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## International Mission for Iraqi Elections Organizational Concept

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### **Mission Rationale**

The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) recognizes in regulation *05/2004 – Electoral Observers* the importance of electoral observers in the conduct of democratic elections. The IECI, with the support of the United Nations (UN), has approved an international mission to follow the election preparations and make informed judgments, and to build capacity and confidence through assessment of identified targets and activities. In the case of Iraq, the international review function will be provided through the organization of an impartial and neutral mission that is dedicated to this purpose, in the spirit of UN Security Council resolution 1546.

### **Mission Overview**

This project concept involves the organization of an international mission solely for the purposes of the Iraqi election cycle as described in the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL). The electoral events within its mandate will include the voting for the Transitional National Assembly (TNA), governorates, and Kurdish regional assembly (January 30, 2005); constitutional referendum (October 2005); and national elections (December 2005). The mandate of the body will be refined in light of conditions on the ground as well as the outcomes of the first elections.

In the spirit of horizontal co-operation with the IECI and other organizations in Iraq, the International Mission for Iraqi Elections (IMIE) will be organized as an alliance of interested parties through an invitation by the IECI and the support of the UN. The IMIE will seek sources of funding to support its activities. For the January election, the specialists will be predominantly election officials from independent election management bodies. The IMIE will focus on the election process in Iraq as well as the out-of-Iraq electoral process; the out-of-Iraq balloting is recognized as important to the evaluation of the overall electoral process.

The IMIE will seek to establish links with domestic monitoring organizations and political parties. The IMIE will seek to coordinate its activities with the internal monitoring that may be conducted by organizations such as the European Commission. In performing its assessment functions, the IMIE will liaise with and seek information from the electoral commission, political entities, government officials, and civil society organizations involved with the election.

The mission's areas of focus will include the legal framework; registration of voters, political parties, coalitions, and candidates' registrations and certifications; impartial pre-polling complaint procedures; voter education; equitable access to media; electoral preparations; polling; vote counting and compilation of results; and the adequate processing of post-election complaints.

The IMIE will involve a team of specialists, plus support staff and security. Given the unique electoral circumstances of Iraq, the IMIE will adopt a framework for its involvement; that is, a statement of its scope of work in the form of a protocol adopted on the elections. Although the immediacy of the January elections is noted, the scope of the mission will include forward-looking components to support the Iraqi electoral process through calendar year 2005 and to provide information to allow the IECI to build its capacities.

### **Mission Structure**

The IMIE will be led by a Steering Committee composed of independent chief electoral officers and electoral commissioners or their nominees. The Steering Committee will select a chair. The Steering Committee can establish an operational platform as required. The IMIE will have an office in Baghdad and be supported through logistical operations in Amman. The Amman office can also have off-site responsibilities. Additional donor countries for human and financial resources will be identified.

The IMIE will focus on the electoral process and may not require a substantial number of people for the January 30 election. The mission structure can be reviewed after the January vote. The mission will have staff based in Iraq to provide an ongoing point of contact and to provide continuity throughout January. The specialists can be deployed from Amman and make visits in January to Baghdad and other parts of Iraq. Using such an assessment model, the IMIE can be a source of verification of the Iraqi electoral process from a broad, multilateral perspective. The IMIE can also make recommendations on capacity building and for long-term improvements in the electoral process.

There will be three forms of reporting from the IMIE. First, the specialists will develop periodic activity reports. Second, there will be delegation reports that are developed and distributed both to the electoral commission and to the public. And third, the final accounting of the mission can be formally reported to the IECI, the voters of Iraq, and the international community.