



THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

REPORT OF THE ELECTION MONITORY MISSION OF 19TH PARLIAMENTARY GENERAL ELECTION 10TH NOVEMBER 2020

19TH PARLIAMENTARY GENERAL ELECTION OF
HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN HELD ON NOVEMBER 10, 2020
IPC REPORT 2020

This report contains the findings of the International Parliamentarians' Congress Delegation who visited the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to observe General Elections held on November 10, 2020.



REPORT

The International Parliamentarians Congress (IPC) hereby acknowledge the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) as our publishing partner and for providing their valuable feedback on our report in terms of the quality enhancement and coherence.

JORDAN PARLIAMENTARY GENERAL ELECTION 2020

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT

A key regional player in Middle Eastern politics, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan occupies a strategic location in the heart of the world. Its geographical contiguity with West Bank and the occupied Palestinian territories provides it with a special place in the Palestine conflict, which continues to linger on the minds and hearts of Muslims, specifically, and the humanity at large. The efforts of Jordanian authorities in resisting the Israeli occupation in Al Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif are certainly commendable. The Hashemite custodianship of the sacred places in Jerusalem for the past nine decades has been a key factor in preserving the Muslims' rights in the occupied territories.

2. On November 10, 2020, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan held the 19th Parliamentary elections for 130 seats of the House of Representatives. At a time when the world was grappling with the fallouts of the global pandemic i.e. COVID-19, the conduct of such an activity involving mass gatherings was certainly a gigantic task for the authorities. The caseload for COVID-19 was 120,982 in Jordan on Election Day, and 1386 people had died due to the pandemic till November 10, 2020. However, despite all odds, the Jordanian authorities took up the challenge and successfully concluded the election exercise.
3. On the invitation of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) of Jordan, a three-member Election Observation Mission (EOM) of the International Parliamentarians' Congress (IPC) led by the Secretary-General was sent to observe parliamentary elections in Jordan. The IPC is a transnational network of parliamentarians who have joined hands to play a proactive role in promoting peace and sustainable development through cooperation and dialogue.
4. The IPC Committee on Monitoring and Observation of Elections in the World is among six dynamic committees focusing on specific areas of Parliamentary relevance. This was the second EOM the IPC has conducted since its inception in 2019. Earlier, the IPC delegation observed the parliamentary elections in the United Kingdom.
5. It is indeed a matter of great satisfaction that the IPC has been growing as per its founding aims and objectives which included the creation of synergies among the parliamentary community to cope with daunting challenges humanity faces through dialogue and cooperation.
6. I take the opportunity to present this report, which is based on the experiences of the IPC EOM sent to Jordan to observe the election held on November 10, 2020. This report gives a comprehensive overview of the elections and parliamentary system in Jordan. And provides a detailed analysis of the 2020 elections. The report also presents the findings, that were made during the visiting, and comprehensive recommendations for reforms made by the mission.

Senator Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani
President
International Parliamentarians' Congress (IPC)



IPC INTRODUCTION

International Parliamentarians' Congress (IPC) is a transcontinental platform of individual members of national Parliaments across the globe united in purpose to jointly resolve global and regional issues that invariably impact the whole humanity and bring together parliamentarians of different countries to achieve peace, prosperity, and progress through cooperation, mutual understanding, sharing and exchange of ideas as well as experiences.

The aims and objectives of IPC include the establishment of a worldwide network of individual Members of Parliaments across countries and regions, who voluntarily and passionately intend to work in unison to perpetually develop cooperation, synergy, and strategies across parliaments for achieving a prosperous and peaceful world through effective and independent interaction among parliamentarians. Permanently headquartered in Islamabad, the IPC conceptualizes, strategizes, and implements ideas of peace, prosperity, and progress in the world through dialogue, mutual understanding, and sharing of parliamentary experiences. The fundamental values of IPC call for strict adherence to respect for fundamental human rights, gender equality, and resolve to promote social progress and better standards and respect for the rule of law.

The Membership of the IPC is open to all Parliamentarians of national Parliaments of the world, which accept the obligations contained in the Constitution and thereby commit themselves to the above-mentioned IPC's objectives by regular dialogue among Member of Parliaments (MPs) to seek cooperation, synergies, and customized strategies to overcome common threats of ecological degradation, disease, poverty, malnutrition, inequalities, and discrimination based on gender, age, caste, and creed.

The IPC conceptualizes a General Assembly, that comprises of all MPs who have registered as Members of IPC, that is scheduled to meet annually, a Governing Board that is represented by MPs elected from five different regions across the globe, which is supposed to meet more often to pursue dialogue across key common challenges. The IPC prescribes strategies and customized solutions on above mentioned key themes through joint recommendations of all Members to introduce reforms and regulations through respective Parliaments with the goal of human development and prosperity.

