

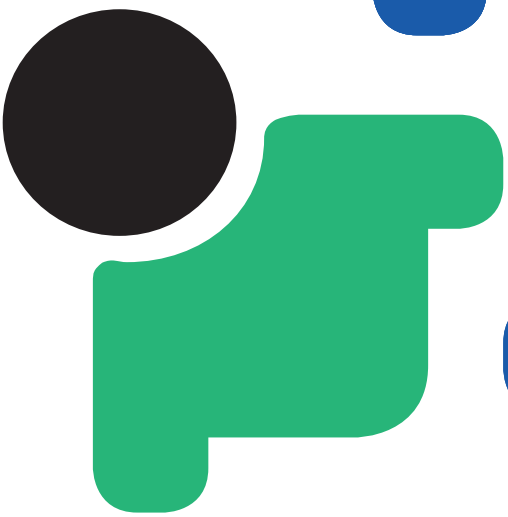


**ORGANIZATION FOR SOCIAL  
RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS**  
DATA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

# OPINION POLL FOR THE AFGHAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2019

July 13, 2019

Kabul, Afghanistan



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## WHO WE ARE

The Organization for Social Research and Analysis (OSRA) is a nonpartisan and independent non-governmental organization based in Kabul. At OSRA, we Conduct Socio-Economic Research, Public Opinion Polls, Sentiment Analysis, Big Data Analytics, content analysis and a variety of data-driven research.

Our mission is to facilitate fact based transparency to support sustainable development, good governance and to promote democracy by producing high-quality evidence-based social science research. We study Afghan public attitude, demographic trends, policy impact, communication and public relations with the help of the latest technology as well

as standardized and customized methodology to enable intelligent decision-making processes. In order to convey the right message from complex and large data, we focus on presenting the general public and our clients with easy to read and comprehensible virtualization and visualization platforms.

OSRA relies on its pool of national and international experts to carry out the following activities: conducting independent, high-quality research and analysis; advising governments, international organisations and the NGO sector; and informing and encouraging public debate.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to investigate the public attitude towards the upcoming Afghan presidential election and the preferences towards the presidential candidates, OSRA conducted a survey between 30 March 2019 - 25 May 2019 that was representative of the Afghan population.

The poll adopted the probability-based sampling approach, a standard technique which is the cornerstone of modern survey research. An intelligent algorithm generated random valid mobile phone numbers and a team of professional interviewers conducted phone interviews to capture the views of the sample population. The survey process was supported by a specifically designed survey management system. The representative

sample size of 2405 is calculated based on a margin of +/-2 percentage point sampling error and a confidence level of 95 percent. The sample was collected from 31 of the 34 provinces in Afghanistan. The random sampling ensured that people from various geographical and ethnic backgrounds were included in the sample. However, the sample shows a gender imbalance since more men than women were sampled.<sup>1</sup>

The participation rate is 81.1% which demonstrates people's willingness to take part in the survey and express their attitudes and preferences towards the upcoming presidential election. In the sum people have indicated the following preference towards the presidential candidates:

|   | Candidate           | Percentage of Respondents' Votes |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Ashraf Ghani        | 35.1                             |
| 2 | Abdullah Abdullah   | 5.8                              |
| 3 | Hanif Atmar         | 3.3                              |
| 4 | Gulbuddin Hikmatyar | 2.5                              |
| 5 | Latif Pedram        | 1.2                              |
| 6 | Others              | 3.0                              |
| 7 | Not specified       | 5.8                              |
| 8 | Not yet decided     | 43.3                             |

Statistically the results show almost no association between ethnicity and candidate preference therefore the results cast doubt on the widespread assumption that Afghan voters vote mainly according to their ethnic affiliation and primordial loyalties.

The results of this survey serve as a snapshot only and reflect the participants' preferences towards presidential candidates and

should not be interpreted as a prediction of an election outcome. Factors such as the security situation, media portrayal, lack of transparency, coalitions and endorsements may quickly change people's decision at the ballot box.

<sup>1</sup>The reason for this skewness may be twofold: firstly, if a household can afford only one mobile phone, it is more likely that the male head of the household will have primary access to that mobile phone and therefore be more likely to be sampled. Secondly, women are less likely to answer the phone if the caller is unknown. Hence, they are less likely to be sampled.

# 01

## INTRODUCTION



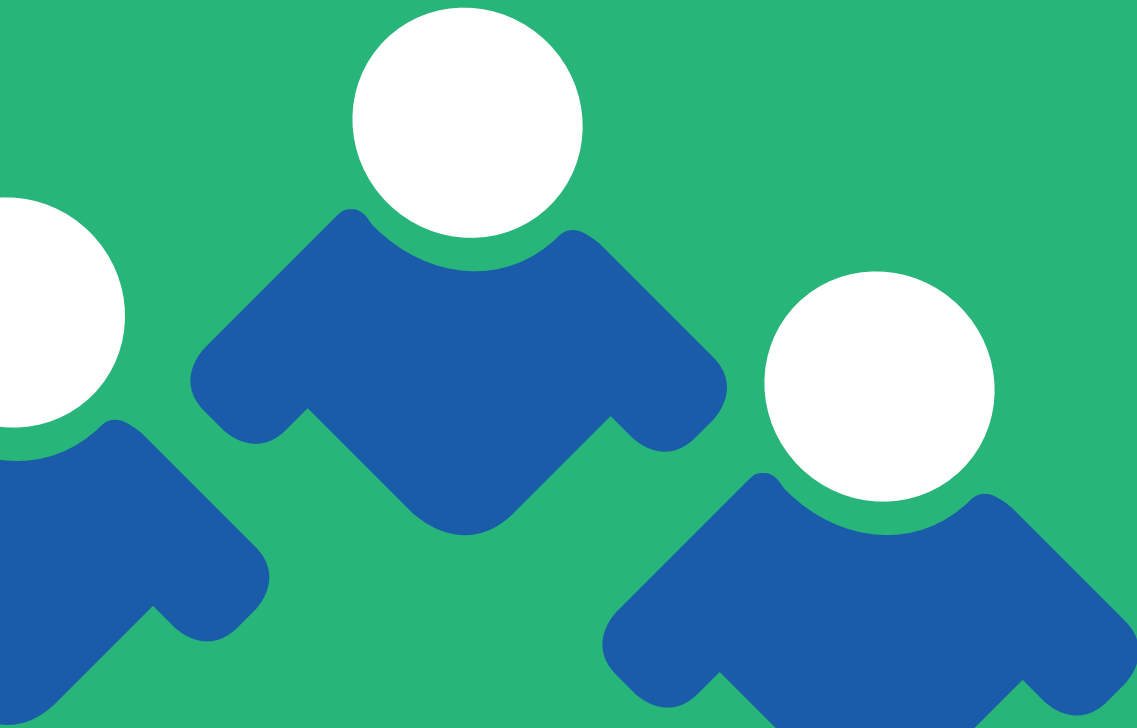
# INTRODUCTION

To understand the public's attitude towards the upcoming Afghan presidential election and the preferences towards the presidential candidates, OSRA conducted a survey representative of the Afghan population. The study was conducted between 30 March 2019 and 25 May 2019. The objective of the poll was to map the criteria according to which the Afghan electorate would cast their votes and how ethnic and regional factors, educational status and income shape people's political preferences.

