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Detainee torture persists in Kandahar jails: MP

March 31, 2013

A parliamentary delegation on Sunday said detainees continued to be tortured and mistreated in southern Kandahar province, widening the gap between locals and the government.

The eight-member *Wolesi Jirga* team that arrived in Kandahar City a day earlier met with detainees at the central jail and a detention facility of the National Directorate of Security (NDS) -- the spy service.

Led by lawmaker Haji Sakhi Mashwani, the delegation held meetings with Governor Toryalai Weesa and other civilian and military officials, said Hamid Lalai, a member of the delegation.

He told Pajhwok Afghan News their visit was aimed at meeting provincial authorities, visiting detention facilities and listening to people's problems. The delegation was told that prisoners were being tortured and deprived of basic facilities.

Lalai said prisoners at the central jail and at the NDS detention centre claimed they had been mistreated and abused following their arrests. He said the central jail had been built for 650 inmates, but more than 2,000 were currently being held there.

"Overcrowding is a big problem the inmates are faced with," Lalai said, adding Kandahar residents had shared with the visiting MPs their problems.

Lalai said their aim was to assess people's problems and find solutions to them in order to narrow the gap. They would share people's problems with high officials in Kabul, the lawmaker said.

Meanwhile, the Governor's House issued a statement, saying the visiting team had promised to work jointly with the provincial government for resolving the problems being faced by residents.

The delegation involving lawmakers from Kunar, Kandahar, Kabul, Farah and Badakhshan also looked into the provincial administration's progress in retaking public land from powerful individuals.