

The Post 2003 Iraqi Electoral Laws: A Comparison and An Assessment

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Abstract

In this paper, I will review the current Iraqi Election Law that was adopted by the Iraqi Parliament on December 2009, which was applied to March 2010 Iraqi national election. I will analyze the election law and compare it to the previous election laws that were adopted by various Iraqi legislative bodies following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in April 2003. In my paper, I will assess the Iraqi Election Law to see if it is a real democratic election law, if it confirms to the Iraqi Constitution, and if it allows fair representation of diverse ethnic groups, political trends, and Iraqis living in Diasporas. In this paper, I will present a literature review of the various electoral systems around the world and to distinguish one that is more suitable to the Iraqi situation. Finally, I will propose some recommendation to remedy the faults of the current election law in Iraq after presenting my conclusion on the issue.

Keywords: Iraq, Elections, Democracy, the Middle East

Introduction

With the end of the authoritarian regime in Iraq in April 2003, a door was open for Iraqis to enjoy their freedom and democracy. A major component of democracy is to hold fair elections to choose representatives to the House of Representatives (the parliament). Since 2003, three national elections were held in Iraq to choose people's representatives. Each of these elections was governed by different electoral law. The last election in March 2010 was more controversial, since the electoral law was changed greatly, effecting the representation of small and diverse political groups.

In my paper, I will review the current Iraqi electoral law, law number (20) of 2009 that was adopted by the Iraqi House of Representatives. This law was applied to March 7, 2010 national election. The 2009 electoral law was actually an amendment to the previous election law number (16) of 2005. I will analyze the amended electoral law and compare it to the two previous electoral laws that were applied to January 2005 and December 2005 elections. The first electoral law was order number (96) of 2004 issued by the American dominated Provisional Collation Authority in Iraq, which was supported and influenced by the U.N. proposition. The second electoral law was law number (16) of 2005, which was proposed by the newly elected Iraqi National Council and approved by the Iraqi Presidential Council.

I will assess the current Iraqi electoral law to see if it is a genuine democratic electoral law, conforms to the Iraqi Constitution, and allows fair representation of diverse ethnic, religious, political, Iraqis groups and Iraqis living abroad. I will compare and contrast statistics from the three general elections and analyze them to assess my hypotheses. At the end, I will propose some recommendation to remedy the faults of the current electoral law in Iraq after presenting my conclusion on the issue. Further, I will seek to understand the conditions under which voters are willing not to vote for their most preferred candidate, but instead, vote for the bloc with a larger chance of winning seats in the parliament.

I will present literature review of the various electoral systems around the world, whether winner-take-all, various types of proportional representation (PR), or the mixed system, in order to distinguish one that is more representative and more suitable to the Iraqi situation.

I will exam the original Iraqi election law number (16) of the year 2005, which was based closely on proportional representation, to see if it produces higher voter turnouts comparing to the amendment law adopted in December 2009.

I will look at number of voters and the percentages of voters' turnouts in these three national elections in Iraq, taking into account other variables effecting election to support my hypothesis. The dependent variable would be voter turnout and the independent variable are the two various types of proportional representation, the first more allied version with PR where Iraq was considered one national district and the other two less allied with PR, where Iraq was considered 18 electoral districts. I will expect that the more genuine PR system produces higher turnout comparing to that of less PR system and hence is more representative. This paper will make several offerings to enhance our understanding of voters' behavior and decision-making in newly democratic nations. This is an essential concern of political science and contributes to a deeper knowledge of the workings of democratic process and institutions. It will enlighten us on the best electoral system that serves diverse ethnic, religious, and political groups in the newly emerging democratic states in the developing world like Iraq.

Literature Review on Electoral Systems

There are many different types of electoral systems around the world. Here are the summaries of the three main electoral systems.

1. "Winner-take-all" Election System

This system is mainly practiced in the U.S. and is called "first-past-the-post" in Great Britain. In this system, whoever receives the most votes in his or her congressional district is elected. A member receives plurality to win a seat, not majority of 50% plus one. Here, the nation is divided to several districts and usually one representative is elected from that district. In some cases, more than one candidate is elected from a single district. This system does not really represent the real choice of people all the times. To give one example, in 1983 British election the conservative party got only plurality of 42.2% vote but won landslide of 61.1% of parliamentary seats.

