



Iraqi Media Monitoring

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IRAQI NEWS for 22 Dec 04

Iraq: Booby-trapped car kills unknown number of people

Al-Sharqiyah Satellite Channel, Baghdad, in Arabic 22 Dec 04: A booby-trapped car was detonated this evening (Wednesday) in Al-Mahmudiyah, killing and wounding a number of people. Dawud al-Ta'i, director of the city's hospital, did not disclose their number. Al-Ta'i said there was a number of casualties resulting from a car explosion which took place at 1830 [1530 GMT] in the centre of Al-Mahmudiyah. He pointed out that many of the wounded were transferred to Baghdad hospitals.

Interior minister says terror attacks dropped by half since

Al-Sharq al-Awsat [Baghdad edition of London-based daily Al-Sharq al-Awsat 22 Dec 04]: Interior Minister Falah Al-Naqib, speaking in an interview published in London-based paper Al-Sharq al-Awsat on 21 December, said government statistics showed that terrorist operations had decreased by 50 per cent since the US-led offensive on Al-Fallujah.

Gunmen kill Al-Dawrah municipal council member

Al-Sharqiyah Satellite Channel, Baghdad, in Arabic 22 Dec 04: Unidentified gunmen on 21 December shot dead a member of Al-Dawrah Municipal Council, Al-Sharqiyah TV reported. The station said the gunmen surprised the official, Yusuf Abd-al-Razzaq, in one of Baghdad's suburbs. It added that he was killed on the spot.

"Violent explosion" heard in Baghdad at dawn

Al-Sharqiyah Satellite Channel, Baghdad, in Arabic 22 Dec 04: The sound of a violent explosion followed by machine-gun fire was heard in Baghdad at dawn on 22 December, Al-Sharqiyah TV reported. The station cited the US Army saying they were investigating the explosion.

Interior minister accuses Al-Jazeera of promoting terrorism

Al-Sharq al-Awsat [Baghdad edition of London-based daily Al-Sharq al-Awsat 21 Dec 04]: The paper carried an interview with Interior Minister Falah al-Naqib, in which he accused Al-Jazeera and other Arab channels of "promoting terrorism" in Iraq. He claimed Al-Jazeera was "hostile" to Iraq and had supported Saddam Husayn's rule. As an example, he mentioned how the channel portrayed groups that attacked drivers and held them hostages as "strugglers and resistance fighters". He added that Al-Jazeera was "the only channel that broadcasts footage of terrorist groups and their activities" and said it "definitely promotes these groups". He said he also had information showing that Al-Jazeera extended financial assistance to the groups. He said Arab channels also did not usually broadcast government announcements of the capture of Arab nationals involved in armed operations and added that the government media "is not fulfilling its responsibilities" because they did not report government activity and news.

Health minister says half of Iraqis unemployed, one-quarter rely on food aid

Al-Bayan [Baghdad, daily newspaper in Arabic published by the Islamic Al-Da'wah Party] 21 Dec 04: Health Minister Dr Ala al-Din al-Alwan has said that 50 per cent of Iraq's population remains unemployed, while 25 per cent are completely reliant on rations which are handed out. He said up to 11 per cent suffer from extreme poverty and a lack of sustenance. He said the rates of unemployment in some Iraqi provinces had risen dramatically and added that there was an urgent need to provide medical care to sectors of society suffering from poverty.

Iraqi health official says US using banned weapons, causing "serious diseases"

Dar Al-Salam Radio, Iraqi Islamic Party-affiliated 21 Dec 04: The director-general of Al-Anbar's Health Directorate, Dr Khamis al-Fahdawi, has said that serious diseases not seen in Iraq for decades have resurfaced due to the recent US offensives against the cities of Al-Fallujah and Al-Ramadi, Dar-al-Salam radio reported on 21 December. Al-Fahdawi said skin and eye allergies, which cause the skin to dry, split and bleed had increased considerable, as had incidences of epilepsy among young men and deformities in babies, such as the lack of a mouth ceiling, heart openings, blindness and mongolism. He said the "occupation's" use of banned weapons was behind these diseases and added that information from the Veterinary and Animal Care Department in Al-Anbar Governorate also showed that more than 10,000 sheep, cows and goats had died for unknown reasons.

