



بعثة جامعة الدول العربية
لمراقبة انتخابات مجلس النواب العراقي 2025

Preliminary statement of the League of Arab States Mission observing Iraq's 2025 parliamentary elections

In line with the League of Arab States' commitment to supporting the democratic process, consolidating good governance, and broadening political participation, and in implementation of the "Development and Modernisation Path" document adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at the Summit level during its 16th Ordinary Session in Tunis in 2004—aimed at achieving justice and equality among citizens and upholding human rights and freedom of expression in all Arab states,

And in response to the invitation extended to the League of Arab States by Mr. Omar Ahmed Mohamed, Chairman of the Independent High Electoral Commission of the Republic of Iraq, to observe the 2025 Iraqi parliamentary elections,

His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, directed the formation of a mission headed by Ambassador Dr. Faed Mustafa, Assistant Secretary-General, and composed of a group of observers from the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States representing five Arab nationalities: Palestine, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Libya,

As part of the mission's engagement with various partners in the electoral process, the delegation met with Judge Omar Ahmed Mohamed, Chairman of the Independent High Electoral Commission, and Mr. Amir Ryan, Senior Electoral Advisor to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The mission also met with the heads of the Civil Society Organisations Network for Election Monitoring to gather diverse perspectives on the electoral process.

The League of Arab States mission aimed to observe all stages of the electoral process in accordance with the Iraqi Constitution, the electoral law and related legislation, internationally recognised standards and obligations, and the decisions issued by the Independent High Electoral Commission. The mission adhered to the League of Arab States' Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation.



The following are the mission's key preliminary observations:

First: The Legal Framework

The 2025 Iraqi parliamentary elections were conducted in accordance with the 2005 Iraqi Constitution, the Elections Law 12 of 2018 as amended by Law 4 of 2023, and the Independent High Electoral Commission Law 31 of 2019 as amended, in addition to other relevant laws, decisions, and regulations issued by the Independent High Electoral Commission.

The legal framework generally provides for several fundamental rights and principles, including the right to vote and to stand for election, respect for the principle of equal opportunity among candidates, the right to appeal decisions and results, the establishment of quotas for women and minorities, and the monitoring of elections by candidates' representatives and local and international organisations.

However, some aspects of the legal framework require further clarification and procedural enhancement, which the mission will address in its final report.



Second: Voter Registration

The voter registration process lasted for more than two and a half months, following several extensions granted by the Independent High Electoral Commission. The Commission exerted considerable effort to complete the process, which included first-time registration, as well as additions, corrections, changes, and deletions—covering both members of the security forces and internally displaced persons.

Legislation mandated the exclusive use of biometric voter cards and guaranteed the right of individuals with special voting rights to cast their ballots in their place of residence, provided they voted for their original constituency. The Commission also employed registration mechanisms that included the collection of biometric data (fingerprints and facial images) to prevent duplication and multiple voting, thereby overcoming the limitations of fingerprinting alone. The League of Arab States' mission recalls its previous recommendation, included in its report on the 2021 parliamentary elections, to adopt the exclusive use of biometric voter cards to enhance voter confidence in the electoral process.

By the end of the voter registration period, the total number of registered voters reached 21,404,291, including 1,313,980 members of the security forces and 26,538 internally displaced persons.

The League of Arab States' mission noted the Commission's commitment to enabling voters to collect their biometric cards, including up to election day, through the establishment of collection offices at polling stations for unclaimed cards.



The Commission announced that the number of citizens legally eligible to vote was approximately 29 million, while the total number of registered voters stood at around 21.5 million—indicating that roughly 7.5 million eligible voters had not registered or updated their information. In this regard, the mission recommends that the Commission, in cooperation with its electoral partners, intensify voter awareness programmes on the importance of registration and data updating, well in advance of the registration period.

The League of Arab States mission also underscores the importance of ensuring that Iraqi voters residing abroad are able to exercise their constitutional right to vote, as they represent a significant proportion of eligible voters. The mission calls for the development of new mechanisms to guarantee this right, in line with international electoral standards.

Furthermore, the mission recommends that the results of the 2024 census be used to prepare an electoral register that accurately reflects the demographic reality and contributes to a fair distribution of voters across polling stations. The mission believes that this measure would enhance the accuracy and integrity of the electoral register, reiterating a recommendation previously made following its observation of the 2021 Iraqi parliamentary elections.

Third: Candidate Registration

The Commission opened a two-month registration period, allowing all those wishing to run for office to submit their applications. This period was sufficient for candidates to complete the nomination procedures. The total number of candidates reached 7,745, including 2,247 women and 5,498 men,



competing within 147 political entities. These entities comprised 68 political parties, 53 minority groups, and 26 independent candidates, all contesting 329 parliamentary seats.

The legal framework guarantees the right of all citizens to run for office. The law stipulates basic eligibility requirements, including that candidates must be at least 30 years old, have a clean record, not be subject to the Equality and Justice Commission or the Integrity Commission, hold a bachelor's degree, and submit a list of 500 voters endorsing their candidacy.

The legal framework allows both parties and individuals to contest the elections, thereby giving voters multiple choices—an approach expected to enhance the quality of the electoral process and increase competition among candidates. The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) announced the disqualification of more than 800 candidates for various legal and administrative reasons, including invalid academic documents and incomplete nomination files. The mission notes that the candidate disqualification process is a critical stage in the electoral process, as the clarity and consistent application of legal principles are essential for fostering confidence in the elections.

