

Fact Sheet

Governorate Count Centres

Unlike the count of ballots at polling stations where they were cast on 7 March, the count of ballots cast by various categories of special voters will take place at Governorate Count Centres. Special voters encompass personnel from the police, military, patients/personnel of hospitals, inmates/staff of detainee centres and prisons. There will be one count centre in every governorate with the exception of Baghdad which will have two count centres. In addition to the special voting ballots, the ballots cast by absentee voters on 7 March are also counted at the count centres.

The count centres will also audit and investigate sensitive materials from regular polling stations that are subject to a complaint, or upon request from the Data Entry Centre at the IHEC National Office following inconsistencies during the results data entry.

Are the procedures that apply for the count of ballots at Count Centres the same as those for the count at regular polling stations on 7 March?

Yes. The count itself follows the same procedures. Prior to the actual vote count however, the special voting and absentee ballots will be submitted to additional reconciliation, verification and batching processes.

- **Reconciliation:** special voting and absentee ballots cast on 4 and 7 March respectively are not fully reconciled at the polling stations following the close of polls. At the count centre, these ballots are reconciled 1) with the number of signatures on respective voter lists, and 2) with the number of ballots issued.
- **Verification:** data recorded on the conditional ballot envelopes cast by special voter categories (hospitals, detention centres and prisons) will be verified against the Iraq wide voter registry to confirm that the voter is eligible to vote, and has cast a ballot for the correct governorate. Data verification will enable the rejection of ballots cast by non-illegible and/or multiple voters.
- **Batching:** to safeguard voter secrecy ballots from different absentee and special voting stations are mixed and batched by governorate according to strict criteria set out in the count centre procedures. Batching may only start following the end of the period reserved for the investigation of complaints submitted with regard to any absentee and/or special voting station.

Both reconciliation and verification will start immediately following the delivery of materials to the count centres after polling. No actual count will take place at the count centre until after the end of polling on the regular Election Day and a 48-hour period for polling complaints.

Are the count centres accessible for observation?

Yes. The processes at the count centres form an integral part of the entire electoral process, and may therefore be observed by accredited observers, political entity agents and media. Details about the governorate count centres are available at the IHEC Governorate Electoral Offices, at the IHEC National Office in Baghdad and on the IHEC website www.ihec.iq.

Count centre administration

The count centres are administered by a count centre manager who reports to the IHEC Governorate Electoral Office, and the IHEC National Office in Baghdad. All staff are screened and trained prior to beginning their work and they must sign codes of conduct that they are not related to any candidate or political entity/coalition.

How are the results of the count centres announced?

In order to ensure maximum transparency, copies of Batch Result Forms are displayed and available at the count centre for observers, political entity agents and media. At the same time, the original Batch Result Forms are transported to the Data Entry Centre located at the IHEC National Office in Baghdad.

More information on the IHEC website www.ihec.iq