

**Globalized Election
Weekly Report
March 26, 2010 to March 30, 2010**

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Week # 112

A **parliamentary election** was held in Iraq on 7 March 2010. The election decided the 325 members of the Council of Representatives of Iraq who will elect the Prime Minister of Iraq and the President of Iraq.

IRAQ

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Iraq

Capital (and largest city)	Baghdad
Official language(s)	Arabic, Kurdish
Recognised regional languages	Neo-Aramaic, South Azeri (locally called "Turkmen")
Demonym	Iraqi
Government	Developing parliamentary republic
- President	Jalal Talabani
- Prime Minister	Nouri al-Maliki

Independence

- from the Ottoman Empire	1 October 1919
- from the United Kingdom	3 October 1932
- Republic	14 July 1958
- current constitution	15 October 2005

Area

- Total	438,317 km ² (58th) 169,234 sq mi
- Water (%)	1.1

Population

- 2009 estimate	31,234,000 ^[1] (39th)
- Density	71.2/km ² (125th) 184.6/sq mi

GDP (PPP)	2009 estimate
- Total	\$114.151 billion (63rd)
- Per capita	\$3,655 (125th)
GDP (nominal)	2009 estimate
- Total	\$68.553 billion (58th)
- Per capita	\$2,195 (105th)

1. INTRODUCTION

Iraq is a country in Western Asia spanning most of the northwestern end of the Zagros mountain range, the eastern part of the Syrian Desert and the northern part of the Arabian Desert.

Iraq is bordered by Jordan to the west, Syria to the northwest, Turkey to the north, Iran to the east, and Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to the south. Iraq has a narrow section of coastline measuring 58 km (35 miles) on the northern Persian Gulf. The capital city, Baghdad (Arabic: بغداد *Baġdād*), is in the center-east of the country.

Two major rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, run through the centre of Iraq, flowing from northwest to southeast. These provide Iraq with agriculturally capable land and contrast with the steppe and desert landscape that covers most of Western Asia.

Historically, the territory comprising Iraq was known in Europe by the Greek toponym 'Mesopotamia' (*Land between the rivers*). Iraq has been home to continuous successive civilizations since the 6th millennium BC. The region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers is identified as the cradle of civilization and the birthplace of writing and the wheel.

Throughout its long history, Iraq has been the center of the Akkadian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Hellenistic, Parthian, Sassanid and Abbasid empires, and part of the Achaemenid, Roman, Rashidun, Umayyad, Mongol, Safavid, Afsharid, Ottoman and British empires. The Kingdom of Iraq was founded in 1932.

Beginning with an invasion in 2003, Iraq came under military occupation by a multinational coalition of forces, mainly American and British.

The occupation ended when sovereignty was transferred to the Iraqi Interim Government June 2004. A new Constitution of Iraq has since been approved by referendum and a new Government of Iraq has been elected. As of March 2010, 96,000 US troops remain in the country. There is a deadline for the full withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq by 31 December 2011.

2.History

Kingdom of Iraq

Britain granted independence to Iraq in 1932, on the urging of King Faisal, though the British retained military bases and transit rights for their forces. King Ghazi ruled as a figurehead after King Faisal's death in 1933, while undermined by attempted military coups, until his death in 1939. Ghazi was followed by his under age son, Faisal II. 'Abd al-Ilah served as Regent during Faisal's minority.

On 1 April 1941, Rashid Ali al-Gaylani and members of the Golden Square staged a coup d'état and overthrew the government of 'Abd al-Ilah. During the subsequent Anglo-Iraqi War, the United Kingdom invaded Iraq for fear that the Rashid Ali government might cut oil supplies to Western nations because of his links to the Axis powers. The war started on 2 May and an armistice was signed 31 May.

A military occupation followed the restoration of the pre-coup government of the Hashemite monarchy. The occupation ended on 26 October 1947. The rulers during the occupation and the remainder of the Hashemite monarchy were Nuri al-Said, the

autocratic Prime Minister, who also ruled from 1930–1932, and 'Abd al-Ilah, the former Regent who now served as an adviser to King Faisal II.

Republic of Iraq

The reinstated Hashemite monarchy lasted until 1958, when it was overthrown by a coup d'etat of the Iraqi Army, known as the 14 July Revolution. The coup brought Brigadier General Abdul Karim Qassim to power. He withdrew from the Baghdad Pact and established friendly relations with the Soviet Union, but his government lasted only until the February 1963 coup, when it was overthrown by Colonel Abdul Salam Arif. Salam Arif died in 1966 and his brother, Abdul Rahman Arif, assumed the presidency.

In 1968, Abdul Rahman Arif was overthrown by the Arab Socialist Baath Party. Ahmed Hasan Al-Bakir became the first Baath President of Iraq but then the movement gradually came under the control of Saddam Hussein al Tikriti, who acceded to the presidency and control of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), then Iraq's supreme executive body, in July 1979.

In 1979, Saddam Hussein took power as Iraqi President after knocking down his close friend and the leader of his party (Ahmed Hasan Al-Bakr) and killing and arresting his leadership rivals. Shortly after taking power, the political situation in Iraq's neighbor Iran changed drastically after the success of the Islamic Revolution of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, which resulted in a Shi'ite Muslim theocratic state being established. This was seen as a dangerous change in the eyes of the Iraqi government, as Iraq too had a Shi'ite majority and was ruled by Hussein's government which, apart from having numerous Sunnis occupying leading positions, had a pan-Arab but non-religious ideology.

This left the country's Shiite population split between the members and supporters of the Ba'ath Party, and those who sympathized with the Iranian position. In 1980, Hussein claimed that Iranian forces were trying to topple his government and declared war on Iran. Saddam Hussein supported the Iranian Islamic socialist organization called the People's Mujahedin of Iran which opposed the Iranian government. During the Iran–Iraq War Iraqi forces attacked Iranian soldiers and civilians with chemical weapons.

Hussein's regime was notorious for its human rights abuses; a well-known example is the Al-Anfal campaign as well as attacks on Kurd civilians inside Iraq, such as the Halabja massacre, as punishment for elements of Kurdish support of Iran. During that period at least 100,000 Kurds were killed. The war ended in stalemate in 1988, largely due to American and Western support for Iraq. This was part of the US policy of "dual containment" of Iraq and Iran. Between half a million and 1.5 million people from both sides died in the 1980–88 war.

In 1977, the Iraqi government ordered the construction of Osirak (also spelled Osiraq) at the Al Tuwaitha Nuclear Research Center, 18 km (11 miles) south-east of Baghdad. It was a 40 MW light-water nuclear materials testing reactor (MTR). In 1981, Israeli aircraft bombed the facility, in order to prevent the country from using the reactor for creation of nuclear weapons.

Gulf War

In 1990, faced with economic disaster following the end of the Iran–Iraq War, Saddam Hussein looked to the oil-rich neighbour of Kuwait as a target to invade to use its resources and money to rebuild Iraq's economy. The Iraqi government claimed that Kuwait was illegally slant drilling its oil pipelines into Iraqi territory, a practice which it demanded be stopped; Kuwait rejected the notion that it was slant drilling, and Iraq followed this in August 1990 with the invasion of Kuwait. Upon successfully occupying Kuwait, Hussein declared that Kuwait had ceased to exist and it was to be part of Iraq, against heavy objections from many countries and the United Nations.

The UN agreed to pass economic sanctions against Iraq and demanded its immediate withdrawal from Kuwait (see United Nations sanctions against Iraq). Iraq refused and the UN Security Council in 1991 unanimously voted for military action against Iraq. The United Nations Security Council, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, adopted Resolution 678, authorizing U.N. member states to use "all necessary means" to "restore international peace and security in the area." The United States, which had

enormous vested interests in the oil supplies of the Persian Gulf region, led an international coalition into Kuwait and Iraq.

The coalition forces entered the war with more advanced weaponry than that of Iraq, though Iraq's military was one of the largest armed forces in Western Asia at the time. Despite being a large military force, the Iraqi army was no match for the advanced weaponry of the coalition forces and the air superiority that the coalition forces provided. The coalition forces proceeded with a bombing campaign targeting military including an occupied public shelter in Baghdad.

