

UNCHECKED AND UNBALANCED PRESIDENT KARZAI AND THE AFGHAN PARLIAMENT

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is on the brink of a constitutional crisis with no clear solution. President Hamid Karzai's continued ability to undercut his opposition in parliament has kept the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) from consistently conducting its day-to-day affairs and has left the body unable to effectively counterbalance Karzai's executive authority. The system of checks and balances between the three branches of government is broken. Institutional credibility has been damaged by perceptions of interference by government entities in the electoral process.

The parliamentary elections were held on September 18, 2010 to elect representatives to the lower house. They were the fourth election in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban government and the first to be conducted with Afghans in a leading role with international support. The elections were plagued by fraud, a spike in insurgent violence, and the manipulation of results. The elections were a reminder of the difficulty of holding credible elections while simultaneously conducting a robust counterinsurgency campaign. The opaque processes of ballot counting and fraud investigation gave rise to suspicions among losing candidates and spurred a call for further investigation.

This report focuses on the parliamentary elections and the increasingly troubled relationship between the executive and legislative branches. The first section describes the electoral process and preparations taken by the Afghan government and observer organizations leading to Election Day. The subsequent sections discuss contentious post-election events and decisions that have nearly deadlocked the three branches of government in the current complex political quandary.

THE WOLESI JIRGA

The Parliament of Afghanistan, also known as the National Assembly, is a bicameral legislature described within the Afghan Constitution as the supreme legislative body that "shall manifest the will of its people as well as represent the entire nation." It is composed of the two houses: the Wolesi Jirga and the Meshrano Jirga (Upper House).¹

The Wolesi Jirga is composed of 249 Members of Parliament (MPs), each of whom is directly elected to a five-year term. The number of representatives from each of Afghanistan's 34 provinces is determined proportionately to the population, and each province has at least two MPs. Afghanistan uses the single non-transferable vote system, in which each person casts a single vote for one candidate in their province. The candidates who receive the most votes in each province are elected to serve in the Wolesi Jirga.

Legislation can originate in either the parliament or the president's administration, and the proposal must first be introduced into the Wolesi Jirga. If it is approved by the Wolesi

Jirga, then it is sent onto the Meshrano Jirga for approval. If the Meshrano Jirga rejects the proposed law, a two-thirds majority in the Wolesi Jirga can override it. Furthermore, a two-thirds majority in the Wolesi Jirga can also override a presidential veto.²

Article 83 of the Constitution states that the term of the current Wolesi Jirga would “terminate, after the disclosure of the elections, on 22 June of the fifth year,” after which the new parliament would assemble and begin working. The article also notes that “elections for members of the Wolesi Jirga shall be held 30–60 days prior to the expiration of the term of the [current] Wolesi Jirga.”³

The responsibility for organizing and executing elections in Afghanistan falls to the Independent Election Commission (IEC). Led by a nine-member administrative board appointed by the president, the IEC maintains office in each of the 34 provinces.⁴ For the 2010 election, the IEC employed over 88,000 staff members, including 3,000 district field coordinators and 85,000 poll workers.⁵

Election Day was initially scheduled for May 22, 2010, but the spring timeframe added several logistical challenges on top of a deeply-troubled electoral process. The international community predicted the IEC would be unable to successfully plan and execute the election on that timeline.⁶ International donors, who provided the majority of the finances needed to conduct the elections, also threatened to hold their funding until the IEC could demonstrate that it had implemented some election reform following the 2009 election.⁷ With a rapidly approaching deadline to address growing logistical and security challenges, as well as calls for an Afghan-led process, the IEC announced in late January 2010 that it would delay the elections until September 18th.⁸ This would grant Afghan and international partners a longer timeframe for planning purposes, and because election materials would be more easily distributed across the country during the summer months.

EARLY POLITICAL MANEUVERING

Prior to the 2010 election season, the previous Wolesi Jirga had demonstrated its unwillingness to be a “rubber stamp” body. Seated MPs critical of Karzai made efforts to stand up to what they perceived to be heavy-handed political maneuvering by the president. These opposition figures believed the 2009 presidential election illustrated President Karzai’s willingness to shrewdly commit fraud to ensure his reelection. As a result, opposition MPs began attempting to actively counterbalance Karzai’s executive maneuvering.

