

Appendix 1:

Summary of Candidate Responses to the Questionnaire

Below is a brief question-by-question summary by Human Rights Watch of the answers on each topic by the candidates who responded to the questionnaire. The full responses from each campaign, in Dari and English, can be found in appendixes 3-6.

The candidates' responses have been listed in alphabetical order, by the candidate's last name.

A. Security Force Accountability

- 1. The Afghan Local Police (ALP) have been implicated in numerous abuses against civilians that have been traced to poor vetting of ALP members, limited governmental oversight, and the lack of a functioning disciplinary mechanism. As president, what changes, if any, would you make to reform the ALP program?*

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai, and Sultanzoy

Abdullah:

Abdullah writes that his “program envisions eradicating the need for the ALP by strengthening the Civil Order Police.” He describes human rights as the “foundation” of a “reward and punishment system” designed to eradicate ALP abuses such as “mistreatment of civilians.” Abdullah also cites the need to address “accountability” in the ALP and to improve its “culture of respect for human rights standards” through mechanisms including “professional and legal training.”

Helal:

Helal acknowledges that the ALP “has been involved in the mistreatment of civilians,” which he blames on a lack of professional training and a recruitment process that permits “irresponsible and notorious individuals” to join the ALP. Helal provides a lengthy list of perceived ALP failings including that they “use their authority for the purpose of pre-existing local rivalries or enmities,” “engage in theft,” and “believe in violence.” Helal’s prescription for ALP reform hinges on improving the recruitment procedures, including the use of background vetting of prospective recruits as well as better training and improving ALP salaries “so they are not in need of bribes and theft” to supplement their incomes. He also calls for an improved ALP, saying, “[ALP commanders] don't have a registry, [or] records of their [personnel's] particulars, promotions or retirement.” Helal stresses the need for greater ALP accountability by asserting that ALP personnel “involved in crimes, thievery and violations must be punished to imprisonment and released [from duty] so they become a lesson for others.”

Karzai:

Karzai provides a two-point response, which he introduces by asserting that the ALP should operate on the basis of relations with the people that are “very friendly and within the framework of the law.” Karzai’s prescription for remedying ALP abuses hinges on recruitment of individuals who “have no ethnic issues with the local people” and a one-month training program for the ALP on “human rights standards and laws of Afghanistan.”

Sultanzoy:

Sultanzoy responded to the questionnaire with an essay-form answer that does not correspond to specific questions. He attributes ALP abuses to a “culture of violence” in Afghanistan resulting from “decades of war...[and] political violence.” He also references Afghanistan’s rampant impunity symbolized by “very violent” politicians implicated in “many war crimes.”

Sultanzoy calls for “meaningful and lasting educational programs” for Afghanistan’s security forces. He states that “accountability of our security forces to uphold the law should be encompassing and respect of human rights will be an integral part of that accountability. This will be in practice and not in rhetoric.”

2. Afghanistan has no functioning system to provide prompt, fair and consistent compensation to civilians harmed by Afghan security forces. As president, would you create such a system?

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai

Abdullah:

Abdullah endorses the idea of a system for compensating civilian victims, writing, “In case an Afghan citizen bears losses or damages from security forces or, more generally the Afghan government, we consider it our duty to elevate the level of accountability and pay appropriate compensation at the earliest opportunity, and make comprehensive efforts to institutionalize this process.” He also expresses his commitment to respect “human rights standards and ethics” by “protecting the life, property and honor of citizens.”

Helal:

Helal writes that, “The type, amount and cause of the loss should be determined by a panel. After the determination of the type, amount and cause of loss, the leaders of affairs [responsible officials] must first apologize and pay the amount of losses justly.” He writes that orphaned children should be “provided free educational opportunities” and “the injured must be shifted immediately to hospital and treated for free,” including being fitted with prosthetics when necessary.

Karzai:

Karzai answers “Yes” and writes: “Efforts will be made to find solutions for their prevention and a comprehensive investigation about such incidents will be conducted.”

Sultanzoy:

Sultanzoy did not provide further details on this issue beyond his views on security force accountability that are summarized above in response to question 1.

3. As president, what steps would you take to end abuses by illegal militias (arbakis), some of which are aligned with and supported by the government?

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai, Sultanzoy

Abdullah:

Abdullah expresses concern about government use of arbakis, saying, “We have not supported the creation of ‘arbaki’ forces from the beginning and believe that low level of training, their unwillingness to accept discipline and the possibility of their misuse will not only not strengthen security, but also intrude on security.” He commits to efforts toward “eradication of illegal forces” by requiring forces working in cooperation with Afghan government security forces to submit to government command. He also commits to take “serious legal action” against “abuse and law-breaking behavior.”

