

# **Kurdistan Election: Another step toward implementing democracy**

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Since the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq, there have been many obstacles that hindered the developmental process of the Kurdistan society. Some of these obstacles were foreign made and some were domestic. Nevertheless, today's Kurdistan is not the same Kurdistan which was under Iraqi occupation. Many good projects have been implemented—many more are needed.

An achievement that our people in Kurdistan have been enjoying is the “voting right.” Although, sometimes the voting process had been misused in the past, nonetheless, citizens of Kurdistan have been able to enjoy this democratic prerogative.

On July 25<sup>th</sup>, the people of Kurdistan will elect their president and a new parliament. This election is a turning point, because unlike the previous election where members of the Kurdistan Parliament elected the president, this time, the people of Kurdistan directly elect their president. It is important because it could strengthen the leader-people relationship and makes the president more responsive to the needs of people.

Therefore, we hope that all parties that are involved in the election process will do their due diligence to assure the people of Kurdistan that they will adhere to the democratic principles and respect the outcomes regardless who wins. We hope that in the future, the Kurdistan authority will provide an opportunity for the Kurds in Diaspora to participate and exercise their voting privilege so they can stay connected with Kurdistan.

Lastly, we cordially congratulate the people of Kurdistan and encourage them to vote their conscience and remain respectful of the election results. It is important to remember that the world is watching this election, thus the more democratically we conduct ourselves the better it is for the image of our infant democracy in Kurdistan. This is the opportunity for Kurdistan to prove to the world that it is committed to the ideals and practice of democracy. Not only will such a practice strengthen and build the civic life within Kurdistan – it strengthens

the perception of the strategic importance of the Kurdistan Regional government to the international community.

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