

The Drama of the Iraqi Elections

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Global Research, March 04, 2010

4 March 2010

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

When it comes to Iraq under occupation, elections are not falsified on the day of voting, but well in advance.

The staged dramatisation of the Iraqi elections, by considering them a decisive moment for the future of Iraq, is an American propaganda plan against the Iraqi resistance and the anti-occupation forces who don't participate in presenting candidates in these elections. The Obama administration, in committing itself — for financial and military reasons — to its plan of withdrawal and the handing back of Iraq to its people, was faced by the reality that the Iraqi people in the days and months before the electoral process began developed a mood of disbelief in the political process, as shown by their weak voter registration.

The political process produced a tragic situation for Iraqis: generalised corruption in which ministers, deputies and governmental institutions participated without sanction; tens of thousands of prisoners tortured, raped, sentenced without fair trials; five million refugees without any rights or protection, or even being recognised as refugees by the government; the generalised abuse of human rights; the absence of elementary services like water purification, electricity, or a sewage system; unemployment reaching up to 50 per cent of the population coupled with the absence of decent means of income; no access to health or education; the loss of rights as workers or civil servants in the state; the continuous fear of dying, being arrested, kidnapped or displaced, among other fears. Throughout the four years of this government and parliament no law was written or decision taken to assure the people of Iraq that the future of the political process would be any different.

If the Obama administration needs to save what it can of the legitimacy of the political process before the eyes of the American people by staging elections, its own local allies saw them as a danger, as they would lose power. The proof is the fact that none of the forces allied to the US wanted to allow the refugees — which they forcefully displaced — to be allowed to participate in the elections. Among other proofs is their decision to delay the electoral law, regulating the elections, until the last minute in order to dramatise the elections. It is the US who pressured its allies in the current parliament to allow the refugees to participate in the vote while at the same time ensuring this vote, by different means, is unworkable.

During seven years of occupation the US repeatedly used this pattern of politics, consisting of pushing for or remaining silent in front of attacks conducted by its allies against the Iraqi resistance, its supporters or alleged supporters, while at the same time criticising by words — but not deeds — these same attacks in order to win the hearts of their victims, trying to make them believe that the US will protect them against its allies. The US is again using this pattern during these elections. While the US has done nothing against the relentless sequence of mass arrests, deportations, executions, assassinations, accusations,

intimidations, falsifications, and general illegal acts carried out by its allies, it declares from time to time that the elections should be transparent.

These elections are falsified in advance. The falsification of elections does not necessarily happen on the day of the elections itself. When there are no reliable records of voters, whether inside or outside Iraq, when there is terror against opponents and minorities, when there are no just procedures and rules concerning political entities, their financial mechanisms, their electoral campaigns and regulating the equal rights of rival candidates, when the government can use the whole state apparatus and institutions against its own rivals, it is evident that the elections will be fake and will not reflect the real will of the Iraqi people.

Many governments, international institutions and associations declared that they want that the elections be free, fair and transparent. These good intentions if not followed by acts on the ground will be considered a silent endorsement of the falsified results. We remember that UN Security Council Resolution 1483 stipulated the obligations of the occupying forces, but the UN remained silent thereafter in front of the occupation's violations of these same obligations, thereby giving the US the liberty to do whatever it wants in Iraq as if it was legal. In this context, it is evident that the next parliament will again be a US product composed of US allies with different faces, and not real Iraqi representatives.

The Iraqi resistance and the anti-occupation forces, the first political force in Iraq, are aware of the use of this repeated pattern of US policy. Therefore they cannot and will not consider these elections as legitimate or democratic. The antithesis between the occupation and the resistance and anti-occupation forces will be immediately revived after the elections, as the primary conflict in Iraqi politics. The resistance and anti-occupation forces are opposed to the SOFA, to the oil contracts, to the division of Iraq and the destruction of this Arab and Muslim identity, and the fascist religious regime that Iran — ally of the US in Iraq — wants to establish, and stand against all the results of the occupation and its illegal political process. They have the support of the Iraqi people, which will not be represented and reflected in these elections.

These forces know that the tactics employed in the elections are used by the occupation to divide them on the question of whether or not they will participate in the elections. For this reason, as is understood from their literature and position, they will not try to prevent their supporters from casting their votes in support of this or that candidate that they consider less awful than another, or if he or she defends their immediate and local preoccupations, as will happen in many provinces, especially in Kirkuk, Mosul and Baghdad. Thereby, they let the people realise by their own experience that these elections will change nothing in their lives. Assuring the liberty to vote for their supporters will prevent the occupation from using these elections as a way to isolate the Iraqi resistance from the Iraqi people. On the contrary, the falsification of the elections and the hypocritical pattern used by the US will push some forces that believed in the political process to quit it and join the anti-occupation movement.

These tactics, which became a repeated pattern used by the US, remind us of those used — “the surge” — during the sectarian killings of 2006-2007. These sectarian killings were practiced under the eyes of, amid the silence of, and some say with the active participation of, the occupation. Only when the killings produced their desired effects — hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of refugees — did the US pretend to protect the victims by

imprisoning the regions they inhabit by walls in order to control them. They punished no one for the killings; neither did they do anything to facilitate the return of the refugees. The same is happening in the context of these elections. While the US pretends it wants transparent elections, the arrests, the displacement, the generalised abuse of human rights of individuals and communities, the falsifications, the executions, the banning of candidates, goes on unabated on the ground, with no real acts to stop them.

This time the US is playing with fire. Its tactics heighten the divisions amongst local US allies, whose victims are the Iraqi people. They potentially lead, in the aftermath of the elections, not only to internal civil strife but also to a regional war. The political process has failed and no one wants to repeat it for another four bloody years. The essence of the US and its allies' project during seven terror-filled years is the partition of Iraq. Its continuation in whatever form will lead to a civil war. Is the US using the elections and the heightening of conflicts as an opportunity to impose Biden's project of partition as a fait accompli? If the US, through the elections, negotiates the future of Iraq and the extent of this partition only with Iran and the Kurdish leaders, its principal allies, other Iraqi political forces will not bear that the Iraqi people be victims of these machinations and will reinforce their military, political and civil resistance.

One of the dangers of heightening existing conflicts during the elections is that the US's allies, the pro-Iranian and the Kurdish leaders, did not and will not accept transparent elections to realise their project. They use and will use again force — with or without US aid — to impose their plan on the Iraqi people. Their plan is not only a danger for Iraq and its people but also for Iraq's neighbouring countries. Any renewed civil strife would involve a regional war. Is the US, in spite of all its propaganda effort, attempting to revive its failed project of the New Middle East through a regional war? It is time to realise that the only way to have peace, stability and democracy in Iraq is an unconditional withdrawal of all US forces, the establishment of a transitional government supported by the resistance, and to organise a free, fair, transparent and democratic election to hand Iraq back to its people. Without a rupture with the political process and its groups, Iraq will sink more and more into tragedy.

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