While the President has the constitutional authority to appoint ministers, the attorney general, Supreme Court justices, and other select positions.⁹ These nominations are subject to approval by the Wolesi Jirga and can be dismissed.¹⁰ In January 2010, Karzai appointed two-dozen individuals to temporarily fill vacant positions in his cabinet while he waited for their official approval from the Wolesi Jirga. Even though the parliamentarians were winding down their first terms, they rejected all but seven of the nominees in an unexpected show of political strength.

President Karzai, also facing international pressure to ensure the upcoming elections were more transparent than had previously been, introduced a decree that extensively rewrote the 2005 electoral law and made sweeping changes in the electoral process. The most alarming change was the restructuring of the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC), the five-man panel that had previously ruled on complaints of election fraud in 2009 and nearly forced him into a second-round of voting against his primary opponent, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah. As originally established, the ECC was composed of three international members and two Afghan members. Karzai’s decree called for the ECC to become an all-Afghan body by removing the three foreign members.¹¹

Although Karzai contended that the changes would allow Afghans greater control over the process, the United Nations and U.S. interlocutors began a series of discussions with President Karzai that succeeded in persuading him to allow two international members (a former chairman of the election body in South Africa and a former member of the Iraqi electoral commission) to the ECC. Furthermore, at least one of the international members would have to concur with each ECC decision.¹²

In order to become active, the decree was required to receive a confirmation vote from both houses of parliament.¹³ The Wolesi Jirga interpreted Karzai's electoral decree as yet another move to force undue influence over what should have been an impartial, "free and fair" elections process. Many parliamentarians expressed concern that Karzai had a personal desire to manipulate the ECC, which had been a primary obstacle to his 2009 reelection bid.¹⁴ The reseating of two international members did not mollify the Wolesi Jirga, and it rejected the decree in late March 2010. The constitutional method to stop a decree from being enacted is through rejection in both houses of parliament, and so the decree then went to the Meshrano Jirga, the majority of whom are appointed by Karzai. The upper house decided to abstain from voting. Ironically, the upper house's inaction – which was *not* a veto against the decree – passively allowed the decree to become law.¹⁵

ELECTION PREPARATIONS

In 2009, opposition candidate Dr. Abdullah publicly challenged the IEC's impartiality and alleged that IEC chairman Azizullah Ludin had been biased in favor of Karzai, citing Ludin's statement, "we will have another election, and we'll have the same result. Karzai is going to win."¹⁶ The Karzai administration initially refused to remove Ludin, who blamed the international community for attempting to "defame" the IEC.¹⁷ By early 2010, foreign

donors were putting increasing pressure on Karzai to take meaningful steps towards electoral reform, and improvements to IEC leadership were considered vital to secure international funding.¹⁸

The Presidential Palace announced on April 17, 2010 that it had selected Justice Fazel Ahmad Manawi to replace Ludin as the new head commissioner of the IEC.¹⁹ Manawi previously had been a member of the Northern Alliance opposing Taliban rule in the 1990s and later participated in the planning for the new Afghan government following the defeat of the Taliban government. Manawi, who had been a commissioner on the IEC for the 2009 elections, was familiar with the electoral process. His judicial record was perceived by both domestic and international observers to be fair and impartial. Steffan de Mistura, the U.N. Special Representative of the Secretary General in Afghanistan, welcomed the new appointment, describing Manawi as "a very solid person who we can all feel comfortable with."²⁰ He congratulated President Karzai for "his wise decision to agree to guidelines aimed at ensuring more credible and transparent elections. We are in a position, under these circumstances, to recommend to the international community to support financially the future elections of 18th September 2010."²¹

