

Electoral update

- On December 6, Iraq's parliament held a special session in order to resolve the deadlock over the election law which was tied to the size of parliament and seat distribution for the upcoming parliamentary elections. The proposal supported by the majority of political blocs resulted in parliament's undisputed adoption of a decision, thus clarifying the amendments to the electoral law which were passed on November 8 and 24. Upon a request from the major political blocs, UNAMI electoral team participated in a series of political negotiations prior to the adoption of the decision, facilitating technical opinions on possible solutions.
- The parliament's decision apportions the total number of seats in the Council of Representatives (CoR) based on 2005 population figures obtained from the Ministry of Trade, while accommodating a population growth of 2.8% annually across all governorates. The adopted decision calls for the future Council of Representatives (CoR) to be comprised of 325 seats, out of which 310 are general seats and 15 are compensatory, with reserved quota for component groups. Additionally, the out-of-country voting is to be treated the same as in-country, with votes counted against the governorate from which a voter originates.
- All operational activities have continued during the legal debates. It is the view of UNAMI and IHEC operations that elections are technically feasible as of February 24 for special voting and February 27. According to the law, the exact date of the elections is set by the Presidency Council who have been informed of IHEC's readiness as of the end of February.
- A new operational timeline to ensure preparations are ready by the end of February has been prepared.
- Locations of all regular polling centres have been confirmed by the GEOs. A list of GEO count centres and warehouses locations was updated through IHEC Field Coordination and vulnerability assessments are underway by ISF.
- The IHEC Voter Registration section continues to work on the Special Voting lists for the military and police. According to the amendments of the Electoral Law, the ISF is required to submit all data to IHEC at least 60 days before the Election Day.
- Logistics and procurement preparations remain on track.
- IHEC with the support of UNOPS and IFES continues to work on the development of the election results software.
- Plans have commenced to establish a Joint Operations Centre within the IHEC, in support of the CoR election.
- Preparations for the CoR elections voter education campaign have resumed following clarity with the electoral law.
- Various graphic materials in support of public outreach and training activities, including ballots for both in-country and out-of-country voting have been designed and are currently under review for potential changes related to the adopted legislation.