

KEY POINTS ON POLLING AND COUNTING

1. Polling Centre and Polling Station Structure

- For the Iraqi Council of Representatives election, the IHEC will establish around 10,000 polling centres throughout Iraq. Each centre consists of one or more polling stations, totaling over 50,000 altogether. Each polling station is expected to serve up to 420 voters.
- To increase the participation of eligible voters, the IHEC will also establish absentee polling stations for IDPs who registered with the IHEC to vote for the governorate from which they have been displaced, as well as special voting polling stations for categories of voters who are unable to cast their ballots in regular polling stations on Election Day, 07 March 2010.
- There will be a unique number for each polling centre and for each station (1, 2, 3 etc). This number will be recorded on all polling and counting forms and on all ballot boxes and other sensitive materials for that station. Absentee polling stations for IDPs will be indicated by an additional letter (1/أ , 2/أ, etc), and special voting polling stations by the additional letter (1/خ, 2/خ).
- In compliance with the law there will be a unique ballot for each governorate and a different ballot for out of country voting.
- Counting for regular polling will take place in polling stations, following close of polls. Counting for absentee and special voting will take place in Governorate Count Centres.

2. Regular Polling and Counting

- In regular polling stations, each station will have its own voter list with names in alphabetical order. Each voter must sign the voter list prior to receiving a ballot. A voter must be listed on the voter list in order to cast a ballot in that polling station.
- Counting of ballots for regular polling stations will take place in the polling station. Polling staff will undertake all reconciliation and counting processes, and will complete Form 501 (Polling Station Reconciliation Form), which accounts for ballots issued to the polling station, and Form 502 (Polling Station Results Form), which lists the specific political entities and candidates for each governorate. Reconciliation and Results Forms will then be transported to the IHEC Data Entry Centre in Baghdad for data entry and tabulation of results.

3. Absentee Voting for IDPs

- Absentee polling stations are established so that IDPs can cast a ballot for the governorate from which they have been displaced.
- As in regular polling stations, each absentee station will have a voter list, listing families in alphabetical order, and a voter must be listed on the voter list in order to vote in that polling station.
- Where there are less than 50 absentee IDP voters in a particular area, absentee services will be provided concurrent with regular polling stations in 'mixed' stations.

4. Special Voting

- There are two types of special voting, according to the category of voter: special voting with voter list and special voting by conditional ballot.
- Special voters will cast a ballot according to the governorate for which they are registered to vote (where they are listed on the voter register). This may or may not be the same governorate in which the polling centre is located.

4A. Special Voting with Voter List

- Members of the Iraqi security forces (military, or personnel of the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of the Interior and other security institutions) on duty on Election Day will vote prior to Election Day, on 04 March by special voting voter list.
- Polling processes for special voting with voter list will follow the same procedures as regular and absentee polling. The special voting voter list will be created according to names submitted by security authorities, which are then checked against the voter register. Those found in the voter register will be permitted to vote in special voting polling stations.

4B. Special Voting by Conditional Ballot

- Facilities for special voting by conditional ballot will be established for voting prior to Election Day on 04 March for eligible detainees in detention centres and prisons, hospital patients and employees of both these. Similar facilities will be established for special voting on 07 March Election Day for IDPs who did not register with the IHEC during the Voter Registration Update period, and for employees of governmental institutions located in the International Zone in Baghdad, who are registered elsewhere outside the International Zone.
- In special voting polling stations for these categories of voters, each polling station will have a blank polling station voter list. The voter list is filled on polling day according to the voter's documentation. Each voter signs the voter list prior to receiving a ballot.
- Because the voter list is blank and created during the polling process, special voters will cast what is known as a 'conditional ballot'. This means that the ballot is cast at the time of polling, and then the voter's details are checked afterwards in the voter register database in the Count Centre before counting. If the voter is proven to be eligible according to the voter register in the governorate for which s/he cast a ballot, then the vote will be counted.
- In order to ensure secrecy of the vote, inside the conditional ballot envelope, the ballot will be sealed into a secrecy envelope. This contains no information on the voter. Once eligibility is verified, the secrecy envelope will be removed from the conditional ballot envelope prior to the start of counting processes, so the ballot itself remains confidential.

5. Counting of Ballots for Absentee and Special Voting Polling Stations

- Absentee and special voting ballots will not be counted in the polling stations, but in Governorate Count Centres. Ballot boxes might contain ballots for different governorates, according to the governorates serviced during polling.
- Following partial ballot accounting in the polling station using Form 500 (Polling Station Reconciliation Form for Absentee IDP and Special Voting), the ballot boxes and all sensitive materials will be transported to Governorate Count Centres. At the Count Centres, ballot boxes will be opened and reconciliation will be completed.
- Following reconciliation, the voter eligibility verification process will be completed for conditional ballots, to determine whether each voter is eligible, and the ballot therefore counted.
- Ballots for absentee and special voting polling stations will not be counted by polling station, but will then be mixed into batches of governorate ballots for counting. This is in order to protect the secrecy of votes, and to maximize efficiency of counting processes. Following counting, Form 505 Count Centre Results Form will be completed and subsequently forwarded to the Data Entry Centre in Baghdad for data entry and tabulation of results.
- While reconciliation and verification processes for early voting will take place after 04 March early polling day, counting may not begin in Count Centres until after Election Day.