



## Elections for Iraq's Council of Representatives

### FACT SHEET #1 General background

#### **When and where will the elections be held?**

They are scheduled for 10 October 2021 across all of Iraq.

#### **What is the legal framework?**

The elections are governed by Elections Law No. 9 of 2020 of the Iraqi Council of Representatives. According to this Law, the Council of Representatives is comprised of 329 seats. 320 of those are distributed among the governorates within 83 constituencies, which have been defined under the new electoral system. The remaining 9 seats are reserved for minorities called component seats:

- Christians: 5 seats in Baghdad, Dohuk, Erbil, Kirkuk and Ninewa
- Yezidis: 1 seat in Ninewa
- Sabeen Mandeans: 1 seat in Baghdad
- Shabaks: 1 seat in Ninewa
- Fayli Kurds: 1 seat in Wasit

#### **How will women be represented?**

According to the Constitution, 25% of all seats in the Council of Representatives are reserved for women. And one seat in each of the 83 constituencies is set aside for female candidates. These are just minimums. More female candidates can be elected.

#### **How many electoral constituencies are there across the country?**

Currently, there are 83.

#### **What is the electoral system in Iraq?**

Iraq uses the "Single Non-Transferable Vote" system, which is a plurality electoral system based on multi-seat electoral constituencies. Each voter casts one vote for one candidate. But every constituency has more than one seat. Candidates who get the most votes win seats.

### **Who qualifies to vote?**

An eligible voter must be an Iraqi citizen, legally competent, at least 18 years old in the year in which the elections are held, and registered in the registry of voters. No voting by proxy is permitted.

### **What are the eligibility criteria for candidates?**

A candidate must:

- be a registered voter;
- hold a high school certificate or its equivalent;
- reside in the governorate where they are being nominated;
- submit a supporting list of 500 registered voters from the constituency of their candidacy;
- be at least 28 years old;
- not to be subject to issues covered by the Accountability and Justice Law;
- not have been convicted of a crime of moral turpitude;
- not be a member of the armed forces or security agencies when nominated;
- not be a member of the previous or current Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) when nominated.

### **What is the process for nominating, vetting and certifying candidates?**

Independent candidates and candidates endorsed by political parties and coalitions had the opportunity to submit their nomination papers until 1 May 2021. IHEC received more than 3,500 nominations by that deadline. IHEC sent the candidates' documentation to the Ministries of Education, Interior, and Higher Education and Scientific Research, as well as the Accountability and Justice Commission, so they could vet the candidates within 15 days.

### **How many candidates are running?**

IHEC's Board of Commissioners approved the final list of 3,249 candidates, out of which 951 are women (29% of the total).

### **How will the candidates appear on the ballots?**

Ballot lotteries – to determine the order in which candidates will appear on the ballots – were held on 7 July at IHEC Headquarters (for minority candidates) and in all of IHEC's Governorate Electoral Offices (GEOs) (for all remaining candidates).

### **When does the electoral campaign start and end?**

IHEC has announced that the official campaign period will last from 8 July to 7 October 2021. Campaign activities must end 24 hours prior to the opening of polls. IHEC is responsible for monitoring the compliance of candidates, political parties and coalitions, with IHEC regulations on electoral campaigning.

### **How many different ballots will be used on election day?**

There will be 84 different ballot papers. That includes one ballot paper for each of the 83 constituencies, which will list all the candidates competing in that specific race, and one ballot

paper for special voting that will be used by security forces personnel and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

### **How does special voting differ from general voting?**

Special voting refers to voting by specific categories of voters that are mentioned in Article 39 of the Elections Law. Those categories include military and security forces, inmates in prisons, and IDPs. Their voting will be done by biometric cards exclusively – 48 hours before the general voting day. General voting refers to voting by regular voters who meet the conditions stipulated in the Law.

### **Will internally displaced persons (IDPs) be able to vote?**

Yes, IDPs will be able to vote on the special voting day. They will have to present their biometric voter registration cards to do so. For the purpose of IDP voting, IHEC has identified 296 polling stations in 17 Governorate Electoral Offices (GEOs). All of these polling stations will have ballot papers from the 83 constituencies so that each IDP can vote for their constituency. IDPs will be able to vote at polling stations that are close to them without travelling to their governorates of origin.

### **How many voters are registered for the upcoming election?**

According to IHEC, as of 7 July, there are 25,182,594 registered voters. Of those, 12,941,671 are men (51.4%) and 12,240,923 are women (48.6%).

### **How and when was voter registration conducted?**

Voter registration is a continuous process in Iraq and takes place in the 1,079 voter registration centres distributed across the country. Voter registration teams register voters by entering their names and other personal data into the system through a biometric registration form. They also capture biometric data such as fingerprints and photos of the registrants, and they issue registration receipts. Voters must return to registration centres to collect their voter registration cards. The purpose of the biometric voter registration is to create an accurate and up-to-date voter list database.

