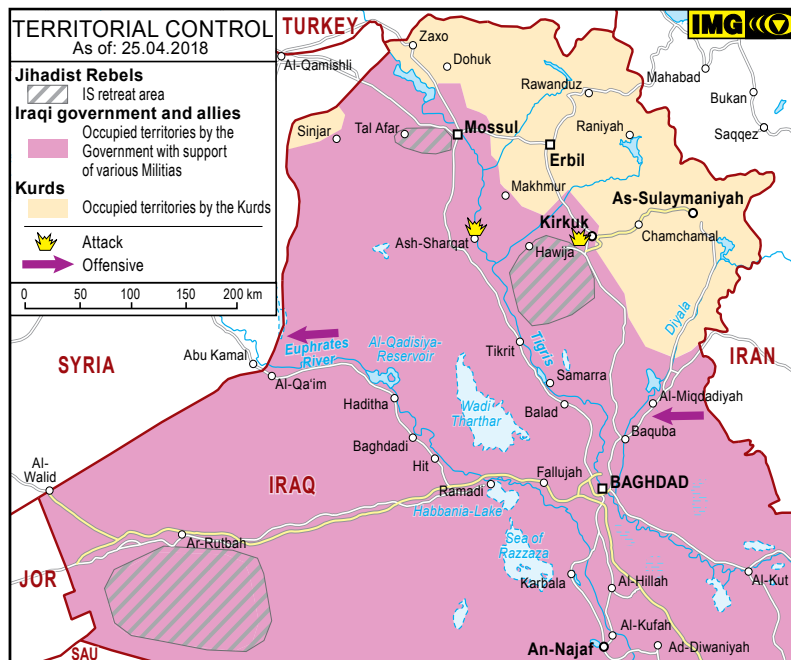


Iraq is in campaign fever with the parliament elections scheduled for May, 12. Official starting point of the electoral campaign was April, 16. In the upcoming elections a broad majority of alliances tries to achieve a high impact in order to gain as much seats in parliament as possible. The main goals of all alliances and parties are combating corruption, improvement of the security situation, creation of new job opportunities and rebuilding of destroyed regions.

ISIS declared that it will fight the elections by conducting suicide bombings. The Iraqi security forces reacted with two major offensives against ISIS in Anbar and Diyala province. Turkey also started a major campaign against PKK fighters, who are believed to be hiding in Northern Iraq. The announcement of the Turkish offensive was followed by protests of the high cleric Muqtada al- Sadr and Kurdish MPs.



MAP ANALYSIS

The security situation in Iraq remains critical. ISIS is conducting attacks in the areas around Sharqat and Kirkuk in order to intimidate the population not to take part in the elections. The Iraqi Security Forces started two offensives to neutralize ISIS fighters hiding in the desert-rich Anbar province and the mountains near Diyala.

FORECAST

After the launch of the official electoral campaign in Iraq everything will be focused on the elections. The governing parties will focus on their achievements like the war against corruption. The other parties and alliances will try to get attention by formulating popular goals like the improvement of the security situation. Therefore the security forces will be put in standby and secure the election facilities trying to prevent ISIS attacks. In the meantime Baghdad will set new attempts to centralize the federal order and to weaken Kurdish claims.

The periodically published Fact Sheet compiles and analyzes significant developments pertaining to the Iraq conflict while providing maps and an outlook of possible future events.



INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

20.03: Turkish President Erdogan announced that the Turkish army will accelerate its offensive against Kurdistan's Worker Party (PKK) militants across the border into Northern Iraq if it is necessary.

21.03: After the visit of prime minister Abadi in Saudi Arabia twice in recent years, a return visit by Saudi Arabian prince bin Salman in Iraq was announced by Iraqi member of parliament (MP) Saadoun al-Dulaymi. This notification was followed by a huge investment in the agricultural sector near Ramadi.

22.03: The Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) asked PKK members to leave Kurdish cities and villages in order to avoid casualties on KRG-territory. Turkey continued to conduct air strikes on PKK-hidings and shelters in the Iraqi-Turkish border region.