Iraq responded to the invasion by launching SCUD missile attacks against Israel and Saudi Arabia. Hussein hoped that by attacking Israel, the Israeli military would be drawn into the war, which he believed would rally anti-Israeli sentiment in neighboring Arab countries and cause those countries to support Iraq. However, Hussein's gamble failed, as Israel reluctantly accepted a U.S. demand to remain out of the conflict to avoid inflaming tensions. The Iraqi armed forces were quickly destroyed, and Hussein eventually accepted the inevitable and ordered a withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Before the forces were withdrawn, however, Hussein ordered them to sabotage Kuwait's oil wells, which resulted in hundreds of wells being set ablaze, causing an economic and ecological disaster in Kuwait.

After the decisive military defeat, the agreement to a ceasefire on February 28, and political maneuvering, the UN Security Council continued to press its demands that Hussein accept previous UN Security Council Resolutions, as stated in UNSCR 686. By April, UNSCR 687 recognized Kuwait's sovereignty had been reinstated, and established the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM). Two days later, UNSCR 688 added that Iraq must cease violent repression of ethnic and religious minorities.

The aftermath of the war saw the Iraqi military, especially its air force, destroyed. In return for peace, Iraq was forced to dismantle all chemical and biological weapons it possessed, and end any attempt to create or purchase nuclear weapons, to be assured by

the allowing UN weapons inspectors to evaluate the dismantlement of such weapons. Finally, Iraq would face sanctions if it disobeyed any of the demands.

Shortly after the war ended in 1991, Shia Muslim and Kurdish Iraqis engaged in protests against Hussein's regime, resulting in an intifada. Hussein responded with violent repression against Shia Muslims, and the protests came to an end. It is estimated that as many as 100,000 people were killed. The US, UK, France and Turkey claiming authority under UNSCR 688, established the Iraqi no-fly zones to protect Kurdish and Shiite populations from attacks by the Hussein regime's aircraft.

Disarmament crisis

While Iraq had agreed to UNSCR 687, the Iraqi government sometimes worked with inspectors, but ultimately failed to comply with disarmament terms, and as a result, economic sanctions against Iraq continued. After the war, Iraq was accused of breaking its obligations throughout the 1990s, including the discovery in 1993 of a plan to assassinate former President George H. W. Bush, and the withdrawal of Richard Butler's UNSCOM weapon inspectors in 1998 after the Iraqi government claimed some inspectors were spies for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. On multiple occasions throughout the disarmament crisis, the UN passed further resolutions (see United Nations Resolutions concerning Iraq) compelling Iraq to comply with the terms of the ceasefire resolutions.

It is estimated more than 500,000 Iraqi children died as a result of the sanctions. With humanitarian and economic concerns in mind, UNSCR 706 and UNSCR 712 allowed Iraq to sell oil in exchange for humanitarian aid. This was later turned into the Oil-for-Food Programme by UNSCR 986. Over the years, U.S. land forces were deployed to the Iraq border, and U.S. bombings were carried out to try to pressure Hussein to comply with UN resolutions.

As a result of these repeated violations, US Secretary of State Madeline Albright, US Secretary of Defense William Cohen, and US National Security Advisor Sandy Berger held an international town hall meeting to discuss possible war with Iraq, which seemed

to have little public support. In October 1998, U.S. President Bill Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act, calling for "regime change" in Iraq, and initiated Operation Desert Fox. Following Operation Desert Fox, and end to partial cooperation from Iraq prompted UNSCR 1284, disbanding UNSCOM and replacing it with United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC).

The Bush administration made a number of allegations against Iraq, including that Iraq was acquiring uranium from Niger and that Iraq had secret weapons laboratories in trailers and isolated facilities throughout Iraq; none of these allegations have proven true. Saddam Hussein, under pressure from the U.S. and the U.N., finally agreed to allow weapons inspectors to return to Iraq in 2002, but by that time the Bush administration had already begun pushing for war.

In June 2002, Operation Southern Watch transitioned to Operation Southern Focus, bombing sites around Iraq. The first CIA team entered Iraq on July 10, 2002. This team was composed of elite CIA Special Activities Division and the U.S. Military's elite Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) operators. Together, they prepared the battle space of the entire country for conventional U.S. Military forces.

Their efforts also organized the Kurdish Peshmerga to become the northern front of the invasion and eventually defeat Ansar Al-Islam in Northern Iraq before the invasion and Saddam's forces in the north. The battle led to the killing of a substantial number of terrorists and the uncovering of a chemical weapons facility at Sargat. In October 2002, the U.S. Congress passed the Joint Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq, and in November the UN Security Council passes UNSCR 1441.

Invasion and civil war

On March 20, 2003, a United States-organized coalition invaded Iraq, with the stated reason that Iraq had failed to abandon its nuclear and chemical weapons development program in violation of U.N. Resolution 687. The United States asserted that because Iraq was in material breach of Resolution 687, the armed forces authorization of Resolution

678 was revived. The United States further justified the invasion by claiming that Iraq had or was developing weapons of mass destruction and stating a desire to remove an oppressive dictator from power and bring democracy to Iraq. In his State of the Union Address on January 29, 2002, President George W. Bush declared that Iraq was a member of the "Axis of Evil", and that, like North Korea and Iran, Iraq's attempt to acquire weapons of mass destruction posed a serious threat to U.S. national security. These claims were based on documents that were provided to him by the CIA and the government of the United Kingdom. Bush added,

Iraq continues to flaunt its hostilities toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade... This is a regime that agreed to international inspections — then kicked out inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world... By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes [Iran, Iraq and North Korea] pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred.

However, according to a comprehensive U.S. government report, no complete, fully functional weapons of mass destruction have been found since the invasion. There are accounts of Polish troops obtaining antiquated warheads, dating from the 1980s, two of which contained trace amounts of the nerve gas cyclosarin, but U.S. military tests found that the rounds were so deteriorated that they would "have limited to no impact if used by insurgents against coalition forces." Iraq was also home to 1.8 tons of low-enriched uranium, miscellaneous other nuclear materials, and chemical weapons paraphernalia; the nuclear material was under the supervision of the IAEA until the beginning of the war.

Post-invasion

Following the invasion, the United States established the Coalition Provisional Authority to govern Iraq. Government authority was transferred to an Iraqi Interim Government in June 2004, and a permanent government was elected in October 2005. More than 140,000 troops, mainly Americans, remain in Iraq.

Some studies have placed the number of civilians deaths as high as 655,000 (see The Lancet study), although most studies estimate a lower number; the Iraq Body Count project indicates a significantly lower number of civilian deaths than that of The Lancet Study, though IBC organizers acknowledge that their statistics are an undercount as they base their information off of media-confirmed deaths. The website of the Iraq body count states, "Our maximum therefore refers to reported deaths – which can only be a sample of true deaths unless one assumes that every civilian death has been reported. It is likely that many if not most civilian casualties will go unreported by the media."

After the invasion, al-Qaeda took advantage of the national resistance to entrench itself in the country. On December 30, 2006, Saddam Hussein was hanged. Hussein's half-brother and former intelligence chief Barzan Hassan and former chief judge of the Revolutionary Court Awad Hamed al-Bandar were likewise executed on January 15, 2007; as was Taha Yassin Ramadan, Saddam's former deputy and former vice-president (originally sentenced to life in prison but later to death by hanging), on March 20, 2007. Ramadan was the fourth and last man in the al-Dujail trial to die by hanging for crimes against humanity.

At the Anfal genocide trial, Saddam's cousin Ali Hassan al-Majid (aka Chemical Ali), former defense minister Sultan Hashim Ahmed al-Tay, and former deputy Hussein Rashid Mohammed were sentenced to hang for their role in the Al-Anfal Campaign against the Kurds on June 24, 2007. Al-Majid was sentenced to death three more times: once for the 1991 suppression of a Shi'a uprising along with Abdul-Ghani Abdul Ghafur on December 2, 2008; once for the 1999 crackdown in the assassination of Grand Ayatollah Mohammad al-Sadr on March 2, 2009; and once on January 17, 2010 for the gassing of the Kurds in 1988; he was hanged over a week later on January 25.

