

**PRESS CONFERENCE:**

**Judge Kassam[ph], Spokesman, Iraqi Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC)**

**Brigadier General Ali Jabouri[ph], Spokesman, Iraqi Ministry of Interior**

**Brigadier General David G. Perkins, Spokesman, Multi-National Force – Iraq**

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**PARTICIPANTS:**

**Brigadier General Ali Jabouri[ph]  
Judge Kassam[ph]  
Brigadier General Perkins**

**REPORTERS:**

**Peter Graff from Reuters  
Ben Morgan from AFP**

**Other reporters not identified by name or press affiliation.**

**REPORTERS 1-16**

**\*REP1 = REPORTER 1**

**\*INT = INTERPRETER**

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:**

As-Salāmu `Alaykum. [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:**

It is a day to see the latest updates to the security situation related to the elections. A year ago, there was a committee formed, a High Security Committee...Higher Security Committee headed by the deputy minister for police affairs and has represented patients from all ministries...MOD and all the commanders in the field in other provinces. And, of course, MOI and our intelligence department and the national security ministry and also Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Health. A year...throughout this year we had a security effort...a great security effort. I don't want to forget also the member...the coalition members in this committee represented by high-ranking American generals and officers in this committee. This committee worked to...on putting a security plan to providing security or securing polling sites. And there was a clear effort and great success appeared through protecting the registration centers that was opened on the 15th of July and the work continued until the 28th of August. And throughout that period, we had 550 registration centers in...across Iraq. And some of the sub-branches were in the remote areas, far...it was very far away...hundreds of kilometers away from the centers...city centers like Samau[ph], for instance, and that required providing security for those centers. It was a great...a phenomenal experience. We were able to exercise or

check the ability of our security forces in providing control and movements there. We also had a great effort in providing the material and the arrival of the material for the voters' registry and other material.

We studied this plan and developed this plan to...in order to put a general plan to provide security for the polling sites and the election sites. And this plan was put together and was ratified by the Council of Ministers. And there is going to be a conference on the 12th of this month to put the last touches on this plan in this conference.

During this...these days...upcoming days, we are putting a lot of efforts in protecting the arrival of the materials in Baghdad airport, Basra and Mosul airports, and traveling or moving them, transferring them by trucks to the provinces and the warehouses, and then, after that, to the polling sites. The plan would...is going to be discussed and detailed on the 12th of this month and we're going to have commanders to discuss this plan.

Also, I don't want to forget to thank General...or Major General Idan[ph] who didn't...he's not present here today. But Brigadier General Ali's got...is going to give us a brief on the security side and I'm going to answer questions on the technical side here. And I

also want to thank General Perkins, the Multi-National Force spokesman. We have a great work...are doing a lot of work to provide security for the polling sites to secure the Iraqi voters through...during going to or heading to the voting sites to be able to freely give their votes. And there is great effort from the government and from the prime minister personally that helped and assisted the IHEC and they gave a lot of authorities to the IHEC that helped to give the liberty to IHEC to be able to do the elections on the 31st of January.

I wish the next elections or future elections will have great attendance of voters. And after knowing all the technical and security preparation has been put in place so that they can go and freely do their votes or give their votes.

I'm very thankful for your listening here, and I now defer to Brigadier General Ali to give you a brief of the...some of the details about the security plan.

**BG ALI:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** Thank you, Mr. Kassam[ph]. I want to convey the regards of Major General Idan[ph] to you, the deputy minister of MOI, and directions from the MOI minister and Mr. Jawad al-Balani.

Ministry of Interior is taking responsibility of securing the provincial elections throughout the country. And this process started a year ago. And this was the first experiment, just like General Kassam[ph] said. It started with the voters' registration centers and some of it...some of those locations were far away in remote areas, and we were able to work through...coordinating with the Iraqi Army in providing security. This plan was studied and we had...held a lot of conferences...security conferences for all the commanders throughout the country.

