

In the first sequence of shots, you see the sign of a shop. It reads:
Spare parts shop of Haji Khaja Mohammad
Parts for Russian trucks: Kamaz, Kraz, Super Maz 500
[note: this is a shop that primarily sells parts to the Ministry of Defense]

Interview with Khaja Mohammad + his two sons
[Interpreted simultaneously in the shop by a cousin of Khaja Mohammed, Aziz, who is also my driver. According to the second translator, "the words of the interpreter in the shop, in most cases, do not by any means correspond to what the shopkeeper said. They seem to be self-invented and resemble interpreter's own personal thoughts and views."]

Original question in the background in English:
"So, since I was here during the constitutional Loya Jirga and was asking your opinions then. I thought would come back now during the election to talk to you about the election."

Have you already broadcast my previous interview, asked the shopkeeper?
The interpreter replies, yes.

Asked whether everyone here voted he said, no, as there was cheating [he is referring to duplicate votes on election day].

Asked when and what they heard about the election, he said, "We were told during the casting of the votes not to vote due to fraud."

Asked if he feels that the election was therefore not legitimate he said, yes.

"Faroq Wardak assured us at the outset that it was impossible that someone vote more than once. But I witnessed that a person repeatedly and even ten times went into the ballot booth by wiping away the ink from his hand and returning back to vote again. I as a worker throw away my card."

Asked whether they would be able to accept the present Government put in place by these elections [this question was answered by the interpreter by saying that he heard from radio that he (Qanouni) would not contest anymore.]

Asked whether the people would also be happy with the elections if the candidate that they would have chosen is able to accept the outcome of the elections, he said, "Anyone who really won the votes is acceptable to me, whoever he may be, Qanouni or Karzai. He [the latter] is not a bad guy, but has some negative aspects ... that is common knowledge. The reality is something else. You may ask people on the street, do not believe the TV -- they are lying, they will tell you that the ink was fraud, except in some cases where it still remained on hands. For example, on your [interpreter's] hand the stamp still remained."

Asked what would have to be different for the parliamentary elections in the way that they are managed or in the way that the people are able to vote, in order for him to make the choice to actually vote, he says: "They should avoid the fraud and cheating... otherwise the consequences will be the same."

Question from the interviewer: So, one of the things to be changed would be the system of management of elections. Do you think it would be better that it is managed by the Afghan people rather than the UN?

The interpreter: "Uncle, I have another question for you: I am sorry to disturb your business. I have been asked to interview you..."

The shopkeeper says: "No problem, with pleasure I will answer your questions honestly and tell you only the truth..."

The interpreter: "You know we went through this presidential election led by the United Nations and are on the eve of a parliamentary election. What do you think? Who should lead the next election - the UN, or the Government or someone else - in order for it to become more effective?"

Shopkeeper: "These three persons who are nominated as candidates have been certainly backed by millions of their supporters. So if they make it, the others will surely accept them."

Interpreter: "No, no... you didn't understand my question, I am talking about the parliamentary election that will take place 6 months later... The presidential election was sponsored and organized by the UN... So, it was performed by a foreign hand and probably ballot rigging and cheating might have also taken place... So, the question is who should lead the next election in order to avoid this?"

Shopkeeper: "The truth is that we Afghan people have cheated and will continue to cheat the UN... in the long run it is the UN and the people..."

[interrupted by the interpreter]

"So who should lead it...?"

"Whom should I name then?" asks the shopkeeper. "Our people proved not to be reliable." Whoever comes to our help, either we cheat him or ask him for money. Ask this young guy next to me, he must have lots of unresolved issues in his mind... "

"One more thing," the shopkeeper went on to say, "normally, we do not allow our women [wife, mother, sister, etc.] to go the doctor without our accompanying them. However, for the occasion of the election I told everyone to go to the polling station. But once things went wrong I didn't let them go."

"Ask this guy whether he went to the polling station." [The answer was no.]

Replying to a question on the election campaign process, the shopkeeper says: "The first person who launched his parliamentary campaign was Mr. Yunus Qanouni, traveling to Herat, Kandahar, Khost, Jalalabad, and northern Afghanistan. On the contrary, Mr. Karzai did not really have this possibility as bomb attempts were made on his life. But Qanouni was welcomed and, just in one province, 40,000 people went to welcome him. Other candidates do not travel to the countryside, alleging that they do not have funds for this purpose. I hope you publish this interview outside Afghanistan... but I have told you the truth."