

RASSED for Parliamentary Monitoring Program
10th Weekly Report on the Performance of the Parliament
During the 3rd Ordinary Session
January 23, 2016

In the 10th week of its Third Ordinary Session, the House of Representatives has held a session allocated to complete the discussion of the Foreigners Act and the Affairs of Residency Draft Law which took four sessions to approve the draft articles. However, the council was unable to complete the session's agenda, in which the Industry and Trade Amending Draft Law of the year 2011 and the Accreditation Commission of the Higher Education Institutions Amending Draft Law for the year 2015 were scheduled.

12 parliamentary committees have held 16 regulatory and legislative meetings during the last week. The Energy Committee held three meetings, while the Tourism and Antiquities Committee and Palestine committee have held two meetings each. The Countryside and Badia Committee, the Integrity and Transparency Committee, the Investment and Economy Committee, the Services and Transportation Committee, the Labor and Social Development Committee, the Education and Culture Committee, the Agriculture and Water Committee, the Legal Committee, as well as the Youth and Sports Committee have held one meeting each, while 8 committees did not hold any meeting.

Last week has witnessed the first meeting of the Executive Office, which consists of the permanent office's members, the parliamentary blocs' heads or representatives, and a representative of the independent MPs after more than two months of the Third Ordinary Session. The Executive office decided to elect MP Khloud Khatatba a Rapporteur

by acclamation, approved the membership of a number of MPs to the committees, and accepted the resignation of other MPs.

During the 10th week, the second Deputy of the Jordanian House of Representatives President Mr. Khamis Attiyah directed a memorandum to the Prime Minister on the issue of «the invalidity of the selling of Jubaihah lands». MP Motaz Abu Rumman directed a memorandum to the House of Representatives President Atef Tarawneh asking to hold a meeting with investors and owners of international companies who intend to transfer their investments outside the kingdom.

An intention in the parliamentary committees to form miniature Committees to follow up the service and social issues has appeared last week. The three committees of Integrity and Transparency, Agriculture and Water, and Tourism and Antiquities have formed three miniature committees to follow up certain issues. The miniature Committee of Integrity and Transparency was assigned to follow up with the tax and customs evasion issue, the miniature Committee of Agriculture and Water to study the status of agriculture, and the miniature Committee of Tourism and Antiquities to follow up the problems related to expatriate workers in the tourism sector.

However, the miniature committees that have been formed involved members from outside the House of Representatives, which questions the legal validity of this procedure and its compatibility with the article 63 of the Parliament's interior bylaw, which states that «each of the permanent and temporary committees can form a subcommittee from its own members to study certain subjects and report the outcome of its work to its original committee». Hence, the article states that the miniature committees are formed from the original committees' members and not from outside the council. However, the miniature committees that were

announced last week was formed by members from inside and outside the Parliament. It has been announced that the miniature Committee of Transparency and Integrity included representatives from the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Audit Bureau of Jordan, Jordan Customs, and Jordan Income and Sales Tax Department as members. The miniature Committee of Tourism and Antiquities included members from the Ministry of Labor and the Tourist Hotel Association. The miniature Committee of Agriculture and Water included the Ministers of Agriculture, Water and Irrigation, Industry and Trade, Catering, Transportation, Labor, the Environment and Municipal Affairs, as well as representatives of the General Federation of Jordanian Farmers.

The legislative part of the committees work was low as only four committees tackled their legislative tasks. The Legal Committee continued discussing the Electoral Draft Law and reached the eighth article, which is related to the electoral system, and stopped there. The committee opted not to decide until after hearing the MPs views as this article represents the essence of the law. The Energy and Mineral Resources Committee approved some of the articles of Natural Resources Draft Law 2015. The Economic and Investment Committee discussed the temporary law no. 70 of the Chambers of Commerce Law 2003. The Public Service and Transportation Committee discussed the temporary law no. 33 for the Passengers Public Transportation 2010.

On the other hand, only eight committees did their monitoring role. The Countryside and Badia Committee discussed with the mayors of the northern, central and southern Badia the challenges and obstacles faced by their municipalities. The Integrity and Transparency Committee discussed the amounts of the tax and customs evasion and the mechanism used to impose taxes. The Tourism and Antiquities Committee discussed the problems related to the employment in

the hotel sector. The taxes levied on tourist transport sector were also discussed by the same committee in another session. The Labor and Social Development Committee listened to complaints from citizens regarding the services provided by the Ministry of Social Development to people with disability and their financial support.

The Education and Culture Committee listened to the demands of a number of community colleges' deans. The Agriculture and Water Committee discussed ways of enhancing the agricultural sector. The Youth and Sports Committee met with the heads of disability sports clubs. Palestine Committee met with the heads of the camps' committees, and discussed the medical exemptions for Gaza strip residents in another meeting.

The Chairman of the Finance Committee, Eng. Abdul Rahim Biqai, announced that the committee will embark on the implementation of their supervisory duties through a periodic follow up to the general performance regarding The Budget Law, which was approved by the Senate and the high royal will. The Chairman stated that the role of the Financial Committee is not limited to discussing the State Financial Law in its initial levels, but extends to the monitoring and continuous follow-up to the implementation mechanism, abiding to its outcomes, and checking the integrity of its assumptions and estimates.

RASED noted that parliamentary committees are still suffering from the lack of quorum to hold its meetings. The committees often held their meetings without a quorum especially if the subject was regulatory and not legislative.