

# Is the Iraqi early elections going to take place?

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After Sadr's withdrawal from the early elections, now the circle is going bigger. As recently the communist party, blocs led by Ayad Allawi and Salih al-Mutlak plus 20 other smaller parties have decided to quit the upcoming elections. But still the process is under discussion and not been decided whether to postpone or not.

There are different excuses to withdraw from the elections, Sadr which initiated to boycott the process did not give clear reason, but the common believe is that Sadr made this decision in order to protect its front from some failures in health and electricity sectors which three months ahead of the election date failures in these two ministries have embarrassed Sadrist officials as its been for many years Sadrists controlled these two ministries. Allawi, and other forces excuse such communist, Islamic movement and new groups formed after protests of October 2019 is related to that they think holding the elections is not important. In the situation where there is proliferation of weapons out- of control, money and state wealth are at the service of main political actors. This is not going to be solved immediately and not in the next years even if there is will and program to fix it.

Unlike Sadr's boycott in February 2014 elections, this time he is not fully marginalized from the political affairs, despite registering his fans for the political and social project (solid structure) , also in a tweet Sadr has endorsed Kazimi's trip to US on the deal about changing the mission of US forces from combat to advisory one. Some of the candidates and prominent figures within the Sadr movement think that is likely their leader Sadr at any moment will decide return to the election process because as they say " the country needs him" and many parties have asked him to regret and participate in the elections.

The early elections in October if takes place is the new outweigh in the Iraqi political process after 2003, originally the early election was requested to fix the big crisis that caused by the protests in late 2019 during era of Adil Abdul-Mahdi, but many of the active groups of this movement have withdrawn from the beginning. Sadrists were engineering the new electoral law especially in dividing the electoral districts but now you see them withdrew, these are two main reasons to cancel the elections especially if Sadr not regret from his decision. Because Sadr despite huge popularity which is more than quarter of Shia population also his front has big military wing (Saraya al-Salam).

In addition to the Iraqi government, former Iraqi PM Nouri al-Maliki also emphasizes on holding the elections but earlier he was against it because the election law would divide his bloc's votes. We can have two interpretation for Maliki's current point up on the elections first he is trying to get benefit from Sadr's absence who is key rival to Maliki, as Sadr still want to boycott the elections. Second Maliki is taking stance and showing off via expressing that he is prepared for the elections who is clear that will not take place then he will use it as the election campaign card.

Kadhimi's cabinet that is supervising the process beside defend the elections does not have another choice, because this cabinet in fact has been appointed for two tasks which is the early elections and fight covid-19 and its impacts. If the cabinet slow or inadequate in fulfilling's these two tasks then its legitimacy under risk and will be targeted by its many rivals. But there is common believe that postponing the elections is in the interest of Kadhimi as well, because this will extend its cabinet period and will give more opportunity to think about the future.

Holding elections is not only related to the political and legal stances, one of the important aspect of this process is the security and stability which is related to the position of Shia militia groups. These groups are still in talks on to deal with the conclusions of Biden-Kadhimi's meeting, political alliance of these groups (al-Fatih) is welcoming the meeting, but some of the militias are against it, and some are still silent. According to revealed information there are divisions among " the Islamic resistance council for collaboration" therefore until their position is clear about Kadhimi's government and

elections, stability of the process will remain unclear.

It seems most parties might agree on that there is no ground and environment to hold the elections in October 2021, but it's clear that none of them will initiate to postpone it because this will show weakness and failure, therefore Kadhim's government and electoral commission until the last moment will fight for the elections to take place. This will impact delay accumulating of withdrawals and dominate the situation over this will and date. This will take another while until reaches completion, unless Sadr's withdrawal or other elections motives move fastly on the opposite direction!

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