



المفوضية العليا المستقلة للانتخابات
كۆميسيوني بالاي سه ره خوي هه لېژارد نه كان
The Independent High Electoral Commission

POLLING AND COUNTING PROCEDURES FOR THE GOVERNORATE COUNCIL ELECTIONS



31 JANUARY 2009

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) is an independent, neutral, governmental and professional institution. It is supervised by the Council of Representatives.

IHEC performs its works according to article no. 102 of the Iraqi Constitution in terms of Law no. 11 of 2007. It has all the authorities relevant to electoral events, including organizing elections and ensuring fair and transparent implementation of elections.

The Iraqi Council of Representatives issued the Election Law on Governorate, District & Sub-district Councils no. 36 for 2008. This represents the legal framework according to an open list system that will regulate the Governorate Council Elections for governorates which are not affiliated to regions.

Iraq is divided into several electoral districts based on governorates; each governorate represents one electoral district. Consequently, IHEC registered political entities and certified their candidates' lists for the fourteen electoral districts. There will be a specific ballot for each of the fourteen governorates where elections will take place (which does not include the governorates of the Kurdistan region and Kirkuk).

Reserved seats have been allocated for specific minorities in the governorates of Baghdad, Ninewa and Basra.

In order to broaden opportunities for the participation of all eligible Iraqis in the voting process, including IDPs, special absentee polling stations will be established for IDPs who registered to vote absentee during the Voter Registration Update period. These polling stations will be established in polling centres in the locations where the IDP absentee voters currently reside (including Kurdistan and Kirkuk), so that they can cast a ballot for the candidates of their choice of the governorate from which they have been displaced.

Governorate Council elections will be conducted on Saturday 31 January 2009 and polling centres will be open from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm for regular and absentee voting in polling stations.

SECTION 1: POLLING PROCEDURES

1. POLLING CENTRES

1.1 Polling Centre and Polling Station Structure

For the purposes of conducting Governorate Council elections, the IHEC will establish almost 7,000 polling centres throughout Iraq. Each polling centre consists of one or more polling stations, totaling around 42,000 altogether, each of which is expected to serve approximately 400 voters.

Voters are assigned to a polling unit on the basis of their food ration agent number, and information provided during the Voter Registration Update Period (15/07/2008 – 28/08/2008) and the additional period of voter registration update services (Exhibition and Challenges Period, 05-12/11/2008).

There will be a unique number for each polling centre and for each station (1, 2, 3 etc). This number will be recorded in all polling and counting forms as the polling station number. Absentee polling stations will be indicated by an additional letter to the station number (1/ع, 2/ع, 3/ع etc¹).

1.2 Voter Register

- Each polling station will have a copy of the polling station's voter list. Families will be listed in alphabetical order, according to the name of the head of family. Each voter who wishes to vote will sign the voter list prior to casting a ballot.
- There will also be a centre register, which contains voter information for all stations in the centre, listing families in alphabetical order according to the head of family names and detailing their polling stations. It can be used to help voters find their correct polling station.
- There will be a register, similar to centre register, displayed on the walls outside the polling centre, allowing voters to see and identify the stations where they will vote.

¹ In Arabic, this is the first letter of the word for absentee (transcribed as ghiyabi)

2. PEOPLE AUTHORIZED TO ENTER THE POLLING CENTRE

Only the following categories of people may be present in the polling centre and polling station:

- Voters waiting to vote, or in the process of voting
- Polling staff
- Authorized members of IHEC
- Accredited political entity agents
- Accredited observers
- Accredited media representatives (without equipment, except in centres where it is permitted by IHEC for media representatives to have access with media equipment)
- Members of the security forces ONLY if their presence is needed.

All of the above must wear a badge or armband issued by the IHEC, except voters and security personnel.



Note: - No one is authorized to carry weapons inside the polling centre, except for security personnel on duty, responsible for security of the polling centre, if required.

2.1 Polling Officials (Centre and Station)

All polling staff are members of the IHEC and must remember to behave neutrally at all times. The neutral behavior of polling staff is important for a free and fair election. All staff must sign and adhere to the IHEC Code of Conduct.

All polling staff will work on Election Day, 31 January 2009. Polling staff must also attend training and be available to help set up the polling centre before Election Day.

Each polling centre is managed by a Polling Centre Coordinator, who manages and supervises all polling centre staff. Each polling station is managed by a Station Manager who supervises four other polling officials.

❖ **Each polling centre consists of polling centre and polling station staff.**

A. Polling Centre Team:

Polling Centres with one or two polling stations will have 5 staff:

1. Polling Centre Coordinator
2. Queue Controller (2), 1 male, 1 female.
3. Inspector (2), 1 male, 1 female.

Polling Centres with three or more polling stations will have 10 staff:

1. Polling Centre Coordinator
2. Queue Controller (4), 2 male, 2 female.
3. Inspector (4), 2 male, 2 female.
4. Polling Centre Registrar.

i) Polling Centre Coordinator

The Polling Centre Coordinator reports to Branch Centre officers, who in turn reports to their Governorate Electoral Office (GEO). The GEO Manager reports to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), who is the chief executive officer of the IHEC.

Duties of the Polling Centre Coordinator:

- Managing the overall running of the polling centre.
- Receiving and delivering to Polling Station Managers all sensitive and non-sensitive materials prior to polling, and retrieving materials after polling for material transfer to the Branch Centre. Ensuring secure storage of all sensitive materials as required.
- Organizing and following up on all security arrangements.
- Reporting to the Branch Centre opening and closing of the polling centre and its stations, in addition to all incidents and voter turnout from polling stations within the polling centre.
- Resolving any problems that appear in polling stations and the centre, which need to be resolved.

ii) Queue Controller

All polling centres will have queue controllers who report to the Polling Centre Coordinator and manage the queues outside the polling centre.

Duties of the polling centre queue controller:

- Controlling the flow of voters into the polling centre and ensuring that the queues are orderly.
- Guiding voters to the board of political entities and their candidates outside the centre, to know the entity, its candidates and their numbers.
- Reminding voters that they will have to show proof of identity and confirming that they have such proof with them. Advising voters without proof of identity to go and bring an identity document.
- Confirming that voters are at the correct polling centre by asking which polling unit they belong to. Guiding voters to the centre's register posted on the wall outside the centre, in order to find the correct polling station.
- Ensuring that only authorized people enter or remain in the polling centre.
- Closing the polling centre queue at 5:00 pm, upon instructions from the Polling Centre Coordinator.

iii) Inspectors

A sufficient number of female and male inspectors will be appointed to ensure that voters are checked quickly and efficiently.

Duties of the Inspector:

- Ensuring that no person enters the polling centre with any weapons or explosive devices or carries any bags or parcels.
- Checking all visitors who intend to enter polling centre.

iv) Centre Registrar

There will be a special register at the centre, which will include all the names of heads of family registered to vote in that centre. The Centre Registrar is responsible for safeguarding the register and for guiding voters to the correct polling station, through searching the register. In cases where the Centre Registrar cannot find a voter's name in the register, the Registrar will assist the voter to determine the correct Polling Centre by asking the voter his/her polling unit number (food ration agent).

B. Polling Station staff:

1. Station Manager
2. Queue Controller
3. Identification Officer
4. Ballot Issuer
5. Ballot Box Monitor

❖ All staff must cooperate to resolve any problem, but the final decision will be made by the Station Manager.

Remark: Dual Stations providing services for both regular and absentee voting together, may have one additional staff member to work on absentee voting services, according to separate procedures for absentee voting.

i) Station Manager

The Station Manager manages a polling station and reports to the Polling Centre Coordinator of the polling centre.