The IEC banned 6,000 of its staff who had participated or permitted fraud during the previous election and reshuffled many of its provincial election officers to limit their influence over local networks to reduce the likelihood of fraud.²² Tests were conducted on various formulas of indelible ink and the one chosen had highest concentration of silver nitrate considered safe for application on human skin. The sanctity of election materials was also considered, and the IEC distributed ballots with unique serial codes, tamper-evident tape and tamper-evident bags. ANSF also partnered with the IEC to develop plans to escort and track ballot materials between polling centers and district and provincial centers.²³

The IEC conducted voter registration drives across the country until a month before Election Day, garnering just over 376,000 new eligible voters to bring the total voter cards to over 17 million. The total figure was agreed to be unreliable, as thousands of forged voter registration cards were distributed during the 2009 elections. Unable to remove those fake cards from circulation and unable to scrap the entire registration system and begin anew, the IEC was forced to accept previous voter cards and rely on its employees at each of the 20,000 polling stations to carefully scrutinize voter cards. To try and account for the ambiguity, the IEC used a “compromise” figure of just over 12.5 million estimated registered voters.²⁴

After working closely with coalition planners at the ISAF Joint Command in Kabul, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) conducted patrols to check the serviceability of the sites in their areas of responsibility. They conducted threat assessments based upon accessibility of the sites, soundness of the structures, and the local security situation. Afghan National Army corps commanders delegated authority to their subordinate units to determine the condition of each polling site.²⁵ One month prior to Election Day, the IEC released its finalized list of 5,897 polling centers. Each polling center included several polling stations, which totaled 18,762.²⁶

Insurgent threats were widespread across the country, especially in southern and eastern Afghanistan. ANSF planners believed that their forces had successfully kept insurgents from disrupting the electoral process in 2009, and therefore implemented the same “ring of steel” security plan that had been utilized the previous year. The responsibility of physical security for polling centers was given to local police and army units. Approximately 52,000 police and 63,000 army personnel were deployed for election security.²⁷ Afghan police would provide a tight ring of security around each site, the army would form a loose cordon around the police, and

then coalition forces would be on standby with quick-reaction forces and air support if needed to counter a major insurgent attack.²⁸

VOTING, RESULTS, AND A TRIBUNAL

On September 18, 2010, turnout varied across Afghanistan, with an estimated 5-6 million votes cast out of the 17 million voter cards in circulation. Select provinces with poor security, including Pashtun-majority regions in the south and east of the country, suffered from very low turnout. Violence spiked to a record high, with nearly 400 attacks across the country.²⁹ Even with the great number of incidents, casualties were relatively low, as the vast majority of insurgent actions were uncoordinated “harassing” attacks to discourage people from voting.

The ECC immediately began receiving complaints alleging irregularities ranging from the abuse of fraudulent voter cards, people casting multiple ballots, the “indelible” ink washing off, and even shortages of ballot papers at select polling centers.³⁰ Fraud investigations had already disqualified some corrupt candidates prior to Election Day, and the IEC disqualified nearly a quarter of the total ballots cast before releasing preliminary results on October 20, 2010.³¹ The IEC also referred 224 candidates suspected of fraud to the ECC, which ultimately disqualified an additional 24 candidates.³² The ECC disqualifications included influential former militia commanders, Karzai allies, and the brother of the National Security Council Chairman.³³ By October 9th, the ECC had received over 4,000 complaints and these were triaged into three categories: Category “A”

Complaints Received by October 9, 2010

| Category | Complaints |
|----------|------------|
| A | 2,213 |
| B | 1,157 |
| C | 630 |

Source: Afghan Election Complaints Commission

complaints had the potential to change election results, Category “B” were considered serious but unlikely to impact results, and Category “C” were unsubstantiated or erroneous and required no further investigation.³⁴

On November 24th, the IEC announced final results for all provinces but Ghazni, for which province final results were announced on December 1st.³⁵ Ethnic Pashtuns, long accustomed to ruling Afghanistan, previously held 150 out of 249 seats in the Wolesi Jirga. They fared less well in 2010 and won only 98 seats. The case of Ghazni, with its mixed-ethnic population, was frequently cited, as all 11 seats were won by Hazara candidates.³⁶

