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The Electoral System in Iraq

Iraq, officially The Republic of Iraq, is a 168,743 square-mile country located on the southwest of Asia. Its capital, Baghdad, is located in its center, right between the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers. After being freed from the British Mandate in 1932, Iraq had had a series of changes in its political system. Right before the recent Iraqi war in 2003, Iraq had been under the autocracy of the Baath Party for 35 years. Now, the recent, newly-born government is a parliamentary democracy ruling an eighteen-governorate Iraq. Parliamentary conveys that the executive and legislative powers are not totally separated.

After the 2003 invasion, Iraq's new government involved members representing all of its various ethnicities and religions. Being elected on January, 30, 2005, members of the parliament started writing a new constitution for the new Iraq. Having been overseen by the United Nations, the 2005 election was considered fair to most of the 7000 candidates running for the 275 available seats.

The Iraqi constitution defines the federal government of Iraq as an Islamic, democratic, federal parliamentary republic that consists of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

The Legislative Branch is composed of two different councils: The Council of Representatives and The Federation Council. The former is the main elected body of Iraq that is re-elected on a 4-year term basis. The power of this council allows it to elect the Iraqi President, approves the appointment of the Federal Court of Cassation and the President of Judicial Oversight Commission as well as approving the appointment of the Army Chief of Staff and the director of the intelligence service. The Federation Council involves members of different small regions and is controlled by the Council of Representatives.

The Executive Branch consists of both the President and the Council of Ministers. The president is recognized as the head of state. "The President should safeguard the commitment to the Constitution and the preservation of Iraq's independence, sovereignty, unity, the security of its territories in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution" states the Iraqi Constitution. He is elected on the approval of two-thirds of the Council of Representatives for four years.

Additionally, a vice president takes on the duties of a president in case of the absence or elimination of the latter. The Prime Minister and his cabinet constitute the Council of Ministers. The prime minister is the commander-in-chief and the direct executive authority of the general policy of the State. The cabinet is expected to oversee their ministries, propose laws, and maintaining other duties.

The Judicial Branch includes: the Supreme Judicial Council, the Supreme Court, the Court of Cassation, the Public Prosecution Department, the Judiciary Oversight Commission, and other federal courts regulated by law.

The Supreme Judicial Council runs and oversees the affairs of the federal judiciary besides

nominating the Chief Justice and members of all of the judiciary councils and departments mentioned above.

Determining the validity of laws and regulations based on the constitution is a responsibility of the Supreme Court, the independent judicial authority.

Of the 18 Iraqi provinces, 11 are under the direct control of the Iraqi government, leaving the other seven under the power of the multi-national coalition forces.

The new Iraqi government aims at including members from the various Iraqi ethnicities and religious denominations. This resulted in having a Kurdish President, Jalal Talabani, a Shiite Prime Minister, Nouri Al-Maliki, and a Sunni Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mahmoud Al-Mashhadani.

The next Iraqi Elections are scheduled to be held at the end of January, 2009.

Resources:

1- CIA: The World Factbook: Iraq.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

2- Iraq, from Wikipedia:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq>

3- Al-Intikhabat Al-Iraqia: [BBCArabic.com](http://www.BBCArabic.com)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/arabic/middle_east_news/newsid_4637000/4637186.stm

4- Politics of Iraq: from Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Iraq#Government