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## The disabled protest in front of parliament

By Abasin Zaheer

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Scores of disabled people, seeking permission for reconstructing roadside kiosks in the capital, staged a protest in front of the parliament building in Kabul on Tuesday.

The protestors, who prevented lawmakers' vehicles from entering the parliament, denounced the government's decision on abolishing roadside cabins as a step against the special people.

Lame in one leg, Malik Mohammad Malikzada told Pajhwok Afghan News the authorities had decided last year to give the disabled small pieces of land in eight police districts of Kabul.

Subsequently, they set up small shops on the allotted pieces of land to support their families, but the kiosks were destroyed during an anti-encroachment drive. The authorities promised them land for shops in another locality, he said.

However, Malikzada complained the government was yet to honour its commitment. A disabled person, receiving 1500afs (\$30) in monthly pay, could not make ends meet without setting up a business, he added.

“Since no one listens to us, we have gathered here in the hope that public representatives will resolve our problem,” the protestor said.

Reliant on crutches, another demonstrator warned: “We’ll continue our protest as long as we are not allotted land for shops.” Zabihullah accused police of seeking bribes from them.

“Many continue running roadside shops; cart vendors are also doing their job. They bribe police. But people like us who refuse to pay them have had their cabins razed.”

But Ministry of Interior spokesman Siddique Siddiqui rejected the allegation as unfounded. He said the shops that encroached on roads had been destroyed in compliance with government’s orders.

“We can’t allow them to sell their goods and park hand carts on city roads. It creates traffic problems. The disabled are unwilling to move to the new site, where they say there are no buyers...”