

## Helpdesk Research Report

# Cost of elections in fragile states

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## Question

*Please provide a comparison of how much national elections (Presidential and Parliamentary) have cost per capita in fragile states since 2000.*

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## 1. Overview

This report provides a comparison of how much national elections (Presidential and Parliamentary) have cost, financially, in various fragile states since 2000. Where possible these costs have been broken down against the various elements required to run successful elections such as training, civic education, security, election commission staffing, production of ballot papers etc.

There is **limited literature available** on this topic. One expert commentator stated that the costs of elections for fragile states are very difficult to come by, especially in relation to the breakdown of costs. A lot of the information that is available only provides the cost of certain elements of the election, mainly in relation to voter registration. In addition, there appear to be inconsistencies in the costings provided by the available sources. There was no information available on the amounts spent by candidates and political parties. Some countries have formal spending limits but these are often not even close to what is actually spent through hand-outs etc., especially in fragile states (expert comment).

The **most comprehensive source currently available** is **“CORE: A Global Survey on the Cost of Registration and Elections”**, produced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). It is a guide to election processes relating to registration and cost of elections around the world, including examples from conflict-affected and fragile states (Guatemala, Iraq, Haiti and Afghanistan). It explains the types of costs, what needs to be in place before an election, and provides a comparison of how much this has cost or was projected to cost. UNDP and IFES are **planning an update** to the CORE Report in a form of searchable database related to cost of

elections, but are only in the beginning of the process (expert comment). Further information was drawn from presentations given at the joint EC-UNDP Partnership on Electoral Assistance workshops. Some of these sources also include a breakdown of how the elections were financed.

The report includes case studies of Afghanistan, Cambodia, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Libya and Sierra Leone.

**Key issues** to consider in relation to the cost of elections in fragile states include:

- Elections tend to **cost more in fragile states due to integrity costs** (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006). Integrity costs relate to **creating the conditions for a safe, free and fair election**, through both voter and ballot security (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, pp. 15-18).
- Integrity costs will decrease as countries become more democratic (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 23)
- In a country which has not experienced a democratic election in decades, such as Afghanistan, costs are driven up by **the need to create an election infrastructure** and to **educate and inform the electorate** (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 31).

## 2. Case studies

### Afghanistan

<b><i>2004 Presidential and 2005 Parliamentary elections</i></b>	
<b>Total costs</b>	
<i>Total cost per voter:</i> Not including security carried out by ISAF and US soldiers and civic education and logistics assistance provided by international NGOs.	23 USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 31).
<b>Individual costs</b>	
<i>Registration of voters:</i>	120 million USD (Amarkhil, 2013, p. 9).
<i>Voting in Pakistan and Iran:</i>	nearly 30 million USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 31).
<b><i>2009 Presidential and 2010 Parliamentary elections</i></b>	
<b>Individual costs</b>	
<i>Registration of voters:</i>	86 million USD (Amarkhil, 2013, p. 11).
<b><i>Electoral Management Body 2003-2015</i></b>	
<b>Total costs</b>	
<i>6 election cycles and 4 voter registration exercises:</i>	around 1 billion USD (Amarkhil, 2013, p. 4).

## Cambodia

<b>2003 Parliamentary elections</b>	
<b>Total costs</b>	
<i>Total cost:</i>	11.16 million USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 138).
<i>Cost per voter:</i>	1.7 USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 32).
<b>Individual costs<sup>1</sup></b>	
<i>National Election Committee (NEC) budget:</i>	808,750 USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 141).
<i>Voter registration:</i>	12 billion riels (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 141).
<i>EU Election Observation mission:</i>	1.5 million USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 33).
<i>Asia Foundation election observation:</i>	240,000 USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 33).
<i>Salary of Polling Station Officials:</i>	1,154,340 USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 148).
<i>Salary of NEC members and officials:</i>	927,016 USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 148).
<i>Printing ballots:</i>	701,000 USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 148).
<i>Training for polling station officials:</i>	24,000 USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 142).
<i>Training material (for all election officials):</i>	711,250 USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 142).
<i>Voter and civic education:</i> Not including free airtime of public and private media.	around 485,000 USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 144).

## Cote d'Ivoire

<b>2010 Presidential elections</b>	
<b>Total costs</b>	
<i>Total cost:</i>	305 million Euros (Bilé, 2013, p. 8).
<i>Cost per voter:</i>	53 Euros (Bilé, 2013, p. 8).
<i>Cost per capita:</i>	13.8 Euros (Bilé, 2013, p. 8).
<b>Individual costs</b>	
<i>System for the identification and registration of voters:</i>	133 billion CFA Franc (203 million Euros; around 266 million USD) (Adou & Lam, 2012, p. 29).
- <i>Equipment and materials:</i>	71,136,130 Euros (Adou & Lam, 2012, p. 29). of which: 7,901,077 for electronic recording equipment (6,000 kits; approximately 1,317 Euros or 1,728 USD per kit)
- <i>Initial implementation:</i>	30 489 803 Euros (Adou & Lam, 2012, p. 29).
<i>Implementation:</i> Including capacity building, adjustments	100,978,811 Euros (Adou & Lam, 2012, p. 29).