### **Can voters still register to vote in the 10 October 2021 election?**

Registration is an ongoing process in Iraq. However, there was a deadline for registrants who wanted to vote in the forthcoming election. That deadline was on 15 April 2021. Currently, those already registered biometrically are collecting their printed biometric voter cards from the voter registration centres.

### **Which documents will a voter need on election day to be able to vote?**

The voter, whose name is included in voters list, must present (a) their biometric voter card, or (b) their electronic voter card in addition to two of the three main identification cards, i.e. the Iraqi national ID ("Jensiyah"), the national unified ID, or the Iraqi citizenship certificate.

### **What is the difference between the electronic and biometric voter cards?**

The electronic voter cards are the older ones issued by IHEC that include the voter's data (full name, voter number, year of birth, family number, registration centre number, name and number of polling station). They each have an embedded chip, which contains biographic data only. They will be accepted on election day for voter identification but must be coupled with two personal identification documents.

The biometric voter cards are issued by IHEC to all Iraqis eligible to participate in the elections. They include voter data (full name, voter number, year of birth, family number, registration centre number, name and number of polling station) in addition to 10 fingerprints and a photograph. The biometric voter cards have an embedded chip which contains the voter's biometric data, in addition to the biographic data. They will be used on election day and will allow the voter to vote after being recognized by an electronic verification device.

### **How is recruitment of polling staff being done?**

IHEC has formed a recruitment committee responsible for organizing sub-committees at the Governorate Electoral Office (GEO) level. Those subcommittees are each composed of seven members, who manage and monitor recruitment of polling staff in each GEO. An online application process was developed and is available on IHEC's official website. The deadline for applications is 1 August 2021.

Upon completing the online process, the applicant prints the form and receipt and then signs and submits the form and required documents. The sub-committee at the GEO reviews the forms, seals them with the subcommittee stamp and approves them through a QR reader. (The application form contains a special QR code for each applicant.) The acceptance or rejection of an application will be indicated on the form. In case of rejection, the reason will be provided and recorded in the server.

### **What technologies will be used during voting?**

The following election technologies will be used:

- A Voter Verification Device (VVD) will be used to identify the voter before they are allowed to cast their vote. The process will include verification by fingerprint (for biometric cards) and collection of fingerprints (for those with electronic cards). The VVD will also capture and record the QR codes of the ballot paper that is issued to the voter.
- The Polling Centre Optical Scanner (PCOS) will be used to cast the ballot. It is linked to the VVD and will verify the issued ballot paper through matching the QR codes. It will read the ballot using optical scanning to determine whether a ballot is marked and valid or invalid. It will then record the vote.
- A Results Transmission System (RTS) device, which will be connected to the PCOS, will transmit the results securely using a satellite link.

### **What is the process for casting ballots?**

The following are the key steps:

- The voter is verified using the VVD.
- The voter is verified using the paper voter list.
- The voter is issued with a ballot paper, which is recorded in the VVD.
- The ballot paper's serial number is synchronized with the PCOS.
- The voter marks the ballot with their choice.
- The voter inserts the ballot paper into the PCOS machine.
- The PCOS detects, reads and records the vote.
- The paper ballot goes into the ballot box.

### **How will the ballots be counted?**

- In all polling stations, ballots are counted electronically by the PCOS machine as the ballot papers are inserted into the machine.
- One polling station out of each polling centre will be randomly selected for manual counting.
- If the difference between the manual and electronic count results in a difference of more than 5%, all polling station results in that polling centre will also be counted manually, and the manual count will prevail.

### **How many polling centres and polling stations will be open on election day?**

IHEC will set up around 8,954 polling centres and 55,041 polling stations for general voting – and 681 polling centres and 2880 polling stations for special voting.

### **When will polling centres be set up?**

All polling officials are to be present at their respective polling centres at the agreed times with the Polling Centre Coordinators and Polling Station Managers on the day before election day. They will assist in the implementation of the station's planning and design process. The design of the polling station should allow for movement of voters from the entrance to the identification officer, issuer of ballot papers, voting platforms and ballot box.

### **How many poll workers will work on election day?**

About 300,000 polling staff will be working on election day or on standby as contingency polling staff. Each polling centre is managed and operated by a team of 5 staff, and each polling station is equally managed and operated by a team of 5 staff. Each centre is managed by a Polling Centre Coordinator and assisted by two Queue Observers (male and female) and Inspectors (male and female). Each polling station has a Polling Station Manager, Queue Manager, Identification Officer, Ballot Issuer and Ballot Box Monitor.

### **What procurement activities are planned?**

The electoral process involves the procurement of various goods and services to support all the election requirements. Specific critical activities include the procurement of ballot papers, election result and reconciliation forms, election technology, software to support the technology,

and transportation services to transport the materials from the supplying country to the polling centres and to then carry these materials to the governorates after election day, for appropriate and secure warehousing of the electoral materials.

**Who undertakes the procurement of electoral goods and services for the elections?**

IHEC's Procurement Department is responsible for carrying out all the relevant international and local procurement activities to support the electoral process. The procurement process is based on Iraq's procurement legislation.