Member of Iraqi Sunni clerical group blames "Jews" for arrests, abductions:

Al-Diyar Satellite Channel In Arabic, Baghdad, 22 Dec 04: Association of Muslim Scholars member Al-Sayyid Nuri Hadi al-Sumayda'i, has accused "Jews who seek to destabilize the country" of being behind the arrest of Sunni scholars and the abduction of

Sunni clerics. Al-Sumayda'i called on Iraqis to "be more alert" to attempts at inciting sectarian sedition.

Al-Sharqiyah TV. News Headlines, 22 Dec 04:

Al-Sharqiyah Satellite Channel, Baghdad, in Arabic, News Headlines on 22 Dec 04

- ◆ US forces have sealed off entire districts of the Iraqi city of Mosul, imposed a curfew
- ◆ Bush says attack on US base in Mosul will not deter the US government from its mission for peace in Iraq
- ◆ Several US troops in Iraq have been hit by a rare type of pneumonia, a study has found
- ◆ Iraqi interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi holds talks with Jordanian king
- ◆ A strong explosion rocked Baghdad this morning
- ◆ Unknown men have attacked and killed a local Iraqi official in southern Baghdad ... unknown men killed an Iraqi police officer this morning
- ◆ Five Iraqi family members have been killed in a bomb explosion in Abu Ghurayb area in Baghdad
- ◆ Polish prime minister, defence minister have visited Polish troops in Iraq
- ◆ Iraqi oil minister says Iraqi oil installations have been subject to 240 sabotage acts
- ◆ resulted in losses worth over 7bn dollars
- ◆ Iraqi Ministry of Industry has distributed food supplies among Al-Fallujah residents who fled their homes
- ◆ Saudi Arabia denies sending troops to Iraq
- ◆ Saudi Arabia to hold military manoeuvres with Yemen next year
- ◆ International Committee of the Red Cross visited Al-Fallujah today
- ◆ US marines in Iraq take over security in Karbala from Polish-led force
- ◆ Japanese prime minister has reiterated his wish to visit Iraq
- ◆ Ukrainian prime minister says his country will withdraw troops from Iraq following next January elections
- ◆ Kofi Annan admits shadow over UN from Iraq oil scandal

Iraqi Press On 22 Dec 2004 highlight the following issues :

Iraqi newspapers dated 22 December highlight the following issues:

I. Iraq elections

Tariq al-Sha'b, Baghdad, political weekly, by the Iraqi Communist Party: carries on the front page a 300-word report on the positive reaction to last Friday's "huge festival"

organized by the Communist Party in Baghdad, during which the media campaign for the party's electoral list, "the People Union List," was launched.

Al-Manar al-Yawm [Baghdad , daily independent news paper in Arabic]: publishes on the front page a 100-word report citing Dr Farid Ayar, the spokesman for the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq, as saying that the upcoming elections will begin one minute after sunrise and end 33 minutes before sunset on 30 January. Ayar criticized and denied giving any statement or dealing with Al-Jazeera satellite channel because it is "impartial and does not care about the interests of Iraq and Iraqis."

Al-Sabah Al-Jadid, Baghdad, Independent Daily : carries on page 7 a 300-word report on the expanded conference organized by the National Turkomen Front, headed by the Front's Chief Faruq Abdullah, on 20 December. The conference, which was attended by a large number of the Turkomen parties, discussed the importance of Turkomen alliance at this stage in order for the Turkomen candidates to win in the upcoming elections. The report includes the full text of the statement issued by the Iraqi Turkomen Front's Coalition, listing the parties included and explaining the goals and reasons for forming the coalition. The statement said that the coalition's electoral list, which comprises 63 candidates, was approved by the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq under No 175.