Helal:

Helal describes his understanding of the history of the term “arbaki” and his perception of their current status, writing “there is no sacredness to the name ‘arbaki’ and instead of a good name, they now have a bad name” and stating that such groups “have been the cause of mistreatment and even killing of defenseless people.” He attributes this change to arbakis being “in the service of foreign troops.” He writes that as president, he hopes that arbakis, ALP, and militias can all be “eliminated,” with the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) and Afghanistan National Police (ANP) taking full charge of the country’s security. If the arbakis are still needed, Helal says he will try to ensure that “the former system and tradition is revived.”

Karzai:

Karzai’s full answer is: “We will make efforts that forces parallel to the army and police are reduced and all the responsibilities are delegated to the security forces and that the arbakis work within the framework of these forces.”

Sultanzoy:

Sultanzoy makes general statements about the impact of a “culture of violence” on the security forces and his plans to train them. Sultanzoy states: “Rule of law is the only way we can combat many ills in our society. Justice can only prevail when the rule of law without discrimination and or favoritism is applied at all times in the entire country.”

B. Women’s Rights

- 4. As president, would you support and work to provide the necessary resources for the establishment of shelters for women fleeing domestic violence and specialized violence against women prosecution units within the Attorney General’s Office in each of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces?*

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai, Sultanzoy

Abdullah:

Abdullah says he will “take multi-dimensional” steps to deal with violence against women. These include steps to “increase the range of safety for them,” and to “invest in creating a culture for the encouragement and popularization of respect for their human rights.” He also will “mobilize legal and rights support for them more than before” and “create legal and structural context and frameworks at various administrative levels to deal with violence against women.” Finally, he will “deal with perpetrators of violence against women within the framework of Afghan law with such seriousness that they become an example for

others, so that every perpetrator of violence against women will think multiple times before resorting to violence towards women.”

Helal:

Helal endorses shelters on the basis that “When it is proven that domestic violence is the cause that women have fled their homes, a place of shelter must be provided so that, unlike the homeless, they don't roam the streets and bazaars or don't beg or get addicted to narcotics or prostitution.” Helal writes that he believes “the place for a divorcee [woman] is the house of the father and the brother.” He lays out the conditions under which women should be taken to a shelter: “[if] a husband-less woman or a woman for whom the house of the brother and father is not available and she has become homeless from violence and fled, I will offer them a shelter in order to protect their honor and dignity, and for the continuation of their life.” He advocates that shelters be women-only environments and that if divorced women are young, it is best that they remarry. He calls for the creation of “separate administrations” so that women’s problems “can be addressed.” He argues that assistance for women should not encourage women to complain over “any small pretence” in such a manner that “domestic control becomes affected.”

Karzai:

Karzai says he will undertake “a serious and decisive fight against the phenomenon of violence against women,” and “investigate the perpetrators of violence at the earliest opportunity.” He writes that he will establish “special courts for the immediate investigation of such cases.” He also says that “if necessary, shelters will be created in other areas.”

Sultanzoy:

Sultanzoy says he is committed to women’s rights, which he attributes to the example of his mother, whom he describes as a women’s rights pioneer. He describes his wife as a “steadfast activist and journalist who will be a courageous support to me,” and who can be an example for all women in Afghanistan.

5. *There are very small numbers of women in the Afghan National Police (ANP). Could you please describe what specific steps you, as president, would take to increase the number of women who join the ANP and the ANP's success at retaining these women in the police force?*

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai

Abdullah:

Abdullah describes the situation of women in the police as “not satisfactory.” He says that families may prevent their daughters from becoming policewoman because “They fear discriminatory and immoral treatment for their daughters and because of this they are less ready for their daughters to join the police.” He will “encourage and promote female participation” while at the same time “strengthen order and discipline in the police.” Specifically, he wants to “shape the environment of interaction between male and female police in a way that no male police can have the mentality of mistreatment or abuse of female police.” He also endorses “promotion of female police at high administrative levels within the structure of the police” as a means to “guarantee dependable conditions for female presence in the various levels of the police.”

