



د افغانستان د ټاکنو او روڼتيا د څار مؤسسه  
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Election & Transparency Watch Organization of Afghanistan

# Weekly Monitoring Report of Wolesi Jirga

30th Dec 2017 – 4th Jan 2018

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### **Senate Appreciates Trump Tweet About Pakistan**

The Meshrano Jirga or Upper House of the Parliament on Tuesday described US President Donald Trump's recent comments about neighbouring Pakistan as a positive move, saying the words should be put in practice.

Senate first deputy speaker, Mohammad Alam Azydyar said the US warning to Pakistan was a good news for Afghanistan.

His fellow senator, Mualvi Muhiuddin Munsef said Trump understood Pakistan had not been honest in the fight against terrorism and breaded terrorism on its territory.

Lailuma Ahmadi, another senator, said: "Trump's tweet was confirmation of Afghanistan's claims. The US should implement the statement."

Some other lawmakers also welcomed the US President's tweet of the year.

Senate Chairman Fazal Hadi Muslimyar said: "Trump's social media statement against Pakistan is a positive development for Afghanistan. It is not a simple thing that the US president has started believing that Pakistan deceives them."

He asked Pakistan to improve relation with Kabul otherwise the neighbouring country would be isolated.

"We don't want the Pakistan nation to suffer like Afghans suffered for 40 years. We want Pakistan to sincerely fight against terrorism so that the people of both countries can live in a peaceful environment."

Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi was on Tuesday reportedly chairing a high level meeting to discuss Trump's latest tirade.

### **Finance Ministry Calls on MPs to Approve Draft Budget**

MPs want the government to also consider budget allocations for the projects which had been included in last year's budget.

Legislators in Afghanistan's House of Representatives on Tuesday said that they will not approve the draft budget of 2018 unless the government addresses the problems facing the draft budget.



MPs said that the government should also consider budget allocations for the projects which had been included in last year's budget.

The ministry of finance has however called on the lawmakers to approve the draft budget soon so that the government can initiate the implementation of development projects in the country

The government referred the draft budget to the parliament two weeks ago.

MPs argue that in the New Year's budget, only 30 small and bigger projects have been included and others have been reduced significantly.

The House is still insisting that projects from the past must be included in the draft budget. If these changes do not happen, we will not approve the budget," said one MP Sadiqi Neelizada.

The new fiscal year's budget is estimated to be 361 billion Afs of which 267 is for the ordinary budget and 93 billion for the development budget.

### **Ibrahimi Misuses His Authority: MPs**

Some Wolesi Jirga, or the Lower House members on Saturday accused the house speaker, Abdul Rauf Ibrahimi of misusing his authority.

This came weeks ago when Ibrahimi was accompanied by a group of lawmakers during his Pakistan tour. Some of his colleagues claimed Ibrahimi decides who to accompany him.

Saleh Mohammad Salah, a people's representative from Kunar province, said: "Have you ever taken any MP from Kunar or Helmand provinces to accompany you. You are shameless."

But Ibrahimi dismissed the allegations as baseless. He said that he did not commit any action to be ashamed for it.



He added: "I have not stolen nor have I embezzled and is not a traitor. All the Afghan people judge me."

A month back, reports revealed that more than 50 million afghanis had been spend in renting a house and office for Ibrahimi over the past five years.

Later, a probe-team was assigned to investigate the issue.

Ibrahimi and parliament's Secretariat head, Khodai



Nazar Nusrat were accused of being involved in graft by Mohammad Nazir Ahmadzai, a second deputy speaker of parliament, while Nusrat's case was referred to the Attorney General's Office-AGO for interrogation. At the same token, Ibrahimi was ordered to five million Afghanis.

### Senate stresses immediate launch of e-ID cards issuance

A number of Meshrano Jirga members on Tuesday asked the government to immediate launch the electronic national identity cards (e-NIC) issuance process, saying its postponement was not in the country's interest.

Lawmakers had earlier said News the e-NIC cards distributing process was scheduled to begin on Tuesday (Jan 2) and the first computerized ID cards would be given to the president and the CEO. However, the process has been delayed.

