

IRI Accomplishments in Iraq 2004-2010

The IRI Model: National Presence and Bottom-Up Politics

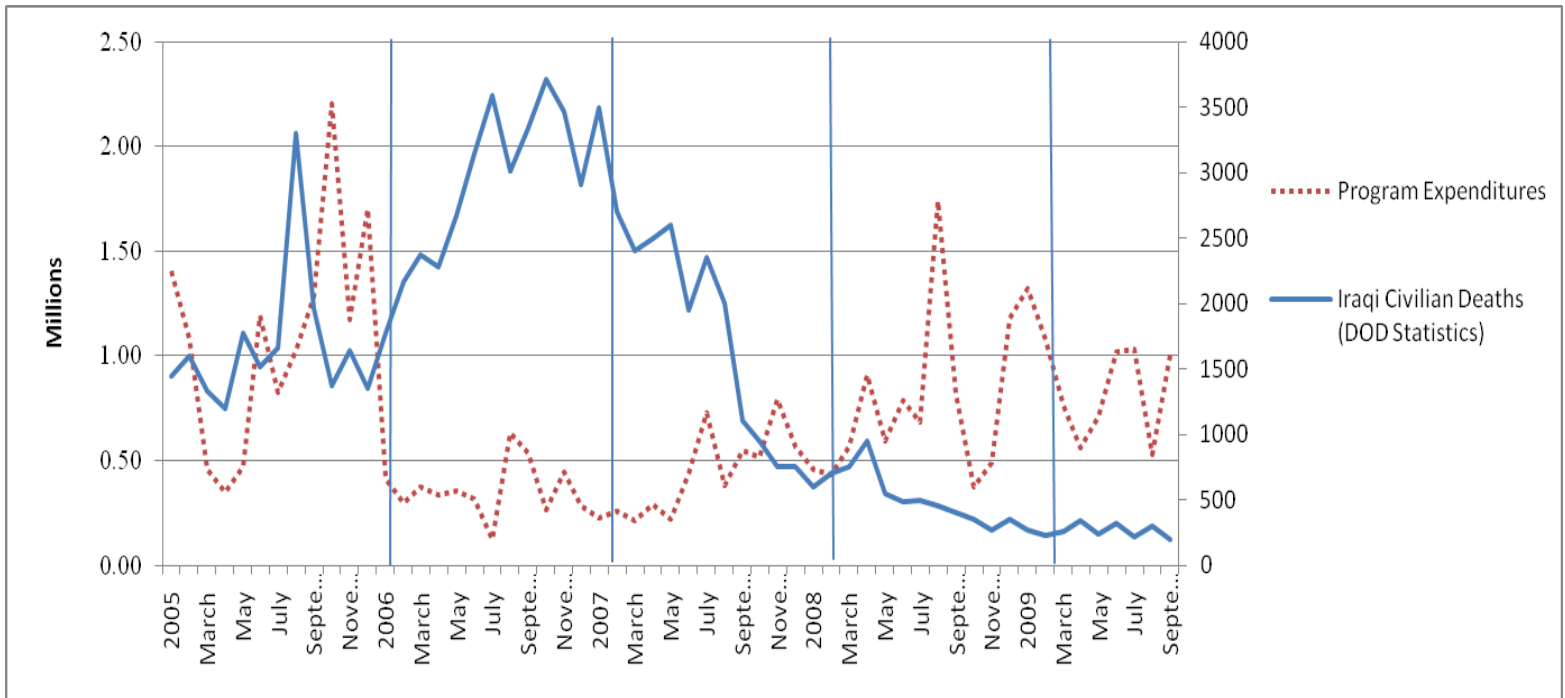
Among western development agencies there is a bias towards believing that a democracy can be built from the seat of politics in the national capital; that a government can be built from the top down, in essence, by concentrating on developing the capacity of government ministries and elected officials at the center.

Drawing upon its political experience around the world, the International Republican Institute (IRI) understands that an effective political organization, be it a party, an insurgent movement or a government, can only be built from the grassroots up. In Afghanistan, the United States has suffered from a Kabul-centric approach in a country that has almost never been centrally governed in 5,000 years of recorded history, and in Iraq the much-lauded Anbar Awakening that turned the tide against al Qaida in 2007 only began when the United States reached into the political and geographic hinterland of Iraq to enlist rural tribes in a common fight against extremism.

