



[Governance Center for Public Policies](http://www.igcpp.org)




[National Endowment for Democracy](http://www.ned.org)

## Executive Summary

### National Index for Democratic Transformation in Iraq, 2020 – 2021

(Hard Bet)

Country	National Index for Democratic Transformation in Iraq 2020 – 2021		Economist Democracy Index 2020		Freedom House 2021	
	Score	Regime type	Score	Regime type	Score	status
 <a href="#">Iraq</a>	3.8	<b>Partially authoritarian</b>	3.62	<b>Authoritarian</b>	29	<b>Not Free</b>

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National Index for Democratic Transformation in Iraq, 2020 – 2021, is based on field studies in 12 provinces (Baghdad, Nineveh, Basra, Sulimanyiah, Thi-Qar, Babil, Erbil, Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, and Najaf)

### **About Governance Institute for Public Policy**

“Governance” is a Think Tank aims to spur creative thinking towards state building and institutions. Its activities focus on analyzing and making public policy, in order to contribute to prerequisite of democratic transformation in Iraq, based on principles of Good Governance.

Since its establishment (2010), Governance Center organized activities in Baghdad and several Iraqi provinces on number of strategic issues on national and local levels. It published policy and research papers, drafted by specialized academics, as well as, established a network of experts and activists in different fields on different levels to bridge relations among those share creative thinking, stakeholders, and policymakers.

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- **Introduction**

The path of democratic experience in Iraq over the last 18 years led to gradual erosion of trust between citizens and the political process, as reflected in international indicators, and evidenced in results of the National Index for Democratic Transformation in Iraq for previous years. This was due to the weak performance of the political system and failure of democratic institutions to accomplish their tasks at the local and national levels, which contributed to the failure in service delivery and achieving security, accompanied by widespread corruption.

These factors fueled the popular protests, reaching their climax in the October uprising in 2019, which expressed new vision and priorities. The ethno-sectarian quotation system, which is key pillar of the political system, was considered the biggest obstacle towards establishing an efficient, effective and inclusive democratic system in the view of the masses and youth in particular. Therefore, the demands of the protest movement centered on political reform and countering corruption.

**The greatest task of achieving reforms' demands is achieving genuine popular representation through free, fair general elections as an entry point to achieve fundamental change in the political process.**

Despite the partial admission of failure by the political forces, and the response of the political system to public pressure through the resignation of the government of Mr. Adel Abdul-Mahdi and the formation of an “interim” government led by Mr. Mustafa Al-Kazemi, and the change of a number of election-related laws (Electoral Commission Law, Parliament Elections Law), and Electoral administration, setting a date for early elections next October, and registering about 3,500 people as candidates in the October elections. However, holding elections capable of bringing about structural change and comprehensive reforms still faces real challenges.

**A key challenge to political reform is restoring control over arms, imposing state authority by enforcing laws, and taking serious and tangible steps towards countering corruption.**

It is noteworthy that many activists, media persons and human rights defenders in Iraq are still facing real dangers due to their defense of basic freedoms and the fight against corruption, which led to the occurrence of numerous attacks, some of which claimed the lives of a number of activists.

**The current Iraqi government took number of steps in fighting corruption, arresting number of perpetrators involved in the assassination of activists, and finalizing all preparations for upcoming elections.**

Accordingly, the National Index for Democratic Transition in Iraq came amid an atmosphere of anticipation and a test of confidence in the government’s ability to meet the requirements of holding elections that express the vision of change and its entitlements, and the great challenges

on the part of the actors and structures of the system whose mechanisms and internal and external interests have been entrenched throughout the past eighteen years to sustain status quo. It is a conflict that may extend outside the mechanisms of the political process if the regime fails to broker balances and meet the basic requirements for reform and democratic change, taking into account the tense regional environment and its ramifications on Iraq.