The purpose of this poll, and the polls to follow, is to increase transparency by creating predictability mechanisms based on scientific research. Allegations of vote rigging and ballot box tampering were widespread in previous Afghan elections and contributed to a distrust of and disillusionment with politics and politicians by voters. OSRA conducted this poll to increase accountability from the perspective of politicians to provide the Afghan voter with a quick and timely overview, and to build an increasingly accurate picture of the political atmosphere in Afghanistan.

# 02

## METHODOLOGY





# METHODOLOGY

## DATA COLLECTION

In 2019, OSRA surveyed 2,405 adult respondents from 31 of the 34 provinces in Afghanistan. The survey interviewed a random, representative sample of men and women aged 18 and over by phone. Random phone numbers were generated using an intelligent algorithm. The data gathering was conducted by trained operatives who contacted participants to capture their views. After gaining the consent of the participants, the interviews were recorded and digitally stored in our survey management system. The response rate was 20 percent, thus 12,025 phone numbers were dialed to collect data from 2405 people. The interview questions are provided in Annex I.

## DATA QUALITY

The poll adopted the probability-based sampling approach, a standard technique applied by almost all public pollsters which is the cornerstone of modern survey research. This method ensured that every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected. Probability-based sampling has been widely used by researchers in surveys where the population size is large and diverse.

## MARGIN OF ERROR

For this survey a random sample of 2405 respondents were surveyed in 31 provinces of Afghanistan. The maximum margin of error for this sample of  $n=2405$ , estimated proportion  $p=0.5$  and the 95 percent confidence interval is  $\pm 2$  percent.

03

DEMOGRAPHICS



# DEMOGRAPHICS

## GENDER DISTRIBUTION

Figure 1 below illustrates the male/female ratio of the collected sample. As can be seen, 78.1% of the participants were male and 21.9% were female.<sup>2</sup>

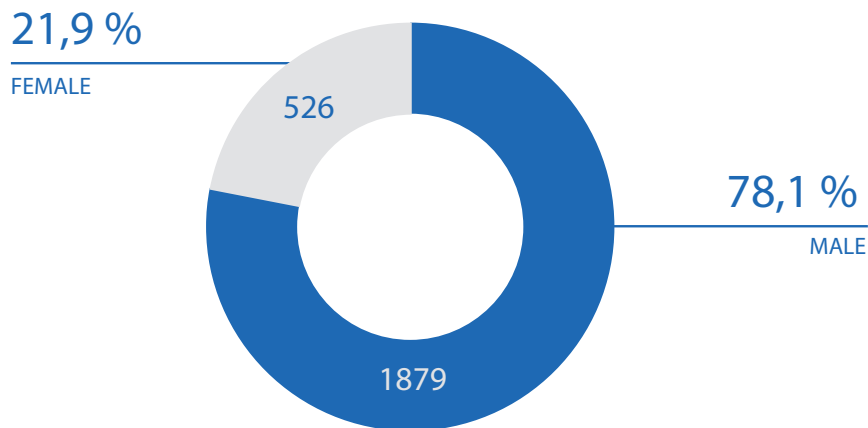


Fig 1: Male/Female ratio

## AGE DISTRIBUTION

Figure 2 illustrates the age distribution of the participants. Given the young age of the Afghan population, more than half of the survey participants are between 18 and 34 years of age.

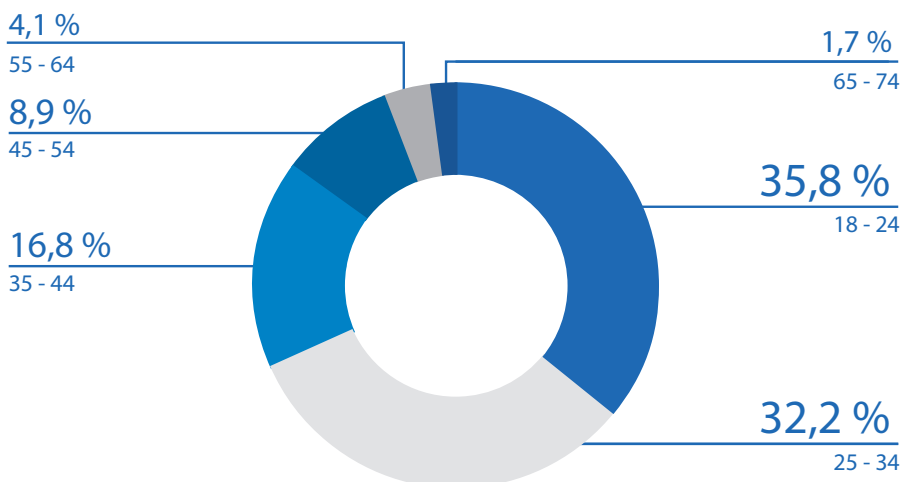


Fig 2: Age Distribution

<sup>2</sup>The reason for this skewness may be twofold: firstly, if a household can afford only one mobile phone, it is more likely that the male head of the household will have primary access to that mobile phone and therefore be more likely to be sampled. Secondly, women are less likely to answer the phone if the caller is unknown. Hence, they are less likely to be sampled.

## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

Despite the random selection of the participants, none of the research participants resided in the provinces of Nuristan, Uruzgan and Zabul. Hence, data from only 31 out of 34 provinces could be collected.

The population distribution of the country is largely reflected in the sample distribution:

The higher number of participants from Kabul, Balkh, Herat and Nangarhar provinces can be explained by the larger number of people living in those provinces. This made it more likely for people living in those highly populated areas to be sampled.

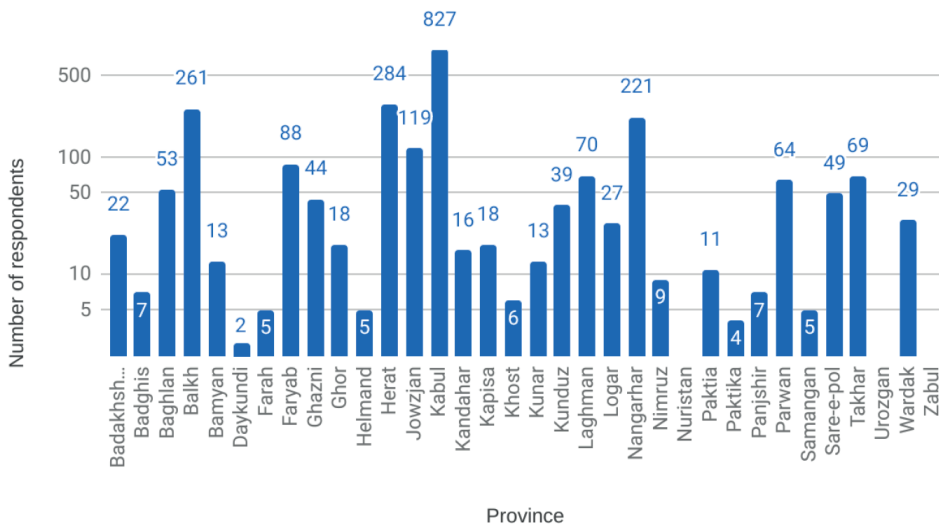


Fig 3: Geographical Distribution

## ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION

Figure 4 illustrates the ethnic composition of the sample. Together, the Tajik and Pashtun ethnic groups represent the largest group of the sample (75.3%) followed by the Uzbek and Hazara ethnic groups.