Senator Jumadin Giyanwal from southeastern Paktia province, told today's session the postponement in issuance of the electoral ID cards wasn't in favor of the Afghans and it should not be delayed.



"We ask the government to initiate the distribution as soon as possible and don't let some mentally sick people to disrupt the process, Giyanwal said, but named no one.

A number of other legislators also held similar views, criticizing the suspension of the process.

Meshrano Jirga chairman Fazal Hadi Muslimyar said the e-ID cards were scheduled to be issued today and it was

questionable why the process did not begin. He asked government leaders to pave the ground for issuance of computerized ID cards at the earliest possible.

Muslimyar, in response to a senator's remarks that the president had no time to initiate the process, said: "It takes no time at all. Only 20 minutes of the president's time is needed. We call upon the president not to make pretexts such as lack of time for initiating the process. If there is a problem, he should share it with the nation and public representatives."

Calls by Pajhwok seek comment from the Presidential Office, the CEO office and the Population Registration Department went unanswered.



This comes as on Sunday the Meshrano Jirga said the process of issuing electronic national identity cards (eNIC) would start in the next two days. However, it didn't happen as expected.

Following the establishment of the unity government, President Ashraf Ghani approved the law on population registration, in which nationality and ethnicity was not mentioned.

As protests against not mentioning the two words in the ID cards continued, the president issued a legislative decree adding nationality and ethnicity to the cards. The decree then was rejected by the Wolesi Jirga but was approved by the Senate.

To resolve the disagreement, a joint committee comprising members of Wolesi Jirga and the Meshrano Jirga was formed to decide on the issue. The committee two weeks ago approved the inclusion of nationality and ethnicity in the new e-NIC.

On Saturday, however, a number of MPs again said they were against the inclusion of the nationality and ethnicity in the e-NICs.

They said four members of the joint committee had been absent when the decision was made and that it contravened Article 100 of the Constitution.

### **MPs Slam Govt over Failed Policy on Caretakers**

There are now three institutions under caretakers in Kabul: the garrison, the Police HQ and the municipality itself.

Members of Afghanistan's parliament on Monday strongly criticized the government over what they described as a failure to address the issue of caretakers in the government institutions.



There are now three institutions under caretakers in Kabul. These are the Kabul garrison, Kabul police headquarters and Kabul municipality, all run by the caretakers. MPs accused the government of having failed to address the problem.

The MPs argument is that the absence of a commander for the Kabul police headquarters has also left significant impacts on the security situation in the capital at a time that Kabul is also grappling with threats from the insurgents.



Fawad is one of the residents who lost his father on Sunday when unknown armed men assaulted the 500-Family area of the capital city.

“They hit my father by a bullet. What is this government doing, why does it hand out pistols?” asked Fawad, a son of the victim.

Residents say that over the past few weeks the rate of crime and other security-related issues have increased in the city.

“We arrested over 350 criminals in Kabul since last year,” said Mohammad Salim Almas, head of crime investigation department of Kabul police.

Following last June’s deadly attack in Kabul’s diplomatic enclave that killed over 150 people, the government decided to suspend the job of commander of Kabul garrison and police commander under mounting pressures from the members of the Afghan public.

Later the government announced the appointment of general Mohammad Aman Afzal as acting commander of the garrison and Mohammad Salem Ehsas as the commander of Kabul police headquarters.

Kabul’s municipality is also one of the organs is run by a caretaker over the past two years. Abdullah Habibi is currently serving as the acting mayor of Kabul

“Whenever these caretakers are fired from the job, then they claim to be able to continue their job and make demands on the government,” said one MP Mirbat Khan Mangal.

“Caretaker issues directly harm the government of Afghanistan,” said MP Fatima Nazari.

Meanwhile, the ministries of defense and interior affairs have expressed their views about the caretakers in this manner.

“There has not been any kind of work deficiency in the daily operations of the garrison,” said Dawlat Waziri, spokesman for the ministry of defense.

“Qualified and able people will be recruited,” said Nusrat Rahimi, deputy spokesman of the ministry of interior.

Critics say that the work of caretakers in the government institutions have left major impacts on the governance as the caretakers do not feel accountable.

The National Unity Government (NUG) under President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah has been under constant criticism from the Afghan public for their inability to end to the woes of weak governance in institutions run by the caretakers.

