

Iraq Council of Representatives Out-of-Country Voting

Comprehensive Fact Sheet

1. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE IRAQ OCV PROGRAM

1.1 What is the Iraq Out-of-Country Voting Program?

The Iraq Out-of-Country Voting Program, or Iraq OCV, is a program organized to enable Iraqis residing outside of Iraq to register and vote in the upcoming election for the Iraqi Council of Representatives.

1.2 When will the Out of Country Voting take place?

Registration of voters and polling will take place simultaneously during a three day period between 5 and 7 March. Registration and polling will occur between 8am and 6pm. Only those Iraqis who meet IHEC eligibility conditions and provide required documentation will be allowed to register and vote.

1.3 Who is implementing the Out of Country voting program?

In accordance with the Election Law the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) is mandated to conduct Out-of-Country Voting operations for the 2010 Council of Representatives election.

The Independent High Electoral Commission has requested and is receiving support from a UN International Elections Assistance Team and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). Both organizations are providing technical assistance to the IHEC OCV HQ and the OCV country offices.

1.4 What is the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC)?

The IHEC, is a professional body under supervision of the Council of Representatives (CoR), is the only body that has the authority to declare, organize, implement and oversee all electoral activities including voter registration, governorate council elections, and referenda.

The IHEC is comprised of eight permanent Election Commissioners and the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO). The CEO heads the IHEC Administration and is a non-voting member of the Board of Commissioners. IHEC is comprised of 19 offices in the Governorates (two in Baghdad), a regional office in Kurdistan, a national headquarters office in Baghdad and the IHEC OCV HQ in Erbil.

1.5 What does the Council of Representatives do?

The Council of Representatives will enact federal laws, monitor the performance of the executive authority, elect the President of the Republic, regulate the ratification process of international treaties and agreements, and approve the appointment of the President and members of the Federal Court of Cassation, the Chief Public Prosecutor, and the President of Judicial Oversight Commission. The Council will also approve other ambassadorial, ministerial and military positions. The council will monitor the performance of these appointees. Any member of the Council of Representatives may direct questions to the Prime Minister and Ministers on any subject within their specialty.

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1.6 What is the seat allocation for the Council of Representatives?

The Parliament or Council of Representatives (CoR) consists of 325 seats of which 310 are general seats allocated to 18 governorates and 15 are complementary seats, of which 8 are allocated to minorities. Seat allocation has been based on the 2005 population data obtained from the Ministry of Trade and adjusted for 2.8% annual growth across all governorates

1.7 What is an “open list” ballot?

Open list ballots are those in which voters must mark their preferred political entity and are given a choice of that entity's candidates to choose from within an open list. The seats won by the political entity are then distributed to their candidates on the basis of their popular vote. Although it adds some complication to training and counting processes, the system enhances the role of the voter in the election beyond casting a vote for just the political entity.

1.8 What is a "Political Entity"?

A "political entity" is an organization, including a political party, of eligible voters who voluntarily associate on the basis of common ideas, interests or views, for the purpose of articulating interests, obtaining influence and having their representatives elected to public office. Political Entities for the Iraqi elections must be officially certified as a political entity by the IHEC. A political entity also includes individual persons who intend to stand for election to public office, provided that the individual person is officially certified as a political entity by the Commission.

1.9 Who will be elected?

Iraqi voters will choose between certified political entities and their selected candidates. Each certified political entity has submitted a list of candidates to the IHEC. No list, except the final list certified by the IHEC may contain fewer than three or more than double the numbers of seats allocated to the governorate.

1.10 Will the Council of Representatives include women?

Yes. The IHEC requires from each political entity that at least one quarter of its listed candidates be women. This will ensure a good representation of women in the Council of Representatives.

2. POLLING LOCATIONS

2.1 Where will polling centres for the Iraq OCV Program be located?

The IHEC will open approximately 1000 polling stations within approximately 140 polling centers in the following 16 countries: Austria, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Germany, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, The Netherlands, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States of America.

Location of polling centres will become available on the OCV website: www.ocv-ihec.com

3. REGISTRATION, POLLING AND COUNTING

3.1 Can anyone vote in the out-of-country election for the Iraqi Council of Representatives elections?

No, to vote you must be eligible and register.

3.2 How can I prove I am eligible?

According to the Electoral Law and IHEC regulations, to be eligible to vote in the 2010 CoR election, a person must:

- Hold Iraqi nationality
- Be legally competent – fully eligible
- Be born on or before 31/12/1992
- Prove a link to an Iraqi Governorate that you will vote for.
- Submit the required documents to prove the above

Only those who can present documentation proving eligibility will be allowed to register and vote.

3.3 How can I register to vote?

In order prove eligibility and subsequently vote, you must present at least **TWO** acceptable and original documents which confirm all of the following:

i) Identity can be proven by a document issued by a state, state agency or international institution, which contains a recognizable photograph. This may include, for example: Iraqi or foreign passport or ID card, driver's license, refugee identification (refugee ID card or official travel document).

ii Birth on or before 31 December 1992;

iii Proof of Iraqi nationality: In order to prove Iraqi nationality, you must present a document or documents issued by state, state agency, international institution or a National Red Cross Society/Office in the country of current residence, which confirm that you were born in Iraq; or you have current or had previous Iraqi citizenship; or your father has Iraqi nationality;

iv) Proof that you are affiliated with the governorate in Iraq that you will vote for. In order to prove this you must produce documentation, or your father's documentation showing residency or place of birth in that governorate.

Note: Only one document proving all of the above will not be acceptable. Remember to bring at least **TWO** documents with you to the Registration Centre.