2. Propositional Representation (PR) Election System

The basic principle of proportional representation is that a party receives parliamentary seats in proportion to its share of the total vote. If a parliament has 100 seats and a party wins 10 percent of the total vote, then that party will get 10 parliamentary seats. Likewise, if a party wins 1 percent of the total vote, then it gets one seat. If a party gets 1.5 percent of the vote, then a formula will govern the allocation of the fractions and that will depend on what fraction of seats other parties get. There are many types of proportional representation system. In a **close list** type of proportional representation, the individual party determines which of its candidates will be elected. Each party lists its candidates in the order in which they will be awarded the seats won by the party. In an **open list** type of proportional representation, voters chose one candidate from their preferred party or coalition list. The number of votes nationwide for each party is counted and then converted into a percentage of the total vote. If a party wins 10 seats, ten candidates of the highest votes of that party list are chosen. This electoral law is practiced best in the Netherland.

3. Mixed Election System

This type of mixed system is used, for example, in Germany. Each voter has two votes on the ballot; the first vote is in accordance with winner-take-all in a single district, and the second vote is for the party list in accordance with proportional representation. Therefore, one half of the parliament is elected by winner-take-all and the other half by proportional representation. In the German case, the system contains an electoral threshold, denying parliamentary representative to parties that win less than 5 percent of the second vote nationwide and win in less than three single districts. Some countries have **double-ballot** voting system. In this system, a candidate must get 50 percent plus 1 in order to win a seat in a district. If she or he does not get that percent, then a run-off election will take place between the highest two contenders. The one with the highest percent in the second round will win the seat. This type or electoral system is practiced in France during parliamentary elections.

A PR system is often adopted in transitional or post-conflict elections because it best achieves the goals of inclusiveness and equity that are so important in such contexts. With PR, the percentage of seats won by a political entity—an independent candidate, party, or a coalition of parties—will be roughly equivalent to its percentage of the popular vote. This system enables both popular, established political movements, and representatives of smaller communities capable of garnering the minimum threshold of qualifying support to gain representation. In post-conflict environments, such a system has the advantage of enticing former combatants and violent rivals to participate in elections because the bar for obtaining representation is fairly low. Critics of PR systems sometimes warn that severe fragmentation can result if small and narrow interest groups dominate representative institutions

The Three Iraqi National Election Laws Since 2003

1. The Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number (96) of 2004. This election law laid the base for December 2005 election for the National Assembly in Iraq, which considered Iraq one electoral national district with proportional representation. This measure was adopted after consultation with the representatives of the UN, the Iraqi Governing Council, and many diverse Iraqi representatives. The December 2005 election was to elect 275 representatives. Because Iraq was a single electoral constituency, all seats in the National Assembly were allocated through a system of proportional representation. The formula for the allocation of seats in the National Assembly was based on a first calculation employing a simple quota (Hare quota) and subsequent calculations employing the largest remainders. The threshold was to be the natural threshold, which is calculated by dividing the total number of valid votes by 275. The law stated that the competed lists presented in the parliament must have the candidates in a ranked order, and seats in the National Assembly shall be allocated to candidates according to the ranked order on the list (close list type).

2. Elections Law Number (16) of 2005.

This law was signed in October 5, 2005 by Iraqi Presidential Council. Article (9) of the law states that candidacy shall be through the closed list method, but a candidate might contest as an individual. Article (15) specified that the House of Representatives shall be composed of 275 members, 230 seats to be distributed to the electoral districts and 45 seats to be distributed as compensatory seats. Each governorate (province) was considered one electoral district and was allotted a number of seats proportional to the number of registered voters in that governorate. Article (17) of the law indicated that the compensatory seats shall be distributed as follows:

1. the total number of valid votes in Iraq shall be divided by the number of the seats in the House of Representatives, to obtain a “national average”.
2. The total number of votes obtained by each entity shall be divided by the "national average" to determine the number of seats allotted to it.
3. Compensatory seats shall first be allocated to entities that did not obtain representation in the election districts, but obtained at least the national average of votes. The remaining seats shall be distributed to the entities that have been allocated seats in the electoral districts based on ratio of the number of its votes to the total votes nationwide. From the text of Article (16) above, we note that the new law kept the system of proportional representation, which had been adopted by order (96) of 2004 of the previous election system.

