



المفوضية العليا المستقلة للانتخابات  
كوميسیونى بالى سهر به كوى هه لىزاردنه كان  
The Independent High Electoral Commission

# Report on International Cooperation for Capacity Building Technical Visit to Mexico National Electoral Institute, Electoral Tribunal and Supreme Court

21 – 30 OCTOBER 2022



United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)

UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance



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# SECTION 1:

## Background

With the technical assistance of United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI), Iraq successfully held its Council of Representatives (CoR) elections on 10 October 2021 in accordance with the Elections Law No. 9 of 2020. 329 members of the CoR were elected and the election results were certified by the Federal Supreme Court of Iraq on 27 December 2021.

Following the successful elections, Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) with the assistance of UNAMI Office of Electoral Assistance (OEA) conducted series of lessons learned workshops to reflect on the shortcomings and achievements of the election administration, identify challenges and recommend solutions on wide range of issues including legal framework, election operations, technical administration and equipment, stakeholder relations, electoral dispute resolution (EDR), etc. Furthermore, UNAMI OEA under the mandate of the UN Security Council identified several areas of strengthening for the improvement of the electoral process, including the EDR system in Iraq.

EDR is one of the key areas where, UNAMI OEA has been providing support, advice, and technical assistance, over the past year. OEA legal advisors have been in continuous contact with IHEC Legal Committee, Complaints and Appeals Section and Legal Department, with Electoral Judicial Panel (EJP) judges, discussing the gaps and needs to enhance further the knowledge of and institutionalize the EDR. Several activities had already been organized between IHEC and EJP and with EJP alone towards strengthening the EDR knowledge that is in line with the international best practice and Iraqi legal framework.



*Figure 1: Attending public hearing of the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary*

Based on the South – South Cooperation development initiatives and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and 17, Partnerships for the Goals to continue strengthening the capacity of the Iraqi institutions, UNAMI OEA organized a technical visit to Mexico to share experiences, discuss, and further develop electoral knowledge on EDR in line with international best practice.

Mexico was chosen as it is a country that has clearly institutionalized and strengthened electoral management body, judiciary in an independent way, as well as its well-developed South – South Cooperation.

## SECTION 2:

### Rationale and objectives for international cooperation for capacity building

To support democratic institutions and inclusive elections, UNAMI OEA technical assistance aims to support accountability, transparency, and efficiency of IHEC and EJP in the electoral process. It involves stimulating stakeholders' dialogue and strengthening capacity building of the institutions.

UNAMI OEA and Iraqi electoral institutions acknowledge that electoral democracy requires constant improvement and updating to meet the demands of a modern society, of citizens demanding their rights and strong political parties intensely disputing access to political power.

Against this backdrop, the organization of elections has gradually become an object of specialized knowledge and practice. Today, those involved in the organization of elections not only face a very widespread and diversified practice, but also a very complex one in its conduct in order to meet universally recognized international standards for free, transparent, fair, equitable and reliable elections.

The classic standards of electoral democracy have not changed, what has changed are the parameters that are set to satisfy those attributes. Currently, the conditions in which electoral competitions are developed demand a higher quality performance from the electoral authority to comply with those standards. These perceived changes of a constantly evolving electoral agenda demand new aptitudes (knowledge, skills, and abilities) and new attitudes (values and behaviors) from those responsible for organizing elections around the world. It is necessary to establish a periodic review and adjustment of issues such as: the integration and updating of electoral registries, voting, and counting mechanisms, voter information campaigns, special attention to underrepresented groups, policies for the acquisition or production and distribution of electoral documentation and materials, and mechanisms to preserve the vote secrecy, among others.



Figure 2: Meeting with Mexican National Electoral Institute

Therefore, capacity building activities including the international cooperation through the technical visits are fundamental for electoral bodies to deepen theoretical and practical expertise on different electoral issues including voter registration, political party financing, and EDR, etc by sharing knowledge and best practices that are applicable to the functioning of IHEC and EJP.

Since 2004, the federal electoral authorities of Mexico, the National Electoral Institute (INE) (formerly the Federal Electoral Institute, IFE) and the Electoral Tribunal of the Judiciary of the Federation (TEPJF, for its acronym in Spanish), together with the UN have been conducting a series of activities aimed at the authorities of electoral bodies in Iraq, by conducting workshops in which comparative experiences on specific issues of electoral administration and dispute resolution in the field are presented.

Further to capacity building on electoral issues, this technical visit enhanced the commitment of Mexico and Iraq on international cooperation to support consolidation of democracy among the UN State members and in alignment with the SDG 16, Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions and SDG 17, Partnerships for the Goals as well as the South – South cooperation that is “A process whereby two or more developing countries pursue their individual and/or shared national capacity development objectives through exchanges of knowledge, skills, resources, and technical know-how, and through regional and inter-regional collective actions, including partnerships involving Governments, regional organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector, for their individual and/or mutual benefit within across regions.