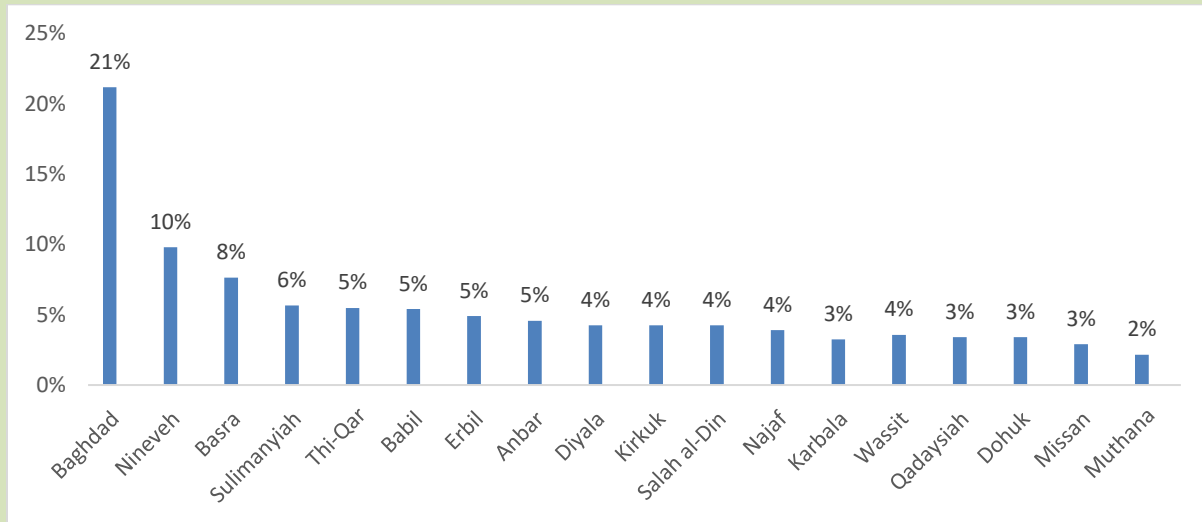
#### • **Methodology**

The National Index was adopted after studying international indicators and trying to localize them through several discussion seminars with academic in the relevant disciplines (political sciences, law, media, sociology, economics, elections, and statistics) in order to reach indicators that approach the reality of the democratic experience in Iraq, and (5) main aspects that form a basis for the study of democracy in Iraq have been adopted, taking into consideration previous studies, the specificities of Iraqi society, the factors of establishing democracy, and pros and cons of democracy. The National Index for the current year adopted the same aspect as for the previous year's indicator to measure progress/retreat in democratic transformation. The aspects are:

- Government performance
- Rule of Law
- Economic stability
- Integrity of elections
- Rights and Freedoms

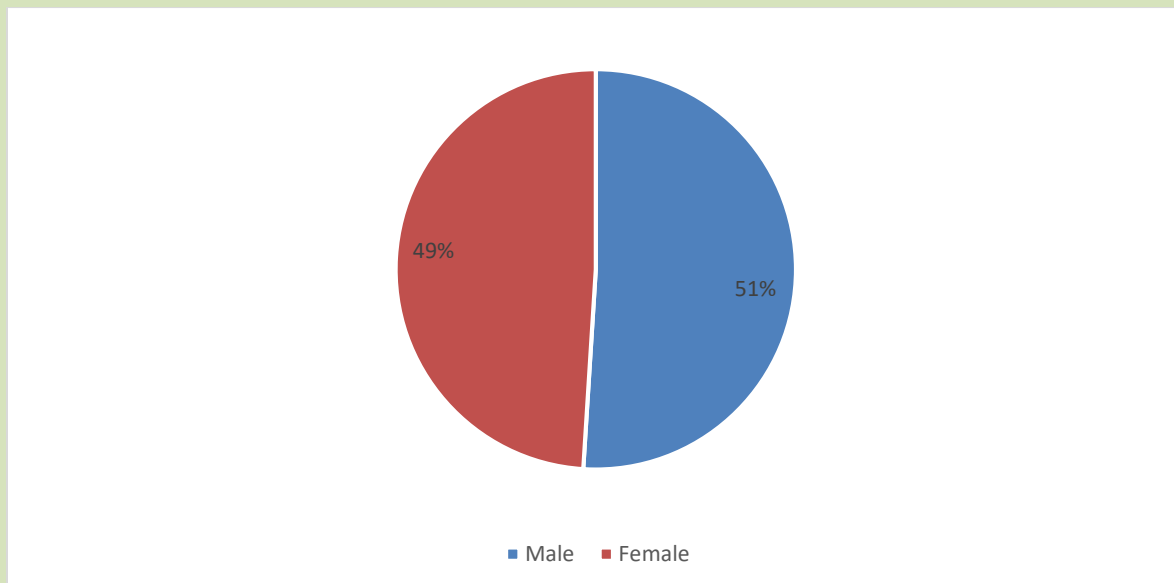
The study is based on a survey of (1203) citizens who have the right to vote (18) years and older, who reside in all Iraqi provinces. (10) Political science graduates were trained in two workshops to ensure random sampling, representation according to the population ratios approved by the Ministry of Planning, as shown in Chart No. (1).