Al-Bayan [Baghdad, daily newspaper in Arabic published by the Islamic Al-Da'wah Party] publishes on page 3 a 300-word article by Amir Salih al-Fatlawi discussing the media campaign for the upcoming elections. The article says that the Iraqis are not used to such large scale media campaign by the too many electoral lists. The article calls for staging a media campaign to educate people on how to follow the media campaigns of the various political forces focusing on the former dictator regime's crimes and the struggle of the political forces against dictatorship. It also calls for benefiting from the experiences of other nations in this regard.

Al-Ufuq publishes on page 4 a 1,500-word unattributed article saying that **Iraq** is marching towards the upcoming elections on a road that, under the current circumstances, is planted with so many mines: the severe shortage in monitoring and experience, the people's lack of basic services, the high possibility of forging, and the interference of both the neighbouring and remote countries. The article discusses the potential dangers and problems that may surface during and after the upcoming elections.

Al-Mu'tamar [Baghdad, daily newspaper in Arabic published by the Iraqi National Congress] publishes on page 6 a 1,000-word article by Salman al-Shammari saying that a number of the Iraqi political forces believing in democracy and participating in the political process have been deceived by the false bright banners that the Ba'thists are raising by calling for the postponing of the upcoming elections. The article says that the reinstating of Ba'thists caused the escalation of terrorism in **Iraq**, thus holding negotiations with some of them would not improve the security situation in the country. The article says that the Iraqis have two options: either hold the upcoming elections as

scheduled or cancel them because submitting to the demand of a minority leads the majority to adopt counter measures.

Al-Zaman [daily, independent, Baghdad edition of London-based Al-Zaman/]: runs a 300-word front-page report on a statement by sources at the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq noting that several candidates have withdrawn from the list of the Independent Democrats Grouping led by Adnan Pachachi. The sources say that those members have joined Iyad Allawi's list. The sources say that the withdrawn members are Planning Minister Mahdi al-Hafiz and Electricity Minister Ayham al-Samarra'i. On the other hand, the report cites the Iraqi Islamic Party in Mosul as announcing its withdrawal from the elections. The statement says that the difficult situation in many Iraqi cities and to avoid being a bridge upon which the "occupation's" plans cross, the Islamic Party decided to boycott the elections.

Al-Zaman runs on page 2 a 200-word front-page report on a statement by a senior official at Baghdad Local Council suggesting distributing the electoral list through the Baghdad Council instead of through the ration card agents. The official says that this suggestion is to avoid any attempt to hinder the electoral list distribution and to ensure wide distribution. On the other hand, the report cites Abd-al-Sahib Allawn, former Iraqi minister, denying that he has joined the National Democratic Alliance's list, headed by Justice Minister Malik Duhan al-Hasan. Al-Alwan says: "I would like to clarify that I haven't joined this list or any other list because of my personal circumstances."

Al-Mada [Baghdad, daily, independent newspaper published by Al-Mada Media, Culture and Arts Corporation] publishes a 100-word front-page report on a statement by a senior member at the Iraqi National Accord Movement noting that the Independent Democrats Grouping, led by Adnan Pachachi, started talks with his movement to join its electoral list. The member says that the negotiations were ended last Monday without any clear agreement. On the other hand, the report cites a senior member at the Independent Democrats Grouping denying this information.

Al-Furat, comprehensive & political daily, by Al-Furat Establishment for Press publishes a 400-word back-page article by Abd-al-Zahra al-Talqani under the headline: "**Elections' Train, Calls To Postpone Trip.**" Al-Talqani says: "No one should expect a happy end to this trip. No one should expect an improvement in the ration card or in the electricity or in the oil products. There is no political party that dares to adopt these problems in its political agendas. But we, the Iraqis, will participate in the elections for God only to avoid the US critiques that we are not democratic people and to avoid being occupied again to change our new regime as the Americans have done with Saddam's regime."

II. Political developments and comments

Al-Manar al-Yawm publishes on the front page a 130-word report on British Prime Minister Tony Blair's third visit to Baghdad. The report says that Blair held official negotiations with Prime Minister Allawi focusing on the progress in the political process

and preparations for the upcoming elections. In the joint news conference held in Baghdad, Blair replied to the newspaper's questions about the goals of his visit, saying that it aimed at supporting the Iraqi Government and the upcoming elections and to overcome the problems that they face in order to ensure larger participation by the components of Iraqi society.