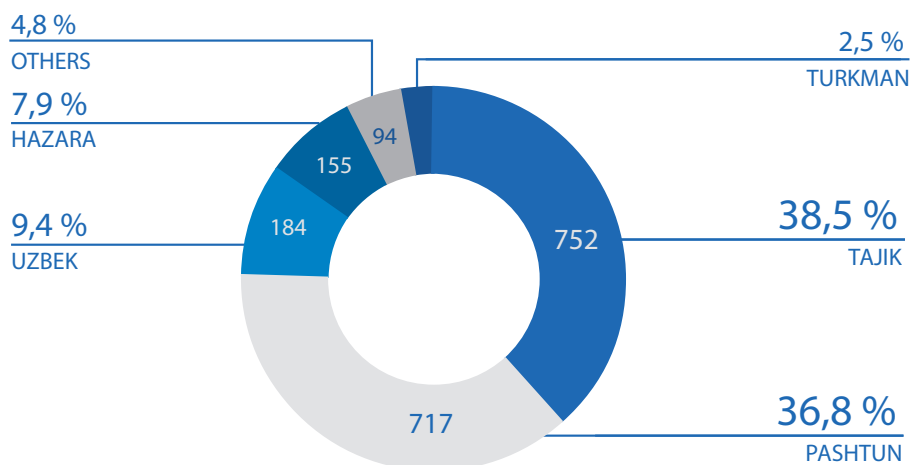


Fig 4: Ethnic Distribution

## ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Figure 5 below shows the monthly income of the survey participants in Afs in three different categories. The majority of the respondents (62.1%) belong to the lower income class earning up to 8.000 Afs/month. Participants with a monthly income of 8.000 - 30.000 Afs formed the second largest group (34.6%) while only 3% of participants earned more than 30.000Afs.

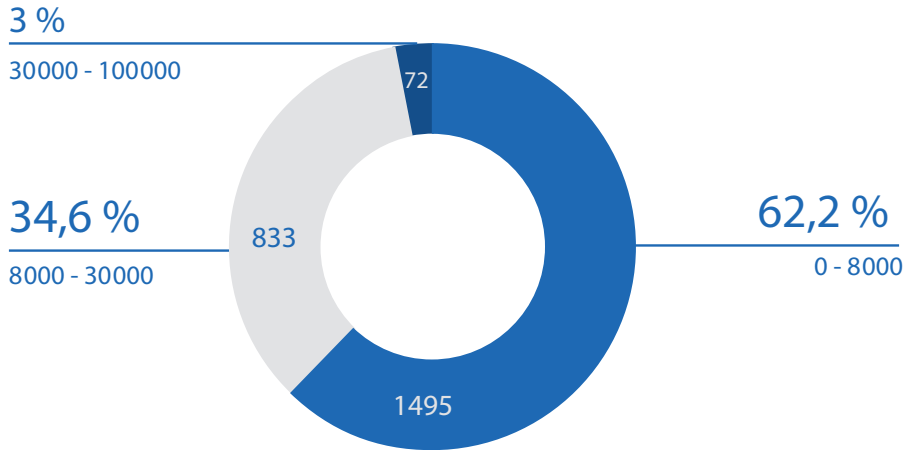


Fig 5: Monthly Income in Afs

## EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Figure 6 illustrates the educational background of the research participants. In total 45.6% of the participants indicated that they were illiterate or had received only a primary level education. On the other hand, the remaining 54.4% were either high school graduates, students or holders of an academic degree. This formed the educated and literate group of research participants.

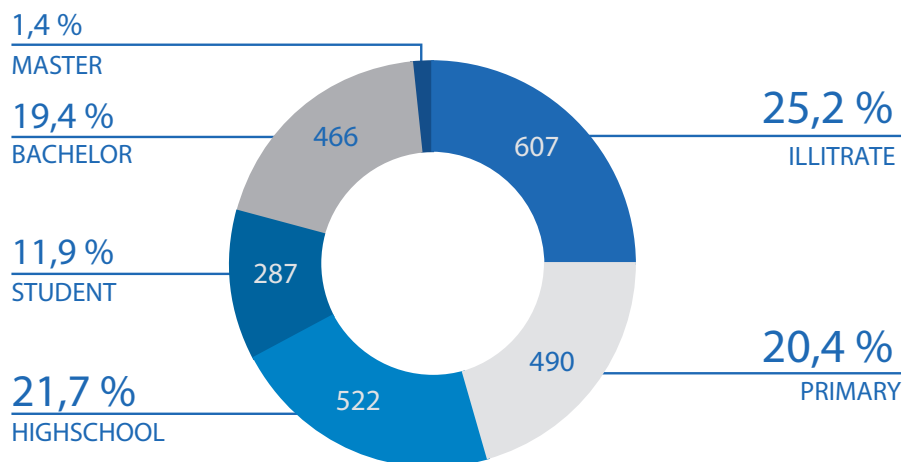


Fig 6: Educational Background

04

# KEY FINDINGS



## KEY FINDINGS

The chart illustrates a high degree of willingness by the participants to take part in the election with 81.1% of the respondents stating that they would participate in the upcoming election. While 13.6% negated the question, 5.3% had not decided yet.

**Research Question:**  
Will you participate in the  
upcoming presidential election  
on 28th September 2019?

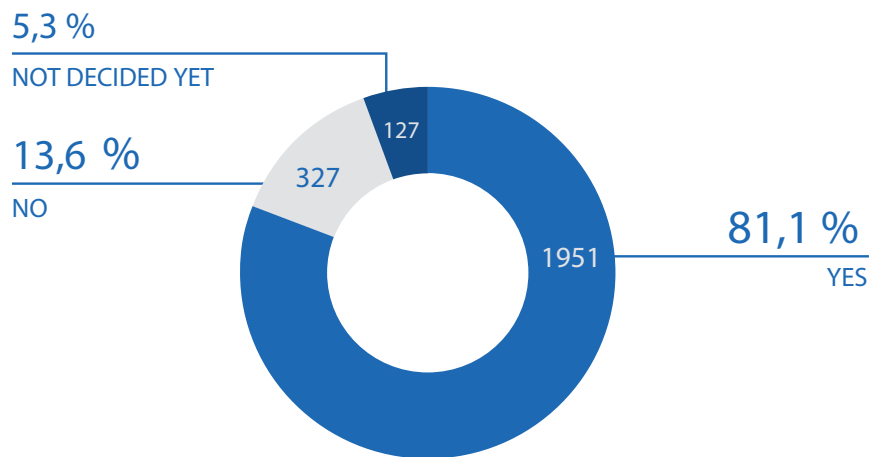


Fig 7: Participation

Figure 8 shows that the majority (53.2 %) of those who do not intend to participate in the 2019 presidential elections state a lack of trust in the election process as their main reason. The second most common responses were security related reasons (16.8%) and lack of documents (15.9%).

Research Question:  
What is the reason for not  
participating?

