



Yemen Parliament Watch



Yemen Polling Center
المركز اليمني لقياس الرأي العام

Report on the Yemeni Parliament's Performance

May-August 2010



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0.1 The Yemen Parliament Watch project

The Yemen Parliament Watch project aims at enhancing the capacity of Yemen's Parliament by providing a central hub of informational and training resources for Members of Parliament (MPs), civil society stakeholders, journalists and citizens. The project, implemented by the Yemen Polling Center (YPC) with funding from the European Union through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), has as its ultimate goal the strengthening of the Parliament and the development of its links to constituents in particular and to Yemen's citizens in general.

Furthermore, the project strives to empower civil society organizations to strengthen democratic and human rights with a focus on women's political rights and participation, electoral rights and reforms, and fostering an independent, free, and fair press, which upholds the highest standards in journalism. The different activities of the project will be implemented over a total of 18 months, between the period December 2009 and May 2011.

Besides establishing and sustaining a website on the Yemeni Parliament (YPWatch.org), the Yemen Parliament Watch project also includes the implementation of several workshops for members of civil society organizations and journalists of various media (newspapers, radio, and TV). These workshops aspire to strengthen the capacities of civil society organizations in lobbying Parliamentarians on issues pertaining to democracy and human rights, and to enhance the capacities of journalists in monitoring and reporting on the work of Parliament.

0.2 The performance report

This report is the second of four special reports YPW will publish throughout the duration of the project on the performance and work of the Parliament.

The reports aim to increase public knowledge of the work of Parliament and Parliamentarians and analyze the Parliament's activities. They are intended to provide the public as well as the relevant stakeholders (MPs, media, and civil society) with a summary of the most recent activities by Parliament. They will serve also as reference for journalists in monitoring and reporting about the work of Parliament and informing citizens. These reports therefore intend to enhance the level of public knowledge in regard to the work of Parliament, the performance of MPs, and ultimately the role of Parliament in Yemeni politics.

Each report will be available to the public on the Yemen Parliament Watch website (YPWatch.org) and will also be circulated in hard copies to MPs, media organizations, and active civil society organizations.

Executive Summary

This Performance Report covers the period 1 May- 30 August 2010. The report is based on the coverage of Yemen Parliament Watch Website, the daily reports of the Parliament sessions prepared by YPW Reports inside Parliament, in addition to the official minutes of Parliament sessions.

While there were 27 draft laws before Parliament during the period, MPs discussed only ten of them. And seven of draft laws were voted on and approved by Parliament. In addition, the Parliament discussed six draft loan agreements to finance infrastructure and development projects of which five of these were voted on and approved by Parliament. The discussion of the sixth agreement was postponed to a subsequent Parliament session.

The legislative output of the Parliament was low as only one draft law was proposed by a Member of Parliament¹ in comparison to 26 draft laws submitted by the Executive Branch of the Government. In terms of the oversight capacity, the Parliament discussed only 7.3 percent of the questions listed in its agenda for the period covered in the report. Moreover, the Parliament discussed only 23 percent of the oversight reports prepared by its committees.

The Parliament's agenda for the third session period included 70 questions, but not a single question was discussed during the third session. All seventy questions were transferred for discussion to the agenda of the Parliament's fourth session.

In terms of the Parliament's relation with the Executive Branch, it continued to be precarious. The Ministers who were summoned by Parliament to attend some sessions of Parliament did not abide by the time and dates set by the Parliament in order to discuss and clarify some aspects pertaining to some developing issues or to reply to questions and interrogations raised and presented by some MPs.

The Parliament did not reconvene three consecutive plenary sessions due to not meeting the required quorum. Many of the plenary sessions, during the period covered in the report witnessed a low attendance rate by MPs, based on the official minutes of the Parliament, at the least.

¹ MP Azzam Abdullah Sallah

During May-August 2010 Parliament held 43 plenary sessions in two parliamentary Sessions². The two sessions were the third and the fourth sessions of the first Ordinary Session³ of the Eighth Annual Session⁴ of the Parliament. During those two sessions, the Parliament's agenda was packed with draft laws and loan agreements and treaties, some of which were carried over from previous sessions.

The Parliament's agenda for the third and fourth sessions included 16 draft laws. In addition, eleven draft laws were sent to their relevant Permanent Committees to examine and to write a report about them. Ten of the eleven draft laws had been submitted to Parliament by the Executive Branch and one draft law, on the eradication of illiteracy was proposed by a Member of Parliament . Thus, twenty seven draft laws in total were presented before the Parliament during the period of this report.

In addition to 27 draft laws, six loan agreement and treaties were presented to the Parliament during the same period. Five loan agreements were not included in the Parliament's primary agenda for the period.

The performance report explains below the draft laws that were discussed and voted on by the Parliament, the outcome of the voting process, and the draft laws that were transferred to subsequent sessions.

1- The draft laws and agreements voted by the Parliament

The Parliament, during the period of the report discussed and voted on seven draft laws. Among the draft laws that were voted and approved by Parliament are: High Education Law, the Income Tax Law, and Investment Law. These three laws were the most controversial laws as the report will explain later in the report.

The Parliament rejected the draft law regarding an alternative national flag on the ground it was not necessary and the current law was sufficient. The Parliament also rejected a draft law pertaining to establishing a Fund for Expatriates⁵ because it contradicted with a previous recommendation issued by Parliament not to create more Funds on the ground that they constitute a loophole for corruption. The Parliament accepted the Government's request to withdraw a draft law the Executive branch had submitted to the Parliament which deals with regulating the agencies and branches of foreign companies.

² The total number of plenaries which the House holds within a month time.

³ One of the two sessions, which House holds during a full year.

⁴ The two sessions the House holds throughout the year

⁵ A special authority with separate financial account to absorb money transfers and investment projects by expatriates

Table 1, below shows the discussed draft laws and the outcome of the discussions during the period of the report.

