

The Independent High Electoral Commission

Under the jurisdiction of the BoC, as mentioned in Article no.4 Paragraph 8 of the IHEC Law no. 11 for the year 2007, we decided to issue the following regulation:

Order No. 8 for the year 2008 Media Outlets

(Introduction)

The IHEC was established in accordance with Law no. 11 for the year 2007 to be the sole electoral authority in Iraq. The commission is an independent and impartial professional body with juridical personality. It is under the control of the state and the supervision of the CoR.

Section One

(Terminology)

The terms hereinafter have the following meanings:

1. Commission: The Independent High Electoral Commission.
2. Iraqi Media Network: An independent institution in charge of disseminating information, in accordance with Order no. 66 for the year 2004.
3. Campaign regulations: Media coverage instructions for the election period.
4. Campaign period: The period starting from the date of registration of candidates for the IHEC to 24 hours prior to the opening of polling centers, during which time entities and coalitions conduct their electoral campaigns.
5. Media: specialized outlets providing news or information or recreational material for the public by audio/visual and print media means.
6. Political entity: An organization, including a political party or an individual, as identified in Order no. 97 for the year 2004 of the political entities and parties law.

Informal UNAMI Translation

7. Coalition: A combination of two or more political entities for the purpose of presenting a unified list of candidates in certain elections.
8. Code of Conduct: The regulations of the media representatives code of conduct, issued by the commission.

Section Two

(Transparent Media Coverage)

1. While implementing the principle of the freedom of expression and information access, media outlets should give accurate, complete, and impartial information. They should also be unbiased and impartial when dealing with political entities and coalitions.
2. Informing all official Iraqi media outlets of the need to provide equal access to political entities and coalitions and to cover their activities.
3. Calling on all Iraqi audio/visual and print media to reduce advertisement costs during the election campaigns, especially since such campaigns are of national rather than commercial character.
4. A. Media outlets should clearly point out that official information, data, procedures, and electoral regulations are issued by the IHEC. Thus, they should refrain from disseminating such information without checking their accuracy.

B. Media outlets should refrain from distorting electoral information issued by the IHEC, whether paid for advertisements, or data, or general media news.

Section Three

(Utilization of media outlets for electoral campaigns)

1. Calling on all audio/visual and print Iraqi media to provide low-cost broadcasting times for political entities and coalitions on an equal basis to enable them to advertise their electoral material.
2. No media outlet should intentionally distort, block, falsify, mispresent, or delete information, including systematic deletion that would actually affect the public understanding of a subject or an event.

3. Calling on electronic media to guarantee the principle of equality, by not allowing any discrimination or alienation of any political entity or candidate, when inviting organizers of the electoral campaigns to participate in programs tailored for such purpose. The policy of inviting political entities should guarantee equal participation of men and women in the programs.

4. Political entities, coalitions, and candidates are entitled to participate in the electoral campaigns by using paid advertisements broadcast on Iraqi media outlets. Print media outlets should publish such political advertisements with simple conditions.

Section Four

(Iraqi Media Network obligations)

The Iraqi Media Network, as a public broadcast body funded by the country, is legally obliged to educate and inform the Iraqi citizens of the following:

1. Educating voters and informing listeners and viewers of the elections through newscasts as well as radio and television programs.
2. Providing practical information for the citizens to enable them to cast their votes and taking measures to guarantee that the information is available to all shades of society.
3. Providing a free television broadcast and allocating available studios and technical resources to the candidates, enabling them to be featured in debates or dialogues or political discussions at least once.
4. Providing free visual or audio recording of the programs referred to in the third paragraph for other media broadcast outlets, in order to broadcast them without any amendment.
5. Free broadcasting of the information and programs issued and provided by IHEC. The network, upon the commission's request, should provide free visual and audio recordings of such programs for other media broadcast outlets in order to broadcast them without any amendment.

Section Five

(Raising voters' awareness and public information)

1. In accordance with the electoral campaign system, the Iraqi media outlets are responsible for informing readers, listeners, and viewers of the elections process in an accurate and timely manner. The information pertaining to procedures, regulations, and electoral policy should be based on clear, transparent, factual, and official data obtained from IHEC.
2. The period under which electoral campaigns are conducted, starts from the date of the candidates' registration for the IHEC to 24 hours prior to the opening of polling centers.

Section Six

(Media outlets' attendance at the commission's headquarters)

1. Representatives of media outlets, who wish to enter the commission's headquarters, such as the NO in Baghdad and the GEO, should first obtain the approval of the media official at these offices.
2. Representatives of media outlets, who wish to enter the registration and polling centers as well as the sorting stations, should obtain a media approval from the commission and sign the Code of Conduct.
3. No photographing or videotaping of any individual is allowed inside these headquarters without their clear consent. Even if the voter consents, the tape or the photograph should not expose the intention of the voter during the casting of his ballot.

Section Seven

(Violations)

1. The BoC will withdraw the approval from any media representative (or outlet) who violates the regulations and the Code of Conduct.
2. The BoC is to request the Iraqi National Committee for Communications and Media to impose the proper penalty on any media outlet which violates the system regulations and the Code of Conduct.

Informal UNAMI Translation

3. The IHEC is to refer any criminal issue to the judicial authority, if there is evidence of a criminal violation.

Section Eight

(Regulation Validity)

This regulation is valid from the date of its approval by the BoC on
..../.../2008

BoC