

Teim



TEIM Election Watch Analysis

ELECTORAL REPORT:

IRAQ/Parliamentary elections
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Waleed Saleh
Roberto Barroso

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Taller de Estudios Internacionales Mediterráneos
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

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Background to the elections:

The first parliamentary elections under the new constitution (adopted on 15 October 2005) were held on 15 December 2005 to elect the 275 members of the permanent Iraqi parliament who, in turn, chose the current government, which has a four-year term. In those elections, the Iraqi Alliance (a coalition of Shiite parties) won the majority in the Council of Representatives, the lower house of the new parliament. This alliance, which won 128 seats, includes, among others, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), the Islamic Dawa Party and Muqtada al-Sadr's group. In second place was the Kurdistan Alliance, with 53 seats, followed by the Iraqi Accord Front (a Sunni coalition), with 44 seats.

On 31 January 2009, elections were held for the provincial councils, in which 14,431 candidates (3,912 of whom were women) competed for the 440 provincial seats that were at stake in 14 of the 18 governorates or provinces in the country. The three Kurdistan provinces (Irbil, Sulaimaniya and Dahuk) held elections on 25 July 2009, when 2.5 million Kurdish citizens elected 111 representatives to the Kurdistan parliament. The constituency of Kirkuk, a province which is a source of conflict between the central and Kurdish governments – with some arguing that it belongs to Kurdistan and whose definitive status has not yet been resolved – did not renew its provincial council as elections were not held in this province.

Quantitative indices of democracy:

Iraq was classified in the following democratic performance rankings just before these elections:

Measurement	Name and year of report or database	Institution	Index	Points, ranking and classification
Political rights and freedom	Freedom House Report 2010	Freedom House (FH)	PR: political rights CL: civil liberties	PR: 5, CL: 6 (Scale of 1, free to 7, not free) Classification: Not free
Degree of democracy in earlier elections	Polyarchy 2.0 2004	Peace Research Institute of Oslo and Tatu Vanhanen	ID: Synthetic democracy index, Part: participation, Comp: competition	ID: , max. 49 Part: , max. 70 Comp: , max. 70 (Democracy minimum: ID: 5, Part: 10, Comp: 30) No elections for evaluation
Consolidation of authoritarian and democratic institutions	Polity IV 2008	Center for International Development and Conflict Management, Univ. of Maryland	Democracy: consolidation of democratic institutions Autocracy: authoritarian consolidation Polity: synthesis of both	Democracy: -66 Autocracy: -66 Polity: -66 (Scale of +10, very democratic to -10, very authoritarian) Classification: interruption of independent political life

Perception of corruption	Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2009	Transparency International (TI)	TICPI: corruption perceptions index	TICPI: 1.5 points out of 10, (Scale of 1, very corrupt to 10, not at all corrupt) Rank: 176 out of 180 countries
Management of political and economic change	Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) 2010	Bertelsmann Foundation	MI: Management Index, quality of transformation management	MI: 3.98 points out of 10, Rank: 99 out of 128 countries Classification: weak management
Democracy, including press status and corruption	World Democracy Audit Oct. 2009	World Audit	World Democracy Rank: political freedom (FH) + press and corruption (TI)	World Democracy Ranking: 126 out of 150 countries, division 4 out of 4

The elections analysed in this report produced the following electoral democracy quantitative results:

Degree of democracy in these elections	Measurement of democracy in these elections according to the Polyarchy 2.0 index, calculated by TEIM Election Watch	ID: 25.3, max. 49 Part: 35.1 ¹ max. 70 Comp: 72.0 ² max. 70 (Democracy minimum: ID: 5, Part: 10, Comp: 30)	Classification of the elections: democratic
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Definition of the electoral system and parties:

These elections used an open list proportional system. This system was first used during the elections for the provincial councils in January 2009. Before that, both in the December 2005 parliamentary elections and the first elections to the provincial councils in January 2005, a closed list proportional system was used. With the open list system, voters can mark one or several candidates from each list, up to a maximum number of candidates that coincides with the number of seats at stake in the constituency.

The party system in Iraq is characterised by an enormous proliferation of rapidly evolving political groups. The large number of parties is partially reduced by the creation of rather extensive political alliances. These alliances, which change from one election to another, form along ethnic or religious lines, despite the fact that these factors have not traditionally been representative cleavages in Iraqi political life and society. However, the victory of the Iraqi National Movement (also known as the Iraqiya list), led by Ayad Allawi, could change these dynamics in the country, creating inter-sectarian alliances. Iraqiya, which

¹ Participation was calculated using the number of votes in the 2010 elections, 10,171,871, and an estimated Iraqi population census that calculated the population to be 28,945,569 inhabitants in July 2009. These data come from *The Majlis* <http://www.themajlis.org/2010/03/10/iraqi-voter-turnout-province-by-province-data> (consulted 26 May 2010).