Duties of the Station Manager:

- Supervising polling staff and all activities in the polling station to ensure that correct procedures are followed.
- Receiving and safeguarding sensitive materials throughout the day, and packing materials for transfer to the Branch Centre or GEO.
- Setting up the polling station on the day before polling, to prepare the station for the polling process.
- Organizing a rotation system so that each member of the polling team can have a short break for lunch and prayer, without closing down the polling station.
- Taking decisions on the rights of voters in difficult situations.
- Reporting problems which cannot be resolved inside the polling station to the Polling Centre Coordinator.
- Recording the number of ballots received by the polling station from the Polling Centre Coordinator.
- Providing assistance to voters when necessary.
- Opening the polling station at 7:00 am and closing the polling station after the last voter who arrived before 5:00 pm has voted.
- Organizing and supervising the counting of ballots.

- Reporting voter turnout and results recorded on counting form to the Polling Centre Coordinator on request.
- Recording in the station journal concerns of agents, observers and voters, time of opening and closing of the station and any other incidents that occur in the polling station during Election Day, and resolves these problems or concerns.
- Recording the presence of observers, political entity agents and media in the journal, and ensuring they sign. The Polling Station Manager will prepare a table containing the following information: name of agent/observer/media representative, organization, IHEC accreditation badge number, time of arrival, time of departure and signature, as illustrated in the section on 'Accredited Observers, Agents and Media'.
- Periodically checking behind the voting screen to ensure that there are no discarded ballots and no campaign material for a specific political entity or candidate.

ii) Queue Controller

The polling station Queue Controller reports to the Polling Station Manager.

Duties of the polling station Queue Controller:

- Checking that the voter is in the correct polling station.
- Ensuring that voters form an orderly queue outside the polling station, and organising the queue so that the polling station does not become crowded.
- Allowing authorised people to enter the polling station without delay.
- Checking each voter's hands for ink to ensure nobody enters the Polling Station who has already voted.
- Asking voters to have their photo ID document ready to show to the Identification Officer.
- Guiding voters one at a time to the Identification Officer.
- Ensuring that voters leave the polling station as soon as they have voted.
- Ensuring that no voters take any ballots out of the polling station.
- Giving priority to elderly, pregnant and disabled voters and parents with small children.
- Keeping the entrance to the polling station clear.

iii) Identification Officer

The Identification Officer reports to the Station Manager of the polling station.

Duties of the Identification Officer:

- Examining each voter's photo ID document.
- Finding the voter's name on the voter list.
- Cross checking the information on the ID document with the data on the voter list.
- Asking the voter to sign or thumbprint (with the lefthand thumb) next to his/her name on the voter list.
- Guiding each voter to the Ballot Issuer.

iv) Ballot Issuer

The Ballot Issuer reports to the Polling Station Manager.

Duties of the Ballot Issuer:

- Explaining the method of voting to voters.
- Removing the next ballot in serial number order from the ballot pad.
- Stamping the back of each ballot and folding the ballot so it is easy for the voter to fold after marking the ballot so that the stamp is visible.
- Issuing a ballot to each voter.
- Guiding each voter to a vacant voting screen. In case that there is no vacant voting screen, asks the voter to wait until one is available.
- Guiding voters to the poster of political entity and candidate names behind the voting screens, in case voters need to check name or number of a political entity or candidate.
- Ensuring ballots are safeguarded at all times.

v) Ballot Box Monitor

The Ballot Box Monitor reports to the Polling Station Manager.

Duties of the Ballot Box Monitor:

- Safeguarding the ballot boxes at all times.
- Ensuring that the right index finger of the voter is inked with indelible voter marking ink.
- Ensuring the ballot paper is stamped with the official IHEC ballot stamp. If there is no stamp, directs the voter to the Ballot Issuer.
- Ensuring that each voter places her/his ballot in the ballot box.
- Asking the voter to leave the polling station after completing the voting process.

2.2 Accredited Observers, Agents and Media

- Electoral observers, political entity agents and media representatives have an important role in helping to ensure that the elections are free and fair.
- They are accredited by the IHEC, and issued with accreditation badges. They must wear their accreditation badges at all times, and present this along with a photo ID document to the Station Manager and/or Centre Coordinator.
- They must introduce themselves to the Station Manager or Polling Centre Coordinator.
- They must sign and abide by the relevant code of conduct adopted by IHEC.
- The Station Manager may establish a schedule to rotate agents and observers in turn in order to ensure that the conduct of electoral processes is not disrupted.

All observers, political entity agents and media representatives should sign in the journal, by his/her name, in the table as outlined below:

Item	Name	Organization	Badge Number	Time of Arrival	Time of Dep	Signature

A. Observers

- Observers may enter a polling centre from the time the polling staff arrive, until completion of the counting process, and packing and handover of materials.
- They may move from one polling station to another inside the polling centre.
- No more than one observer for each observer organization may be present in the polling station at any one time.
- Observers may witness all processes in the polling centre except for voters voting or the voter list.
- They can make their own record of seal numbers and voter turnout.
- Observers cannot file an official complaint but they may submit their concerns in public reports to the organization they represent.
- Inside the polling station, observers may not communicate with voters in any way.
- Observers may follow a vehicle carrying polling materials to the Branch Centre or GEO, but may not travel in an IHEC vehicle.



Electoral observers may raise any concerns with the Station Manager or with the Polling Centre Coordinator, but they cannot file a formal complaint or insist on any IHEC staff member taking any particular action according to the IHEC Regulation on Observation No 3 2008. However, the Station Manager or the Polling Centre Coordinator will record any concerns raised by observers in the station journal and, where possible, will resolve the issues raised.

B. Political Entity Agents

- Political entities may appoint agents to be in polling stations.
- Agents may enter a polling station from the time that polling officials arrive until completion of the counting process, and packing and handover of materials.
- They can move from one polling station to another inside the polling centre.
- No more than one agent for each accredited political entity may be present in the polling station at any one time.
- Agents may witness all processes in the polling centre except for voters voting or the voter list.
- They can make their own record of seal numbers and voter turnout.
- Inside the polling station, agents may not communicate with voters in any way.
- Political entity agents have the right to submit a complaint to the IHEC by completing a Complaint Form 110.
- Political entity agents have the right to object to decisions of the Station Manager according to the IHEC Regulation on Political Entities No 5 2008, but the Station Manager is not obliged to act upon this objection.
- Agents may follow a vehicle carrying polling materials to the Branch Centre or GEO, but may not travel in an IHEC vehicle.



If an agent conducts her/himself inappropriately, the Station Manager or Polling Centre Coordinator must warn the agent to behave in accordance with the code of conduct for political entity agents. If the misconduct continues, the Station Manager may ask the agent to leave the polling centre. The Station Manager must record such an incident in the station journal.

C. Media Representatives

- The media has an important role in covering polling and counting processes inside polling centres and stations, and promoting free and fair elections.
- They are prohibited from disrupting processes inside polling centres and stations.
- No interviews are allowed inside polling stations.
- They are prohibited from accessing or filming behind a voting screen.
- They are not allowed to carry any electronic equipment (cameras, recording devices) except in certain polling centres identified previously by the IHEC.

2.3 Security Personnel

Iraqi security forces are responsible for the security of the polling centre. However, police officers and other security personnel should generally station themselves outside the polling centre and not inside the polling stations, unless their presence is needed in an emergency or is requested by a polling official.

Polling Centre Coordinators and Station Managers must ensure they have a contact number for the security forces, in case of emergency.

