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DEMOCRACY & GOVERNANCE IN IRAQ

OVERVIEW

Iraq is facing a crisis of confidence. Early parliamentary elections were held on October 10, 2021, in response to citizens' demands for greater transparency and accountability. Both domestic and international observers deemed the elections as fair, credible, and technically sound. After a protracted and contentious government formation process, a new government was formed about a year later. Various sectors are proposing electoral law reforms that would backslide on earlier progress. This situation is more complicated due to growing citizen frustration with their government's inability to deliver basic services such as water, electricity, and solid waste management and ensure long-term stability and prosperity for all Iraqis.

GOALS

USAID works with the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government, and Iraqi civil society to establish more democratic, accountable, and responsive governance for all citizens. In collaboration with Iraqi partners, USAID's work contributes to greater transparency of political processes and democratic practices, more sustainable resource management, and improved basic service delivery.

The USAID-funded Iraq Governance and Performance Accountability (IGPA/Takamul) project supports strategic, Iraqi-led reform initiatives that improve resource management, empower pragmatic leadership,

and strengthen the government's capacity to deliver basic services to all citizens. IGPA/Takamul liaises between central and local government and civil society organizations to promote greater cooperation, accountability, and citizen participation.

The Iraqi Electoral Assistance Project supports the United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI) in activities with the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) across the country to bolster locally led efforts for free and fair elections and enhance voter engagement.

KEY RESULTS

- Over \$940 million in public contracts to improve service delivery for water, electricity, and solid waste management have been awarded using the streamlined procurement system made possible through USAID support.
- Trained more than 190 Iraqi change agents to promote climate-smart agriculture, solar energy use, and water system repair across Iraq.
- Promoted emerging youth leadership by establishing a youth council in each of the Kurdistan Region provinces to increase youth's political participation and engagement in good governance.
- Engaged 35 local organizations to improve citizens' understanding of the electoral process and foster greater civic engagement, particularly among youth, women, internally displaced persons, and other vulnerable communities.
- Increased accountability and transparency through developing new mechanisms to help the government better respond to citizens' needs and measure effectiveness.
- Building the organizational capacity of the IHEC to ensure more transparent and fair elections, and addressing 139 recommendations for improvement of IHEC procedures and operations.