

## **Afghan Villagers Refuse to Vote for "Selfish" Lawmakers**

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Ahead of next year's election, Afghans say they deserve better from their representatives.

Local politicians came in for some sharp criticism in a series of IWPR-organised debates in Afghanistan this month.

With a parliamentary election due next year, villagers say many of the current lawmakers have not kept their promises.

In an open atmosphere that encouraged participants to speak freely, some said they regretted voting at all during the last parliamentary election held four years ago, saying they had been too naïve about the candidates.

Others stressed that lawmakers had failed to push forward legislation or hold the government to account, and instead prioritised their own personal interests.

In the Bazarak district of Panjshir region northeast of Kabul, debate participant Nasrullah Amiri accused parliamentarians of completely failing to address local issues. Instead, he said, they simply drew their salaries and enjoyed the privileges that came with the job.

Abdul Hamid Adel, a member of Bazarak's local community council, agreed, adding that voters should in future pay close attention to the honesty and track-record of candidates before making a choice.

In Faizabad, the centre of Badakhshan province in northeast Afghanistan, civil society activist Maryam Amwaj claimed that elected representatives had spent their time in office feathering their own nests rather than working for the public good.

Abdullah Naji Nazari, chairman of Faizabad's provincial council, told the debate that people should turn to civil society activism if their elected representatives did not fulfill their promises.

"It is the public's duty to monitor the performance of members of parliament and ask them why they aren't serving the people," he continued.

In a debate held in Zaranj, the administrative centre of Nimroz province in western Afghanistan, civil society activist Nazifa Wakili said voters should use the ballot box to punish rogue politicians.

"It is a sin to repeat a mistake, so we must not vote for selfish individuals again," she said.

Tribal elder Mir Abdullah said parliamentary candidates needed to have a good understanding of the needs of Afghan society.

He said that some of the laws passed by the current parliament had proved useless because they failed to take account of the realities of life in Afghanistan.

*This report is based on an ongoing series of debates conducted as part of IWPR's **Afghan Youth and Elections** programme.*

**Location:** [Afghanistan](#)

**Topic:** [Corruption](#)

**Focus:** [Youth and Elections, Afghanistan](#)  
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