



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Press Statement

Richard Boucher, Spokesman

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Elections in Afghanistan

Today history was made in Afghanistan. We congratulate the Afghan people on exercising their political right to choose their country's next leader. They have much to be proud of in bringing their country to this point, just three years after the end of a quarter century of war and repression.

In these elections, millions of Afghans voted to select their next president through secret ballot across their country, and in Iran and Pakistan. The country had its first-ever election for a head of state. Initial reports indicate that turnout was extraordinarily high. Voters, including a large number of women, waited patiently for hours to cast their votes. Voting hours were extended at some polling stations to accommodate the heavy turnout. Based on first reports, we are encouraged that polling day proceeded calmly and that no major security incidents occurred. The voting is now finished, and the results will be tabulated over the days to come.

We note that there were reports of technical problems at some polling stations. We are confident that the Joint Electoral Management Body, which is charged with overseeing the elections, will review and address those complaints, as it has pledged to do. In its statement today, the Body promised that all complaints would be thoroughly investigated.

This election is the latest milestone on the Afghan people's road to democratic government and vibrant civil society. In the spring, they will take another major step in charting their political future when they return to the polls to select members of parliament and local governments. The United States and the international community will continue to support them as they work toward this brighter future.

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