

## IRI Iraq Index

### Indicators

#### *Trends Since December 2009 Survey*

This survey indicates a divided mood among the Iraqi people – more so than in IRI's [December 2009 survey](#) – with 59 percent of respondents indicating that their country is heading in the wrong direction and 41 percent indicating the right direction. This wrong direction rating represents a shift in opinion about the future of the country, with the number of respondents who believe that Iraq is heading in the right direction dropping 10 points from a 51 percent majority in December 2009.

Significantly, however, respondents' optimism concerning their personal and household economic future rose between the December and June polls. When asked if they felt that their household economic well being would improve, 63 percent thought it would improve and 13 percent thought it would worsen. This shift is noteworthy as corresponding figures were considerably lower in the December 2009 survey.

A majority of respondents also see wages and salaries as either better (36 percent) or at least the same (37 percent) over the past year, suggesting, in turn, that the predominant dissatisfaction with Iraq's overall direction stems more from perceptions of national rather than personal troubles.

One source of this malaise is the widespread view that basic services (water, electricity, sewage, etc.) have deteriorated over the past year. At the same time, a majority of Iraqis continue to see a negative general economic situation (56 percent) and a worsening of unemployment in the country (63 percent).

As seen over the course of IRI polling, Iraqi people continue to display optimism towards the security situation within the country. This survey indicates that 73 percent of respondents acknowledge an improvement in security, representing an eight point decrease from 81 percent in December 2009.

When asked how the Iraqi National Government has performed a majority, 61 percent, cite favorably, a three point increase from December 2009. Conversely, the Council of Representatives received decidedly mixed reviews with 38 percent of respondents indicating that they approve of the new body, while 62 percent either disapprove or remain undecided.

#### *Regional Differences*

As of June 2010, regional differences on bellwether questions have narrowed since December 2009. Today even residents of the Kurdistan region (61 percent) or Basrah (71 percent) tend to agree with their compatriots elsewhere that Iraq is going in the wrong direction. In fact, only in the southern belt provinces are the right and wrong directions statistically tied (51 percent vs. 49 percent). Similarly, the three major sectarian or ethnic groups are now more inclined to agree on this point, but by different margins: Shia Arabs, 52 percent wrong vs. 48 percent right;

Sunni Arabs, 68 percent wrong vs. 32 percent right, Kurds, 56 percent wrong vs. 44 percent right.

In December 2009, by contrast, optimism was strong in the Kurdistan Region, southern belt provinces and in Basrah; the mood was negative in the disputed territories and the northern triangle. Sunni Arabs viewed the country as on the wrong track (36 percent right direction – 58 percent wrong direction), while the opposite was true among Shia Arab (58 percent right direction – 36 percent wrong direction) and Kurds (58 percent right direction – 38 percent wrong direction).

## Looking Ahead

### *Government Formation*

Majorities of all three groups, Sunni Arabs, Shia Arabs and Kurds say it is important for Ayad Allawi to be in the new government: overwhelmingly so among Sunni Arabs (92 percent), by Shia Arabs (69 percent) and Kurds (68 percent). However, Sunni Arabs say a government without Allawi would be illegitimate. Shia Arabs are evenly divided on that question, while the Kurds reject it by a decisive margin (56 percent vs. 26 percent).

In assessing the recent elections and anticipating the new Council of Representatives' performance, there are almost no differences at all in the positive views of all three major communities in the country. Around two-thirds in each group say the March 7, 2010 elections were free and fair. Moreover, the same high proportion of each group (57 percent) voice confidence that the new parliament will work well for the benefit of all Iraqi people.

### *Looming Decisions*

Federalism and secularism remain divisive issues, but in different ways. Except in the Kurdistan region, majorities in all other regions prefer a stronger central government, and say oil revenues should flow in that direction. However, inside the Kurdistan region, 14 percent and 30 percent, respectively, take the same positions.

## Issues

### *Top Concern: Services, Not Security*

The June 2010 poll showed a distinct shift from December 2009 on the *single* biggest problem facing Iraq as a whole. The latest figures for this are: Basic services such as water and electricity, 69 percent; security, 20 percent; and unemployment, nine percent. The top two were reversed in December 2009: security, 43 percent; and basic services, 23 percent.

Security is cited in June 2010 as *one of the top three concerns* by 59 percent, behind basic services at 74 percent. In the December 2009 poll, the economy and security were virtually tied as top three issues with Iraq voters. When asked to name the top three issues they wanted the prime minister and the Council of Representatives to focus on, 76 percent cited economy-related issues as one of their top three choices and 72 percent cited security. However, a majority of

Iraqis agreed that security has improved in the country (81 percent better – 18 percent worse). Voters were less sure about the economy, with 40 percent rating the economy positively and 57 percent rating it negatively.

### *Provincial Issues*

Based on the June 2010 poll, there are differences in assessments of Iraq's provincial councils. The only one with a clearly positive (60 percent) rating is in the Kurdistan region. In the southern belt, northern triangle, and Ninewah/Kirkuk provinces, a little more than half rate these councils favorably; views in Baghdad are split right down the middle (44 percent positive, 44 percent negative). The negative standout is Basrah, where the provincial council gets by far the worst ratings: 65 percent negative vs. 33 percent positive.

In the December 2009 poll, people were mixed about the conditions in their province but optimistic about the future. When asked about the condition of their province in the December 2009 poll, 49 percent said that they thought it was heading in the right direction, while 36 percent said it was not. Local economies were rated as being in good shape by 38 percent while 52 percent rated it negatively. However, the December 2009 poll indicated that people did believe that their councils could improve their lives; 58 percent responded that it was likely that their council would do so. When asked in the December 2009 poll what the councils' top three priorities should be, basic services were chosen by 67 percent while 52 percent mentioned unemployment; security was third at 47 percent.

## **Ratings**

### *Performance Ratings*

As of June 2010, the Iraqi National Army (73 percent) and police (68 percent) continue to receive high approval ratings – and so, by a smaller margin does the national government (61 percent). All of these numbers are practically unchanged since the December 2009 poll.

The largest difference in attitudes remains in perceptions of the army: Shia Arabs, 81 percent favorable; Sunni Arabs, 70 percent favorable; Kurds, only 51 percent favorable. Conversely, Kurds are solidly favorable (83 percent) toward the Kurdistan region; that opinion is much lower between Shia Arabs (24 percent) and Sunni Arabs (22 percent), although this is a marginal improvement since December 2009.

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