

Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the Kurdistan Parliament Activities
**Monitoring Report for the Elections of the
Sixth Term of the Kurdistan Parliament**

**FIRST REPORT ON SPECIAL VOTING ON
18/10/2024**



Project for Monitoring and Evaluating the Activities
of the Kurdistan Parliament

Monitoring Report for the Elections of the Sixth Term of the Kurdistan Parliament

**First Report
on Special Voting on 18/10/2024**

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-On 5/3/2024, at the Directorate of Non-Governmental Organizations of Federal Iraq and on 12/5/2024 at the Directorate of Non-Governmental Organizations of the Kurdistan Region, its name was changed to Pay Foundation for Education and Development.

- The project of monitoring and evaluating the work of the Kurdistan Parliament began from the fourth term of the parliament with the cooperation of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) of America.

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Introduction

The decision was made for the Sixth Parliamentary Elections of Kurdistan to be held two years ago, but it was postponed to October 20 of this year. Despite disputes among political parties over conducting or not conducting the election at the designated time, issues with the voter registry, the election law, final seats, the Independent Commission, and the region's referendum, ultimately, due to the decision of the Federal Supreme Court, the elections moved into the implementation phase amidst all these conflicts and disputes.

On 18/10/2024, the special voting took place. In this brief report, we present our observations and comments so that the points of progress can be recognized and further enhanced. We aim to mobilize all capabilities to fill the gaps, make better preparations for the general voting day on 20/10/2024, and prevent the recurrence of the irregularities that occurred on the special voting day. These irregularities were recorded by the monitoring teams of the Pay Foundation for Education and Development, who observed the polling centers in the provinces of the Kurdistan Region.

With the hope that on 20/10/2024, the elections will be conducted successfully in a democratic atmosphere, free from fraud, leading to a change in the political landscape of the region. This would result in the re-establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Parliament and subsequently taking serious steps to form a new, effective government that addresses the concerns and sufferings of the people of Kurdistan, rescues them from all the crises we have fallen into, and preserves the stature of the region.

Pay Foundation for Education and Development

18/10/2024

Statistics of Voters for the Sixth Parliamentary Elections of Kurdistan

In general, across the Kurdistan Region and other provinces of Iraq, there are (7,067) polling stations within the framework of (1,431) centers, and (282) registration centers are welcoming the voters of the Sixth Parliamentary Elections of Kurdistan.

Accordingly, (2,899,578) people at the general level of the provinces of the Kurdistan Region have received new voter cards. Of that number, (2,683,618) people at a rate of (93%) are in the general voting category, which is spread over (173) registration centers that are divided into (1,266) polling centers and include (6,318) polling stations. On the other hand, (215,960) people at a rate of (7%) are in the special voting category, which is spread over (109) registration centers that are divided into (165) polling centers and include (749) polling stations; they have the right to participate in the election.

If this is detailed at the level of the provinces, then:

First: Erbil province, (1,022,906) people at a rate of (35.3%) of the total voters have the right to participate; accordingly, (933,115) people at a rate of (91%) are in the general voting category, which is spread over (53) registration centers that are divided into (498) polling centers and include (2,213) polling stations; they have the right to vote. Also, (89,791) people at a rate of (9%) are in the special voting category, which is spread over (34) registration centers that are divided into (62) polling centers and include (306) polling stations; they have the right to vote.

Second: Sulaymaniyah province, (1,087,073) people at a rate of (37.5%) of the total voters have the right to participate; accordingly, (1,008,412) people at a rate of (93%) are in the general voting category, which is spread over (74) registration centers that are divided into (477) polling centers and include (2,373) polling stations; they have the right to vote. Also, (78,661) people at a rate of (7%) are in the special voting category, which is spread over (32) registration centers that are divided into (57) polling centers and include (276) polling stations; they have the right to vote.

