



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 09, Session No. 90 of the Senate

Senate: Fair Trial Bill Passed

ISLAMABAD, February 01, 2012: The Upper House passed the Investigation for Fair Trial Bill in the ninth sitting of the 90th session, which met for 57 minutes on Friday.

Already passed by the National Assembly, the bill provides for collection of evidence by means of modern techniques and devices to prevent and effectively deal with scheduled offences and to regulate the powers of the law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

The sitting was marked by low attendance. Only eight Senators were present at the outset while 11 at the time of adjournment. A maximum of 36 Senators were present at one point of sitting.

JUIF Senators again walked out over imposition of Governor Rule in Balochistan and did not return to attend the rest of the proceedings. ANP Senators walked out over target killings in Karachi.

The sitting was chaired by the Deputy Chairman.

The Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition, and the parliamentary leaders of MQM, PML, ANP, and JUIF attended the sitting.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The Senate met for 57 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1129 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1030 hours, witnessing a delay of 59 minutes.
- The Deputy Chairman chaired the entire sitting.
- The Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition attended the sitting.
- The parliamentary leaders of MQM, PML, ANP, and JUIF were present whereas those of BNPA, NP and PMLF did not attend the sitting.
- Only eight Senators were present at the outset while 11 were there at the time of adjournment. A maximum of 36 Senators were present at one point of sitting.
- The quorum was visibly lacking at various stages of the sitting. However, it was not pointed out by any member.
- Two minority Senators attended the sitting.
- Five Senators applied for leave.

Representation and Responsiveness

- Three of the four starred questions appearing on the agenda were taken up during the Question Hour. Additionally, 14 supplementary questions were asked.



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- The House unanimously passed the Investigation for Fair Trial Bill.

Order and Institutionalization

- Five points of order consumed 20 minutes of the sitting time.
- Two instances of walkouts were observed. JUIF Senators walked out over imposition of Governor Rule in Balochistan 15 minutes before the sitting's adjournment. ANP Senators walked out over target killings in Karachi five minutes the sitting ended. Senators of the both parties did not return to attend the rest of the proceedings.

Transparency

- Orders of the Day was available to legislators, observers and others.
- Information on senators' attendance was unavailable to observers and the public.

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