Helal:

Helal endorses the need for women in the police force, writing that “half of our society is made up of women, and it is naturally necessary that this half of the population visit the courts and the police because of crimes, divorce, violence, etc.” He describes policewomen as being as necessary to society as female doctors: “Just like women can easily be operated on, treated and checked up by a female doctor, likewise, it is better for the women who visit police stations to be interrogated by female police because this will make investigation easy and eliminate questioning by a *non-mahram*.” (A *mahram* is a male family member who acts as a chaperone to a woman; a *non-mahram* is a man outside the immediate family circle.) Helal advocates that policewomen “stay in separate places” from male police.

Karzai:

Karzai calls “drafting and approval of regulations that can implement the principle of respect for women in the ranks of the army in a serious manner,” and the “creation of organs for oversight of the situation of women in the ranks of the army and police.”

6. As president, what steps would you take to improve enforcement of the provisions of the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which makes forced marriage and child marriage a crime?

Respondents: Karzai, Abdullah, Helal

Abdullah:

Abdullah states that “violence against women and underage marriage [are] a violation of the principles of human rights and the laws of Afghanistan.” He will “be serious in strengthening the human rights of women and strengthening the rule of law. Through planning and implementing laws, we will make efforts to guarantee greater immunity for the women of the country.”

Helal:

Helal explains that in his view, under Sharia, “forced marriage is impermissible.” “Underage marriage,” he says, “is also one of our society’s customs and traditions” and says that “upon reaching the age of maturity, [the couple’s vows] must be renewed and a Sharia-compliant marriage ceremony should take place.” He advocates abstention from underage marriage on the basis that such unions “darken the lives of the wife and husband, even those of the two [extended] families – a [phenomenon] whose examples abound in our society.” Helal states that he is a follower of “the orders and directives of the Islamic Sharia” and believes Western social practices result in “ruination of family life, hatred and distances [among kin].”

Karzai:

Karzai sets out a three-point plan including: “distribution of the *tazkira* [the national identity card which many Afghans currently do not possess] for all individuals, so age can be specified”; mandatory document certification of the age of prospective couples; and a “general directive from the Ministry of Endowments for all *ulema* [mullahs] so that no marriage ceremony can take place when one party is underage.”

7. *Following Afghanistan's first review by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in mid-2013, the committee expressed serious concerns about discriminatory treatment of women in regard to personal status and family law matters. The committee called on Afghanistan to:*

a) Repeal all discriminatory provisions of the Shia Personal Status Law and Civil Code;

b) Raise the age of marriage for girls to 18;

c) Adopt a Family Law providing equal rights for women and men in all matters related to marriage and family, including property, inheritance, divorce and child custody;

(d) Abolish polygamy.

As president, would you support and work for these changes?

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai, Abdullah

Abdullah:

Abdullah supports “preconditions for the articles of the Personal Status Law and the Civil Code” which he says should include the “upholding—in a wise way—of fundamental human rights, the laws of Afghanistan and contemporary interests.” He supports strengthening “the professionalism of legal and legislative organs” and says he will work to ensure that “We will not keep Afghanistan separate from the progress of the global family.”

Helal:

Helal writes that he does not understand the question’s reference to “discriminatory provisions of the Shia Personal Status Law and the Civil Code” and that he has “no information about such discrimination.” He says he does not believe in “any racial, religious, linguistic or regional discrimination.” He supports marriage after the age of 18 to allow young people to “finish their basic education.” He states that Sharia law allows for marriage of individuals under the age of 18 if they have already entered puberty, but says that “such marriage is not obligatory – it is related to the consent, inclination and propensity of the mutual parties and the consent of the parents.” He says that marriage before the onset of puberty is unwise because “such pre-pubescent marriages are synonymous with forced marriages.”

In regard to equal rights for women in matters related to marriage and family, Helal describes the rights he says women are granted under Sharia. He states that women’s property rights under Sharia exceed those of men, writing, “What plentiful rights women have in Islam that they don't in any other religion that we know of.” He adds that “But unfortunately, these rights are not practiced in our community, and my government must implement these rights and give women their rights.” He acknowledges that women face greater obstacles than men to obtain a divorce, but says that “there is divine wisdom hidden in this.” With regard to child custody, he says that “during the period of custody” a child must live with their mother. In regard to gender equality he says that to determine, “whether men and women enjoy equal rights or whether women have even greater rights under Islam, we must pay attention to divine orders, not to the customs and traditions and degenerate habits of our contemporary society.”

Helal states that polygamy is appropriate in some circumstances and permitted under Sharia. Overall, he supports restoring women's rights "so that women can observe an Islamic revolution in Afghan societies and enjoy their rights."