Al-Sabah al-Jadid publishes on the front page a 160-word editorial commenting on the role of Iraq's neighbouring countries in destabilizing the situation in Iraq. The editorial says that "two decades after its Islamic revolution, Iran has joined the other regimes that are governed by organs that are controlled by the desires of only limited factions of a giant people." The Iranian and Arab regimes will remain confused and form an obstacle before the progress of the Arabs and Muslims, preventing them from reacting with the rest of the world. These regimes are not only depriving their own people the opportunity for progress, but using all available means and tricks to block the progress in their neighbouring countries as well.

Al-Bayan publishes on the front page a 70-word report citing Muhsin Abd-al-Hamid, the leader of the Iraqi Islamic Party, informing the newspaper: "The massacres of Al-Najaf and Karbala aim at creating sectarian sedition in Iraq and at dividing the Iraqi people." Abd-al-Hamid added: "There is no doubt that those committing these crimes will lose and that all of their plans will fail because the people, the national and religious parties, and the religious authorities are aware and agree that Iraq's interests are in its unity."

Al-Ufuq publishes on the front page a 300-word follow-up report stating that in its meeting yesterday, 21 December, the National Assembly voted and recommended the dismissal of Suhayl Muhammad Salih, the chairman of the Property's Disputes Settlement Committee responsible for the settlement of the ownership of the properties seized by the former regime, due to the bad performance of the committee.

Al-Zaman carries a 100-word front-page report on a statement by Iraqi President Ghazi Ajil al-Yawir condemning the terrorist attacks in Karbala and Al-Najaf Governorates. On the other hand, the report cites the Association of Muslim Scholars as condemning these attacks and calling on the Iraqi people to be aware of the attempts that aim to create sectarian sedition among the Iraqis.

Al-Furat publishes a 200-word front-page report on a statement by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani calling for an urgent meeting with the religious authorities to discuss the terrorist attacks that occurred in Al-Najaf and Karbala Governorates. Al-Sistani says that these attacks indicate an intention to hurt the Iraqi people. Al-Sistani calls on the religious authorities to be responsible in facing these criminal acts.

Al-Manarah carries a 400-word front-page article by the political editor on the recent suicide attacks in Karbala and Al-Najaf. It says that all indications confirm that those attacks seek to undermine the elections, which are only a few weeks away. The approach of the elections might trigger the countdown to an escalation of violence. If the elections

go ahead as planned and succeed, the Iraqis will see through the foreign hands behind the bloodshed.

III. Security and military developments

Al-Mu'tamar publishes on the front page a 100-word report citing oil sources and eyewitnesses as saying that a number of saboteurs set a junction of oil pipelines north of Baghdad aflame yesterday, 21 December.

Al-Mashriq runs on page 4 a 100-word report citing Mines Affairs Director Mu'ayad Sabir Majid as saying that the directorate removed 16,000 mines and 300,000 tons of unexploded shells all over Iraq. Majid adds that the directorate is still surveying other areas, especially Southern Iraq, to clean them soon. He says that a recent survey revealed that there are 25 million mines and 3 million tons of unexploded shells in Iraq.

Al-Dustur carries on page 4 a 100-word report citing a source in the Basra Crime Investigation Directorate as saying that the directorate arrested a number of "terrorists" of different nationalities. The source adds that those "terrorists" were trying to "bomb police stations in Basra Governorate."

Al-Zaman publishes a 250-word front-page report on the assassination of an Iraqi nuclear scientist in Diyala Governorate. The report says that unidentified gunmen assassinated Talib Ibrahim Zafir, a nuclear scientist and professor at Al-Yarmuk University in Diyala Governorate. The report cites an eyewitness as saying that the gunmen opened fire on the victim's car, which drove into a small river. On the other hand, the report says that the violent attacks and the kidnapping operations against doctors escalated. The report adds that many doctors have left Iraq.