Acts of sectarian violence have led to claims of ethnic cleansing in Iraq, and there have been many attacks on Iraqi minorities such as the Yezidis, Mandeans, Assyrians and others. A U.S. troop surge to deal with increased violence and improve security became a contentious political issue in the United States. The surge in troops was enacted in early

2007; in his September 2007 testimony to Congress, General Petraeus stated that the surge's goals were being met. Iraq also suffered a cholera outbreak in 2007.

Violence in Iraq began to decline from the summer of 2007.

The mandate of the multinational force in Iraq, last extended by UN resolution 1790, expired on December 31, 2008.

On June 29, 2009, U.S. troops formally withdrew from Baghdad streets, in accordance with former U.S. President George W. Bush's security pact with Iraq known as the Status of Forces Agreement. The SOFA pact stated, among other things, that U.S. troops will withdraw from Iraq's cities by June 30, 2009, and will leave the country on Dec. 31, 2011. Throughout the country, as the citizens of Iraq celebrated with fireworks, television programs declared June 30 as National Sovereignty Day. However, crime and violence initially spiked in the months following the US withdrawal from cities. As Iraqi security forces struggled to suppress the sudden influx of crime, the number of kidnappings, robberies, bomb assaults, and shootings increased dramatically. According to the Associated Press, Iraqi military spokesman Major General Qassim al-Moussawi said investigations found that 60 to 70 percent of the criminal activity is carried out by former insurgent groups or by gangs affiliated with them — partly explaining the brutality of some of the crimes. United States Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said that the withdrawal caused a change of chemistry with “a real sense of empowerment on the part of the Iraqis.” U.S. troops continue to work with Iraqi forces after the pullout. Despite the initial increase in violence, on November 30, 2009, Iraqi Interior Ministry officials reported that the civilian death toll in Iraq fell to its lowest level in November since the 2003 invasion.

Government and politics

Government

The federal government of Iraq is defined under the current Constitution as an Islamic, democratic, federal parliamentary republic. The federal government is composed of the

executive, legislative, and judicial branches, as well as numerous independent commissions. Aside from the federal government, there are regions (made of one or more governorates), governorates, and districts within Iraq with jurisdiction over various matters as defined by law.

Governorates

Iraq is composed of eighteen governorates (or provinces) (Arabic: *muhafadhat*, singular – *muhafadhah*, Kurdish: زگه‌ی‌پار *Pârizgah*). The governorates are subdivided into districts (or *qadhas*). Iraqi Kurdistan (Arbil, Duhok, Sulaymaniyah) is the only legally defined region within Iraq, with its own government and quasi-official militia.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Baghdad | 10. Babil |
| 2. Salah ad Din | 11. Karbala |
| 3. Diyala | 12. An Najaf |
| 4. Wasit | 13. Al Anbar |
| 5. Maysan | 14. Ninawa |
| 6. Al Basrah | 15. Duhok |
| 7. Dhi Qar | 16. Arbil |
| 8. Al Muthanna | 17. Kirkuk |
| 9. Al-Qādisiyyah | 18. Sulaymaniyah |

Politics

Iraq was under Baath Party rule from 1968 to 2003; in 1979 Saddam Hussein took control and remained president until 2003 after which he was unseated by a US-led invasion.

On October 15, 2005, more than 63% of eligible Iraqis came out across the country to vote on whether to accept or reject the new constitution. On October 25, the vote was certified and the constitution passed with a 78% overall majority, with the percentage of support varying widely between the country's territories. The new constitution had

overwhelming backing among the Shia and Kurdish communities, but was overwhelmingly rejected by Arab Sunnis. Three majority Arab Sunni provinces rejected it (Salah ad Din with 82% against, Ninawa with 55% against, and Al Anbar with 97% against).

Under the terms the constitution, the country conducted fresh nationwide parliamentary elections on December 15 to elect a new government. The overwhelming majority of all three major ethnic groups in Iraq voted along ethnic lines, turning this vote into more of an ethnic census than a competitive election, and setting the stage for the division of the country along ethnic lines.

Iraqi politicians have been under significant threat by the various factions that have promoted violence as a political weapon. The ongoing violence in Iraq has been incited by an amalgam of religious extremists that believe an Islamic Caliphate should rule, old sectarian regime members that had ruled under Saddam that want back the power they had, and Iraqi nationalists that are fighting the U.S. military presence.

Iraq has a number of ethnic minority groups: Kurds, Assyrians, Mandeans, Iraqi Turkmen, Shabaks and Roma. These groups have not enjoyed equal status with the majority Arab populations throughout Iraq's eighty-five year history. Since the establishment of the "no-fly zones" following the Gulf War of 1990–1991, the situation of the Kurds has changed as they have established their own autonomous region. This has been a source of particular tension with Turkey. The remainder of these ethnic groups continue to suffer discrimination on religious or ethnic grounds.

In 2008, according to the Failed States Index, Iraq was the world's fifth most politically unstable country. On November 17, 2008, the U.S. and Iraq agreed to a Status of Forces Agreement, as part of the broader Strategic Framework Agreement. This agreement notably states "the Government of Iraq requests" U.S. forces to remain in Iraq to "maintain security and stability in Iraq," and that Iraq has jurisdiction over military contractors, and US personnel when not on US bases or on-duty.

Elections in Iraq

History

Under the Iraqi constitution of 1925, Iraq was a constitutional monarchy, with a bicameral legislature consisting of an elected House of Representatives and an appointed Senate. The lower house was elected every four years by manhood suffrage (that is, women did not vote). The first Parliament met in 1925. Ten general elections were held before the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958. The electoral system, however, was manipulated by the King and his advisors, who were Sunni Muslims, to ensure that the Shi'a majority were prevented from taking power.

Between 1958 and 2003 Iraq was ruled by a series of military regimes, all dominated by Iraqi Arabs, particularly after the emergence of the Ba'ath Party in the early 1960s. Under the regime of Saddam Hussein, who came to power in 1979, Kurds were persecuted. Furthermore, Arabs who were non-Ba'athist or non-Arab inclined (most notably those of Shi'ite faith) were also persecuted. Saddam's regime was largely run by Arabs from Tikrit (a mainly Sunni area), his home region. On October 16, 2002, after a well-publicized show election, Iraqi officials declared that Saddam had been re-elected to another seven-year term as President by a 100% unanimous vote of all 11,445,638 eligible Iraqis, eclipsing the 99.96% received in 1995. The United States and others outside Iraq said the vote lacked any credibility. Stories later surfaced stating that voting was compulsory and that the "yes" box had already been checked for voters in advance.

Post-2003 invasion

The multinational force's invasion of Iraq in 2003 overthrew Saddam's regime and installed an interim government in which all Iraq's ethnic and religious communities were represented. This government held elections on January 30, 2005 to begin the process of writing a constitution. International groups and the formerly excluded Shi'a and Kurd factions claimed that the January 2005 elections were the first genuinely free elections in Iraq's history, with a fair representation of all ethnic groups. This is in stark contrast to

previous elections, including those under the Constitutional Monarchy decades earlier. Opponents of the occupation, such as the insurgents and the Sunni faction, claim that the elections were not genuinely free and fair, pointing to several flaws in the process. The UN adviser to Iraq's election commission, Craig Jenness, said the complaints were not significant; "I don't see anything that would necessitate a rerun...There were nearly 7,000 candidates standing in this election and only 275 seats, so you're always going to have winners and losers and it's normal that the losers won't always be happy about it."

