

Press Release

Afghan Presidential Election - Second Round

Glevum Telephone Opinion Survey - Key Findings

Summary: *Ashraf Ghani has taken the lead (49%) over Abdullah Abdullah (42%) for the second round of voting, according to a survey of 2806 Afghans, contacted by telephone, from June 3rd to June 9th. When asked who would bring peace to Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani was again in the lead with 47% of likely voters choosing him, compared to 39% choosing Abdullah Abdullah. And when asked who was better for Afghanistan, again likely voters choose Ghani over Abdullah – 49% to 41%.*

Introduction

Glevum Associates is proud to present the findings of a large, company initiated and sponsored, opinion survey conducted in Afghanistan from June 3rd to June 9th 2014, ahead of the second round of the Afghan Presidential Election, which will be held on June 14th between Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah. This telephone-based survey of 2,806 likely voters was undertaken to determine who is the frontrunner in the second round of this vital election and to help deter further election fraud. A likely voter is a respondent who told our interviewers that they intended to vote in the second round.

Survey Information and Methodology

Glevum Associates has conducted a telephone survey of 2,806 Afghans who plan to vote in the June 14, 2014 presidential runoff election. Glevum has not previously conducted a telephone poll in Afghanistan but has undertaken more than 30 face-to-face polls with the field research team used for this project. They have always executed field research to the highest ethical and methodological standards.

The sample was selected from two lists of phone numbers. One list consisted of 200,087 phone numbers with Afghan area codes and the other list included 255,897 phone numbers with Afghan area codes. A simple random sample was selected from the two lists by our U.S. based analyst, which was then passed to our Afghan based interviewers. The margin of error is 1.84% using a total population of 455,984 (the two lists combined). The sample was selected using an SPSS function that randomly chooses phone numbers from a list. These calls were undertaken between June 3rd and June 9th 2014, and our interviewers spoke with a total of 2,806 likely voters. Interviews were conducted in Dari and Pashtu.

Respondents were first asked if they intend to vote in the June 14, 2014 runoff presidential election in Afghanistan. If respondents answered that they did intend to vote (likely voters), they were then asked three additional questions. If respondents indicated that they did not intend to vote, the interview ended.

The three additional questions were:

Which candidate are you going to vote for?

Which candidate do you think is more likely to bring peace to Afghanistan?

Which candidate will be better for Afghanistan?

Survey Limitations

Unfortunately, due to time and financial constraints, respondents were not asked demographics questions such as gender, province, etc. This poll is representative of the individuals whose phone numbers were included on the list of 455,984 numbers, however, the list of phone numbers is not an exhaustive list as such a list is not available. Also, all phones called were cell phones; landlines are generally not available in Afghanistan and the list contained many non-working phone numbers.

Most Interesting Findings

Below are the most interest findings from this survey.

Candidates Support

The primary finding of this poll is that Ashraf Ghani has increased his level of support from the 31.5% that he secured in the first round, to 49% of likely voters in the Glevum poll. He is now the front-runner for the second round. The percentage of likely voters interviewed in this poll who indicated that they would vote for Abdullah Abdullah was 42%. This is a drop of 3% from his share of the vote in the first round.

When asked who would bring peace to Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani was again in the lead with 47% of likely voters choosing him, compared to 39% choosing Abdullah Abdullah. And when asked who was better for Afghanistan, likely voters again choose Ghani over Abdullah – 49% to 41%.

The answers to these two questions are consistent with the choice, by a majority of likely voters interviewed, of Ghani (49%) over Abdullah (42%) in the second round.

Conclusion

This 49-42 split in favor of Ghani suggests that he has consolidated the Pashtun vote (Pashtun are a plurality in Afghanistan) and that the Ghani/Dostum ticket has maintained their high level of support with ethnic Uzbeks. Ghani may also have made some inroads into Abdullah's Hazara and even his Tajik support.

Abdullah is likely maintaining most of his share of the Tajik vote and that of other minorities but this poll suggests that he may be losing the limited Pashtun support that he enjoyed in the first ballot.

Given that Abdullah's support has dropped by only 3% but Ghani has surged from 31.5% to 49%, this poll suggests that he has picked up most of this support from the eliminated candidates. This is consistent with a poll undertaken by ASCOR in March 2014, which suggested that Ghani was favored 57-34% over Abdullah in a second round by those who intended to vote for a different candidate in the first round.

In a transparent and fair election, then, unless Abdullah can secure a late surge in Pashtun and Uzbek support, which seems unlikely, this poll suggests that he cannot reach 50.1% of the vote needed to win. With 9% of likely voters interviewed still undecided, this poll could still go either way but this poll strongly suggests that Ashraf Ghani is now the front-runner.

With what will very probably be a very close election, the impact of fraud could be decisive, and it is therefore vital that this election is more closely monitored than ever. Another tainted and contested election would be disastrous for Afghanistan

Further Information

A copy of our PowerPoint presentation for this survey can be obtained either by email directly from Glevum or by accessing the website of the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI.org). It will be available after 10 am EST June 11th 2014.

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