Karzai:

Karzai says that "The amendment of the Civil Code of Afghanistan is a dire need and efforts will be made so that, at a specific time, gradual reforms in the civil code can be implemented, keeping in view social sensitivities and Afghanistan's international commitments."

8. *In recent years, there have been many murders of high-profile women, including women who work for the government, such as Lieutenant Islam Bibi and Lieutenant Nigar in Helmand this year. As president, what would you do to protect female government employees from attacks?*

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai, Helal, Sultanzoy

Abdullah:

Abdullah seeks to "ask the judicial organs to seriously follow the cases of chain assassinations, especially those of female service members. In relation to the safety and security of female service members, we will take effective steps."

Helal:

Helal expresses "regret and sorrow" about the killings of high-profile female police officers and describes these officers as "assets of our female class, of which we had a limited number." He advocates "specific measures" to "provide ways for [protecting female government employees'] safety. Helal calls for "specific measures so that they can be immune to such attacks and appropriately conduct their assigned duties in [the areas of] security, education, health, etc." He describes the killing of women as "a shameful and cowardly act."

Karzai:

Karzai says that it is "the government's duty" to protect all government personnel. He commits to identify "individuals or appointees who might face threats and offer them necessary security precautions so that such cases can be avoided."

Sultanzoy:

Sultanzoy states that he will focus "on overall women's issues not only to protect their rights as human beings, but enhance those rights in areas which matter the most, i.e. empowerment of women in all fields such as government, civil society, private sector and rural development." He advocates "creating better conditions not only in cities but more importantly in rural areas of the country so women can become part of the economy and become indispensable wage earners at family level."

C. Transitional Justice and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission

9. Many serious human rights abuses have been committed in Afghanistan over the past 35 years, yet no major perpetrators have been prosecuted or convicted for any of these abuses. As president, would you take steps to prosecute those people who credible evidence indicates were involved in serious human rights abuses?

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai, Sultanzoy, Helal, Abdullah

Abdullah:

“Transitional justice is one of the most important discourses in our society. Entering this discourse requires professional and impartial institutions and necessitates a justice and judicial organ that is standard, independent and trustworthy. In addition to the fact that we feel a sense of duty in this regard, we will also actively conduct our duties in promoting the ethics of tolerance. In our view, it is necessary to create the appropriate cultural, moral and legal backdrop through which the discussion of transitional justice can be had. Without that, political misuse and the strengthening of a spirit of vengeance under this banner [of transitional justice] will not allow for the realization of the adjudication of truth.”

Helal:

“Punishment and accountability of human rights violators is important so that, within the framework of the law, such individuals should be prosecuted in case credible evidence exists so that they become a lesson for others. I will make such actions, in courts [and] within the framework of the laws of the country, mandatory against violators.”

Karzai:

“In case credible evidence is accessed by the government, all efforts will be made for their prosecution. But in addition to that, we want a transitional justice process such as the one in Rwanda and want the people of Afghanistan to make that decision; the government will support the people's decision.”

Sultanzoy:

“Transitional justice is part of the overall justice in the country and should be dealt with accordingly. The best way and most effective way of achieving justice in our country is to make sure we have accountability from the top down. The top down approach to rule of law will make sure no body is above the law.”

10. In 2012, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) completed an 800-page report mapping serious human rights abuses that were committed in Afghanistan between 1978 and 2001, but the report has not yet been released by the Afghan government. As president, would you release this report?

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai, Abdullah

Abdullah:

Abdullah calls for the appointment of a group of specialists and experts tasked to provide “accurate assessment of this report... so that all aspects of this report and the documents that it is based on can be assessed transparently, honestly and professionally.” He states that if necessary “further investigations will be conducted into the cases included in this report.” A final decision on publication requires “gaining confidence about the accuracy of this report.”

Helal:

Helal says that he has not yet read the report, but indicates he intends to do so: “After reading it and upon consultations with judicial officials, if its publication is [deemed] in the national security interests of the country, I will publish it.” Helal says the report requires “close study” to determine “whether to publish some paragraphs of it, publish it entirely or abstain from publishing it. In this issue, the country's supreme interests are important.”

Karzai:

Karzai says that his government will “conduct a general referendum” on the report’s possible publication. He believes that such consultation will help determine “The will of the Afghan people and their decision will be consulted and implemented.”