In this regard, the mission affirms the importance of conducting the candidate disqualification process in accordance with clear criteria and specific timelines to strengthen trust in the election results.



Fourth: Election Campaigning

The legal framework affirms that election campaigning is a guaranteed right for all candidates. Accordingly, campaigns began on 3 October and continued until 24 hours before polling day, marking the start of the election silence period.

The campaign period lasted five weeks, which may be insufficient for candidates to conduct their campaigns effectively compared with the same period in the 2021 elections, particularly since each governorate was designated as an electoral district. The mission highlights the importance of considering the extension of the campaign period in future elections to enable greater interaction between candidates and voters.

The Commission issued several decisions to regulate and monitor the campaign period, including the adoption of campaign regulations and the formation of central and regional monitoring committees responsible for overseeing candidates' campaign activities and ensuring compliance with legal provisions.

Although the law stipulates a spending limit for campaigns, the mission observed noticeable disparities in campaign expenditure among candidates, which may affect the principle of equal opportunity, especially between party-affiliated and independent candidates. The mission notes that the legal framework establishes a sound basis for financial oversight; however, the mechanisms for its implementation and monitoring require further strengthening.



Fifth: The Independent High Electoral Commission

The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) managed the key stages of the electoral process with a high degree of organisation. It also worked to upgrade the technological systems used in the elections through biometric registration and data verification mechanisms, reflecting its commitment to strengthening the integrity of the electoral process. The Commission is further credited for its continued cooperation with international organisations and its commitment to providing essential information related to the various stages of the electoral process in a transparent and timely manner.

Sixth: Observations of the League of Arab States Mission on the Voting Process:

The methodology adopted by the League of Arab States Mission for monitoring the voting, counting, and sorting processes relied on technology through the use of electronic forms on tablets. This was facilitated by an electronic application that received observer reports and converted them into charts and percentage-based statistics. The Mission's operations room analysed this data, enabling rapid, accurate, and comprehensive monitoring of key indicators related to the progress of the electoral process.

The Mission's teams participated in monitoring both the special and general voting, attending the opening of four polling stations and visiting 70 polling stations located in 17 electoral centers. The teams also observed the counting and sorting processes in four stations.



The mission's observations regarding the polling centres it visited can be summarised as follows:

The League Mission noted the comprehensive and effective security measures implemented at the polling centres, including procedures preventing the entry of mobile phones to limit the photographing of ballot papers. The mission also commended the significant role of the security forces in safeguarding the electoral process and ensuring a secure environment that enabled Iraqi voters to freely exercise their constitutional right.

The polling stations visited by the mission opened on time at 7:00 a.m. The opening procedures were carried out in accordance with the law and the instructions issued by the IHEC. Station managers and staff demonstrated familiarity with the opening procedures. The voting process proceeded smoothly and efficiently at most of the centers and stations visited by the mission, with voter entry generally well-organised.

The mission teams observed broad compliance with established procedures, with only isolated cases of group voting. They also noted instances in which some voters affixed their fingerprints to paper registers before receiving their ballot papers, occasionally causing ink smudges that interfered with the automated reading of the QR code printed on the ballots. The mission further observed that essential election materials were available and intact at the polling stations visited and that the electronic voting equipment functioned efficiently. Polling station staff were present and appeared well-acquainted with the voting procedures.



The mission teams noted the presence of campaign materials outside many of the polling centers they visited, in violation of the IHEC's instructions. They also recorded high voter turnout during the special voting day, while turnout on the general election day varied throughout the day depending on the areas observed. The mission also noted low youth participation at some polling stations.

The mission observed that the voting booths generally ensured ballot secrecy at the stations visited. It also recorded a notable presence of representatives of candidates, political entities, and local observers. However, the mission teams did not encounter international observers at the polling stations they visited. The polling stations closed at 6:00 p.m. on both the special and general voting days, in accordance with IHEC instructions. The electronic counting and sorting process was conducted according to the procedures outlined in the legal framework, with mission observers assessing the performance of the electronic equipment as very good. The mission also reported that the manual counting and sorting were carried out according to established procedures, and that polling station staff were well-versed in them. Nonetheless, the mission noted a lack of verification of invalid ballots during the manual sorting process, which the electronic equipment had already classified as invalid.

The IHEC announced that voter turnout reached approximately 56%, an increase from the 42% recorded in the 2021 elections.

In this context, the League of Arab States Mission affirms that this preliminary statement reflects its initial observations, which will be elaborated upon in its final report. The report will include a comprehensive analysis of all stages of the electoral process and will present recommendations aimed at further improving future elections.



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In conclusion, the League of Arab States' Mission expresses its appreciation for the calm and orderly atmosphere in which the voting took place. It notes that the process was generally conducted in accordance with the legal framework, allowing Iraqi voters to freely exercise their electoral rights. The mission affirms that the observations recorded during the voting process do not materially affect the integrity of the electoral process.

On this occasion, the League of Arab States' Mission to observe the Iraqi parliamentary elections extends its sincere congratulations to the Republic of Iraq on the successful completion of this important electoral milestone. It expresses its hope that the newly elected Council of Representatives will fulfil the aspirations of the Iraqi people for security, stability, progress, and prosperity.