

The complete report of the observation for the media campaigning of the Iraqi parliamentary election 2010

Tammuz organization for social development has accomplished the media campaign observation for the political entities preparing for the parliamentary election due in March 7 2010. Our observers supplied us with their report from all the Iraqi provinces. The media campaign continued for 22 days which was insufficient period to identify for the Iraqi populations the programs of the candidates. The minimum period is supposed to be 1 month according to the international standards.

The observers have noted some observations relating to the media campaign, the IHEC role, media and NGO organizations role to disseminate the awareness and to motivating the voters to go the polling centers, and these observation are the following:

- 1- On the level of the political entities, there was resemblance of the mottos and programs the candidates declared that fight the corruption, and inspire the change, construction and provision of security and stability as well as fulfilling the promises to offer the residence and salaries for the employees and bettering the economic status of living. These slogans confused the voters to whom they will spill their bucket.
- 2- The diversity of the campaigning manners of the political parties and the conformity of most of them to large extent. It was noted that some political parties used the songs, balloons, stationery, notebooks, lighters, and T-shirts that have logos, names and numbers of the candidates or their lists. The political parties used also the classical campaigning manners like posters, pictures, public speeches, and advertisement in all the mass media.
- 3- Some of the political parties violated the code of conduct by buying the votes. Those candidates presented amounts of money to the citizens who will vote for their benefit under the condition of vowing of pledging or voting for them in the election. Our organization considers this deed as negative element in the integrity of the election.
- 4- The escalating of the competitive fever among the entities

- 5- Handful incidents took place. For example; one of the political entities HQ exposed to an attack from anonymous people. Lots of election posters and candidates pictures were tore or disfigured by writing propaganda of other candidates upon.
- 6- Obvious misuse of the public resources, governmental posts, for the turn of the campaigners and propagating the governmental programs of the candidates. The government building and transportation vehicles of the government were used in the campaigns as well.
- 7- The religious clerics were used as an umbrella or cover by some of the candidates to earn some votes. This use was represented by printings and posters that carried the pictures and mottos of some clerics and religious authorities which implicitly refers that the authority in on the side of those candidates which is something violates the opinion of the authority itself.
- 8- In cooperation with IHEC, the NGOs implemented educative workshops to enhance the participation in the election. The IHEC educative publications and posters & booklets were used in these lectures and workshops.
- 9- Some of the lists violated the role of IHEC by pasting their posters with glues that cannot be removed and pasting them in the unsuitable places.
- 10- The inconsistency of media campaigns strength among the political lists. Some lists employed huge amount of money for their campaigns, posters and banners as well as the media campaigns thru the Iraqi and Arabic cable channels. Some other political lists that lack sufficient sponsoring could barely use the classical and simple techniques of campaigning.
- 11- The campaigns witnessed the withdrawal of some candidates and entities or merging with other political entities. One of the lists suspended their campaigns then resumed the campaign again.
- 12- The occurrence of some violence incidents as a result of ceasing the media campaigns in Suleimayia province at night.
- 13- Some security forces were campaigning for the benefit of one of the political parties and other impeded the media campaigns of some candidates under the

pretext of having neither legal documents nor records in the media campaigns.

These incidents were observed in the early days of the campaigns.

- 14- Some of the big political lists questioned the integrity of the election and expressed their misgivings of occurring kind of fraud. These misgivings weakened the voters' participation in the election.
- 15- It was clear in the logistic, political and financial support that there was regional and / or international intervention to back some of the [p]olitical entities.
- 16- The bias of some cable channels and/or satellite channels that were known as independent for the benefit of some political entities. This bias represented in the programs and advertisement that were broadcasted.
- 17- Some of the non-objective centers surveys for the ratio of participation in the election became more like political campaigning rather than statistical and scientific surveying centers.

On the other hand, the organization has some observations on the performance of the IHEC and the official in charge authorities (governmental, media, religious, and NGOs).

- ✓ The IHEC implemented number of workshops in Baghdad and the provinces in cooperation with mass media and the non-governmental organizations. The workshops dealt with the mechanism of voting, and to raise the awareness of the voters to participate in the election. The IHEC built bridges of cooperation with observation networks, NGOs and the political entities representatives.
- ✓ Babil province branch of IHEC adopted new ways of techniques to induce and encourage the population to participate in the election. The branch organized a theatrical play in some sub-districts of the province. In Muthana province branch, competition was held in public to explain the ways of voting and encouraging them to participate in the election. These activities were shared as well by the branches of IHEC in Anbar and other provinces.
- ✓ The religious authorities assured more than once their neutrality and non-alignment. The religious authority (Marji'ya) ensured as well their non-

interventional status in any candidate campaign during the process of campaigning and it on the other hand urges the population to vote for whomsoever they prefer.

- ✓ The IHEC proceeded in the precautionary measures to restrict the fraud cases in the election.
- ✓ The chairman of Karbala IHEC office submitted stern warning to the political lists and the candidates who violated the code of conduct thru the media campaign to remove these violations within two days or the IHEC will proceed in forbidding them from nominating in the election.
- ✓ It was noted that there were bridges of cooperation between Baghdad municipality and IHEC to notify the political lists violators to remove their violations or forfeiting them.
- ✓ The Iraqi governmental and non-governmental mass media paid enormous attention to the subject of [e]lection. In addition, the mass media provided the free of charge advertisement periods for all the political entities and the candidates for the purpose of identifying them for the population. The purpose of this mass media was to educate the people on the concepts of election and the ways of participation in.
- ✓ Some of the NGOs implemented educative and tutoring lectures and workshops that gathered in addition to the citizens, the candidates to show the population their programs and to discuss them.
- ✓ Issuing some penalties like imprisonment against the violators who tore the campaigning posters and banners. Nineveh operation unit declared that such accident took place there in Tela'ffar district in the Nineveh province.
- ✓ Five political entities pledged and signed code of conduct to guarantee the freedom and integrity of the election as well as stopping the use of public money. On the other hand, the signees presented invitation to other political entities to share with them the code of conduct and be abided to.
- ✓ Some in charge in the department of defense declared that they will penalize any security personnel who attempt to campaign for particular political entity or candidate in the election.

Finally, Tammuz organization for social development recommends the IHEC remove all the election posters and banners which exist close to the electoral polling stations and centers.

It is worth mentioning that the same problem was repeated in the past election and this matter violates the standards and instruction of IHEC that stipulated the campaigning posters should be no less than 100 meters far from the polling center.

Tammuz organization for social development
March 6 2010