Reforming IEC Before Presidential Election

January 21, 2019

A fter the candidates started registering their names for the upcoming presidential elections, the political environment in Afghanistan seems to be getting more exciting. However, along with excitement, there are many concerns over the upcoming elections. One of the most important is that the election should be able to bring about a better change for Afghanistan, which is only possible through a fair and transparent election. However, looking at the present performance of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) of Afghanistan, it is very difficult to expect anything very positive. In fact, the performance of the commission during and after the parliamentary election has left many of us disappointed. We face serious problems regarding our capacity to conduct a fair, free, and transparent election.

The initial result of parliamentary election was announced after a long delay. Even after it was announced, there were serious allegations of fraud and errors in the count of IEC. The results of Kabul election further disturbed andBesides ambiguity on the commission and even Inde-pendent Election Complaints Commission (IECC). Both the organiza-tions failed to satisfy the candidates, the observers and the people of the country.

As a matter of fact, this year the IEC will be faced with the challenge of con-ducting four elections: presidential and district council elections in the provinces, municipal elections in the provinces, as well as by-elections in the Ghaninis. The situation is going to be very sensitive and demanding for political and social sensitivities. The presidential election is the most important of all, while political and factional sensitivities are on the rise. Unfortunately, these sensitivities are based on identity and ethnicity.

That is why the presidential election is going to be very sensitive, while the IEC has lost its moral authority to manage it properly. The parliamentary election also proved that no major work has taken place over the past four years, though there has been huge spending. In fact, the work has only produced a project. Even digitization of the voting process did not achieve anything. It was expensive, inefficient and not a solution for the problem at hand. A new technology for the upcoming presidential election will also prove to be its ultimate failure. But in addition to the technical aspects of the IEC’s performance, there is another important aspect, which is its inability to conduct a biometric system success. However, after the delay in holding the presidential election, the elec-tions are now taking place in the post-peace process, there is a genuine reason to engage in this 

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by: Byar Hardal

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Reforms should not be limited to the capacity of the IEC’s ordinary workers and attracting qualified people at the provincial and central levels. The government should also take steps at the national level. The government should establish the IEC only at the IEC level. Foreign and donor institutions, as well as the Afghan people, should work together to make use of this opportunity to use the necessary capacity building at the IEC.

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