

THE FUTURE OF POLICYMAKING IN THE 2024 KRI PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Noor Omer | October 16, 2024



Overview

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq will hold elections for the Parliament on October 20, 2024. Considering this historical electoral process, a quick review of the policies proposed for the upcoming cabinet is necessary. Ahead of the October 20 elections, INNOV8 Research Center provides its **Election 2024 platform** to inform about the elections in detail. At the center of the parliamentary elections are the different policies put forward by the engaged parties in the elections. With a gradual change in the electoral culture of voters in the Kurdistan Region, voters are vying for a policy-oriented election that turns their demands into actual policies at all levels of government.

An overview of the political manifesto/agenda of political parties and coalitions (including independent candidates) running in the elections, indicates a new trend in the electoral process: (1) a focus on policymaking in government sectors and (2) a changed behavior among Kurdish voters by examining the proposed policies before casting ballot. This changed behavior among voters takes root in the series of financial hits coupled with lack of good governance and public services provision that has severely impacted the daily lives of KRI citizens. This election serves as the frontline for voters to voice their dissatisfaction with the questionable governance process and to make a deliberate decision regarding who to vote for, the policies they support, and the result of these policies. For this purpose, here is the key information on the elections and the key policies proposed at the forefront of this election.

Election Snapshot

- **Eligible voters:** 3, 789, 360 voters
- **Registered voters:** **2,899,578** (around 800,000 eligible voters unable to vote)
- **Polling stations:** 6318 voting centers with 1266 polling stations.
- **Seats:** total of 100 seats of Parliament, with 5 seats reserved for minorities.

- **Candidates and lists:** 69 lists with 1191 candidates competing over 100 parliamentary seats (on average, each seat is being contested by about 12 candidates). This includes 10 political parties, two political alliances, and over 50 independent candidates (823 men, 368 women, and 38 candidates from minority communities).
- **Electoral constituencies:** Sulaymaniyah (38 seats), Erbil (34 seats), Duhok (25 seats), and Halabja (3 seats), as illustrated in the graphic below including the seats assigned for minorities.
- **Number of first-time voters:** 123,307 (10% of total eligible voters)
- **Voting System:** Party List Proportional Representation (List-PR).
- **Election Observers:** 13478 (2100 local). observers from 13 different diplomatic Consulates and 17 non-governmental organizations are also observers.
- **Media Coverage:** 20 international and 48 local media will cover the election day.

