

Monitors Final Report on the Iraqi Council of Representatives Elections

May 12, 2018

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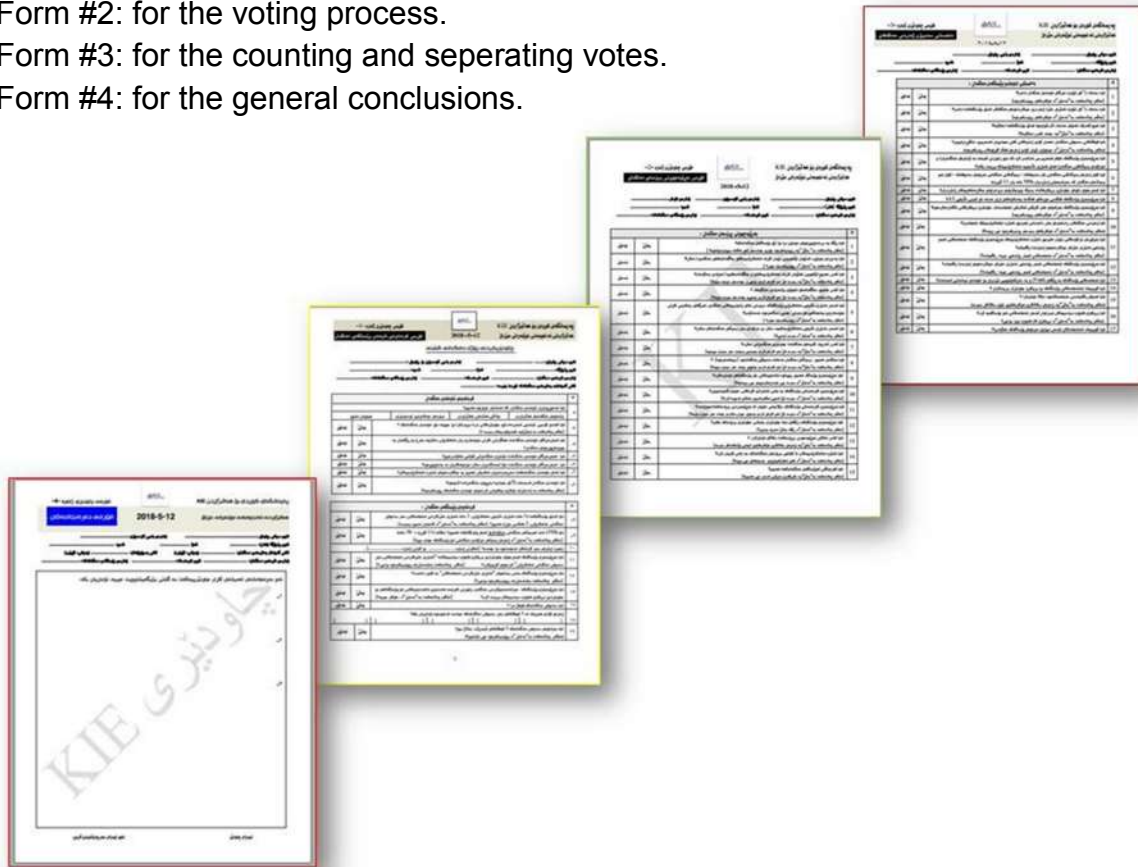
Introduction:

On May 12, 2018, Iraqis across 18 constituencies (governorates) voted to elect 329 representatives in the fourth round of Iraqi Unicameral Council of Representatives. The electoral process based on [modified Parliamentary Elections Law No. 45 of 2013](#).

The electoral system is Proportional Representation system PR, Seats shall be allocated according to the modified Sainte-Laguë method (1,7). The candidate who secures the highest number of votes on the list shall be elected while ensuring that a woman candidate is elected after every three winning male candidates, thereby allotting 25 percent of seats to women and the Voting is not compulsory.

A volunteer team from the [Kurdish Institute for Elections KIE](#) (*Paimangai Kurdi bo Halbjardn*) monitored both of special voting day (including 31 polling station) and general voting day (including 418 polling stations) throughout Sulaimaniyah constituencies. Prior to Election Day, the volunteers received training on monitoring methods and were required to fill out four forms that contained 48 questions on the different parts of the elections process. The forms included the following:

- Form #1: for the opening of the polling stations
- Form #2: for the voting process.
- Form #3: for the counting and seperating votes.
- Form #4: for the general conclusions.



