



Violence Threatened if Afghan Election “Stolen”

Supporters of the leading opposition candidate for the presidency of Afghanistan, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, are threatening to take up arms and unleash a wave of violence across the nation if the election is “stolen” and their candidate does not win, *The Independent* reported Tuesday. Widespread reports of fraud are adding to the tension.

“We have heard Karzai is saying he has already won. We have also heard there has been a lot of fraud in the south. The election cannot be decided like this. The international community should correct this and have these votes taken again,” proclaimed Mohammed Amin, a 51-year-old former guerilla of Tajik ancestry. “If they do not, people will resist. This is Afghanistan, and we have all got arms. If people are angry, we will use these arms.”



The former mujahedin fighters delivered the warning late Monday standing by the grave of Ahmed Shah Masoud, a popular resistance leader who helped drive back the Soviet invasion and fight the Taliban. He was declared a national hero by current president Hamid Karzai and in 2002, the year after he was assassinated, was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

According to the article in *The Independent*, entitled “Abdullah’s supporters threaten to take up arms over ‘rigged’ election,” the former fighters said that they still have their guns and have not forgotten how to use them. Pointing up at the mountains, Amin said, “That is where we made a stand with Ahmed Shah Masoud when the Russians attacked us. We must make a stand again if wrong is being done at the election.”

Opposition candidate Abdullah, who served as Karzai’s foreign minister, has thrown fuel on the fire, accusing the current president of personal involvement in ballot stuffing and massive fraud. But he has urged his supporters to remain calm while the election counting process continues and the commission investigates his concerns. He also predicted that if Karzai illegitimately retained office, there would be a reaction like the one seen following the Iranian election, “only worse.”

At least six other major candidates have joined in contesting the credibility of the polls, issuing a press release Tuesday saying that “this election was characterized by widespread fraud which could result in increasing tension and violence in the country and millions across the nation are concerned and the international community is sharing this grave concern with us.” According to the release, the Election Complaint Commission has received over 400 complaints and allegations of fraud, many of them serious enough to change the outcome of the whole election.

Adding validity to the claims was the head of the United Nations mission there, who announced Monday: “There is no doubt there were irregularities on polling day. I appeal to the candidates, their



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on August 27, 2009

campaigns and also to the voters to demonstrate the patience and calm required while these are investigated."

Another former fighter who stood with Amin warning of violence voiced his opinion as well. "No one wants to fight fellow Afghans. We are all the same. But why should people accept their votes being ignored?" he asked. "If people on the other side are not being democratic what choice have we got but to fight? But if that happens we won't be fighting just for Tajiks, we'll be fighting for all Afghanistan."

Adding to all these concerns are widespread reports of Taliban voter intimidation, which some observers claim was designed to help Karzai maintain his hold on power. His government banned coverage and reporting of violence while voting was underway.

All of these election problems come amid the most violent summer since the 2001 invasion and recent statements by American forces that the situation is getting worse. The top U.S. military officer said conditions in Afghanistan are "serious and deteriorating."

Karzai's henchmen, including some of his ministers, have all but announced victory in the disputed election, further fueling anger and distrust among Abdullah supporters. Even the preliminary results announced so far do not indicate that with any degree of certainty, and so far only 17 percent of polling stations have been tallied

According to the Associated Press, Karzai has 44.8 percent so far while Abdullah is trailing with 35.1 percent. To win without going into a runoff, a candidate must have more than 50 percent of the vote. And the official certified results are not expected until mid-September.

Hopefully the election disputes can be resolved without resorting to violence, but for Obama to "praise" the election, as Reuters reported in an article entitled "Obama praises Afghan vote, warns of violence," is simply preposterous. So far the main topic of news reports regarding the election seems to be the widespread fraud perceived across the country.

Photo of Afghan ballot box being emptied: AP Images



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