

## The January 30th Iraqi Elections



# FACT SHEET: THE JANUARY 30<sup>TH</sup> IRAQI ELECTIONS

Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State

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**Iraq's January 30 election is the next step on the road to a secure, prosperous, and democratic Iraq.**

- The elections should: (1) reflect the will of the Iraqi people; (2) lay the groundwork for the drafting of a constitution representing the will of the Iraqi people that embraces the freedoms and principles of democratic systems of government; and (3) result in a representative government committed to peace, stability, and democracy in Iraq and throughout the region.
- Building a democracy in Iraq is a long-term effort; there is no quick or easy way forward. This election is an important milestone and proof that Iraqis want to exercise their democratic rights, even under very difficult conditions.
- Decisions for the planning of this election are being made by Iraqis for Iraqis.
- The United States and the international community support the Iraqi people's aspirations for freedom.
- The Iraqi people have suffered greatly during the more than three decades of Baa'thist tyranny. Despite acts of violence and threats of more violence, polls have made clear that the vast majority of Iraqis want to shape their future by exercising their right to vote.

### **Key Facts:**

On January 30, 2005, the Iraqi people will elect a 275-member Transitional National Assembly (TNA), with the goal of having at least 25 percent female representation. The TNA will:

- Serve as Iraq's national legislature for a transition period.
- Name a Presidency Council, consisting of a President and two Vice Presidents. The Presidency Council will, by unanimous agreement, appoint a Prime Minister and approve the selection of cabinet ministers.
- Draft Iraq's new constitution, which will be presented to the Iraqi people for their approval in a national referendum in October 2005. Elections based on this constitution are then to be held in December 2005 to choose a constitutional Iraqi government.
  - A voter registration list of 14.3 million names has been completed. The voter registration process consisted of validating and adding names, and correcting information on the provisional voter registration list, which was based on the food ration public distribution database. Iraqis had six weeks to complete this process.
  - More than 500 voter registration centers were established to help Iraqis verify their registration status. Iraqis will vote on Election Day in thousands of voting centers across Iraq and in fourteen other countries where Iraqis live.
  - 111 political entities have submitted candidate lists for the national elections, and in total, 256 political entities composed of 18,900 candidates have registered to compete in the 20 different elections – the national election, 18 provincial

elections, and Kurdistan Regional government election. The 256 entities include 27 individuals, 33 coalitions of parties, and 196 parties, demonstrating widespread enthusiasm for the political process.

- The Transitional National Assembly election will be conducted according to a closed list proportional representation system with the entire country considered as a single electoral district.
- The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) was established to supervise the elections and ensure a fair and transparent process.
- The UN Electoral Assistance Division is advising the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq. Other non-governmental organizations are providing technical support and assistance to the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq and the Iraqi Interim Government.
- The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq and various non-governmental organizations are engaged in a voter education campaign.
- The role of the United States and the Coalition is limited and consists primarily of providing financial support for the cost of the mechanics of the election as well as some technical assistance through NGOs. The United States has provided more than \$40 million to help the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq conduct elections. Japan has pledged \$40 million and the EU pledged \$38 million for the election effort.
- International support for Iraq's elections is essential. Military forces from 28 nations are working alongside Iraqi forces, helping to establish stability and security throughout Iraq. Iraqi Police and National Guard units have the primary responsibility for securing polling sites. Additional forces, both Iraqi and Coalition, stand ready to provide reinforcement where required.

**After the January 30, 2005 election:**

The votes will be tabulated and winners declared.

- The Transitional National Assembly is expected to be seated in mid-February.
- The Assembly will appoint a Presidency Council, consisting of a President and two Vice Presidents.
- The Presidency Council will, by unanimous agreement, appoint a Prime Minister and, on his or her recommendation, cabinet ministers to run the Iraqi government's various ministries.
- The Prime Minister and the cabinet must receive a vote of confidence by a simple majority of the Transitional National Assembly before commencing work as a government.
- The Transitional National Assembly will be charged with drafting a new Iraqi constitution.
- The draft constitution is to be presented for approval to the Iraqi people in a national referendum in October 2005.

By the end of 2005, the Iraqi people are expected to elect a new national government under a new, permanent constitution.