Summary of the 15 December 2005 Council of Representatives of Iraq election results

Alliances and parties	Votes	%	Seats	+/-
United Iraqi Alliance	5,021,137	41.2	128	-12
Democratic Patriotic Alliance of Kurdistan	2,642,172	21.7	53	-22
Iraqi Accord Front	1,840,216	15.1	44	+44
Iraqi National List	977,325	8.0	25	-15
Iraqi National Dialogue Front	499,963	4.1	11	+11
Kurdistan Islamic Union ¹	157,688	1.3	5	+5
The Upholders of the Message (<i>Al-Risaliyun</i>)	145,028	1.2	2	+2

Reconciliation and Liberation Bloc	129,847	1.1	3	+2
Turkmen Front	87,993	0.7	1	-2
Rafidain List	47,263	0.4	1	±0
Mithal al-Alusi List	32,245	0.3	1	+1
Yazidi Movement for Reform and Progress	21,908	0.2	1	+1
National Independent Cadres and Elites			0	-3
Islamic Action Organization In Iraq - Central Command			0	-2
National Democratic Alliance			0	-1
Total (turnout 79.6 %)	12,396,631		275	—

2010 national election

The Federal Supreme Court gave its opinion on 13 May 2009 following the request of the Speaker of the Council of Representatives to the Court in its capacity as interpreter of the Constitution under Article 93(2). The issue arising was the interpretation of Article 56 of the constitution which states:

First: The electoral term of the Council of Representatives shall be four calendar years, starting with its first session and ending with the conclusion of the fourth year.

Second: The new Council of Representatives shall be elected forty-five days before the conclusion of the preceding electoral term. The previous election had been on 15 December 2005.

The opening session of the Council of Representatives had been 16 March 2006 (the swearing in session) and the first substantive session of the Council of Representatives was then held on 22 April 2006. The Court was of the opinion that the swearing in session on 16 March 2006 was the "first session" as required by Article 56(First). It therefore followed that the conclusion of the 4th year would be on 15 March 2010 and that the election should be 45 days prior to 15 March 2010, i.e. 30 January 2010. The court decided that the Calendar year referred to was the 365 day Gregorian year (and not for example the 360 day Hijri year).

Iraqi parliamentary election, 2010

Iraqi parliamentary election, 2010

All 325 seats to the Council of Representatives

7 March 2010



Leader	Nouri al-Maliki	Ayad Allawi	Ibrahim al-Jaafari
Party	State of Law Coalition	al-Iraqiyya	National Iraqi Alliance
Last election	13	36	117
Incumbent Prime Minister			

Nouri al-Maliki
State of Law Coalition

Prime Minister-designate

TBD

Elections 2010 in Iraq

A **parliamentary election** was held in Iraq on 7 March 2010.

The election decided the 325 members of the Council of Representatives of Iraq who will elect the Prime Minister of Iraq and the President of Iraq. The election was planned for the same day as a referendum on the Status of Forces Agreement.

The necessary election law was only passed on November 8, 2009, and the UN Mission in Iraq, which is helping with the elections, estimated that it needed 90 days to plan for the election. The electoral commission asked for a delay from the original date of 15 January. Iraqi Vice President Tariq Al-Hashimi vetoed the election law on 18 November 2009, delaying the election, which was originally scheduled for January 21.

Electoral system

Prior to the election, the Supreme Court in Iraq ruled that the existing electoral rule was unconstitutional. The parliament therefore set about drafting a new electoral law.

The Iraqi cabinet approved a draft elections law in September 2009. However, it took two months and ten delays for the law to pass in the Council of Representatives. The main areas of dispute concerned the "open list" electoral system and the voters roll in Kirkuk Governorate, which Arab and Turkmen parties alleged had been manipulated by the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq.



Example open list ballot paper from the Netherlands with parties across the top and individuals listed down the page

Open lists

UNAMI advised the electoral system was changed to allow people to vote for individuals as well as party lists under the open list form of proportional representation. The last national elections had used a closed list system, but the Iraqi governorate elections of 2009 had used open lists. The move was initially supported by parliamentarians from ISCI, and the most senior Iraqi Shiite cleric, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, warned that failure to adopt the open list system would have "*negative impacts on the democratic process*" and would reduce turnout and aides said he may call for a boycott of the polls if closed lists were used again. Over 1,000 people demonstrated against closed lists throughout the country. In the end, all parties except for the Kurdistan Alliance agreed to support open lists which was adopted.

Kirkuk governorate

In Kirkuk Governorate, it was proposed to use old 2004 electoral rolls. However, Kurds protested about this, given the large number of Kurdish people who had settled there since then. UNAMI then proposed that Kirkuk be divided into two or more ethnic constituencies, with the Kurdish constituency given an automatic quota of 50% plus one. When put to parliament, this proposal was blocked by Arab MPs, causing a deadlock. The issue was referred to the Political Council for National Security, which comprises the President, Prime Minister and party leaders. The Council proposed to combine the electoral rolls from 2004 and 2009, but when this was put to parliament, it was blocked

by Kurds. UNAMI then proposed using the 2009 records but revisiting for future elections. When put to a vote the Kurdish MPs walked out, leaving the parliament without a quorum. The final law said that the results in Kirkuk - and other governorates where the rolls were deemed "dubious" - would be provisional, subject to review within the first year by a committee formed out of the electoral commission, parliament, government and UNAMI, which could cancel fraudulent ballots. The law was passed by a vote of 141 to 54, with 80 members absent.

Seat allocation

The law increased the size of the Council from 275 to 325 members - equal to one seat per 100,000 voters, as specified in the Constitution of Iraq. As with the December 2005 election, seats will be allocated by governorate with additional "compensatory" seats allocated to those parties whose national share of the vote isn't reflected in the seats won at the governorate level. The votes of Iraqis living abroad would originally have been counted in the compensatory seats, which were reduced from 45 seats to 16 and eight of these 16 seats were allocated to specific national minorities - five for Iraqi Christians and one each for Yazidis, Shabak and Mandaeans.

Iraqi Vice-President Tariq al-Hashimi said the small number of compensatory seats discriminated against the estimated 2 million Iraqi refugees, many of whom are Sunni Arabs like al-Hashimi. He demanded that the number of compensatory seats be increased to 15% (48) and went on national television to say he would veto the law if it weren't amended. Sunni Arab parliamentarian Saleh al-Mutlaq said 30 seats should be allocated to Iraqis abroad to reflect their numbers. President Jalal Talabani also supported the increase to 15%, after receiving a letter from Kurdish regional MPs saying their allies from minority groups would be unfairly treated. In the event President Talabani and Vice-President Adel Abdul Mahdi signed the law despite their concerns, but Hashimi followed through his threat and vetoed it.

Parliament asked the Supreme Federal Court for advice, and it issued a statement saying that *"all Iraqis, whether they live in the country or outside its borders, should be*

represented in the parliament." There was some confusion over this statement with the head of the legal affairs committee interpreted this as annulling the veto. However, Ayad al-Samarrai, the parliamentary speaker said the statement was not binding on parliament because it was advice rather a ruling in response to a complaint. Parliament therefore met to consider the law again. Hundreds of supporters of the Prime Minister held demonstrations against the veto in Najaf, Basra and Wasit.

The President of Iraqi Kurdistan, Massoud Barzani, then threatened to boycott the election if the representation of the three provinces in Kurdistan wasn't increased. The provinces had only gained three of the 77 additional seats.

When the Iraqi Parliament met again they amended the law to provide that Iraqis abroad would vote in the governorate they lived before they left the country. The number of seats per governorate was then changed to increase all governorates by a fixed 2.8% over the 2005 population figures - meaning Kurdish areas got more seats but Sunni Arab areas got fewer. Analysts said Hashemi had "*played poker and lost*" and an MP from a rival Sunni Arab party said he should go and apologize to the governorates that had lost out. Tribal leaders in the Sunni Arab city of Tikrit threatened to call for a poll boycott if the amended law went through and Hashemi said he would veto again.

Internally displaced people will only be allowed to vote where their ration card was issued, a provision that Taha Daraa, MP for the United Iraqi Alliance in Diyala, said discriminated against them and was unconstitutional. He called on the constitutional court to strike down the provision.

Head of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), Faraj Al Haydari, announced that curfew will be imposed and airports closed on the day of elections. The head of the IHEC electoral directorate, Haydar Al Abboudi, said he hoped to announce the results of elections three days later.