Table 1: Discussed Draft laws during the Report's Period

	Submitted by	Type of Legislation	Outcome
Income Tax Law	Government	Draft law	Approved
Higher Education Law	Government	Draft law	Approved
Investment Law	Government	Draft law	Approved
Transportation Law	Government	Amendment to a Law	Approved
Customs Law	Government	Amendment to a Law	Approved
Code Documentation Law	Government	Amendment to a Law	Approved
Eradication of Illiteracy Law	MP	Amendment to a Law	Approved
Alternative National Flag Law	Government	Draft law	Did not approve
Establishing a Fund for Expatriates	Government	Draft law	Did not approve
Regulating Agencies for Foreign Companies	Government	Draft law	Withdrawn by the Government

The Parliament discusses and approved five international agreements during the time period of the report. All of the five agreements were pertaining to financial loans to finance infrastructure projects in Yemen, such as the loan to develop Suqatra Port and a loan to finance electricity projects in rural areas. The Parliament postponed the discussion of the sixth agreement in its agenda, a loan agreement signed between the Government and OPEC Fund for Development to finance the Social Fund for Development to the third session of the second Ordinary Session of the Eighth Annual Session of the Parliament.

The Parliament during its fourth session postponed discussion about “Peaceful Settlement of International Conflicts (Lahai) Agreement”⁶ to a subsequent session although the agreement was included in the Parliament’s agenda for the third session.

It is patently clear that the Parliament did not have an adequate time to examine and study five loan agreements, for the examination and writing reports phases by the Parliament committees and for the discussion of the committees’ reports at the plenary sessions. Instead of taking sufficient time to study loan agreements which add more financial burden on the country, the Parliament and its committees’ members tend to expedite the process leading to the approval of loan agreements. This is an indication of the exerted and continued pressure of the government on the Parliament and MPs.

Moreover, the vote on agreements usually does not generate any disputes or heated debates among the Members of Parliament. The MPs of minority blocs (Islah, YSP, and Nasserite) are the least participatory members in the discussions pertaining to loan agreements.

Table 2: Discussed Agreements in the period of the report

	Outcome of discussion	Notes
Suqatra Port Loan Project	Approved	
48 Hospital Loan Project	Approved	Consisted of two agreements
Funding Electricity project in rural areas	Approved	
Protecting Sana’a from Flood Loan Project	Approved	
An OPEC Fund’s loan to finance Social Fund for Development	Transferred to next session period	

2- Proportion of laws and agreements passed

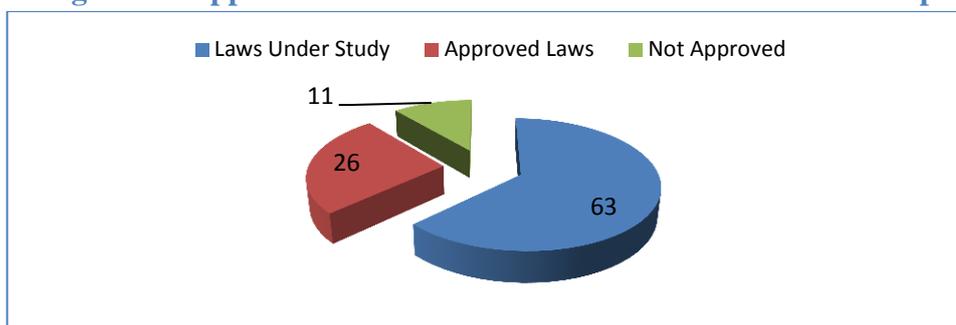
It has been noted that 27 draft laws were before the Parliament during the period of this report. Some of these draft laws were included in the Parliament’s agenda for the period and some others were added outside the agenda. But the Parliament discussed and voted on only seven of the 27 draft laws. So, the proportion of approved laws does not exceed 26 percent of all draft laws that were before the Parliament during the period. The Parliament would vote on a draft law after discussion of the relevant report prepared by the concerned permanent committee in plenary sessions.

⁶ The agreement was named Lahai Agreement in reference to the city it was initiated.

And if we include the draft laws that were submitted but they were rejected by Parliament and the draft law that was withdrawn by the Government, the proportion of the discussed draft laws by Parliament during the period is 37 percent of all 27 draft laws in the Parliament’s agenda for the period covered in the report. 17 draft laws are still pending their examination by committees of Parliament.

It is worth mentioning that the two draft laws that were rejected by Parliament after only reading the clarification memo on each by the Government. The third draft law was withdrawn based on a request by the Government and the Parliament agreed to give it back before any discussion had taken place on it.

Diagram 1: Approved laws and draft laws shifted to later session period



Below are a number of comments related to the proportion of accomplishment of the Parliament’s agenda in the legislative side during the period covered in this report:

- 1- The Parliament witnessed noticeable activity in the legislative function of the Parliament during the fourth session of its first session (the report covers the third and fourth sessions) in comparison to previous sessions, where the draft laws and agreements noted above were approved during this period.
- 2- A number of draft laws were not discussed despite their inclusion in two consecutive working agendas of the Parliament (the third and fourth sessions). The Parliament’s agenda for the third session included 14 draft laws. Only four were discussed and three of them were approved by the Parliament.
- 3- The Parliament, during the third session considered the report on code documentation draft law that was prepared by a permanent committee of the Parliament. The report was referred back to the committee to incorporate some amendments that were made during the plenary discussion of the report. The final vote on code documentation draft law was included in the Parliament’s agenda for the third round session, but the final vote on the law did not take place until during the fourth round session.
- 4- Six draft laws were not discussed by the Parliament during the third and fourth round sessions in spite of their inclusion in the Parliament’s agendas for the two round sessions. The amendment to possession and

carrying of fire arms and ammunition law and the amendment of the personal identification law pertaining to determining the safe age for marriage are among the six draft laws that were not discussed. These two projects are the greatest number of projects to be transferred from one session to another.

3- Competence of Permanent Committees

The competence level of the permanent committees in the legislative side fluctuates from one committee to another. Some Parliament committees submit reports on draft laws and loan agreements and treaties that were asked to examine in a timely fashion, thus discussion of these reports in plenary sessions usually take place as scheduled. Other Parliament committees take a longer time to write and submit reports on draft laws and agreements they were asked to examine, consequently, discussion of these reports do not take place as scheduled and thus, discussions of the reports are rescheduled and transferred from one round session to another.