Al-Zaman publishes a 300-word front-page report on a statement by a security official at the Oil Ministry noting that an explosive device blew up inside an oil complex in Kirkuk Governorate. The official says that the explosion led to a huge fire. The official adds that another secondary pipeline in the same area has blown up and the fire fighting teams are still fighting the fire.

Al-Mada publishes a 250-word front-page report on a statement by General Ghalib al-Jaza'iri, chief of police of Al-Najaf Governorate, noting that the police have received information about another car bomb in Al-Najaf. Al-Jaza'iri says that the police have closed all entrances to the old city and started a huge search campaign for this car.

Al-Furat publishes a 200-word front-page report on a statement by the Joint Command Staff noting that there is high-level coordination between the Defence Ministry and the National Security Ministry to reestablish the Iraqi military intelligence service. The statement says this intelligence will be based on the most modern standers.

IV. Health and human rights issues

Al-Sabah al-Jadid publishes on page 2 a 250-word report citing an official source at the Industry Ministry as saying that the cabinet has agreed that the Central Commission for Standardization and Quality Control and other monitoring organs resume their work in inspecting and testing all imported items prior to their marketing in Iraq.

Al-Bayan publishes on the front page a 100-word report citing an official source at the Environment Ministry as saying that his ministry has spotted eight locations contaminated with uranium in Basra.

Al-Dustur carries on page 5 a 200-word report from Basra on a survey conducted by the Radiation Prevention Directorate to check for radiation pollution. The report says that the survey came out with the result that eight areas are polluted with uranium.

Al-Zaman runs a 200-word front-page report on a statement by a Kurdish official noting that dogs have led the people west of Kirkuk Governorate to discover a mass grave there. The official says that the people noticed that these dogs were gathering in one area. The official adds that the people have investigated the area and discovered this mass grave. The official notes that 20 bodies were found in this mass grave.

Al-Manarah carries on page 3 a 200-word report by Isma'il Qattan citing an official at the Health Ministry as saying that the ministry has published statistics on the cases of contagious diseases reported during November 2004 in all Iraqi governorates save Al-Anbar. The report gives the number of specific cases.

V. Economic news and public services

Al-Bayan publishes on the front page a 60-word report citing an official source at the Oil Ministry as saying that a ministerial decree appointed Muhammad Husayn Taqi as director general for the Gas Filling Company and Hunar Badi'a as director general for the Iraqi Drilling Company. The source said that a new mechanism for distributing gas cylinders to people through ration card agents will be implemented.

Al-Mashriq runs on page 5 a 150-word report citing water resources minister as saying that the irrigation sector is facing "many complex troubles, most important of which are maintaining old projects and fighting weeds." The minister adds that the ministry "lacks modern technology and spare parts," calling on local and foreign companies to provide such materials.

Ishraqat al-Sadr publishes on page 3 an 800-word report from Basra on the "deteriorating" services situation. The report includes interviews with a number of people, surveying their comments on this issue.

Al-Furat publishes a 400-word front-page report on a statement by the oil minister noting that there is a multi-facet plan to ruin the Iraqi oil fortune. The minister calls on

the people to cooperate with the authorities to crush the organized-crime gangs. The minister notes that Al-Dura refinery has no crude oil after targeting the pipeline that feeds the refinery with oil.

[Al-Nahdah](#) publishes on page 4 a 200-word report on a statement by a medical source at Al-Munthiriyah border point noting that several Iranian trucks loaded with fruits were prevented from entering Iraq because the shipment is not valid for human use

[IRAQI PRESS COMMENTS on 22 DEC 2004](#)

"All political forces should put people's interests above their own interests"-Al-Bayan

[Al-Bayan](#), [Baghdad, daily newspaper in Arabic published by the Islamic Al-Da'wah Party] 22 Dec 04 a commentary by Hamid al-Hamdani: All political forces, with their democratic, religious and national orientations, should, at this stage, put people's interests above their own party interests. They should renounce religious or ethnic fanaticism which can never serve our people's aim for building a federal, free and democratic Iraq where peace and security prevail, regaining independence and ensuring the full withdrawal of occupation forces as soon as possible. Any road other than that of democracy will only lead us to more conflicts. Disagreement can weaken these forces' capability to stand up to and defeat the hostile forces dreaming of turning the clock backwards.