Seat Allocations

The council agreed to increase the number of seats from 275 to 325. With this, the number of seats allocated to each governorate were changed from 2005 elections. Source and

Governorate	Coalition	Seats 2010	Seats 2005	In/de- creased by	Percentage in/de-crease	Registered voters
Baghdad Governorate						
	Total	68	59	9	15.3 %	4,599,000
Salah ad Din Governorate						
	Total	12	8	4	50.0 %	696,000
Diyala Governorate						
	Total	13	10	3	30.0 %	840,000
Wasit Governorate						
	Total	11	8	3	37.5 %	638,000

Maysan Governorate						
	Total	10	7	3	42.9 %	561,000
Basra Governorate						
	Total	24	16	8	50.0 %	1,466,000
Dhi Qar Governorate						
	Total	18	12	6	50.0 %	993,000
Al Muthanna Governorate						
	Total	7	5	2	40.0 %	379,000
Al-Qādisiyyah Governorate						
	Total	11	8	3	37.5 %	619,000
Babil Governorate						
	Total	16	11	5	45.5 %	961,000

Karbala Governorate						
	Total	10	6	4	66.7 %	564,000
Najaf Governorate						
	Total	12	8	4	50.0 %	696,000
Al Anbar Governorate						
	Total	14	9	5	55.6 %	802,000
Ninawa Governorate						
	Total	31	19	12	63.2 %	1,702,000
Duhok Governorate						
	Total	10	7	3	42.9 %	574,000
Erbil Governorate						
	Total	14	13	1	07.7 %	917,000
Kirkuk Governorate						
	Total	12	9	3	33.3 %	787,000

Governorate	Total	17	15	2	13.3 %	1,098,000
Compensatory seats						
	Total	7	45	-38	-15.6 %	
Minorities						
	Total	8	0	8	100 %	
Total		325	275	50	18.2 %	

Coalitions

Previous election result

The United Iraqi Alliance, made up primarily of religious Shi'ite parties, won 128 out of 275 seats in the previous election and was the largest party in the parliament. The list split into two lists for this election: the State of Law Coalition of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and the National Iraqi Alliance, which included most of the other parties.

National Iraqi Alliance

The National Iraqi Alliance is coalition of mostly Shi'ite parties. It was first mooted in August 2009 made up of the principal remaining components of the Alliance: SIIC & Badr, the Sadr Movement, the National Reform Trend, the Islamic Dawa Party - Iraq Organisation and Fadhila. SIIC was reported to have offered to split the coalition's seats four ways - 25% to SIIC and Badr, 25% to the Sadrists, 25% to Prime Minister Nouri al-

Maliki's Islamic Dawa Party and 25% to others and independents. However, Maliki wanted half the seats - reflecting the results of the Iraqi governorate elections of 2009 won by Maliki's State of Law Coalition - and a guarantee of another term for Maliki. He also wanted Sunni Arab parties like the Awakening movements to be included as primary members of the coalition to form what his spokesman termed "*a truly national alliance*". In September the coalition was formally announced without the Islamic Dawa Party. Other members include former Oil Minister Ahmad Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress and the Tribes of Iraq Coalition, an awakening council splinter group.

State of Law Coalition

The State of Law Coalition is built around incumbent Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Its largest component are members of al-Maliki's Al-Dawa party who joined him in splitting with the other Shi'ite parties. While mostly made up of Shi'ites, State of Law is officially secular and multi-ethnic. Some smaller Sunni, Christian, and Kurdish parties have joined the coalition. The State of Law Coalition was the winner of the Iraqi governorate elections, 2009, where they became the largest list, winning 126 out of 440 local seats and becoming the largest list in 8 of the 9 Shi'a provinces and Baghdad.

al-Iraqiyya

The Iraqi National Movement, more commonly known as Iraqiya, is a secular party headed by former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi. In the 2005 election Allawi's Iraqi National List won 8% of the vote, winning votes among secular Shi'ites and Sunnis. In 2009 Vice-President Tariq al-Hashimi left the Sunni Iraqi Islamic Party, and launched a new party called the Renewal List. Hashimi's party joined the Iraqi National Movement. Also joining was the neo-Baathist Iraqi National Dialogue Front led by Saleh al-Mutlak. In January 2010 the De-Baathification Commission barred al-Mutlak from the election citing links to the banned Baath party. The Iraqi National Movement threatened to boycott the election unless the decision was reversed. al-Mutlaq however eventually decided his party would run in the election despite the fact that he had been banned as candidate.

al-Tawafuq

Tawafuq, also known as the Iraqi Accord Front was the main Sunni coalition in 2005 winning 15% and 44 seats as an alliance between the Iraqi Islamic Party, the General Council for the People of Iraq (Iraqi People's Gathering) and the Iraqi National Dialogue Council. Since then the Iraqi National Dialogue Council left the alliance, also the Iraqi Islamic Party's leader Tariq al-Hashemi resigned from his position and left the party to create his own party and join al-Iraqiyya. The alliance still includes several independent candidates and the Sunni Islamist Turkmen Justice Party. In 2009 Tawafuq was still the largest Sunni list with 32 seats however the parties which would later form al-Iraqiyya won 47 seats and Tawafuq also lost control of their main stronghold, al-Anbar governorate.

Iraq's Unity

Ahmed Abu Risha, the head of the Awakening movement party that won the most seats in the Al Anbar governorate election, 2009, formed a coalition with Interior Minister Jawad al-Bolani's Iraqi Constitutional Party and Ahmed Abdul Ghafour al-Samarrai's Sunni Endowment called Iraq's Unity. Abu Risha had previously held talks with Maliki on joining the State of Law Coalition.

Kurdish Lists

The Kurdistan Alliance called for a single pan-Kurdish list, including the Islamist parties and the opposition Movement for Change, which had gained a quarter of the seats in the Iraqi Kurdistan legislative election of 2009. However, the Movement for Change said the two main Kurdistan Alliance parties - the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan of President of Iraq Jalal Talabani and the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iraq of Iraqi Kurdistan President Massoud Barzani - tended to "monopolize" power, and competing separately would "secure their own powers" in Baghdad. The Kurdistan Islamic Union also said it would compete separately, as it had in December 2005, and rejected a pan-Islamist coalition with the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Islamic Group. In 2005 the Democratic Patriotic Alliance of Kurdistan had won 21.7% of the votes and 53

out of 275 seats with the Kurdistan Islamic Union winning 1.3% of the votes and 5 seats. In the 2009 Kurdistan general elections the Kurdistani List had won 59 out of 100 Kurdish seats, Gorran winning 25 and the Islamist list winning 13.

New government

The Al-Maliki government was the first government formed under the Constitution of Iraq that was approved in 2005. As a transitional measure, both the President and Prime Minister had two deputies to maintain harmony among Shiite Arabs, Sunni Arabs and Kurds. The President and his two Vice Presidents formed the Presidency Council of Iraq which acted unanimously. However, after the election the President can use his powers alone, and there will be no Vice-Presidents and only one Deputy Prime Minister. In addition, as a transitional measure the Presidency Council had to be elected with a two thirds majority; under the permanent measures, a simple majority is sufficient to elect the President after the first round.

Candidate ban

On 15 January, 2010 Iraq's electoral commission banned 499 candidates, most of which Shia Muslims, from the election due to links with the Ba'ath Party. Several prominent Sunni politicians were among the banned, including Iraqi Front for National Dialogue leader Saleh al-Mutlaq, Iraqi Defence Minister Qadir Obeidi and Iraqi Accordance Front chairman Dhafer al-Ani. Among the banned candidates 216 were former members of the Ba'ath Party (including 13 mid-ranking members), 182 were members of the paramilitary Fedayeen Saddam and the Mukhabarat (Saddam's intelligence service), a further 105 of them were officers from the Old Iraqi army, including several ex-generals. Among the banned candidates 60% were Sunni Muslims and 40% were Shi'a however all of the banned candidates are members of secular and liberal parties and not a single member of a Sunni or Shi'a religious party was banned. According to Sheikh Abu Risha 7 of the banned candidates were members of his Anbar Salvation Council and 70 were members of the Iraq Unity list, a major Sunni list led by Abu Risha and Jawad al-Bolani.

