



KEY POINTS ON POLLING AND COUNTING

1. Polling Centre and Polling Station Structure

- For the purposes of conducting Governorate Council elections, the IHEC has established polling centres throughout Iraq. Each centre consists of one or more polling stations, each of which is expected to serve up to approximately 400 voters.
- There will be a unique number for each polling centre and for each station (1, 2, 3 etc). This number will be recorded as the polling station number in all polling and counting forms and on all ballot boxes and other sensitive materials for that station. Absentee polling stations will be indicated by an additional letter to the station number (1/غ, 2/غ, 3/غ etc), as will special voting polling stations (1/خ, 2/خ, 3/خ etc)¹.
- Only absentee polling centres will be open in the Kurdistan region, and only absentee and special voting polling centres will be open in Kirkuk. All other governorates will include facilities for regular, absentee and special voting.

2. Regular Polling and Counting

- In regular polling stations, each station will have its own 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. A voter must be listed on the voter list in order to cast a ballot in that polling station.
- Regular polling stations will issue only ballots of the governorate in which the polling station is located.
- Counting of regular polling stations will take place in the station following close of polls. Polling staff will complete all reconciliation and counting processes, and complete Form 141 (Polling Station Reconciliation Form), Form 142 (Total Votes for Political Entities) and Form 143 (Total Votes for Candidates), which will then be transported to the IHEC Tally Centre in Baghdad for data entry and compilation of results.
- If, during reconciliation processes, the ballots cannot be reconciled within the agreed tolerance level, then counting processes in the polling station will cease, and the ballot box and all sensitive materials will be transferred through the GEO warehouse to the Count Centre for audit, following which decision will be made as to whether ballots will be counted and votes included in the results or not.

3. Absentee Polling and Counting

- Polling processes for absentee voting will follow the basic principles of regular polling, except that counting processes will take place in the GEO Count Centre.

¹ The first letter of the word for absentee (transcribed as ghyabi) and special voting (khāss)

- As in regular polling stations, each absentee station will have a voter list, listing families in alphabetical order, and a voter must be listed on the voter in order to cast a ballot in that polling station. Each voter will sign the voter list prior to casting a ballot.
- Absentee voters will, however, cast a ballot for the governorate from which they have been displaced, instead of the governorate where they are resident and casting their ballot. Ballot boxes may therefore contain ballots of different governorates.
- After close of polls, the ballot box will be sealed and partial reconciliation will take place, using Form 141A (Polling Station Reconciliation Form – Absentee and Special Voting). The ballot box and all sensitive materials will then be transported through the GEO warehouse to the Count Centre. At the Count Centre, the ballot box will be opened and reconciliation completed by polling station using Form 150A. If reconciliation reveals a discrepancy outside the agreed tolerance level, the ballot boxes will be audited.
- Absentee ballots will not be counted by station, but will be mixed with special voting ballots into batches of governorate ballots for counting. This is in order to protect the secrecy of votes and to ensure where possible that votes cannot be linked to individual voters. Batch reconciliation and count forms will be completed in the Count Centre prior to transportation of results to the Tally Centre in Baghdad.

4. Special Voting Polling and Counting

- In special voting polling stations for the agreed categories of voters, each polling station will have a blank polling station voter list. The voter list is filled in on the spot according to the voter's documentation presented on polling day. Each voter signs the voter list prior to casting a ballot.
- Special voters will cast a ballot according to the governorate for which they are registered to vote (where they are listed on the voter register). This may or may not be the same governorate in which the polling centre is located.
- Because the voter list is blank and created during the polling process, special voters will cast what is known as a 'conditional ballot'. This means that the ballot is cast at the time of polling, and then the voter's details are checked afterwards in the voter register database before counting. If the voter is proven to be eligible according to the voter register in the governorate for which s/he cast a ballot, then the vote will be counted.
- In order to ensure secrecy of the vote, inside the conditional ballot envelope, the ballot will be sealed into a secrecy envelope. This contains no information on the voter. Once eligibility is verified, the secrecy envelope will be removed from the conditional ballot envelope prior to the start of counting processes, so the ballot itself remains confidential.
- Special voting ballots will not be counted in the polling station. Following partial reconciliation in the polling station, using Form 141A, they will be transferred to the GEO Count Centres for completion of reconciliation using Form 150 and verification of eligibility from conditional ballot envelopes. If reconciliation reveals a discrepancy outside the agreed tolerance level, the ballot boxes will be audited.
- Special voting ballots will be mixed and batched with absentee ballots for counting, as outlined above. Ballot boxes might contain ballots for different governorates inside the secrecy envelopes, and there may be more than one ballot box for a polling station.