² Competition was calculated by adding the percentage of seats won by all of the losing parties, whether or not they belong to the previous government, represented by a different colour in the results table. Since the formation of the government will be delayed by a few months, perhaps until after the summer, the competition figure only takes these results into account and does not include the interplay of minorities and majorities that will lead to the formation of the future government coalition. This coalition may be headed by Iraqiya, the State of Law or by both.

for the most part received its votes from the Sunni community, is led by the Shiite Allawi, a champion of political secularism, but also includes renowned politicians from all ethnic and religious groups in the country.

Impact of the electoral formula and size of the constituency on the elections:

Since the last electoral reform, the Iraqi Council of Representatives has been composed of 325 seats (earlier, 275), that are filled as follows: direct elections are held for 318 seats in the 18 governorates or provinces, 310 of them according to the general election, and 8 reserved for the religious minorities found in the provinces. The other 7 are compensatory seats and are divided among the lists that receive the highest number of votes at national level. Article 49, point 4, sets aside a 25% quota of the total seats to be allotted to women. This article is valid for two consecutive elections, of which the 2010 elections were the last; beginning with the next elections, women will lose this right. Women won 82 seats out of the total of 1,813 for which they ran as candidates (4.5%).

Election results:

The final results distributed the votes as follows:

Name of list or party	Gov./ Opp	Number of votes	Percentage votes	Number of seats	Percentage seats
Iraqiya Alliance (Iraqi National Movement)	Opp	2,786,335	27.2%	91	28.0%
State of Law Coalition	Gov	2,727,284	26.6%	89	27.4%
Iraqi National Alliance	Gov	2,052,713	20.0%	71	21.8%
Kurdistan Alliance	Gov	1,635,037	16.0%	42	12.9%
Movement for Change	Opp	402,018	3.9%	8	2.5%
Iraqi Accord Front (al- Tawafuq)	Opp	234,029	2.3%	6	1.8%
Unity Alliance of Iraq	Opp	150,063	1.5%	4	1.2%
Kurdistan Islamic Union	Opp	51,065	0.5%	4	1.2%
Al-Rafidayn List	Opp	84,285	0.0%	3	0.9%
Popular Chaldean Syriac Assyrian Council	Opp	43,764	0.4%	2	0.6%
Kurdistan Islamic Group	Opp	141,855	1.4%	2	0.6%
Yazidis	Opp	10,171	0.1%	1	0.3%
Sabians	Opp	1,177	0.0%	1	0.3%
Shabaks	Opp	11,755	0.1%	1	0.3%
TOTAL		10,247,266	100%	325	100%

Source: Independent High Electoral Commission (www.ihec.iq)

- As a consequence of allegations and formal complaints, the Electoral Commission voided the votes from some 99 polling locations in the provinces of Anbar, Baghdad, Kirkuk and Nineveh after finding different types of infractions. However, the Commission rejected 421 allegations presented from abroad in countries such as Holland, Australia, Austria, Denmark, Great Britain, Canada, Iran, Turkey, Syria, the UAE, Lebanon and the United States due to a lack of evidence. Likewise, some political groups like the Kurdistan Alliance in the province of Dahuk and in Sweden, and the Turkmen Front in

Denmark were fined. A vote recount was also ordered in some provinces like Diyala, Baghdad and Dahuk (Source: Independent High Electoral Commission (www.ihec.iq)).

- The 8 seats set aside for religious minorities were distributed as follows: 5 seats for Christians (Chaldeans, Assyrians and others) in Baghdad, Irbil, Nineveh, Dahuk and Kirkuk, 1 seat for the Yazidis (Nineveh), 1 seat for the Shabaks (Nineveh) and 1 seat for the Sabians (Baghdad).
- The 7 compensatory seats were distributed thus: 2 for each of the three coalitions and 1 for the Kurdistan Alliance.
- There were 18,600,000 Iraqi citizens registered on the electoral rolls and 6,292 candidates, of whom 1,813 were women. 165 parties and coalitions participated in these elections. 272,000 people voted outside Iraq, with the highest number of votes being cast in Syria (42,000), followed by Sweden (36,000), the United States (27,000) and a mere 1,500 in the Austrian polling places (Source: www.bbc.co.uk).