The electoral commission was criticized for alleged partiality and ties to Shi'a religious parties and some fear this decision will lead to sectarian tensions. Sunni Muslims largely boycotted the January 2005 elections and fears are they will boycott this election as well, since the dominant Sunni list: the Iraqi National Movement threatened to boycott the elections if the decision was not reversed. Al-Mutlaq himself said he would resort to the United Nations and the international community if he is banned from the next election calling the decision a political decision "linked to foreign desire". Sheikh Ahmed Abu Risha, head of the Awakening councils threatened he might boycott the 2010 elections as well if the 70 banned candidates of his list were not unbanned. Earlier, Massoud Barzani had threatened Kurds might boycott the elections over the seat allocations. Kurds however decided not to boycott after more seats were allocated to them.

Iraqi President Jalal Talabani called on the Supreme Court to settle the dispute over the banned candidates saying: "We should not be unjust with them." In Najaf however, demonstrations were held in support of the ban where people called the Ba'athists Nazis. American Vice President Joe Biden travelled to Iraq on January 23 to try resolve the matters of the election ban. In response on January 25, Iraq dropped the ban on 59 out of 150 candidates who had appealed their ban. A total of 458 however remained banned from the elections. On 3 February the appeals court has temporarily lifted the ban on the candidates allowing them to run, which the Iraqi government condemned the decision by the court calling it "illegal and unconstitutional". The suspending of the ban is meant to allow the candidates to run, the Supreme Court said they will then review the candidates after the election. The government however ordered the Supreme Court to make their final ruling on the candidates before the election. However out of 511 candidates most had been replaced by their parties (and 59 had been unbanned), only 177 candidates appealed their ban. According to IHEC spokesman Khalid al-Shami only 37 of those appealed their ban correctly, the other 140 remain banned.

US Ambassador Christopher Hill said that by lifting the ban the elections would become credible. Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki however said they would not allow Hill to go beyond his diplomatic mission and that Iraq would not bow to any US-pressure. He also insisted that the ban on the alleged Ba'athist candidates must be implemented. Maliki

called on the countries high court for a final decision and also called for a parliamentary meeting to discuss the issue.

Before the start of the campaign on 12 February, 2009, the IHEC confirmed that the appeals by banned candidates had been rejected and thus all 456 banned candidates would not be allowed to run for the election. The Iraqi National Movement (al-Iraqiyya list) suspended their election campaign in response. Later Saleh al-Mutlaq's Iraqi National Dialogue Front (a part of the Iraqiyya list) withdrew from the elections and called on other parties to boycott the elections as well. Later however al-Mutlaq changed his mind and decided his party should join the election anyway despite himself being banned.

Election violence

On 13 February, the day the election campaign started, there were several bombings. The first bomb struck a political office of banned candidate Saleh al-Mutlaq, a second bomb was thrown into a building in West-Baghdad used by Sunni scholars and election candidates, while a third bomb damaged the National Iraqi Alliance's headquarters in Eastern Baghdad, a fourth blast struck the headquarters of the Moderate Movement list, injuring two people, a fifth blast struck a building used by Nehru Mohammed Abdul Karim al-Kasanzani's list, injuring one person. On February 15, Omar al-Baghdadi the leader of the Islamic State of Iraq, an umbrella organisation which includes al-Qaeda in Iraq released an internet message calling for a Sunni boycott against the election. He was quoted as saying: "Sunni participation in this election will certainly lead to the establishment of the principle that Sunnis in Iraq are a minority who have to be ruled by the rejectionists" (a term used by radical Sunnis to describe Shi'a Muslims), he also said that his group would use "primarily military means to prevent these elections". On 16 and 17 February campaign workers for the secular Ahrar party were attacked in Baghdad and Maysan governorates when trying to hang up posters. Also between 14 and 17 February at least four Christians were killed by Sunni insurgents. While on February 18 an al-Qaeda suicide bomber struck a government headquarters in Ramadi, al-Anbar, as part of their campaign to paralyze the elections. 26 February four civilians were injured as a

massive blast struck Iraq's finance ministry. A car bomb targeted an election convoy for Sunni candidate Ashur Hamid al-Karboul, in Khaldiya in al-Anbar. A campaign worker and a bystander were killed.

On 3 March, two car bombs exploded in the city of Baquba, Diyala, killing 33 people and injuring 55. This was one of the largest bombings of the year.

One of the hardest hit communities during the election period is the Iraqi Christian community. Attacks against the community began in December in Mosul, Iraq's second largest city. It led to the assassination of over 20 Christians and the bombings of different churches in Mosul. The attacks led to 680 Christian families fleeing Mosul to Nineveh plains.

On election day, 38 people were killed and 110 were wounded in Baghdad as insurgents attacked voters. In the deadliest incident 25 people were killed as a Katyusha rocket hit a residential building.

On election day, Islamist insurgents distributed leaflets in Sunni neighbourhoods of Baghdad warning people not to go to the polls, they mostly used rockets, mortars and explosive-filled plastic bottles hidden under trash to target those who did vote, this was due to a vehicle ban the government had enforced to stop car-bombings. Attacks killed 42 people and wounded at least 110. In Baghdad Katyusha rockets killed at least 4 people and wounded 16 in the neighbourhoods of Qreiat and al-Hurriya, while roadside bombs killed 7 people in Baghdad. In Mahmoudiyah, a city near Baghdad, a policeman was killed and 11 people were injured when two mortars struck a polling center. One woman was killed and 36 people were injured during attacks on polling centers in the insurgent stronghold of Mosul. But the largest attack came in Baghdad when a Katyusha rocket hit a flat in Ur neighbourhood, killing 25 people. Attacks on election day were also reported in Tikrit, Baquba, Samarra and Fallujah.

According to the Iraq Body Count, from 12 February (when the campaigning started) until 7 March (election day), at least 228 people were killed.

Results

Pre-Election Opinion polls

In February 2010 the National Media Center, a government agency conducted a survey among 5,000 Iraqis from 18 different provinces. When people were asked who they would vote for the poll gave the following results:

- State of Law Coalition: 29.9%
- Iraqi National Movement: 21.8%
- National Iraqi Alliance: 17.2%
- Kurdistan List 10%
- Iraqi Unity: 5%
- Iraqi Accord Front: 2.7%
- Other: 6.3%
- No Opinion 4.9%
- No Response 2.2%

When asking if people would vote or not two third said they would vote. Among Shi'a Muslims 63% said they would vote, among Sunni Muslims this was 58%. 57% of the Arabs said they would vote while 67% of the Kurds said they would vote. Of those asked 47% supported the candidate ban, 38% opposed it and 15% had no opinion.

According to the Sadrists, they expected the National Iraqi Alliance to win 70 to 80 seats in the government, where from the Sadr Movement would win 35. Spokesmen from Da'awa were skeptical about these claims.

Preliminary Results

Early estimates put the turnout at 62.4% with highest turnout in Dahuk governorate (80%). With less than 30% of the vote counted Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law Coalition was in the lead in 9 out of 18 provinces. Iyad Allawi's al-Iraqiyya was said to be leading in the country's Sunni majority areas. The Irish Times claimed that the State of Law Coalition had won 100 out of 325 seats and the National Iraqi Alliance had performed

disappointingly. They said Maliki himself had won the most votes in Baghdad as candidate. In as Sulaymaniyah province, they estimated the turnout at 71.2% with Gorran winning Sulaymaniyah city but the Kurdistan List sweeping the rural areas and the Kurdish Islamist list doing well in the Eastern areas of the governorate winning 15% of the vote there. They also claimed that in Kirkuk province the Kurdistan List had secured 8 out of 12 seats. In Kurdistan, polls showed the Kurdistan List had won 44 seats (27 for the KDP, 17 for the PUK) while Gorran claims to have won 15 and the Kurdish Islamic List won 6 (4 for the Islamic Union of Kurdistan and 2 for the Islamic Group of Kurdistan). The Kurdistan List won 8 out of 12 seats in Kirkuk (6 PUK, 2 KDP), 10 out of 14 seats in Erbil (8 KDP, 2 PUK), while Gorran won 2 seats in Erbil and the KIU and IGK each won 1 seat there. In Dahuk the KDP won 8 out of 10 seats and the KIU won the other 2. In Ninawa the 10 out of 31 seats went to Kurdish parties, with Gorran winning in Mosul city.