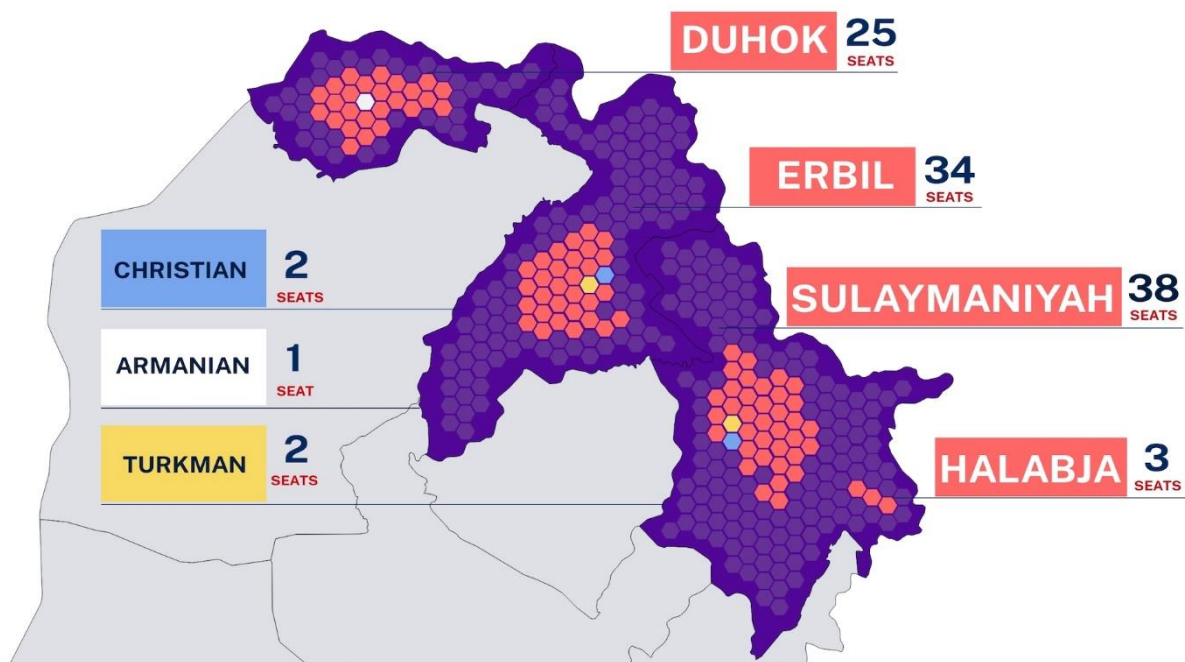


Figure 1: the four electoral constituencies for the 2024 KRI Parliamentary Elections including the distribution of the 5 quota seats for Christians, Turkmens, and Armenian minorities.
Credit: iNOV8.

Under What Conditions Is a Candidate Eligible to Run in the Elections?

According to regulations set by the Iraqi High Electoral Commission (IHEC), each nominee must meet the following requirements:

1. Must be a citizen of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and currently reside there.
2. Must be fully eligible and at least twenty-five years of age.
3. Must be literate in reading and writing (no specification for degree requirements).
4. Must not have been convicted of any crime involving defamation of public honor, decency, or integrity.
5. Must not have been sentenced to imprisonment for manslaughter or theft.
6. Must not have participated in crimes planned by the former regime involved in ethnic cleansing.
7. Must be registered in the biometric voter database and possess a biometric voter card.

What Are the Eligibility Requirements for Voting in the Election?

- Must be a citizen of Iraq
- Must be at least 18 years old
- Must be registered in the biometric voter database
- Must possess a biometric voter card

How Many Political Parties, Coalitions, And Independent Candidates Are Contesting the Elections?

Ten political parties, two political alliances, and 57 independent candidates are competing for 100 parliamentary seats in the elections.

- Gorran Movement (No.114)

- Islamic Relations Movement (No.123)
- Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (No.129)
- Kurdistan Region Coalition (No.133)
- Kurdistan Justice Group (No.147)
- Kurdistan Islamic Union (No.148)
- New Generation Movement (No.157)
- National Stance Movement (No.161)
- Kurdistan National Coalition (No.162)
- Sardam Coalition (No.164)
- People's Front (No.169)
- Kurdistan Democratic Party (No.190)
- Islamic Movement in Iraqi Kurdistan (No.198)

The Kurdistan Region Coalition, numbered 133, comprises the Kurdistan Communist Party, the Kurdistan Socialist Democratic Party, and the Kurdistan Toilers' Party. The Sardam coalition, designated as number 164, comprises the Kurdistan Conservative Party, the Kurdistan Ranjbaran Party, and the Kurdistan Democratic National Union Party. The party lists from across the four provinces of the Kurdistan Region contain a total of 950 candidates, with the following breakdown: 305 candidates in the Erbil constituency, 424 in the Sulaimani constituency, 177 in the Duhok constituency, and 44 in the Halabja constituency. Meanwhile, the coalition lists currently comprise 123 candidates, distributed as follows: 40 candidates for Erbil, 55 for Sulaimani, 19 for Duhok, and 9 for Halabja.

Will The Women's Quota Be Implemented in the Upcoming Kurdistan Parliamentary Elections?

In the Kurdistan Parliamentary Election Law, a 30% quota is allocated for women representation in Parliament. This means that at least one out of every three candidates must be a woman, even if she is not one of the top candidates. This is aimed at ensuring female representation in the parliament.

What Are the Applicable Legal Frameworks for Organizing the Sixth Parliamentary Elections of the Kurdistan Region?

The legal framework of the electoral process, as amended consists of the following:

- Kurdistan Parliamentary Electoral Law No.1 of 1992, as amended.
- Law No.(31) of the Iraqi Independent High Election Commission (2019).
- Political Parties Law No.(17) of the Kurdistan Region (1993).
- Political Parties Law No.(36) (2015)
- All the instructions, guidelines, and procedures issued by IHEC.
- The Iraqi Federal Court verdict No.(83), (131) and (185) rules of (2023).
- The Iraqi Electoral Judiciary verdict, No.355 dated (May 20th, 2024).