Today, Baghdad remains an important center for political development, but one most dangerous and logistically challenging. Baghdad and its surrounding areas account for approximately 40 percent of all significant acts of violence, according to Multi-National Force-Iraq statistics, a disproportionate level of violence that seriously impacts IRI activities in the capital. Because of this, training venues and adequate accommodations are few in Baghdad, and those that exist are frequently targeted or indirectly affected by violence. As recently as October 2009, IRI participants and staff barely avoided injury when the al Mansur hotel, at which they were gathering, was damaged by a car bomb detonating nearby.

As can be seen from the graph on the next page, IRI in-country expenditures are inversely proportional to the level of background violence. During the worst periods in 2006 and 2007, programs nearly ceased altogether as IRI personnel were reduced to a state of siege in a capital beset by mortar barrages and sectarian violence.

(more)



As a result of the high level of violence and specific threats, in early 2007, IRI relocated its expatriate staff and much of its training operation to Erbil in the Kurdistan Region where program activity increased steadily. In fiscal year 2009, IRI conducted more in-country programs than at any previous period in Iraq. Today IRI retains two offices in Baghdad with 28 staff, an office with three staff in Basra, as well as 58 staff in Erbil where much of IRI’s activity takes place due to comparative ease of security and logistical considerations.

More importantly than its fixed offices, IRI has an extensive network of part-time mobile teams and facilitators operating in every one of Iraq’s provinces. Outside of the Kurdish region, IRI has a network of 13 mobile staffers based in each of the provinces where IRI does not maintain a permanent presence. These staff members are hired locally and understand the local political and cultural considerations critical for safe and effective programs. They provide weekly updates on local developments, oversee a pool of more than 400 trained interviewers used by IRI to conduct public opinion research, and deliver IRI training modules where they are most needed, directly to the grassroots level of political parties.

This level of provincial access is what defines IRI’s bottom-up approach to democracy promotion. Instead of focusing solely on national politics inside the “Baghdad bubble” (and the Green Zone bubble within Baghdad), IRI delivers its training directly to the party activists who are critical to the success of democratic politics: provincial and city branch managers, door-to-door canvassers and event organizers.

(more)

Impact of IRI Democracy Promotion Programs

“Since the Coalition deposed the former regime in spring 2003, Iraq has had two national elections (both in 2005) and two provincial elections (in 2005 and 2009). These elections have widely been regarded as some of the freest and best managed in the Middle East.”

-SIGIR Observations (Report to Congress), October 2009

Since 2003, IRI has conducted a multi-faceted program to support the Iraqi democratic political process. IRI’s impact can be seen through support of political parties, civil society organizations and governmental bodies. IRI has conducted programs to impact the political process in Iraq in the following areas:

- **Governance.** Supporting the Iraqi government on all levels to increase transparency, responsiveness and effectiveness.
- **Civil Society Advocacy.** Supporting organized Iraqi civil society groups including youth, in advocating for constituent interests, directly resulting in concrete legislative action.
- **Women’s and Minority Programs.** Assisting women’s and religious minority groups to safeguard their human and political rights.
- **Voter Education and Turnout.** Educating Iraqi voters on how, when and why to vote, resulting in a measurable impact on voter turnout on Election Day.
- **Political Party and Candidate Training.** Training political parties and candidates to encourage an inclusive, issue-based, competitive political field for elections.
- **Public Opinion Research.** Conducting public opinion surveys in order to better inform Iraqi political parties, the Iraqi government and the international community as to public priorities.

What follows are some of IRI’s accomplishments in Iraq in each of the above categories, including citations from IRI quarterly reports to its funders at the National Endowment for Democracy, the State Department, and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

(more)

Governance

“Before our training with IRI we did not understand our authorities according to the law, and thought that we were quite limited. But now we understand the powers that we do have, and we learned ways in which we can increase our budgets without conflicting with the Central Government.”