"Federation and the Kurdish cause in Iraq"- Al-Sabah al-Jadid

[Al-Sabah Al-Jadid](#), Baghdad, Independent Daily, On 22 Dec 2004: carries on page 6 a 600-word article by Fa'iz Shamran al-Yasiri discussing federation and the Kurdish cause in Iraq. The article says that not only the Kurds have the right to get rid of the tight control of the central government, but other regions in Iraq have the same right too. The article praises the first conference for the Al-Furat al-Awsat governorates held in Al-Najaf recently because it was "the first step towards establishing a federal, decentralized rule in this important part of Iraq."

"The US has finally put its hands on the Iraqi bleeding wound"- Al-Mu'tamar

[Al-Mu'tamar](#) [Baghdad, daily newspaper in Arabic published by the Iraqi National Congress] 22 Dec 04: publishes on page 6 a 400-word article by Sahir Uraybi saying that "the US has finally put its hands on the Iraqi bleeding wound" when General Meyers said that the real danger threatening Iraq today is the remnants of the former regime. This came to end the controversy about who the enemies of Iraq are and to foil the attempts that some Iraqi irresponsible parties were trying, in an attempt to cover for the real enemies, to blame some other parties for terrorism in Iraq. The article calls for eliminating the Ba'thists from all electoral lists that they managed to penetrate under

various cover names, otherwise we expose ourselves and sons to another wave of mass graves.

Sunday's attacks clear message: "next elections will be held in a pool of blood"- Al-Manarah

Al-Manarah, [Basra, daily independent newspaper in Arabic published by the Voice of the South Press,] 22 Dec 04: Last Sunday's bombings sent a strong message to all, without exception, that the next general elections will be held through rivers of Iraqi blood and body parts of hundreds of Iraqis all over Iraq, the southern cities in particular, which will be punished more for their support for elections. What happened was only a prelude to what is more serious. You cannot trust the promises made by the foreigners or their supporters. The only promise you can count on is the Iraqis' courage and determination to find a way out of this double impasse of terrorists' control of people's lives and Americans and their supporters' control of power. The courage of the citizen is the decisive factor that will overturn the balance and change the course of events in the country.

Updates from Iraqi Kurdish Press, 22 Dec 2004

Khabat and **Kurdistani Nwe** dailies ran front-page reports today quoting a source from the Office of federal Iraq Deputy PM that announced the Iraqi Government's cancellation of the entire Baath regime directives pertaining to the civil status, according to which records of forcibly displaced people were transferred to their new locations against their will. The new Iraqi directive endorsed on 22 December 2004 comes after cancellation of another two Baath regime directives that deprived Feili (Shiite) Kurds from Iraqi nationality and prohibited Kurds in Kirkuk and other Arabized areas from their right to ownership of real estate. The new directives by the federal Iraqi government are good steps towards reversing Arabization of Kurdistan in Kirkuk and other areas but there remains so much to be done yet.

Khabat daily, issued in Erbil by the KDP, 22 December 2004

- **(summarized column)** (...) The Iraqi higher Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), Ayad Allawi's government, the Un and the international community should wake up and realize that the [KDP] President Barzani's address to Makhmour people are not mere statements aiming at making headlines. They are rather the entire Kurdish people's real warning for the international policy makers in the region and for the Iraq Government that after 20 months since Saddam fall and rivers of Kurdish youths' blood, the Kurds will not allow an ex-Baathist and member of Turcoman Front to play with the future of Kurds in Kirkuk. (...) It is better to respond to the Kurdish people demands in a logical and friendly manner, otherwise, the Kurds may not loose anymore. This is not a threat. It's rather the reality and the fruit of Kurdish wisdom and patience, which the entire world knows it, exceeds that of Jacob.

