

Afghan Youth Debates: Security and Corruption Fears

Author: [Zabihullah Ghazi](#)

Security and corruption remain key concerns for Afghanistan's young voters as the country heads towards provincial and presidential elections in April, a meeting in the eastern Nangarhar province has heard.

Students attending the December 24 debate at the municipal guesthouse in Jalalabad, the provincial centre, voiced fears that candidates would buy influence, and that Western governments would try to ensure that only politicians who represented their interests gained power.

Zabihullah Zamarai, a provincial council member, agreed that many local leaders had bribed their way to guarantee election success, and he urged the Afghan Independent Election Commission (IEC) to take action to address the problem.

Despite the risk of election fraud, Zamarai said, it was essential for people to take part and sustain the democratic process.

"People should vote with care," he said. "The AIEC needs to ensure fairness and transparency, within its own organisation as well. There shouldn't be any interference."

Abdul Basir Sabawun, director of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission for the east of the country, responded to the concerns raised about foreign interference.

He told the 100 audience members that "serious action" should be taken against any "foreign intelligence service found to be plotting to hamper Afghanistan's elections".

Sadullah Fetrat, the IECs spokesman for Nangarhar province, assured the debate that no individual or group would be allowed to interfere. He said that the IEC enjoyed the full cooperation of Nangarhar's local government, and that he could "confidently say nobody will be allowed to commit fraud".

Panelist Shir Alam Amlawal, a political commentator, noted that some polling stations in Nangarhar were too unsafe to allow an orderly election, and urged the IEC to relocate them to more secure areas to allow election observers to do their job.

Ahmad Zia Abdulzai, spokesman for provincial governor Ataulah Ludin, replied that in the months remaining until the polls, the security forces would make every effort to ensure that known trouble spots were made safe.

"The security forces will focus on areas where there are many security problems," he said. "We have the support of local people."

Zabihullah Ghazi is an IWPR-trained reporter in Nangarhar.

*This report was produced as part of **Open Minds: Speaking Up, Reaching Out - Promoting University and Youth Participation in Afghan Elections**, an IWPR initiative funded by the US embassy in Kabul.*

Location: [Afghanistan](#)

Topic: [Elections](#)

Source URL: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/afghan-youth-debates-security-and-corruption-fears>