



Legislative Newsletter

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NEWS:

MPs call for summoning of security officials.

The Wolesi Jirga (WJ) on 22 July discussed the assassination of Ahmad Khan Samangani (Samangan), Pakistan's recent artillery attacks on Kunar and poisoning of school girls in different parts of the country. The house criticized the government for remaining quiet in the face of Pakistani attacks and resolved to summon security officials for their neglect of duties.

Opening the session, WJ Speaker Mr. Abdul Rauf Ibrahimimi welcomed the MPs after the 45-day recess and expressed his deep sorrow on the assassination of Mr. Samangani who was killed in a suicide attack at his daughter's wedding party on 14 July 2012. According to Mr. Ibrahimimi, "He was a big loss to the NA and the country, in general."

Echoing the Speaker Mr. Abdul Qader Qalatwal (Zabul) also paid condolences to Mr. Samangani's family. Mr. Qalatwal also briefed the House on his recent visit to Zabul Province where the governor and mayor are alleged to have illegally sold government land. "When I attempted to investigate the issue, both the mayor and the governor told me that the land was being sold on the president's order. The mayor went as far as pointing his pistol on me threatening to kill me in the governor's house." Mr. Qalatwal said. He asked the Admin Board to convene a committee to investigate the issue.

MPs such as Mr. Sayed Muhammad Hassan Sharifi Balkhabi (Sar-e-Pul), Mr. Monawar Shah Bahaduri (Herat) and Mr. Haji Sakhy Meshwani (Kunar) raised issues of insecurity and corruption in the country. Mr. Bahaduri said, "The Pakistani Prime Minister came to Afghanistan and spoke to us of friendship and peace but as soon as he went back, he gifted us 300 rocket shots in Kunar Province, killing and injuring many people."

Mr. Meshwani (Kunar) accused the government of neglecting the security of Kunar Province, leaving the people exposed to the Pakistani military attacks. According to him, the Pakistanis have occupied some villages and districts in the province. "Villages have been deserted and foreigners (Pakistanis) have occupied them, yet the government does not show any concern. There is no military and the police are under siege," he said. He accused the government of double standards, saying it was paying attention to flood affected areas while ignoring the bloodshed in Kunar.

Mr. Gul Pacha Majidi (Paktia) and Mr. Ahmad Shah Ramazan (Balkh) strongly criticized the security officials for "neglect in their duties". Mr. Majidi said that everyday there's news of martyrdom. "Let's speak on behalf of the oppressed . . . Where do suicide killers go after being arrested? What did the government do with the Samangan, Paktia and Kunar cases? The government is incompetent." Mr. Majidi also showed dissatisfaction with President Karzai's statements referring to the Taliban as brothers. He called on MPs to forge a stronger opposition unit before the presidential election. According to him, "The current opposition is not doing the job an opposition should do."

At the end of the plenary session, Speaker Ibrahimi informed members that security officials would be invited to committee meetings to discuss issues of concern during the committee sessions. This did not placate some MPs who began to collect signatures to push for the summoning of the security officials before the plenary.

Wolesi Jirga to Invite Minister of Foreign Affairs over Tokyo Conference

On 23 July, the Wolesi Jirga (WJ) discussed the Tokyo Conference and criticized government's failure to ensure MPs participated in the conference. According to the MPs, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended the Tokyo Conference, yet they did not have any expertise to make meaningful contributions to the event. The Tokyo Conference was held on 8 July. It sought to chart a course for Afghanistan post 2014.

Mr. Ramazan Jumazada (Kabul) criticized the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the ministry's director of protocol for not arranging visas for MPs to participate in the Tokyo Conference. "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not invite relevant people to take part in the Tokyo Conference. Mr. Javid Ludin, the deputy minister only invited his advisors to participate in the conference. The House should summon Mr. Zalmai Rasoul to answer MPs' questions in this regard." he said.

Supporting Mr. Jumazada's statement, the WJ Speaker, Mr. Abdul Rauf Ibrahimi said because of the importance of the Tokyo Conference it was imperative that Mr. Zalmi Rasool is invited to the commission for questioning.