Table 3 below shows that the Oil and Development Committee is the most committee to submit reports on draft laws the committee was asked to examine during the period of this report. The Parliament discussed six reports prepared by the Oil and Development Committee, even though the reports were compiled in collaboration with other committees of Parliament. The Finance Committee comes next with three reports filed by the Committee during the same time period.

Table 3: Submitted Reports of Parliament Committees for the Period

	Parliament Committee
Higher Education Draft law Report	High Education Youth and Sports Committee
Income Taiz Draft law Report	Finance Committee
Investment Draft law Report	Finance, Commerce and Industry, and Oil and Development Committees
Transportation Draft law Report	Transport and Communication Committee
Customs Draft law Report	Finance Committee
Documentation Draft law Report	Justice and Endowment Committee
Eradication of Illiteracy Draft law Report	Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
Suqatra Port Loan Project Report	Oil and Development Committee + Transport and Communication Committee
The Forty Eight Hospital Loan Project Report	Public Health and Housing Committee + Oil and Development Committee

Funding Electricity Project for Rural Areas Report	Oil and Development and Services Committees
Protecting Sana'a City of Floods Loan Project Report	Oil and Development and Services Committees
OPEC Fund Loan Project to Finance Social Fund for Development	Labor Force and Oil and Development Committees

There are a number of factors connected with the performance of the permanent committees of Parliament in examining, writing and submitting reports on draft laws and agreements committees are asked to examine, as well as on the timing of the committees to submit their reports. The most important factors are:

- I. The importance of the draft law to the government increases the work pace of the committees, such as in the case of economic draft laws submitted to the Parliament by the government. For example, "Income tax draft law", "Investment draft law", and "Customs draft law" were presented to the Parliament in July. The three draft laws were examined by the relevant committees and the Parliament voted on and approved them before the session was ended. Similarly, the "High education draft law" which the government presented to the Parliament as urgent was discussed and approved by the Parliament in the same round session even though it was not included in the Parliament's agenda for the period.
- II. Some draft laws tend to generate disagreement either inside or outside the Parliament. This may slow the pace of the committee's review. One example is the safe age for marriage draft law which is still pending the report of the Endowment and Islamic Legislation Committee. The draft law has created much argument inside the Parliament as well as among the general public. Some argue that the draft law contradicts with Islamic Legislation. Even though the committee has completed its report, it has not been able to submit it on the ground the report would generate disagreement.
- III. The loan agreements tend to have more priorities than other agreements. While six loan agreements were discussed and five of them were approved by the Parliament, the discussion of the peaceful settlement of international conflict agreement "Lahai" has been postponed to a later session despite its inclusion in the Parliament's agenda in two consecutive sessions.

MPs' Legislative Capacity

The legislative capacity of MPs is measured by two standards. First, the number of draft laws proposed by the Members of Parliament and second, the effective participation of Members of Parliament in the legislation discussions.

From the data in Table1, it is clear that out of the seven draft laws that were approved by the Parliament during the period only one draft law was presented by a Member of Parliament in comparison to six projects that were submitted by the Government.

Despite controversies and general debates, some draft laws had generated during their discussion inside the Parliament, such as the Investment law, Income tax law, and High education draft law the number of MPs who participated in the discussion of these laws did not rise to the expected level. The Number of MPs who participated during the discussion of the most controversial draft law, the Investment law did not exceed eight MPs.

4- Legislative Capacity of Parliamentary Blocs

The existing parliamentary blocs in the Parliament also reflect a low level of legislative effectiveness. The fact remains that not a single draft law was proposed by any of the present parliamentary blocs inside Parliament during the period covered by the report. The limited contributions and interactions of some MPs as part of the legislative function of Parliament reflect only their personal energetic level and dedicated efforts as individuals and not as members of any parliamentary bloc they are affiliated with. In other words, parliamentary blocs continue to lack any concerted internal coherence.

In other words, the stances and positions expressed by Members of Parliament towards the discussed draft laws in plenary sessions do not necessarily reflect the stances and positions of any parliamentary bloc or the political parties they are affiliated with. The only exception is pertaining to the position of opposition MPs towards the High Education draft law where they opposed the draft law as an opposition bloc, as this will be referred to later on in the report.

A number of draft laws that were approved by the Parliament during the period in the report are considered important laws due to the economic nature and impact they possess and entail, such as the Income Tax law, the Investment Law, and the Customs Law. Yet, the stances and positions expressed by the opposition parliamentary blocs did not go beyond demanding a change/ replace of a word or a phrase here and there to these laws.

The stances and positions of opposition political parties toward economic policies of the ruling political party have not been felt inside the Parliament and they have not been expressed by opposition parliamentary blocs. In other words, the criticism of the opposition is not transferred into draft laws their parliamentary blocs present to the Parliament's floor as alternative policies to the ruling party's. This is true as well during the discussions of loan agreements which tend to be approved by Parliament without any tangible resistance by the opposition parliamentary blocs.

5- Most Controversial Draft Laws

Some of the draft laws that were approved by the Parliament during the period of this report generated controversy among the public and witnessed intense debates among MPs during their discussions. The most important of these laws are:

High Education Law

Article 19 of the draft law states: "The Dean of University is to be appointed by a decree issued by the President of the Republic following the approval of the Prime Minister and suggestion of Minister of High Education. The appointee is chosen of a list of three candidates nominated by the Board of Trustee".

The law involves establishing a board of trustee which would consist of three businessmen to be recommended by chamber of commerce, three public figures to be recommended by Prime Minister and four academics to be recommended by the Minister of High Education in addition to the departing Dean of the University. The law generated a controversy among the academics who believe that the board of trustees and the Dean of the University should be elected by the academic community. The students apposed the law as well since it requires that a student must pass the TOEFL Test in order to be eligible to continue his/her higher studies.

These objections indicate that the legislators did not involve the relevant and concerned sectors such as the teachers syndicate at universities and students unions during the legislation process. The chairman of the teachers syndicate at Sana'a University stated that the syndicate had sent a number of observations and recommendations on the law, but they were not taken into consideration.

Only five MPs participated in the discussion of this law. The MPs of the opposition and independent MPs had objected to the draft law.