- Mohammed al Massudi
Head of the Babil Provincial Council Committee for Reconstruction

“For Iraqi members of parliament, and especially for women, IRI trainings are very successful and beneficial, in particular training in Media Communications and Campaign Messages. A priority of Iraqi parliamentarians is to communicate better with voters, and this is what IRI teaches us.”

- Shatha al Abussi
Member of Parliament from al Tawafuq Coalition and member of Human Rights Committee

IRI supports the Iraqi government at both the national and local levels, increasing transparency and accessibility to improve effectiveness in listening to and meeting the needs of constituents.

Support to Iraqi Council of Representatives

- IRI supports the Research Directorate of the Iraqi Council of Representatives. Successive speakers of the parliament have been sufficiently impressed with the Research Directorate to request its assistance on specific pieces of legislation.
- The Research Directorate has assisted in drafting legislation, and has written and distributed a report on the 2010 Iraqi budget.
- The Iraqi Research Directorate has been in discussion with similar entities in Egypt and Lebanon to pursue joint projects.
- The IRI-supported Media Directorate of the Iraqi Council of Representatives now conducts C-SPAN-like coverage of the parliament’s work, including a nightly wrap-up television program, called “Mirror of the People,” discussing the major topics of each session.¹ This is the only television program providing such legislative transparency in the Arab world.

¹ IRI Quarterly Report to the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, July-September 2009, pg. 3

(more)

Work with the Provincial Councils

“It is good for us to share trainings with other provincial councils so we can show the rest of Iraq that despite ethnic tension elsewhere in the country we in the Kirkuk Council are on the path to national reconciliation.”

- Khalil Ibrahim
Coordinator for the Kirkuk Provincial Council Public Relations Committee

SIGIR recognizes that *“the precise scope of these provincial officials’ power remains ambiguous.”*

-SIGIR Observations (Report to Congress), October 2009

The themes of the quotes cited above has been observed at every one of IRI’s trainings with these newly elected bodies, who often complain of an obstructionist central government.

- IRI has been conducting a series of trainings with newly elected provincial councils, instructing them on the scope of their powers according to Law 21 (outlining the power of the provincial councils).²
- As an example of the increasing assertiveness of provincial bodies, the council of Salahaddin removed the provincial governor for incompetence and lack of integrity, a decision upheld by Iraqi courts. Babil province has similarly censured its governor.
- The Baghdad, Wassit, and Maysan provincial councils have each created provincial-level research directorates on the model of IRI’s national-level directorate operating in the parliament.
- Using IRI guidance on methods to raise local revenue and increase local autonomy, Babil passed revenue-raising legislation by imposing fees on tourists and regulations requiring licensing of health care professionals. Wassit province passed legislation to raise funds from health care facilities in order to subsidize higher quality health care for low-income individuals.
- After IRI training in early December 2009, the Basra Provincial Council passed a number of laws towards improving personal freedoms and economic efficiency. First, the council rescinded a previous law banning the sale of alcohol, stating this to be a personal and religious matter outside the authority of the government to regulate; second, after a spate of embarrassing cases of graft and mismanagement by local municipal companies, the Basra council decreed that all municipal contracts for more than \$2 million must go to foreign companies.

² IRI Quarterly Report to the U.S Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor S-LMAQM-08-GR-601-A001, January-March 2010, pg. 4

(more)

- U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) often face difficulty gaining access to the political leaders of their provinces, and IRI facilitates these linkages to support their work. In one occasion, the first meeting of a U.S. Department of State PRT representative and elected members of the provincial council in which he was based was at an IRI training in Erbil.

“It was very beneficial for us to attend the training with IRI and the Maysan PRT. The previous Provincial Council had a bad relationship with the PRT, but now that we understand what the PRT does we can get more projects from them.”

-Salih Tuma
Head of the Maysan Provincial Council Committee for Reconstruction

“Before our meeting with IRI and the Thi Qar PRT we did not know what a PRT did or how to propose projects to them, but after the training we nominated a point of contact to work closely with the PRT and as a result we have received more projects and enjoyed improved communication.”