The announcement of the final results was followed by an outcry and a flurry of complaints from Pashtuns, who blamed their low turnout on the poor security situation in their areas. The Hazara community countered that their winning candidates could not rightly be penalized for something that was not their fault, and that the only legitimate course was to follow the electoral process, regardless of the security situation.³⁷ Karzai publicly expressed his dissatisfaction with the results, and the Attorney General’s Office (AGO) interjected by challenging the IEC and questioning the sanctity of the election results. The AGO referred over 200 cases to the Supreme Court, asking the justices for an annulment of the IEC-certified result, a recount of votes, and the prosecution of over a

dozen IEC officials on fraud allegations.³⁸ The IEC immediately reaffirmed the credibility of its certified results and condemned the intervention as unconstitutional and out of the AGO’s jurisdiction.³⁹

On December 26, 2010, Karzai utilized the Supreme Court’s recommendation to establish a Special Election Tribunal to conduct its own investigation of electoral fraud and the results.⁴⁰ Western critics and MPs voiced their concern about the impartiality of Karzai-appointed tribunal, as they largely expected it to focus more on reducing the opposition than strengthening the electoral process.⁴¹

SIGNS OF DIVISIVENESS

On January 19, 2011, the tribunal abruptly requested that Karzai delay the inauguration by at least a month to allow the tribunal to complete its election investigation.⁴² Karzai’s acceptance of the request caused an outcry among incoming MPs, who threatened to enter the parliamentary building, by force if necessary, and “inaugurate themselves” to begin work.⁴³ Hoping to stabilize the situation and force a resolution, U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry and U.N. Special Representative Steffan de Mistura applied intense pressure on Karzai and publicly announced their intent to attend parliament’s inauguration.⁴⁴ President Karzai also held several tense negotiations with representatives of incoming MPs and

Changes in Ethnicity in the 2005 and 2010 Wolesi Jirga

| Ethnic Group | 2005 | 2010 | Difference |
|-----------------------|------|------|------------|
| Pashtun | 113 | 98 | -15 |
| Tajik (incl. Aimaq) | 60 | 66 | +6 |
| Hazara (incl. Shi’a) | 42 | 56 | +14 |
| Uzbek | 22 | 19 | -3 |
| Turkmen (incl. Tatar) | 5 | 3 | -2 |
| Arab | 3 | 2 | -1 |
| Pashai | 2 | 2 | - |
| Nuristani | 1 | 2 | +1 |
| Baloch | 1 | 1 | - |

Source: International Crisis Group

ultimately announced his agreement to preside over the inauguration.⁴⁵ The Wolesi Jirga was sworn into office on January 26, 2011.

The first order of business for MPs was to select a Speaker of the House and an administrative board. Observers initially predicted that Yunis Qanuni, a Tajik and the previous speaker, would probably be selected again. However, the Wolesi Jirga became mired in a deadlock almost immediately. In the first round of voting, no candidate (including the frontrunners Qanuni and Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, a Karzai-allied Pashtun) was able to garner the absolute majority of votes required to secure the speakership.⁴⁶ As a result, the MPs held a run-off between the two candidates with the most votes in the first round, but that vote also was inconclusive.

The rules and regulations of the Wolesi Jirga have no provision beyond a single round of voting and a runoff round.⁴⁷ Therefore, the parliamentarians were immediately uncertain whether Qanuni and Sayyaf were eligible to run in a third round. Debates over whether to allow contenders to run again continued for several days, with some MPs arguing for the veteran frontrunners and others arguing for fresh faces in the running. The Wolesi Jirga voted to deny Qanuni and Sayyaf a chance to run again.