Income Tax Law

The income tax law generated some controversy inside the telecommunication sector for increasing the income tax in this sector by 50 percent. The law was approved after accepting amendments in five articles of the draft law which were suggested by the Finance Parliament Committee, in addition to amendments to two articles that were raised during the plenary session.

Investment Law

The investment law was subjected to intense discussions by MPs. The investment law was the draft law that witnessed the participation of more MPs (eight MPs) in comparison to other draft laws that were discussed during the period of this report. The MPs who opposed the draft law justified their position for not involving the investors in the legislative process.

The Oversight Performance of Parliament

In line with the oversight function of Parliament, the report reviews two of the rights and responsibilities of Members of Parliament: Interrogations and Questions. In addition, the report examines reports filed by special committees the Parliament formed for a specific mission, such as a fact finding mission. This section of the report refers to general topics the Parliament discussed and the level of responsiveness of the Parliament to events and issues that took place outside the Parliament.

1. Interrogations

During the period of the report, three interrogations of government officials were made by three MPs. Two of the three interrogations were of the Minister of Interior and the third was of the Minister of Local Administration. Two of the MPs who questioned the Ministers were from the GPC and the third interrogation was by an independent MP. Refer to Table 4.

The meager number of interrogations reflects the low level of oversight of MPs. The number of interrogations indicates more specifically the upper limit or the oversight capacity of MPs considering that interrogation is the most powerful leverage the MPs have to perform the oversight function of Parliament. The interrogation tool could lead to a withdrawal of confidence of the government or of one of its members according to the By-law of Parliament. Thus, it can be concluded that the utilization of this tool by MPs is still limited in comparison to the questioning tool, as the report will further elaborate.

One of the above-mentioned three interrogations had encountered major difficulties before it took place on the session of 14 July 2010. The independent MP (Ahmed Saif Hashed) had to go on food strike inside the Parliament twice for not being able to interrogate Minister of Interior. The first food strike took place during a previous round session to the sessions covered by the report. He could not interrogate the Minister even though the Parliament Presidium had included it in the Parliament's agenda. The Parliament's Bi-law states that an interrogation must take place during seven days from date it is first filed or presented.

The security situation in Yemen, especially in the southern governorates were behind two of the three interrogations targeted Minister of Interior. The third interrogation was to question the Minister of Local Administration for not adhering to the law in assigning the Heads of Executive Offices. The Ministry rather appointed Members of Local Councils as the Heads of Executive Offices in violation of the law.

The discussions in the three interrogations produced at the end a list of recommendations to the government and grace periods to implement them. By looking at the Parliament's recommendations which often are characterized as broad and open, it is difficult for the Parliament to measure and determine what has or has

not been implemented. For example, the outcome of the interrogation pertaining to the security disorders was to give the Government a two-month grace period to reform the security corporation and to normal situation. The recommendations did not specify what inefficient areas and aspects of the security apparatuses for the Government to reform.

Instead of general recommendations to be issued by the Parliament, there is a need for the Parliament to put in place an effective mechanism to ensure the government implements the Parliament's recommendations and decisions.

Table 4: Submitted Interrogations from Parliament during the period

Topic	Name of MP	Interrogated Person	parliamentary Bloc
Killing five citizens from Qabaitah District, Lahj Governorate	Ahmed Saif Hashed	Minister of Interior	Independent
Different National Flags, kidnapping and killing and the proliferation of arms among citizens in various governorates of Yemen	Abodh Mohamed Beshr	Minister of Interior	GPC
The violation of Ministry of Local Administration to Laws in appointing members of local councils as the Head of Government Executive Branch	Abdul-Aziz Jubari	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Local Administration	GPC

2. Questioning

Forty three Members of Parliament from different parliamentary blocs in Parliament submitted 96 questions on various topics. The questions were supposed to be discussed inside Parliament during the period May-August 2010.

The proportion of the discussed questions constitutes only 7.3 percent of all submitted questions to Parliament and which were included in Parliament's agenda for the period covered in this report, as shown in Table 5 below. The main observations and factors pertaining to the low percentage of the discussed questions are:

- The Parliament's agenda for the third session included the discussion of 70 questions. But since not a single question was discussed during the third round session, all of seventy questions were transferred to the fourth round session.
- Some MPs ended up withdrawing their questions since the circumstances for their questions were no longer applicable. Such as the question of MP Ali Al-Amrani to Foreign Minister about the reality of the Iranian role in supporting Al-Houthis. The MP submitted the question during the war in Sa'adah, but

because it was discussed at the time and it was included in the Parliament's agenda for consequent sessions when the war had ended.

- In spite of the specified date of the Parliament session for the government side to attend in order to answer questions of MPs, the Government did not abide at all during the third round session of the Parliament.

Table 5: Proportion of discussed questions out of all questions in the period

	Number	Proportion
Discussed questions	7	7.3
Questions not discussed	89	92.7
Total questions in the period	96	100

Important Topics

Topics pertaining to basic services, security, industry and the economy constituted the majority of the questions asked by MPs during the period of the report. Questions on basic services came in first place of the topics MPs were most interested in followed by questions pertaining to the security situation Yemen during the period covered by this report.

The interest of MPs in basic services reflects the extent of the attention of MPs with the needs and demands of their areas and constituencies. Six out of eight questions asked were connected with basic services for the constituencies of the MPs who asked the questions. On the other hand, this trend points to the nature of relationship between MPs and constituents in Yemen. The relationship between MPs and constituents is based on a specific understanding of role to be played by the MP, where the MP is supposed to be carrying out the functions of other authorities such as the function of the local authority or that of the executive authority.

Most Active MPs

MP Mohamed Nasser Al-Hazmi is the MP who asked the most questions. He submitted seven questions which were included in the Parliament's agenda in the period of the report. MPs Mohamed Al-Nageeb, Aidarous Al-Nageeb, and Abdurrahman Ba Fahdl are in second place with six questions asked by each. Refer to Table 6.

While the questions of MP Al-Hazmi focused on legal violations at the governmental facilities as well as on aspects pertaining to religious and moral disciplines, the questions asked by Mohamed Al-Nageeb focused on topics pertaining to basic services, electricity, war, and roads issues. The questions by MP Aidraous Al-Nageeb dealt with the security incidents, especially in the southern governorates. The questions of Ba Fahdl focused mainly on economy.