11. As president, what would you do to revive and implement the 2005 Action Plan for Peace, Reconciliation and Justice?

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai, Sultanzoy

Abdullah:

Abdullah states that the 2005 plan “is brought up at a time and context that, considering the changes, it should fall prey to positive changes and be adjusted to new needs.” He proposes that “specialists of these affairs” need to “offer concrete recommendations so that principled and useful executions can be made.”

Helal:

Helal writes: “Peace, reconciliation and justice are among my first priorities, and after studying the 2005 plan, I will do the necessary measures.”

Karzai:

Karzai wants to launch “a popular process to bring peace...because the people are the real victims of war and injustice.” That includes “a bottom-up, popular mechanism in order to follow the peace process more effectively and seriously.”

Sultanzoy:

Sultanzoy writes that, “Rule of law is the only way we can combat many ills in our society. Justice can only prevail when the rule of law without discrimination and or favoritism is applied at all times in the entire country.”

D. Torture and Cruel, Inhumane and Degrading Treatment

12. After a government committee found widespread torture in Afghan detention centers, President Karzai in February 2013 ordered that any government officials who engage in torture would be prosecuted, yet there have been virtually no prosecutions. As president, what steps would you take to ensure that members of the police, military and other government officials who commit torture are brought to justice?

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai, Sultanzoy

Abdullah:

Abdullah states that “We not only condemn torture and degrading treatment but also will not tolerate it in practice” and says he will “prosecute all torturers.” Abdullah writes that preventing torture in prisons and detention centers requires that “the administration of prisons be fundamentally reformed.” Such reform includes “professional teams of guards and researchers” who can “safeguard and guarantee the rights of prisoners in a better way.” He describes the “exceedingly bad” financial situation of prisoners, “the existence of crimes in prisons – such as rapes of young prisoners, rape of female prisoners, buying and selling of narcotics,” and serious overcrowding with prisoners in most prisons sleeping “10 to 20 in rooms [designed to] hold three or four.” He states that “All these problems can be eradicated with a comprehensive program that first requires a comprehensive evaluation of the conditions of prisons.”

Helal:

Helal writes that he “will follow up on any law that is passed.” He states that, “none of my orders or decrees will be mere writings.” He calls for the creation of a “responsible organ” to implement his orders and decrees and report back to him. He says that he has “decided to manage, not to stand in the way of, laws and principles with delays and recommendations.”

Karzai:

Karzai writes that “The Constitution of Afghanistan deems torture as against human dignity.” He recommends the creation of “an oversight administration within the Ministry of Justice for evaluation of the condition of prisons and prisoners.” This body will provide “ongoing and serious evaluation of prisons and dealing with violators of the law in a timely and lawful manner.”

Sultanzoy:

Sultanzoy states that, “we have comprehensive plans in all aspects of rule of law, good governance and all related matters that enable us to make sure all rights of citizens are not only safeguarded but they are enhanced.” He says his government will not only “safeguard all RIGHTS in this country” but also enhance the enjoyment of these rights “so we will enable our society to evolve, not just live at the edge of the rule of law.”

13. As president, would you ensure access to all Afghan detention facilities by the AIHRC, the United Nations, and humanitarian and human rights organizations to monitor conditions within these facilities?

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai

Abdullah:

Abdullah states that there is “no legal hindrance” to the AIHRC, the UN, and “other humanitarian organizations” accessing and monitoring prisons. He says he will “not only cooperate, but also provide the necessary facilities [to enable prison monitoring].” He says that he believes that the results of such monitoring by outside organizations can “help the government to address the issues of prisons and prisoners.”

Helal:

Helal says he will “allow the human rights organization [probably a reference to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission] and other humanitarian organizations to visit prisons and administrative [detention] centers from time to time because even if [the prisoners] are criminals, they are still humans and they must be visited.”

Karzai:

Karzai states: “Access to prisons will be provided to all human rights organizations within the legal regulations of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.”

14. As president, what would you do to end compelled “virginity examinations,” a form of cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment that is carried out on all women and girls accused of “moral crimes” for use in legal proceedings, despite being medically invalid?

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai

Abdullah:

Abdullah writes that anything “considered degrading under the law and human ethics does not have our approval.” He supports holding “civic culture and ethics dear” on behalf of the human dignity “of citizens, especially Afghan girls.” He states that in any investigation of suspected criminal activity, “the ethics of human rights should be considered fundamental and be promoted.”

Helal:

Helal writes: “The laws of the courts will be implemented until a legal amendment takes place.” He states that, “Even though the hymen can break from incidental accidents, falling down or diseases, under Islamic Sharia, the existence of witnesses is important, so that eyewitnesses can testify to this effect under oath, not false testimony.”