After 18 MPs had run in numerous rounds of voting, the Wolesi Jirga established an internal panel of unsuccessful Speaker contenders and two MPs from each province. The commission decided that the ethnic competition between Pashtun, Tajik, and Hazara candidates was keeping the Wolesi Jirga mired in a deadlock. They nominated an Uzbek from Kunduz, Abdul Rauf Ibrahimy, who was successfully voted in as Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga on February 27, 2011.⁴⁸

THE TRIBUNAL IN ACTION

Although the Wolesi Jirga struggled through its inconclusive rounds of voting, it unanimously insisted the tribunal was a violation of electoral law and lacked jurisdiction over election results. On the morning of February 14, 2011 members of the Special Election Tribunal and Attorney General's Office conducted a spectacular surprise raid on the IEC headquarters in Kabul.⁴⁹ Supported by Afghan National Police, the officials seized all election materials for their own pending recount.

While the tribunal continued its recount, the Wolesi Jirga attempted to persuade President Karzai to halt the investigation. Some MPs threatened to strike in protest and on May 9, 2011 the MPs officially declared the tribunal was illegal. None of these actions successfully deterred the tribunal or the Presidential Palace. The Wolesi Jirga was scheduled for a recess in early June, but many MPs voiced concerns that if they left, the tribunal's pending ruling could potentially keep them from retaking their seats. The parliamentarians therefore decided to delay their recess twice.⁵⁰

As the Wolesi Jirga had previously rejected the majority of Karzai's past cabinet nominations, the positions remained filled by acting ministers. The MPs continued to press Karzai on his refusal to submit new nominees for his cabinet positions and staged a week of silent protest in mid-June to attempt to pressure Karzai to introduce his new names for confirmation.⁵¹

On June 23rd, after four months of reviewing election materials and recounting ballots, the tribunal announced that 62 of the 249 MPs had acquired their seats by committing electoral fraud and would therefore be disqualified and removed from office.⁵² This statement stunned the MPs and reignited the debate over the election results. The tribunal claimed to have conducted its own recount that disputed the IEC's certified results. An example of the

noticeable differences between the IEC and tribunal's results occurred in Herat, where a sitting MP was stripped of 5,000 votes, a second candidate was awarded 12,000 votes, and a third candidate was awarded 12,000 votes despite failing to win any in the first count.⁵³ The tribunal announced that the 62 named MPs would have one month to appeal the verdict. Although the seated parliamentarians passionately claimed the tribunal's findings were unconstitutional and lacked valid authority, the losing candidates have unsurprisingly voiced their agreement with the tribunal's results.⁵⁴

Parliamentarians countered by summoning the Attorney General (AG) for questioning on June 23, but he refused to appear.⁵⁵ The Wolesi Jirga then passed a vote of no confidence against him and issued a four-day deadline for his appearance, but the AG again claimed the Wolesi Jirga had no authority over his office and ignored it. The MPs lacked any method to enforce their summons and calls for testimony by the AG soon ceased.⁵⁶ Some MPs discussed impeaching President Karzai, which sparked passionate arguments and even caused physical violence between MPs.⁵⁷ The IEC submitted a six-part proposal to President Karzai, but it failed to clarify the ambiguity surrounding electoral authority.

The 62 MPs named in the tribunal's announcement of June 23rd were given until July 26th to appeal the verdict. As of July 25th, only two MPs had submitted an appeal. The tribunal is expected to make a new announcement regarding the disqualifications, but the Wolesi Jirga and the IEC continue to deny the legitimacy of the tribunal.⁵⁸

UNCERTAIN FUTURE

President Karzai has been able to co-opt, discredit, or otherwise distract the new MPs for the past six months. As a result, he has kept the Wolesi Jirga from consistently conducting

its day-to-day affairs and has left the body unable to effectively counterbalance Karzai's executive authority. However, a new opposition coalition called "The Parliamentary Alliance for the Support of the Law" has formed in the Wolesi Jirga. Within this new coalition, at least 185 experienced and new MPs are reportedly cooperating to develop a way for the Wolesi Jirga to resist future actions by Karzai and the tribunal.⁵⁹

Still, the future composition of the Wolesi Jirga remains uncertain, especially as no clear authoritative body exists in Afghanistan to enforce a final determination over the validity of the election results. Although the Supreme Court could potentially be an arbiter for the crisis, the terms of three of its justices (including the Chief Justice) have expired, and the losing side in any arbitration will likely refuse to abide by the court's ruling for this reason.⁶⁰

Any extrajudicial attempts to remove parliamentarians would establish a troubling precedent that constitutional and electoral manipulation is acceptable to the international community. Afghan electoral bodies cannot seriously implement reform if they are threatened with investigation conducted outside the country's legal system. Currently, the electoral process remains vulnerable to political influence and manipulation, and the increasing tension between government entities and the prolonged nature of the electoral drama have marred the legitimacy and efficacy of the government.