On March 11, preliminary results were released with 30% of the vote counted for 5 of Iraq's 18 provinces. They showed the Kurdistan List leading in Arbil with 96 thousand votes, Gorran being a distant second with 20,000. In Salah ad-Din and Diyala, al-Iraqiyya was first place with 34 and 42 thousand votes followed in Salah ad-Din by Tawafuq and in Diyala by the INA, which had each only 10 thousand votes. In two Shi'a provinces of Babil and Najaf, State of Law Coalition was in a narrow lead having 68 thousand votes in Babil, followed by the INA with 55 thousand and having 55 thousand votes in Najaf, followed narrowly by the INA with 48 thousand.

The next day results were released for al-Muthanna (where State of Law led with 15 thousand votes, followed by the INA with 10 thousand) and Maysan, where the INA led with 30 thousand votes to State of Law's 23 thousand votes. By 12 March the State of Law Coalition was nationally in first place with roughly 179,000 votes, followed by the INA with 160,000 and al-Iraqiyya with 124,000. The Kurdistan Alliance was fourth place with well over 100,000 votes. Baghdad preliminary results were released on March 13 with the State of Law Coalition in first place with 150,000 votes, followed by the National Iraqi Alliance with 108,000 votes and al-Iraqiyya with 105,000 votes. The National Iraqi Alliance's Sadr Movement however, came first in Sadr City with State of

Law coming second. Results in Sunday also showed State of Law ahead in Karbala province, while the National Iraqi Alliance was ahead in al-Qadissiyah, al-Iraqiyya was ahead in Ninawa, were they were backed by the local al-Hadba party. On March 14 preliminary results were released for 3 more governorates, they State of Law leading in Basra, al-Iraqiyya leading in al-Anbar and the Kurdistan List leading Dahuk.

In Basra, with 63% of the vote counted, State of Law was leading with 219 thousand votes, followed by the NIA with 122 thousand votes and al-Iraqiya with 36 thousand votes. In al-Anbar, al-Iraqiya was leading by a large margin with 122 thousand votes, followed by Iraq's Unity with 18 thousand and State of Law with 3 thousand. In Dahuk, the Kurdistan Alliance was in a far lead as well with over 170 thousand votes, the Islamist alliance of the KIU and IGK was second place with 31 thousand votes, the main opposition party: Gorran, coming third with just 12 thousand votes. At the end of the day results were released from all governorates, they showed State of Law leading in Wasit, the National Iraqi Alliance leading in Dhi Qar, the Kurdistan Alliance leading in as Sulaymaniyah and al-Iraqiya leading in Kirkuk, which came as a surprise to most analysts which had expected the Kurdistan Alliance would win. His lead however was very narrow, having 123,862 votes against the Kurdistan Alliance's 120,664 votes. However later results showed the Kurdistan Alliance catching up and by March 17 al-Iraqiyya's lead over the Kurdstan alliance had dropped from 3,198 to just 6.

For a short period al-Iraqiyya pulled ahead of State of Law in the polls, leading in the polls with 9,000 votes. This led to fraud allegations by State of Law which demanded a recount. The next day however, the State of Law Coalition re-took it's lead and was over 40,000 votes ahead of al-Iraqiyya. On March 20, al-Iraqiyya pulled ahead of State of Law again, leading with just slightly less than 8 thousand votes prompting Maliki to call for a recount again.

Final Results

Summary of the 7 March 2010 Council of Representatives of Iraq PROJECTED

election results based on 95% results

Alliances and parties	Votes	%	Seats	+/-
Iraqi National Movement (<i>al-Iraqiya</i>)	2,631,388	24.55%	91	+55
State of Law Coalition	2,620,042	24.44%	90	+77
National Iraqi Alliance	1,976,412	18.44%	69	-48
Kurdistani List	1,553,667	14.49%	42	-12
Movement for Change (<i>Gorran</i>)	443,871	4.14%	8	+8
Iraqi Accord Front (<i>al-Tawafuq</i>)	276,733	2.58%	7	-37
Unity Alliance of Iraq	295,226	2.90%	4	+4
Etihad Islamic Union	230,742	2.15%	4	-1
Islamic Movement of Kurdistan	143,790	1.34%	2	-1
Others	548,279	5.11%	0	?

Minorities	unknown	unknown	8	-
Total (turnout 62.4 %)	10,720,150	100%	325	

Fraud Allegations

Prior to the elections there were already claims that Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's list was planning to rig elections. The fact that the government printed 26 million ballots, 35% more than are needed for all eligible voters led to claims by Ayad Allawi and his al-Iraqiyya list that these ballots were going to be used to commit fraud. According to the National Iraqi Alliance al-Maliki was abusing his powers as Prime Minister by distributing government land and plantations freely to tribal leaders to secure their votes, Maliki was also said to be giving expensive guns with gold emblems on them, to visitors. Ibrahim al-Jaafari's Islah party accused the Maliki government of registering 800,000 fabricated names in rural areas and Baghdad so the government could use their names to vote in favour of Maliki while these people do not exist. The Sadr Movement complained that the government was arresting and detaining their supporters in the days prior to the elections to prevent them from voting.

Leaders of al-Iraqiyya listed a series of alleged violations by Maliki claiming some of their votes had been removed from boxes and replaced by other ballots. A spokesman from the alliance released this statement: "Insistence in manipulating these elections forces us to question whether the possibility of fraudulent results would make the final results worthless. We will not stand by with our arms crossed," however analysts claim Allawi might be listing these complaints for tactical reasons. Allawi also accused the Kurdistan Alliance of fraud in Kirkuk. On the other hand the Kurdish Gorran List alleged that Allawi's al-Iraqiyya list had committed fraud in the city of Mosul and Ali al-Adeeb, a candidate on Maliki's list, made his own fraud accusations, saying that: "There was

manipulation of the numbers by an official who works in the data entry section, this person is working for the benefit of one bloc and manipulating the numbers."

Meanwhile the Iraqi National Alliance voiced concerns that the US was trying to manipulate the country's election results. INA candidate Entifadh Qanbar told Press TV: "The concern is that how the ballots from each voting center are going to be processed in the computer center inside the Electoral Commission, the reason we are insisting on this issue is that we are afraid there is some sort of American intervention inside the Electoral Commission in processing these numbers and may be altering these numbers. We will not accept any election results without putting the ballots out to prove that the ballots have been processed and entered in the computer system in a proper way."

Iraqi Kurdish politician Khalid Shenawi, accused election workers in Arab areas in the city of Kirkuk of manipulating the results in Allawis favour. Meanwhile Arab and Turkmen politicians accused the Kurds of stacking voter rolls in their favour. Shenawi said that loudspeakers of mosques were used to encourage people to vote and expressed doubt over the 93% turnout in Kirkuk's Arab districts al-Zab, al-Abbasi, al-Riad and al-Houija. Ala Talabani said the Kurdistan List had submitted 40 notices of appeal against fraud by al-Iraqiya. Turkmen nationalist politician Arshid Al-Salihi, who stood as part of the al-Iraqiya list however claimed they have proof of al-Iraqiyya votes being thrown in the garbage, alleging fraud by the Kurdistan List. However, contradictingly he also claimed that "Everyone who loses in elections accuses their rivals of fraud" in reference to claims by the Kurdistan Alliance.