And this plan is a joint plan between MOI and MOD. And this plan is going to secure anything related to security of elections in the provinces, starting from arrival of voters to the polling sites or their candidates and their election campaigns prior to election day. And also the special needs voting. Article 26...36 explained that the special vote is going...the special needs vote is going to be for the Army personnel and the military or the police and it's going to be prior to the election day on the 31st of January. There are certain preparations and contingency rules and laws, and it's going to be explained prior to election day.

As far as the reporters, the reporters will have...will be issued

badges by IHEC, special badges. And I have to...and I'd like to explain that on the 20th of January is the last day to register to...for...to register those reporters in the IHEC because without this badge, they will not be able to enter these polling sites. And there are certain polling sites, about 55 polling sites, where the journalists or the reporters have the right to take their equipment with them inside to the polling sites. I want everyone to cooperate with us for their safety and for the voters' safety. Those procedures are going to take time. And we are ready to provide security for them to facilitate their movements inside the polling sites. And this is going to apply also to the observers of the...the international observers. Also local observers. And they need to get badges from the IHEC so we can easily identify them, and this is going to ease their entrance to the polling sites. The polling sites are going to be secured by a plan, a plan that we put together to provide security for all the voters to enter and exit from those polling sites.

We also...like we explained, MOI forces, MOD forces is going to provide...jointly provide security. The task has been distributed to different field commanders and we're going to have...we held so many conferences for all the local commanders to discuss all the hurdles and the obstacles and try to resolve it. Also, we're going to have female searchers...screeners and we're going to also have men

screeners. And we only hope that you can...you cooperate with Iraqi Security Forces.

Also, the prime minister's directives and instructions accor-...for the police and the Army, they should not interfere in the...in any way in the elections. And what we are there for is to provide security and secure those voters to arrive to the polling sites. But we are not going to interfere; we are only going to supervise the process. And the block is going to have central supervision in Baghdad because of the special case in Baghdad here. And we are going to have certain tasks in certain areas.

Also, we have certain procedures that I want to mention here related to the cautious...caution procedures. And it's going to be announced in the right time. But we have seen improvement in security, thanks to God. But we are trying to take the right procedures that would not hinder the movement of the Iraqi people, but at the same time, provide security. This is what's related to the plan and I'm ready to any questions. Thank you very much.

**BG PERKINS:**

As-Salāmu `Alaykum and good afternoon. Again, I'd like to thank General Ali and Judge Kassam[ph] for joining us all here today to talk about this very important topic and one of the first big events to

happen here in Iraq in 2009 in the beginning of the year.

As mentioned earlier, the dramatic progress made in 2008 in security, which resulted in a reduction of 93% of violent security acts with...compared to the height of 2008, this has now allowed us to move forward in many other venues such as economic and, what we're talking here today, political. And so as we are seeing the growth of democratic institutions, the coalition forces here will continue to partner with IHEC, with the Iraqi Security Forces, and with the Iraqi people to ensure progress along this diplomatic line continues to improve.

We are working with all agencies that are involved here in the elections. This is a very large undertaking. There is a lot of help coming from many different sectors which is very good for all involved. And again, the coalition force will be involved in all those. Of course primarily focusing on security. We are working very closely with the minister of defense and the minister of interior on developing the security plans, determining where best coalition forces can augment and help Iraqi Security Forces while they maintain the lead in planning and executing security for the elections.

Coalition forces will provide security throughout all of Iraq with specific focus on areas deemed appropriate, again, in our discussions with the minister of interior and minister of defense. Iraqi Security Forces will be providing the actual security of the polling places in the inner ring. And the coalition forces will be focusing on providing over watch in what we call the outer ring throughout the entire country of Iraq. Everybody's goal here is for legitimate and credible elections – elections of which the results are accepted by the Iraqi people as a major step forward in developing democratic institutions and democratic processes.

