

Iraq Council of Representatives Out-of-Country Voting

General Fact Sheet

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In accordance with the Iraqi constitution, Election Law and the Independent High Electoral Commission Law, Council of Representatives (CoR) elections will take place on 7 March 2010.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Election Law the Independent High Electoral Commission is mandated to conduct Out-of-Country Voting operations (OCV) enabling Iraqis living abroad to participate in the Council of Representatives elections in host countries as per bilateral agreements. Registration of voters and polling will take place simultaneously during a three day period between 5 and 7 March. Registration and polling hours will be 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 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 the UN and IFES have deployed advisors to OCV headquarters in Erbil as well as to host countries. Both organisations are providing technical assistance to the IHEC OCV HQ and to the IHEC OCV country offices. Advisors deployments will be completed in early February.

2 Locations for Out of Country Voting

- 2.1 IHEC has selected the following host countries to conduct the OCV - Iran, United States, Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Australia, Sweden, Turkey, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Canada, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Austria and Denmark (based on available data for Iraqi population abroad). Further information on polling centre locations, when announced, can be found at the ocv website www.ocv-ihec.com.
- 2.2 In all 16 host countries, IHEC will establish electoral country offices. Support of host countries authorities will be imperative in the set up and security provided for the out-of-country voter registration and polling process.
- 2.3 Polling centres will be established in those areas with the highest number of resident Iraqis, and in as many locations as time and resources permit.

3 The Ballot, Registration, Voting, Voters List and Counting

- 3.1 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 that governorate. The voter will then mark the ballot for the political entity/candidate of their choice from the specific governorate.
- 3.2 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 and that no fraudulent documentation has been used to register. The ballot cast by each voter is therefore conditional and will not be counted if the person is found to have registered and

OCV Fact Sheet 1

voted twice or have used fraudulent documentation. This checking will take place prior to the counting process.

3.3 Voter data will be recorded in the voters list during each day of the three-day polling period. At the end of each day the data will be electronically entered. As mentioned the data will be checked for duplicates and fraudulent documentation at the main OCV 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 polling station managers for viewing by voters, accredited party agents and observers. This is a transparency and anti-fraud measure. Challenges can be made to registrations by political entities and eligible voters.

3.4 Ballots for the OCV will be counted in OCV polling stations. This process will only take place after the verification process and the adjudication of challenges has been completed. 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.

4 Voter Education, Public Outreach Audit and Observation

4.1 OCV voter education and public outreach campaigns will be conducted in all host countries targeting Iraqi populations and informing them of election activities. Election campaign materials will be distributed in Arabic, Kurdish and English.

4.2 All effective auditing procedures and observation mechanisms will be implemented to prevent fraud and ensure credibility of the registration and polling processes.

5 Legal Framework

5.1 OCV operations will be implemented in accordance with the Iraqi Constitution, Election Law, and IHEC regulations and procedures.

5.2 The implementation of OCV operations in host countries will also be subject to the agreement of the host government.

6 Structure and Appointment of OCV staff

6.1 IHEC has formed a special committee to supervise the OCV. This committee will take operational decisions and report on operational progress to the Board of Commissioners. The OCV headquarters is located in Erbil. Baghdad based IHEC staff have been reassigned to support the OCV operation.

6.2 The IHEC will deploy at least two main Country Office staff to each of the host countries, one of whom will serve as the country manager. Other Country Office staff in host countries will be recruited from Iraqi nationals residing in those host countries.

6.3 The OCV, through its host country recruitment, will aim to reflect the ethnic balance of Iraqi communities in the areas in which they work.

6.4 All country offices will be equipped with networked computers, communication systems, printers and at least one high-capacity photocopier. The offices should also contain facilities for training and for holding voter education meetings, as well as sufficient and safe storage capacity for polling materials. These requirements will vary from country to country and will depend on the number of voters being catered for.

OCV Fact Sheet 1

7 Operational concepts

- 7.1 **Security** - In coordination with host country authority's security measures will be put in place for the storage and transportation of sensitive polling materials. Security measures will also be put in place for polling centres, offices and warehouses and for convoys of sensitive materials.
- 7.2 **Recruitment** - Polling staff will be recruited from Iraqi communities located in each host country and trained by Country Office staff.
- 7.3 **Training** - Training will follow a simple cascade method: IHEC training staff will train Training Officers from host country offices. The Training Officers, in turn, will train polling staff in their respective Country Offices.
- 7.4 **Polling procedures** - Polling procedures and principles used in Iraq will where possible be adopted for the OCV program. However, some OCV procedures will need to be adapted and / or developed for the out-of-country context.

8 Transparency

- 8.1 Given the political sensitivity of OCV, there is a need to observe and monitor the process. Iraqi and international organizations will be invited to monitor the process.

Please visit the website at www.ocv-ihec.com for any further information