

REPORT ON THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN IRAQ'S ELECTIONS  
Prepared for the United Nations Development Programme by YouGov  
August 2009

A summary of the findings include:

- Many women are disappointed with progress since 2005 and doubt the value of voting (effectively providing their consent to what they regard as a broken politics). This should not be misunderstood as apathy – rather it is disillusionment with the performance of politicians and the political process.
- Respondents across the groups complain that politicians fail to live up to their promises.
- Similarly, a majority of respondents across all the groups say that evidence of Government effectiveness – e.g. delivering on promises of improved security, services and jobs – would encourage them to vote.
- Many respondents say they are discouraged to vote because they lack basic information about candidates' reputations or their policy platforms.
- A number of respondents say that more information about the candidates and their platforms may encourage more women to vote. Respondents report feeling disconnected from the politicians.
- Some respondents don't vote because they are scared for their personal safety.
- Some respondents believe that people are afraid of registering their names to vote.
- Some respondents don't vote because they don't know where to vote.
- Some respondents – especially those from Anbar and Mosul - don't vote because they can't travel the distances to their polling centre.
- A common rumour at the last election was that unused votes would be used fraudulently to rig the election. This motivated some women to get out and vote.
- Some women were discouraged to vote because they believed the elections were rigged and that therefore their vote was of no significance.
- Some respondents say that some women are strongly influenced by their husbands. Other respondents go further and say that husbands prohibit their wives from voting even if they want to participate.
- The IHEC information about registration and voting is easy to understand. All respondents grasp the material quickly and easily. Nevertheless, many women still don't have accurate information in their possession or mistakenly believe they can vote at their local centres even if they are not registered there.