We also want to ensure that post-election activities are done in accordance with the rule of law. So this is really an election period, not just an election day. We are in the pre-election period now, going through numerous preparations as has been outlined here already, a very complicated process. This will culminate with the election on the 31st, special needs voting on the 28th. But then there's also the post-election period which we will be equally vigilant with regards to security concerns to make sure, again, that all post-election activities are done in accordance with the rule of law.

And again, the coalition forces are here in a supporting role; we are

supporting the Iraqi-led, the Iraqi-planned preparations. And we take their lead and assist them where we can, where they have asked us to.

So I think, based on that, all three of us are prepared to take any questions out there. Sir.

**REP1:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:** As-Salāmu `Alaykum. Brigadier General Ali and Judge Kassam[ph]. The IHEC puts very strict rules and instructions against the political entities that violate rules in the...during the campaign or their...campaign. So this is not what I say but all other people say that we see posters in...especially in the security...government institutions. And we...there was not any...nothing done against those political entities. And we've seen that political entities within the government are using these posters and using the checkpoints to put their posters and campaigns.

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** In fact, as far as security campa-...or the campaigns...election campaigns, we have put rules and regulations put by the IHEC, and we put rules and we put a system in place. And we...this was the

first time we put a rule for the crime and the infractions or violations regarded to the campaigns or in....

To be frank with you, the legal coverage for the political process still are not enough in Iraq. And there is not a...the party rules are political party rules and the media or the campaign rules. We don't have political party rules, as you know that we're still using rule...or Article 97 of CPA. It was an...we're still under the CPA law. And we did not talk about political entities or how to fund or form those political parties and who is the side that should support or fund them. So this is all not specified yet.

Also, the articles are not enough to regulate this whole issue. But the IHEC warned a group...a great group of political entities, whoever that's going to violate the rules, the ones that using posters and the unauthorized areas like schools or monuments or checkpoints or government entities. And we did put a fine on some political entities. And I don't like to mention their names because this is going to affect negatively on their political campaigns. And we are going to punish more...or penalize more and put fines on them, financial fines. And we hope that in the future we complete our system or our...and the rules and the laws and also put a certain budget, just like other countries. And in each country there...in the

world, they have certain budgets for their political campaigns and election campaigns. And we're still at the beginning of the road and we have done few number of polling and elections. And I'm sure with experience...with practice, comes experience, and I think we can get all the rules in place by time.

**REP2:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:** Brigadier General Ali, some of the people in Ninawa and Diyala, they requested to postpone elections in their areas because of their concerns about security. Do you have any special procedures to provide security in those areas?

**BG ALI:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** I want to thank you for this question. We did put in mind the worst-case scenarios and we put plans, accurate plans for those areas that we think that ha-...would have some spikes or violence or problems. The two provinces that you just mentioned, there is a Ninawa Operation Command and we have Diyala Operation Command and we are following up between the IHEC and the security committee and we are doing...paying visits to those areas and we are going to estimate...or assess the security situation there. And I think we can do it. We are prepared and we are ready. Iraqi Security Forces are ready and confident to provide security in those areas.

**REP3:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:** My question is to Brigadier General Ali. Is it going to be threats by al-Qaida? Who do you think are threatening the political process here or election process? My other question to Judge Kassam[ph]. Did we receive...have we received the ballots yet or...? And General Perkins, where is it going...the MNF-I forces, where is it going to be located as far as from...? Is it going to be from the first line, second line, third line? Thank you.

**BG ALI:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** As far as the threats, I just mentioned earlier that we have taken all cases...worst-case scenarios and worse...all expectations in mind and we think that there would...should...would be threats from al-Qaida or others and we put our plan to...that covers all the threats and everything.

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** As far as the ballots, we have accomplished 80% of the printing process of the ballots. It's been printed now in...outside the country. In the upcoming few days there is going to be finished and be transferred to Iraq. And also the ballots; this is the first time it

been...actually we designed these ballots in...by the IHEC. And we put security signs on those ballots so it cannot be counterfeited or faked...forged.

