



Report on the Monitoring of Re-Count and Tabulation Of the Iraqi Parliamentary Elections 2010

Shams observation team had finished monitoring of the manual re-count and tabulation of the election booths in Baghdad governorates for the Iraqi parliamentary elections.

Shams had waited the announcement of the final results of the elections to issue its report in that regard. However, the passage of a long time before announcing a precise date for the results of the elections had obliged the observation team to issue its report on the re-count and tabulation. The report includes preliminary observations waiting on the final results of the election to be announced. At that stage, a comprehensive report on the overall electoral process will be issued.

As indicated in its press conference, the network had completed its plan to monitor the re-count and tabulation stage, including the training of its high level observers on the regulations and mechanisms of observation of the re-count and tabulation in Baghdad. The latter included 11,000 booths, which were monitored at a rate of 8 observers per day, who were distributed in the halls dedicated for the process.

Shams was keen to let the public and other stakeholders know through its press conferences and issuing report about the progress of the process in terms of its transparency and its adherence to the regulation that were verified by the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC).

IHEC was successful again in implementing this process in defiance of the challenges that faced the process. It accomplished the process of manual re-count and tabulation in accordance with a legal provision in that regard. The process included all the electoral stations of Baghdad governorate for the parliamentary elections of last March.

Some parties were betting on the legal provision to recount the vote to confirm worries about the integrity of the electoral process.

These parties had accused the supporting teams of the UN in playing a role of manipulating the results of the elections through computerized programs and through satellites and with the alleged support of the professionals of the team.

In addition, some other parties had accused the IHEC for being impartial and serving the interest of one party against the other.

Some political parties assured the existence of systematic fraud process to steal the will of the Iraqi people in order for some parties to reach power instead of others.

Shams had made the statement frequently that despite the fact that mistakes happened in the work of IHEC's staff and the presence of unqualified and impartial officers, but there were no widespread and systematic fraud processes.

The preliminary results of the re-count proved the fact that the minor changes in some of the results doesn't rise to the level of changing even one seat in the parliament. This happened when some of those who were questioning the results, expected dramatic changes in the results after the re-count.

Monitoring Team's Observations

A number of impressions were accumulated with the monitoring teams, we summarize them as follows;

1. The voting booths were protected at secure places with appropriate protection in general with exception particularly in the first few days.
2. The place dedicated for the re-count process was not ideal, however, it was relatively appropriate.
3. All the writing materials were removed from the place of re-count, except for some incidents that have been recorded.
4. The numbers of the keys matched those which were presented before the process, except for some cases for which complaints were presented.
5. The voting papers were tabulated to valid or invalid according to the regulations.
6. The tabulation of valid and invalid papers matched for the re-count and tabulation team.
7. The numbers of the papers in the booths matched those indicated in the forms except for some cases that have been recorded.
8. No one other than the count and tabulation team was allowed to conduct the process, except for some cases that were managed by the supervisors.
9. The count and tabulation process didn't stop except in some limited cases.
10. The person in charge of the team announced the results of the count and tabulation at the end of the process.
11. The results of the re-count were not so different from what was indicated in the form except for some cases that didn't change from the final result.
12. The representatives of the political parties presented complaints about the announced results and many violations were recorded.
13. No representative of political party was forced to leave the room except in limited cases.
14. The work of the officers at the polling station was generally characterized by professionalism and transparency.

The Monitoring Teams Found the Following Observations:

٢٠١٠/٥/٣	<p>The process progressed in a smooth and transparent way except for some problems. For example the process stopped in the morning due to the absence of enough space for the monitors. The officers of IHEC, asked the monitors to leave the hall for other monitors to enter. After negotiations that lasted for about half an hour between the monitors and representatives of the political parties on one hand and the officers of IHEC on the other, the monitors were allowed to enter again. Some of the representatives of the political parties created some noise but the situation was ended peacefully. One of the monitors stated that the officers of IHEC are not cooperative because they didn't answer questions and they didn't re-count the counting of votes.</p>
٢٠١٠/٥/٤	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The presence of some open booths, the locks of which were broken. Some of those booths were signed by red tapes. When the monitor asked IHEC officer for the reason of breaking these booths, the answer was these were broken during the transportation process. 2. Limiting the movement of the monitors by dedicating a place for them. They were not able to move from that place. That led to the inability in part of the monitors to cover the whole process of re-count and tabulation completely. 3. The voting booths were not protected in a secure place with enough protection. Any person was able to pass by those booths. During the transportation of those booths to the hall through trolleys there was no supervisor from IHEC to monitor the process. 4. The writing materials were not removed before starting the process. They remained on the table particularly blue pencils.
٢٠١٠/٥/٥	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some of the representative of political parties helped the re-counting team. Nothing have been done to investigate in the beginning, but they were informed that they should not do so through loud speakers. 2. A new regulation was implemented at this day. Every team was supposed to re-count 4 booths and 2 additional booths for every line. The original rule was that each team which finishes 4 booths can exit, however the new rule helped implementing the process fast with equal performance by every team.
٢٠١٠/٥/٦	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The existence of some papers that were valid and were regarded otherwise and vice versa. 2. Complaints were issues with regard to the unmatched numbers of locks. 3. Observing minor errors in the counting of votes.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Observing unstamped voting papers. 5. Voting booths were dispersed at the entrance of the second hall without appropriate protection. 6. the close existence of the table of one team from another and the large numbers of those tables that led to the closeness of the representative of the political parties from the voting papers. The space from the representatives of the political parties and the papers didn't exceed one foot. Some of the representatives of the political parties wrote their notes on the same table that the re-count process occurred.
٢٠١٠/٥/٧	Abandoning the stamps of IHEC on the table before and after work hours
٢٠١٠/٥/٨	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The first hall was arranged so that every table can be monitored clearly. 2. The administrative regulation by IHEC was good, the officers of the commission were cooperative. 3. The second hall was not arranged in a way that can allow monitoring smoothly. There were large numbers of people at the seats and at times the representatives of political parties and monitors were seating shoulder by shoulder without any space exactly like the re-count officer. This had led to confusing the re-count and tabulation process. 4. Some interference in part of the representatives of the political parties was noted to help the re-counting officers. However, there were special teams related to IHEC which were convoying the halls continuously to prevent such incidences. 5. More than one notification was presented to the representatives of the political parties due to their continuous attempts to intervene in the counting and tabulation process. This led IHEC to threaten that they well be expelled from the hall if those attempts were to continue. 6. The monitoring screens were not activated in the tele-center. When asked for explanations, the director of the center announced that the Council of Commissioners made the decision of not giving any partial results and to give the final results at the end of the counting process. Complaints were given to IHEC that all the signatures in the voting papers were similar.
٢٠١٠/٥/٩	The presentation of complaints continued because of un-matching of the numbers of the locks and missing forms and the large numbers of voting papers in the booths.

Some observations on negative points were presented at the last days of the process after dealing with some short-comings by IHEC:

Conclusions:

The same IHEC that was accused continuously for being established based on political calculations and for following instructions from major political parties, came out this time clean and solid in front of those accusations. IHEC had come a long way close to our expectations of being a neutral and impartial body within the Iraqi government. IHEC has a significant role in conducting the electoral process without submitting to political pressures from any party. The IHEC needs to continue working on evaluating and correcting its previous work to find solutions to the problems that face and challenge it's constitutional and legal duties and responsibilities. It needs to put a clear and transparent road map for its future work and for the electoral process in general;

1. Despite the fact that the re-counting process needed a lot of time, efforts and money, but it was a necessary step to provide additional credit to the transparency of the electoral process and the work of IHEC.
2. Some of the mistakes in the re-count process showed the limited abilities of some of the cadre of IHEC in some of the polling stations and the inability of IHEC to avoid those limitations in the capacities through its continuous mechanisms of selecting the officers and training them.
3. The process showed the weak capacities of the representatives of some of the political parties and their inability to understand the rules and regulations of IHEC. That was observation extended to high ranking members of some of the winning lists which showed their ignorance about the regulations and rules and the procedures of IHEC.

Recommendations:

1. Implementing a comprehensive review for all the stages of the electoral cycle in terms of the rules, regulations and procedures with the participation of IHEC professionals and a supporting international team with consultations from the observation teams and representatives of the political parties to reach to an electoral law that minimizes the incidences of questioning the transparency and integrity of the electoral process in general.
2. Revisiting the mechanisms of selecting the officers of the polling stations and their training in a way that will ensure a high quality of performance by the cadre.
3. Working to implement a legal and legislative framework on one hand and increasing the electoral awareness on the other hand to prevent announcements by some of the political parties that may lead to tension and turmoil in the county which will be difficult to control.

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