Table 6: MPs who asked questions the most

	Number of questions	parliamentary Bloc
Mohamed Nasser Al-Hazmi	7	Islah
Mohamed Al-Nageeb	6	GPC
Aidarous Al-Nageeb	6	YSP
Abdurrahman Ba Fadhl	6	Islah
Abdulkareem Jadban	5	GPC
Saeed Dowman	5	Islah
Jabal Duaiman	4	Islah
Abdoh Beshr	4	GPC
Ali Abdrabouh Al-Qadhi	3	Independent
Abdulkareem Shaiban	3	Islah

Questions by Parliamentary Blocs

Although the parliamentary blocs did not have any tangible presence as caucuses, we will read the questions that were asked based on the affiliation of MPs to parliamentary blocs. The most commonly asked questions during the period of the report were by members of the GPC with 44 questions (GPC has 235 MPs out of 301). Islah caucus came in second with 37 questions.

In examining the topics of the questions according to parliamentary blocs, we find that the YSP caucus is more centered on security concerns especially in southern regions. The majority of the questions by YSP members were addressed to Minister of Interior about security issues. The questions of GPC members were mainly connected with basic services in addition to legal violations in some governmental facilities. The questions that were asked by Islah members varied between questions pertaining to basic services to questions on unemployment and jobs related issues.

Table 7: Questions according to Parliamentary Bloc

	Number of Question
GPC	44
YSP	8
Islah	37
Nasserite	3
Independent	4
Total	96

3. Oversight Performance of Parliament Committees

The Parliament was supposed to discuss twenty six reports connected with the oversight function of Parliament. The reports were compiled by permanent committees of Parliament and by some special committees the Parliament had formed for specific missions. The 26 reports have been submitted to Parliament by relevant committees during the two sessions covered in the report as well as from previous round sessions. The main observations on the oversight performance of parliamentary committees are:

- The Parliament discussed 6 of the 26 in the period. The six reports constitute only 23 percent of all included reports in the Parliament’s agenda. This indicates a low performance level of most of parliamentary committees.
- Out of the six reports submitted by parliamentary committees, four reports were prepared by special committees in comparison to only two reports submitted by permanent committees during the period of the report.
- The importance of the topic that is asked of a committee to examine and to submit a report about is reflected by the momentum of the committee and its members in accomplishing and filing their reports. The issues pertaining to “Dorah Al-Mukalla land” and the spread of Dengue fever in southern governorates, for example did not require a lot of time for the relevant committee members to file and submit their respective report. In general, it is patently clear that issues with political consequences tend to be the topics to receive the most attention of parliamentary committees.
- MPs during the third round session considered a report on the performance of permanent committees of Parliament. At the end of the discussions that took place, the MPs emphasized the importance that the permanent committees of Parliament expedite accomplishing the tasks required of them.

Table 8: Reports of Parliament Committees in agenda of Parliament for the period covered in the report

Ⓜ	Topic	Committee	Notes
1	Examine the closing statement for the fiscal year 2008	Special Committee	Discussed
2	The takeover of location posts for salt refinery company in Hodeida	Special Committee	Not Discussed
3	The death of a prisoner in Haredh area	Special Committee	Not Discussed
4	Central Market in Dhamar Governorate	Special Committee	Not Discussed
5	The epidemic situation arising from spiralworm	Agriculture and Irrigation Committee	Not Discussed
6	The situations of students and cultural attachés abroad	High Education	Not Discussed

7	Outcome of field visits by Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee	Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee	Not Discussed
8	Regular Report of Central Apparatus for Control and Audit	Education Committee	Not Discussed
9	The situation of Pharmaceutical division at faculty of medicine in Dhamar Governorate	High Education	Not Discussed
10	The situations of Cement Factories in Yemen	Commerce and Industry Committee	Not Discussed
11	Outcome of field visits to Taiz and Ibb Governorates by Water and Environment Committee	Water and Environment Committee	Not Discussed
12	The depreciation of national currency	Special Committee	Not Discussed
13	The 2008 annual report on agricultural sector	Agriculture and Irrigation Committee	Not Discussed
14	Problems and consequences to Yemeni females marrying foreigners	Islamic Legislation Committee	Not Discussed
15	Finding mistakes in copies of Holy Qur'an	Islamic Legislation and Justice and Endowment Committees	Not Discussed
16	The reports of the Central Apparatus for Control and Audit for the years 2004, 2005, and 2006	Legal and Constitutional Committee	Not Discussed
17	The situation of TV and Radio state corporation	Media, culture and Tourism Committee	Not Discussed
18	The situation of central and reserved jails in Aden	Public Freedoms Committee	Not Discussed
19	The smuggling of children abroad	Public Freedoms Committee	Not Discussed
20	The spread of Dengue Fever in some Governorates	Health and Population Committee	Discussed
21	Shortages in Diesel substance	Special Committee	Not Discussed

22	Land problems in Hodeida	Special Committee	Discussed
23	Detainees in Political Security Authority Jails and reserved prisons in Hodeida and Sa'dah Governorates	Special Committee	Not Discussed
24	Increase of prices	Commerce and Industry Committee	Not Discussed
25	Problem of Dorah Al-Mukalla investment project- Hadhramout	Justice and Endowment Committee + Local Authority	Discussed
26	Determining the topics to be proposed to the Government on the economic situation	Special Committee	Discussed

General Issues and Topics

Before reviewing the issues and topics the Parliament discussed and dealt with as part of the oversight function of the Parliament during the period of the report, it must be noted that most of what the Parliament discussed of public matters and issues under deliberations are transformed into the form of questions and interrogations MPs would present in plenary sessions. The other part of the discussions that would take place in plenary sessions is a general discussion of an issue or topic based on a submitted request for discussion by some MPs (According to a by-law of Parliament: at least 20 percent of MPs can request a discussion of an issue).

Most Important Issues and Topics

General discussions of issues and topics during the period of the report vary in terms of length of time and level of importance depending on priority of an issue or a topic to be discussed inside Parliament. For example, assaults and violations of the rights of individuals and groups that were taking place in several parts of the country dominated discussions inside Parliament. Issues pertaining to the living conditions of citizens were also discussed inside Parliament during the two sessions covered by the report.

