

## IRAQ

**Date of Elections:** 20 June 1980

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament provided for under the new Electoral Law of March 1980\*. General legislative elections had not been held in Iraq since 1958.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The unicameral Parliament of Iraq, the National Council, comprises 250 members elected for 4 years.

### **Electoral System**

All Iraqi citizens who are at least 18 years of age are entitled to vote. Electoral registers are compiled on the constituency level; voting is not compulsory.

In 1980, candidates for the National Council had to be literate and at least 25 years of age. Furthermore, they must have been Iraqi by birth, from Iraqi parents by birth or from an Iraqi father by birth and a mother from one of the Arab countries; upheld the principles and aims of the July 1968 progressive and socialist revolution; completed military service or been exempted from it; not been expropriated landowners from whom land was taken under the Agrarian Reform Law, or whose properties were nationalized or confiscated by the State; not been convicted of crimes related to the State's internal or external security after the July 1968 revolution; not been convicted for violating public confidence, harming the national economy and the State's financial confidence, violating public morality, or misdemeanour; and not have had a record of imprisonment for murder for a period not less than 15 years.

For the 1980 poll, the country was divided into 56 electoral districts, each having a minimum of 250,000 inhabitants; one Deputy represents every 50,000 people.

### **General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections**

The 1958 military coup d'Etat which overthrew the monarchy resulted in the dissolution of the National Assembly. Ten years later, supreme governing authority was vested in a Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), whose Chairman was also President of the Republic.

\* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 17.

In December 1979, the 17-member RCC invited political, trade union and popular organizations to debate a draft law which provided for a 250-member National Council; this law was adopted on 16 March 1980.

Some 860 candidates—including 19 women—contested the Assembly seats. Although candidates ran without party affiliation, the majority were members of the Arab Baath Socialist Party, a revolutionary movement that has ruled the country since 1968, at times in alliance with the Iraqi Communist Party. Candidates also included members of the Kurdistan Revolutionary and Democratic parties, both supporters of the Baath-led National Progressive Front, as well as independents.

Polling day was marked by a high turnout of voters. On 1 July, the new National Council was formally opened. The President of the Republic is Mr. Saddam Hussain, who assumed power in July 1979.

Statistics

*1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in the National Council*

Number of registered electors	6,000,000 (approx.)
Voters . . . . .	85% (approx.)