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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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Parliamentary Elections Expected in 2016

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One of the most important qualities of democracy is the process of election. In a democratic country, if elections continue democracy prospers. This claim can be strengthened by the examples that can be found in the history of greatest democratic states. American democratic history has a series of elections, continued for more than two centuries. United Kingdom's history depicts even a longer continuation of series of elections and today both the countries enjoy a dominant role in international political arena. They both enjoy economic and political might and there are many countries that have been trying to pattern their systems in accordance to these democratic giants.

As a matter of fact, elections let the public govern themselves; therefore, in a democratic state government is elected as per the will of the people. People get the chance of listening the motives and mottos of the leaders and they get time even to analyze them properly. Afterwards, they are given a chance of casting their votes and choosing the leaders whom they consider capable enough to govern their country. It is possible that the leaders who are chosen to form government may not be the best, but they are better than the ones who are not chosen by the will of the majority as every nation in the world has the right to choose what they think better for themselves, without bringing harm to others.

It is important that there should be consistent elections within a democratic country if it really wants to prosper and develop. In fact, every new election is a new step in the evolution of democracy and every new step is better than the earlier one. That is basically the demand of an evolutionary process. Even if the government after new election is corrupt, it is always better

than the earlier one as the election before the earlier one had also contributed a little in the awareness enhancement; so will do this new one and the election after this one would have better decisions. People will have a chance to see what the chosen government has been able to offer to them. They can have the chance of not casting their votes to ones who have not been able to serve them properly.

In the context of Afghanistan, there have been certain hiccups regarding the elections process. There have been certain delays and allegations of fraud and the road to a truly democratic election process has not been smooth. There are intellectuals who even believe that democracy will not be able to lead Afghan political system and they even argue that Afghan society is not so far ready for it. But, it would be better to be more logical and scientific. The history of democracy in Afghanistan is very short and blaming democracy for the miseries in our country is not just. It should be given more time and space to grow and serve the people in true sense.

The presidential election took place last year after many controversies and there has been a delay in the parliamentary election as well. Parliament had completed its term in June this year, but because of unpreparedness and security concerns, the elections could not be held before that time and President Ashraf Ghani issued a decree in June, extending parliament's mandate until a vote could be held.

Though Afghanistan's system is a presidential system and the parliament does not enjoy much authority, it is important that the elections must continue without delays and problems as it will ensure improvement in the role of the parliament in the country. Moreover, the district council elections that have to be held along with the parliamentary elections can support in the development of grass root democracy. Though there are still serious concerns regarding the setup, there can be amendments and improvements to make the setup more people oriented and convince the people to participate in such elections to a large extent so that they are able to have their say in the system.

President Ghani, along with Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah, pledged in a meeting with the members of the Electoral Reform Commission and selection committee at the Presidential Palace on Tuesday, December 29, that the parliamentary elections will be held next year between summer and fall. He also said that the exact dates for holding parliamentary and district council elections were for the Independent Election Commission to announce under the relevant law. He also said in the meeting, "The important issue is that reforms will be brought and the election date will be announced by the new leadership of the Independent Election Commission."

It is really important for Afghanistan that there should be better power-sharing formula between the parliament and the presidential palace. Moreover, important amendments are required to make district council elections more effective; as, a democratic country can best provide services to the people when the district councils are truly effective, authoritative enough and are formed by the votes of the majority of the people.

We need to understand that in order to have a fruitful tree of democracy, we need to water it continuously with elections, safeguard it from the parasites of corruption, fertilize it with

freedom of expression and above all avoid deforestation by dominance of dictatorship. Only then we would be able to continue our journey towards a true democracy.