Paraag Shukla is a Senior Research Analyst at the Institute for the Study of War.

Michael Whittaker contributed to this report.

NOTES

¹ Article Eighty-One, The Constitution of Afghanistan, 03 January 2004.

² Article Ninety-Four, The Constitution of Afghanistan, 03 January 2004.

³ Article Eighty-Three, The Constitution of Afghanistan, 03 January 2004.

⁴ “The Second Periodic Report under the Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,” The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2006. ; “Secretariat,” Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan, 2010.

⁵ “Figures,” Fact Sheets, Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan, 28 September 2010.

⁶ “Afghanistan’s Elections Stalemate,” International Crisis Group, 23 February 2011.

⁷ “Karzai appoints new elections chief for Afghanistan,” Trend News Agency, 17 April 2010.

⁸ “Afghanistan’s Elections Stalemate,” International Crisis Group, 23 February 2011.

⁹ Article Sixty-Four, The Constitution of Afghanistan, 03 January 2004.

¹⁰ Article Ninety-One, The Constitution of Afghanistan, 03 January 2004.

¹¹ Partlow, Joshua, “Afghanistan’s Government Seeks More Control Over Elections,” The Washington Post, 15 February 2010.

¹² Green, Matthew, “Karzai under fire over poll reform,” Financial Times, 18 April 2010.

¹³ Boone, Jon, “Hamid Karzai’s election decree overturned by Afghanistan parliament,” Guardian UK, 31 March 2010.

¹⁴ Boone, Jon, “Hamid Karzai’s election decree overturned by Afghanistan parliament,” Guardian UK, 31 March 2010.

¹⁵ Salahuddin, Sayed and Peter Graff, “Afghan upper house backs Karzai election decree,” Reuters, 3 April 2010.

¹⁶ Cavendish, Julien, “Abdullah wants election chief sacked,” The Christian Science Monitor, 26 October 2009.

¹⁷ Rahmatullah Afghan, “No foreign meddling in IEC: Manawi,” Pajhwok Afghan News, 22 April 2010.

¹⁸ “Karzai appoints new elections chief for Afghanistan,” Trend News Agency, 17 April 2010.

¹⁹ “Karzai appoints new elections chief for Afghanistan,” Trend News Agency, 17 April 2010.

²⁰ “Karzai appoints new elections chief for Afghanistan,” Trend News Agency, 17 April 2010.

²¹ Shalizi, Hamid, “Karzai names election chiefs, ends standoff with U.N.,” Reuters, 17 April 2010. ; “Karzai appoints new elections chief for Afghanistan,” Trend News Agency, 17 April 2010.

²² Interview with U.S. Intelligence Officer, June 2011.

²³ “Afghanistan Elections Update,” National Democratic Institute, 04 September 2010.

²⁴ Foschini, Fabrizio, “An Update on Voter Registration,” Afghanistan Analysts Network, 15 August 2010.

²⁵ Interview with U.S. Intelligence Officer, June 2011.

²⁶ “Afghanistan Elections Update,” National Democratic Institute, 04 September 2010.

²⁷ “Afghanistan Elections Update,” National Democratic Institute, 24 September 2010.

²⁸ Interview with U.S. Intelligence Officer, June 2011.

²⁹ “Afghanistan Elections Update,” National Democratic Institute, 24 September 2010.

³⁰ “Intimidation and washable ink mar Afghan vote,” IBN Live, 18 September 2010.

³¹ Partlow, Joshua, “Nearly 1 in 4 Afghan ballots invalid due to fraud,” The Washington Post, 20 October 2010.

