

## **RASED for Parliamentary Monitoring Program 4<sup>th</sup> Weekly Report on the Performance of the 17<sup>th</sup> Jordanian Parliament during its 2<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Session November 30, 2014**

### **Key Summary Points:**

- RASED calls for the Parliament to discuss outstanding reports of the Audit Bureau.
- RASED values the Speaker of the House's decision to present the 2013 Report on Human Rights in Jordan to the relevant committees and to publish it on the website of the House.
- RASED regrets that 8 committees elected their leadership in sessions closed to the press. RASED calls on the Finance and Economics Committee to utilize experts in studying the Public Budgets and to build the capacity of MPs and employees to evaluate its components.

### **RASED**

The Parliament finished the 4th Week of its performance during the 2nd Ordinary Session by electing leadership for its permanent committees. Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons, and Rapporteurs were elected for 18 committees, with leadership elections for 2 committees were postponed until the coming (5th) week.

On Tuesday of the 4th week, the internal compositions of 18 permanent committees were formed. Two committees—the Committee on Rural Areas and the Badia and the Committee on Accountability and Transparency—did not elect leadership, because they did not have enough members to form a quorum. The Committee on Public Services and Transportation also did not elect a rapporteur.

According to a date set by Speaker of the House Atef al Tarawneh, these positions should be elected next Sunday.

The House elected the leadership of 8 committees away from the eyes of the media in closed sessions. This unprecedented move is worrisome because it violates transparency and the citizen's right to know. In the 10 other committees, representatives of the press were allowed in after protesting the closure of sessions.

The election of these 18 committees was supervised by the First Vice Speaker Ahmad al Safadi and took place in the presence of the Second Vice Speaker Suleyman Al Zibin.

It was noted that the elections were not conducted in the order determined by the parliamentary bylaws or the dates set by the House's Permanent Office, but instead, elections were skipped and reordered according to the availability of parliament members.

RASSED noted that some committees had such a robust competition for the chairmanship that the other positions (Vice Chair and Rapporteur) were not strongly contested. Only the Administrative Affairs committee that had all of its positions appointed through contested elections.

Below is a listing of committee positions and the MPs who were elected to fill them:

### **Legal Committee:**

Chair: MP Mustafa Ammawi

Vice Chair: MP Mustafa Yaghiy

Rapporteur: MP Mafleh al Khaza'ileh

### **Finance Committee:**

Chair: MP Yusuf al Qurna

Vice Chair: MP Mohammed al 'Alaaqme

Rapporteur: MP Fatima Abu 'Abta

## **Economics and Investment Committee**

Chair: MP Kheir Abu Sa'eeleek

Vice Chair: MP Dirar al Dawoud

Rapporteur: MP M'oataz Abu Rumman

## **Foreign Affairs Committee:**

Chair: MP Bassam Manaseer

Vice Chair: MP Hayyal ad-Da'aja

Rapporteur: MP Mohammed al Freihat

## **Administrative Committee:**

Chair: MP Khamees 'Atiyah

Vice Chair: MP Abd al Majeed al Aqtash

Rapporteur: MP Mohammed al Reyatee

## **Education and Development**

Chair: MP Bassem al Batoosh

Vice Chair: MP Miram Al Lozi

Rapporteur: MP Faatan Khalifaat

## **Committee on National Direction**

Chair: MP Zakaria al Shaykh

Vice Chair: MP Mohammed al Hajj

Rapporteur: MP Kuhlood al Khatatbeh

## **Committee on Youth and Sport:**

Chair: MP Tamam al Riyadi

Vice Chair: MP Amina al Gharagheer

Rapporteur: MP Haytham Abu Khadijeh

## **Agriculture and Water Committee:**

Chair: MP Ibrahim al Shahahde

Vice: MP: Dayfullah al Sa'edeen

Rapporteur: MP Sa'id al Zawaida

## **Work, Social Development, and Housing Committee:**

Chair: MP Abdullah 'Abeidat

Vice Chair: MP Abd al Hadi al Muhaarima

Rapporteur: MP Mafleh al 'Ashebaat

## **Committee on Health and Environment**

Chair: MP Raed Hajazeen

Vice Chair: MP Dayfullah al Khaledi

Rapporteur: MP Zakariya al Sheikh

## **Energy and Natural Wealth Committee**

Chair: MP Jamal Qamwa

Vice Chair: MP Mohammed 'Asha al Duweimeh

Rapporteur: MP 'Atef Q'awar

## **General Services and Transportation**

Chair: MP Ibrahim al 'Atwiyya

Vice Chair: MP Ali Bani Ata

Rapporteur: \*(vote was delayed )