- Qussay al Ubadi
Head of the Thi Qar Provincial Council

(more)

Civil Society Advocacy

“Through instruction by trainers with experience from multi-cultural countries similar to Iraq, IRI helped me communicate ideas to people with unifying arguments. Increasing the number of the trainings is very useful and important. I hope that all organizations similar to mine get the chance to take part in the trainings to get the utmost benefit.”

- Samir Elias
Director, National Organization for Minorities' Rights Defense

In a successful democracy, effective political parties and well-managed elections must be complemented by organized groups of citizens advocating for constituent needs. To this end, IRI assists a broad spectrum of civil society organizations, including ethnic and religious minority groups, youth organizations, and academic think tanks.

Campaign 25

“On behalf of Al Lind Organization for the Democratization of Youth, we offer our thanks and appreciation to IRI for their material and moral support for the awareness and educating people, especially young people, in the field of civil society, along with our hope that this support will continue.”

- Sherzad Pirmosa
Director, Alind Organization for the Democratization of Youth

Two-thirds of the Iraqi population is under the age of 30 and suffers from a disproportionate share of the poverty and political instability troubling the country. In 2007, IRI founded Iraqi-run regional youth centers to advocate for this population from which the insurgency draws its rank and file, and these centers launched a national advocacy campaign to lower the minimum age of candidacy for elected office from 30 to 25 years. The IRI-supported youth centers were the only advocacy coalition seriously involved in this campaign. Beyond the immediate benefit of bringing Iraqi youth into the political process, the success of this campaign has given the future leaders of Iraq direct experience in democratic change.

- After two years of a creative and multi-media advocacy campaign by IRI's Erbil-based partner, the North Youth Center, in February 2009 the Kurdistan Regional Parliament approved an amendment to the Kurdish Election Law, lowering the age of candidacy to 25 years.³
- After success in Kurdistan, Campaign 25 refocused on Baghdad. The Baghdad Youth Center succeeded in obtaining 107 signatures from Members of Parliament in support of

³ IRI Quarterly Report to the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor S-LMAQM07-GR-209, January-March 2009, pg. 8

(more)

a reduction in the age of candidacy. This degree of cross-partisan agreement is unheard of in Iraqi politics.⁴

- Annual youth conferences are held including hundreds of young activists from national political parties, who receive training on campaign and voter mobilization and who participate in the development of youth-directed political messages, culminating in a mock campaign and election for the conference president.

Think Tanks

In a country used to an authoritarian, closed form of government, there has been traditionally little involvement by academia in politics. Since 2005, IRI has been assisting a number of small academic institutes to develop substantive research on topics of concern to Iraq to better inform policy makers.

- IRI-funded think tanks have become thoroughly accepted -- nationally and internationally -- as a source of information and expertise on Iraqi political, social and economic issues. The think tanks have been asked by parliamentary committees to assist in drafting legislation, invited to participate on television and radio talk shows, and featured in foreign publications.
- On January 10, 2009, IRI sponsored a conference hosted by the Iraqi Institute for Economic Reform in which many academics presented papers and policy recommendations for Iraq's 2009 budget. In attendance were several Members of Parliament, advisors to the Iraqi President and Prime Minister, major cabinet ministries, the United Nations, and the U.S. Treasury attaché. Among the conference's recommendations was the need to tie Iraq's budget to falling oil prices, a recommendation that was subsequently enacted in the March passage of a much-reduced federal budget.⁵
- On November 8, 2008, IRI funded the Iraqi Elite and Efficiencies Conference on the comparative powers of central and local governments, attended by Prime Minister Maliki, Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih, both vice presidents, and numerous members of parliament, governors, ministers, and other Iraqi and international government representatives.⁶

⁴ IRI Quarterly Report to the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, July-September 2009, pg. 12

⁵ IRI Quarterly Report to the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, January-March 2009, pg. 5 – 6

⁶ IRI Quarterly Report to the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, October-December 2008, pg. 4

(more)

Women's Programs

“The International Republican Institute is the primary motivator for women in our party, helping spark efforts that resulted in raising the number of women in our party from all social segments to take part in the political process and the coming elections. This would never have been possible without the aid that IRI provided along the way.”