### **Water Energy Minister Survives MP's Summons**

Ali Ahmad Osmani got a 124 vote of confidence on Monday after MPs called for his impeachment due to his alleged poor performance in the ministry.

The minister of water and energy, Ali Ahmad Osmani, on Monday was able to get Parliament's vote of confidence and remained in his position.

Osamani was summoned to parliament for spending less than 60% of the budget and allegations of illegal hiring in the ministry. He, however, convinced the MPs and got a vote of confidence.



Osmani got 124 votes of confidence, 36 votes of rejection, six invalid votes and one blank vote.

Legislators in Afghanistan's parliament wanted to impeach Osmani for his poor performance in the construction of dams and his failure to achieve the spending targets of the 2016 fiscal budget.

On Sunday other lawmakers opposed the impeachment and accused their colleagues of conspiring against Osmani after he refused to accept their illegal demands.

MPs who insisted on the impeachment, argue that the spending of less than 60 percent of the budget and poor performance in the construction of dams were among key reasons that the lawmakers decided to call the minister.

“The first reason for impeachment relates to the unspent budget allocation as he has failed to meet the index which had been determined by the parliament. The second reason is the lack of work in the construction of the dams which has angered the representatives of the people,” said Mohammad Nazir Ahmadzai one of the MPs.

Other lawmakers say that certain circles in the parliament have conspired the plot against the Minister.

“There are certain circles which are trying to create a conspiracy, especially the mafia groups which have not been able to work because their contracts have been annulled by the presidential palace,” said another MP Ghulam Farooq Majroh.

### Daesh ‘gaining strength’ in the east: MPs

Some lawmakers on Monday said Daesh or so-called Islamic State (IS) militants had increased their activities in eastern Afghanistan, blaming the situation on government’s failure to suppress the outfit.

Haji Hazrat Ali, a Wolesi Jirga member from eastern Nangarhar province, told today’s session of the lower house that moneychangers, traders and doctors were on strike in the province due to kidnappings, murders and armed robberies, but no one cared about them.

“Nangarhar has turned into a center of terrorists while the government is silent,” he said.

Haji Zahir Qadir, another MP from Nangarhar, said people in districts had fled violence and displaced to Jalalabad, the provincial capital, but they were not safe as well.

“The government and security forces have failed to suppress Daesh militants, therefore the President should resign for his failure,” he said.



Saleh Mohammad Saleh, a lawmaker from eastern Kunar province, said the uptick in insecurity in the country’s east was a matter of concern.

Mahmoud Sulaimankhel from Paktika province also criticized the government and said Daesh militants were currently recruiting fighters in Warmami district of the province.

“Daesh is a dangerous project, it may convert Afghanistan into Syria and Iraq if not prevented in time,” he said.

“A number of Taliban militants have joined Daesh rebels in cooperation with Pakistan’s ISI agency,” he alleged.

Laila Wali Hukmi, another lawmaker from Nangarhar, said that the government always claimed it had defeated Daesh but in fact the group was gaining more power with each passing day.



## Air pollution ‘catastrophic’ in Kabul, MPs told

National Environmental Protection Agency head Shah Zaman Maiwandi on Sunday said air pollution had turned catastrophic in Kabul City.

Appearing before a Wolesi Jirga or lower house of parliament panel, the EPA chief said preventing pollution wasn’t responsibility of only one organization but all government institutions and people should make joint efforts in this regard.

Lawmakers said air pollution was a major problem of Kabul residents after insecurity and unemployment. They said dozens of people developed respiratory diseases on a daily basis due to the dirty air.

Wolesi Jirga’s Commission on Natural Resources and Environment on Sunday summoned the authorities concerned to find solution to the increasing air pollution.

Ramazan Jumazada, head of the Wolesi Jirga panel, said Kabul residents in addition to insecurity, joblessness and poverty also faced a air pollution problem because dozens of children, youth and elderly people daily caught breathing ailments.

Jumazada dubbed air pollution in Kabul city as a grave issue and warned if serious measures were not taken; the situation in Kabul would worsen.