3. BEFORE POLLING DAY

3.1 Planning and Designing the Polling Centre and Polling Station

- All polling officials are expected to be present at the polling centre, at times agreed upon with the Polling Centre Coordinator and Station Manager, on the day before polling in order to assist.
- During set up of the polling centre, posters detailing the names and numbers of the political entities and their candidates, as well as the guiding posters listing the names of heads of family and assigned polling stations, must be displayed on the wall outside the polling centre.
- All non-sensitive materials for the polling station (such as desks, voting screens, etc) should be set up on the day before polling day.
- Station Managers must plan the layout of their polling stations at least one day before polling day. The layout must provide for a circular movement of voters from the entrance, to the Identification Officer, to the Ballot Issuer, to the voting screens, to the ballot box, and to the exit point. If the room has two doors, a separate entrance and exit point should be established.
- The posters listing the names and numbers of political entities and their candidates must be displayed behind the voting screens for voters to view.
- The sign which includes the number of the polling station and the alphabetic distribution of voters in that polling station must be displayed at the entrance to the station.
- The ballot box must be placed, raised, clearly visible to everyone.
- The Identification Officer and Ballot Issuer need a desk of sufficient size. The Ballot Box Monitor needs a desk or other raised surface on which to put the ballot box, and a separate desk for the indelible ink. The Station Manager needs a desk located away from the flow of voters but where s/he can observe all proceedings and be easily reached by voters needing assistance.
- Agents and electoral observers need seating located away from the flow of voters but where they can observe all proceedings. They are not bound to remain seated, but may not communicate with voters or observe voters marking their ballot.

3.2 Receipt and Storage of Election Materials from the GEO

Materials will be sent from the National Office to the GEOs, who will store them in previously identified secure storage facilities.

Separate instructions will be issued detailing collection of materials from the GEO, movement of materials to the polling centre, and secure storage for materials.

There are two types of materials: sensitive and non-sensitive.

Sensitive materials are materials which may be used for fraudulent purposes and must be kept secure or under polling staff supervision at all times. Those materials are ballots, voter lists, official ballot stamps, forms, indelible voter marking ink and the station journal when it contains information.

Forms

There will be three forms used in the Polling Station.

- Form 141 Polling Station Reconciliation Form. This is used in both polling and counting processes.
- Form 142 Total Votes for Political Entities. This will be used during the counting process.
- Form 143 Total Votes for Candidates. This will be used during the counting process.

Non-sensitive materials cannot be used for fraudulent purposes, for example voting screen, portable light etc.

4. POLLING STEP-BY-STEP

4.1 Before the Start of Polling

Polling staff must have signed the IHEC recruitment contract at the Branch Centre as well as the Code of Conduct before starting work on polling day.

On polling day, polling officials must arrive at the polling centre by 6:00 am at the latest. Polling Officials must wear their identification issued by IHEC until the completion of counting processes.

If some staff do not arrive for work at the specified time, the polling station manager will inform the Polling Centre Coordinator, who will contact the Branch Centre or GEO to request additional staff from the reserves. At least three staff members must be present to open the polling station. Until replacements arrive, the Station Manager will allocate the tasks between team members, ensuring key roles of ballot box monitoring, identification officer role and ballot issue are covered. The Polling Centre Coordinator may provide one of the centre staff for queue control, if available.

The Polling Centre Coordinator gives each Station Manager a package of 450 consecutively numbered ballot. Each package consists of a number of pads of 50 ballot. The Polling Centre Coordinator records on Form 162 (Material Handover from Polling Centre to Polling Station and Retrieval) the quantity and serial numbers of the ballot issued to each polling station in that polling centre. Station Managers sign Form 162 to confirm receipt of the ballots and other sensitive materials.

The Station Manager records the total ballots received from the Polling Centre Coordinator and the serial numbers of those ballots on Form 141 Polling Station Reconciliation Form.

In each polling station, the Station Manager inspects the ballot box to ensure it is empty, and invites observers and agents to observe the sealing of the ballot box. The Station Manager shows observers and agents that the ballot box is empty and puts a tight seal on each side of the ballot box. The Station Manager writes the serial numbers of the seals on Form 141 Polling Station Reconciliation Form and leaves the upper slit of the box open for voters to cast their ballots. The Station Manager invites electoral observers and agents to record the serial numbers of the seals.



Note: The station manager places a sticker on the ballot box stating the name and number of the governorate, name and number of the Branch Centre, name and number of the polling centre, and number of the polling station.

The Station Manager must not delay preparations for polling if agents and electoral observers have not yet arrived at the polling station.

Polling staff should cast their vote just before 07:00 am before voters enter the polling station. Observers and agents present are to observe this process. The voting process is conducted as follows:

- If the name of the polling station staff member is in the voter list in the polling station in which s/he is working, the staff member can cast her/his ballot.
- If the name of the polling station staff member is in the centre register but not in the voter list of the polling station in which s/he works, the staff member should go to the station in which s/he is listed on the voter list in order to cast a ballot.
- If the name of the polling station staff member is not included in the centre register, the staff member can vote in the station in which s/he works after adding her/his name and other personal data (as occurs in the voter list) at the bottom of the register and then signing next to that.
- As for the polling centre staff, if the staff member's name is not in the centre register in which the staff member works, s/he will vote in Station Number 1 after s/he adds his name and other personal data (as occurs in the voter list) at the bottom of the register and then signs next to that.

It is possible for political entity agents and Iraqi election observers based in the polling station and whose names are on the voter list of that polling station, to cast their ballot immediately after the polling staff have cast theirs and before other voters.

4.2 Opening the Polling Station

Polling should start at exactly 07:00 am. The Station Manager must record this in the station journal and confirm to the Polling Centre Coordinator.



opening

4.3 Joining the Queue

- The Queue Controller will organize the voter queue.
- The Queue Controller will check the voter's hands to ensure that there is no ink on the fingers, particularly on the cuticles.
 - If there is ink on the voter's fingers, the voter will not be permitted to enter the Station.
- The queue controller will allow voters to enter the polling station, after opening at 7:00 am.

4.4 Identification

- The voter shows her/his photo ID document to the Identification Officer.
- The voter tells the Identification Officer the name of her/his head of family and the Identification Officer will search the voter list to locate the voter's name.
 - The voter must be on the voter list for that polling station in order to cast a ballot.
- The Identification Officer checks that the photograph on the ID document is of the person presenting that document, so s/he may vote.
- The Identification Officer will ask the voter to sign or thumbprint (with the thumb of the left hand) next to his/her name on the voter list.
 - Any person refusing to sign or thumbprint the voter list will not be permitted to vote.
- The Identification Officer directs the voter to the Ballot paper Issuer.

4.5 Ballot Issue

- A. The Ballot Issuer explains to the voter how to mark the ballot. The Ballot Issuer must ensure that the explanation is completely impartial, and should not point to the ballot paper as it may appear that s/he is telling the voter how to vote for a specific political entity or candidate.
- B. The Ballot Issuer will detach the next ballot from the pad according to the consecutive serial numbers.
- C. The Ballot Issuer folds the ballot paper, stamps the back of it with the official IHEC ballot stamp, and gives it to the voter.
 - The stamp must be clear on the folded paper to help the voter fold it in the same manner, so the Ballot Box Monitor can easily see the stamp on the ballot before the voter casts the ballot in the ballot box. This aims to ensure all legitimately cast ballots are stamped, since unstamped ballots will not be included in the results.
- D. The Ballot Issuer clarifies to the voter the mechanism of marking the ballot:
 - Place a tick (√) in the box next to the political entity you would like to vote for.
 - If you would like to vote for a candidate, place a tick (√) in the box next to the candidate number in the candidate area on the left hand side of the ballot paper, in addition to the tick for the political entity.

Note: If you place a tick (√) only for a candidate, with no tick (√) for a political entity, your vote is invalid.

