

## **Election Monitors Learn the Ropes**

**Author:** [IWPR](#)

By Yaseen Madhlom in Hillah (ICR No. 103, 27-Jan-05)

The one-day workshop on January 27 focused on voting procedures and how to sort and count votes. The aim was to ensure the election goes smoothly, frustrating attempt by insurgents to disrupt the day.

Volunteers are essential to the election process, because there will be no official international monitoring presence in Iraq due to security concerns. They will observe from Jordan.

Some of the monitors in Babil will be working in the volatile areas of Latifiyah, Iskandariyah, Jarf al-Sakhir and Haswa, where leaflets have been distributed calling for a boycott.

Ali Abdul-Hamza, one of the volunteer monitors, said he decided to participate because the Shia clerical leadership, headed by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, had issued a call encouraging everyone to vote.

"I'm not afraid of the terrorists, and the elections will succeed," he insisted.

United States-led coalition troops will work with Iraqi security forces to provide protection on election day. The police and military will search everyone entering polling stations, including election officers.

Babil's deputy governor Hassun al-Fatlawi said all roads leading to the polls will be secured.

"It is normal that the first elections might not be conducted perfectly in Iraq, especially after years of agony and deprivation," al-Fatlawi said. "That's why we should accept any sort of results that come out after January 30, and it will be considered a success for Iraq."

Yaseen Madhlom is an IWPR trainee journalist in Iraq.

**Location:** [Jordan](#)  
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