

RASED for Parliamentary Monitoring Program

13th Weekly Report on the Performance of the Parliament

During the 3rd Ordinary Session

February 13, 2016

The Jordanian House of Representatives convened two legislative sessions and one oversight session during the third ordinary session of the 13th week. 13 of the Parliamentary committees held 19 meetings during the past week, and 7 committees did not convene any meetings during this time.

From the beginning of the session, which inaugurated mid-November, until the end of the 13th week, MPs posed 212 questions, two interrogations, 35 memorandums, and 3 law proposals to the government.

The past week witnessed two major events. The loss of the quorum occurred in two council sessions – the legislative session held on Sunday, and the oversight session held on Tuesday. In this case, the council meeting violated the Constitutional provisions regarding the legal quorum for each session.

Sunday's legislative session adjourned after approximately one hour because of the loss of the quorum. The head of the council overlooked the loss of quorum in the oversight session on Tuesday, which continued until attendance reached 16 MP's as reported in the press and by the RASED team.

MPs Mahmoud Al-Kharabsheh and Amjad Al-Majali questioned the constitutionality of holding the legislative session, noting that the session was held without a quorum. The presidency of the Council denied this allegation, and confirmed the availability of a quorum at the beginning of the session.

The existence of violation of the provisions of the Constitution in Article 84 was clear in the Council's oversight session. The article states that, «the chambers' sessions are not considered legal unless attended by an absolute majority of the Board members and continue to be valid as long as the majority is present.»

RASED noted that the House of Representatives has suffered as a result of the loss of a quorum issue for some time, which sometimes prompted the presidency of the Council to delay the meeting for half an hour, the timeframe stipulated by the Rules of Procedure to provide a quorum.

During the last week, 13 parliamentary committees held 19 meetings overshadowed by the regulatory side, as well as consultations and meetings with specialists in financial affairs, which were dominated by the parliamentary legislative meetings. Additionally, the Executive Office decided to set up the Management Committee President and his deputy, and Rapporteur.

So far, the House of Representatives did not take note of the formation of the management committee and did not make a decision on their position. The adjourning of the meeting was devoted to informing the Council of the restructuring of the committee because of the loss of quorum.

The Legal, Education and Culture, Finance, Integrity and Transparency and the Joint Economy and Financial Committees held two meetings for each respective committee, while the Countryside and the Desert, Energy, Labor, National Orientation, Management, Youth and Sports, Agriculture and Water, and Economics and Investment Committees each held one meeting. The Jordanian-UAE Parliamentary Fraternity Committee held a meeting with UAE Ambassador to Jordan, Bilal Al Rabe' Al-Badour.

The Palestine, Foreign Affairs, Women, Tourism and Antiquities, Transportation, Public Services, Public Freedoms and Human Rights, and Health and the Environment Committees did not hold any meetings during the past week.

During the committee meetings, two draft laws were approved, and the Legal Committee approved the Code of Legal Trails amending the draft law. The Energy and Mineral Resources committee approved the Natural Resources Law of 2015.

The Legal Committee continued discussing the electoral draft law, and began discussing the Integrity and the Fight against Corruption Law for the year 2015. The joint Finance and Economy Committee finished their consultations on the Banking Draft Law and discussed the Banking amending draft law of 2015. The economic and investment committee continued discussing the Chambers of Commerce Draft Law No. 70 for the year 2003.

The System and Behavior Committee discussed the draft working rules and procedures of conduct with the International Partners Foundation. The Finance Committee held a meeting with program experts «Sigma» funded by the European Union to discuss the topic of «the prevention of corruption in government tenders.»

The National Steering Committee and the press discussed the results of the workshop held during the period between the 3rd and 4th of February under the title «Complaints Council: Ideas and Practice.» The Finance Committee demanded to adjust the income tax and sales system at a meeting with the government.

The Education and Culture Committee held two oversight meetings. The first meeting was held with the head of the Private School Owners Union and number of the union members to discuss the issues and

problems that hinder the work of some private schools. The committee held another meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Education to discuss the establishment and licensing of private and foreign educational institutions system.

The Integrity, Transparency, and Fact Finding Committee held a meeting that stressed interest in pursuing anecdotal information about the presence of «stomatitis fibrosis» disease in the cow shipments imported from Colombia, which is on its way to Jordan. The sub-Committee of the Integrity, Transparency and Fact Finding Committee discussed tax evasion.

The Countryside and the Desert Committee discussed environmental compensation for the desert areas. The Labor and Social Development Committee agreed to form a committee to evaluate the damage to companies that engaged in loading and unloading in customs centers.

The Youth and Sports Committee met with representatives of professional football clubs to see the problems and concerns faced by the clubs. The Agriculture and Water Committee discussed considering the complaint submitted to the Committee regarding the poaching.

The Management Committee, which was formed by a decision of the Executive Office, agreed on its chairman MP Qusay Al-Demisi, with MP Fares Halasa as Vice President, and MP Mohammad Al-Zboun as Rapporteur of the Committee.

The 13th week witnessed the activity of many parliamentary blocs. “Mobadra” bloc held a meeting with the Minister of Communications and Information Technology. “Al-Eslah” bloc held a meeting with the Minister of Labour. “Al-Nahda Democratic Rally” Parliamentary bloc held a special meeting to discuss some information. On the other hand, no meetings were recorded for the rest of the blocks.