- In governorates with reserved seats for minorities (Baghdad, Ninewa, Basra), if you would like to vote for a minority candidate, put a tick (√) only in the box next to the name of the minority candidate you would like to vote for.
- E. The Ballot Issuer tells the voter to go behind one of the empty voting screens and mark the ballot in secret with the ballot marking pen provided. The voter can use the posters (or list) of names and numbers of political entities and their candidates which is found behind the voting screen.
- F. The ballot must be folded so that no-one can see the voter's choice. Then it will be cast in the ballot box.
- G. Sometimes a voter makes a mistake on the ballot paper and therefore needs a new one. The ballot paper with the mistake in it is called a spoiled ballot paper. If the voter spoils a ballot paper, or wants a new ballot paper for any reason, s/he may return to the Ballot Issuer and receive a replacement ballot paper. Without looking at the front of the ballot, the Ballot Issuer writes the word "Spoiled" on the back of the spoiled ballot and puts it in the Spoiled and Discarded Ballot Envelope. A new ballot paper is issued to the voter and the process is repeated.

4.6 Casting a Ballot

- A. The Ballot Box Monitor admits one voter at a time to the ballot box area.
- B. The Ballot Box Monitor must ensure that the voter dips her/his right index finger into the indelible ink and that the ink covers the cuticle of the voter's finger nail before the person is allowed to put the ballot paper in the ballot box. The Ballot Box Monitor must also ensure that the voter does not try to wipe her/his finger before the ink dries.
- Any voter refusing to ink the finger will not be permitted to cast a ballot. (In this case, the ballot becomes a discarded ballot.)
 - If a voter has missing fingers, the Ballot Box Monitor dips one of her/his other fingers of the right hand, and, if s/he has no right hand, s/he dips one of the fingers of her/his left hand. If the voter has no fingers, it is not necessary to apply ink.
- C. The Ballot Box Monitor ensures that the ballot is stamped and that the voter places the folded ballot paper in the ballot box and then instructs the voter to leave the polling station.
- The Ballot Box Monitor must ensure that the ballot box does not get too congested by shaking it at intervals in order to re-distribute the ballots inside the box.

- A **discarded ballot** paper is a ballot paper which a voter may have discarded, and which is found somewhere in the polling station. If polling staff find a discarded ballot paper, they must not put it in the ballot box. They must give it to the station manager who will write “Discarded” on the back of the ballot paper and put it in the Spoiled/Discarded Ballot Paper Envelope.

4.7 Close of Polling

At exactly 5:00 pm, the polling centre Queue Controller ensures that all voters have joined the queue and closes the door to the polling centre, if there is one. The Queue Controller informs any voters who arrive after 5:00 pm that they cannot vote.

If the polling centre does not have a door, or if the queue is too large to fit inside the polling centre, a polling centre Queue Controller must stand at the end of the queue to ensure that no other people join the queue after 5:00 pm, in order to vote.

In the polling station, polling continues until all voters in the queue have voted. When the last voter has voted, the Station Manager will record the time of closing in the journal.

After the last voter has voted, the Station Manager will seal the top slot of the ballot box and write the seal number on Form 141 Polling Station Reconciliation Form, allowing any observers and agents to record the seal number.

The Station Manager will then finalize the polling process:

- Checks behind the voting screens for any discarded ballots
- Removes all blue pens and place in the kitbox
- Places the ballot stamp into an A3 tamper evident bag and seals it
- Puts the indelible voter marking ink in the kitbox.

4.8 Assisted Voting

- Voters who are illegible, blind, with severed hands or they cannot write for any reason the station manager is responsible to facilitate such assistance for them.
- The friend or relative may assist a voter, but they cannot assist more than two voters.
- The station manager must explain to the friend or relative the need to maintain absolute respect for the voter's choice and to keep the voter's choice secret.
- The voter, who needs assistance, may ask the station manager for assistance. The station manager must not communicate the voter's choice to anyone on the Election Day or on any other occasion.



Note: Agents and electoral observers may not assist a voter and may not witness assisted voting.

4.9 Suspension of Polling

The Polling Centre Coordinator may decide to suspend polling in the polling centre or individual stations if the polling centre is threatened by riot, violence, storm, flood or any other event, which makes orderly polling impossible. The Branch Centre should be consulted before the suspension takes effect.

The Polling Centre Coordinator may accept advice from the security forces to suspend polling, and can also act on her/his own initiative.

As soon as possible, after suspending polling, polling centre coordinators must inform the Branch Centre and discuss the possibility to resume the polling process. The Branch Centre must inform GEO, and the GEO should inform the National Office of the situation.

In cases of suspension of activities, the Station Manager must ensure all voters leave the Station and will attempt to secure all election materials. In these cases, the Station Manager will take the following steps where possible:

- Ask all voters to leave and close the Station
- Secure all sensitive materials
- Record the time of suspension and reason in the journal
- If instructed, pack election materials in preparation for transfer.

5. COMPLETING POLLING STATION RECONCILIATION FORM (FORM 141)

The Polling Station Reconciliation Form 141 comes in size A3 with three carbon copies, each in a different colour. The reconciliation form contains six sections as follows:

- i. Section 1: Prior to the opening of the polling station. It contains the following fields:
 - Field 1 contains the governorate name and number, the branch centre name and number, polling centre name and number and polling station number.
 - Field 2 contains the total number of ballots received and their serial numbers (from – to).
 - Field 3 contains the serial numbers of the seals used sealing the ballot boxes.
- ii. Section 2: After closing the polling station. It contains the following fields:
 - Field 4: number of seal used to close the top slot of the ballot box
 - Field 5: number of signatures on the voter list
 - Field 6: number of unused ballots
 - Field 7: number of spoiled ballots
 - Field 8: number of discarded ballots
 - Field 9: total number of ballots outside the ballot box. Total of fields 6+7+8
- iii. Section 3: After opening the ballot box. It contains the following fields:
 - Field 10: total number of ballots inside the ballot box
 - Field 11: discrepancy calculation: fields (10+8)-5 (first reconciliation)
- iv. Section 4: Reconciliation. It contains the following fields:
 - Field 12: total number of ballots outside the ballot box (field 9)
 - Field 13: total number of ballots inside the ballot box (field 10)
 - Field 14: total number of fields 12+13
 - Field 15: total number of received ballots (field 2)
 - Field 16: total number of fields 12+13
 - Field 17: discrepancy between fields 15 and 16
- v. Section 5: After sorting and counting of ballots. It contains the following fields:
 - Field 18: number of unstamped ballots
 - Field 19: number of blank ballots
 - Field 20: number of invalid ballots
 - Field 21: number of valid ballots
 - Field 22: total number of ballots inside the ballot box; fields 18+19+20+21
 - Field 23: discrepancy between fields 10 and 22
- vi. Section 6: After packing sensitive materials. It contains the following fields:
 - Field 24: serial numbers of seals used to seal the ballot box
 - Field 25: serial number of tamper evident bag 1
 - Field 26: serial number of tamper evident bag 2
 - Field 27: serial number of tamper evident bag 3

The form also contains a field for the signatures of the station staff who must all sign after completion of the sorting and counting process. This proves the discharge of their duties on polling day. It also contains two fields for remarks: one on the right hand side, to be used if there is a discrepancy in the seal numbers used from the morning; and another on the left hand side to be used for any remarks regarding the reconciliation process.

6. ELECTION DAY COMPLAINTS

As a part of the regular complaints process which will be conducted in accordance with the IHEC regulation and procedures, any voter or political entity agent has the right to submit a complaint related to polling and counting processes.

Observers can submit reports to their official authorities to explain their complaints. They cannot however submit formal complaints related to polling and counting processes.

Any voter or political entity agent willing to file a complaint must do so by way of the official Complaint Form 110.

The complaint form will be available on polling day at polling centres, GEOs and the IHEC National Office, and following polling day at the IHEC GEOs and National Office in Baghdad.

How to submit a complaint?

Anybody who wishes to file a complaint can obtain the Complaint Form 110 and a special Complaints Envelope from the Polling Centre Coordinator, Station Manager or IHEC official at the GEO or National Office.