3. Election Law Number (26) of 2009.

This law is an amendment to Election Law number (16) of the year 2005. Article one is to annul Article (15) of the 2005 law and to state that Council of Representatives “consists of number of seats at a ratio of one seat for every one hundred thousand people, provided that they include the compensatory seats at the rate of 5%.” The following components were granted a quota from the compensatory seats:

1. The Christian Component, five seats distributed to the provinces of Baghdad, Nineveh, Kirkuk, Dohuk, and Erbil;
2. The Yazidi Component, one seat in the Nineveh Province;
3. The Sabi’/Manda’ian Component, one seat in Baghdad Province;
4. The Shabak’s Component, one seat in Nineveh Province.

Article three of the law annulled Articles (9, 10, 11, and 16) of the previous 2005 electoral law and replaced them with the following as stated in the law.

First, the nomination shall be according to the **open list** and the number of the candidates shall be no less than three and not to exceed the double number of the seats allocated to the constituency. The voter shall be able to vote for a list or for an individual candidate. Any candidate may run as an individual.

Second, the valid votes that a list obtains in a constituency shall be added and divided by the electoral divider (denominator) to determine the number of the seats allocated to that winner list.

Third, the seats shall be distributed by rearranging the sequence of the candidates based on the number of votes each candidate obtains; the first winner shall be the candidate that obtains the highest number of votes, and so forth for the rest of the candidates, provided that the ratio of women does not fall below 25%. If two candidates from the same list obtain equal number of votes, the winner shall be chosen by lot.

Fourth, the vacant seats shall be granted to the high **winning lists** that obtain number of seats based on the percentage of votes they obtain.

This new law increased the size of the Council from 275 to 325 members, one seat equal to 100,000 citizens as specified in the Iraqi Constitution. The votes of Iraqis living abroad would originally have been counted in the compensatory seats, which were reduced from 45 seats to 16 (eight of these 16 seats were allocated to specific national minorities, which leaves only 8 seats for actual compensatory seats).

The Findings

The First Parliamentary Election, January 2005

Table 1: Summary of the January 2005 Election for the National Assembly

	Alliances and parties	Votes	%	Seats
1	National Iraqi Alliance	4,075,292	48.19%	140
2	Kurdistan Alliance	2,175,551	25.73%	75
3	Iraqi National Movement (<i>al-Iraqiya</i>)	1,168,943	13.82%	40
4	The Iraqis	150,680	1.78%	5
5	Iraqi Turkmen Front	93,480	1.11%	3
6	National Independent Cadres and Elites	69,938	0.83%	3
7	People’s Union	69,920	0.83%	2
8	Islamic Group of Kurdistan	60,592	0.72%	2
9	Islamic Action Organization In Iraq	43,205	0.51%	2
10	National Democratic Alliance	36,795	0.44%	1
11	National Rafidain List	36,255	0.43%	1
12	Reconciliation and Liberation Bloc	30,796	0.36%	1
	Total (turnout 58%)	8,456,266	100%	275

The January 30, 2005 elections for the National Council were held on the basis of proportional representation with a closed list system. The country was made one national electoral district. In total, eligible voters elected 275 representatives to put a permanent constitution for Iraq and to prepare for new election according to the new constitution. Voters could easily understand the electoral process. Twelve parties or collations out of 111 competing lists won seats in this first real democratic national election in Iraq’s history. There was low Arab Sunni turnout because of terrorist threats to attack them if they take part in the election and because of the boycott of some Arab Sunni parties.

The Second Parliamentary Election, December 2005

Table 2: Summary of the December 2005 Election for the House of Representatives

	Alliances and parties	Votes	%	Seats	+/-Vs. 1/2005
1	United Iraqi National Alliance	5,021,137	41.2	128	-12
2	Kurdistan Alliance	2,642,172	21.7	53	-22
2	Iraqi Accord Front (<i>al-Tawafuq</i>)	1,840,216	15.1	44	+44
4	Iraqi National List (<i>al-Iraqiya</i>)	977,325	8.0	25	-15
5	Iraqi National Dialogue Front	499,963	4.1	11	+11
6	Kurdistan Islamic Union	157,688	1.3	5	+5
7	The Upholders of the Message	145,028	1.2	2	+2
8	Reconciliation and Liberation Bloc	129,847	1.1	3	+2
9	Turkoman Front	87,993	0.7	1	-2
10	Rafidain List (Assyrian list)	47,263	0.4	1	0
11	Al-Umma Party (The Iraqi Nation)	32,245	0.3	1	+1
12	Yazidi Movement for Reform &Progress	21,908	0.2	1	+1
	Total (turnout 79.6%)	12,396,631	100%	275	

The December 15, 2005 parliamentary elections (Council of Representatives) were held also on the basis of proportional representation with a closed list system, but the country was divided into eighteen electoral districts corresponding to the provinces. Seats were allocated among the provinces on the basis of population, with one seat for every 100,000 people.