One of the most important issues Parliament discussed during the period (May-August 2010) is the confiscation of lands in Hodeida Government. The Parliament formed a special committee to investigate this issue during a previous session. The special committee produced a detailed report and the discussion of the report led to a list of recommendations and the formation of a committee to follow up the government in implementing the recommendations.

The issue of Al-Ja'ashen residents in Ibb Governorate is an issue that is still being discussed in Parliament sessions. This is in spite of a recommendation issued by Parliament which binds the government to repatriate the residents to their villages.

The residents were forced to leave their regions following the confiscation of their properties by the region's Sheikh, according to statements of some residents to the media and CSOs which have been active on their behalf.

The Parliament also discussed seizing the land property for the Dorah Al-Mukalla investment project in Hadhramout Governorate by a number of influential persons. The issue was referred to the Parliament's Justice Committee and the local authority in the government to assess and report back. The report of the committees led to a recommendation that the government reinforce the judicial decisions and to empower the investors of their property.

Responsiveness of Parliament to Public Issues

There are a number of reasons that would compel Parliament to discuss a specific issue. The Parliament would discuss an issue it sees a need to address. If a situation arises as a result of occurrence of an incident or unexpected development, the Parliament would promptly address. Generally, such issues are put forward before the Parliament for discussion outside its working agenda.

The following points are intended to elaborate on the extent of the effectiveness of the responsiveness of Parliament toward public issues:

- The Parliament discussed the confiscation of lands in Hodiedah Governorate, and the seizing of property for Dorah Al-Mukalla investment project in Hadhramout Government in response to calls by Members of Parliament from the two governorates. As a matter of fact, the MPs from Hadhramout suspended their membership in Parliament in protest that the judicial verdicts were not implemented.
- The Parliament did not respond effectively to the case of Al-Ja'ashen residents. It is one of the most talked about and unresolved issues even though it has been almost a year since it first surfaced. In spite of the ongoing sit in in front of Parliament by the residents for several months, the obvious support of some active civil society organizations, and the recommendation by Parliament which obliged the Government to repatriate the residents within one month of the date of issuing the recommendation, the problem of Al-Ja'shen residents is still unresolved until the date of writing this report. On one hand, this issue does not seem to be of a high priority for political parties due to lack of interest of their parliamentary caucuses. On the other hand, there is an obvious role for civil society organizations, the media and some independent MPs.
- Some main issues of interest to the general public are not discussed inside Parliament. The situation in the southern governorates and the escalation of calls to undo the unification, for example, have not grabbed the full attention and interest of Parliament until now. The attention and interests of Parliament has been limited to the security components of the issue through raising some questions and interrogations as previously noted in the report. Despite the

importance of the issue and political nature the issue has gained, the Parliament has not attempted to discuss the political aspect of the issue. Such a role is similarly absent by Parliament in its dealing with situations in Sa'ada Governorate. The Parliament did not have any role leading to the halt of war. The Parliament was not involved in the dialogues that took place between the Government and Al-Houthis after the cease fire agreement.

- Even when Parliament did adopt clear decisions to settle and resolve problems arising from an issue or a dispute, the problems seem to persist until the solution is delivered by a third party or institution. The third party is usually President Ali Abdullah Saleh who intervened in resolving and /or ceasing the dispute over the land of Dorah Al-Mukalla investment project, and the violent protests by tribes following the death of Mareb Secretary General who was accidentally killed in an air strike targeted a leader of Al-Qaeda.

Table 9: The Public Matters that were discussed during the period of the report

No	Discussed Matters
1	The unavailability of Diesel Substance in Aden, Abyan and Lahj Governorates
2	Detainees by security apparatuses in Hodeida and Sa'adah
3	Increase of tariff of electricity power
4	Exodus of some citizens of Al-Ja'ashen area in Ibb governorate to Sana'a city
5	The confiscation of the land for Dorah Al-Mukalla housing project
6	The killing of Secretary General of Local Council of Marib Governorate
7	The pilfering of lands in Hodeida Governorate
8	Spread of Dengue Fever in some governorates
9	Price Reform of oil derivatives
10	Distribution of jobs by Ministry of Civil Service

Parliament's Relation with Government

Relations between the Government and Parliament in Yemen are usually quiet and of almost total harmony as they never witness any intense disputes. There has been no record of a call to conduct a vote of confidence on government or on one of its Ministers by the current Parliament.

Many MPs have attacked the government for its repeated failures to attend Parliament sessions in order to discuss of some issues or to reply to MPs' questions. Many MPs also attacked the government for not implementing the Parliament's recommendations on a number of issues. Below are the main observations that depict the nature of relationship between Parliament and Government during the period covered in the report:

1. The Government has been criticized by some MPs because summoned officials did not attend two consecutively scheduled sessions the Parliament had assigned for discussion with the government regarding the confiscation of lands in Hodeida Governorate (this happened during the month of June 2010).
2. The Government did not implement the Parliament's decision to repatriate Al-Ja'ashen residents during the one month grace period set by the Parliament. The Parliament did not take any measures against the government for its failure to implement the Parliament's decision.
3. The Government responded to 7.3 percent of the questions of MPs. And 92.7 percent of the questions are yet to be replied by the Government, refer to Table 5 of the report.

Respecting Internal Structure and By-Law

The Parliament held 43 plenary sessions during the third and fourth sessions of the Parliament's first ordinary session. With the exception of one closed plenary session Parliament held on June 9 2010, all of the plenary sessions were open. The observations pertaining to this aspect of the work of the Parliament are:

- During the month of May, the Parliament was unable to hold three sitting consecutively due to not meeting the required quorum for a sitting to be valid.
- Most plenary sessions witnessed the absence of many MPs. On other plenary sessions, some MPs would attend for a short period before leaving the discussion of draft laws to a meager number of MPs.
- Parliament Presidium had to withdraw the Minutes of the closed sitting which was dedicated to the discussion of the internal structure of Parliament on the ground that the Minutes were inaccurate and its content contradicted with what actually was discussed. On the same issue, some Minutes generated controversy among MPs because of they claim, "the minutes are inaccurate".
- Some MPs complain of the attitude of Parliament Presidium when requesting the inclusion of a question or interrogation in Parliament's agenda. MP Ahmed Said Hashed had to protest and go on food strike more than once in order to enable him to interrogate the Minister of Interior. A number of MPs had to withdraw their questions since they were not included in Parliament's agenda in suitable time, especially since some questions forfeit justification or become irrelevant after time such as the questions pertaining to the Sa'adah War.