المفوضية العليا المستقلة للانتخابات - انتخاب برلمان إقليم كوردستان العراق لسنة ٢٠٢٤ - محافظة السليمانية
 كوميسیون باڵای سەڕهێخۆی هه‌ڵبژاردنه‌كان - هه‌ڵبژاردنی پەرله‌مانی ههرێمی كوردستانی عێراق بۆ ساڵی ٢٠٢٤ - پارێزگای سلێمانی

عزیزاتی الناخبة، عزیزای الناخب، لاخیار التحالف او الحزب او لارشیخ الفرد الذي ترغیب بالتصويت له اهتم بقلم التأشير في المربع الخالي المخصص له
 ده‌نگه‌ری به‌ریز، به‌ پێنوووسی مۆری ئێشانه‌دانان ئێشانه‌ داخه‌ له‌ چوارگۆشه‌ی به‌تال تاقیبه‌تکاروه‌
 له‌ به‌رامبه‌ر هه‌وایه‌یه‌مان پان حزب پان کاندیدی تاک که‌وا ده‌ته‌وی ده‌نگی بۆ به‌ده‌یت

اختم بقلم التأشير على تسلسل المرشح الذي ترغیب بالتصويت له
 به‌ پێنوووسی مۆری ئێشانه‌دانان مۆریکه‌
 له‌ سه‌ر ژماره‌ی ژنجیره‌ی نه‌و کاندیده‌ی
 که‌وا ده‌ته‌وه‌ی ده‌نگی بۆ به‌ده‌یت

١٠١	المهندس الاستشاري شوكت عزت	١٦٨	طارق قانق	١	٣١	٦١
١٠٤	ماموستا سامان	١٦٩	بهره‌ی گه‌ل	٢	٣٢	٦٢
١١٠	نویسه‌ر باران	١٧١	ماموستا هه‌یرق محمد	٣	٣٣	٦٣
١١٣	ماموستا سه‌رداری نوڤتیزم	١٧٤	کویخا عمر ته‌رمه‌ماری	٤	٣٤	٦٤
١١٤	گوران (التغییر)	١٨٠	سامانی که‌ منه‌ ندامان	٥	٣٥	٦٥
١١٥	یزگار ره‌شید سه‌کتاتی	١٨٢	ادریس خدر حسن خدر	٦	٣٦	٦٦
١١٦	ماموستا شاهو	١٨٣	ماموستا خدر براهی شه‌هید کونخا	٧	٣٧	٦٧
١١٧	هه‌وا عبدالله خدر- هه‌لوێست ژاڵه‌یی	١٨٥	دلێر کریم	٨	٣٨	٦٨
١١٩	جبار محمد رضا صه‌له‌یی	١٩٠	پارتی دیموکراتی کوردستان	٩	٣٩	٦٩
١٢١	پاریزه‌ری راویژکار کارزان که‌مال شریف	١٩٢	به‌رزان حاجی کریم به‌رزنجی	١٠	٤٠	٧٠
١٢٢	ماموستا نالان	١٩٣	کاروان به‌رخه‌سه‌یی	١١	٤١	٧١
١٢٣	بزووتنه‌وه‌ی په‌روه‌ندی ئیسلامی کوردستان	١٩٤	ماموستا ناوایه‌ حه‌سام الدین طیب	١٢	٤٢	٧٢
١٢٤	طالب دارا سه‌وله‌ قه‌ره‌مه‌تاتی	١٩٨	الحركة الإسلامية في كوردستان العراق	١٣	٤٣	
١٢٥	به‌ره‌ن- مه‌ لا وشیار شیه‌له‌ خاتی	٢٠١	افین عه‌نان جاسم	١٤	٤٤	
١٢٨	وه‌ستا عوزیر	٢٠٧	دانا ناماته‌ج نه‌جیب شه‌معون			
١٢٩	یه‌که‌تیی ئێشه‌مه‌تیی کوردستان	٢١٨	توانا به‌شیر داود			

Figure 2:Sample of voting ballot for Sulaymaniyah Province for the 6th Parliamentary elections in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. **Credit:**IHEC.

What Type of Election Technology Devices Are Utilized?

In the upcoming Kurdistan parliamentary elections, electronic devices will be utilized for the first time. The electronic matching device (e-verification device) is one of the devices that will verify the accuracy of the information from the voter's biometric card. It will also store the barcode on the ballot card and send the information via cable to another device called the Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS). The PCOS will then scan both sides of the ballot card and send the results to a flash drive for storage. During the counting and separation of the station's votes, the machine will automatically print the station's results report within a few minutes. The results from the polling stations will be collected from the PCOS device and sent to the data collection and classification center in Baghdad.

Who Has the Authority to Approve the Final Election Results?

After the Independent High Election Commission releases the preliminary results within 24 hours, all complaints and appeals are promptly addressed, ensuring a fair and transparent electoral process. Subsequently, the Election Judiciary Board gives its official approval to the final election results.

