



Shams Network for Election Observation in Iraq

A series of reports monitoring the electoral process in Iraq

Elections of the Iraqi council of representatives, 12 May 2018

Election campaign

BAGHDAD-10 May 2018

Shams Network for Iraqi Election releases its preliminary report on the electoral campaign in a series of reports to follow up the electoral process and this report is the special report to monitor the election campaign in the elections of the Iraqi Council of Representatives.

The Shams network to monitor the elections in Iraq has issued a statement confirming that it will monitor all the stages of the electoral process, starting from the pre-election stage with the start of the election campaign, and then monitor voting process in abroad in cooperation with the network of elections in the Arab World and private and public voting and announcement of results.

The media observatory of the network began from April 14 to May 10, 2018, to monitor the campaign that precedes the electoral process scheduled for 12/5/2018.

The monitoring included 19 television channels, 8 radio stations, 5 electronic newspapers and 10 independent newspapers, some of which are affiliated with rival entities in the Iraqi Parliament elections in all Iraqi governorates.

In addition, they monitor the alliance of local channels, newspapers and advertisements through posters and banners in their governorates and social media, especially (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube). Thirty-five journalists and media outlets participated in the monitoring process on how to monitor media violations in breaking of UNHCR laws and electoral campaign system No. 11 of 2018. This initial report is part of the final report to be issued later, including all the details and documentation of the monitoring process .

Campaigns duration:

The commencement date of the electoral campaigns was determined by the IHEC. Although the period has been reduced according to the schedule of operations and campaign system No. 11 of 2018 for four days, it was supposed to start the campaign from 10/4, but due to the visit of Imam

Kadhim postponed to 14/4/2018. However, the network monitors captured dozens of direct and indirect election campaigns, especially in the social media before starting the campaign, and the network in its detailed report will publish a list of violations that were monitored during the election campaign.

Specify the locations and conditions of election campaigns

Pre-coordination has been established between the IHEC and the municipalities to determine which places are permitted by electoral and not permitted for the campaign, however we have been observed that these controls were not properly promoted in some constituencies (provinces) resulting in advertisements and posters being placed in unauthorized locations, including what happened in two constituencies in Babil and Duhok and resulted in a campaign to remove electoral campaign in many places. The most notable violations observed by the network monitors were:

- -Placing advertisements near traffic lights.
- Cutting of sidewalks for citizens ' passage.
- Putting advertisements on streets sides and causing the trees to be ruined and destroyed.
- Advertising on walls using adhesive material or writing on the walls in election campaign.

Election campaign cost

The Independent High Electoral Commission reaffirmed the system of expenditure on electoral campaign No. (1) For the year 2013, this is an advanced step to adopt a minimum level of equal campaigning to reach the electorate. On the other hand, the volume of campaign spending affects the quality and quantity of campaigns.

However, the Shams network wonders whether there are few possibilities for the Independence High Electoral Commission in terms of monitoring and not being able to measure the potential of alliances and lists of funds disbursed across dozens of party-owned satellite channels and lists, and if it's possible to monitor these kinds of irregularities.

And now we've spotted a campaign volume for some blocks and lists above what was put in System 1 that each candidate has the right to disburse 250 dinars for each voter in the electoral district, therefore, the Independence High Electoral Commission, in cooperation with the specialized agencies, including the Office of Financial Supervision, the integrity authority and the central bank, should activate a system to specify to quantify the spending in campaigns.

Exploitation of state resources in campaigns.

- According to article 8 of the campaign system, the buildings of ministries, State institutions, places of worship and religious symbols are not used to any propaganda or electoral activities of political parties and coalitions and candidates, observers of the network have monitored the using some of the buildings of State institutions by political entities in their campaigns.

- Article 9 prohibits the use of the state's official emblem in meetings, declarations and electoral bulletins and in the writings and drawings used in the campaign elections, and observers have monitored hundreds of candidates and entities using national or regional flag in electoral campaigns, particularly in the means of Social communication.

-According to article 10, officials of the state and local authorities shall not exploit their functional power or the resources, means or organs of the State in favor themselves or any candidate, including their security and military agencies, with electoral propaganda or influencing voters... Observers have monitored some cases of staff candidates by exploiting their official influence to promote a list and electoral number.