Results by seats broken down by list and province:

(not including seats reserved for minorities or compensatory seats)

Province	No. seats	Winning lists and parties and seats
Baghdad	68	- State of Law: 26 - Iraqiya Alliance: 24 - Iraqi National Alliance: 17 - Iraqi Accord Front: 1
Basra	24	- State of Law: 14 - Iraqi National Alliance: 7 - Iraqiya Alliance: 3
Babylon	16	-State of Law: 8 -Iraqi National Alliance: 5 -Iraqiya Alliance: 3
Karbala	10	-State of Law: 6 -Iraqi National Alliance: 3 -Iraqiya Alliance: 1
Najaf	12	- State of Law: 7 - Iraqi National Alliance: 5
Muthanna	7	- State of Law: 4 - Iraqi National Alliance: 3
Wasit	11	- State of Law: 5 - Iraqi National Alliance: 4 - Iraqiya Alliance: 2
Dhiqar	18	- Iraqi National Alliance: 9 - State of Law: 8 - Iraqiya Alliance: 1
Salahuddin	12	- Iraqiya Alliance: 8 - Iraqi Accord Front: 2 - Unity Alliance of Iraq: 2
Anbar	14	- Iraqiya Alliance: 11 - Iraqi Accord Front: 2 - Unity Alliance of Iraq: 1
Diyala	13	- Iraqiya Alliance: 8 - Iraqi National Alliance: 3 - State of Law: 1 - Kurdistan Alliance: 1
Kirkuk	12	- Iraqiya Alliance: 6 - Kurdistan Alliance: 6
Nineveh	31	- Iraqiya Alliance: 20 - Kurdistan Alliance: 8 - Iraqi Accord Front: 1

		- Unity Alliance of Iraq: 1 - Iraqi National Alliance: 1
Qadisiya	11	- Iraqi National Alliance: 5 - State of Law: 4 - Iraqiya Alliance: 2
Misan	10	- Iraqi National Alliance: 6 - State of Law: 4
Irbil	14	- Kurdistan Alliance: 10 - Movement for Change: 2 - Kurdistan Islamic Union: 1 - Kurdistan Islamic Group: 1
Dahuk	10	- Kurdistan Alliance: 9 - Kurdistan Islamic Union: 1
Sulaimaniya	17	- Kurdistan Alliance: 8 - Movement for Change: 6 - Kurdistan Islamic Union: 2 - Kurdistan Islamic Group: 1
Total	310	

Source: Author's compilation based on results published by the Independent High Electoral Commission

Qualitative analysis of the elections:

Participation:

Participation, according to the Independent High Electoral Commission, was 62.4%, lower than in the first parliamentary elections held in 2005, when it reached 76%. The highest participation was recorded in the Kurdish provinces: Dahuk 80%; Irbil 76% and Sulaimaniya 73%. In the unstable Kirkuk province, the percentage reached 73%, in Salahuddin 73%, Nineveh 66%, Diyala 62%, Anbar 61%, Babil 63%; Karbala and Diwaniya 62%, Muthanna and Najaf 61%, Dhiqar and Wasit 60%, Basra 57%, Misan 50% and Baghdad 53%.

Abroad, where 1,400,000 Iraqi citizens had the right to vote, only 272,000 voted in a total of 16 countries. The highest number of voters was recorded in Syria (approximately 43,000), followed by Sweden (37,000) the USA (28,000), Jordan 25,000 and 24,000 in Iran.

The high participation rates in both the northern provinces of Kurdistan and the central provinces, combined with the results, demonstrates the interest that these areas share in bringing about real change in the composition of the parliament and the government's policies of the last five years.

Violent acts continued throughout the campaign, and the victims were both regular citizens and politicians and candidates for the elections. In many cities, the headquarters of Iraqiya were targets of violence aimed especially at frightening this group and scaring its sympathisers into dropping their support for it. On election day, different attacks carried out in various cities left 38 dead and 110 wounded (Source: Al Arabiya TV, www.alarabiya.net).

Competition:

The United Iraqi Alliance, which modified its name for these elections to the Iraqi National Alliance, was the principal group in the outgoing parliament and the coalition government, having won 128 of the 275 seats in the 2005 elections. The Kurdistan Alliance also had an important role in this government, as did the Iraqi Accord Front, Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi's party. For the March elections, the latter group joined the Iraqiya list, the main opposition group. Groups like the al-Rafidayn list, although they had representatives in the

parliament, were also outside the government (Source: Iraqi National Assembly, www.parliament.iq).