<sup>1</sup> Full budget breakdown provided in (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 148-149).

to operation systems, extension of timeframe etc.	
<i>Setting up the national structures for enrolment:</i> personnel, data processing, awareness campaigns, logistics, equipping local coordination centres and secondary sites, deploying enrolment teams in Cote d'Ivoire and abroad.	23 billion F CFA (35 million Euros; around 46 million USD) (Adou & Lam, 2012, p. 29).

## Democratic Republic of Congo

<b>2011 Parliamentary and Presidential elections</b>	
<b>Total costs</b>	
<i>Total cost:</i>	493 million USD (380 million Euros) (Bilé, 2013, p. 8).
<i>Cost per voter:</i>	12 Euros (Bilé, 2013, p. 8).
<i>Cost per capita:</i>	5.1 Euros (Bilé, 2013, p. 8).
<b>Individual costs</b>	
<i>Registration kits:</i>	10,000 kits; 2900 USD per kit (Bungu & Mavinga, 2012, p. 18).
<i>Detection of duplicates process:</i>	around 1 million USD (Bungu & Mavinga, 2012, p. 18).
<i>MONUSCO logistics support:</i>	74.6 million USD (Bilé, 2013, p. 10).
<i>Construction of polling stations:</i>	0.6 million USD (Bilé, 2013, p. 10).
<i>Capacity building and civic education:</i>	171.9 million USD (Bilé, 2013, p. 10).
<b>2005 Referendum</b>	
<b>Total costs</b>	
<i>Total cost:</i>	546 million USD (EISA website).
<i>Cost per voter:</i>	2.5 USD (EISA website).

## Haiti

<b>2006 Parliamentary and Presidential elections – budget estimates<sup>2</sup></b>	
<b>Total costs</b>	
<i>Total cost:</i>	nearly 49 million USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 160).
<i>Cost per voter:</i>	around 14 USD
<b>Individual costs<sup>3</sup></b>	
<i>Voter Registration:</i>	9 million USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 160).

<sup>2</sup> Actual cost not given in López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006

<sup>3</sup> More draft budget information provided in López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 165

<i>Civic education:</i> Including hire of consultants, campaigns to promote registration and participation (approx. 200,000 radio spots, 1,500 TV spots, 500,000 posters, 1 million pamphlets, 1,000 banners), and registration days for women and civil society.	1,263,167 USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 163-164).
<i>Salaries for voter registration and polling officers:</i>	12,097,167 USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 165).
<i>Security:</i>	4 million USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 165).

## Iraq

<b>2005 Parliamentary elections – budget estimates<sup>4</sup></b>	
<b>Total costs</b>	
<i>Cost per external voter:</i>	estimated 50 USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 134).
<b>Individual costs<sup>5</sup></b>	
<i>Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) set up:</i>	approx. 28 million USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 134).
<i>Voter registration:</i> Including staff, printing, data entry, and secure logistics.	approx. 83 million USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 134).
<i>Polling:</i> Including polling staff, material procurement (including polling kits, ballots, and voter lists), and secure logistics.	approx. 180 million USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 134).
<i>External registration and voting:</i>	approx. 72 million USD (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 134).
<i>Security for external registration and voting:</i>	3 million USD per country (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 134).
<i>Security:</i> Including personal protection for the Board of Commissioners and international technical advisors, higher than normal costs for the storage and transportation of election materials, international data entry due to domestic security concerns.	Unknown (López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 135).

<sup>4</sup> Final costs not given in López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006

<sup>5</sup> More draft budget information provided in López-Pintor & Fischer, 2006, p. 165

## Libya

<b>2012 Parliamentary elections</b>	
<b>Total costs</b>	
<i>Cost per in-country voter:</i>	35.6 USD (Al-Sayeh, 2013, p. 8).
<i>Cost per out-country voter:</i>	280 USD (Al-Sayeh, 2013, p. 8).

## Sierra Leone

<b>2012 Parliamentary and Presidential elections</b>	
<b>Total costs</b>	
<i>Total cost:</i>	25 million USD (Davies, 2013, p. 13).
<i>Cost per voter:</i>	9 USD (Davies, 2013, p. 13).
<b>Individual costs</b>	
<i>Biometric Voter Registration System:</i>	10 million USD (Davies, 2013, p. 13).
<i>Operations:</i>	15 million USD (Davies, 2013, p. 13).

Information about UNDP procurement costings in relation to three voter registration options can also be found in Holm (2008, p.17). These include the low-tech voter registration kit which costs 0.71-0.85 USD per voter, the Optical Mark Recognition forms registration kit which costs 0.39-0.47 USD per voter, and the digital registration kit which costs 1.34-1.61 USD per voter.

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## Key websites

- AEC – Cost of Registration and Elections: <http://aceproject.org/ace-en/focus/core>
- Joint EC-UNDP Thematic Workshop on Sustainability in Electoral Administration: Maputo 2013 [http://www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=171&Itemid=177&lang=en](http://www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=171&Itemid=177&lang=en)

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