Mr. Sediq Ahmad Usmani (Parwan) brought the attention of the House to three major problems of Afghanistan - administrative corruption, security and good governance - and proposed that the House holds serious debate over these issues. Mr. Manawar Shah Bahadori (Herat) and Mrs. Zaheen Shenkai Karokhel (Kabul) proposed that the House establishes a special commission for oversight of the government's activities.

Since donors' commitments during the Tokyo Conference were premised on the fight against corruption, a number of MPs thought the government was not doing enough to combat the scourge.

Concluding the session, Mr. Zahir Qadir (Nangahar) the First Deputy Speaker of the House said that the MoFA should explain why the MPs were not invited to the Tokyo Conference. The House also decided to ask the MoFA about the recent Pakistani shelling on Kunar province.

MPs Concerned over Information Leaks, Approve 2 Laws

On 25 July, Members of Parliament raised concern over leaking of information on interpellation of the Minister of Defense (MoD) Mr. Rahim Wardak, Minister of Interior (MoI) Mr. Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, and Chief of National Directorate for Security (NDS) Mr. Rahmatullah Nabeel. According to the MPs the names of those who signed the proposal to interpellate the ministers were disclosed to the government and revealing such important information can affect future interpellations.

The Wolesi Jirga's 22 July plenary session had called for the summoning of security officials following the assassination of Ahmad Khan Samangani (Samangan), Pakistan's recent artillery attacks on the eastern province of Kunar and poisoning of school girls in different parts of the country. Before going to the agenda of the plenary, Mr. Erfanullah Erfan (Kabul) said a proposal to interpellate ministers of defense

and interior as well as the general director of National Directorate of Security (NDS) had been signed, but “unfortunately MPs disclosed the names of those who signed to interpellate the ministers.”

Clearing his name Mr. Gul Padshah Majidi (Paktia), who collected MPs signatures, said that he was sorry that the names of MPs who signed had been disclosed. “I did my job honestly, and then submitted the final list to the First Deputy Speaker and either him or his assistant disclosed all the names to the deputy director of NDS,” said Mr. Majidi. He called on Haji Abdul Zahir Qadir (Nangarhar), the First Deputy Speaker of the House, to clear the issue forthwith.

Responding to the MPs’ concerns, Mr. Qadir called Mr. Majidi’s assertions worrisome. He added, “No one can prove that I have shared that information with government officials. If you have proof, I will give up not only my Admin Board position, but will also leave the membership of Parliament as well.”

A number of MPs suggested that the plenary should adhere to the day’s agenda and Mr. Sher Wali Wardak (Kabul) presented the Law on National Standards to the plenary for approval. This law has 5 chapters and 26 articles, and the joint committee had discussed the rest of articles. Only paragraph 6 of article 3 of this law was controversial. The original text of this paragraph was about the definition of “Norm”, which goes as follows: “an absolute quantity which is ascertained as a result of scientific research and experiments, after confirmation from the National Board of Standard and will be approved by the Cabinet of Ministers”. The proposed amendment says: “Norm is an absolute quantity which is ascertained as a result of scientific research and experiment by the technical committee, and is applicable after the confirmation from the Standard Council”.

The First Deputy Speaker put this article to a vote, and the house approved the amended version by a majority of the votes. Following that the entire law was put to a vote and was also approved by a majority of the votes.

Subsequently, Mr. Hafiz Mansoor (Kabul) presented the law on Office of National Central Audit for approval. He had initially presented this law before the recess but due to lack of quorum, voting on the law had been rescheduled. Only article 7 of this law which is about the nomination of the Head of the Office of Central audit was controversial. The original text of the article says that the president of Afghanistan nominates the Head of Office of the National Central Audit, but MPs agreed on the amended version, which says that the president should nominate the candidate, who should in turn obtain a vote of confidence from Parliament.

As result, the law on Office of the National Central Audit as a whole was approved with 64 MPs approving it, 40 rejecting and 6 abstaining.

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