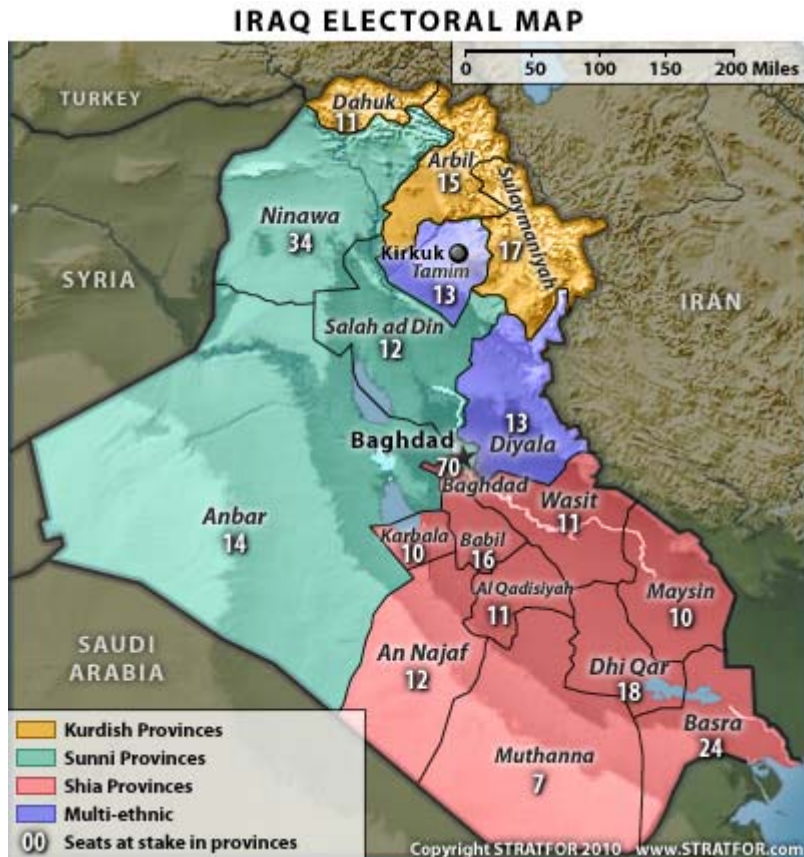
With al-Iraqiya in the lead, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and President Jalal Talebani both called for a manual recount of all the votes. This was however rejected by the IHEC which denied there were any significant irregularities during the vote. Partial results from the Iraqi parliamentary election indicate that Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's ruling State of Law bloc is leading in Baghdad and the provinces to the south. The big surprise has been the victories of al-Maliki's main rival, former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, whose al-Iraqiya list seems to be sweeping the Sunni regions along Baghdad's northern rim. The rise of al-Iraqiya, along with the fact that al-Maliki hasn't completely dominated

the Shiite south, suggests that he will have a hard time cobbling together a coalition government that is Shiite-dominated and has a reasonable degree of Sunni representation.

Analysis

Former Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's al-Iraqiya list is leading Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law (SoL) bloc, according to the latest results from the March 7 parliamentary election. The results announced by Iraq's Electoral Commission March 16, representing about 79 percent of the vote counted from Iraq's 18 provinces, showed Allawi with a narrow lead of about 9,000 votes over al-Maliki. Candidates' positions will probably change as the vote-counting continues, and final results are unlikely to be available for another few weeks. A total of 325 seats — divided by provinces — are up for grabs in the election.

Seats will be allocated to parties or coalitions in proportion to the number of votes they gain. Each province counts as one electoral district, which is allocated a certain number of seats relative to the size of its population. The number of valid votes cast in each electoral district is divided by the number of seats allocated to the district, thus determining the number of votes necessary to win a seat in that district. In turn, the number of votes obtained by each list is divided by the number of votes required to obtain a seat, thus determining the number of seats won by each list.



Certain trends are evident in the preliminary election results. As expected, four groups have emerged as the main blocs — al-Maliki’s SoL; Allawi’s non-sectarian al-Iraqiya list; the Iraqi National Alliance (INA), the main Shiite coalition; and the main Kurdish alliance. These four blocs will dominate the next Iraqi parliament.

Al-Maliki’s SoL is ahead in seven provinces — Baghdad, Babil, Karbala, Muthanna, Najaf, Wasit and Basra. In Baghdad, SoL is in stiff competition with al-Iraqiya, in second place, and the INA, in third. The INA is also in a strong second position behind SoL in Muthanna, Najaf, Wasit and Babil provinces, whereas it is leading only by slim margins in Dhiqar, Qadisiya and Maysan provinces. The ruling SoL has shown its strongest performance in the southern oil-rich Basra province, where it has garnered some 150,000 more votes than the INA.

Moving beyond the Shiite-dominated south, al-Maliki has been badly undercut by Allawi, his rival for the non-sectarian vote. Allawi’s al-Iraqiya is a close second — a

difference so far of 65,000 votes — behind SoL in Baghdad, which has the lion's share of seats in Parliament (70). In Baghdad, the INA is in a strong third-place position. But the main achievement of al-Iraqiya has been its ability to sweep three key Sunni provinces — Anbar, Nineveh and Salahuddin — as well as the ethnically mixed province of Diyala. Furthermore, in the highly contentious oil-rich northern province of Kirkuk, al-Iraqiya is in a close race with the main Kurdish alliance, separated by little more than a couple of hundred votes.

In the three provinces of the Kurdistan region, the main Kurdish alliance maintained its hold over Dahuk and Erbil but is in a difficult spot in Suleimaniyeh, where the rising Gorran movement and the Kurdish Islamic Union between them have won about 50,000 more votes than the main Kurdish bloc. This is a major upset in terms of the traditional dominance of the Kurdistan region by the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and it will likely undercut a unified Kurdish stake in the national government.

At the national level, al-Maliki, whose group was vying for both the Shiite sectarian and non-sectarian (largely Sunni) votes, has achieved neither. Therefore, in terms of forming a government, SoL will be heavily relying on the INA in the Shiite south. In the Sunni provinces, al-Iraqiya has swept the ballots, which means that Sunni representation in the government will require a coalition that includes al-Iraqiya. A coalition government that contains both Shiite sectarian and Sunni forces will be tough to cobble together, since both sides will be demanding key Cabinet positions. Further complicating this scenario will be the Kurdish alliance, which will drive its own hard bargain by exploiting the sectarian divide to enhance its own ethnic stake.

When the election results were not final, it was too difficult to tell what the composition of the next Iraqi government will be. The old Iraqi political deck has certainly been reshuffled with the rise of al-Iraqiya in the Sunni regions. What is clear at this point is that arriving at a power-sharing formula will be an excruciatingly contentious and lengthy process.

Results for the Iraqi elections have been released. Former Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's al-Iraqiya List came in first with 91 seats, current Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law (SoL) came in second with 89 seats, the Iranian-backed Iraqi National Alliance (INA) came in third with 70 seats and the Kurdistan Alliance was fourth with 43 seats. The candidates have three days beginning March 27 to contest the results.

Al-Iraqiya and SoL have been neck-and-neck in this Iraqi political race as vote counts have trickled out over the past week. While al-Iraqiya has already officially nominated Allawi as prime minister, al-Maliki is claiming that these results are not final and that Allawi should be ineligible due to past corruption charges levied against him.

With the vote count between the two lists only separated by two seats, this dispute is unlikely to subside any time soon, and may translate into violence on the streets between competing political factions and jihadist militants looking to exploit the situation and undermine the political process in Baghdad.

When a final result is accepted by all parties in the coming days, the messy affair of coalition-building politics will take center stage. A ruling coalition must have at least 163 seats to run Iraq's 325-seat parliament. Iran has been attempting to forge a coalition between al-Maliki's SoL and its allies in the INA to form a more solidified Shiite front in Baghdad. The INA is also likely to court the Kurdistan Alliance, as the two blocs share a common vision for an Iraq divided among federal autonomous lines.

If, however, INA and SoL attempt to sideline al-Iraqiya, the security implications likely will turn more severe, as Allawi's secularist bloc has been the most inclusive of Sunni candidates seeking reintegration in Iraq's political process as an alternative to supporting insurgency efforts. It is far too early to tell how the ruling coalition will turn out, but the stakes are high for all parties, as is the potential for violence.