

Amidst deadly violence, UN calls on Afghan authorities to ensure voters can cast ballot

Against a backdrop of violence and technical malfunctions, the UN Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has released a [statement](#) calling on the country's electoral authorities to re-double their efforts to make sure all eligible voters are given a reasonable opportunity to cast their ballot.

Afghanistan's parliamentary elections took place on Saturday amid reports of explosions targeting polling stations across the country, including the capital Kabul, killing or injuring dozens of people,

The violence, along with technical electoral management issues, has led to delays, and many people were forced to wait long hours to cast their vote: a number of stations are reported to have extended their opening hours, with some remaining open for voting on Sunday.

In Kandahar, citizens will have to wait until next Saturday to vote, following the killing of senior Afghan government officials in the province on Thursday.

UNAMA praised the voters who decided to brave the violence and carry out their civic duty in the first elections completely run by Afghan authorities since 2001, described by the Mission as "an important milestone in Afghanistan's transition to self-reliance."

The Mission put the onus on all Afghan authorities with a role in the electoral process to demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding and completing the elections, and to protecting the integrity of the process, especially with regard to tabulating and announcing the results.

The UN has taken note of the anti-fraud measures put in place by the authorities, and the presence of up to 400,000 observers and candidates' agents, as well as political party monitors, to ensure the transparency of the elections: the Organization is encouraging them, and the voters themselves, to play an active, informed and constructive role in the days ahead.

In its statement, UNAMA reminded Afghan citizens who witness fraud of their civic obligation to file a complaint with the relevant Afghan authorities, and that Afghan law enforcement agencies should investigate swiftly and, where appropriate, detain and prosecute those responsible for fraud, where credible allegations are made.