The Complaint Form consists of four carbonated copies in different colours. The form must include the following:

- The name, address and contact information of the complainant.
- The name and contact information of the person alleged to have committed a violation (if available).
- The details of the alleged violation, including date, time, place and circumstances.
- The name and contact information of any witnesses of the violation (if available).
- Any relevant document or other evidence supporting the complaint.
- The signature of the complainant.

The person wishing to submit a complaint must be informed of the requirements.

Complaints are confidential. The complainant fills out the Complaint Form, dates and signs it, keeps the last copy and inserts the other three copies into the Complaints Envelope (size A5) along with any other relevant documentary evidence (if available). The complainant seals the envelope and then submits it to the Polling Station Manager, Polling Centre Coordinator or designated IHEC official (at the GEO or National Office), who will then stamp, date and sign the submitted Complaint Envelope across the seal.

Remark: If the complainant desires so, s/he can ask the Station Manager or Polling Centre Coordinator to write her/his comments on the Complaint Form.

A complaint must be submitted within three days of the time and date of the alleged violation.

At the polling station, all submitted Complaint Envelopes are placed into a Complaint Envelope (size A4) also labeled "Complaints", on which is written:

- the name and code of the polling centre
- the code of the polling station
- the number of A5 Complaint Envelopes inside the A4 envelope.

The A4 Complaint Envelope will then be submitted to the Polling Centre Coordinator together with the counting forms for transfer to the GEO.

Complaints may also be submitted electronically, by way of attaching a scanned copy of a completed Complaint Form 110 to a mail addressed to the official IHEC complaints e-mail address as posted on the IHEC website.

Section 2:

COUNTING PROCEDURES

1. COUNTING STEP BY STEP

1.1. Preparing the Station for the Counting Process

1. The Station Manager will supervise the counting of ballots. The Station Manager will delegate tasks to polling staff as appropriate.

2. Arrange the polling station to accommodate efficient and transparent handling of the ballots during the counting:

- » Arrange a number of tables into a large square “ballots counting table,” allowing members of the polling station staff to be seated during the counting and allowing observers and agents to observe the counting process from a reasonable distance.
- » Edges of tables should be attached with adhesive tape, in order not to have any spaces between tables and ensure that no ballot paper will be lost.
- » Prepare all the forms that will be used in the counting process and the red coloured pens that will be used in filling the worksheets.

Remark: Only red pens may be on the counting table.

Remark: Three forms will be used in the counting process.

- *The first form is Form 141 Polling Station Reconciliation Form that will be used from the beginning of the polling process until the end of the counting and packing process.*
- *The second form is Form 142 that will be used during the counting process to record the votes for political entities.*
- *The third form is Form 143 that will be used during the counting process to record the votes for candidates during the counting process.*

The cover page of each form will be used as a draft, and mistakes made throughout the counting process can be corrected on this draft. The correct information can then be transcribed onto the real forms.

All counting forms must be clear and legible. If a mistake is made on a real form, or a form is unreadable, it is possible to obtain a spare copy of the form from the Centre Coordinator and rewrite the information.

The top section of the form must be completed. This contains the name and number of the Branch Centre, the name and number of the Polling Centre and the Polling Station number, and in Form 141 also the governorate name and code. Not filling in this part may lead to results of the station not being included in the election results.

- » During the counting process, periodically check under the counting table and under the chairs to make sure that no ballots have fallen on the floor.
- » Observers must be able to see the counting process but must not be able to touch the ballots or otherwise interfere with the count.
 - » The Station Manager will be responsible for filling in all counting forms.
- » Station staff must announce to observers and agents each step they are about to undertake, the status of each ballot paper (unstamped, blank etc), and the results.
- » The count will consist practically of double counts as a way to avoid committing any errors, during the sorting and counting process as described in section (1.4 Counting Total Ballots Cast After Opening the Ballot Box). The double count applies to signatures on the voter list as well as ballots.

Remark: Make sure the official ballot stamp is sealed into an A3 tamper evident bag before starting the count.

1.2 Counting Ballots Outside the Ballot Box using Form 141 Before Opening the Ballot Box.

- Count the signatures of voters on the Voter List and write the total in field number 5 of the Polling Station Reconciliation Form 141
 - Count the unused ballots and write the total in field number 6 of Form 141
 - Count the spoiled ballots and write the total in field number 7 of Form 141
 - Count the discarded ballots and write the total in field number 8 of Form 141
- Remark: Put the spoiled and discarded ballots in the envelope specified for Spoiled/Discarded Ballots.*
- Total the number of the ballots above (unused, spoiled and discarded) and write the total number of the ballots outside the box in field 9 of Form 141.

1.3 Opening the Ballot Box

- Make sure the seals on the ballot box are the same as those recorded on Polling Station Reconciliation Form 141 in the morning before the start of polling.

Remark: If there is any discrepancy in seal numbers, the Station Manager should inform the Polling Centre Coordinator, and together indicate this on Form 141 and note this in the Station Journal.

- Open the ballot box by cutting the seals. Take out the ballots in front of observers and political entity agents. Unfold the ballots face down and place them on the counting table face down.

1.4 Counting Total Ballots Cast After Opening the Ballot Box

- Ballots will be turned over and counted as in groups; every group consists of 25 ballots and will be placed in (X) shape.
The ballots will be transferred to another employee of the polling staff in order to recount them. Thus, the counting process will be easier as every group contains 25 ballots. If the total was different in the two counts, the ballots will be given to another station staff member to check the number. This method must be used in counting ballots after sorting into categories and sorting the valid ballots by political entities and candidates.
- Record the number of total ballots cast in field 10 of Polling Station Reconciliation Form 141.
- Calculate the sum of the total number of ballots found in the ballot box (field 10) and discarded ballots (field 8). Deduct from that sum the total number of signatures on the voter list (field 5).
- Write the outcome of this calculation (the difference between field 5 and fields 10+8) in field 11 of Form 141.

Note: If the numbers do not match, then recount the total number of signatures on the Voter List and recount the total ballots cast accurately.

In case there is still a discrepancy, the difference is recorded on Form 141 with a comment in the section for reconciliation remarks, and also in the Station Journal with mention of any known reason for this, and the reconciliation process continues (the first area of reconciliation).

1.5 Reconciliation Processes (Form 141)

After counting the total ballots cast, complete the reconciliation section of Form 141.

1. Write in field 12 the total number of ballots outside the ballot box as recorded in field 9.
2. Write in field 13 the total number of ballots inside the ballot box as recorded in field 10.
3. Calculate the total of fields 12 and 13 and write the total in field 14. This represents total ballots found, both inside and outside the ballot box.
4. Write in field 15 the total number of ballots received at the start of the day as recorded in field 2.
5. Write in field 16 the total ballots found both inside and outside the ballot box as recorded in field 14.
6. Write the difference between field 15 and 16 in field 17, and if there is no difference, write 0 (zero).

Remark: The difference should be 0 (zero). If the result is not 0 (zero), the ballots inside and outside the ballot box should be recounted and the total recalculated against ballots issued in the morning (the second area of reconciliation).

In case there is still a discrepancy, the difference is recorded on Form 141 with a comment in the section for reconciliation remarks, and also in the Station Journal with mention of any known reason for this.

Checking Discrepancies against the Tolerance Level

The two processes of reconciliation have now been completed: field 11 which indicates the difference between the number of signatures on the voter list and the sum of ballots inside the ballot box plus discarded ballots, and field 17 which indicates the difference between the total number of ballots found both inside and outside the ballot box and the number of ballots received.

The IHEC will determine the acceptable level of discrepancy for these two reconciliation processes). Counting staff must now look at the instructions in the relevant Annex (Tolerance Level) to determine the acceptable level of discrepancy for that Station.

