

A short report about election of Kurdistan region

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Election has its importance and specialty to strengthen the feelings of the citizens towards authority. The voters decided to elect their representatives through voting to establish an authority, which is suitable with the opinion of people and create a represented democracy. People elect their representatives in this way. The interest of people and the groups compete freely during voting especially the authority should be established through winning the majority of the votes. It is clear that most of us have returned to Kurdistan as international observers so that we could service truly and be effective in putting a stone on the process of democracy in Kurdistan region, therefore; we came back to homeland for observing the election.

I, as an observer, want to identify my role that I tried to have a measurement for defending the voters of Kurdistan citizens so that they can vote freely far from forgery and intervention during voting process from any side. In the centers where I was an observer tried to point out the obstacles which hinder the Kurdistan voters to cast their ballots freely. I can say that most of us came back to show the good image of Kurdistan election to the general world view, but we have got a lot of notes on the election which should be improved in future elections.

Election in Kurdistan region

Generally the election was in a secure condition in the polling stations. It is obvious that the country and security establishments played an important role. An important side of the election was having different colors and lists also having five different candidates for the presidential election. It is one of the nice signs of election in the region in general. Despite noticing some violations and frauds in the process of voting, totally the process is a civilized and good phenomenon. Kurdistan citizens were happy that the whole process was good and to an extent they were satisfied and it is believed the future election can be improved.

After 1992 for the first time Kurdistan elected its parliament and most of the authority was in the hand of PDK and PUK in the liberated areas. But after the elections from 1994 to 1998 a civil war broke out between PDK and PUK. The Kurdish areas divided in to two party places, one for PDK and the other for PUK. In 2003 Baghdad regime demolished and in 2005 election was held for Iraqi national assembly and for the governorates but the election for Kurdistan parliament delayed this year for many times until 25 July.

In Kurdistan the motto of CHANGE, which was a political motto of Obama, the new president of United States, became the motto of a strong group in Kurdistan which was mixed of different sides and ideologies but with shared programs under the name of change run by Nawsherwan Mustaffa, the second person of PUK, took steps against corruptions in Kurdistan very soon. Change list can be regarded as the main strong list against kurdistani list (the list of PDK and PUK). Service and Reform List was the list of the four parties. Almost more than 20 parties and organizations competed in this election.

In fact if we want to evaluate the election completely, we need work accurately starting from the campaign date to the count votes.

There are some obstacles in the way of voting freely, in general all over the world and can be seen in Kurdistan, which are:-

- 1- Demographic deceiving. For example transferring a group or some groups of voters from one place to another to vote in a special time or place such as prison, hospital and etc...
- 2- Frightening the voters by threatening and psychological pressure.
- 3- Putting pressure on the voters by giving them money and gifts.
- 4- Deceiving illiterate people in the backward countries. In most of the centers, illiterate people were cooperated by the employees of the center but we did not know what they have been told. There is doubt if the employees of the centers have cooperated with the voters to vote for a special list.
- 5- Inequality of the candidates and the sides as far as economy and using mass media are concerned. For example the two parties (PDK and PUK) were able to use country and media for their service.
- 6- Dissmising some of the employees from their work because of their support for another political side other than the two authorized parties (PDK and PUK).
- 7- Broadcasting lie and unfairly propaganda opposite to each other during the election.
- 8- Availability of persons employed by a party to work inside the centers of voting for the purpose of affecting the voters as it was seen in some centers in Erbil.
- 9- Some voters voted for many times.

I was an observer in elections, the special one on 23 July and general election on 25 July. I have visited the following centers and try to expose the bad face, and the positive and negative sides.

1-Erbil Rizgari Hospital Center

In this center I was very happy when I saw the patients coming to vote with the patient dresses. One of the bad things was the voting of some patients with the letter and support of the hospital manager.

2-Immortal Barzani center

Availability of party related persons inside the center and some others with the posters of kurdistani list were coming and going in the Election Day. Some people voted by special ID and the form of 111. Some times the manager of the center gave supporting letter to the voter so as to vote. It means the system was not the same in all the centers. Those who were responsible for recognizing people could decide.

3-Hemn high school for boys

A person with Kurdish clothes worked for the kurdistani list inside the center. A large number could vote with the form of 111. Availability of responsible party related persons inside the center and sometimes were seen in front of the center.

4-Ahmadi Khani school center

There was Media existence of the two parties inside the center of voting and doing interviews with the manager of the center.

5-Qwestan Base School

In this center almost 179 people voted and their names have been added to the list of voters. I informed the manager of the center about this and called one of the high commission member (Sardar Abdul-Kareem) as a result those who were waiting in the queue disappeared. A large number of people voted with the form of 111. These happened almost at 17 pm. The manager of the center received my letter and I have saved a copy for myself .A person voted who was born in 1994.

6-Chnar intermediate school for girls

Adding the last hour had no excuse .It looked like an organized plan because the number of the voters was not so much for adding time and there was no crowd in the centers where I was in. A large number of voters voted with the yellow form and about 26 names were added to the list. Here a lot of voters voted with the form of 111. After the hour 17 pm the number of young voters increased. Curiously I asked the ID of one of the voters who wanted to vote (who was let to sign by the responsible person for recognizing the identities). They left the center without voting. In the same center responsible of the area (party related persons) came to the center many times.

There was Media existence of the two parties inside the polling station and doing interviews with the manager of the center.

Conclusion

At the beginning it was difficult to know how the process of voting runs. When I entered the first center I was received warmly but very soon I was informed that this chair was my place and I had no right to move. This order was repeated in most of the centers. When I looked to myself and other observers, I thought we were like primary pupils in a very old classic school. We had no right to move and had to follow the orders of the teacher of the subject. We were passive and inactive onlookers even we were asked not to get close to the voting papers during counting votes time. Another international observer had seen by himself a voter voted instead of another voter and his finger was dipped.

I was surprised as to why someone can vote instead of another .In one of Erbil centers, Chnar for girls, we asked a voter about his ID, his name was Aram Ahmed but he signed in the place of Ahmed khidr. How many people have voted in this way?

Also in Kurdistan school nearly 179 names had been added to the list of those who vote. How many people voted in this way?

Were the employees of the centers of party related persons? An influence of a political party was seen in the process of voting. The soldiers and police were like observers in front of the centers. They came to the centers to vote in group by car and bus. It was said that some of them were illiterate, therefore; the manager of the center or some others stood behind them to tell them how to vote. It is worth mentioning that was seen many times in Khani School. Also in hospital patients voted with the letter of the hospital manager.

In Qwestan School more than 179 people were able to vote and their names have been added to the list of voters. I filled the form of number 110 for complaint but I have been told that I cannot complain because I was foreign observer instead I had to receive the form of 111 but they did not have that form and told me to write a report .As a result I wrote my report and the manager of the center signed it. It was strange that representative of kurdistani list asked me many times not to complain. Some of his speeches almost looked like indirect threats. The one who is in charge of organization (party division manager, a fat man) came to the center many times and called the kurdistani list observer then disappeared.

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