

UN Security Council hails 'courage' of Afghan voters; calls for perpetrators of violence to be held accountable

Welcoming Saturday's parliamentary elections in Afghanistan, the United Nations Security Council called for continued engagement with electoral institutions and urged that any complaints over the vote should be channelled through established legal and constitutional mechanisms.

In a press statement on Tuesday, the members of the Security Council "commended the participation and courage" of Afghans for their participation in the vote, including women's engagement in the elections "both as voters and candidates."

The members "reiterated their continued support for the Afghan Government and people of Afghanistan in their efforts to develop sustainable democratic institutions" added the statement.

In addition, they reiterated the important role of national electoral institutions, including the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission, and urged them to "redouble efforts" to ensure the integrity, neutrality and transparency of the electoral process. That should include detection and prevention of fraud and careful monitoring of results.

They also took note of the situation in Kandahar, where the ballot was postponed due to security incidents until this coming weekend, saying it was important that the vote goes ahead.

In the statement, the members also "condemned in the strongest terms" the actions of those who sought to disrupt the elections and emphasized that violence, or threat of violence in any form, was unacceptable.

"Perpetrators of such acts must be held to account and brought to justice," said the joint statement from Council members.