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مؤسسه ديده بان انتخابات و شفافيت افغانستان  
Election & Transparency Watch Organization of Afghanistan

# Weekly Monitoring Report of Wolesi Jirga

23rd – 28th June, 2018

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### **Being excitement over becoming a lawmaker**

Nowadays the electoral market is driving high, especially the enthusiasm of representation in parliament among thousands of people registered by IEC. This excitement unlike everyone's habit and invasion of entry to the parliament is not only worthless, but it is a kind of complication of political backwardness emanated from collective frustration that affected the community.

It means at a time when the gap between the public and government getting wider as a result of the corruption, poverty, violence and insurgency, where people deem politicians as cruel individuals, with authorities and their spokespersons turned into bitter jokes of citizens and receives their execrations.

It means, due to situation of life affected by poverty and corruption, violence and insecurity, the space between government and people increases day by day and the people recognize the government and the politicians not as servants for people but as oppressive creatures; the spokesmen are the bitter subject of jeer among the people and receive thousands of insults and malison daily. Distrust increased increasingly from the government officials and there is pessimism from all them, this emotional trend cannot be a sign of political concern and the growth of the participatory political culture of the people of this era; but it is a sign of what goes on under the skin of this society, and that is a general hopelessness.

The disappointment that policy-making has come to do and provided thinking so that desperate people in this series look at hope only in politics, and so everyone queues to enter the parliament.

The fact is that the hopes and delights that have sprouted with the defeat of the Taliban and the creation of a new government in the presence of the tired people of the war on this land, and the colorful dreams and the green life, Afghanistan free of the war and poverty that world has come to the to rescue it; after one and half a decade, it has become a disappointment.

The state-building and anti-terrorism program of the United States has completely failed, and instead, the defeat of Taliban and the terrorists, they have recovered and have almost half of the territory of Afghanistan. Insecurity is raging and there is no day not to be witness of the killing innocents and getting involved in this country. The government has been incapacitated and ineffective in law enforcement, providing services to citizens, and the corruption has become a famous throughout the world; and each year comes in the top five of the world's most fragile and deadly governments. The political situation in the country becomes more intense every day, and the struggle and power struggle of the ruling elite has pushed the government into a deadlock. Poverty, recession and idleness....



## Wolesi Jirga session prorogued as MPs trade barbs

Wednesday's session of the Wolesi Jirga, or lower house of Parliament, ended with an exchange of harsh words between two lawmakers.

Earlier, civil society activists and residents of southern Ghazni province demanded reopening of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) branch and warned of protests if their call went unheard.

For elections to the Wolesi Jirga in October this year, Ghazni has been divided into three constituencies.

Abdul Latif Pedram, a public representative from Badakhshan, hit out at the IEC decision on constituencies of Ghazni.



But Kamal Safi, a legislator from northern Kunduz province, stressed the need for unity and accused Pedram of harming national interests and insulting other ethnic groups.

However, Administrative Board officials closed Safi's mike and Pedram raised a red card. But he was not allowed to speak. Both MPs traded harsh words and the speaker prorogued the session.

Meanwhile, MP Kamal Nasir Usuli said: "Violations of rules have become a routine affair for politicians. When law is violated in our favor, we remain silent."

He said: "When the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) slot was created against the constitution, all of us were silent and considered it the country's best interest.

"However, to you, justice for the people of Ghazni is against the law," he remarked, stressing adherence to rules under all circumstances.



### MPs Welcome Peace Efforts but Question Govt's Action

Some legislators said government is trying to hand over parts of the country to the Taliban as “secure areas” to kickstart the peace process with the group.

Some lawmakers in the Afghan parliament, the Wolesi Jirga, on Saturday welcomed peace efforts by Kabul but said people will not support “secret and unclear” plans around peace.

They claimed that government is adopting secret plans in the peace talk's process.

“We are concerned about this peace under (President Ashraf) Ghani and their foreign supporters' management. We want to make it clear that no type of plot is acceptable for us,” said Abdul Latif Pedram, an MP from Badakhshan.



“It is good that we should know about the mechanism so that there should be an agreement on it and a common definition of it. The peace process should not be used as a tool to remove one group and bring another,” said Fawzia Kofi, an MP from Badakhshan.

The speaker of the house, Abdul Rauf Ibrahim, said any secret talks are against people's interests and that he asks government to share its peace plans with members of the public.

“The peace plan is vague and the peace plan's details are being kept secret from the people which is not acceptable to us,” he said.

One MP, Mullah Tarakhail, hailed the president's plans for peace.