Moreover, a few days before the elections, the electoral commission rejected the candidacies of more than 500 candidates who were accused of having previously been members of the banned Baath party (Source: al-Rafidayn, www.alrafidayn.com).

Transparency:

These elections were held in the presence of 1,447 international observers and 700 Arab and foreign journalists, in addition to 1,800 Iraqi journalists. They took place under the supervision of 351 national and international organisations.

According to the electoral commission, most of the complaints and accusations regarding the voting and vote count were lodged in the provinces of Nineveh, Kirkuk and Sulaimaniya. Nearly 1,000 formal complaints were presented regarding general voting, 423 in reference to special sectors or groups (members of the armed forces and hospital patients) and 455 referring to voting abroad. According to the commission, around 240 complaints were relatively serious. In the end, the electoral commission agreed to hold a vote recount for the province of Baghdad. 68 seats were in contention in this constituency, and a change in their distribution could have affected the nature of the national results, but after a recount that lasted a few weeks, the commission announced that the results held as they were.

As with the 2009 provincial elections, there was a chorus of complaints during the campaign about the inequality of the resources available to each party or group. Because of the privileged position of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's party in power, it was accused of using official resources in its campaign, and the other groups complained that they were at a relative disadvantage.

Party representation and debate during the campaign:

One of the most prominent characteristics of these elections was the disappearance of small parties from the new parliament. Five large blocs captured most of the votes, to wit: Iraqiya, the State of Law, the Iraqi National Alliance, the Kurdistan Alliance and the Unity Alliance of Iraq. The small groups attributed their negative results to the electoral law, which was recently modified to reject any group not reaching the vote threshold.

A second feature of the current parliament is the low presence of Islamist and religious groups present in the current parliament, such as Humam Hamoudi and Jalal al-Din al-Saghir, both members of the Islamic Supreme Council. There will also be fewer conservative women in the new chamber, leaving more room for liberal and secular women.

Openness:

The different polls gave the election to Prime Minister al-Maliki, leader of the State of Law coalition. Very few predicted that Allawi's Iraqiya group would garner the highest number of votes. The reason for this apparent error in calculation may have to do with the fact that al-Maliki had the most powerful media at his disposal and that he was supported by neighbouring Iran, and both sides wanted him to win the elections at any cost.

Significance:

Although voter participation was not very high (62.4%), the voters were clearly interested in change. Four years of the parliament and government

elected in 2005 only highlighted the corruption and neglect of Iraqi citizens and their interests. During these four years – despite a slight improvement in security – conditions of life for Iraqis have not improved greatly. The scarcity of basic services like electricity and drinkable water, the disastrous situation with the infrastructure, high unemployment rates and illiteracy are still causes for great concern among citizens in this country.

Iraqis hope that the new parliament and government will more efficiently solve the problems that they face on a daily basis and hope to see their streets and cities somewhat safer. They would also like to see a decrease in the nationalist, ethnic and religious feelings that have led different sectors of society into dramatic and bloody clashes.

Ayad Allawi, the Shiite head of Iraqiya, the coalition which won the highest number of votes, has the right to be the first to try to form a government. However, the need to obtain 163 seats to do so makes this task difficult. A coalition with the Kurdish parties would be one of the options for a possible government formation. But this would mean that Allawi would have to yield to demands to implement Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution, which establishes that the central government must take a national census and hold a referendum on whether or not the province of Tamim (Kirkuk) should be attached to the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan.³ Two different points stand out among the results in this disputed province: the number of votes cast for the Kurdish and non-Kurdish parties was almost equal (around 250,000) and Iraqiya and the Kurdistan Alliance won the same number of seats.

A possible coalition government with the Iraqi National Alliance – a pro-Iran Shiite party that includes the main Shiite parties in the country except for the State of Law list led by Prime Minister al-Maliki⁴ – seems much more feasible. Iran is going to exert pressure to have a presence in a future national government. Similarly, the United States knows that not including at least part of the Shiite bloc in the new government would lead to chaos in the country. However, it seems that the formation of the government will be delayed until after Ramadan (August). It remains to be seen whether the electoral commission decides to veto some of the candidates from the Iraqiya list during this time through a later process of de-Baathification and whether al-Maliki's actions will have any effect.⁵

³In 2003, after the North American invasion, the Kurds began to return to Kirkuk after the Arabisation campaign carried out in the province by the Baathist government in the 1980s and 90s. During this operation, part of the Kurdish population was moved to the north, to Iraqi Kurdistan. Currently, Kurdish authorities are repeating the same practices, expelling hundreds of Arabs and turning them out of their homes to be reclaimed by Kurdish families expelled earlier by Saddam Hussein.

