

The parliament of Kazakhstan legalised the parliamentary opposition. It means that the oppositionists would be entitled to speak in the lower house, introduce issues to the agenda and to promote draft laws alternative to the initiatives of the ruling majority.

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Together with the deputy of Mazhilis (lower house) of parliament, chair of Ak Zhol democratic party, **Azat Peruashev**, we'll discuss why Kazakhstan needs parliamentary opposition and how it will work.

Parliamentary opposition? What is it?

Parliamentary opposition is a political party or parties represented in the Mazhilis of the parliament and not a part of the parliamentary majority. They come up with their own criticism regarding the administrative and governmental policies pursued and have their alternative opinion about relevant issues in the society.

Why was it introduced?

Because Kazakhstan still has no legal concept of "opposition". Although, it is widely applied in normal life. However, current legislation has vague concepts of the opposition and how it can be implemented.

There were talks about the opposition in the times of Nazarbayev. Why was it introduced just now?

You are right. The draft law was produced by Ak Zhol party back in 2012. But it was not passed and during speeches microphones were turned off. After the order of Kassym Zhomart-Tokayev, the draft law was adopted and it entered into force.

What may the parliamentary opposition do now?

It may initiate parliamentary hearings at least once during one session regarding the most relevant topics, determine the topics of government hours, speak at the sessions of the Senate, committees, at joint sessions of the parliament.

Now ministers attend the government hour and tell things they consider significant. As a result, they tell stories about how good they are and how many good things they do. The opposition may ask officials uncomfortable questions now, ask them not what they want to tell about, but what they want to conceal.

Will the opposition really work?

According to the draft law, the parliamentary opposition:

- Leads one of the committees of Mazhilis,
- Has a right to serve as secretaries of two committees of Mazhilis,
- Has a right to initiate the parliamentary hearings and to determine the agenda of a few government hours.

To have these preferences, the parliamentary opposition needs to take an active part in work. The number of votes from the opposition faction against governmental draft laws will be counted: if the number is below 50, the opposition will no longer be deemed opposition and will lose these preferences.

Thus, factions will be actively working in the parliament from the critical point of view by suggesting their vision and opposing the position implemented by the parliamentary majority. Therefore, if a party considers itself opposition, but keeps silent, it will lose the right to be named opposition.

How to become the parliamentary opposition?

By results of parliamentary election, the winning party becomes ruling party and those who got the least votes become the parliamentary minority. The latter can use the preferences and become the opposition. To do that, the party should report it becomes the opposition upon registration in the Mazhilis.



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