



Glevum Associates
Social Science
Research & Analysis (SSRA)

AFGHAN ELECTION SURVEY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Key findings from a survey of 3,566
Afghans ages 18+ conducted
July 8-17, 2009*



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PRE-ELECTION SURVEY

Glevum Associates, LLC released on August 9, 2009 the results of a national poll of Afghanistan public opinion relating to the upcoming Presidential and Provincial Council elections. The U.S. Government funded this survey.

Methodology

This poll, conducted using face-to-face interviews, was fielded between July 8th and 19th 2009. Poll results are based on responses from a stratified random sample of 3,556 Afghans ages 18 and older. The sample was designed so all provinces are represented and that an equal number of men and women were recruited to participate in each province. Responses are weighted to adjust for allocation of interviews across provinces and rural/urban distribution within the population.

Voter Turnout and Interest

Two-thirds of Afghans polled view the coming election as very important for themselves and their family and more than half of those polled indicate high levels of engagement by elders and community leaders. The majority of Afghans polled displayed considerable optimism about the electoral process with more than three quarters certain or fairly certain that the election will be secure (79%), inclusive (82%) and representative (80%).

Nearly 80% of respondents were registered to vote at the time of the survey, with nearly two-thirds of those polled saying that they are certain they will vote. Two-thirds of undecided voters and those who refuse to answer say they are certain to vote. Surprisingly, the poll indicates that the lowest level of voter registration is in the Kabul area, where just 64% of respondents are registered to vote. Disappointingly, around 25% of female respondents had still not registered to vote.

When asked to look ahead to August 20th, the majority of Afghans report that they believe that the elections are going to be inclusive, credible, and secure; but perceptions of security vary greatly by province along with the reported likelihood of voting.

Among those who believe that the elections are certain to be secure, 78% are registered to vote and say that they are certain to be at the polls. Among those who believe that the elections will not be secure, more than half (55%) are certain they will not cast a ballot in

the upcoming election. Even among those who believe the elections are important, security concerns appear to have a significant impact on voter confidence.

The South Central and South Western regions of Afghanistan registered a much lower percentage of those who indicated they were "certain to vote". However when combined with the percentage of those who said they would "probably vote", the overall total of respondents from these two regions who indicated that they would likely vote was well above 90%.

Key Findings

When asked if things in the country were going in the right direction almost two thirds of respondents (65%) said that it was. However, by region the figure was much lower in South Central (46%) and South Western (45%) Afghanistan.

When asked whom they would support, respondents were presented with a replication of the actual Presidential election ballot and asked to indicate whom they would vote for if the election were held today.

Results of the poll identify President Hamid Karzai, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Dr. Ashraf Ghani, and Ramazan Bashardost garnering the largest share of the vote among a field of forty-one Presidential candidates. When undecided registered voters and registered voters who refused to answer are factored out of the pool of respondents, Karzai receives 45% of the decided vote, Abdullah receives 25%, Bashardost receives 9%, and Ghani receives 4%. The remaining 37 candidates all are at less than 2% in the survey, and collectively they receive 17% of the decided vote. As Karzai is below 50% of the vote in this decided voter model, a runoff would occur if these numbers hold on August 20.

Among all respondents who are currently registered to vote, President Hamid Karzai was favored by 36% and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah was favored by 20% of registered voters. Ramazan Bashardost and Dr. Ashraf Ghani received support from 7% and 3% of registered voters, respectively. The remaining 37 candidates all are at less than 2% in the survey, and collectively they get just 13% of the vote. One-in-five registered Afghans are either undecided (10%) or refuse to state the person for whom they would vote (11%).

Amongst those respondents most likely to vote, President Karzai is ahead by 15% (37%

Karzai – 22% Abdullah) but even amongst this group, he is still below the 50% threshold required to avoid a run-off. Karzai does better with wealthier Afghans where he has a lead of thirty points over his nearest rival amongst Afghans earning more than Af 10,000 per month.

Regional differences in the level of support for leading candidates are significant and could make a tremendous difference on Election Day. President Karzai has big leads over his nearest rival in the East (+45%) and the Southwest (+52%), while the race is closest in the Central/Kabul (+3%), Western (+8%) and Northern regions (+3%) of Afghanistan.

With regard to ethnic voting patterns, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah is slightly ahead with Tajik voters (+4%), while President Karzai and Ramazan Bashardost split the Hazara vote. Of the nearest rivals to President Karzai, Abdullah is most popular with Tajiks and ethnic minorities, while Bashardost is most popular among Hazara. Except for Pashtuns, Dr. Ashraf Ghani remains undefined with other ethnic groups.

This poll also highlights other key findings of interest as follows:

- While overall two-thirds of Afghans think the country is heading on the right direction, opinion in the south is more mixed.
- Despite being under 50% in support amongst respondents, President Karzai remains personally popular, with two-thirds of voters having a favorable opinion of him, compared to just 16% who have an unfavorable opinion of Karzai.
- President Karzai received above 60% favorable ratings across all ethnic groups
- Undecided voters are facing a difficult choice because they like all three major candidates.
- The top issues facing Afghans are corruption and lack of jobs.
- Security remains important to Afghans but it is not considered to be the top priority.
- On the top issues of concern to Afghans, President Karzai has a modest advantage on perceptions of issue handling.