

ABDULLAH DECLARES HIMSELF ELECTION WINNER, WON'T ACCEPT AUDIT RESULT

In a press conference completed only about an hour ago, Abdullah Abdullah has declared himself the winner of Afghanistan's presidential election and said that he will not accept the result of the audit that has been taking place since the June runoff election. Khaama Press appears to be the first to come out with a story on Abdullah's statements, although there were Twitter updates from several sources as he spoke:

Afghanistan's controversial presidential election was once again taken towards a deadlock after the Reform and Partnership tem led by Dr. Abdullah Abdullah announced their stance regarding the election process.

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Abdullah said the political process has now entered to a deadlock and claimed that his team was the winner and will be the winner of the presidential election, accusing the electoral bodies for being involved in industrial scale fraud.

Abdullah criticized the vote audit and invalidation process and said the process had problems since the beginning and his team's complaints and concerns were not considered by concerned parties involved in the process.

He claimed that his rival team had the support of government and the electoral bodies during the election and vote audit process.

Although Abdullah did speak out against

violence, there appears to be widespread concern that if the audit and power-sharing process have indeed broken down, fighting could break out along ethnic lines.

It appears that Obama was still pushing last night for Abdullah and Ghani to work out a deal, but that effort clearly failed.

By declaring himself the winner, Abdullah seems to be setting the stage for both candidates to declare themselves winners. From this morning's Washington Post:

Daoud Sultanzoy, a top aide to Ghani, said the Ghani campaign hopes that Abdullah will not announce he's abandoning the process. But if he does, Ghani appears prepared to assume power unilaterally.

When the US begins to squawk about both candidates abandoning Afghanistan's constitution to declare themselves winners, don't forget that it was the US who first brought up the extra-constitutional "power-sharing" government idea. There seems to be a very good chance that the situation will get worse very quickly at this point.