Third: Duhok province, (723,747) people at a rate of (25%) of the total voters have the right to participate; accordingly, (682,791) people at a rate of (94%) are in the general voting category, which is spread over (41) registration centers that are divided into (264) polling centers and include (1,596) polling stations; they have the right to vote. Also, (40,956) people at a rate of (6%) are in the special voting category, which is spread over (30) registration centers that are divided into (33) polling centers and include (142) polling stations; they have the right to vote.

Fourth: Halabja province, (60,252) people at a rate of (2.1%) of the total voters have the right to participate; accordingly, (59,300) people at a rate of (98%) are in the general voting category, which is spread over (5) registration centers that are divided into (27) polling centers and include (136) polling stations; they have the right to vote. Also, (952) people at a rate of (2%) are in the special voting category, which is spread over (1) registration center that is divided into (1) polling center and includes (3) polling stations; they have the right to vote.

Fifth: The provinces of (Nineveh, Kirkuk, Diyala, Anbar, Baghdad (Karkh and Rasafa), Wasit, Salahuddin), (5,600) people at a rate of (0.2%) of the total voters have the right to participate in the special voting category, which is spread over (12) registration centers that are divided into (12) polling centers and include (22) polling stations; they have the right to vote.

According to the data of the Commission, the number of special voters in the provinces was distributed as follows:

Province Code	Province	Registration Centers	Polling Centers	Polling Stations	Number of Voters
5	Erbil	34	62	206	89,791
6	Sulaymaniyah	32	57	276	78,661
4	Duhok	30	33	142	40,956
7	Halabja	1	1	3	952
-	Other Provinces of Iraq	12	12	22	5,600
Total		109	165	749	215,960

But during the elections that were held on 18/10/2024, the participation rate was as follows:

No.	Province	Number of Voters	Number of Participants	Percentage
1.	Erbil	89,791	87,513	97 %
2.	Sulaymaniyah	78,661	76,501	97 %
3.	Duhok	40,956	40,206	98 %
4.	Halabja	952	917	96 %
5.	Other Provinces of Iraq	5,600	3,384	60.42%
Total		215,960	208,521	96.55%

This voting process conducted by the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq included several successful aspects. At the same time, it was not without shortcomings. In the positive points, weaknesses, deficiencies, and this report, we will attempt to highlight irregularities, so they can be taken into consideration during the general voting. This aims to correct the shortcomings and prevent the irregularities. Because if we cannot stop and .ities, the situation during the general voting could get out of handcontrol the irregular

First: Positive Aspects of the Process:

1. Polling centers opened to voters on time (7:00 a.m.).
2. Generally, the process proceeded smoothly.
3. Overall, the security of the centers was well provided.
4. Generally, the Commission's procedures were implemented, requiring voters to present necessary identification for voting; conversely, they were not allowed to vote without it.
5. At 6:00 p.m., polling centers were closed on time.
6. The voter turnout was generally high.
7. No apparent fraud occurred inside the stations and polling centers. However, we cannot give any opinion about the later stages because the process is still ongoing. Regarding the transfer of the ballot boxes, sending the results to the Commission, and the method of announcing the results, we will provide our observations and remarks in due course.

Second: Negative Aspects of the Process

First: Party Violations:

1. Some of the parties' media channels continued election campaigning until the evening of October 18. For instance, NRT broadcasted a rally of the New Generation Movement and openly urged security forces to vote, announcing in their advertisements that "Brothers in the security forces are with the Movement." GK and Kurdsat channels aired messages from their party leader aiming to secure votes from the security forces, even though campaigning had legally ended. The channels of the KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party) had similar violations.
2. Near some polling centers, party advertisements were present, and in some locations, campaign cards of candidates were being distributed.
3. Some candidates were continuously campaigning near polling stations and among voters. A candidate in Sulaymaniyah had set up his own campaign team in front of all polling centers and even spoke in the name of the Deputy Prime Minister.
4. Near some centers, the names of people who were going to vote were being recorded by certain officials and party representatives.
5. At the entrance of polling stations, an officer was collecting all the slips used for retrieving biometric cards given to voters, gathering them, and taking them from the voters.
6. Some special voters were pressured to vote against their own preferences for specific final candidates. In some polling stations, the PUK and KDP openly requested voters to vote for the quota seats of Christian and Turkmen candidates. While citizens are free to vote for candidates of general seats or quota seats, and preventing them is illegal, pressuring them to vote for a specific candidate is also illegal because it takes away the voter's right to choose. This is similar to how political parties in Erbil, Duhok, and Sulaymaniyah forced special voters to vote for candidates of the Christian and Turkmen quota seats.
7. Some candidates (especially from the ruling party) were allowed to enter polling stations for the purpose of campaigning.
8. The percentages of votes obtained and announced by lists and parties are unofficial, inaccurate, and illegal, and publishing them is not permitted; they can negatively affect the conduct of the general voting process.

