

## **Afghan Youth Debates: Nation Wants End to Suffering**

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A political analyst from the southern province of Kandahar has told an IWPR debate that Afghans have had enough of "grief" and must now seek peace via the ballot box.

Speaking to more than 100 students at an event held on May 12, Mohammad Omar Satay said the elections had given the nation a new sense of optimism. Provincial and presidential elections were held on April 5; the latter goes to a second round on June 14.

Satay told the undergraduates that the bravery and professionalism of the Afghan security forces in the run-up to last month's ballot had inspired voters to defy Taliban threats and come out in vast numbers. He said the seven-million-strong turnout served as a demonstration to the world that the war-torn nation wanted not conflict but stability and reconciliation.

"The biggest hopes of Afghans are to eliminate the political, social and economic problems created over the past 35 years [of war]," Satay said. "Afghans can no longer tolerate grief, and they want to live in peace.

"Good security [on April 5] allowed us to cast our votes and show the world that Afghans are no longer a nation of guns. We want to fulfill our hopes by voting."

The IWPR debate took place at Kandahar University, with guest speakers including Nurullah Nuri, the regional director of the national radio and TV company.

Basir Ahmad, a journalism student, asked Nuri whether he believed that Afghans would be put off from participating in the second round by allegations of fraud during the first.

Nuri answered, "The electoral process is in its infancy in Afghanistan, and fraud occurs even in developed societies. The government has promised that the second round will be free of corruption, and it has won public trust through good security.

"Afghans must not lose their determination. They must cast their votes again."

**Nesar Ahmad is a student at Kandahar University and an IWPR trainee.**

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**Location:** [Afghanistan](#)

**Topic:** [Elections](#)

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