If the discrepancy for either one reconciliation area (either field 11 or 17) is outside the acceptable limit (tolerance level), the counting staff at the station will act as follows:

- Cease the count without turning the ballots face-up
- Fold all ballots together and pack them into the ballot box
- Seal the ballot box and pack materials according to packing procedures for material handover.
- Inform the Polling Centre Coordinator that the reconciliation has revealed a discrepancy outside tolerance level and counting has ceased.

If both discrepancies (field 11 and 17) are 0 (zero) or within the tolerance level, the counting process will continue.

1.6. Sorting the Ballots

When sorting ballots, there will be five groups of ballots:

1. Unstamped ballots: when checking the back of the ballots, they do not carry the official ballot stamp, then the voter's vote will not be counted. After finishing sorting the unstamped ballots from rest, turn the ballots face up, so the voter's mark will be visible.
2. Blank ballots: a ballot paper which does not have any mark is blank.
3. Invalid ballots: an invalid ballot is a ballot which contains an incorrect mark for the voter's choice. (See Section on determining ballot validity.)
4. Valid ballots: ballot that have correct mark for an entity, or an entity and candidate of that entity.

5. Ballots requiring adjudication: the mark is not clear or identified, the mark must be identified as either valid or invalid by the Station Manager, and the ballot placed in either the valid or invalid group.

Note: If any ballots require adjudication, follow these steps:

- » Thoroughly review the rules and examples for valid and invalid ballots.
- » Allow any polling station staff, agents and observers to see the ballot.
- » The Station Manager will announce her/his decision about whether the ballot is valid or invalid.
- » If any member of the polling station staff objects to the Station Manager's decision, there will be a vote of the team members. If the votes are even, the Station Manager's decision will be implemented.
- » If it has been decided that the ballot has a valid mark, place it into the stack of valid ballots.
- » If it has been decided that the ballot does not have a valid mark, place it onto a stack of invalid ballots.

1.7. Sorting Ballots and Recording on Form 141

Continue the evaluation process for all ballots and sort them into the following groups:

- Unstamped – count and record in field 18 of Form 141, and place them in the special envelope for unstamped and invalid ballots
- Blank – count and record in field 19 of Form 141, and place them in the special envelope for blank ballots
- Invalid – count and record in field 20 of Form 141, and place them in the special envelope for unstamped and invalid ballots
- Valid – count and record in field 21 of Form 141
- Calculate the total number of ballots above (unstamped + blank + invalid + valid) and write the total number in field 22 of Form 141.
- Compare the total number of ballots written in field 22 with the total number of ballots inside the ballot box written in field 10 of Form 141 and write the difference in number is written in field 23 of form 141.

If there is any difference, then recount the ballots in each group (unstamped, blank, invalid and valid) in order to correct any mistakes.

1.8 Sorting and Counting of Valid Ballots

A. Sorting and Counting by Political Entity and Completing Form 142 Total Votes for Political Entities

- Ballots will be sorted according to political entities only, without considering the candidate mark.
- The ballots of each political entity will be placed separately, and a special post-it note placed at the head of the pile for each political entity, with the name and number of that political entity on it.
- Count the ballots of each political entity in sequence based on the sequence of political entities on Form 142 and write the total votes for each entity on the post-its and on Form 142 (Total Votes for Political Entities).
- After finishing counting the ballots for each political entity, the total number for all entities will be written down in the special field on Form 142.
- The total number of political entity votes on Form 142 will be compared with the number of valid ballots as recorded in field 21 of Form 141. If there is a difference between the two fields, a mistake has been made in the counting, recording or calculation of political entity votes. Recheck until the mistake is found and corrected.

B. Sorting and Counting by Candidate and Completing Form 143 Total Votes for Candidates

Remark: this process will group ballots into stacks for each candidate and another stack for political entity only votes. A political entity only vote is a vote to the political entity only or a vote to a political entity where the mark of the candidate is invalid.

- Complete the first three columns on Form 143 by writing down the entity number and name and number of votes received from Form 142.
Remark: Only political entities which received votes need to be included on Form 143, in the same order as they appear on Form 142.
- Take the stack of ballots for the first political entity and sort by candidate, labeling each stack on the post-it with the name and number of that candidate.
- Create an additional stack for ballots of political entity only votes and label this 'political entity only'.
- Count the ballots of each political entity candidate in turn and write the total votes for each candidate on Form 143 (Total Votes for Candidates).
- Calculate the total votes for all candidates of that political entity and write this in column 3 on Form 143.
- Count the ballots for political entity only votes for that political entity and write down the number in column 4 on Form 143.
- Calculate the total of column 3 and column 4 and write the total in column 5. That number should equal the same number as column 1. If it is not, a mistake has been made in the counting, recording or calculation of candidate votes. Recheck until the mistake is found and corrected.
- Repeat the steps above for each political entity and candidates in turn.

- After completing the counting of votes for all the political entities and their candidates, the number of copies of Form 143 used will be recorded in the relevant box at the bottom of the form.

Remark: After completing counting ballots for each entity, roll together the ballot papers and secure them with an elastic band and put them in the ballot box. Place the post-it with the name and number of the entity and the votes it received under the elastic band.

1.9 Completion of the counting process

- Observers and agents will be invited to record the information contained in the forms.
- Station staff will now start preparing for packing and completing the section relating to packing on Form 141.

2. VALIDITY OF BALLOTS AND VOTES

A. Adjudicating Ballot Marks

In adjudicating ballot marking, the principle is that a vote is considered valid if the intention of the voter is clear. (See section D on determining valid and invalid votes).

B. Ballot Validity

For a ballot to be valid:

1. It must be the official ballot supplied by the IHEC and officially issued at the Polling Station, stamped with the official IHEC ballot stamp.
2. If the ballot is torn, all political entity and candidate boxes used for marking a voter's choice must remain intact, as well as the name of the governorate.
3. The political entity vote must be valid. The ballot as a whole is only invalid if the political entity vote is not clear.

C. Candidate Vote Validity

Once it is determined that the political entity vote is valid (and therefore the ballot is valid), the candidate vote may also be counted if a mark is also made for a candidate number and this is considered valid. If the candidate vote is considered invalid, the ballot will be counted as a vote for the political entity only.

The following table is used to determine how to count the vote.

Item	Ballot Marks	Ballot Validity	How to Count the Vote	Comments
1	Unclear political entity vote	Ballot invalid	Vote not counted	
2	No political entity vote; valid candidate vote	Ballot invalid	Vote not counted	
3	Valid political entity vote; no candidate vote	Ballot valid	Vote counts for political entity only	
4	Valid political entity vote; unclear unclear candidate vote	Ballot valid	Invalid candidate vote. Vote counts for political entity only	
5	Valid political entity vote; candidate number outside total number of candidates on political entity list	Ballot valid	Invalid candidate vote. Vote counts for political entity only.	Form 143 to be completed according to the ballot, and correction made at data entry.
6	Valid political entity vote; candidate number written in political entity box on right hand side of ballot	Ballot valid	Voter's intent clear. Vote counts for both political entity and candidate	
7	Valid political entity vote; candidate box not marked, but candidate name from the political entity list is written on the ballot	Ballot valid	No reference to candidate number. Vote counts for political entity only.	

Remark: Section D illustrates how to determine valid/invalid votes.

D. Determining Valid and Invalid Votes

The following outlines how to determine whether a vote is valid or invalid.

❖ The intent of the voter is clear and a vote will be therefore be considered valid when:

- The ballot is marked with any mark within the box next to the name of only one choice (examples: ...);
- The voter's choice is indicated clearly with a mark other than a mark inside the box (Examples:).
- A mark made in a box touches other boxes or extends also outside the box, as long as this indicates the voter's clear choice (Examples:).
- In addition to a clear mark indicating the voter's choice, the voter has written or drawn something on the ballot (Examples:).
- The voter has clearly marked a single choice, but has also crossed out or otherwise scribbled over the name(s) of other political entities/candidates without making a mark for any of them (Examples:).
- The ballot is marred, smudged or soiled but the voter's choice remains clear (no example given).