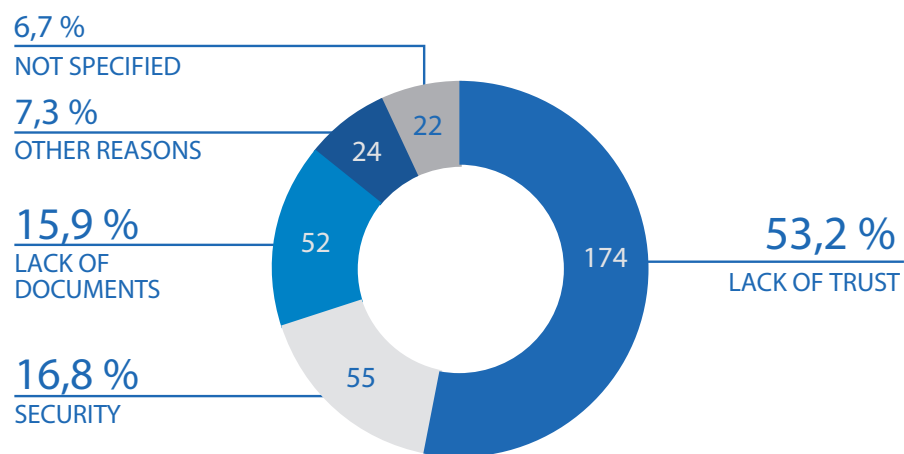


Fig 8: Reasons for not participating



The results of the survey show that Ashrif Ghani holds the leading position with 35.1% of the votes followed by Abdullah Abdullah with 5.8% and Hanif Atmar with 3.3%. The fourth and fifth positions are held by Guibuddin Hikmatyar with 2.5% and Latif Pedram with 1.2% respectively. 3% of participants would vote for other candidates and 5.8% did

not specify their preference. However, 43.3% of the participants who plan to participate in the election have yet to decide which candidate to vote for. This large number of people who have not decided yet, offer each presidential candidate an opportunity to win votes, as these potential voters can be mobilised.

**Research Question:**  
Which candidate will  
you vote for?

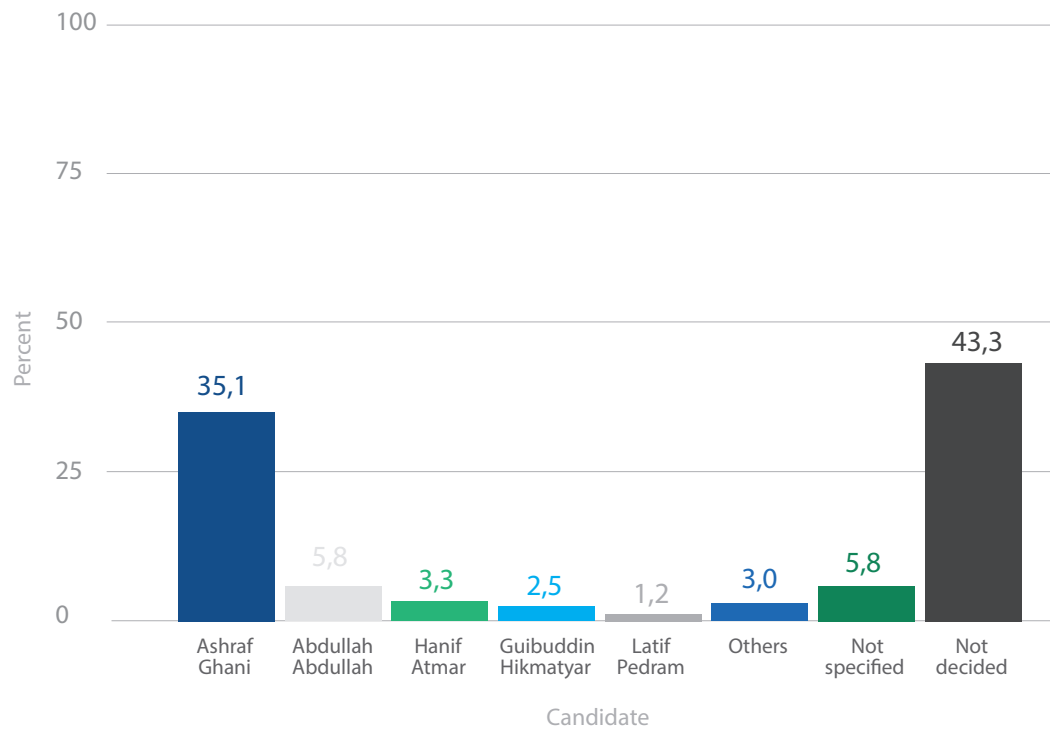
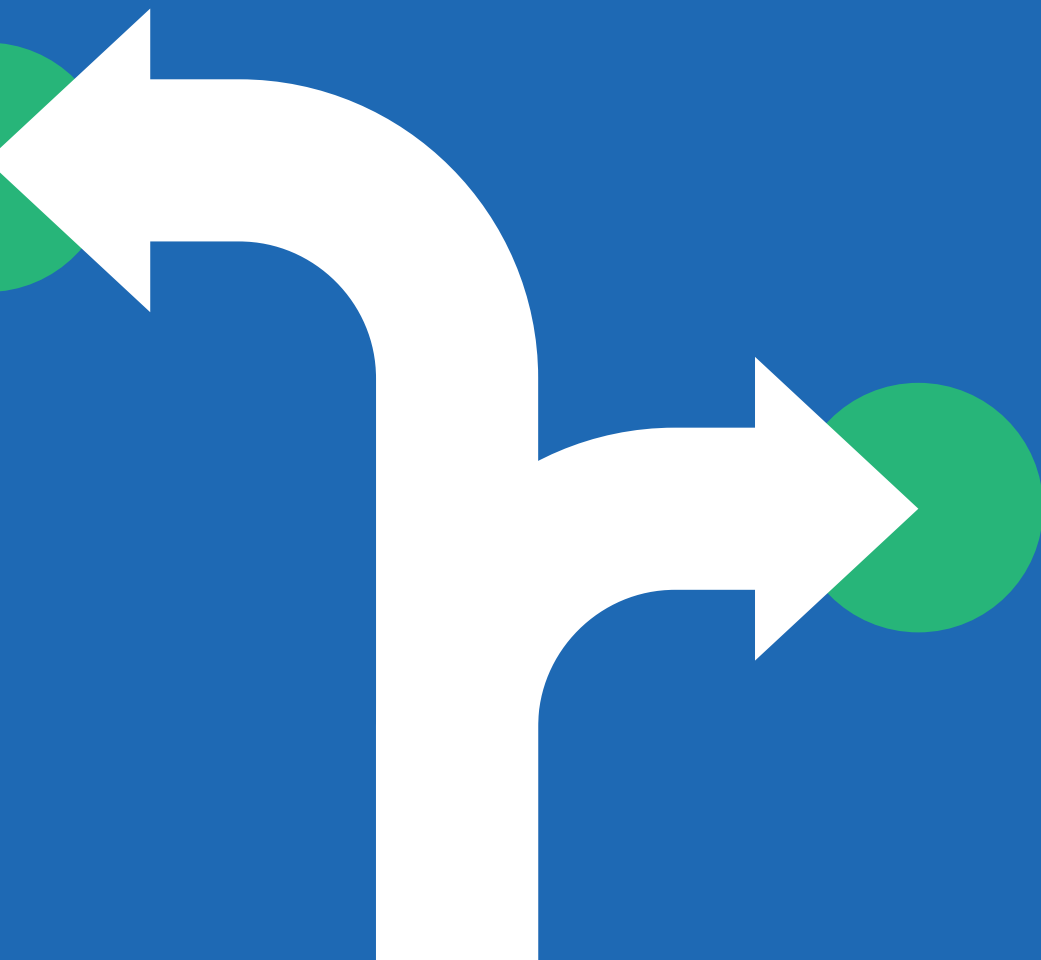


Fig 9: Voting results

# 05

THE 'UNDECIDED  
WHO TO VOTE FOR'  
FACTION ANALYSIS



# THE 'UNDECIDED WHO TO VOTE FOR' FACTION ANALYSIS

Of the 2405 people surveyed, 1086 were either undecided about their candidate choice, did not have a preference or did not specify their preference. This data has been analysed by ethnicity, education background, occupation, income group, age range and marital status. The aim is to identify any trends or associations in this data.

