



# Fact sheet



## Elections for Iraq's Council of Representatives

### FACT SHEET # 8

### International Electoral Observers

#### **What is an electoral observer?**

An electoral observer is a person who is part of an electoral observation team, whose responsibility is to monitor all stages of the Council of Representative (CoR) elections, and who is authorised by Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to observe.

#### **What is an international electoral observation team?**

It is an international group registered by IHEC to monitor all stages of the electoral process for the 10 October 2021 election, including voter registration, candidate registration, polling, counting, announcement of preliminary and final results, etc. IHEC only accredits electoral observation teams, not individuals.

#### **Which international organizations can apply to observe the CoR elections?**

All official international representations, such as embassies, consulates and international organizations or their branches, and foreign organizations or their branches that are registered and located in Iraq, can apply. In addition, the IHEC Board of Commissioners (BoC) has the right to send invitations to international organizations specialized in electoral affairs for the purpose of observing the elections.

#### **Which institution has the authority to register and accredit international observation teams?**

The international electoral observation teams are obliged to submit their applications for registration and accreditation to the IHEC National Office or Kurdistan Regional Office (KREO). The IHEC BoC, upon review of the applications, will issue accreditations to the observers.

#### **How can one file an application for registration and accreditation of an international observation team?**

An international electoral observation team needs to submit: an official authorization letter from its institution, including the name and copy of the ID or passport of each representative of the

observation team; the registration certificate issued by the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Department of the Council of Ministers if the international team is registered as a foreign organization or has a branch inside Iraq; and copies of Registration Forms 131 and 132, which were already submitted to the IHEC National Office or KREO.

**When should one apply for registration and accreditation for an international observation team?**

The application window for registration and accreditation of international electoral observation teams started in January 2021 and will continue until 8 October 2021.

**Is there a code of conduct for international electoral observers?**

Yes, IHEC has adopted a Code of Conduct for Electoral Observers, and observers are required to sign and comply with it. International electoral observers are not permitted to interfere in the electoral process. IHEC has the right to withdraw the registration or accreditation of an observation team or observer that violates the Code of Conduct.

**Is there any restriction of movement of observation teams?**

No, the observation teams will have freedom of movement between polling centres/polling stations (PC/PS) after presenting their IHEC-issued accreditation cards, provided that this does not affect the conduct of the electoral process.

**Is it possible for observation teams to have interpreters and security personnel with them?**

Yes, the electoral observation teams can be accompanied by their interpreters and security personnel in accordance with the electoral regulations and procedures issued by IHEC. However, security personnel are not allowed to enter PC/PS with their weapons.

**Can international electoral observers submit electoral complaints and appeals?**

No, international electoral observers cannot submit electoral complaints or appeals. International observers can report on the electoral process and any irregularities to IHEC or to the institutions with which they are affiliated.

**How are the expenses of the electoral observation teams covered?**

It is the responsibility of each accredited observation team to cover all the expenses they might incur while in Iraq, including training, transportation, communications, accommodation and security.

**How will IHEC benefit from the reports of the observation teams?**

The monitoring teams are expected to submit their observations to their organisations, and the organisations are required submit a final monitoring report to IHEC. That will enable IHEC to improve in the future.