



Press Release
National Parliament
1 August 2017

JSMP pessimistic about the National Parliament extending the normal period for finalising pending draft laws

The National Parliament (NP) held a plenary session on Monday 31 July 2017 with 43 votes in favour, 0 votes against, and 1 abstain, to approve Draft Law No. 26/III (5) on Extending the Normal Period for the Functioning of the National Parliament until 18 August 2017. This extension was proposed to finalize draft laws that are in the process of being granted final approval.

During the discussion of this draft law all MPs agreed to extend the mandate of MPs which was going to end on 31 July 2017. The reason for extending the normal period is to accelerate the approval of the draft laws that have reached the discussion phase and final approval so that these draft laws can be finalised before the new legislature begins.

“JSMP is not convinced that this extension will be enough to finalise these pending laws in two weeks if there is no political will and political commitment from the MPs. Also, some MPs whose names were not included in the list of those returning to the National Parliament have started packing up their stuff and are no longer active in the parliament,” said Luis de Oliveria Sampaio, Executive Director of JSMP.

JSMP has observed that for more than a month the regular functioning and activities of the plenary and the standing committees have almost completely stopped without any justification in comparison with the other organs of sovereignty that have been working smoothly.

JSMP is concerned because the parliament is a sovereign organ that represents the people and has abandoned its work for more than a month, between 22 June - 31 July 2017, without making its own adjustments to ensure the normal functioning of the parliament. Meanwhile the other public bodies and institutions have been functioning normally even though some members have been participating in campaign activities for parliamentary elections. In such circumstances, government members need to present a request for leave without pay when participating in an election campaign.

JSMP understands that MPs have a responsibility to their parties to participate in parliamentary election campaigning, but MPs need to realise that as active MPs they need to perform their responsibilities until their mandate expires and they need to ensure the regular functioning of the national parliament. This practice can be interpreted as failing to appreciate the trust placed in

them by the people in the performance of their mandate. This situation has had a significant impact as laws have been left pending and the MPs have not been able to discuss them before their mandate expires.

JSMP appeals to the members of parliament to discuss and approve all laws, and JSMP requests for the Chair of the National Parliament and the Heads of the Parliamentary Benches to prioritise an extraordinary plenary with an increased number of items on its agenda to focus on discussing and approving those draft laws that have reached the discussion phase and final approval so that they can be finalised before the mandate of the MPs expires.

JSMP hopes that MPs in the new legislature will comply with the Rules of Procedure of the National Parliament and will not to repeat such acts (omissions) in the next period so that work can be finalised before their mandate expires.

JSMP has also observed that the parliament still has many pending laws that will probably expire. These include the Draft Law Against Corruption, Amendment to the Law on Remuneration for Judicial Magistrates, Prosecutors and Public Defenders, Law on a Bar Association, Law on Local Power, Law on Municipal Elections and Law on Child Protection.

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