## **Committee on Tourism and Antiquities**

Chair: MP Munir al Zuwaideh

Vice Chair: MP Ansaf al Khawalideh

Rapporteur: MP Qusay al Damisi

## **Committee on General Freedoms and Human Rights:**

Chair: MP Khair al Din Hakouz

Vice Chair: MP Sa'id al Balawi

Rapporteur: MP Wafa' Bani Mustafa

## **Committee on Palestine**

Chair: MP Yahya al Sa'oud

Vice Chair: MP Radayneh al 'Ata

Rapporteur: MP Abd al Majeed al Aqtash

## **Committee on Internal Organization**

Chair: MP 'Adnan al 'Ajaarima

Vice Chair: MP Qasim bani Hani

Rapporteur: MP Abd al Kareem al Druwayseh

## **Committee on Womens and Family Affairs:**

Chair: MP Reem abu Dalbooh

Vice Chair: MP Tamam al Riyati

Rapporteur: MP Shaha al 'Amareen

The parliamentary blocs' shares in the committees is unclear and ambiguous because the blocs did not complete their own formation and registration with the Secretary General of the House by the end of the session Thursday. Two blocs – Tamkeen and the Al Itihad al Watani – did register, but even these registered blocs may be subject to removals and additions until the end of the day next Tuesday December 2.

The Investment and Economics Committee was the first permanent committee to hold a session, after calling its members to a late session through phone calls. The committee decided to continue with a discussion begun by the committee in the previous session on the provisions of the Draft Tax and salaries Law for 2014, according to an announcement by the Chairman Al Khair Abu Sa'eeleek. This compelled the Speaker of the House to call for a special legislative session Sunday to complete discussion of the Draft Income and Tax Law for 2014.

In some cases, the announcement of committee leadership provoked angry reactions from committee members who protested the results. In some cases, this led to MPs resigning from committees for parliamentary blocs. In many cases, attempts at mediation were not successful at containing many MPs' anger and frustration with the election results.

During the week, the House of Representatives sent the Audit Bureau's 62nd Annual Report for 2013 to the Finance Committee. This report now joins the 5 other outstanding reports by the Audit Bureau that remain to be discussed, including those from 2009, 2020, 2011, 2012.

RASSED would notes that it has long discussed the importance the Audit Bureau's annual reports, as they enable the House of Representatives to play its fiscal monitoring role. The fact that the House has not considered these reports in some time is a significant impediment to its exercise of this role.

The Finance Committee had reviewed these reports during the 1st Ordinary Session, but it did not complete them. The reports were not discussed during the extra ordinary sessions of parliament.

RASSED calls upon the Finance Committee to finish the discussion on these reports pursuant to the efforts of the previous committee. It is possible for the committee to begin a study of these reports in conjunction with its studies for the draft budgets for the fiscal year 2015.

RASSED calls on the House to set a specific timeframe for reviewing the reports of the Audit Bureau presented to it, in addition to granting these reports urgency status pursuant to the Constitutional provision that Audit Bureau reports should be included in the House agenda and be considered without delays.

RASSED supports the request of the House of Representatives for the Audit Bureau to distribute reports on a quarterly basis. This would help the Parliament monitor infractions in the ministries and government agencies. This was agreed upon on by multiple groups on more than one occasion and was echoed by MPs when reviewing the 62nd Annual Report for 2013 at last Sunday's meeting.



During the week, the House also sent the draft laws for the General Budget and the Unified Government Budget to the Finance Committee. RASED calls on the House to follow up on the implementation of the budget and calls on the parliament to discuss the official accounts for completed fiscal year in order to prepare the budget for the upcoming year.

RASED calls for building the capacity of MPs and employees of the permanent committees to understand the general budget. This may entail the help of experts to assist MPs in evaluating budget components, in order to build their ability to analyze budgets and legislate accordingly.

During this time, the House held one session to hear a speech on the General Budget for the state, and a number of laws were sent from the Government to relevant committees. (Normally, only one or two such laws would be passed on by the government during this time.)

The decision of the House of Representatives and its Speaker to send multiple pieces of legislation to the committees clearly demonstrates the commitment of the parliament to considering parliamentary committees the places where legislation is truly made. This supports the role of committees and gives MPs more opportunities to make substantive contributions to the legislative process.

In the 4th week, Speaker of the House Eng. Atef al Tarawneh submitted a copy of the yearly report on Human Rights in Jordan for 2013.

RASED values the decision of the Speaker of the House to send this report to the relevant committees in the House. And also to upload the report to the website of the House of Representatives to support a national discussion on the issue.

During the week, 23 MPs signed a motion of confidence for the Minister of Agriculture 'Akif al Za'obi in a memorandum adopted by MP Bassam al Batoush.