26.03: The PKK announced to leave the region of Sinjar to avoid a Turkish invasion in Iraq. A spokesperson of PKK argued that this move is justified with the acquired self-defence capabilities of Yezidis in the Sinjar region.

04.04: The Iraqi government announced its intention to increase the crude oil production to 6.5 million barrel per day until 2022.

09.04: The Turkish armed forces announced that they were able to neutralize 108 Kurdish militants in Northern Iraq and South Eastern Turkey over the past weeks by conducting air strikes in those regions.

10.04: According to a local broadcast station Turkey has entered the border region on the Iraqi side to clean it from PKK fighters, followed by protests of Kurdish parliamentarians to respect the integrity of Iraq.

16.04: The Arab League declared its willingness to assist with Iraq's security challenges. Furthermore, in a joint statement they condemned the military operation by Turkey.

20.04: Iraqi Air Force announced that it had conducted air strikes on ISIS positions in Syria. This move came after Abadi's declaration to engage in the cross-border-war against ISIS to avoid a repeated spill over by ISIS terrorists.

25.04: Canada declared that it is still figuring out what to do with the \$ 7 Million deal on weapons for the Peshmerga forces, with whom they were allied in the war against ISIS.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

19.03: The Iraqi government announced to establish a national oil company to regulate a fair distribution of shares for the KRG and the central government.

20.03: According to a report of the Free Press Association Iraq is holding more than 19,000 ISIS members and supporters in captivity and sentenced more than 3,000 to death because of belonging to a terrorist organization.

26.03: The Committee of Responsibility and Justice declared that they had finished the examination of the candidate lists for the election and had to opt out many candidates in high positions with a Bath regime background.

04.04: The parliament agreed on a new provincial election law and set the date for elections on December, 22. It will mark the first time where the disputed province of Kirkuk holds elections and settles the territorial dispute ultimately.

05.04: Since months Kurdish civil servants are protesting due to a reduction of their salaries. While the protests did not achieve any results. The first ones who resumed their work were teachers and education staff.

09.04: After the defeat of ISIS the first Christians try to return to their villages and cities according to the arch bishop of the Syriac Catholic church (Yohanna Petros Mouche).

10.04: The Federal Supreme Court will examine a lawsuit against the legality of Kurdish oil agreements for the export of crude to the international market.

10.04: Kurdish officials are sceptical about the neutrality of the provincial elections in Kirkuk in case Shiite Popular Mobilization Forces would stay in the area. A statement of the PMFs followed that there is no need of Kurdish Peshmerga forces being present in Kirkuk.

16.04: According to the Ministry of Interior the former Minister of Trade, Ziad al-Qatan, wanted for corruption, was arrested with the help of the Jordanian police.

19.04: The High Commission for Elections announced the introduction of a computer system for the counting of votes.

23.04: Religious leaders all over Iraq, such as Ayatollah Sistani, advised the people to vote cautiously and not to vote for politicians, who were on trial for corruption.

MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

20.03: The Iraqi army declared the start of a new offensive against hiding ISIS members in the province of Diyala. Further, on 16.04. they started an offensive to clear Anbar province.

22.03: The Iraqi border guard unit stated that they were able to prevent ISIS from attacking their headquarters near the Saudi Arabian border.

09.04: Iranian border guards reportedly hurted or killed at least two of four Kurdish adolescents, who were hunting close to the Iranian border.

10.04: Representatives of a Kurdish electoral list complained in parliament about possible disadvantages in the election process due to the military intervention in North Iraq by Turkey.

12.04: A roadside bomb exploded during a funeral of two PMF fighters in Sharqat killing at least 16 people. The attack was claimed by ISIS.

26.04: A Turkish air strikes targeted the Qandil mountain range to neutralize PKK positions.

27.04: The Iraqi Ministry of Interior denies reports about ISIS being in control of some villages near Kirkuk.



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