



WORLD LEADERS REACT TO THE IRAQI ELECTIONS

THE IRAQI ELECTIONS

- Iraqis in large numbers voted at 5,216 polling centers around Iraq on January 30.
- Iraqi officials organized the election and Iraqi security forces protected the polling places. Over 30,000 trained Iraqis monitored the elections.
- More than 265,000 Iraqis participated in the Out-of-Country Voting program, held in 14 countries worldwide. 94% of those who registered reportedly voted.
- A 275-member Transitional Assembly will be seated within the next few weeks.

Leaders around the globe responded quickly and favorably to the January 30 Iraqi elections, praising the courage and determination of the Iraqi people in going to the polls. They also recognized that the election, while a milestone, is a first step on a longer road to democracy. Some of their statements follow.

NORTH AMERICA

Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Pierre Pettigrew:

“This Sunday marks an important milestone in Iraq’s political transition toward a stable and functioning democracy... Despite obvious challenges, Iraqis have shown determination and commitment to their electoral process.”

Mexican President Vicente Fox: The Iraqi election “is an important democratic step and we hope that the process won’t be impeded by violence.”



CENTRAL AMERICA

El Salvadoran President Elias Antonio Saca:

“I believe that very few in the world expected such a marvelous response on the part of the Iraqi people – that such a high percentage went out to vote... We’ve been through the most difficult part, today

comes the most important part, which is to allow the established authorities to be at the forefront of control in their country.”

EUROPE

British Prime Minister Tony Blair:

“It was moving and humbling... to see the simple determination and clear-sighted courage of millions of Iraqis exercising the right to vote for the first time in their lives. A democratic Iraq is not just a giant

step forward for Iraq itself; it is a blow right at the heart of global terrorism....”

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer: Iraqis “deserve great recognition for the will they have shown to shape the future of their country peacefully and democratically, despite massive intimidation.”

Polish Defense Minister Jerzy Szmajdzinski: “These elections show we are dealing with an optimistic scenario... For sure the high election turnout shows the Iraqis, in contrast to the black scenarios and various predictions, have made this their day, their celebration.”

Portuguese Prime Minister Pedro Santana Lopes: “The future of Iraq will be determined by Iraqis themselves. That is the message coming from today’s elections.”

Russian President Vladimir Putin: “The conditions for the election in Iraq were, to put it mildly, very difficult. At the same time it is a step in the right direction; it is a positive event.”

World Leaders React to the Iraqi Elections (cont.)

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Indonesian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Marty Natalegawa:

“Their active participation, despite the very difficult security situation, reflects a commendable determination to seize their own destiny in restoring sovereignty and in establishing a democratic Iraq.”

New Zealand Foreign Minister Phil Goff: “These elections represent a key step toward achieving a democratic and peaceful Iraq.”

South Korean Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Ban Ki-moon: “We highly praise and celebrate Iraq’s general elections, which we have viewed as an opportunity to bring peace and stability to the nation.”

THE MIDDLE EAST

Iranian Parliamentary Deputy Alaeddin Boroujerdi:

The vote is “a great step for Iraqis towards an independent and popular regime.”

Jordan’s King Abdullah II: “If we have good examples of democratic process, whether it’s in Iraq or with the Palestinians, it does help countries such as Jordan to be able to push the envelope. So I think what we saw yesterday in Iraq is a positive thing. I think it is a thing



that will set a good tone for the Middle East, and I’m very optimistic.”

Kuwaiti Oil Minister Sheikh Ahmad Fahd al-Saabah, the President of OPEC: “I think this is the first step for a stable Iraq.”

SOUTH ASIA

Afghan President Hamid Karzai:

“I am happy for the people of Iraq and hope that today’s elections will be another important step on the path of achieving stability, democracy and prosperity for our Iraqi brothers and sisters.”

OTHER LEADERS

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan:

“The Iraqis who turned out today are courageous; they know that they are

voting for the future of their country. We must encourage them and support them to take control of their destiny.”

European Union Foreign Policy Chief Javier Solana:

“Despite the many difficulties that lie ahead, the elections mark progress towards a transition to a democratic, free and peaceful Iraq.”

Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano:

“The international community hopes this day may magnify a future of peace.”