⁴After the election results for the provincial elections in 2005, al-Maliki decided to present a new list for these parliamentary elections. The State of Law coalition is made up of the Islamic Dawa Party and several independent Shiite candidates, including the Independent Bloc led by Hussain al-Shahristani, but without the parties in the National Iraqi Alliance (NIA). It also has the support of some Sunni leaders, a tribal leader from Anbar and the Minister of Defence, Abdul Qadir al-Obaidi, whose only role is to give an appearance of secularism that has little to do with reality. If al-Maliki had been in a coalition like the NIA – which would have given him an overall victory – the parties involved would not let him renew his term as Prime Minister. Source: International Crisis Group, cf. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=6548&l=4> (last visited 06-04-2010).

⁵In the last few weeks, the Shiite leader has tried to boycott Allawi's victory, asking for a recount of the votes, referring to his relationship with the Baath party and even making reference to his opponent's Lebanese mother.

The leader of the State of Law, current Prime Minister al-Maliki, who is a religious and sectarian Shiite, is a traditional ally of Iran, which does exert influence (a very profound influence according to some analysts) on the Iraqi government and its society, particularly in the centre and the south. Allawi, the leader of Iraqiya, has criticised this situation on several occasions. For this reason, it seems that the regime of the Ayatollahs is doing everything possible to prevent the incoming prime minister from being a member of Iraqiya. At the same time, al-Maliki's relationship with neighbouring countries like Syria and Saudi Arabia is not very smooth, due to the numerous accusations that the government has hurled at them regarding their support for and encouragement of acts of terrorism in Iraq.

International political reaction:

Great hope was placed on these elections by a good part of the international community due to the peculiar circumstances in Iraq, a country invaded and occupied by the United States, which has been committed to political change in the country since 2003, hoping to make it a model for the region. Indeed, several international powers and countries expressed their joy at the results, given the relative normalcy of the electoral process. The spokesperson for the US Department of State, Philip Crowley, described the end of the electoral process as a 'significant milestone' for the development of democracy. The UN's special envoy to Iraq, Ad Melkert, congratulated the Iraqi people on the 'success' of these 'reliable' elections and called on all the parties to accept the results. The American president, in turn, congratulated the Iraqis on their election. Catherine Ashton, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, also congratulated the Iraqis for turning out to vote.

For his part, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that "Iraq can expect a prosperous future", affirming that any advance in Iraq is an advance for Iran and that his country will put no impediments in the way of strengthening bilateral relations. The neighbouring Arab countries were more wary, and have not expressed their opinion on the results. The relative victory of Iraqiya, a secular formation, calmed them to some extent because Allawi is secular and, if he becomes prime minister, the government will have good relations with them. These countries, however, remain somewhat concerned, due to the small margin that separates Iraqiya from the bloc led by al-Maliki, a sectarian politician who has favoured Shiite groups.

Conclusions:

Despite the irregularities that occurred, the election process can be qualified as democratic, as the TEIM quantitative indicator shows. This is a clear break with the democratic indicators recorded for Iraq to date (see table). While it cannot be denied that some pressure was exerted by different inside and outside forces, despite everything, the High Electoral Commission seems to have stayed on the sidelines, carrying out only one recount in the Baghdad constituency and rejecting the other complaints of electoral fraud.

One of the most important consequences of these elections was the disappearance of closed blocs based on sectarian memberships. Some Sunnis who had run in parties based on their sect (i.e., the Islamic Party) in previous elections were spread out in these elections among other political options. This is

a positive sign that the sectarian nature of the political groups and parties is softening.

Even so, many Iraqis still see themselves as trapped by ethnic and sectarian sentiments and would not consider voting for a list that does not specifically represent their ethnicity and religion. This indicates that a long road lies ahead before they can free themselves from these feelings, which have profoundly damaged Iraqi society. These elections have also shown that the Iraqi people truly want democracy. Even those who have rejected the North American project with its 'imposed democracy' do not accept authoritarian systems, which can only be fought against at the polling stations. Finally, if the North American troops really do withdraw from the country as has been announced, they will try to leave behind a government in Iraq that is both friendly and aligned with their interests.

Reference to another Internet analysis of these elections:

Iraqi Democratic Future Network (IDFN), associated with Intekhabat (Elections Network in the Arab World). [Iraq Local Election Coverage. Preliminary Statistical Report: Balloting stage](#). Created in collaboration with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). 13 March 2010.