**BG PERKINS:** In regards to coalition focus on security, as I said earlier, the Iraqi Security Forces will provide the security at the actual polling place and in the inner ring. Coalition forces will focus on what we call the outer ring. Area security will also provide the ability for additional forces, quick reaction forces, if they're needed. We'll also assist with security at some of the storage areas for the election material and ballots as well as provide security where requested during the transportation of ballot material as well.

**REP4:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:** To succeed in this elections—my question is to Judge Kassam[ph]. The nominees or the candidates are complaining about tearing down their pictures and their posters. And this is something...this is not a good thing. And some of the entities...the political entities are using their religious figures, their pictures, and raising their pictures. General Perkins, what is the role of the American forces in...by not launching rockets or mortars? Is it going to...are you going to provide aerial security to the polling sites?

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:**

[Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:**

Obviously...strange is that most of those political entities are complaining to everyone, but not apart from the IHEC. We haven't received any complaints from those political entities or parties. And this is one thing.

The second thing, the IHEC is with the Ministry of Interior. And considering MOI members are working and they're...they have coordinated that the police are working on watching those people who's trying to tear down those posters and try to arrest them. And if you're trying to complain about something like that, you have to prove it and have evidence and have to file a complaint and all that. If you would just allow me, the minister of interior's...the minister of interior ha-...we put certain numbers for people to provide tips in regards to this subject and to give us tips about anyone who is doing that. And the Ministry of Interior is going to take the right procedures or acts.

**BG PERKINS:**

And following up with, again, security forces...the security focus from the coalition force. We will provide capabilities both on the ground, in the air to provide visibility and situational awareness. And again, it will be in close cooperation with the Iraqi Security

Forces to provide them both the ability to respond to those things as well as sometimes just information as to the threat and the nature of it is very useful as well.

**REP5:** Hi. A candidate in Mosul was assassinated on December 31st. Just trying to find out whether there have been any other assassination attempts in the last few weeks or assassinations and what you guys are doing to help protect any of the candidates.

**BG ALI:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** Very much according to directi-...instructions from the minister of interior or the command operation in Mosul, we formed a committee to investigate the assassination.

And as far as all the candidates, we are coordinating with them to provide security to them during the campaigns or prior to their campaigns and during the election day. And this is...we don't know if it's going to happen again, but we are going to work on resolving this.

**REP6:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:** I have two questions to Brigadier General Ali. The first question is that you mentioned 55 polling sites that's going to allow reporters

to go in with their cameras and their equipment. We want to know why did you only specify 55 or a certain number of those polling sites, not all of them. The other question is is there any other equipment that you can find out – bombers or car bombs or...?

**BG ALI:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** The first question, you should ask...or direct this question to the IHEC. And I think they were the ones to identify or specify those 55 polling sites. In fact, all the polling sites or election sites are going to be open for all reporters and...registered reporters at the IHEC. There is enough time for all reporters to register. And we have certain regulations and rules that reporters have to comply with, whoever that's covering the election day. There is 55 polling sites are...they are ready to receive reporters with their equipment, and they are provided with equipment to scan and find bombs and explosives. And only 55 sites. And even in Kurdistan areas where we're going to have the displaced or special needs votes there, too.

This is going...we appreciate and encourage the attending or the attendance of the reporters because this is going to reflect the transparency of the elections. But there is rules and regulations that reporters should comply with. And they shouldn't interview any person unless they approve that or authorize them to do that. So....

The second part of your question is we have different equipment in MOI. We're going to...it's going to be used. And there are certain procedures. I told you we have put it together...in place in order to organize the entrance and the exits of people.

