

FACTSHEET

2014 Council of Representatives Elections: Electoral Observation

Introduction

The importance of election observers, both domestic and international, in providing impartial and non-partisan assessment of the electoral process cannot be overemphasized. The presence of independent and non-partisan election observers deters electoral fraud and builds confidence in the process. Election Observation is therefore one of the methods by which the transparency, credibility and impartiality of an electoral process can be promoted.

How does the IHEC demonstrate its commitment to Election Observation?

The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) has a legal duty to ensure the elections are just, free and impartial. (2013 CoR Electoral Law, Article 2:4) and has a mandate to develop appropriate regulations and procedures to facilitate this goal.

Consequently, the IHEC has issued **Regulation 4 (2013) for Observers of Iraqi Council of Representatives Elections** for election observers.

In addition IHEC has issued a Code of Conduct for Electoral Observers and separate accreditation procedures for domestic and international electoral observation. These procedures stipulate that accreditation applications for international observers shall be processed at the IHEC National Office (NO) and at the Kurdistan Regional Electoral Office (KREO). Domestic observers' application and accreditation are processed at the GEO of the province within which the organization is located and operates.

Who is an Election Observer?

Observers are persons nominated by Domestic or International Electoral Observation Teams accredited by the IHEC to observe the election on their behalf.

International observers can be of two types:

- a) People living outside Iraq who are nominated by international observation teams.
- b) People living inside Iraq who represent foreign organizations with offices in Iraq or embassies.

Election observers should be at least 18 years old at the time of registration.

Who can be accredited to observe the elections?

All international governmental organizations such as diplomatic bodies (embassies and consulates) and non-governmental bodies such as societies and organizations are eligible to submit requests to register election observation teams. Similarly, domestic non-

governmental organizations are eligible to submit requests to register to observe the elections.

When & where can applications be made?

The IHEC has sent an official invitation letter through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to all diplomatic missions that may have an interest in carrying out election observation during the elections. To register, international observer organizations should apply in the registration office of IHEC NO and at the KREO. Registration has begun and will continue until about two days to the opening of polls.

Applications and requests for information should be directed to:

IHEC NO (Baghdad):

Tel: +964 (0) 770 002 3373 (Alhasan Kabas)

Email: public.rel2013@gmail.com

KREO (Erbil)

Tel: +964 (0) 750 467 1291 (Mrs. Tara 'Abdullah Midya)

Email: taramidya@yahoo.com

Tel: +964 (0) 750 476 4867 (Zana Khurshid)

For domestic observers, their application and accreditation are processed at their respective GEOs. Registration has begun and will continue till about two days to the polls.

What is the registration & accreditation process?

The authorized representative of an international organization wishing to register an electoral observation team should submit a letter to the IHEC NO that confirms the delegated authority of the representative. The letter should be accompanied by Form 131I (International Observer Registration Form) and Form 132I (International Observer Accreditation Form). The latter form should contain the full names of Observation Team members including bodyguards (PSD) and translators. Copies of national passports or diplomatic identification documents of Observation Team Members should be attached to the registration application.

What are the rights and responsibilities of Electoral Observation Teams?

Members of the Electoral Observation Teams will receive IHEC badges (those belonging to PSD and translators for international observers will be stamped as such), which must be signed by the relevant team member and visible at all times during periods of observation. Team members should also carry an additional photo ID when entering polling centres/stations and other designated electoral sites/venues.

All members of the Observations Teams should sign the IHEC Code of Conduct for Electoral Observation and abide by its provisions. Team members should be familiar with the IHEC's regulations and procedures for the elections.

The Electoral Observation Teams have the right to move freely among polling stations and centers as long as they do not obstruct the electoral process. They cannot intervene in any way in the electoral process or file a complaint. Team members can inform IHEC staff of possible violations they may witness and the IHEC staff may take action at his or her discretion.

Each Electoral Observation Team is responsible for its own communications, transport, accommodation and security arrangements. The IHEC is not responsible for any costs incurred in the provision of these services and observation team members may not use IHEC vehicles or communications equipment.

Observers should submit their notes and findings to their respective Electoral Observation Team Leaders. At the end of the electoral process each team will submit a formal report to the IHEC with supporting documentary evidence corroborating findings, judgments and assumptions.

Does UNAMI provide logistical Support to Observation Teams?

In general, UNAMI has no obligation to provide logistical support to any electoral observation team. UNAMI may provide information on the electoral process and the general security situation in the country to international observation teams upon request.

Can observer accreditation be revoked?

The IHEC may revoke the accreditation of an Electoral Observation Team at any time as a result of a breach of Regulation 4 (2013) Observers of Iraqi Council of Representative Elections or the Code of Conduct.