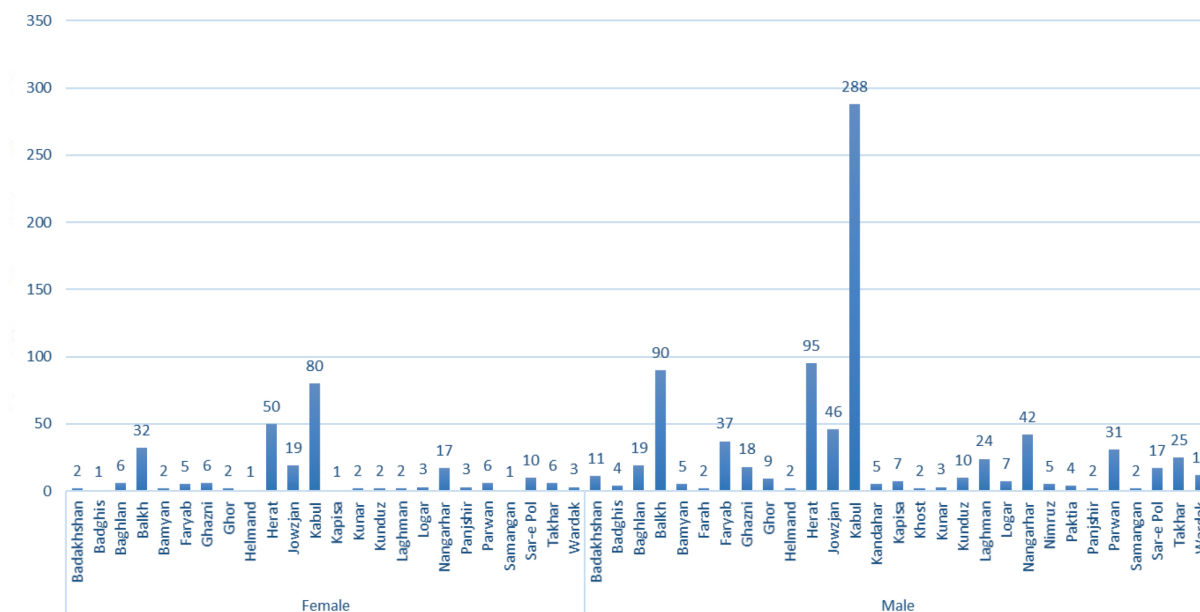


Fig. 10: Undecided population by gender and province



## ETHNIC OVERVIEW

Figure 11 is an illustration of the total percentage of the undecided population distinguished by ethnic belonging. The Hazara ethnic group constitute the largest percentage of undecided voters with 61.3% of the undecided voters being Hazara. The Pashtun ethnic group forms the smallest group. Here, 31.4% of the undecided voters are from Pashtun background.

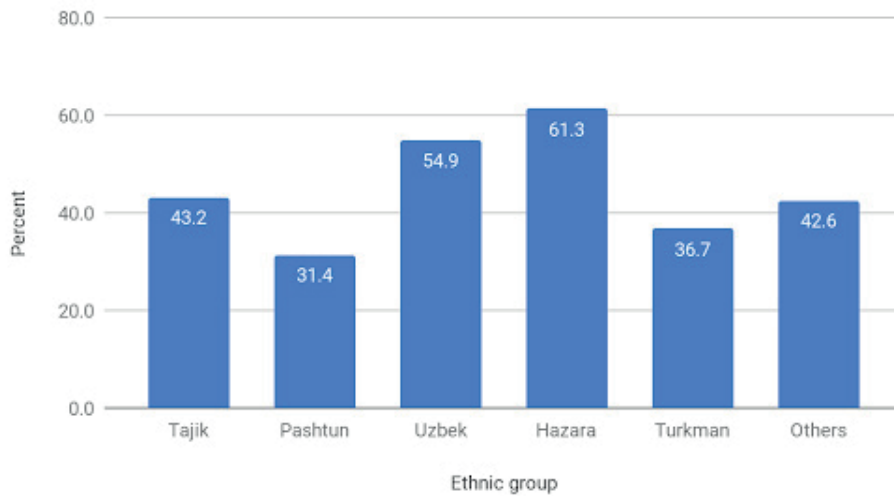


Fig. 11: Undecided ethnic overview

## REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Figure 12 illustrates that 43.2% of undecided voters are from major urban cities like Kabul, Jalalabad, Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif, whereas 56.8% are from other provinces of the country.

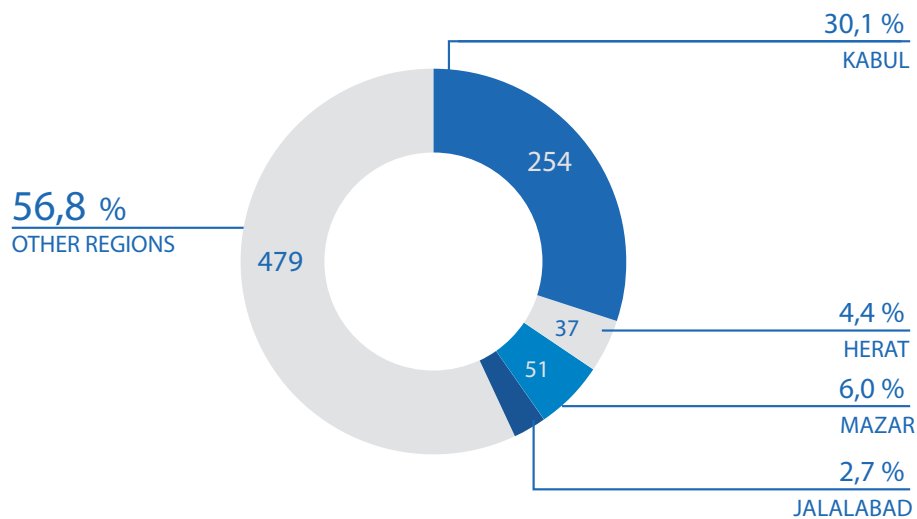


Fig 12: Undecided by Region

## EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Figure 13 illustrates the educational background of the undecided respondents. A statistical Chi-squared test reveals that there is no association between being undecided and the level of education of the participants.