- Mrs. Intisar Abid al-Robaiei
Women's Bureau, Iraqi Constitutional Party

Women remain disadvantaged in Iraq's political and cultural system, and IRI conducts programs specifically designed to empower them within Iraq's democracy.

Women's Leadership Institute

Founded in 2005, IRI brought together two prominent women's rights advocates: Sundus Abbas and Azhar al Shaikhli (who would later become Minister of Women's Affairs). From this beginning, Women's Leadership Institute (WLI) has become an internationally recognized women's organization, with Ms. Abbas traveling frequently throughout the Middle East to participate in women's conferences and trainings.

- WLI trains women political party members, civil society activists, government officials, civil servants and future women leaders of Iraq.
- Through WLI, IRI trained 40 percent of all women winning seats in the 2009 provincial council elections.⁷
- In 2007 WLI director Sundus Abbas received the International Women of Courage Award from U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.⁸
- WLI is now financially independent of IRI, and has been approached by the United Nations and U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) requesting its assistance in their women's programs.

⁷ IRI Quarterly Report to the U.S. Department of State Office of Global Women's Issues, January-March 2009, pg. 1

⁸ Ibid, pg. 3

(more)

Iraqi Women's Capacity Building Program

Between July and September 2009, 199 women from 26 widely differing political parties were trained in grassroots mobilization and database development as political tools. Participants then went on to record a total of 2,666 women into their parties' databases for follow-up voter contact and turnout efforts, as well as 1,398 women interested in actively volunteering for their parties.⁹

- Grassroots door-to-door campaigning and mobilization such as that fostered by the Iraqi Women's Capacity Building Program are very rare in Iraq, especially among women.



IRI training female political party activists from Basra in January 2009.

⁹ IRI Quarterly Report to the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, July-September 2009, pg. 18

(more)

