



**Independent Joint Anti-Corruption  
Monitoring & Evaluation Committee**

## **NEWS RELEASE: MEC Finds Widespread Irregular Hiring and Personnel Practices at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**KABUL, Afghanistan, June 3, 2015** – Today, MEC published its first report examining hiring and personnel practices at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). The report found a persistent legacy of nepotism, favoritism, and patronage that too often prevailed over merit and competency. MEC also found interference by senior officials in various aspects of hiring and promotion, as well as personal relationships seemingly dominating the recruitment and staff-management processes. These practices clearly violate the Civil Service Law (CSL), which explicitly forbids discriminatory hiring practices by government institutions.

For example, of the approximately 1,300 candidates who took MOFA’s entrance examination last summer, 48 passed—but almost none were hired. Instead, 40 other individuals were hired outside of regular channels during the former minister’s last days in office. Currently, MOFA employs at least 12 close relatives of current or former parliamentarians, 4 siblings of former ministers, and 7 other relatives of current or former senior officials. Among MOFA’s current corps of diplomats, many only hold high-school diplomas, or are otherwise unqualified under the merit-based hiring policy.

In addition to irregular hiring practices, MOFA employees confirmed that some employees’ salaries and overseas postings are based neither on the Law on Diplomatic and Consular Affairs (“Law”) nor on MOFA’s internal regulations, but rather on their connections to influential individuals. Similar inconsistencies prevail in the issuance and retention of diplomatic passports, which are used for personal travel by some MOFA employees even after their overseas assignments have ended. Furthermore, many diplomatic passports were illegally issued to unqualified individuals purely based on their personal ties.

To enhance transparency in MOFA’s recruitment process and to ensure the hiring of qualified staff, MEC’s recommendations include that MOFA enact a specific internal policy banning nepotism; the Law be amended to require diplomatic and consular staff to hold a graduate degree; the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission clarify that the CSL applies to MOFA; and the Supreme Audit Office, or another competent oversight body, review all of MOFA’s hiring decisions since 2005.

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