*Figure 3: Meeting with the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary*

## Key areas

During the Technical Visits topics covered including but not limited to

○ Legal framework governing the elections,

○ Political and electoral systems and the political parties' regime,

○ Attributions on administrative and jurisdictional matter of the electoral institutions including voter registration, political party regimes, electoral campaigning, campaign finance, gender mainstreaming in electoral management bodies and politics,

○ Functioning and structure of the judicial institutions and their role in EDR,

○ Mechanisms for electoral and political conflict resolutions,

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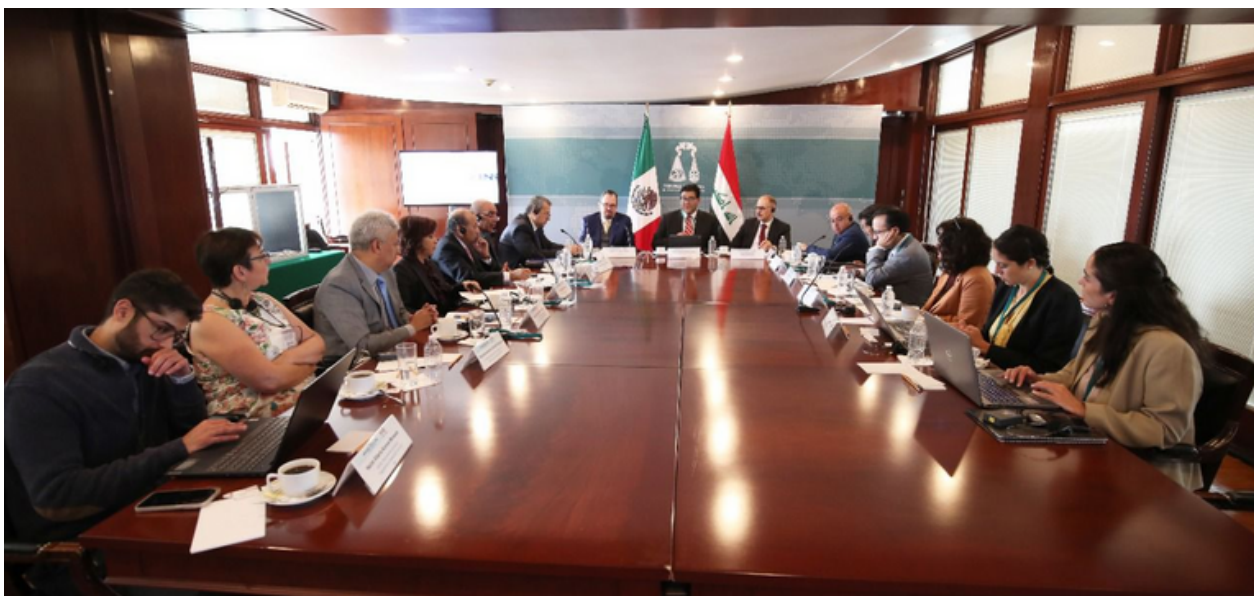
Figure 4: Iraqi delegates with UNAMI team at Mexican supreme court

## SECTION 3:

### Coordination and Participating Institutions

The coordination of the Technical Visit provided by the UNAMI OEA and International Department of National Electoral Institution of Mexico, whose plurennial expertise in this field guided participants through the various sessions. Their capacity and experience ensured quality and consistency of design and implementation of the programme throughout the Technical Visit and provided guidance in identifying and responding to participants' needs while actively coordinating with other institutions.

The participating institutions were The National Electoral Institute (INE), The Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary (TEPJF) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID), The Federal Supreme Court of Iraq , The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) , Electoral Judicial Panel (EJP) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).



*Figure 5: Meeting at the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary*

#### Methodology

- Participants particularly benefited from sharing experience that allowed them to have direct confrontation with peers, build networking links, and listen to experts who shared their know-how and good practices.

## SECTION 4:

### Accomplishments of the Technical Visit

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- Accomplishment of the Technical Visit including but not limited to Exchanged knowledge and experiences on EDR, electoral Justice, and other important issues relevant to electoral process including campaign finance, electoral campaigning, voter registration etc. with the Mexican institutions,
- Enhanced the understanding of the electoral and political system, electoral reforms and EDR in Mexico,
- Reinforced the partnership and mutual understanding between Iraqi and Mexican institutions on EDR, training on electoral issues and determined further opportunities for partnership with Mexican institutions,
- Identified dispute resolution concerns and solutions in Iraq and promoted research to deepen aspects of institutional interest or fosters knowledge about best practices on electoral management and EDR,
- Improved strategic long-term thinking to achieve gender equality in electoral management and in politics,
- Deepened understanding for integrated approaches for training programmes on different electoral matters,
- Strengthened capacity needed for coherent and systematic process of the complaints and appeals so that to the electoral dispute resolution mechanisms are effective and respond rapidly to emerging situations.



Figure 6: Fernanda Rodriguez Gonzalez Head of the International Affairs Unit of the TEPJF and Aamir Aqeel Arain Director, UNAMI OEA



Figure 7: Mr. Jalil Adnan Khalaf Khalaf Chair of IHEC and Mr. Eduardo Jacobo Nieto Garcia – General Director of Case Law TEPJF



## Outcomes and possible follow up activities

- Plenary discussions demonstrated, both Iraqi and Mexican institutions are willing to continue to exchange knowledge and experience on different electoral issues and deepen the relations,
- On 8 November 2022 IHEC adopted a Resolution
  - Expressed its appreciations to the Mexican Institutions and UNAMI OEA,
  - Invited the Mexican Institution to Iraq to observe the upcoming elections,
  - Requested Mexican institutions to provide technical support for improving electoral justice in Iraq.
- Iraqi delegation expressed willingness to continue communication and have more deepened discussion for improving training programme on elections in Iraq,
- UNAMI EAO will organise an experience sharing workshop with the IHEC Complaints and Appeals Section and present the main findings of the Technical Visit,
- Iraqi delegation UNAMI OEA will discuss the issues raised during the Technical Visit with IHEC, EJP and Chief Justice and provide advisories to IHEC and EJP for improving EDR system.



Figure 8: Iraqi delegates with UNAMI team and Mexican officials at INE



Figure 9: Murals at Mexican supreme court



Figure 10: Iraqi Delegation at the Supreme court



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