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3.4 What documents prove that I have Iraqi nationality, identity and a link to a governorate?

You will need to show documents that confirm one of the following:

- i. You were born in Iraq:* You must present a document which lists place of birth as in Iraq.
OR
- ii. You have current citizenship of Iraq:* You must present a document which lists citizenship or nationality.
OR
- iii. Birth to father of Iraqi nationality:* You must present a document or documents which show a paternal link and your father's nationality as Iraqi.

Iraqi nationality may also be proven by:

iv. Iraqi issued documents: You must present any of the following official documents, issued by the Iraqi government:

- Iraqi passport "G" type that holds residence visa or entry stamp to the country (also proves Governorate)
- Iraqi passport "M", "N", "H", "S" and "A" that holds residence visa or entry stamp to the country (does NOT prove Governorate)
- Personal Identity card (shows the place of birth so proves Governorate)
- Nationality certificate (also proves Governorate)
- Iraqi nationality book – 1957 (also proves Governorate)
- Iraqi Ration Card (also proves Governorate)

v. International and foreign documents: You must present any of the following official documents (originals), issued by an international organisation, national organisation and State.

- Documentation issued by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), that includes an Asylum-Seeker Certificate, Refugee Certificate, Refugee Card or Attestation for Mandate Refugee (Does NOT prove Governorate)
- Certificate issued by a National Red Cross Office in that country of residence (Does NOT prove Governorate)
- Foreign passport or foreign personal identification document (Does NOT prove Governorate)

A link to an Iraqi governorate may be proven by:

- vi. An Iraqi ration card, all other Iraqi issued documents listed above. Foreign residence card in the foreign country - this does NOT however prove nationality*

International or foreign documents, only valid for out of country voters, which can be used to prove identity, are as follows:

- Documentation issued by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), that includes an Asylum-Seeker Certificate, Refugee Certificate, Refugee Card or Attestation for Mandate Refugee
- Certifications issued by a National Red Cross Society/Office in the country of current residence, i.e. outside Iraq
- Foreign Passports
- Driver's license of the host country
- Residency card of the country in which the Iraqi lives

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3.5 I was not born in Iraq; can I prove that I am Iraqi?

Yes. In addition to a document proving your identity and age, you will have to present document(s) showing that your father is – or was, if deceased – Iraqi and that you are his son/daughter. This could be, for example, on your parents' passport and a birth certificate. You must also present documentation proving your fathers governorate of residence.

If you have current or had previous Iraqi citizenship, even if you were not born in Iraq, you can register with the necessary documents and do not need to prove your father's Iraqi nationality. You will however have to prove his governorate of residence.

3.6 How will I register?

Prior to being issued with a ballot each voter must be registered on a voters list. All registrations will later be checked to ensure there are no duplicate registrations. The ballot cast by each voter is therefore conditional and will not be counted if the person is found to have registered and voted more than once. This checking will take place prior to the counting process

Voter data will be recorded in the voters list during each day during the three-day polling period. At the end of each day the data will be electronically entered. The data will be checked for multiple voting at the main OCV Administrative Office and used for verification purposes during the counting process. This data will also form the basis of a voters list that will be kept with the polling station managers and be available for viewing by accredited party agents and observers. This will serve as a transparency and anti-fraud mechanism.

3.7 What happens to the information I give when I register?

The IHEC will not share any information gathered with any governmental institution in any of the countries. After the Election, the Voter Lists will be handed over to the IHEC and will only be used for future election information. All personal voter data collected during registration for Iraq OCV Program will be treated with high confidentiality and is for sole use of the Independent High Electoral Commission for the purpose of organizing elections for Iraqis abroad.

3.8 Can anyone come and check the Voter List?

No, the voter's lists will be kept with polling station managers and only voters and accredited observers and Political Entities' Agents can check the Voters List on request. Political Entities' Agents and observers will have to show their accreditation badge, which can only be obtained through the IHEC OCV Program country office.

3.9 Why can Political Entities' Agents and observers check the Voter's List?

To promote transparency, the OCV process will be open to observation by political entity representatives and independent observers.

Political entity representatives and independent observers accredited in accordance with IHEC regulations will have access to all aspects of the election operation. This will include access to polling facilities, access to points at which Iraq OCV election materials are distributed and collected and access to the count.

3.10 What type of ballot will be used and how will I cast my vote?

A ballot designed specifically for OCV will be used across all participating countries. The same ballot will be used regardless of the governorate for which the voter is voting and at all polling stations in all countries. The governorate for which a voter is eligible to vote will be decided based on the documentation provided by the voter. Once this is determined the ballot will be marked for

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that governorate. The voter will then mark the ballot for the political entity/candidate of their choice from the specific governorate.

3.11 How will a ballot be invalid?

A ballot will be invalid if the political entity mark is not clear; if there is no mark for a political entity (even if the candidate mark is clear); if there is no mark for a governorate. Other factors that may contribute to an invalid vote include:

- More than one mark placed for more than 2 entities or candidates.
- A single mark is placed so that it covers two names or boxes, thereby not indicating a clear single choice
- A mark placed next to a political entity or candidate name that does not indicate a clear choice by the voter.
- A mark indicating a choice has been altered, erased or crossed out.
- A ballot that has been written upon, but with no clear mark indicating the voter choice.

3.12 Where will counting take place?

Ballots for the OCV will be counted in OCV polling stations. After counting, OCV results will be sent to the IHEC Data Entry Centre (DEC) in Baghdad. Counting will begin once voters lists have been cross checked by data entry staff for multiple entries.

Updates and further information can be found on the ocv web-site www.ocv-ihec.com.