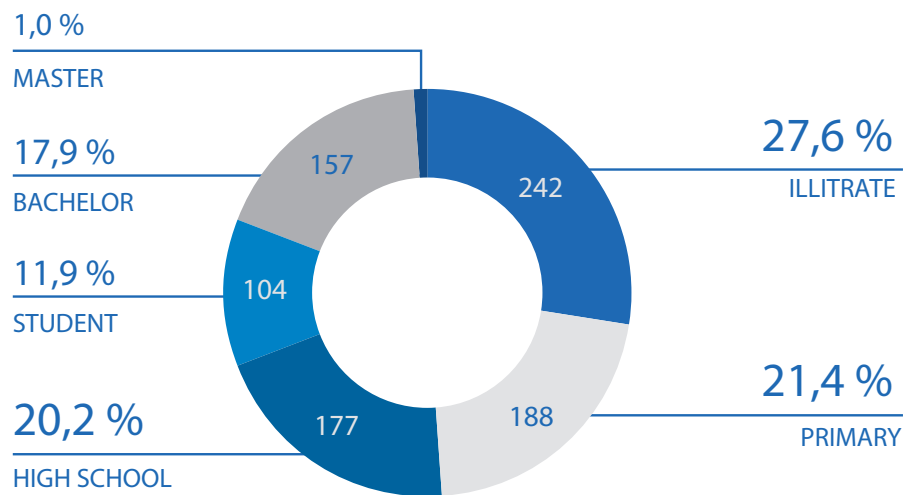


Fig 13: Undecided Educational Background

## GENDER AND NO CANDIDATE PREFERENCE

Of all research participants, 78.13% are male and 21.87% female. Looking at the statistics of those who are undecided who to vote for in the next election, proportionally more women are undecided than men. As can be seen in figure 14, of the total of 526 women in the survey, 206 were undecided regarding their preferred candidate. Figure 15 shows, that on the other hand, 638 men of total 1879 men had not decided who to vote for yet. Analysis of this data shows that there is 5.2% more women undecided which candidate to vote for than men, that coupled with the fact that more men were asked than women suggests

the need for more emphasis on female voters and that candidates need to steer their campaign to appeal to more women.

This gender difference leads to the preliminary hypothesis that more women are undecided regarding their candidate preference than men. If this proves to be the case, candidates should put a stronger emphasis on female voters. Election campaigns targeting women's interests could prove beneficial to mobilise this group of potential voters.

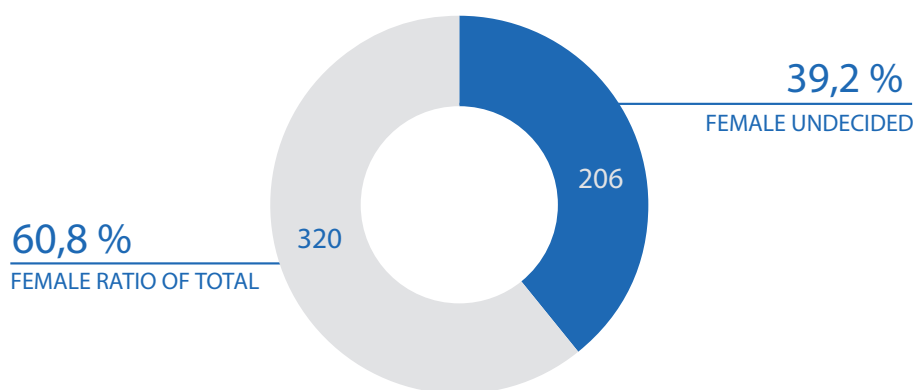


Fig 14: Total number of women vs. women undecided to participate

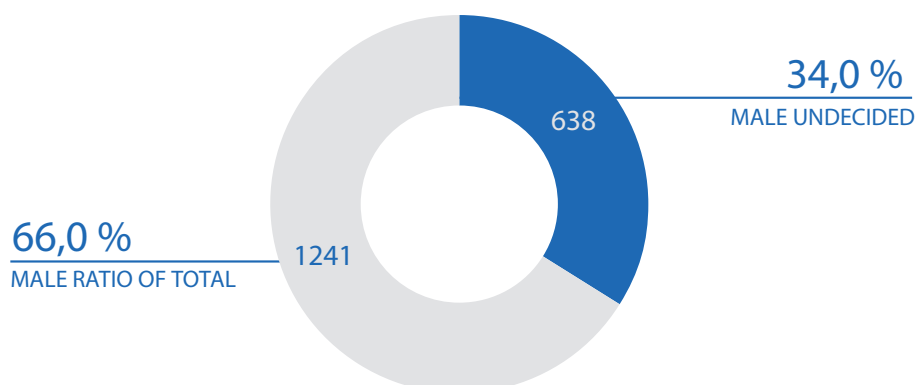


Fig 15: Total number of men vs. men undecided to participate

## AGE FACTOR

The table below shows the percentage of the total number of undecided participants in relation to their age group. This data shows a fairly even split of undecided participants across all age groups. The peaks are ages 75-

84 and the troughs are ages 18-24. However, it should be considered that these impressions might be misleading, as the number of research participants decreases with their age.

| Range       | Total undecided | % of total in group |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 18 - 24     | 313             | 44.71               |
| 25 - 34     | 321             | 50.79               |
| 35 - 44     | 169             | 51.52               |
| 45 - 54     | 95              | 53.67               |
| 55 - 64     | 40              | 53.33               |
| 65 - 74     | 16              | 51.61               |
| 75 - 84     | 4               | 66.67               |
| 85 and over | 1               | 50                  |

Table 1: Undecided candidacy based on age

## INCOME FACTOR

The table below shows the percentage of the total number of undecided participants in relation to their income range. The highest percentage of undecided participants (52.5%) are those of the lowest income suggesting they are the least informed or perhaps the

most affected by political disenchantment. The data also suggests that research participants belonging to the higher income groups are more likely to have a preferred candidate. This indicates social maturity and might be explained by the different sources of information they have access to.

| Range           | Total undecided | % of total in group |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 0 - 8000        | 620             | 52.5                |
| 8000 - 30000    | 17              | 30.36               |
| 30000 - 100000  | 0               | 0                   |
| 100000 - 200000 | 0               | 0                   |
| 200000 +        | 0               | 0                   |

Table 2: Undecided candidacy based on income



## OCCUPATION FACTOR

The table below shows the percentage of the total number of undecided participants in relation to their employment category. As can be seen, 45.29% of the government employees are undecided on their candidate choice. Further, 41.28% of those who ranked as 'employee' are undecided who to vote for. Participants who are unemployed or farmers

account for fairly the same percentage of undecided voters, namely 38.69% and 40.38% respectively. Participants with the occupation "Business" constituted the lowest percentage of undecided voters with 34.43%. It has to be analysed whether these differences are significant and permit the conclusion that government employees are more likely to be undecided who to vote for.

| Occupation    | Total undecided | % of total in group |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Business      | 94              | 34.43               |
| Employee      | 367             | 41.28               |
| Farmer        | 42              | 40.38               |
| Gov. Employee | 125             | 45.29               |
| Retired       | 1               | 10                  |
| Unemployed    | 330             | 38.69               |

Table 3: Undecided candidacy based on occupation

06

ETHNICITY  
ANALYSIS



# ETHNICITY ANALYSIS

The following figures (16-19) summarise how the Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara ethnicities plan to vote in the forthcoming presidential elections:

