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**Press Release**

**FAFEN to Observe Local Government Elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

ISLAMABAD, May 22, 2015: Continuing with its mandate to strengthen the election process in Pakistan, Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) will observe the upcoming local government polls in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, scheduled to be held on May 30, 2015.

FAFEN plans to deploy a total of 1,026 trained and non-partisan observers in as many union councils of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to observe the election environment and processes. These processes include all aspects of Election Day, ranging from the opening of polling stations to counting of the ballot papers. FAFEN will also be observing the pre-election campaigns in all districts of the province.

To continue with its strong track record of election monitoring, FAFEN sent a request for accreditation of its election observers to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), which responded to FAFEN’s request in a timely manner and gave permission for carrying out the observation.

The purpose of citizen observation is to provide independent and objective information on the election process in order to develop evidence-based recommendations for improvements in electoral processes in the future. The observers will spend nearly 45 and 60 minutes in each polling station to collect information and document their findings on a standardized checklist based on the provisions of the Representation of People Act 1976, Conduct of Election Rules 1977 and the ECP’s Code of Conduct for Political Parties and Contesting Candidates.

FAFEN believes the observation of local government elections will contribute positively to the ongoing process of electoral reforms, which in turn will help strengthen the election administration and democracy in the country. FAFEN also acknowledges the ECP’s efforts towards strengthening electoral transparency in the country and appreciates its timely cooperation with FAFEN in this regard. The ECP’s cooperation will strengthen the citizen groups’ oversight of the elections process.