



## **Sitting Marked by Low Attendance; Walkouts over Quetta Bomb Blast**

ISLAMABAD, February 18, 2013: Starting 30 late, the first sitting of 91<sup>st</sup> session on Monday witnessed low attendance of Senators. Only two senators were present at the outset while 13 were there at the adjournment, says Free and Fair Election Network in its Daily Factsheet based on direct observation of the Senate.

The MQM, BNPA, JUIF and PMLN staged four walkouts separately protesting against the recent bomb blast in Quetta.

The Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition attended the entire sitting. The parliamentary leaders of MQM, JUIF and NP attended the sitting, while those of PML, BNPA, ANP and PMLF were not present.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

### **Members' Participation in House Proceedings**

- The Senate met for an hour and 53 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1730 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1700 hours, witnessing a delay of 30 minutes.
- The Chairman chaired the entire sitting.
- The Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the House attended the sitting.
- The parliamentary leaders of MQM, JUIF and NP were present whereas those of PML, BNPA, ANP and PMLF did not attend the sitting.
- Only two senators were present at the outset while 13 were there at the time of adjournment. A maximum of 32 senators were present at one point of sitting.
- A 30-minute prayer break was observed.
- One senator on minority seat attended the sitting.
- Six senators applied for leave.

### **Representation and Responsiveness**

- Question Hour was not held as it was a Private Members' Day.
- Two motions under rule 218 appearing on the agenda were not taken up.

### **Output**

- The House passed two resolutions -- one seeking the House' recommendations for the provision of housing facilities to all Federal Government employees through Pakistan



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Housing Authority, and the second one recommending the government to review fees, service and other charges formula of the foreign banks operating in Pakistan.

- Three bills were referred to their respective standing committees.

### **Order and Institutionalization**

- Twelve points of order consumed 20 minutes.
- MQM, JUIF, BNPA and PMLN staged walkouts over recent Quetta bomb blast.

### **Transparency**

- Orders of the Day were available to legislators, observers and others.
- Information on senators' attendance was unavailable to observers and the public.
- The Quorum was visibly lacking at various stages of the sitting. However, it was not pointed by any of the legislators.

*The Daily Factsheet is based on direct observation of the Senate proceedings conducted by Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), a member organization of FAFEN*