

Ambassador Khalilzad, General Casey Applaud Iraqis on Elections

Urge newly elected leaders to form broad-based government quickly

U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad and U.S. General George Casey, the commander of the coalition forces in Iraq, have congratulated the Iraqi people for the success of their legislative elections December 15, which will lead to the formation of a permanent, democratic government. (See [related article](#).)

Khalilzad and Casey said the high voter turnout and low violence are "a signal that the people of Iraq have chosen to become active participants in their country's future."

"The newly elected leaders should come together quickly and build bridges for national unity and establish an effective, broad-based government that Iraqis across ethnic and sectarian lines have confidence in," Khalilzad and Casey said in a statement released by the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad December 16.

The ambassador and the general reiterated the Bush administration's policy that the United States "will stand by the Iraqi people until the Iraqis can stand on their own feet."

For additional information see [Iraq's Political Process](#).

Following is the text of the Khalilzad-Casey statement:

Embassy of the United States of America
Baghdad, Iraq
NEWS RELEASE

JOINT STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR ZALMAY KHALILZAD & GENERAL GEORGE CASEY
December 16, 2005

We congratulate the Iraqi people for the success of their historic national elections on December 15, 2005 and applaud them for their courage and obvious commitment to building a democratic order. All reports indicate that Iraqis from all communities and regions turned out in large numbers with only limited reports of violence and irregularities. This is a signal that the people of Iraq have chosen to become active participants in their country's future.

The calls by Iraqi leaders to vote and to cease attacks were key to yesterday's success. Rejecting terror

and political accommodation with each other are necessary requirements for Iraq to succeed.

We now await the outcome of the vote counts and the announcement of results as soon as possible. We ask everyone to be patient and to allow the election commission to do its vital work without undue pressure or interference.

This election, like all free elections around the world, provided the opportunity for people to express differing political opinions. However, the election has also shown the potential for Iraqis to choose politics as a means to resolve differences. More needs to be done to nurture this. The newly elected leaders should come together quickly and build bridges for national unity and establish an effective, broad-based government that Iraqis across ethnic and sectarian lines have confidence in.

Iraqis should join together in condemning terrorism, isolating Saddamists and renewing their call on insurgents to refrain from violence. We urge all Iraqis to pursue their objectives peacefully through the political process.

We will standby the Iraqi people until the Iraqis can stand on their own feet. We will work with the new Iraqi Government to increase its capacity and achieve self-reliance. We will stand with our Iraqi allies in the fight for security through focused operations against terrorists who promote civil war in the country. We will also work to enhance economic opportunity for the Iraqi people both through our own assistance and more robust international support.

May God bless the People of Iraq.

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