**Chart No. 1: Distribution of the sample according to the population ratios for each governorate**



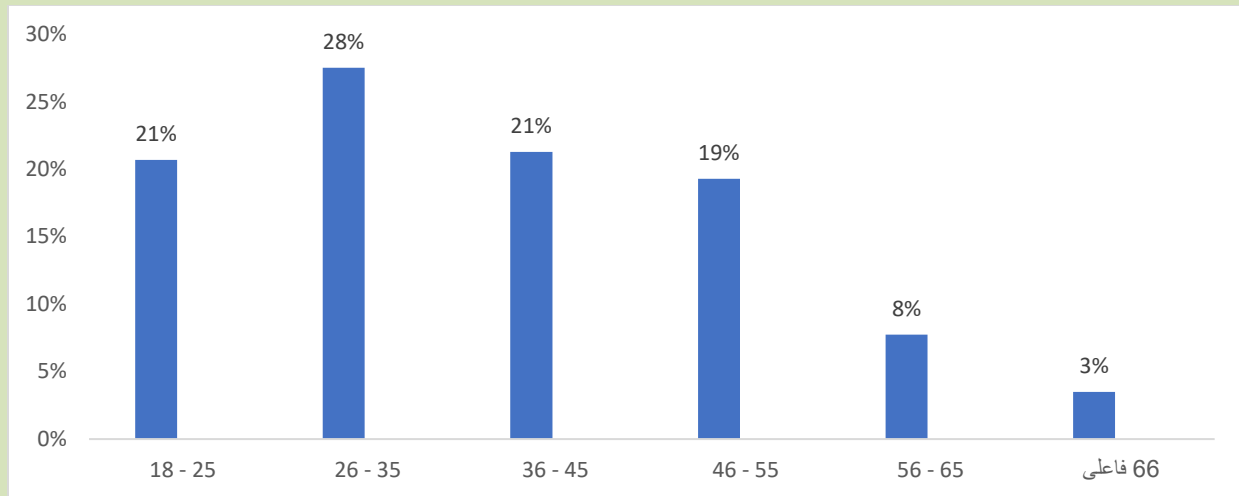
As for gender, the sample is distributed between (614) males and (589) females, according to the estimated percentages of the Iraqi Ministry of Planning for the year 2018 (51% males, 49% females).