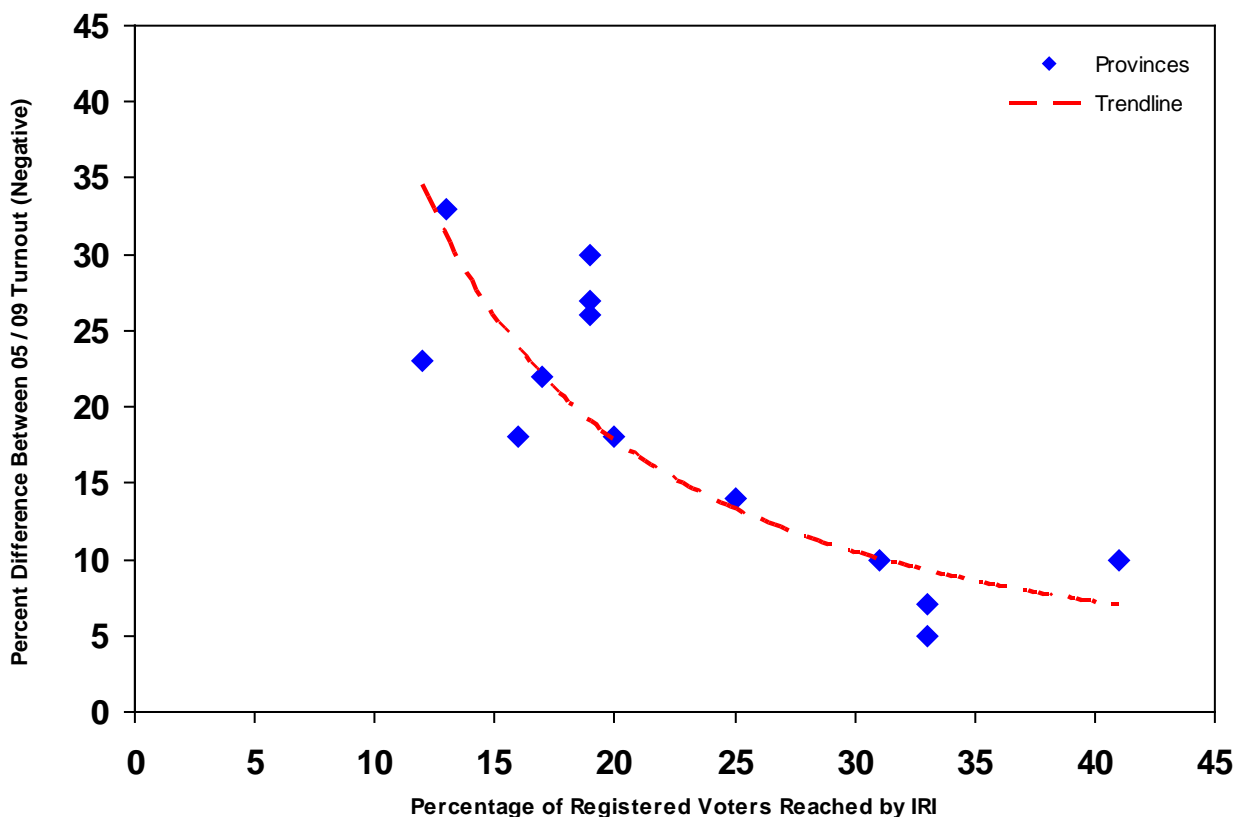
Voter Education and Turnout

A well-trained field of candidates debating issues of importance to their electorate is insufficient to provide credible elections if voters do not know how or when to vote. IRI supports this pillar of the Iraqi elections process through major multi-media voter education campaigns.

January 2009 Provincial Council Elections

IRI distributed more than 3.5 million direct voter education items, including leaflets, posters, newsletters and mock ballots, equal to half the total number of voters on Election Day.¹⁰

- Analyzing the difference between 2005 and 2009 voter turnout versus the number of IRI voter education materials distributed, there is a clear mathematical correlation between IRI's efforts and voter turnout by province, as illustrated by the graph below:



- Although voter turnout was down across the country from the 2005 parliamentary election (except in Anbar where the majority Sunni population largely boycotted the 2005 election), the difference was inversely correlated to the amount of voter education and mobilization material distributed by IRI.

¹⁰ IRI Quarterly Report to the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, January-March 2009, pg. 3 – 7; IRI Quarterly Report to the U.S. Department of State Office of Global Women's Issues, January-March 2009, pg. 4

(more)

- Where IRI distribution reached a level of at least one contact per five registered voters, the correlation was strongest, suggesting that a “critical mass” of educational material can be reached to achieve an exponential effect.
- IRI distributed 59,000 mock ballots in Ninewa alone, more than in any other province of Iraq. Ninewa subsequently had the lowest incidence of spoiled ballots in the country.



Leading Iraqi politicians participate in a January 2009 televised town hall debate at the IRI Media Center before provincial council elections.

“IRI delivers a kind of science and we are like students. I remember well the training conducted by IRI in Erbil, on on-camera and media communications, and honestly it was very good and helpful for our experience. We all gained experience and confidence in appearing in front of television. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the efforts by IRI to help us and conduct these trainings, and also I encourage them to do this more and more in order to serve Iraq.”

- Dr. Abdel Amir al Ghazali
Member of the Parliament from the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq

July 2009 Kurdistan Regional Parliament Election

“Turnout was high [in the Kurdistan elections]: about 78% of the 2.5 million eligible voters cast ballots at more than 5,400 polling stations.”

-SIGIR Observations (Report to Congress), October 2009

(more)

- In the final days before this election, IRI conducted more than a million direct voter turnout contacts, more than one for each of the 800,000 registered households in Kurdistan.¹¹

¹¹ IRI Quarterly Report to the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, July-September 2009, pg. 3 – 4

(more)

Political Party and Candidate Training

“The Change List thanks IRI for its unwavering support in developing our organization and capacity. IRI’s trainings on campaign management brought a great deal of success for the Change List and helped show our people how to campaign with discipline, reach the grassroots and mobilize people around real issues and a real platform. We hope [IRI] will continue with its vital and important role in training political parties with the excellent T4 system [IRI campaign training module: Target, Touch, Track, Turnout].”

- Omer Said Ali
Senior Leader, Change List

“IRI is reaching out to both parties in the conflict in Mosul. The Prime Minister has failed in this, the Embassy has failed in this, and we are hoping that IRI will have success in helping us reach an agreement. At IRI’s suggestion, the Brotherhood is willing to hold a joint training with al Hadba List in Baghdad, and we hope al Hadba agrees to this.”