**REP7:** Shukran. Sam Donnigman[ph], [unintelligible] New York Times.  
[Continues speaking in Arabic.]

**INT:** My question is to General Ali...Amid[ph] Ali Jabouri[ph]. It's well known for...that the minister of interior himself, Mr. Balani, he has a political party and he is in the political process and the elections and he's entering the elections as well. And there are preparations from some of the political leaders, including the prime minister, that they're preparing...he was warning the minister of interior to be away from the political process. And we heard news that some of the minister's officials, they were trying to interfere with this political entity or political party of the minister of interior. Is there any contradiction or inconsistency or conflict of interest here on this problem?

**BG ALI:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** First, I can't answer or speak for the minister himself and I can't...and the minister said in his statement that...and the spokesman of the ministry said that it's not true or the statement is

not true. And the prime minister, he stressed on all security forces. And this is one of his general instructions that not to interfere in the political process...in the election process. I assure you that the security committee or all their members are independent and they don't belong to any political party. And all the...and our officers and our police and Army, they're all professional people. And it's going to be proven to you and to others their independency and they're neutral....

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:**

[Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:**

According to the rules that's put by the IHEC, the MOI, MOD forces are not allowed to enter the elections or polling sites. And I also want to assure you that the voting for MOI, MOD has been...is going to be two days prior to the election so that's why they're not going to even be close to the polling or ballots.

**REP8:**

[Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:**

My question is.... Judge Kassam[ph], you said that the IHEC punished some of those candidates for so many different reasons. Was it because of them using religious figures in their campaigns?

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:**

[Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** We did talk or we warned to some of those political entities and candidates to remove their posters and we tol-.... Some of their violations can be corrected by moving or removing those posters and some of them...some of the violations cannot be corrected. That's why we have to punish them. Some of...a few number of those political entities complied to our warnings and they moved or removed their posters and some of...and most of them didn't. So they are going to be punished.

**REP9:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:** Judge Kassam[ph], I have a que-...two questions.

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** I just want you to ask one question each because we have a lot of you here today so....

**REP9:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:** Judge Kassam[ph], you mentioned...we heard that there are news that some political entities requested...postponed...to postpone the elections. My other question to the brigadier general is you said that...you didn't mention anything about the curfew. Is it going to have a curfew? And what's going to happen with the displaced

people?

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:**

[Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:**

To answer your question as far as the preparation we put in place to prevent any violations in the votes, a year ago we put a committee together and this committee put a detailed report that put standards in place to put...to prevent or prohibit any forging in votes. And we used it in other provin-...used the experiences we had before in order to benefit from it and get the right lessons. And in each polling center, try to...the repetition of names and votes in different areas. To resolve this thing we...this time we printed the voters' registry. And each station and their names are registered only in one station and have...they should have...they should only vote in this station. Actually this whole matter is a lengthy matter and has a lot of details and I can't mention them all here today.

And also, there's a good thing. We have the observers and we have about 50,000 local observers. They're going to be around in all the voter...the polling sites, and the IHEC also. And for each...they decided for each political entity, they can have their own observers...two observers or one observer in each polling station. And they're going to be also participating in writing the reports

with the observers.

There are so many details, I can't talk about today. But also, we have benefitted from the experience before and to prevent any forging in voting. And hopefully we're going to have a fair election this time.

**BG ALI:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** As far as the curfew part or the displaced people, and we had specified certain areas and certain polling sites for voting centers for those displaced people so they don't have any problem with this thing.

**REP10:** Peter Graff from Reuters. General Perkins, you mentioned at the beginning that the security concerns for the election are over an entire election period, not just the election day. I wonder if you would comment about, first of all, the pre-election period. Are you concerned about an increase in violence? Have you seen any increase in violence in the country generally and specifically in areas, like Ninawa Province, that have higher rates of violence than other parts of the country?

And also, you mentioned the post-election period. Why would that

be a concern? Are you worried that people who, say, fare poorly in the election might turn toward violence as a means of settling disputes?