Karzai:

Karzai states: “These tests will be conducted only in cases that necessitate such tests and civil and criminal cases where, without such tests, an investigation cannot be conducted; in other cases where there is no link, [such tests] will be stopped.”

E. Children's Rights

15. Only about half of Afghan girls currently go to school, and many boys are also deprived of education. As president, what steps would you take to increase access to and quality of education for Afghan children, especially girls?

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai, Sultanzoy

Abdullah:

Abdullah writes that children's rights are "among the important priorities of our national program in relation to human rights," a program that includes "devoting resources toward education, health and welfare." He states that his campaign has plans to address "general security, attention toward the qualitative and quantitative aspects of education, attention toward the need for a balanced national development, optimizing welfare programs, and social protection."

Helal:

Helal states that "The situation of education from a quantitative perspective is commendable," but that "adverse circumstances" such as a "[lack of] security, places of study, textbooks, laboratories" render the current school system "inadequate." He says that he will "endeavor that boys and girls can have access to schools" and he will do so by seeking "the attention of the international community, the private sector and donors." He says that in addition to increasing the quantity of education available, there is also a need to increase the quality of education, in areas including teacher education, "standardization of the curriculum, etc."

Karzai:

Karzai describes "the commitment, adequate pay, and capacity building of teachers" as key factors in determining the quality of education. He writes that at the "beginning of the next government" he will take action to gradually increase teacher salaries "in a manner consistent with teachers' capabilities [so that the pay can] guarantee a dignified life." He says that his government will conduct semi-annual programs "to build teacher capacity" and that he will improve hiring conditions for teachers "through a better standard and transparent process."

Sultanzoy:

Sultanzoy states that "Children in war-torn poor societies are not only victims of war and poverty, they become tools of exploitation for economic gain and sexual deviancy. No one should tolerate these crimes against the most vulnerable innocent beings." He says he will carry out "programs to make sure education and recreation of the right kind become an attraction for children." His government will have urban and rural employment programs to "remove the burden of economic hardship" for children's families.

16. Child labor, including in mining and in the carpet industry, remains a very serious problem in Afghanistan. As president, what steps would you take to reduce child labor?

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai, Sultanzoy

Abdullah:

Abdullah states that “We oppose child labor, especially hard [physical] labor.” He wants to “invest in social welfare programs in conjunction with the empowerment of children” to both keep children away from “hard physical work” and allow them to contribute to “social and economic development of the country.”

Helal:

Helal states that children must have “access to nurseries, kindergartens and schools.” He says that “as much as possible” he will “try so that children are not obliged to work in factories and mines.” He says that access to education is essential “for an educated and healthy generation to grow.”

Karzai:

Karzai responds that he will work with “charitable organizations and consolidation of aid for the creation of vocational schools in important cities.” He advocates a national program of assistance to children that would be responsible for “collecting unaccompanied children from the streets.” Finally, he calls for a “plan for non-use of child labor...at different locations in the country.”

Sultanzoy:

Sultanzoy states that “Children in war-torn poor societies are not only victims of war and poverty they become tools of exploitation for economic gain and sexual deviancy. No one should tolerate these crimes against the most vulnerable innocent beings.”

F. Afghan Refugee Children

17. Several European countries have requested that the Afghan government agree to the return of unaccompanied Afghan children from Europe, even if the children’s families cannot be located. As president, what would your response be to this proposal?

Respondents: Abdullah, Helal, Karzai

Abdullah:

Abdullah states that he will consider protection of such children as “an important part of our foreign policy.” He supports efforts to ensure that such children “can enjoy tranquility, welfare and fundamental human rights.” Abdullah says his government will “use every specialized legal resource as well as our diplomatic potential” to assist such children.

Helal:

Helal states that he does “not agree with sending young unaccompanied children abroad.” He writes that unaccompanied children should remain in and be educated within Afghanistan and “foreign aid organizations should also implement such programs in the country.” He states that this approach will reduce costs and help ensure that the children’s “Afghan and patriotic essence can be preserved” and they will “not become estranged” from their homeland.

Karzai:

Karzai writes that he will obtain a list of unaccompanied refugee children from European countries and “will attempt first to identify families or their close relatives and then, upon their agreement and

evaluation of their living conditions, repatriate the children to Afghanistan.” In addition, he says his government will “speak with the respective countries to create a mechanism that allows them to live either in European countries or Afghanistan.”