❖ The intent of the voter is not clear and a vote will therefore be considered invalid when:

- The voter has made marks indicating more than one choice (Examples:).
- The ballot has been written upon, but no clear mark has been made to indicate the voter has made a choice (Examples:).
- A single mark is placed so that it covers two names or boxes, thereby not indicating a clear single choice (Example:).
- A mark indicating a choice has been altered, erased or crossed out, and another choice has been marked (Examples:). If the voter makes a mistake in marking the ballot, this ballot should be spoiled and another ballot issued to the voter by the Ballot Issuer.
- The voter's mark is placed over the name of a political entity/candidate in a manner which makes it unclear as to whether the voter is intending to cross out or to indicate a choice for that political entity/candidate (Examples: ...).

3. PACKING

A. Packing of polling station materials

For each step below, prior to packing, ensure the envelopes and tamper evident bags are properly labeled with the correct sticker and required information is written on the sticker. Then proceed with the packing process.

1. A2 tamper evident bag

Pack the following into a tamper evident bag:

- Stubs of pads of used ballots
- Partially used pads of ballots
- Pads of unused ballots
- Envelope containing spoiled and discarded ballots

2. A2 tamper evident bag:

Pack the following into a tamper evident bag:

- voter list
- station journal
- Official ballot stamp (packed in A3 tamper evident bag)
- Unused complaint forms
- Any unused counting forms.
- Any seals used for sealing the ballot box in the morning or any seals broken and replaced during the polling and packing processes

3. Ballot Box

Pack the following into the ballot box:

- Envelope containing blank ballots
- Envelope containing invalid and unstamped ballots
- Rolls of counted valid ballots
- A2 tamper evident bag (containing items in paragraph 1 above)
- A2 tamper evident bag (containing items in paragraph 2 above)

Remark: In cases where the counting process has ceased due to discrepancy in one of the areas of reconciliation, ballots will be put back into the ballot box and the ballot box sealed. The A2 tamper evident bags will not be packed in the ballot box, but will be handed over to the Polling Centre Coordinator together with the ballot box.

4. Completion of section 'after packing sensitive materials' of Form 141

- Call the Centre Coordinator to check the materials in the ballot box, and after that seal the ballot box.
- Record the seal numbers in field 24 of Form 141.
- Take three A3 tamper evident bags for forms, ensuring they are labeled.

- Ensure the sticker is put on tamper evident bag 1 (National Office sticker) for packing the first copy of forms with the cover. Record the serial number of the tamper evident bag in field 25 of Form 141.
- Ensure the sticker is put on tamper evident bag 2 (GEO sticker) for packing the second copy of forms. Record the serial number of the tamper evident bag in field 26 of Form 141.
- Ensure the sticker is put on tamper evident bag 3 (Station Manager sticker) for packing the third copy of forms. Record the serial number of the tamper evident bag in field 27 of Form 141.
- Form 141 is now completed. All polling staff will sign the form. *Remark:*
 - *Polling station staff should sign all of the forms.*
 - *Observers and political entity agents may also sign Polling Station Reconciliation Form 141 as witnesses if they wish to do so, by signing in the reconciliation remarks field, or on the back of the top copy, if there is no space (National Office copy)*

5. Packing forms into A3 tamper evident bags

- The top copy of all three forms (141, 142 and 143) will remain in the cover and will be placed in tamper evident bag 1 (National Office copy).
- The middle copy of all three forms (141, 142 and 143) will be placed in tamper evident bag 2. Add the complaint envelope to this tamper evident bag (GEO copy).
- The third copy of all three forms (141, 142 and 143) will be placed in tamper evident bag 3 (Polling Station Manager copy).
 - *Remark: do not seal the forms A3 tamper evident bags until handover to the Polling Centre Coordinator.*

6. Handover of Materials to the Polling Centre Coordinator

The Polling Station Manager will then handover to the Centre Coordinator the following materials and sign the handover Form 162:

- One ballot box containing two tamper evident bags (A2) and all ballots
- Form tamper evident bag 1 (A3) containing the first copy of forms for the National Office
- Form tamper evident bag 2 (A3) containing the second copy of forms for the GEO
- Kit-box which contains all non-sensitive materials.

B. Packing of Polling Centre Materials

- The Polling Centre Coordinator will collect all materials from each polling station for transportation and handover to the branch centre. Instructions will be issued to explain exactly how these materials should be sent to the branch centre and GEO and then to the National Office.
- All polling centre materials will be packed into the polling centre kit box.
- Polling centre staff must organize the polling centre and make sure that all election material is properly packed away.

Section 3

ABSENTEE VOTING PROCEDURES

1. Absentee Voting Locations

Special absentee polling stations will be established for IDPs who registered to vote absentee during the Voter Registration Update period (15 July - 28 August 2008) and the additional period of voter registration update services (Exhibition and Challenges Period, 01-12 November 2008), so they can vote for the lists of their governorate of origin. These polling stations will be established in polling centre locations where the IDP absentee voters currently reside (including Kurdistan and Kirkuk), and they will cast the ballot of governorate from which they have been displaced.

- If there are more than 50 absentee voters, they will cast their vote in a polling station specifically established for absentee voting.
- If there are less than 50 absentee voters, they will cast their vote in a regular polling station, which has been assigned to also servicing absentee voters. There will be additional staff to facilitate the process. These stations, which conduct both regular and absentee polling services are known as mixed stations.

Remember that absentee polling stations are numbered in the same way as regular stations, with an additional 'letter at the end (1/Ġ, 2/Ġ, 3/Ġ etc²).

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2 Guiding Principles

The polling process for absentee voting will follow the basic principles of regular polling, but counting processes will take place, in the GEO counting centre.

After sealing of the ballot box before the start of polling, the ballot box must not be opened in the Polling Station. It will be transported sealed to the GEO counting centre.

All polling procedures are the same as outlined for regular polling, with the exception of a few differences outlined below.

2.1. Materials

Absentee polling stations will receive the same polling kit and other non-sensitive items as regular polling stations. They will, however, receive a different ballots and a different set of printed materials.

Some absentee stations will be servicing IDP voters who all come from the same governorate. Other absentee stations will be servicing IDP voters from

² In Arabic, this is the first letter of the word for absentee (transcribed as ghiyabi)

more than one different governorate. This will be reflected in ballots and printed materials received.

1 Voter List

As for regular stations, the absentee voter list will list voters in alphabetical order by head of family. However, this voter list will be divided into the respective absentee governorates serviced by the station. The voter will sign the voter list next to his/her name in the section of their governorate of displacement.

2 Ballots

Absentee stations will vary in terms of which different governorate ballots will be cast. The absentee station will therefore be issued with ballots for all the relevant governorates of the absentee voters in that Station. Some will have one governorate ballot. Others will have ballots of several different governorates.

Governorate ballots will be issued in pads of 50. Care must be taken to ensure each voter receives the correct ballot, according to the governorate that voter will be voting for, and that each governorate ballot is accounted for correctly in the Station and recorded on Form 141/A.

3 Candidate Lists

While regular polling stations receive posters listing the political entity/coalition and candidate lists, absentee polling stations will receive booklets of political entity/coalition and candidate names and numbers for all governorates. These booklets will be kept with the Ballot Issuer.

4 Form

Since the ballots for absentee voters will not be counted in the polling station, but in the GEO Counting Centre, results Forms 142 and 143 are not delivered to these stations. .