**Chart No. (2): Prevalence of the sample by gender**



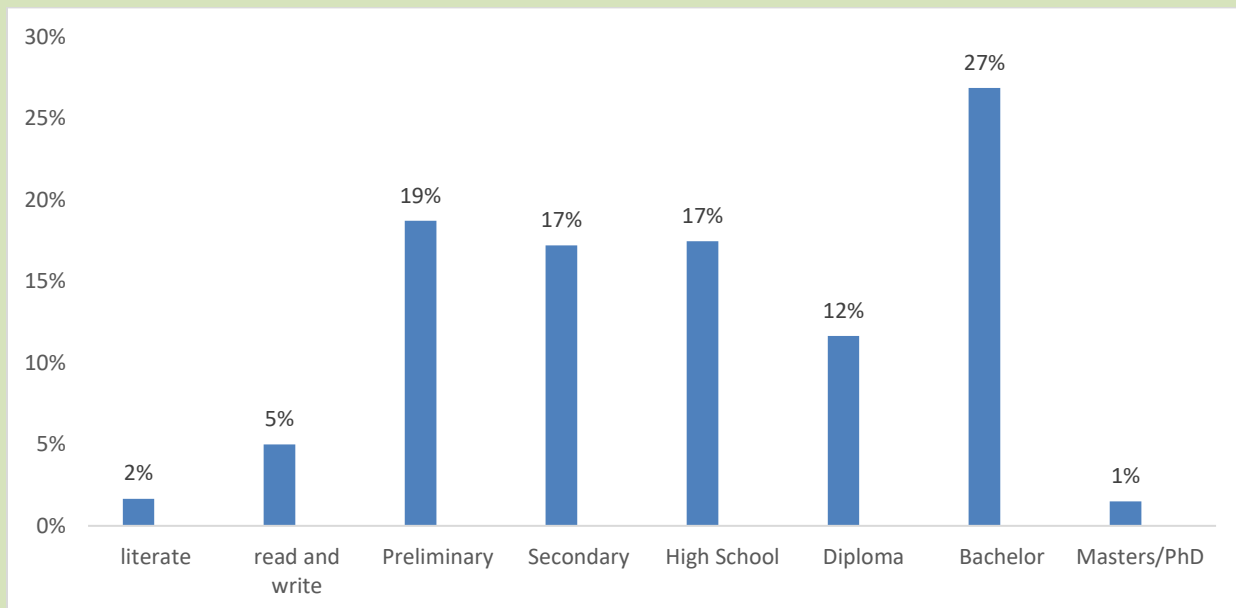
The research sample covered different age groups as shown in Figure (3).

**Chart No. (3): Sample prevalence by age groups**



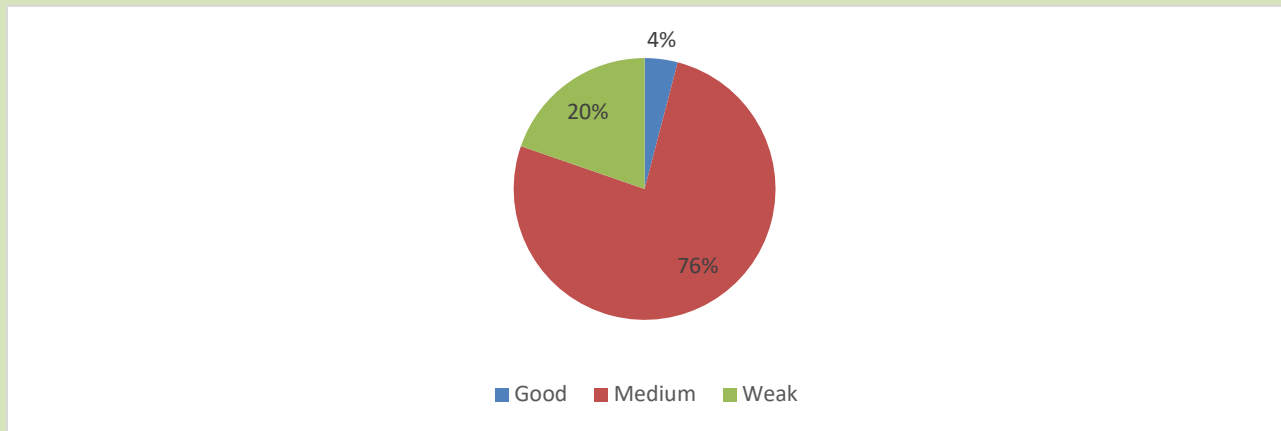
The research sample also covered all societal groups at all levels of study, as shown in Chart No. (4).