Mohiuddin Mahdi, a public representative from Baghlan province and member of the Wolesi Jirga commission, said: “Air pollution is a serious problem in Kabul city, the government is responsible to take practical and serious measures at preventing the air pollution.”

Masihullah Mahboob, urban services deputy head at the Kabul Municipality, who was also present at the session, cited excessive population density, un-asphalted roads, unrestricted usage of fuel and congested traffic as key factors behind the air pollution.

“The municipality has no power to control the population and also asphalted of roads takes a lot of time. But for a short-term solution we can replace fuel with other alternative and stop using smoking old vehicles.” He said about 85 percent of bread bakeries, public bathrooms and hotels consumed gas.

Ghulam Mohammad Malakyar, a technical deputy at the National Environmental Protection Agency, admitted extremely congested roads and use of poor quality fuel added to the air pollution in Kabul city.

He suggested stopping smoking vehicles from plying Kabul roads and replacing polluting fuel with alternative in winter could reduce the air pollution to some extent.



He said if the government interfered in the open market and reduced gas prices, then people would no longer use poor quality fuel and this might be effective in preventing pollution.

Malakyar, while acknowledging Kabul citizens breathed dirty air, however, he said the level of suspended particulates (dust) in air was nearly 1,500 mill microns per cubic meter of air last year but reduced to 650 mill microns per cubic meter this year. He said the standard amount of suspended particles in the air was of 100 to 150.

### **MPs Insist On Removing Ethnicity from E-Tazkira**

MPs said the decision on the inclusion of nationality and ethnicity was information in the new e-NIC that should be reviewed.

Over 50 members of parliament on Saturday signed a petition against the decision taken to include nationality and ethnicity in the new electronic National Identity Cards (e-NIC).

The MPs said the inclusion of such information was not necessary and urged government to review the decision.

Following the establishment of the National Unity Government (NUG), President Ashraf Ghani approved the law of population registration in which the inclusion of the nationality and ethnicity information was not included.

The law was Then criticized by a number of people and the president issued a legislative decree stating nationality and ethnicity information should be included.

The decree then was rejected by parliament but was approved by the senate.

To resolve the disagreements in this regard, a joint committee was formed by parliament and the senate to decide on the issue. The committee approved the inclusion of nationality and ethnicity in the new e-NIC.

On Saturday, however, a number of MPs said they are against the inclusion of the nationality and ethnicity information in the e-NIC.

They said four members of the committee were absent when the decision was made and that it contravened article 100 of the constitution.

Two weeks ago 12 members of the joint committee approved the president's legislative decree.

“It looks like the previous law had all the standards that the identity cards in other countries have. But the president instead of approving that law and instead of understanding the legal problems has amended the law without approval of both houses (parliament and senate),” MP Fawzia Kofi said.





“There are dozens of issues that you should include in the agenda. Otherwise, disagreements will rise up in a way that handling it will be a problem for you,” MP Abdul Wali Niazi said.

However, some other MPs said the population registration law has been approved and there is no need to discuss it.

They said the new e-NIC should be distributed as soon as possible.

“This law has completed all its legal and principle steps,” MP Abdul Hai Akhundzada said.

“Let’s stay united. If there are problems in this e-NIC, please write my name as Habib Afghan Hazara,” MP Habib Afghan said.

Mirdad Nejrabi, Najia Aimaq, Abdul Wadood Paiman and Abdul Qayyum Sajjadi are members of the joint committee who were absent from the meeting of the committee where they decided on the fate of the new e-NIC.

They then were accused of treason by the parliament speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahimi over being absent at the meeting.

“You should have informed us that the joint committee members have a meeting in a specified day. I as a member of the committee had not received any message or letter in this regard,” MP Abdul Qayyum Sajjadi and a member of the committee said.

“50 signatures have been collected in regard to the joint commission and e-NIC and you should include it in the agenda,” MP Zahir Sadaat said.

“Right now, there are not enough MPs present and you should explain what your letter is about,” Ibrahimi said.

Meanwhile ousted Balkh governor Atta Mohammad Noor said the e-NIC should be issued based on the law that has been approved by Ghani.

“The issuance of e-NIC should start within a month based on parliament’s decision and president’s approval without any changes,” Noor said.



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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 ETWA 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, ETWA 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.

ETWA 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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