In total, 230 seats were allocated to the provinces in 2005, in addition to 45 seats contested on the basis of proportional representation at the national level. The allocation of these “compensatory seats” among provinces was extremely complex. Most voters could not understand the electoral process, which made it controversial.

Compensatory seats were allocated first to parties that had received enough votes nationally (reached the national threshold vote) but not enough in any single province to win a seat. Then, parties with the largest nationwide votes were rewarded the rest of the votes that were not enough to win any seat by any party.

The United Iraqi Alliance, made up primarily of religious Shi'ite parties, won 128 seats out of 275 seats in the election and was the largest party in the parliament. The list split into two lists for 2010 election: the State of Law Coalition of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and the National Iraqi Alliance, which included most of the other parties.

In total 228 competing lists has been registered to take part in the election, including 21 coalitions. Twelve lists won seats in the election. The voting turnout of 79% was the highest of the three national elections.

The Third (Current) Parliamentary Election, March 2010

Table 3: Summary of the March 2010 Election for the House of Representatives

	Alliances and parties	Votes	%	Seats	+/-Vs. 1/2005
1	<u>Iraqi National Movement</u> (<i>al-Iraqiya</i>)	2,849,612	24.72%	91	+54
2	<u>State of Law Coalition</u>	2,792,083	24.22%	89	+64
3	<u>National Iraqi Alliance</u>	2,092,066	18.15%	70	-35
4	<u>Kurdistan Alliance</u>	1,681,714	14.59%	43	-10
5	<u>Movement for Change</u> (<i>Gorran</i>)	476,478	4.13%	8	+8
6	<u>Unity Alliance of Iraq</u>	306,647	2.66%	4	+4
7	<u>Iraqi Accord Front</u> (<i>al-Tawafuq</i>)	298,226	2.59%	6	-38
8	<u>Kurdistan Islamic Union</u>	243,720	2.12%	4	-1
9	<u>Islamic Group of Kurdistan</u>	152,530	1.32%	2	+1
10	Minorities	61,153	-	8	+6
	Total (Turnout 62%)	11,526,412	100%	325	+50

In the Iraqi parliamentary elections of March 2010, nearly 6281 candidates ran for election, distributed to 12 large coalitions and 167 political entities to win 325 seats in Parliament. Total of 310 seats were divided into eighteen provinces, 8 seats were allocated to minorities (5 seats for Christians, and one seat for each of the Sabians, Yazidis, and Shabaks), and 8 compensation seats were to be awarded to the lists that receive the largest number of votes. For the first time, the new law called for an open list system rather than a closed list system. The results of March 2010 elections revealed that the Iraqi National List (*al-Iraqiya*), led by former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, won 91 seats; State of Law coalition, led by current Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, won 89 seats; National Iraqi Alliance won 70 seats; Kurdistan Alliance won 43 seats; Movement for Change (*Goran*) that split from Kurdistan Alliance won 8 seats; Unity Alliance of Iraq won 4 seats; Iraqi Accord Front won 6 seats; Kurdistan Islamic Union won 4 seats; Islamic Group of Kurdistan won 2 seats; and minorities (quota) gained 8 seats. In total, 160 political parties, as well as 36 independent candidates and 10 minority parties took part in the election. While the 2005 election law reserved 15% (45 seats) for minority groups and compensatory seats, the current bill has put aside considerably fewer seats. The law sets a proportion of one parliament member for every 100,000 constituents, thus determining the number of seats for each province. As most estimates of Iraqis living abroad range from 1.5 million to 3 million, the eight seats designated for them were far from representing this segment of population.

The People's Union (The Communist Party list), which has supporters scattered in a number of provinces, got two seats in December 2005 parliament, but none in March 2010 due to the nature of the new electoral law. The same fate was for other small parties. The Iraqi Nation Party leader Mithal al-Aalosi, who managed to get one seat in the last election, did not get any in March 2010 election. The Ahrar list (The Freer) led by former House member Ayad Jamal al-Din, an enlightened cleric who believes in separation of state and religion, received scattered votes in central and southern governorates but none to qualify him to reach the electoral threshold in any province. Thus, the votes of the cluster were calculated for the strong winners. Other candidates and small parties had to run under the banner of other large lists, hoping to win seats under this biased election law. Their votes ended up helping their larger partners rather than taking them to the parliament. Some political parties would have been able to win seats if they were to run under large blocs but they refused such offer and took the challenge to run independently. They used the opportunity to call for their programs in order to politically educate the public.