- According to article 11, expenditure on electoral propaganda is prohibited from public funds or from the budget of ministries or religious endowments or from support funds external, network monitors have observed that according to some of the social media's trading sites, they have to send external funds or exploit public money or budget for official circuits, the Office of the High Commissioner and the authorities in particular have the legislative and regulatory authority to enact legislation that impedes the use of public funds and stricter control over every state official who is a candidate in elections and strict restrictions on the likelihood of public funds being disposed of to serve electoral purposes competitive for a personal interest or for a list or alliance with which the employee is sympathetic in the state.

- According to article 19, the role of worship in the electoral propaganda of an entity, coalition or nominee is not used and is permitted to be used to induce voters to participate in elections and to promote the electoral process. Observers have monitored some Islamic political blocs and entities exploiting the religious platforms of the campaigns. The network suggests that the candidate cleric should be excluded from the elections and be suspended from his or her religious functions, in particular by the fact that he has stopped practicing religious discourse in religious institutions until the end of the election period.

Encouraging and threatening campaigns.

- Article 12 prohibits the exercise of any form of pressure or coercion, or the granting or promise of material or moral gain, in order to influence the results of the elections... During their visit to the electoral roll stations, our observers monitored a number of irregularities, with pressure and coercion, the most famous of which were:

1. A rumor that certain lists of staff members are able to know whom the voter is intending to vote, that is, the unavailability of the secrecy of the ballot with a view to intimidating the subsequent accounting of the influential political forces.
2. A threat to deprive employees of the public service.
3. Voter cards are received from voters as a means of pressure from members of competing entities and lists.

- With regard to article 15, which prohibits any political parties and alliances and candidates from giving or promising gifts, donations or other benefits during the election campaign in order to influence the electorate... Observers have monitored multiple forms of gift or donation like the following:

Defamation and extremism in the campaigns.

In accordance with article 13, political parties and alliances and candidates are prohibited from making false statements or using defamation against a candidate or political party participating in the electoral process or against the Independence High Electoral Commission . Observers observed a high level of defamation, especially targeting women candidates in the visual, audio and video media, particularly in social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube).

-In accordance with article 14: It is prohibited for all political parties and alliances and candidates participating in the elections to include in their election campaigns ideas of provoking national, religious, communal, tribal or regional, whether by slogans, images, television broadcasts or other media and various communications... Network monitors have been monitoring a number of interviews of journalists and electoral rolls, which are controversial and cause quarrels between supporters of competing lists in a number of governorates.

- According to article 16, political parties and alliances and candidates must refrain from violence, hatred, intimidation, support or practice of terrorism or use or incite during election campaigns by expressing views or speeches or through visual or audio media or any other means... Observers monitored cases of violence against voters, candidates and media professionals. What happened in Zakho district in Duhok Governorate, repeated beatings of supporters of lists or heads of blocs,

and lack of action by the political and security authorities concerned against the aggressors and what happened to the other two existing candidates in Basra to try to assassinate and beat the Kurdistan Democratic Party candidates by the guards of a Fatah's candidate in Khanaqin.

- According to article 17, the obligation not to attack or to be subjected to any other electoral propaganda involving political parties and alliances. Observers monitored a number of attacks and exposure to election propaganda, which included most of the electoral rolls, part of which were systematic, the other spontaneous in all Iraqi governorates, and some of the propaganda was distorted as a whole or part.

Continuation of election campaigns on the special day vote

In the special day vote on 10/05/ 2018, and media silence was not entered into under the law and controls of the Office of the High Commissioner to begin the media silence 48 hours before the general vote, in order not to use electoral propaganda on the day of special voting, network monitors have monitored the presence of candidates in front of and within electoral centers and stations that affect voters with a view to voting for them.

Penalties for campaign violators

In accordance with article 23 of the IHEC impose a fine or cancel the approval or deprive the political party candidates from nomination for one or two electoral cycles for those who violate these rules or the rules of conduct of the political parties signed by them, as well as taking legal measures to implement the penalties stipulated in the electoral law

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Network monitors have monitored, and despite the fact that the Board of the Commission has issued resolutions on the fines of a large number of entities and candidates, the process of violating the electoral campaigning system has been ongoing to the last day of the campaign. The network therefore suggests that more severe penalties be used in accordance with the law if the violations repeat and become serious.

[Shams Election Observation Network](#)

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