Additionally, a different reconciliation form will be used, to account for ballots from a range of different governorates, without opening the ballot box: Form141/A Polling Station Reconciliation Form, specifically for absentee stations.

2.2 Polling Staff

The team in an absentee polling station will generally consist of the same five members of staff who will have the same responsibilities as the polling staff in normal stations. In some cases, where there are ballots of several different governorates, one or more additional staff members may be supplied to assist in ballot issuance, to ensure the voter receives the candidate booklet, and to assist in other absentee procedures.

Specific duties to highlight are as follows:

- ❖ **Station Manager:** Completes Form 141/A, ensuring all governorate ballots are correctly used
- ❖ **Identification Officer:** Asks the voter his/her governorate of origin, and ensures the voter signs beside his/her name in the correct governorate section of the absentee voter list.
- ❖ **Ballot Issuer:** Ensures that the correct ballot is issued to each voter according to the governorate from which he/she has been displaced, and ensures the correct governorate booklet containing the political entity and candidate names and numbers is provided.

3 Polling Process

3.1 Before the start of polling

- The Polling Centre Coordinator gives to the Station Manager a stack of serial numbered ballots for each governorate for which the absentee voters in the station will vote.
The Coordinator will record the number of ballots given to the polling station and the serial numbers on them on Form 162/A Material Handover from Polling Centre to Polling Station and Retrieval.
The Station Manager will double check the serial numbers and sign Form 162/A confirming receipt.
- The Station Manager will complete the fields relating to ballots issued and serial numbers on Form 141/A.

3.2. Identification

- After checking the voter's identification document, the Identification Officer will ask the voter his/her governorate of origin in order to locate the voter's name in the correct governorate section of the voter list.

3.3. Ballot Issue

The Ballot Issuer should take special care to ensure the correct ballot is issued to the voter from the ballot pad for the governorate for which the absentee voter is registered to vote and listed on the voter list (ie the voter's governorate of displacement).

The Ballot Issuer will provide the voter with the correct governorate booklet of political entities and candidates according to the ballot which has been issued.

3.4. Casting the Ballot

The Ballot Box Monitor must ensure that voters do not remove the political entity and candidate booklet(s) from the polling station.

3.5. Close of polling

- After the last voter has cast his ballot the Station Manager will close the slot on the top of the Ballot Box and write down the number of the seal in the Polling Station Reconciliation Form 141/A and then allows observers and PE Agent present to write down the seal number themselves.
After the sealing of the ballot box, the ballot box must not be opened until it reaches the GEO Counting Centre and it is time to count the ballots.
- The Station Manager will then complete Form 141/A and prepare the materials for handover to the Polling Centre Coordinator and transportation to the GEO.

3.6 Staff voting

Polling staff of an absentee polling station will be residents of governorate in which the polling centre is located. They will therefore need to cast a regular ballots. Polling staff may do this in Station 1 of the Polling Centre.

4. Packing polling station materials

Prior to packing, polling station staff ensures the envelopes and tamper evident bags are properly labeled with the correct sticker and required information is written on the sticker. Then proceed with the packing process as follows:

1. A2 tamper evident bag:

Pack the following into a tamper evident bag:

- Stubs of pads of used ballots
- Partially used pads of ballots
- Pads of unused ballots
- Envelope containing spoiled and discarded ballots

2. A2 tamper evident bag:

Pack the following into a tamper evident bag:

- voter list
- station journal
- Official ballot stamp (packed in A3 tamper evident bag)
- Unused complaint forms
- Any Broken seals which have been broken and replaced during polling and packing processes.

3. Ballot Box

The Ballot Box contains the ballots on which voters have cast their votes. This ballot box must NOT be opened, and will remain sealed until opened in the GEO counting centre.

4. Packing Form 141/A in TEB A3.

- The top copy of Form 141/A, will remain in the cover with the worksheet and will be placed in tamper evident bag 1, which has the sticker for the National Office.
- The second copy of Form 141/A will be placed in tamper evident bag 2. Add the complaints envelope to this tamper evident bag 2 which has a sticker for the GEO.
- The third copy of Form 141/A will be placed in tamper evident bag 3 with the sticker for the Polling Station Manager.
 - *Remark: do not seal the forms A3 tamper evident bags until handover to the Polling Centre Coordinator.*

5. Handover to the Polling Centre Coordinator

The Polling Station Manager will then handover to the Centre Coordinator the following materials and sign the handover Form 162/A (Material Handover from Polling Centre to Polling Station and Retrieval):

- One sealed ballot box containing cast ballots
- Two large tamper evident bags size A2
- TEB 1 size A3 containing the first copy of form 141/A for the National Office
- TEB 2 size A3 containing the second copy of form 141/A for the GEO
- Kit-box which contains all non-sensitive materials.

5 Mixed Polling Stations (both regular and absentee voting)

5.1 Materials

Mixed stations conducting both regular and absentee polling processes will receive materials to conduct both processes, so both regular and absentee voting can be taking place at the same time:

- Two polling station kits
- Two ballot boxes (one for regular voting and one for absentee voting)
- Two voter lists (one regular voter list and one absentee voter list)
- Political entity and candidate posters for regular voting, and booklets for absentee voting, according to the governorates for which votes will be cast
- Two sets of printed materials (including one set of forms 141, 142 and 143 for regular voting and form 141/A only for absentee voting).

Notes on Station numbers

- All materials for regular voting will be labeled the station number for regular voting,
- All materials for absentee voting will be labeled with the absentee number.
- For mixed stations, we will use the same polling station number with the addition of the letter for absentee voting (1/Ě, 2/Ě, 3/Ě etc).

5.2. Station Set Up

The mixed polling station must be in a suitable way for the two processes to take place separately at the same time.

- IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THE BALLOT BOX FOR REGULAR POLLING IS CLEARLY SEPARATED FROM THE BALLOT BOX FOR ABSENTEE POLLING.
- BALLOTS OF THE GOVERNORATE WHERE THE POLLING STATION IS LOCATED MUST BE PLACED IN THE REGULAR BALLOT BOX, AND ABSENTEE BALLOTS FOR OTHER GOVERNORATES MUST BE PLACED IN THE ABSENTEE BALLOT BOX.
- IF THIS DOES NOT HAPPEN, THIS WILL SEVERELY DISRUPT COUNTING PROCESSES AND MAY MAKE COUNTING OF REGULAR BALLOTS IN THE POLLING STATION IMPOSSIBLE.
- An inking station will also need to be set up by each ballot box, with one voter screen near to the absentee ballot box and two voter screens near to the regular ballot box.

5.3 Polling Staff

Unless the polling station has a very small number of absentee voters, the polling team will be supplemented by one or two additional staff members to oversee the absentee polling process.

If one additional staff member is supplied, this will be an additional Ballot Box Monitor, to ensure absentee voters apply voter marking ink and cast their ballot correctly.

If there are two additional staff members, the second one will act as both a second Identification Officer and Ballot Issuer for absentee processes. This would mean all absentee services are separated from regular processes.

The Queue Controller will ensure to direct the voters to the right Identification Officer on entry to the polling station.

5.4 After Close of Polls

Following close of polls, the Station Manager will complete closing actions for absentee polling, prior to regular polling as follows:

- Seal the top slot of the absentee ballot box and record the serial number of the seal on Form 141/A.
- Seal the top slot of the regular ballot box and record the serial number of seal on Form 141/A.
- Complete Form 141/A for absentee polling and place the three copies in the A3 tamper evident bags (do not seal until material handover).
- Pack and seal all absentee materials for material handover and transfer.
- Set aside the absentee sealed ballot box which contains cast ballots and other absentee materials in the corner of the room, visible to observers and political entity agents but removed from counting processes..
- Complete counting processes, form completion and packing for the regular polling process.
- Handover materials for both absentee and regular processes to the Polling Centre Coordinator.