**BG PERKINS:** Yes. As I said, across the board, both within the coalition and the Iraqi Security Forces and the people of Iraq actually, we want to make sure that—this is a multi-weeklong process and we want to make sure that security facilitates the credible and legitimate election process.

Right now we are in the pre-election phase. We are moving election material around which we are providing security for, we are providing support for. And that has actually gone fairly well. It's moving via air, it's moving via land. A very complicated process, convoys and what not. And we are intimately involved in that and that is all going very well and we have had no incidences in that. So that is an example of the pre-election part of where there are threats.

If...you specifically talked about up in Ninawa. There are areas which historically have had higher levels of violence than the rest of Iraq; Ninawa Province is one of those. We're paying particular attention. As you know, the last couple of months we've had extended...extensive operations there with Iraqi Security Force lead,

coalition supporting, and that has paid off. Part of the thought process through that was to be able to get rid of many of the malign elements up there to set the conditions for elections. And in fact, if you take a look at the rate of violent attacks in Ninawa, it has dropped off dramatically in the last month, which is good news. Again, we don't take that for granted.

But as we looked at the upcoming elections, we have worked—really for months now—with the Iraqi government to set the conditions to facilitate those. So it's everything from doing offensive operations starting a couple of months ago in the difficult areas to reduce violence, putting together transportation plans, synchronizing who's providing what security where. So there are many possibilities for interruption in the process. And so far they've gone exceptionally well.

The post-election period that you talked about, again, there are possibilities there for people who want to thwart the progress of democratic institutions, of which elections are one of the greatest examples of that, to interfere with the results of the elections, to interfere with the lawful seating of winners in the provinces after that. So again, we are going to work very closely with our Iraqi partners to make sure, again, that the results are credible, legitimate,

that the results are widely accepted, and that the process of seating the new elected members is done in accordance with the rule of law.

So there's no particular reason why any one part is more important than the other. I just want to emphasize that we are not taking a simplistic view of this. We realize this is a very complicated process; it's a very historical process. It's very noteworthy in that this is going forward so early in the development of democracy here in Iraq. It is a good sign, but we are putting a lot of effort into it and we are coordinating very closely because this is something that does not happen overnight and, in fact, is going to take...has taken and will take multiple weeks and months to bring to fruition.

**REP11:** [Speaks in briefly in Arabic. Translation not provided.]

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** You asked...you have to give a chance for other people to ask because we have limited time here.

**REP11:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** My question is probably important.

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** Why didn't you ask it in the beginning? Okay. Go ahead.

**REP11:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** Brigadier General, when he answered one of the questions here today asking about the...answering the question about the...related to the political party...the minister...MOI minister political party, I attended one of the conferences for this political party and it was headed by the minister of interior and some of those members there were from the Ministry of Interior. How do you answer this? How do you respond to this? Did this minister of interior resign from this political party or this...?

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** What date was this conference you're talking about?

**REP11:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** I think it was last year.

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** Maybe it was before. I think one of the constitutional party

members, he clarified that the minister of interior, he used to be a member in that political party and according to the new instructions, they should not belong to any political party, and I think he doesn't anymore. And I think if you have any information, you can give us some detailed information later on.

**REP12:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:** My question to Brigadier General Ali. You talked about 55 polling sites that has authorized the journalists or reporters would have the right to go in with their equipment. When are you going to announce the names or the locations of the 55 polling sites?

**BG ALI:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** This is going to be announced by the IHEC. And those 55 polling sites are throughout the country of Iraq and even in Kurdistan area because there is displacement voting there and also special needs voting. And this was selected according to the process of work there so...to provide...because the reporters...so we can search or scan their equipment in the right way.

**REP13:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:** Judge Kassam[ph], is...some of those political parties have the right to name their political parties with the...or name them with the

government names or labels or.... Are they allowed to call their political parties or entities, for instance, by the name of Fardh Al-Qanoon Plan or the Rule of Law Plan or are they allowed to do that?

