



المفوضية العليا المستقلة للانتخابات في العراق
كۆميسونى باىلى سه ربه خوى هه ئبژارد نه كان له عيراق

The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) of Iraq

الفريق الدولي للمساعدة الانتخابية

SUMMARY OF VOTER REGISTRATION COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTION ISSUES

The International Electoral Assistance Team (IEAT) was asked by the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to advise how individuals who appear on lists submitted by government committees including the Article 140 Committee could be added to voter lists for the upcoming governorate council elections in January 2009. Key findings:

- **Analysis of 140 Committee data** indicates the vast majority of names are already on the voter lists and will be eligible to vote – 75% of the names provided by the 140 Committee for Ninewa appeared on the national voter list and similarly 30% in Diyala.¹
- **Because the voter list is based on the Public Distribution System Iraqis are by default already registered to vote.** Two opportunities have been given this year for Iraqis to come forward and check or amend their details on the voter lists – over 3 million did so.
- **It is an individual's right to have their polling location changed** and that right cannot be assumed or delegated to any Iraqi institution, for this reason a voter must attend in person and change their polling location. This was the minimum standard that was applied to all Iraqis who intend to vote in January 2009.
- **13 special voter registration centres were opened in Ninewa and Diyala** – attended by over 10,000 voters during the update period in November, indicating widespread knowledge of the process and accessibility to those on the 140 Committee lists.
- **Very few (only 33) individuals who attended the 13 centres**, asked for their location to be changed or voter details to be amended – indicating either the accuracy of the voter list and/or a desire not to change voting locations.
- **All voter registration complaints have now been resolved by the IHEC;** these include the addition of 4,000 names in Diyala that have now been added to the voter list based on the individual's choice.

In preparation for the January elections the IHEC implemented a nationwide voter registration update period (VRU). The VRU began in mid-July and lasted for six weeks. It presented an opportunity for all Iraqis to come forward and check/amend their details on a Provisional Voter List (PVL). The VRU provided voters the opportunity to change their polling location if they have moved governorates. By default all Iraqis appear on the PVL as it is based on the Public Distribution System.

During the VRU process a number of complaints were received that names had been missed off the PVL in the areas affected by the "Article 140 Committee." Consequently the Article 140 Committee submitted a request to IHEC to add names to the Final Voter List (FVL). The governorates subject to the complaints were Kirkuk, Ninewa and Diyala.

¹ These are approximate percentages and could be higher. Much of the data provided by the Article 140 Committee lacked PDS number, year of birth or other necessary data to help easily identify voters.

The Article 140 Committee lists included 49,414 families in Ninewa, 18,249 families in Diyala and 44,283 families in Kirkuk. The IHEC analyzed the data against the PVL, and although data received from the 140 Committee was incomplete, IHEC found in Ninewa that over 75% of families submitted by the 140 Committee were already on the voter list and in Diyala over 30%.

In accordance with international best practice, and upon advice of the IEAT, the IHEC displayed the PVL after the VRU had ended and all new data had been added. During this “exhibition and challenge period” the IHEC decided to reopen the entire voter registration process to all Iraqis including those found on Article 140 lists; changes in a voter’s governorate were allowed. One reason was to try and capture those on Article 140 lists and ensure they confirmed their data in the same manner, employing the same standards as had been used for the three million Iraqis that came forward during the summer’s VRU process. Of note it was decided by the IHEC that PDS cards as well as Certificates issued by the Ministry of Trade (MoT) would be sufficient evidence of residence. This was a change in the procedures to accommodate complaints that the MoT had not issued PDS cards in a timely fashion; this change in procedures particularly affected the districts of Makhmur, Kharaj and Gukher in Ninewa and allowed greater flexibility in the voter registration process.

Thirteen special voter registration centres were opened in Ninewa and Diyala for the exhibition and challenge period that ran between 5 and 13 of November. Over 10,000 individuals came forward to check their details in these thirteen centres with only 35 individuals requiring registration services (33 changes in voter locations in Khanaqin).

The IEAT advised the IHEC that by using revised procedures in the November registration process the IHEC would both be complying with international best practise, be sympathetic to the situation in Iraq and be ensuring a credible and transparent process was used to accommodate the names submitted by the Article 140 Committee.

The IEAT notes that by allowing families on the Article 140 Lists the opportunity to come forward and register both during the summer and in November, and by using more flexible procedures to prove residence, this has allowed as many individuals as possible to be captured on the Final Voter List (over 17.2 million). The IEAT is also encouraged that so many of the families submitted by Article 140 were already found to be on the voter lists and that so few individuals found it necessary to change their data during the exhibition and challenge period. The IHEC can now move forward with final preparations for January elections knowing that voters have had two opportunities to update their details, it has provided a chance to allow complaints to be submitted and resolved and it has produced a voter list that will ensure multiple voting is kept to a minimum.

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