



Legislative Newsletter

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NEWS

Meshrano Jirga Calls for Immediate Release of Complete Election Results

On 28 November, the Meshrano Jirga (MJ) called on the Independent Election Commission (IEC) to announce the parliamentary election results for Ghazni Province. The IEC released final outcomes for all other provinces on 24 November, but withheld those of Ghazni, citing technical issues¹.

However, Belqis Roushan (Farah) claimed that the reasons were political. “President Karzai said that the ethnic balance has to be maintained in Ghazni Province. That shows that there has to be some horse trading behind closed doors,” he said.

Zulmai Zabuli (Zabul) echoed Ms. Roushan’s concerns, saying: “The IEC should announce results for Ghazni too or people will think the government is interfering.”

Some senators called for a vote on the legality of the September election but Alam Izedyar (Panjshir), the Second Deputy Speaker and chairman of the plenary session, said that the house didn’t have such a power. However, he said individual senators have a right to raise their concerns and added his voice to those demanding the release of results for Ghazni.

Meanwhile, the Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga, Younis Qanooni, said the lower house was waiting for the announcement that would signal its dissolution. “The incumbent MPs term will come to an end as soon as complete final results are announced,” he told the Afghanistan Parliamentary Assistance Project. “At the moment, we are waiting for the release of results for Ghazni Province.”

Executive Claims MJ Cannot ‘Investigate’ Government Departments

Officials in the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) have refused to cooperate with a special committee formed by the Meshrano Jirga (MJ) to investigate alleged wrongdoings in the ministry.

The committee was formed on 24 October during an extraordinary plenary session, one day after Sarwar Danish, the Acting Minister of Higher Education, appeared before the MJ. At that time, senators called his answers unsatisfactory and decided to establish the investigative committee.

On 23 November, the MJ invited Karim Baaz, the Deputy Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, to explain why their investigation was being blocked. Mr. Baaz said the Afghan constitution does not grant the MJ the authority to investigate government departments (according to Article 89, only the Wolesi Jirga can establish committees for that purpose).

¹ See Legislative Newsletter, 8 November 2010, Vol. 4, No. 10

Alam Izedyar (Panjshir), the Second Deputy of the MJ who was chairing the session, agreed with this argument. “The Meshrano Jirga cannot investigate, using that term was a mistake,” he conceded. However, Mr. Izedyar said that the MJ could monitor the activities of the MoHE, and asked that a new letter be drafted using the word “monitor” instead of “investigate.”

Committee News:

Meshrano Jirga:

Complaints Committee: According to the Complaints Committee, 413 parliamentary candidates, including some incumbent MPs, brought their grievances over the election process to the Committee on 22 November. After receiving them, the Committee decided to invite Attorney General Ishaq Aloko and other relevant officials to a meeting the following day. Chairman Zulmai Zabuli (Zabul) promised the candidates that he would stand shoulder to shoulder with them, saying: “I swear to God, I will either fix this issue or I will stand aside from this job.”

At the follow-up meeting on 23 November, Attorney General Aloko informed the candidates that he has gathered enough evidence to issue a warrant against the spokespersons of the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission, and that he plans to suspend them from their jobs. Mr. Aloko said that one of the charges against the spokespersons is making statements that are harmful to the national interest of Afghanistan, although he did not specify what those statements were.

International Affairs Committee: The Committee met on 22 November to discuss the NATO Lisbon Summit. Committee Chairman Arefullah Pashtoon (Khost) said that the transfer of security responsibility to Afghans was an important step toward strengthening the national sovereignty of Afghanistan.

Legislation

There is no legislative activity to report at this time.

Upcoming Events:

- Meshrano Jirga’s Health Commission to hold a public hearing on “basic health issues” on 4 December at Safi Landmark Hotel. The public hearing will be sponsored by USAID/APAP

Acronyms:

IEC	Independent Elections Commission
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education