**Chart No. (4): Sample spread by educational level**

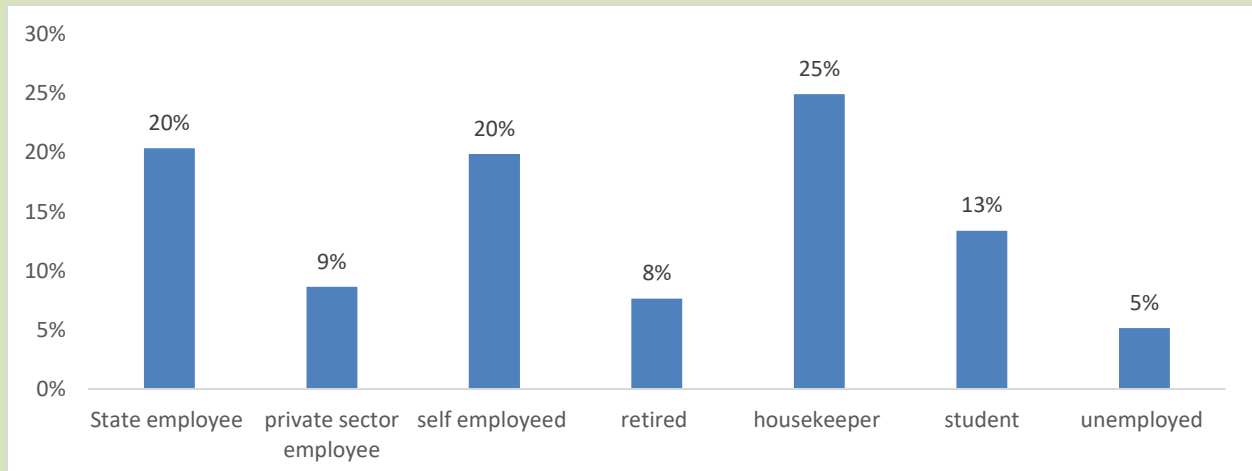


The economic level of the respondents was also determined by knowing their standard of living and their professions, as only (4%) have the ability to save some money, compared to (20%) who face difficulties in covering their monthly expenses, as shown in Chart No. (5), Although more than (57%) have a fixed source of income (government employee, private sector, self-employed, retired) as shown in Chart No. (6), and this can be attributed to the economic consequences of the Corona pandemic.

**Chart No. (5): distribution of the sample by standard of living**



**Chart No. (6): Distribution of the sample by occupation**



As shown above, the research sample is identical to the research population in terms of geographical spread and gender, which enables the generalization and adoption of its results to know the perception of the Iraqi society on the democratic experience in Iraq.

- **Results Summary:**

- **Government performance:**

The survey on this aspect showed a number of results, the most prominent of which is that the majority of the sample indicated that government institutions do not provide services in a manner that can be considered in line of good governance, at a percent of (71%), and this is due to the fact that many government leaders do not have the necessary competence and experience according to (68%) of the respondents, and the lack of transparency (71%), and the weak effectiveness and productivity of parliament (79%), due to weak legislative and oversight roles (84%). On the aspect of security, 78% of the sample believes that security forces succeeded in achieving security.

**Positive perception of citizens towards security institutions and trust in its capability to protect them, impose security, and achieve stability**

Perception was also positive towards independent commissions, as 66% of sample believes independent commissions perform its tasks in an acceptable manner. This indicates an increase in popular acceptance to the efforts of some independent commissions, such as Independent High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR) and Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) that has achieved progress in fulfilling its duties.

**IHCHR achieved popular acceptance after documenting and transferring October incidents objectively and neutrally, winning the trust internally and internationally, and its reports established its credibility in monitoring and documenting human rights violations and this was reflected in citizens' positive perception.**

- **Rule of Law:**

Results shows positive progress towards equality in front of the law, compared to 2020 results, despite progress was not huge, still it is important to note and should be promoted, accompanied by an increase in judicial suspension and arrest, compared to last index results.

