

# PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme

Afghanistan Country Office, Shah Mahmood Ghazi Watt, Kabul



## **UNDP-ELECT, EUPOL, MOI Police Electoral Training Programme Started**

**Kabul, June 01, 2009**—UNDP ELECT (Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow) project together with EUPOL and the Ministry of Interior (MOI) started a major programme to train 35,000 police officers for the upcoming presidential and provincial council elections to ensure the security during the election process.

One of the intended results of the project is a reduced incidence of electoral violence and a greater awareness of police of the electoral processes and the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders during the campaign, polling, counting and tallying processes.

To that end donors have supported the inclusion in the project of specific support to the Afghanistan National Police (ANP) in the training of relevant officers in electoral specific responsibilities. This training will be conducted with the support and active participation of international training institutions already embedded with the ANP particularly EUPOL, and with reference to the other mentoring agencies within the Mol.

The training methodology is highly participatory. It is important that participants are able to translate theory into practice. The aim is to enable police officers to apply human rights principles to their day-to-day work during the election period.

At each stage, training includes exercises. For example, participants are given role-play exercises on dealing with angry opposition supporters at an election rally. They are encouraged to explore the consequences of taking different actions. At all stages police officers are made to understand that their actions may have either negative or positive consequences. Participants are encouraged to explore the nature of relationships with other stakeholders. The training programme aims primarily to build knowledge, skills and change behavior as opposed to simply transfer knowledge. Police officers need clear guidelines on how to conduct themselves during the election period. It is not enough for officers to know that they are expected to be impartial; they need to know how to interpret laws and understand their consequences for policing in a democracy.

Officers from all the provinces will attend the course in proportion to the number of Polling Centers in each province. 350 officers will be brought to four locations for a two day training course conducted by EUPOL in Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif (Balkh province), Kabul and Terinkot (Uruzgan Province). They will return to their provinces and each will conduct further training/briefing in a cascade program to up to 100 other officers. They will be supplied with training material and directions as to how they should proceed and complete their task prior to the 20th August election date. All Regional Police Commanders will be involved and in accordance with the Minister's directive they will be responsible to conduct the cascade training in their respective districts and provinces.

The UNDP/ELECT Project in Afghanistan supports the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in the planning and implementation of the 2009 and 2010 electoral processes. In addition, the project includes a broader scope of work designed to contribute to a conducive environment for elections wherein police, candidates/agents, domestic observers and the media are able to play a more

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positive role according to their mandates, and to informed participation of the Afghan electorate in the 2009 and 2010 elections.

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