“This courage and initiative of the president should be appreciated, and it is a must for us as representatives of the people to support this,” Tarakhail said.

Meanwhile, government and the High Peace Council rejected claims of any secret talks with the Taliban.

“The proposed package prepared by the High Peace Council by using people's voices has not mentioned safe zones (for militants),” the High Peace Council spokesman Ehsan Taheri said.

“The president has started consultations with different political figures, representatives of political parties, honorable jihadi figures, and the head of parliament and different levels of people. We hope that the Afghan parliament will share with us if they have any comments,” said Shahussain Murtazawi, a spokesman for President Ashraf Ghani.

Some legislators said government is trying to hand over parts of the country to the Taliban as “secure areas” to kick start the peace process with the group.



## MPs Approve Draft Plan to Pay District Council Members

Following a barrage of criticism over a decision not to pay district council members, MPs have moved to fight for salaries.

Lawmakers in Afghanistan's Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) on Monday approved a draft plan to regulate salaries for district council members.

Based on the draft plan, members of provincial councils who are employed as teachers or who have a government job will not be paid; however members who are not civil servants will get salaries.

“Those who serve as teachers, and government employees, their salaries and privileges must be protected and they should continue with their jobs, but those who have no jobs, they must be paid,” said an MP Muhayyuddin Mahdi.

According to the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan (IEC) up to now 3,731 candidates have registered to run for district council elections. Of those registered, 271 are female candidates.

But not a single woman has registered as a candidate in six provinces, while in other provinces the number is much lower compared to their male counterparts, said the IEC.

“We have no female candidates in six provinces such as Nangarhar, Kandahar, Paktika, Paktia and Farah,” said Abdul Aziz Ibrahim, deputy spokesman for the IEC.

Lawmakers have however appealed to government to pay these district council members.

Last week the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) said government has no budget to pay district council members' salaries.

Based on a preliminary plan outlined by the IDLG, members of district councils will have to serve voluntarily, said the IDLG.

But institutions overseeing the elections meanwhile have raised concerns over the low turnout of candidates for the district council elections.

This comes after officials from the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) said last week that government has no budget to pay them salaries.

Based on the preliminary plan outlined by the IDLG, members of district councils are supposed to serve voluntarily.

Syed Ahmad Khamosh, Head of Coordination of Local Council Affairs, has said that government does not have the money to cover salaries.





Based on the law, there are around 2,800 seats for members of district councils and government would need to hire over 800 civil servants to process working procedures of these members, he said.

Khamosh said the money government needs for salaries for members of district councils is estimated to be about 500 million AFs per annum which is beyond the government's financial capability.

“We have only considered some allowances that they will use when they attend meetings, once or twice. But more than this, the issue of a connecting salary, is the authority of president and the national assembly,” said Khamosh.

“Some privileges which come in the context of attendance have been considered. But to allocate more funds, it is supposed to be the authority of the national assembly and the president,” added Khamosh.

Last week, election watchdog Free and Fair Election Forum of Afghanistan (FEFA) said so far there were no candidates for elections in some districts of Uruzgan, Farah, Kandahar and Ghazni provinces.

Observers said at the time that in Logar only one person nominated himself for district council elections, in Nimroz seven, in Zabul five, in Badghis nine and in Faryab province only two.

“The situation is concerning in seven provinces, either you have few candidates or it is hard for people to participate in the elections. This makes the race meaningless,” said Yousuf Rashid, CEO of FEFA.

Election commission figures show that so far over almost six million voters have registered to vote.

The total stands at 6,381,377 of which 4,169,877 are men, 2,088,134 are women, 122,845 are Kuchis and 522 are Sikhs and Hindus.



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## ETWA'S MONITORING AND ITS PURPOSE:

Monitoring of the work of the Parliament for the purpose of informing citizens and promoting cooperation between the parliament and civil society is an effort that EWA believes contributes to the development of the political system of Afghanistan and strengthens the highest representative institution of the country, the Parliament.



ETWA'S EMPLOYEES

To this end, EWA has started a program to observe the work of the

Wolesi Jirga and provide reporting and analysis that would help this institution to expand and advance its work. Collecting information on the work of the Parliament and disseminating it to the people and electorate of Afghanistan will promote this institution and has the potential to build closer links between the elected and the electorate.

EWA will remain impartial and neutral throughout its work, in particular in its observation and reporting, and will adopt a code of conduct for its observers and analysts, as well as with full preparation to successfully implement this initiative in conjunction with Wolesi Jirga.

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