



One of the country's most senior prosecutors said yesterday that President Hamid Karzai fired him last week after he repeatedly refused to block corruption investigations at the highest levels of Karzai's government.

Fazel Ahmed Faqiryar, the former deputy attorney general, said investigations of more than two dozen senior Afghan officials — including Cabinet ministers, ambassadors, and provincial governors — were being held up or blocked outright by Karzai, Attorney General Mohammed Ishaq Aloko, and others.

Faqiryar's account of the troubles plaguing the anticorruption investigations has been largely corroborated in interviews with five Western officials familiar with the cases. They say that Karzai and others in his government have repeatedly thwarted prosecutions against senior Afghan government figures.

An American official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Afghan prosecutors had prepared several cases against officials suspected of corruption, but that Karzai was "stalling and stalling and stalling."

"We propose investigations, detentions, and prosecutions of high government officials, but we cannot resist him," Faqiryar said of Karzai. "He won't sign anything. We have great, honest, and professional prosecutors here, but we need support."

Earlier this month, Karzai intervened to stop the prosecution of one of his aides, Mohammed Zia Salehi, who investigators say had been caught on a wiretap demanding a bribe from another Afghan seeking his help in scuttling a corruption investigation.

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