- The KDP Politburo delegation continues its Beijing visit and talks with Chinese ruling party leaders over Kurdistan situation, the prevailing security and reconstruction atmosphere.
- Dahuk Governor inaugurated a temporary bridge on Tigris River that facilitates movement of people between Dahuk on one side and Sinjar and Zummar areas on the other side, as well as easing transport between Kurdistan Region and Syria. More than 30 Kurdish labors from Sinjar area were drowned weeks ago while they were crossing the river in a small boat to avoid Mosul land road dangers. The Governor announced the planned construction of a large solid bridge on the river soon.

Kurdistani Nwe daily, issued in Sulaymanya by the PUK, 22 December 2004

- Khanaqeen will remain part of Kurdistan forever, the PUK leader Jalal Talabani told a large audience of Khanaqeen area people in his Qalachwan HQ Tuesday. A representative of “genuine Arabs living in the area since more than 100 years” also gave a speech in the gathering supporting Talabani’s views and added that the other Arabized areas like Saadiya, Jalawla, Mandali and Qaratapa towns, together with Khanaqeen were also waiting to join Kurdistan Region.
- During his Tuesday reception in Qalachwan to the new US Consular in Kirkuk, Talabani said he would assure the Kurdish people that eth Kurdish political leadership would never abandon fighting for Kirkuk.
- In Kirkuk, the leader of Turcoman Brotherhood Party (Akhaa Partici) Walid Shareeka held a seminar Tuesday on the necessity of immediate implementation of Article 58 of the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) and the need to postpone Kirkuk provincial election until after the TAL implementation and normalization of Kirkuk situation. Shareeka said the interests of the Turcomans is in supporting the Kurdish political leadership in their fight for restoring Kirkuk to Kurdistan Region because “The Turcomans in Iraq have never enjoyed their rights since 1921 as they do now in Kurdistan Region,” the Party leader said. Representatives of many Turcoman political parties, social and dignitaries and civic society activists participated in the seminar.

www.peyamner.com 22 December 2004

- In a special interview with the website correspondent in Sulaymanya, an official from the Sulaymanya Office of the IEC announced that 54,675 persons approached his office and corrected their voter coupons while thousands others missed the chance to do so because of the limited duration announced for the process.
- Dr. Noori Talabani, the former Head of Kurdistan’s higher Independent Electoral Commission who submitted his resignation because he is running as a candidate for Kurdistan National Assembly, confirmed to the website that his resignation was approved today. He certified news reports that said %85 of the voter coupons distributed in Kurdistan Region were erroneous but said that about %75 of those

mistakes have been rectified. He also said that the Kurds still have a chance to raise a complaint between 15 to 20 January and resolve the problem then.

Aso weekly issued in Sulaymanya by Khandan Press Foundation, 21 December 2004

- Neither KDP nor PUK will respect the elections results if they loose, leader of Kurdistan Toilers Party (KTP) Qadir Azizsaid. In an interview with Zahmatkeshan TV station in Sulaymanya two nights ago. Aziz added that about %75 of Kurdistan people were impartial and not affiliated to any party. He urged those who were not happy with the KDP-PUK list and their distribution of Parliament seats to vote for the KTP joint list with Independents otherwise the KDP and PUK would benefit.
- Another three Kurds have filed cases in Holland recently against the Dutch trader suspected to have sold Saddam chemical agents. One of the plaintiffs is from Halabja, the city that Saddam gassed in 1988. The second is from Goptapa village that was also gassed by Saddam while the third plaintiff is from [Iranian] Sardasht, the town that Saddam gassed during the Iraq-Iran war [in the 1980s]. The supervisor of the Center for Halabja against Kurdish Genocide (CHAK) announced that on 8 November 2004 his center's lawyer and two Dutch political parties filed cases against the suspect, who is now in police custody.

NB: This is not an official document. The information contained therein was compiled by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, Information Office. If you have any questions/suggestions, please contact us at (+ 962 550 -4631/4703 or Cell. + 962 77 619 731 jarrar@un.org or alsokhni@un.org