³² van Bijlert, Martine, “2010 Elections 27,” Afghanistan Analysts Network, 21 October 2010. ; Hewad, Gran, “2010 Election (32),” Afghanistan Analysts Network, 23 November 2011.

³³ Hewad, Gran, “2010 Election (32),” Afghanistan Analysts Network, 23 November 2011.

³⁴ “Complaints received and complaints triaged from 22 September to 10 October 2010,” Afghan Electoral Complaints Commission, 10 October 2011.

³⁵ “Ghazni Parliamentary Poll Results Announced,” Tolo News, 01 December 2010.

³⁶ “Afghan poll results threaten ethnic balance,” BBC News, 09 December 2010.

³⁷ Ruttig, Thomas, “Ghazni’s election drama: It’s the system,” The AFPak Channel, 02 December 2010.

³⁸ Hanifi, Ashraf, “Special court established for disputed election cases,” Pajhwok Afghan News, 27 December 2010.

³⁹ Rubin, Alissa J., “Contrary to Hopes, Afghan Vote Disappoints,” The New York Times, 01 December 2010.

⁴⁰ “Karzai Approves Special Court to End Electoral Tensions,” Tolo News, 26 December 2010. ; Hanifi, Ashraf, “Special court established for disputed election cases,” Pajhwok Afghan News, 27 December 2010.

⁴¹ “Afghanistan’s Wolesi Jirga receives praise,” United Press International, 26 January 2011.

⁴² Shalizi, Hamid, “Afghan court seeks to delay parliament inauguration,” Reuters, 19 January 2010.

⁴³ Rivera, Ray, “Afghan Political Crisis Grows as Legislators Vow to Defy Karzai and Open Parliament,” The New York Times, 20 January 2011.

⁴⁴ Lawrence, Quil, “Fraud Ruling Throws Afghan Parliament into Disarray,” National Public Radio, 28 June 2011.

⁴⁵ Foschini, Fabrizio, “High Hurdles Race to the Afghan Parliament,” Afghanistan Analysts Network, 22 January 2011.

⁴⁶ Gran Hewad, Fabrizio Foschini, and Thomas Ruttig, "Lower House speaker election: Intermezzo of the Surprise Candidates," Afghanistan Analysts Network, 04 February 2011.

⁴⁷ "Chapter Three: Election of the Speaker and the Administrative Board," Rules of Procedures of the Wolesi Jirga, .

⁴⁸ Gran Hewad, "The Wolesi Jirga has a Speaker," Afghanistan Analysts Network, 27 February 2011.

⁴⁹ "UN 'concern' after Afghan vote office raid," Agence France-Presse, 15 February 2011.

⁵⁰ Suroush, Qayoom, "The Performance of the Afghan Parliament in its First Session," Bamdad, June 27, 2011.

⁵¹ Abasin Zaheer, "MPs propose another way of protest," Pajhwok Afghan News, June 19, 2011.

⁵² "Elections Special Tribunal Throws Out Quarter of MPs," Tolo News, 25 June 2011.

⁵³ Shalizi, Hamid and Paul Tait, "Afghan court overturns 25 percent of parliament poll," Reuters, 23 June 2011.

⁵⁴ Gambrell, Jon, "Fraud tribunal throws out quarter of Afghan MPs," Associated Press, 23 June 2011.

⁵⁵ Elections Special Tribunal Throws Out Quarter of MPs," Tolo News, 25 June 2011.

⁵⁶ Zaheer, Abasin, "Parliament sets four-day deadline for AG to quit," Pajhwok Afghan News, 28 June 2011.

⁵⁷ Rubin, Alissa and Sangar Rahimi, "Brawl Erupts During Impeachment Talks in Afghan Parliament," The New York Times, 05 July 2011.

⁵⁸ "Afghan court overturns dozens of poll results," Aljazeera, 23 June 2011.

⁵⁹ Ruttig, Thomas, "Impeachment and Other Threats," Afghanistan Analysts Network, 11 July 2010.

⁶⁰ "List of Cabinet picks being finalised: Karzai," Pajhwok Afghan News, 06 June 2011.