Second: Violations by Security Forces:

1. Some Peshmerga officials, officers, and commanders were present at the polling centers and directly influenced voters on which party to vote for.
2. In all centers, representatives of the Asayish (security forces) were present and interfered with the Commission's affairs, working for their own party in various ways.
3. In many polling centers, media channels were prevented from covering the process and were not allowed to report as required. For example, reporters from G.Kurdistan in Bahadre and K24 in Koya.
4. Some reporters and staff of media outlets faced obstruction and prevention by security forces, such as those from Speda, Payam, Channel 8, Ava News, Kurdistan TV, 964, KNN, NRT, G.Kurdistan, and Kurdistan 24.
5. In some centers, the military atmosphere was overwhelming, and observers from political parties were mostly kept outside the halls—for example, in Halabja.
6. Near some centers, a tent was set up, and voters had to pass through it before voting, which is considered a violation.
7. The presence of security and military forces inside polling centers was a direct pressure on voters, creating a negative psychological impact, as the management of the process was under the control of the security forces.
8. Security forces were making decisions inside the polling centers. For example, they were questioning voters and observers, indicating who could enter and whether they were allowed or not.

Third: Shortcomings of the Commission:

1. The Commission's performance was weak; the centers—from the outer gate to the entrance of the stations—were managed by security forces, and the Commission's staff only worked inside the stations.
2. In most stations, voters were not prevented from using their mobile phones to take photos during voting.
3. Counting and announcing the results of the special voting can have a negative impact on the general voting process.
4. In some centers, there were issues with devices such as fingerprint readers. For example, in the Samany center in Erbil city, one of the supervisors said: "They wasted a lot of time, and this delayed the voting process."
5. In some centers, there was chaos and confusion, and voting was stopped for a period—for example, at the Gulan polling center in Akre, the Halabja polling center, and the Nergiz polling center in Shaqlawa.
6. Sometimes, they withheld information regarding the presence of violations from observers when questioned.

PAY Foundation for Education & Development

PAY Foundation was registered by Kurdistan Regional Government's Foreign Relations Office on November 26, 2013. Later on, it was registered in the Iraqi's Non-Governmental Organizations on February 20, 2022. It is an independent non-profit, non-governmental organization. It has an independent legal personality, is administratively and financially independent.

PAY is working with a new optimistic view for public interest and for a mature ruling system. PAY aims, through scientific and strategic research, to make a sound contribution to improving and bettering the educational, legal, health, and economic sectors of the ruling system in Kurdistan Region, which would prove a true aid and a bridge to connect all civil society organizations seeking to achieve a civil, happy and welfare society in Kurdistan Region.

An Overview of PAY Foundation projects:

1. The project of joint work between civil society organizations and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
2. The project of monitoring Kurdistan Parliament
3. The project of monitoring Ministry of Education works and activities
4. The project of monitoring Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research works and activities
5. The project of monitoring the High Independent Commission for Elections and Referendum.
6. The project of monitoring the Independent bodies in the Kurdistan Region.
7. Monitoring the Implementation of the Kurdistan Region Government Real Estate Taxation Policies and Procedures project.

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