- Khasro Goran
Head of the Ninewa Brotherhood party

2005 Parliamentary Elections

IRI conducted programs that have assisted with the emerging Iraqi political process in 2005, including January 2005 elections for transitional assembly, the drafting of the Constitution, the national referendum that resulted in its acceptance, and the December 2005 parliamentary elections.

- During the drafting process of the Iraqi Constitution in 2005, IRI conducted more than 800,000 direct voter contacts in the form of workshops and explanatory pamphlets to educate Iraqi voters on the issues being debated in Baghdad. Once the draft was completed, IRI continued a wide-ranging outreach program to educate the electorate on the document and the date of the referendum.¹²
- In the first such training of its kind available, IRI trained nearly 1,500 political party activists and candidates from more than 120 political parties in election tactics in preparation for the 2005 parliamentary elections.¹³
- Using its state of the art Media Center, IRI filmed a series of 10 candidate debates featuring 39 candidates for the parliament from 15 different parties in advance of the 2005 elections. These debates were televised nationally, in a country unused to watching its political leaders debate issues openly and publicly.¹⁴

¹² IRI Quarterly Report to USAID, July-September 2005, pg 8.

¹³ IRI Quarterly Report to the National Endowment for Democracy, October-December 2005, pg 2

¹⁴ Ibid, pg. 3

(more)

“I am writing on behalf of the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq to formally thank IRI for the assistance it gave us as we prepared for Iraq’s recent historic election.

“As you will know IECI is a new organization with much still to learn so we very much appreciated your technical advice and practical help with event management – both at the ‘Pick Your Number’ lottery-style event in December and again nearing election day with banners and backdrops for the Media Center.

“We are very grateful indeed to you – thank you for helping make the election happen.”

- Adil Al-Lami
Chief Electoral Officer, the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq

July 2009 Kurdish Region Parliamentary Elections

“Opposition parties fared better in the parliamentary elections, dramatically reducing the size of the ruling KDP-Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) coalition’s majority.”

-SIGIR Observations (Report to Congress), October 2009

- Forty-nine percent of all winners of competitive seats in the Kurdish Parliament were trained by IRI, including 30 of 38 winners from the two opposition parties.¹⁵
- In response to IRI training, the opposition Change List filled out 75,000 voter-identification cards in Sulaymaniya to assist in the party’s turnout efforts on Election Day. The Change List margin of victory in Sulaymaniya was just under 43,000.¹⁶

¹⁵ IRI Quarterly Report to the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, July-September 2009, pg. 32

¹⁶ Ibid

(more)

Tribal Program

The 2007 Surge owed much of its success to the rebellion of the Sunni tribes of Anbar against the violent radicals in their midst, but in the years since, the same tribal militias that assisted in routing al Qaida have been consistently marginalized by the Iraqi central government. To help in the political integration of the tribes with the rest of Iraq, and to ensure they do not once again turn to violence to meet their political goals, IRI has conducted a number of projects strengthening the capacity of tribes to compete in a modern democracy.



Iraqi sheikhs discuss a common Declaration of Principles at IRI's Tribal Conference in December 2008.

- At the request of the U.S. Embassy Force Strategic Engagement Cell, IRI routinely trains emerging tribal political entities interested in competing in Iraqi elections. Most recently, in November 2009, IRI conducted campaign management training for four tribal entities, the same as that provided to Iraq's more established political parties.¹⁷
- Over the winter of 2008 and 2009, IRI helped form one of the largest and most diverse tribal coalitions in Iraq. Over successive conferences in Erbil and Baghdad, 300 sheikhs from every sect and geographic division came together to agree upon a shared Declaration of Principles, leadership and bylaws to govern the organization.¹⁸

¹⁷ IRI Quarterly Report to the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, October-December 2008, pg. 9

¹⁸ Ibid, pg 8; IRI Quarterly Report to the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, January-March 2009, pg. 2

(more)

Public Opinion Research

“Your trainings on public opinion research brought ample benefit to our research division and I would like to highlight the fact that the experiences and mechanisms we use in our polling researches are derived from the experience and lessons we learned from your trainings.”

