

UNAMI Electoral Update 1 October, 2009

- The Iraq wide Voter Registration Update exercise ended, September 30, 2009.
- More than 570,000 voters requested services and over 930,000 visited voter registration centres for checking purposes. IHEC Data Entry Centre continues to progress well with the processing of the VRU forms as they are being delivered from the governorates. To date, more than 250,000 forms have been processed.
- With the 2005 Election Law in effect, all IHEC operational preparations to conduct the CoR elections, planned for January 16, 2010, are on track. UNAMI urges the CoR for clarity on the electoral law the latest by mid October 2009, to avoid degrading of the quality of the election process and any operational delays.
- Discussions on operational requirements and modalities for conducting OCV (Out-of-Country) elections have commenced by the IHEC, with the support of the international advisors (IFES assistance).
- The IHEC Board of Commissioners resumed with their work at the IHEC after observing elections in Germany.
- A media briefing on the DEC and the operational preparations in the run up to the elections was conducted by the IHEC on 27 September.
- UNAMI with its implementing partners continues to provide technical support, advice and assistance to the IHEC.

Kirkuk Voter Registration Update (VRU) and political developments

- The Voter Registration Update in Kirkuk is deemed to have progressed well, with fair and equal access to the process and widespread knowledge of the purpose of the VRU.
- Over 38,000 voters requested VRU services in Kirkuk governorate. 68% of those are related to changes, and approximately 29% requesting additions.
- UNAMI senior electoral adviser has visited a number of voter registration centres. All procedures appeared to be followed correctly and the VRCs functioning as expected.
- Special/confidence building measures were developed by IHEC to counter allegations of fraud/misconduct during VRU. These include: formation of a special committee at IHEC (with UNAMI assistance) to adjudicate all applications for addition to the voter list; no proxy registration for additions or IDPs; a letter required from town council confirming residence if requesting addition to voter list in Kirkuk governorate; the final list of additions will be compared to the KRG final voter list (from July '09); the most recent Ministry of Trade PDS (June '09) and the final voter list for the January '09 governorate elections are used to determine the credibility of the application to add a voter in Kirkuk; staff in VRCs drawn from ethnic groups – Arab, Kurd and Turkoman.

- All additions will be adjudicated by a special committee at IHEC HQ Baghdad and displayed at the VRCs.
- Out of 17 political entities recently registered in Kikruk to contest the COR elections in January 2010, of note 8 are new. This demonstrates a keen interest in the political landscape and should be seen as a sign of positive engagement in the electoral process.
- The participation of accredited political entities agents in observing the process appears to be lower than expected.
- UNAMI is encouraged by the lack of significant complaints that have been filed with the IHEC.