Voting Day for the Military and internal ministry forces (Special voting, May 10, 2018):

Special voting took place on May 10, two days prior to the general election day. KIE teams in Sulaimaniyah province monitored 31 polling stations. The teams' post-election day reviews stated that the electoral procedures in Sulaimani province did not fulfill any of the requirements of an election as stipulated by international standards and deemed the elections chaotic and disorganized. The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) fulfilled neither their logistical, technical, nor humanitarian responsibilities.



Scenes of special voting in sulaymanyah polling stations, - May 10, 2018

Use of electoral Technology:

The most novel aspect of this year's election was the IHEC's use of machine of vote counting technology. KIE team forms show that 12 percent of vote counting devices stopped working before the polls closed at 6:00 PM. For example, in the Sulaimaniyah Science Industrial Institute Center, all six devices stopped working at 3:00 PM. Although all polling stations were required to have a technician on site, only 25 percent of the 418 polling stations that KIE monitored had technicians. In addition, a large number of the polling station supervisors did not have the training or skills to fix the non-working



devices. When the electronic results of the available votes were released, 96 percent of the political parties objected to the results, which suggests that the people did not trust these devices.



Alternative device for counting & separating votes

General Election Day:

The forms submitted by the 418 KIE observers in Sulaimaniyah, indicate the following violations:

- 100 percent of voters entering polling stations were able to bring cell phones in, limiting freedom of the election.
- 85 percent of the observed polling stations did not open at 7:00 AM.
- Technical managers were absent at 25 percent of the observed polling stations, and a large number of them did not have the skills to fix the elections machines when they broke down.
- 30 percent of the observed polling stations lacked the provided ballots with barcodes. Each polling station was supposed to have 550 ballots.
- At 80 percent of the observed polling stations, the directors of the polling stations did not put the flash memories into the election machines in front of the political party observers.
- At 25 percent of the observed polling stations, voters voted without using the electronic machines.
- 85 percent of the directors and monitors of the polling stations were not fully aware of their job responsibilities.



- 12 percent of the electronic machines did not work until near the end of the voting period.
- 40 percent of the polling station directors did not make the political party observers aware of any technical work they performed.
- 45 percent of the votes were not immediately counted by the machines after the polling stations closed.
- 60 percent of polling stations sent the results of the votes via (Vsat) machines late.
- 100 percent of polling stations did not give observers copies of the ballot scanned images results.
- After announcing the results, in 96% of the observed polling stations, the political party observers filled out complaint forms objecting to the electronic results.
- 96 percent of the political party observers did not sign the electronic results.
- In 100 percent of the polling stations, copies of preliminary results were not put on the walls of polling station.
- 20 percent of the votes that were canceled by the alternative counting & separating vote's electronic machine were valid votes.
- According to the reports on the preliminary electronic results in the stations, 15 percent of the candidates that obtained votes did not exist in the lists.



Recommendations:

All the recommendations listed below will be sent to the IHEC, as the only observer and performer of the fourth round of the Iraqi election:

1. The number of polling stations available for the special voting should be increased in Sulaimaniyah, so as to limit the crowds of military and internal ministry forces such as the Peshmerga, Asaish, and police who are allowed to vote early.
2. The members of the IHEC should be more thoroughly trained so that they would better understand their job responsibilities and perform their duties successfully.
3. A more thorough training should be given to the political party observers, especially with regard to the electronic devices and election procedures and regulations.
4. There should be more transparency in the electoral process, especially in terms of logistics and technology issues.
5. IHEC should be Committed to their instructions and decisions which issued by itself, such as no cell phone policy should be more strictly enforced at polling stations, election results should be posted on polling station walls, 550 ballots should be given to each station, and copies of receipts should be given to observers.
6. IHEC should take heed of NGO reports and take steps to respond to their suggestions.
7. As the electronic devices have increased doubts about legitimacy, IHEC should fulfill its duty to transparently work on these problems and restore the trust.

Kurdish Institute for Elections [KIE] is an independent NGO founded in the mid 2002 by some legal experts and lawyers to spread awareness of the concept and elements of election and political participation among the people.

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