

# SILVER BULLET OR SHRAPNEL? TRACING THE POLITICAL MAKE-UP AND COMPOSITION OF THE NEW CABINET

Noor Omer | October 27, 2024



The formation of the 10th cabinet finds itself at the crossroads of the post-election KRI, with decisions ahead that will shape the Region's future path. For decades, the government of the Kurdistan Region has been on the trajectory to adopt a well-balanced political make-up that can address the demands of the public and key challenges decisively. However, long-standing relationships between the two ruling parties, the PUK and the KDP, have resulted in semi-stable political alliances regardless of the results of elections. This time around, the prospect to renew a political deal between the KDP-PUK to establish the 10th cabinet of the KRG seems hazy. The new government formation process finds itself at the crossroads of old party lines and new political players, namely the New Generation Movement (NGM), which has secured 15 seats in the 6th parliamentary elections of the KRI. In this sense, an analysis of both the composition and potential future impact of this political arrangement is significant.

The on-the-ground realities of the post-election era pose the question of whether the 10th cabinet will be a silver bullet- an efficient path to stability and progress, or a shrapnel- a source of internal strife and fragmentation? The recent parliamentary elections portrayed high hopes for a fundamental transformation of power dynamics via the Kurdistan Regional Government. At the same time, the deeply rooted power rivalry between dominant political parties may represent fragmentation and unintended consequences for the future of the KRI. If poorly structured or divided, the new cabinet may well become an extension of the previous cabinet and continue to be a source of strife and inefficiency, or even lead to the destabilization of the Kurdistan Region.

## **Post-Election Results**

As the Kurdistan Region's political landscape continues to unfold, it is imperative to understand the nuances and implications of election results. Amid political incoherence, the

voter turnout reached 74% for the 2024 Parliamentary elections (general and special votes combined). Except for a few political parties, most of the parties participating in the elections witnessed an unexpected increase in votes across the four constituencies. A look at the numbers indeed reveals a challenging situation for the formation of the 10<sup>th</sup> cabinet of government. This is because none of the political parties have the majority of seats to form a government unilaterally, as presented in Table 1 below:

Political Parties	Votes Secured	Seats	Seats per Electoral Consistency
Kurdistan Democratic Party (No.190)	809,197	39	Erbil:17, Sulaymaniyah:3, Duhok:18, Halabja:1
Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (No.129)	408,141	23	Erbil:6, Sulaymaniyah:15, Duhok:1, Halabja:1
New Generation Movement (No.157)	290,991	15	Erbil:5, Sulaymaniyah:8, Duhok:2, Halabja:no seats
Kurdistan Islamic Union (No.148)	116,981	7	Erbil:1, Sulaymaniyah:3, Duhok:2, Halabja:1
National Stance Movement (No.161)	55,775	4	Erbil:1, Sulaymaniyah:2, Duhok:1, Halabja:no seats
Kurdistan Justice Group (No.147)	64,710	3	Erbil:1, Sulaymaniyah:2, Duhok:no seats, Halabja:no seats
People's Front (No.169)	33,365	2	Erbil:1, Sulaymaniyah:1, Duhok:no seats, Halabja:no seats
Gorran Movement (No.114)	11621	1	Erbil:no seats, Sulaymaniyah:1, Duhok:no seats, Halabja:no seats

Other parties, coalitions, and individuals who participated in the parliamentary elections secured votes but did not secure any seats, such as the Kurdistan Region Coalition and Sardam Coalition. The Kurdistan Region Coalition, which is comprised of the Kurdistan Communist Party, the Kurdistan Socialist Democratic Party, and the Kurdistan Toilers' Party,

received only 1228 votes, which was insufficient to secure a seat. Seat values change based on voter participation in each electoral constituency, as indicated in Table 2 below (without 5 quota seats allocated for minorities):

Electoral Consistencies	Seats Assigned	Without Quota Seats	Voter Turnout	Seat Values
Erbil	34	32	72%	22,448 votes
Sulaymaniyah	38	36	65%	20,309 votes
Duhok	25	24	78%	16,978 votes
Halabja	3	3	69%	12,978 votes

## What Comes Next?

The composition of the 10th Cabinet and the political parties' willingness to form a coalition government are the longer-term and more strategic questions for the post-election KRI. In a now-unlikely event, a renewed bilateral agreement between the KDP and the PUK results in a majority government. In this scenario, the 10th cabinet can be formed easily without the participation of other parties. Nevertheless, a majority KDP-PUK-led government is nearly impossible due to the deeply entrenched rivalry between the two parties, particularly considering the recent election chants that have been directed at one another. An emerging development in the post-election KRI is election fraud allegations by certain political parties, such as people' Front, National Stance Movement, and Kurdistan Justice Group. According to official statements, these political parties have evidence of voter fraud and an external election design in favor of the KDP, PUK, and NGM. Until now, the Iraqi High Electoral Commission (IHEC) has not officially accepted appeals on the results of the election as the applicable election law prevents parties and groups from appealing preliminary election

results. Although the formation of the cabinet without these parties cannot be impeded, given that they received a small number of seats, their decision to boycott the parliament will definitely have noticeable impact on the allocation of seats among several parties per location.

### **The Illusion of Change?**

Looking on the bright side for a change, the shocking election outcomes for most parties means a change of course for the political parties of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, for the better or worse. This election confirmed what many election observers missed: inherent or preformed backing of established political parties matters the most. Without it, most participants face colossal defeat at the ballot boxes in the KRI, such cases are evident in the results of the elections for independent candidates and newly established political parties. This does not mean that the election results are free from confusion and uncertainty. In fact, the emerging narrative, which is that the KDP and PUK have always been in the lead in every election since 1992, may have raised more questions than it has answered. Yet, it is clear that the electoral and political system of the Kurdistan Region is incapable of generating genuine change and representation, as the KDP and PUK appear to be the preferred options, by choice or by design, on the ballots.



## **ABOUT**

Nestled in the mountains of Sulaymaniyah, the Culture Capital of KRI, iNOV8 Research Center pioneers cutting-edge research and innovation. We aspire for excellence as an independent research center by providing valid, valuable, and timely products to the public. We deliver impactful solutions and contribute to our industry's vibrant and forward-thinking community. As an affiliate of CHANNEL8 Media Corporation, iNOV8 also serves as the in-house research and public relations hub for the channel.

# **SILVER BULLET OR SHRAPNEL? TRACING THE POLITICAL MAKE-UP AND COMPOSITION OF THE NEW CABINET**



## **CONTACT**

CHANNEL8 BUILDING,  
KURDSAT QTR , SULAYMANIYAH, IRAQ  
+964-773-608-8885  
INNOV8@CHANNEL8.MEDIA