
Preliminary Analysis for the Iraqi Elections Outcome

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What's the early results message?

In general, based on the published results, we can take these results out of the key political alliances and blocs as below:

First: the political wing of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) have shocked, especially the Badr organization within al-Fatih coalition is the first loser. Al-Fatih had 73 candidates and in most of the electoral districts had only a candidate in order to have better chance to win but all together as they are 6 parties including Asaib Ahl al-Haq which in previous election only Asaib had 15 MPs but now all of them won about 15-20 seats. In the previous election only Badr won 18 seats but now all won around this number of seats, in the previous election Badr won these seats through also non-Arab Shia voters as well. Hezbollah wanted to test itself with more than 32 candidates but only won a seat or two. Another loser of this elections is Falih Fayadh head of PMF commission which his coalition included 7 Shia and Sunni blocs with 81 candidates but could not propose a successful program.

However reduce seats of these groups does not mean decline of their leverage in the Iraqi political scene. Because they have armed forces and pressure cards to make them stay as political actors.

Second: the Iraqi pro-Iran groups are declining but increase number of Maliki's seats has created a balance of their power.

Third: The Sadr win was expected. As the movement consolidated itself more than before in Baghdad, Basra, Missan, Dhi qar. But this wining does not mean he can say "whatever I want can form the next government". If Sadr going to form the government eventually he will need to talk to the pro-Iranian groups, otherwise won't be able to form a stable government. Another point is that Sadr is not that far from the Iranian proxies. As he accompanied them in Qom and read the statement "axis of resistance" following killing of Soleimani, earlier for this election he decided to boycott it but after meeting with Ammar al-Hakim and Hadi Amri has changed his mind and decided to participate. Rising Sadr's rival like Maliki, by the end Sadr has to knock the door of these groups to reach a deal.

Fourth: Boycott of %60 is not normal development, as what happened in 2018 elections was not normal either. Event Sistani's call did not have much impact in encouraging people to vote and the turnout stayed low. And vote of most of the parties under this boycott reduced, although some other parties' seats increased. For a society like Iraq that most of the population are keen in politics this was not just boycott but it was a protest and in any likely crisis this carries potential to lead new wave of protests and rebellion.

Fifth: Rising a new group like Emtidad movement in this election creates hope for the protesters to try elections in the next stages. Prior the election we have had a meeting with number of Tishreen movement representatives at Rudaw Research Center in general they were doubtful that can make change through election, they saw it as more a longer term process. The election results of Emtidad quickly can change their views about the elections. Except that the Tishreen movement independent candidates won 25-30 seats which most of them are in the middle and south of Iraq, this is another new development in this election and we have to study.

Sixth: Some of the alliances were successful and others not. The Gorran _PUK alliance was in the interest of PUK especially after the internal tensions within PUK prior the elections occurred. Hakim-Abadi alliance, and al-Azm alliance among the Sunnis were other alliances was not in the interest of all parties. The state of law is strong again. This will strengthen position of Maliki within Dawaa party once again which after 2008 has faced many internal tension and problems. In this election parliament speaker Mohammed Halbusi led a successful alliance and he did well.

Seventh: the political lines in Iraq once more returned to three lines: Shia, Sunni and Kurds. And this is after that due to fight against ISIS and developments following Kurdish referendum there was general Iraqi discourse especially in 2018. The policy of the some of the Shia parties was to have representatives in all Sunni and Shia areas of Iraq but did not work this time. As what Abadi, Hakim, and al-Fatih in the previous election achieved in the Sunni areas this time did not work as Halbusi proved to them that he is present! In the past Shia parties they did try out in Kurdistan as well but did not get any result.

Eighth: In Kurdistan region those ran in the election separately did better than those as coalition as we have seen in KDP and New Generation that both did well. According to the early results the Islamic discourse has declined in KRI, but discourse of reform-anti corruption along with nationalistic discourse or mixed one Islamic-nationalistic is more popular as we have noticed in the Islamic union candidates.

Conclusion

Although from the beginning many internal and external actors said that the election process was managed well, but some issues such the tension over announcement of early results, Sadr's statements over interference in electoral commission work, armed groups protest against results, Kirkuk developments, exchange number of votes of the parties and holding some of the results proved that the will of election was not that great as they claimed and now is difficult to say people vote will solve everything! That's right there is an election but this is not enough and there are internal and external non-electoral institutions have noticeable role in managing trends and developments in post-election.