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:**

[Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:**

I talked...as far as the IHEC, they put their rules and regulations and they follow the provincial elections law and the prime minister's instructions. So I give you a simple example. We had talked about some of political parties if they want to call slang words or name it with slang names. I...legally or according to the law, there is no...nothing that, in the law, prohibits political entities to call or name their political parties or use slang words. But the IHEC and not just...there is no law...we cannot just go ahead and issue one.

**REP14:**

[Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:**

My question is, if there was...if it would be a curfew, how is the reporters are going to go around and move around?

**JUDGE  
KASSAM:**

[Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:**

What do you talk about?

**REP14:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:** If there is any special offices for...to provide badges for reporters.  
Where are those offices?

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** I'm sure it would have...we do have offices...IHEC offices in every single province in the country. And I think they coordinate their work between the province and here in Baghdad. And that's for providing you with badges. But your other question was?

**REP14:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** The curfew.

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** I said that there is a precautions procedures and we're going to announce this in the right time. And that would give enough time to the people to take their procedures in the same time or prepare themselves for the elections and also will provide us security as well. And we're going to also provide special badges to the movement of the reporters and the authorized people according to the regulations we put in place.

**REP15:** [Asks question in Arabic.]

**INT:** My question is to Judge Kassam[ph]. There is a very important thing that is not reaching the Iraqi people who is going to the voting centers or the polling sites to actually know the bio or the biography of those candidates. Is the IHEC going to coordinate to do a coverage or media coverage to give or publish a bio for all the candidates on TV so people know who they're voting for or electing?

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** First, I want to thank you for this question and this is a very important question. And I think this reflects the governmental media and the role that gives a equal opportunity to all the candidates to talk about their programs and their campaigns. And also, I think the Iraqi media network is working. But I think they started late and I don't think they would cover all political entities because, as you know, there are over 400 political entities and if one from each political entity, that will be a total of 400 or over 400 candidates. Unfortunately, the international coverage or media here is not present...as effective as they were supposed to and they're not....

We are going to have elections. And these elections are very complicated and we need to educate people, raise awareness of the elections, how to vote, how...to the people and teach them or clarify to them how to watch. Also, we have to put video clips for people...on TV so people can learn how to vote and the whole voting process. We...I think we are doing that but I think it's very limited and we need to do that more broadly. And there are all those in the media and they need to cover and give time and coverage for all those candidates. And this is one of the issues that we still need time to activate through all of the government media and to be up to the task and up to the whole event. And I see media channels that are not government media channels, but they are talking about the elections and raising awareness and... about the provincial elections.

And this is a...this election is going to be very important and this is going to draw the political map for Iraq. There are also newspapers like Assabah Newspaper. And also there is a directive by prime minister himself that the prime...the Iraqi Media Network and the Iraqi media, they need to...the government media need to cover or they should cover everything in the elections process.

**REP16:**

Hi. Ben Morgan, AFP. Could you give us an exact figure of how many security forces you plan to mobilize for this election period?

**BG ALI:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** Thank you. It would ha-...it would be a good force and would be according to the reports and the estimations or the assessments of the commanders on the field. But it's going to be...I can assure you it's going to be enough force and it would be in different...on various....

[Brief discussion off microphone.]

**JUDGE  
KASSAM[ph]:** [Speaks in Arabic.]

**INT:** I want to thank you for your questions. And these conferences...type of conferences are going to continue and we are, as security committee or elections committee, we are going to continue explaining the procedures. Security procedures is going to be announced for a certain time and the right time to facilitate the provincial elections as planned. It's going to be run and led by 100% Iraqi forces. And it's going to be a good example or test for Iraqi forces and their readiness and the cooperation between or coordination between Iraqi forces and MOI and MOD. Our forces are going to be staged away from the pol-...outside the polling sites. And they are going to secure...completely secure the whole process.

Thank you very much.