**Partial progress in achieving rule of law and judicial measures.**

Despite several challenges noted by respondents, such as the dominance of sub-loyalties tribal, sectarian, and ethnic, which adversely impact the enforcement of laws, in addition to the spread of arms and not being controlled by the State (51%), as well as, lack of understanding of legal frameworks by citizens (51%). As for tribal revenge practices, 66% of the sample agreed that it should be treated as terrorist rather than criminal cases.



**A clear indicator that popular awareness is rising of the danger of tribal revenge practices on social security, rule of law and the importance of resorting to legal channels.**

- **Economic stability**

Confronting Covid pandemic through lockdown measures and the devaluation of Iraqi dinner by 24% generated new economic pressures on government roles, which almost led to a comprehensive economic collapse, but the government was able to mitigate the intensity of economic shock through packages of internal and external lending policies and delaying the payment of bills.

**Government succeeded partially in mitigating the intensity of economic shock**

However, the economic conditions are still disturbing government work and at the same time have repercussions on the citizens. As (51%) of the sample believes that the economic crisis that afflicted the country has led to many workers losing their jobs, and (78%) of them agree that the economic crisis, quarantine measures, social distancing and closure policies have led to a decrease in their monthly income, especially those work in private sector.

The survey shows mixed results towards government's ability to limit the rise in prices, particularly foodstuffs, especially upper middle income families indicated they did not feel the rise of foods' prices, but lower income people for example the residents of Muthana, the poorest province, unanimously (92%) stated that government measures couldn't control prices. Respondents agree that women more difficult circumstances than men in accessing job market. This was evident in Thi-Qar, were 85% of females reported they face difficulties accessing job market and 68% of males reported that females do face such difficulties. Respondents also believe in the prospect of implementing White Paper measures, with some positive perception of its potential.

**Results show that there is an opportunity for the government to proceed with implementing the measures of the White Paper.**

- **Election Integrity**

The results of National Index match the fundamental shifts of the popular electoral mode, which is no longer a bystander but playing proactive role. 43% of respondents affirmed their willingness to participate in the upcoming elections, as well as, a support for the new reforms of having multi-districts in each province, in contrast to prior elections, where each province was one electoral district, individual candidacy guarantees real presentative of the people (62%), and international observation to limit electoral fraud.

**Significant percent of respondents endorse electoral reforms and participation in the upcoming elections**

Regarding election commission, there is a positive perception (55%) towards having judges contributes to the integrity of elections. But 55% expected elections will not change political situation, despite acceptable percentage of those willing to participate and the positive perception

towards the new electoral system. This could be attributed to the influence of religious and tribal leaders (75%) and lack of electoral security.

**57% of respondents supports International observation**

- **Rights and Freedoms:**

Results shows that women enjoy suitable conditions for political participation (44%), in contrast to only 24% who opposed this statement. This percentage represent exponential increase from last year index, where 40% reported that there are obstacles and only 28% believed there are no major obstacles hind women political participation.

**A noticeable progress in the perception of women political participation, indicating a positive impression towards women participation in electoral process**

Results indicated that civil society do affect the promotion of democratic life in Iraq, as 77% believes activities of civil society promote democracy in Iraq. This indicates major development in the level of trust in civil society, compared to last year index, where percentage did not surpass 41%.

**The development of civil society role in impacting political process in Iraq through the ability of mobilizing people, raising awareness, and pressure policymakers to adopt number of societal demands and prerequisite of change and reforms**

Majority of respondents (89%) stressed the importance of legislating Domestic Violence Law to protect families. It is worth noting that majority of males aged (26 – 45) years endorsed the legislation of the law.

**Iraqi society feels according to the National Index and number of surveys of the need of protecting families (kids, women, elderly) from violence, intimidation, and discrimination without a real determinant**

- **Accumulative average**

The average of the five aspects of the National Index of Democratic Transformation in Iraq 2020 – 2021 is 3.8 out of 10. Hence, Iraq is categorized as partial authoritarian system, indicating a slight improvement from last year, where a score of 3 was obtained.

**Chart No. (7) The cumulative average of the survey aspects**