## PASHTUN VOTES

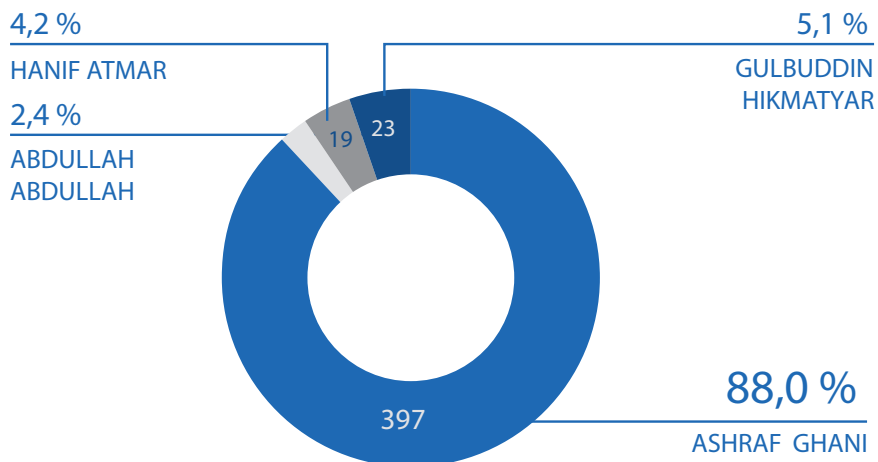


Fig. 16: Pashtun votes

## TAJIK VOTES

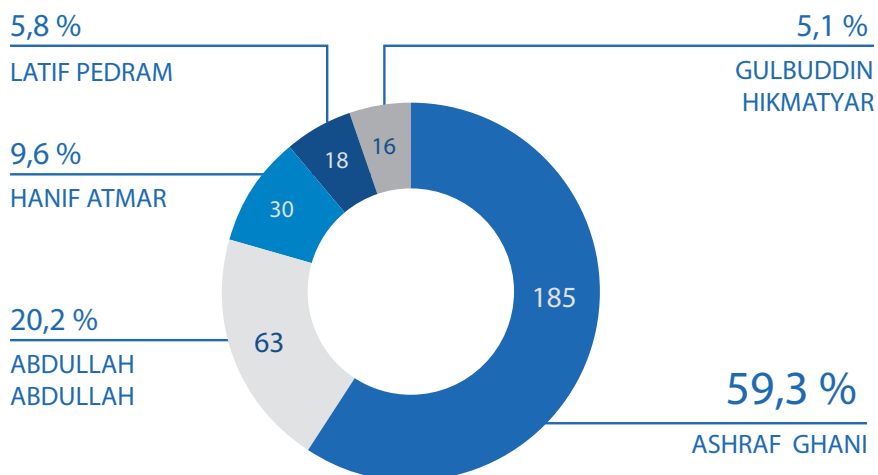


Fig. 17 : Tajik votes

## UZBEK VOTES

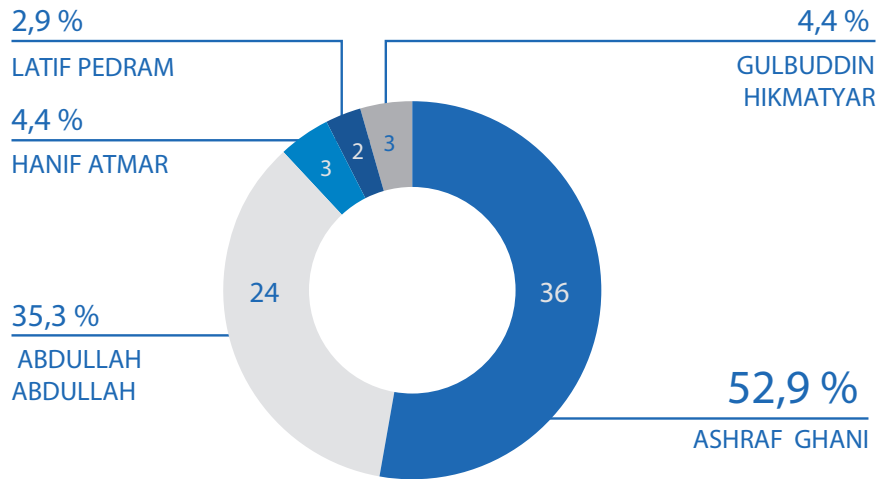


Fig. 18: Uzbek votes

## HAZARA VOTES

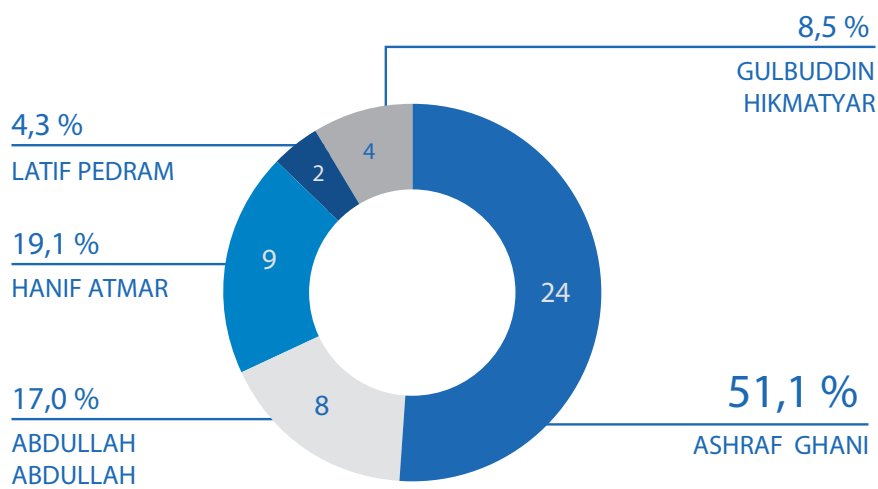


Fig. 19: Hazara votes

## ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ETHNICITY AND CANDIDATE PREFERENCE

A Chi-squared<sup>3</sup> test was conducted to explore the hypothesis as to whether ethnicity has an effect on candidate preference.

The table below details the ethnicity of the voters and their candidate preference with the two largest percentile (if applicable) of that particular ethnicity:

| Ethnicity | Preference      | Percentile |
|-----------|-----------------|------------|
| Aimaq     | Undecided       | 66.67%     |
| Arab      | M. Ashraf Ghani | 29.79%     |
| Arab      | Undecided       | 55.32%     |
| Baloch    | Undecided       | 80.00%     |
| Hazara    | M. Ashraf Ghani | 15.48%     |
| Hazara    | Undecided       | 61.29%     |
| Pashayi   | M. Ashraf Ghani | 50.00%     |
| Pashayi   | Undecided       | 50.00%     |
| Pashtun   | M. Ashraf Ghani | 55.09%     |
| Pashtun   | Undecided       | 31.38%     |
| Qizilbash | Undecided       | 75.00%     |
| Sadat     | M. Ashraf Ghani | 28.00%     |
| Sadat     | Undecided       | 52.00%     |
| Tajik     | M. Ashraf Ghani | 24.60%     |
| Tajik     | Undecided       | 46.81%     |
| Turkmen   | M. Ashraf Ghani | 34.69%     |
| Turkmen   | Undecided       | 36.73%     |
| Uzbek     | M. Ashraf Ghan  | 19.02%     |

Table 4: Preference based on ethnicity

This indicates that ethnicity does not necessarily factor into decision making in terms of pre-determination of votes. According to the data, the highest percentage of decided voters for every ethnicity is “undecided”, averaging at 55.46% (Table 4).

Looking at the presidential preferences across all ethnic groups, incumbent president Ashraf Ghani stands out as the clear

favorite. In total 35.1% (Figure 9) of all research participants indicated to vote for him. However, it should be kept in mind, that a large number of potential voters are undecided regarding their vote behaviour (43.3%). Hence, all candidates have a chance to win their support and their votes within the next few weeks leading to the elections.

<sup>3</sup> The Chi Square statistic is commonly used for testing relationships between categorical variables. The null hypothesis of the Chi-Square test is that no relationship exists on the categorical variables in the population.

