

BAHRAIN

Date of Elections: December 7, 1973

Purpose of Elections

Following the adoption of the Constitution of 1973 * and the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, general elections were held for 30 members of the newly-established Parliament.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Bahrain, the National Assembly, is composed of 44 members. Of these, 30 are members elected for 4 years and 14 are Ministers who are *ex-officio* members.

Electoral System

All male citizens of Bahrain who have attained the age of 20 years and who are registered on the electoral lists are entitled to vote in the constituency in which they reside. Voting is not compulsory.

Native-born citizens residing in Bahrain who are 30 years old on election day, registered electors and proficient in reading and writing Arabic may be candidates to the National Assembly as long as their right to vote has not been suspended.

Membership of the National Assembly is incompatible with public office except in the case of Ministers; in the latter instance, however, the remuneration for membership and the salary of the portfolio cannot be cumulated. During his mandate, a member of the National Assembly cannot be appointed to the board of directors of a company, nor can he participate in concessions granted by the Government or by public bodies, except in those cases prescribed by law. During the said mandate no member may, moreover, buy or rent any property of the State, nor let, sell or barter any of his property to the State, except by public auction or tender, or in compliance with the system of compulsory acquisition. With the exception of Ministers, members may not, during their mandate, be awarded decorations.

The 30 popularly elected parliamentarians are chosen from 20 constituencies by simple majority through secret ballot.

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 16.

If, for any reason, a seat in the National Assembly becomes vacant before the end of the term, it is filled by means of a by-election held within 2 months from the date on which the Assembly declares the vacancy. No such election is held when a vacancy arises less than 6 months before the end of the Assembly's term.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

In accordance with the Electoral Law, the election campaign opened 32 days prior to the election date. A total of **116** candidates stood for the 30 elective seats.

Owing to lack of political parties, candidates ran on an individual basis.

Major issues during the campaign included economic and educational development, increased political freedom, formation of trade-unions, combatting the steadily rising cost of living and implementation of a wide-scale housing policy.

Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa bin Sulman al Khalifa formed a new Government on December 15, 1973.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections

Number of registered voters	24,883
Voters	19,509 (78.4 %)
Blank or void ballot papers	53
Valid votes	19,456