Annex

Table 1: MPs' Questions during the period of the report

No.	Questions/ topic of question	MP	Addressed to	Caucus
1-	About desalination plant	Abdulhameed Farhan	Prime Minister	Islah
2-	The legal ground to increase electric tariff	Mohamed Al-Nageeb	Prime Minister	GPC
3-	Not implementing "Al-Hedha" dam	Khaileed Ma'saar	Minister of Agriculture and irrigation	GPC
4-	Not implementing the road connecting with Nehm Bani Farah district	Khalid Ma'saar	Minister of Public Works	GPC
5-	Not implementing the third phase of wages strategy	Abdulkareem Shaiban	Minister of Civil Service	Islah
6-	The fate of Textile factory in Sana'a	Ali Shaya Mohamed	Minister of Commerce and Industry	GPC
7-	Causes of ditches and bumps on the roads	Abdulkareem Jadhban	Mayor of Sana'a and Minister of Public Works	GPC
8-	The mechanism and criteria for issuance of Diplomatic Passports and the role of consulates in resolving the problems of expatriates	Abodh Beshr	Foreign Minister	GPC
9-	The Government not implementing the project pertaining to putting street lights on Jawf-Marib road	Jabal Doaiman	Minister of Electricity	Islah
10	About importing potatoes from Saudi	Abdulkareem Jadban	Minister of Commerce and Industry	GPC
11-	The fate of allocated oil revenues for development in Marib Governorate	Jabal Doaiman	Minister of Oil and Minerals	Islah
12-	The adopted measures to combat the trade of human parts	Abdullah Am-Maqtari	Prime Minister	Nasserite
13-	Reasons for the arrest of an Australian Muslim family	Abdulkareem Jadban	Deputy Prime Minister of Defence and Security Affairs	GPC
14-	The arrests of five persons of one	Aidarous Al-	Minister of Interior	YSP

	family for one year without any accusation	Nageeb		
15-	The widespread of cheating in exams	Ali Al-Amrani	Minister of Education	GPC
16-	Reduce of allocated sum for Mosques preachers and the surrounding of residents of an endowment building	Abdulmalik Al-Qasous	Minister of Endowment	Islah
17-	Cleaning the city of Sana'a the revenues of cleaning fund	Mohamed Al-Nageeb	Mayor of Sana'a	GPC
18-	Adopted measures to combat Malaria	Ahmed Al-Agari	Minister of Public Health and Housing	GPC
19-	Large quantities of imported bad dates	Naji Ahmed Ateeq	Minister of Commerce and Industry	GPC
20-	Manipulation of price of commodities	Mohammed Al-Sabri	Minister of Commerce and Industry	GPC
21-	Smuggling of 60 Jews with supervision of USA	Abdulkareem Jadban	Foreign Minister	GPC
22-	Lack of coordination with Saudi authority to resolve problems of Yemen expats	Mohamed Bakeer Saleh	Foreign Minister	GPC
23-	The availability of cash amount of local currency and the impact of that on the exchange rate. The volume of reserve of foreign currency. The inefficiency of measures to stabilize the local currency. The volume of Yemeni debits. Not allowing COCA to enter central bank	Abdulkareem Shaiban	Finance Minister	Islah
24-	Cost of exams of ninth and twelve grades	Mohamed Al-Nageeb	Minister of Education	GPC
25-	Share for Marib governorate of the US 128 Million US dollars donation	Jabal Doaiman	Deputy Prime Minister for economic affairs	Islah
26	Shortcoming of Ministry of Agriculture in integration of irrigation network in Abyan governorate	Salem Mansour Haidarah	Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation	GPC
27-	Not implementing the remaining phases of wages and salaries law	Abulmalik Al-Qasous	Minister of Civil Service and	Islah

	for employees		Insurance	
28-	About wrong and contradicting statements that are published as quotes of military sources	Aidarous Al-Nageeb	Ministers of Defence and Interior	YSP
29-	Using force against protesters on 21 May in Aden	Mohamed Salhe Ali	Minister of Interior	YSP
30-	About investigation to killing of three citizens near Aden on 8 June	Mohamed Saleh Ali	Minister of Interior	YSP
31-	Measures against perpetrators of torture inside Political Security Jail	Aidarous Al-Nageeb	Minister of Interior	YSP
32-	Causes to increase tariff of electricity by 50 percent after operation of Marib Power station	Mohamed Al-Nageeb	Minister of Electricity and Energy	GPC
33-	Preparation of Ministry of Youth and Sports for Gulf Tournament	Abdulbari Dughaish	Minister of Youth and Sports	GPC
34-	Measures taken against contractor Shaban-Adar road in Sana'a Gov	Ali Al-Gushaibi	Minister of Public Works	GPC
35-	Government measures on financial violations mentioned by report of Central Organization for Control and Audit (COCA)	Jabal Duaiman	Prime Minister	Islah
36-	Disconnection of water in Amran city	Ali Al-Sa'ar	Minister of Water and Environment	GPC
37-	Water Corporation Debts	Senan Al-Aji	Minister of Water and Environment	GPC
38-	Halt of sanitary project in Sayoun city	Saeed Darman	Minister of Water and Environment	Islah
39-	Random drilling of water wells	Mohamed Al-Nageeb	Minister of Water and Environment	GPC
40-	Contractor did not abide by specifications in implementing Al-Barah cement factory	Mohamed Al-Hazmi	Minister of Commerce and Industry	Islah
41-	Work in coastal road between Kaltex-Khour Maksr	Mohamed Al-Nageeb	Minister of Planning	GPC
42-	Obstacles facing the construction of Keshr-Washha in Hajjah Governorate	Ahmed Shaya	Ministers of Planning and Public Works	GPC
43-	The situation of former local councilors	Abdullah Khairat	Minister of Local Administration	GPC
44-	Sales of building for almsgiving in Sana'a city	Mohamed Al-Hazmi	Minister of Local Administration	Islah