07

CANDIDATES'  
VOTER BASE



# CANDIDATES' VOTER BASE

## ASHRAF GHANI

While the largest number of respondents (43.3%) had still not decided who to vote for, in total 35.1% said they would vote for the incumbent President. The majority of the ethnic Pashtun, 88% (Fig. 16), Tajik, 59.3% (Fig 17), Uzbek, 52.9% (Fig 18), and Hazara, 51.1% (Fig 19) respondents would vote for a second term Ghani in the upcoming election. These numbers indicate that Ashraf Ghani

not only attracts Pashtun voters, but also those belonging to other ethnic groups such as the majority of Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara. This casts doubt on the widespread assumption that the Afghan electorate vote mainly based on their ethnic affiliation and primordial loyalties.

The figure below illustrates the ethnic composition of Ashraf Ghani's voter base.

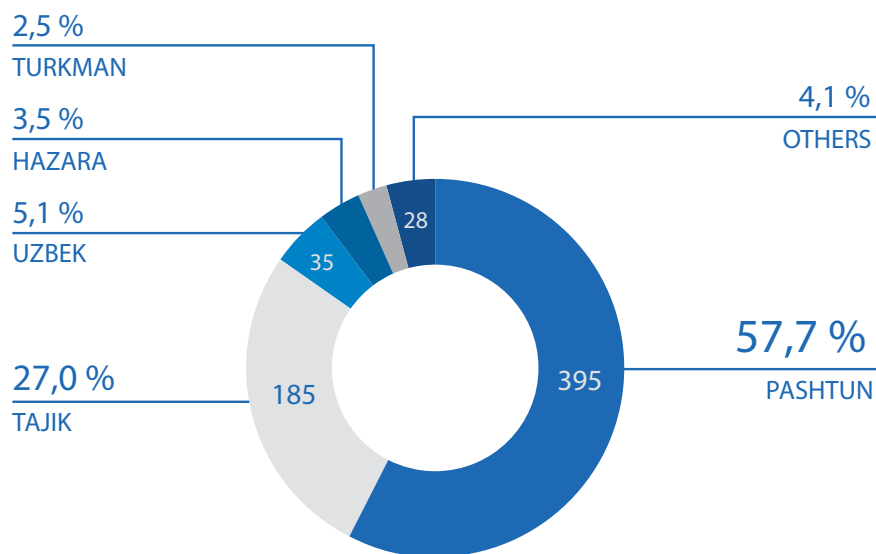


Fig. 20: Ashraf Ghani voters ethnicity

## ABDULLAH ABDULLAH

In the overall poll, 5.8% (Fig 9) of respondents said that they would vote for the CEO of the National Unity Government, Abdullah Abdullah, in the upcoming presidential election. Graphical summaries above show that 35.3% of Uzbek respondents (Fig. 18), 20.2% of Tajik

respondents (Fig. 17), 17% of Hazara respondents (Fig. 19) and 2.4% of Pashtun respondents (Fig. 16) would cast their vote for him.

The figure below illustrates the ethnic composition of Abdullah Abdullah's voter base.

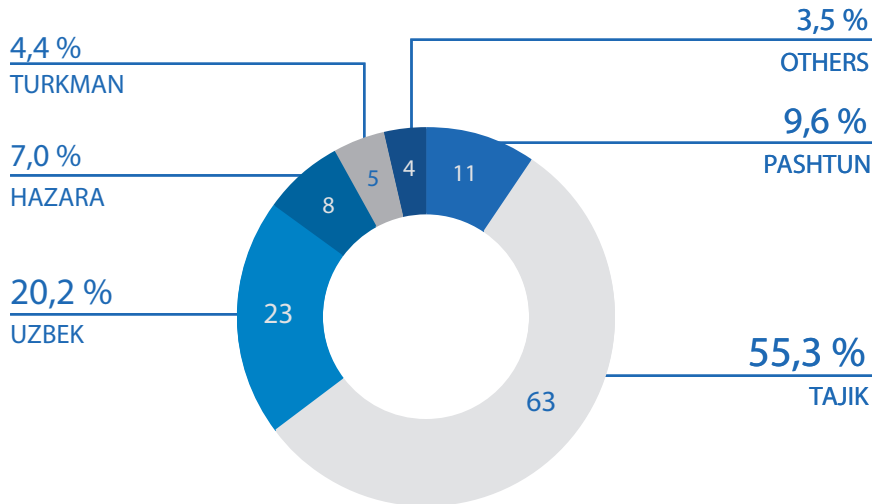


Fig 21: Abdullah Abdullah voters ethnicity

## HANIF ATMAR

In the overall poll, 3.3% of respondents said they would vote for former national security adviser, Hanif Atmar, in the upcoming presidential elections. Earlier graphical summaries show that 19.1% of Hazara respondents (Fig. 19), 9.6% of Tajik respondents (Fig. 17),

4.4% of Uzbek respondents (Fig 18) and 4.2% of Pashtun respondents (Fig. 16) would cast their vote for him.

The figure below illustrates the ethnic composition of Hanif Atmar's voter base.

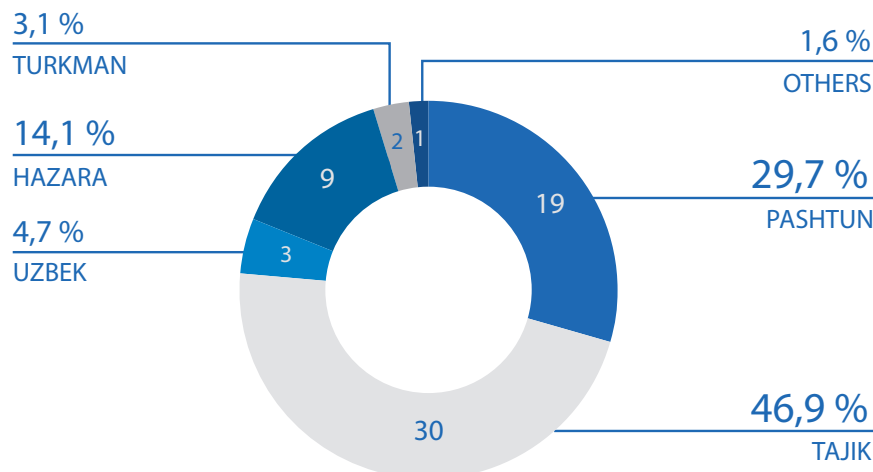


Fig 22: Hanif Atmar voters ethnicity



## DISCLAIMER:

The results serve as a snapshot only and reflect the participants' preferences towards presidential candidates and should not be interpreted as a prediction of an election outcome. Factors such as the lack of security, media portrayal, lack of transparency, coalitions and endorsements may quickly change people's decision at the ballot box.

## ANNEX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION 1:

What is your age?

\_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 2:

What is your marital status?

\_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 3:

Which ethnic group do you belong to?

\_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 4:

What is your mother tongue?

\_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 5:

In which province do you live?

\_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 6:

In which district do you live?

\_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 7:

In which village/area do you live?

\_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 8:

What is your level of education?

\_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 9:

What is your occupation?

\_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 10:

How much is your monthly income?

\_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 11:

Did you participate in the previous presidential election in 2014?

\_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 12:

Will you participate in the upcoming presidential election on 28. September 2019?

\_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 13:

If No: What is the reason?

\_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 14:

If yes: Which candidate will you vote for?

\_\_\_\_\_

## ANNEX II: FIGURES

|  |    |
|--|----|
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