Dozens of candidates won seats in the parliament despite getting few thousand votes because they were among large blocs. The main candidates in their blocs gained much more votes than the required threshold for a candidate and the extra votes were transferred to the ones with much less votes within the same bloc, way below the threshold in their districts. Only eleven candidates were able to get more than fifty thousand votes in the parliament and their extra votes were allocated to non-winning candidates in their lists. These candidates were not the actual choice of the voters. Other candidates from smaller blocs received thousands of votes, some more than ten thousand or twenty thousand votes, but could not secure a seat. They were running on small parties' lists. Therefore, some influential political figures who played effective and constructive roles in political life, such as Hamid Majid Musa, Mithal Alausi, and Ayad Jamal al-Din failed to win because of the nature of the election law. After the conclusion of the election, the Constitutional Court ruled that the 2009 electoral law, which was an amendment to the 2005 election law, was unconstitutional but could not reverse the election results or call for a new election. Many ruling by the Constitutional Court were not respected due to some belief that the rulings are advisory, not binding.

Conclusion and Assessment

The current electoral law dividing Iraq into 18 electoral districts, instead of one national district, resulted in preventing many small parties or groups from entering the parliament, especially secular and leftist democratic parties. Under the current electoral law, the possibility of getting the threshold to gain seat in one of the 18 provinces is tough in a country marked by sectarianism, nationalism, and tribalism. Due to provisions of the law, the competing parties in the election are not allowed to combine votes from different provinces to win a parliamentary seat, as it was in the previous 2005 election. The Iraqi Parliament and the Presidential Council approval of the amendment to the 2005 election law in a way that the distribution of votes of losing blocks or "the weak loser" to the winning blocs is a deliberate injustice to small parties and blocs. The votes of the losing parties go to the blocs of the highest votes, not to the blocks that were close to winning seats. This type of distribution of votes does not guarantee fairness or nurture of an emerging democracy.

The distribution of seats to provinces depending on food ration cards to calculate population is not efficient. Many people, because of their connection with corrupt officials, could get additional cards in order to get more food ration. A better way to solve the issue was to consider Iraq one national electoral district. In this case, there would have been a more just distribution of votes. This would have avoided many disputes among Iraqi politicians on the real number of seats that each province should have in the House of Representatives. Some provisions of the law do injustice to some ethnic religious minority groups such as the Yazidis. The Yazidis are not considered "people of the book" by Muslims and were only given a quota of one seat in the parliament. The Yazidis are much higher than the one hundred thousand estimated by the Iraqi officials. They are over a half million people and if the law is justly applied to them, they should get at least five seats. This practice infringes in the Yazidi's right to fair representation.

Although there were serious problems with the Iraqi current electoral law, it was adopted by the major political parties in the parliament because they would benefit from it at the expense of small parties. The small number of the allocated compensatory seats discriminates against the estimated 2 million Iraqi refugees and immigrants, many of whom are Sunni Arabs. The 2009 election law confiscated the right of the small political lists to gain seats in the parliament whenever there was no national election denominator to combine votes of various provinces. This law is similar to the one that governed the 2009 provincial election where two and a quarter million people lost their votes because they voted for small parties that could not win seats.

The vote was given to the winning lists, rather than placing them at the disposal of the lists with the highest remaining votes. The 2009 election law contradicts with the democratic principles of the Constitution. It is an explicit challenge to the voters' will and their constitutional right to choose whoever they wish to represent them in the parliament. The new 2009 election law led many eligible voters to either not vote, under the pretext of lack of opportunities for success and being afraid of losing their votes to large blocs, or led them to cast their votes for the "lesser evils."

Another flaw with 2010 election was the large differences in the threshold that must be received by the candidate in different province. For example, in the province of Baghdad 1.5% of the vote was need to win a seat, while more than 7% was needed in Babylon and 8% in Salah al-Dain. The highest electoral denominator to win a seat was 49,037 votes in the province of Sulaymaniyah, while the minimum electoral denominator was 27,282 votes in the province of Maysan. The election results depend on the intensity of voter participation in each constituency. If Iraq was made one national district, the electoral denominator would have been 35,466 votes. This would have allowed many small parties to be represented in the parliament, specially the small secular and leftist political parties.