Top Policies Relevant to Voters in the Kurdistan Region

The following policy issues are addressed fully or partially by all parties participating in the Parliamentary elections (not in particular order):

Oil and Energy

Key Issues:

- (a) Low quality, limited accessibility, and high, unstable pricing.
- (b) Corruption and illegal smuggling activities.
- (c) Ongoing oil & gas mismanagement disputes with Baghdad.

Healthcare System and Access to Medicine

Key Issues:

- (a) Low doctor-to-patient ratio.
- (b) Insufficient healthcare staff.
- (c) Drug smuggling.
- (d) High cost of medicines.
- (e) Poor quality of care in public hospitals.
- (f) Limited access to advanced healthcare equipment.
- (g) Absence of a comprehensive health insurance system.
- (h) Lack of funding for job opportunities for medical graduates and support for students pursuing higher education abroad.
- (i) Insufficient healthcare awareness in educational curricula.
- (j) Limited access to healthcare facilities and medical services in rural areas and districts outside urban centers.

Economic Diversification, Agricultural Production, and Investment in Non-Oil

Industries

Key Issues:

- (a) Low demand for local agricultural products.
- (b) Competition from cheap imports impacting local producers.
- (c) Little to no export of agricultural goods.
- (d) Limited access to modern agricultural equipment, technology, and chemicals.
- (e) Insufficient budget allocation to the agricultural sector.
- (f) Political disputes between Erbil and Baghdad affecting farmers, including price discrepancies for local produce (e.g., wheat prices in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq compared to southern Iraq).
- (g) Conversion of agricultural land for real estate development.

Environment and Climate Change Impact

Key Issues:

Climate Change-Focused:

- (a) Limited access to clean water.
- (b) Desertification.
- (c) Rising temperatures leading to increased wildfires.
- (d) Negative effects on crop yields and reduced agricultural productivity.
- (e) Migration from rural areas to urban centers.
- (f) Health-related side effects stemming from environmental issues.

Industrial Activities-Focused:

- (g) Refineries and factories operating in or near urban centers, contributing to air pollution and various health issues for residents in surrounding areas.
- (h) Water pollution due to the dumping of garbage and chemicals into rivers, lakes, and other sources of clean water.

Peshmerga Affairs and Security-Related Matters

Key Issues:

- (a) Challenges to the reform and unification of the Peshmerga forces.
- (b) Obstacles to the institutionalization of the Peshmerga.
- (c) Budgetary constraints and insufficient funding from the Government of Iraq.
- (d) Limited access to weapons, supplies, and ammunition.
- (e) Political party dominance over the command-and-control structure of the Peshmerga forces.
- (f) Difficulties in Erbil and Baghdad directly addressing the Peshmerga forces and recognizing them as part of the Iraqi armed forces.
- (g) Inability of the Peshmerga forces to cover all security gaps in disputed territories.

Constitutional Amendments & Negotiations with the Government of Iraq

Key Issues:

- (a) Challenges to the passage and implementation of a constitution for the Kurdistan Region due to political gridlock.
- (b) Need for the implementation of relevant articles of the Iraqi constitution to establish relations with the Kurdistan Region and protect the rights of Kurds as an ethnic group within Iraq.

Educational Reform and Development

Key Issues:

- (a) Insufficient educational centers and schools.
- (b) Lack of funding for school construction, renovations, and necessary equipment.
- (c) Delays in teacher salaries.
- (d) Discrepancies between public and private school curricula.

Youth-related Issues

- (a) High youth unemployment and lack of job opportunities.
- (b) Insufficient funding for youth educational pursuits.
- (c) Limited entrepreneurial funding for youth projects.
- (d) Youth emigration due to poor job prospects.

	Oil & Energy	Healthcare	Economic Diversification	Environment	Peshmerga Affairs	Constitutional Amendment	Educational Reform	Youth-related Issues
Gorran Movement [no. 114]	✓				✓		✓	✓
New Generation Movement [no. 157]	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Kurdistan Islamic Union [no. 148]	✓				✓		✓	✓
Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) [no. 129]	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) [no. 190]			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
People's Front [no. 169]	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
Kurdistan Justice Group [no. 147]	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
National Stance Movement [no. 161]	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	

Policy Checklist for Key Political Parties Participating in the 2024 KRI Parliamentary Elections.Credit:iNNOV8

Author's Note:The author thanks [Channel8](#) for their comprehensive coverage and data collection on the 2024 KRI Parliamentary elections. This information was pivotal in developing research on voter concerns and candidate policies in the Kurdistan region.



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.

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