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## Rabbani comes under fire in Wolesi Jirga

by Abaseen Zaheer

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A number of lawmakers on Saturday alleged the *High Peace Council* (HPC) chairman, despite repeated demands, had failed to brief them on the outcome of the reconciliation drive.

Over the past month, *Wolesi Jirga* members thrice asked Salahuddin Rabbani to update them on the government-led peace campaign. However, he has not yet appeared before the lower house.

A public representative from central Logar province accused Rabbani of disregarding the parliamentary calls. “Mr. Rabbani believes that appearing before parliamentarians is below his grace,” Sahib Khan remarked.

Asadullah Saadati, another legislator from Daikundi province, also assailed HPC members for ignoring the parliament. He said the Administrative Board had been unable to take action against the officials who refused to answer MPs queries.

Speaker Abdur Rauf Ibrahimy acknowledged the HPC chief had thrice been summoned but could not turn up because of his foreign trips. Right now Rabbani is visiting northern Badakhshan province.

Around 100 of the 294 MPs were present during Saturday’s session, causing the quorum problem that occasionally hinders decisions on important issues. Several members lashed out at their absent colleagues.

A parliamentarian from southern Kandahar province, Abdul Rahim Ayubi, complained the quorum had been incomplete over the past few months. He claimed most members skipped house sessions to push private businesses.

The Administrative Board, whose members also stayed away from the house, could not take disciplinary action against the absent MPs, Ayubi observed.

Many seats remained vacant due to lawmakers' lack of interest in house proceedings and the board's failure to hold the absent members accountable, said Asadullah Sharifi, a legislator from northern Sar-i-Pul province.

Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahimy directed Wolesi Jirga secretaries to impose discipline on absent MPs in line with house rules. Under Article 131 of Wolesi Jirga rules, the name of a member staying absent for more than five days in a month is leaked to media outlets and his/her pay deducted.