The election law and the multiplicity of electoral districts were behind the failure of democratic forces, including the Iraq Communist Party, to win parliamentary seats. Many supporters of the Communist Party did not vote for their party list. They were afraid of wasting their votes if their candidates would not reach their province's threshold. Therefore, they voted for other large blocs that have greater chances of winning. Here, Iraqi voters opted to abandon their most preferred candidate and voted instead for another candidate in hopes of defeating their least preferred alternative. Nonvoting or casting ballots for another choice instead of the preferable real choice could infringe on the concept of democracy in the newly democratic countries and might lead to frustration, extremism, or rejection of the democratic process altogether.

Granting seats to the large parliamentary blocs at the contrary of the will of the voters contradicts with people's choices and rights. Democracy presupposes difference within the community and assumes equality and fundamental freedoms among all citizens. The current election law led more to the domination of sectarian and ethnic nationalistic blocs. It worked to erode the principle of equal citizenship that all Iraqis have the same political rights. The law will enforce the division of Iraqi society into religious sects and ethnicities. The current electoral law favors large electoral slots. Thus, many independent candidates, small, or newly created political parties had to forge collations with larger and dominate parties in order to gain seats, though with unfavorable settings to them. The current election law prevents small parties within large blocs from having a real independent stand in the parliament. They would trail behind their dominant coalition partner (s).

In general, voting systems based on national proportional representation provides more accurate representation of parties, better representation for political and racial minorities, fewer wasted votes, higher levels of voter turnout, greater likelihood of majority rule, and little opportunity for gerrymandering. Under such system type, parliamentary membership would more closely reflect the diversity of the population, and voters would find a party closer to their preferences than under the current system. Such method would produce higher voter turnout as we have seen in December 2005 election comparing to the last one in March 2005 election. Under a different electoral system, "third party" would have a better chance of representation. Many voters do not like to "waste" there vote on a party that is expected to have no chance of victory. The electoral system demonstrates even stronger disparities between seats and votes when the electoral fortune of small parties is examined. Change in the rules of the election law often influence who get elected. A candidate who is successful in one set of rules many not be successful under another.

Proportional representation, in making Iraq one national district, is more appropriate electoral system than others. It is more applicable to diverse Iraqi society, due to large number of political trends engaging in the electoral process. A single national electoral constituency will most embody and express Iraq's national unity. Smaller parties or ethnic minorities often favor proportional representation, which enables them to obtain seats in parliament even when they cannot win a majority of the votes in one single district. To support my conclusion, there was a highest voting turnout of 79% in December 2005 election when Iraq was following a simple proportional representation comparing to 62% voting turnout in March 2010 when that system was changed. Twelve lists were able to win seats in December 2005 election comparing to nine lists, excluding minorities' quota, in March 2010 election. Much more parties were competing in December 2005 election, a total of 228 parties, comparing to 167 parties in March 2010 election.

The reason could well be that many parties did not run or did run under large lists because they were afraid of not winning seats under the new election law that did not follow simple proportioned representation criteria as was the case in December 2005 elections.

Possible Solutions to Remedy the 2009 Election Law

1. Amending the First Article of the election law to allow 15 percent of seats in the upcoming parliament to be reserved as “national seats.” These seats should be set aside as “compensatory” seats for Iraqis living abroad or parties that fare well at the national level but fail to win seats in any particular province. In 2010 election, only 5 percent of the parliament—a total of 16 seats—were allocated as national seats, eight for minorities and eight as compensatory seats.
2. The country return to Article 19 of the 2005 elections law, which would place Iraqi expatriates on equal footing with those in the country.
3. The whole of Iraq should be a single electoral constituency for the reason that they are most embodiment and expression of national unity.
4. Adopt simple proportional representation system. Smaller parties or ethnic and minorities often favor proportional representation, which enables them to obtain seats in parliament even when they cannot win enough votes in any one province.
5. Calculation of the remaining votes for the best losers (the getter of the highest votes) would give more voice to smaller groups to be inclusive in Iraq’s democratic system.
6. Reduce the age of the candidate from a minimum of 30-year-old to a minimum of 25-year old candidates to reflect the youth nature of Iraqi emerging society and encourages youth positive political activism.
7. According to a study published in Public Opinion many voters in British elections did not vote for small parties. They anticipated that these parties will not win seats in specific districts and therefore did not vote for them.

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