45-	Corruption at Almsgiving authority	Mohamed Al-Hazmi	Minister of Local Administration	Islah
46-	Administration interference between Sana'a secretariat and Sana'a Governorate	Ali Al-Ansi	Minister of Local Administration	Islah
47-	Distribution of 30 percent of social fund for youth on governorates	Al-Khadhr Al-Azani	Minister of Local Administration	GPC
48-	90 days have passed although the Parliament gave the government 48 hours grace period to comprehend killers of three citizens from Al-Qabaitah	Abduljaleel Jazm	Minister of Interior and Defence	GPC
49-	Increase of projected budgets of Economic Corporation for fiscal year 2010	Abdoh Beshr	Minister of Local Administration	GPC
50-	Power outages in Hodeida	Abdullah Khairat	Minister of Electricity and Energy	GPC
51-	Measure to promote tourism in Yemen	Fouad Waaked	Minister of Tourism	GPC
52-	Elections of administration board of sports clubs	Fouad Waaked	Minister of Youth and Sports	GPC
53-	Media policies and neutrality of Media	Mohamed Al-Salehi	Minister of Information	Islah
54-	Replacing reciting of Qou'ran classes with Art classes	Mohamed Al-Hazmi	Minister of Education	Islah
55-	Causes for aircraft crash	Saeed Darman	Minister of Defence	Islah
56-	Neutrality of military and security forces	Mohamed Al-Salehi	Ministers of Interior and Defence	Islah
57-	Intermittent security disturbances and kidnapping incidents	Abdoh Beshr	Minister of Interior	GPC
58-	Confiscation of Al-Ayyam Newspaper	Aidarous Al-Nageed	Minister of Interior	YSP
59-	Imprisonment of a citizen for two years at a Political Security prison without trial	Mansour Al-Hadheq	Minister of Interior	Islah
60-	Circumstance in the killing of a citizen in Sana'a city	Najeeb Al-Wargi	Minister of Interior	GPC
61-	Suspension of Mobile services in some southern governorates	Aidarous Al-Nageeb	Minister of Telecommunication	YSP
62-	The wearing of Neggab by female	Mohamed Al-	Minister of Justice	Islah

	judges	Hazmi		
63-	Combating moral corruption	Mohamed Al-Hazmi	Prime Minister	Islah
64-	Carnivals held during working hours	Al-Khadhr Al-Azani	Minister of Civil Services	GPC
65-	Accidents on Pedestrians	Mohamed Al-Hazmi	Prime Minister	Islah
66-	Criteria in setting amount of money for eligible recipient for social security	Ali Abdrabouh	Prime Minister	Independent
67-	The fate of railroad project in Yemen	Ali Abdrabouh	Prime Minister	Independent
68-	Smuggling of diesel substance	Sadeq Al-Badani	Prime Minister	Islah
69-	Allocated funds for development projects in Taiz	Abdulkareem Shaiban	Prime Minister	Islah
70-	Privatization in public sector	Abdurrahman Ba Fadhl	Prime Minister	Islah
71-	The content of report by (Ba Serah- Hillal) on the situations in the South	Mufadhl Al-Abarh	Prime Minister	Islah
72-	Halt of projects in Sa'adah Governorate	Abdulsalam Zabeah	Prime Minister	GPC
73-	About Fund for rebuilding of Sa'adah Governorate	Abdulsalam Zabeah	Prime Minister	GPC
74-	To prosecute those behind financial loss due in the dispute with Canadian company	Abdulmoaz Dabwan	Prime Minister	Islah
75-	The situation of refugees from Africa	Abdulbari Dugaish	Prime Minister	GPC
76-	Land disputes in Hadhramout	Saeed Darman	Prime Minister	Islah
77-	Redeploy of military camps from inside Sayoun city	Saeed Darman	Prime Minister	Islah
78-	Building of new homes for those affected from flood in Hadhramout	Saeed Darman	Prime Minister	Islah
79-	How accurate information about bridge connecting Yemen with Djibouti	Abdulrazaq Al-Hejri	Prime Minister	Islah
80-	Increase street beggars in Sana'a city	Senan Al-Aji	Prime Minister	GPC
81-	Impact of world financial crisis on	Sultan Al-	Prime Minister	Nasserite

	Yemen	Atwani		
82-	Somalian residing in Soqatra Island	Aidraous Al-Nageeb	Prime Minister	YSP
83-	Sanitation problems in Wadi Hadhramout	Ahmed Ba Hwairah	Prime Minister	Islah
84-	Purpose of establishing Shibam Group for real estate	Sakhr al-Wajeih	Prime Minister	Independent
85-	Restructuring of agricultural boards to be part of local authority	Sultan Al-Atwani	Prime Minister	Nasserite
86-	Government reduce 50percent of budget for 2009 without going back to local councils	Abdurrahman Ba Fadhl	Prime Minister	Islah
87-	Halt to establish Al-Azhr institutes in governorates	Abdurrahman Ba Fadhl	Prime Minister	Islah
88-	How accurate information about a new increase of prices	Abdurrahman Ba Fadhl	Prime Minister	Islah
89-	Yemen facing a famine in 2010	Abdurrahman Ba Fadhl	Prime Minister	Islah
90-	The situation of CAC Bank	Abdulaziz Jubari	Prime Minister	GPC
91-	Dealing with farmers by Bajl Cement factory	Ali Abdrabouh	Prime Minister	Independent
92-	Obliging oil companies to the principle of transparency	Abul Kareem Jadban	Prime Minister	GPC
93-	Violation of Ministry of local administration	Abdulaziz Jubari	Prime Minister	GPC
94-	Increase of prices of some commodities	Mansour Al-Hadheq	Prime Minister	GPC
95-	Sales estimate of gas	Abdoh Beshr	Prime Minister	GPC
96-	Regular reports on performance of government	Sadeq Al-Badani	Prime Minister	Islah
الإجمالي	96			96