- Azad Rozh Bayani
Head of Training and Evaluation Department, Kurdistan Democratic Party General Election
Office

IRI has maintained public opinion research in the form of polling and focus groups since early 2004. In the two years between April 2004 and June 2006, IRI conducted 15 national polls that surveyed residents from at least 15 of Iraq's 18 provinces. Results of the polls ultimately served as a tangible indicator of election outcomes and public concerns. IRI shared its poll results with Iraqi political party partners, Iraqi government officials, Multi-National Force-Iraq officials, the U.S. Department of State and international media.

Major news outlets including the *New York Times* and *USA Today* have used IRI's public opinion surveys in their own reporting:

- [New Poll Finds Iraqis Favor Unity: Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion, June 14-24, 2006](#)
- [New Poll Finds Iraqis Favor a Unity Government to Lead the Country: Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion, March 23-31, 2006](#)
- [Overwhelming Majority of Iraqis Plan to Vote Thursday: Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion, November 30-December 7, 2005](#)
- [Overwhelming Majority of Iraqis Plan to Vote in December: Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion, November 1-11, 2005](#)
- [Overwhelming Majority of Iraqis Plan to Vote in Tomorrow's Referendum: Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion, October 9-11, 2005](#)
- [Overwhelming Majority of Iraqis Plan to Vote in Constitutional Referendum: Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion, September 6-12, 2005](#)
- [Majority of Iraqis are Confident in National Assembly and Constitutional Committee: Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion, July 9-14, 2005](#)
- [Majority of Iraqis Want Human Rights Protected in Constitution: Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion, April 11-20, 2005](#)
- [Optimism Continues after Iraq's Historic Election: Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion, February 27-March 5, 2005](#)
- [On Eve of Historic Election, Survey Shows Iraqis Eager to Vote: Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion, January 13-24, 2005](#)
- [Iraqis Remain Committed to Elections: Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion, December 26, 2004-January 7, 2005](#)
- [Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion, November 24-December 5, 2004](#)
- [Optimistic Outlook on the Future and Support for Democracy Continues in Iraq: Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion, September 24-October 4, 2004](#)
- [Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion, July 24-August 2, 2004](#)
- [Survey of Iraq Public Opinion May 27-June 11, 2004](#)

(more)

“On behalf of the Department of State, I would like to offer my thanks for the International Republican Institute’s role in supporting the recent elections in Iraq.

“On January 30 we saw millions of Iraqis brave intimidation and threats of death to demonstrate their commitment to vote. The success of this first step in Iraq’s transition to democracy is due in great part to IRI’s work and the dedication of your highly skilled staff. IRI’s substantial voter education activities helped to inform Iraqi voters about the electoral process and succeeded in raising voter turnout beyond initial expectations. Your training of party agent poll monitors, assistance in preparing political parties to participate in the Transitional National Assembly and commitment to addressing disputes over the election process has helped to ensure that these historic elections were indeed credible and transparent.

“We look forward to IRI’s invaluable service in working with the Transitional National Assembly and the Iraqi Transitional Government to ensure the legislature’s engagement with and responsiveness to the Iraqi public. Together, we will help the Iraqi people realize their dream of a free and democratic society.”

- U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, February 2005

“I want to express my appreciation and that of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), for the excellent work that the International Republican Institute (IRI) performed in supporting the recent Iraq elections. The Iraqis’ enthusiasm for democracy was visible to observers around the world; IRI played an important role in nurturing this enthusiasm.

“I am particularly impressed with IRI’s support to the Civic Coalition for Free Elections and its 76 civil society organizations from across Iraq, which built awareness and support for the elections. The series of televised debates and television spots, fliers, and other information products contributed to an informed voting population and unexpectedly high turnout.

“You and your team certainly have reason to be proud of the work that you performed in supporting the elections. We at USAID look forward to continuing to cooperate with IRI and our Iraqi counterparts as work begins to support the transitional executive body and the future electoral processes. Thank you, and congratulations to you and your colleagues at IRI.”

- U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator Andrew Natsios, February 2005

###