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## HIA claims govt has accepted some of its terms

By Abdul Moeed Hashmi

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The Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA), led by former jihadileader Gulbadin Hekmatyar, claimed on Monday some of its conditions had been accepted by the government of President Hamid Karzai.

A high-level delegation of the group held talks with President Karzai and other high-ranking government officials in Kabul, with both sides agreeing to continue peace talks, an HIA spokesman told Pajhwok Afghan News.

Eng. Haroon Zarghoon said the Karzai administration was ready to accept some of the party's conditions. But details of the negotiations could not be revealed before Hekmatyar spelled out his stance.

Regarding the HIA demands previously conveyed to the government, he said some of them had been changed, while others were accepted. However, the changes could not be shared with media outlets, he added.

In a 15-article draft, the HIA had urged the withdrawal of foreign troops, a ceasefire with militant factions, transfer of the security responsibility to Afghan forces and holding presidential, parliamentary and provincial council polls.

The Afghan government and High Peace Council would continue their efforts wooing the fighters, Karzai promised in his address to the Wolesi Jirga that entered its second legislative year on Saturday.

About the visit of the HIA delegation from Pakistan, Karzai said: "We have had a meeting with the representatives of Eng. Gulbadin Hekmatyar's party. Both sides expressed their views in a candid manner and we hope the talks will continue."

The delegation also met several government officials, including Vice-President Muhammad Qaseem Fahim. The HIA political office head in Europe, Qaribur Rahman Saeed, called the meeting "very important and beneficial." He said they were optimistic about the outcome.