The IPC comprises of six Committees to fulfill its constitutional aims and objectives, which include i) Committee on Climate Change and Food Security; ii) Committee on Human Rights; iii) Committee on Peace, Security, Conflict Resolution and Interfaith Harmony; iv) Committee on Trade, Investment, and Developmental Cooperation; v) Committee on Health Research, Standardization and Quality Control, and Human Development; and vi) Committee on Monitoring and Observation of Elections in the World.



Connecting Parliamentarians

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IPC, following an invitation given by the IEC of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, deployed its EOM for observation of Parliamentary elections that were held on November 10, 2020. The IPC EOM is comprised of Secretary-General IPC, Hon. Senator (Pakistan) Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Hon. Senator (Nigeria) Ike Ekweremadu, and Ayaz Ahmed Soomro, Assistant Director in the Senate of Pakistan with the former serving as the lead.

Pakistan's Mission in Jordan welcomed the IPC delegation on its arrival in Jordan on November 7, 2020. The EOM participated in the briefing session that was arranged by the IEC of Jordan on November 9, 2020, for the election observers. IPC EOM observed the different processes of an election on the day of the election, November 10, 2020. Despite the ongoing global pandemic, the people voted, the staff performed their duties, and IEC managed the election transparently. The IPC EOM is grateful to IEC and other Jordanian authorities for necessary arrangements and sincere cooperation during observation. The IPC EOM is also grateful to Hon. Senator Sakher M. Duddin for extending his invitation to IPC Observers to visit the Majlis-e-Ayyan or Senate and looks forward to future endeavors with a parliamentary community from Jordan and the Middle East.

The IPC Observers are grateful for the hospitality, support, and cooperation extended by Pakistan's Mission in Jordan during their stay. Lastly, special thanks to Ms. Fakiha Mahmood, Deputy Director (Research), Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Service (PIPS), Islamabad, for providing technical assistance in the finalization of this report.

Senator Muhammad Ali Saif

Secretary-General

International Parliamentarians' Congress (IPC)

ABBREVIATIONS

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
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EOM	Election Observation Mission
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FPTP	First Past the Post
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IAF	Islamic Action Front (political party)
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IEC	Independent Election Commission
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IPC	International Parliamentarians' Congress
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MP	Member of Parliament
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PVL	Preliminary Voter List
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UN	United Nation
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WHO	World Health Organization
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan elected their Nineteenth Parliament through an election held on November 10, 2020, during a global pandemic, COVID-19. The state of Jordan, despite the deteriorating epidemiological situation and resultant public health emergency, decided to hold elections as per the schedule and successfully managed the process.

On the invitation of the IEC of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to observe the parliamentary election, the IPC's delegation headed by the Secretary-General IPC, Hon. Senator (Pakistan) Barrister Muhammad Ali Khan Saif, and two other members including Hon. Senator (Nigeria) Ike Ekweremadu and Ayaz Ahmed Soomro, Assistant Director in the Senate of Pakistan, visited Jordan from 7 to 12 November 2020. The delegation observed the election held on November 10, 2020, and visited multiple polling stations.

The IEC, despite the global pandemic, conducted a well-administered and inclusive election. To ensure the safety of the voters, IEC took all the necessary steps at the polling stations to ensure observance of COVID SOPs, which included mandatory masks, sanitizations, and provision of gloves to voters for the voting process, additionally, the voters' IDs were scanned remotely to maintain distance. Other safety protocols recommended by World Health Organization (WHO) were also followed.

The election was held on 130 seats of the House of Representatives based on proportional representation through district candidate lists in 23 electoral districts. The system allowed for multiple voters' preferences and provided reserved seats for women and minority candidates. The turnout fell from 36% in the 2016 election to 29.90% in 2020, of which (34.12%) for males and (26.11) for females, while the number of voters reached (1,387,711), of whom (749,630) were males, and (638,081) females.

Considering the pandemic, a total of 1824 polling stations across Jordan were established which contain 8,061 ballot boxes, of which 3,842 were for males, and 4,219 were for females. The election was contested by 294 candidate lists, and the number of candidates within these lists was 1674, of whom 1314 were males and 360 were females.

For smooth conductance of the election procedures, voter registration and election information were made available online. On the day of the election, opening, voting, and counting of the ballots proceeded peacefully throughout the country. No major incident of violation and conflict was witnessed. Overall, the election was administered transparently.

Voting was generally well organized in all polling stations visited by the IPC EOM. The voting process started as per schedule i.e. from 7 am to 7 pm, however, the closing time was extended for two hours till 9 pm.

This report offers its observation and findings of the EOM and recommends possible actions to further enhance the democratic process and transparency in the election process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF JORDAN	1
1.1. The Government	1
1.2. The Senate	2
1.3. The House of Deputies	2
2. ELECTION IN JORDAN	3
2.1. The Electoral System	3
2.2. The Election Body	3
2.3. History of Elections in Jordan	4
2.3.1. Parliamentary Elections of 2013	4
2.3.2. The Parliamentary Elections 2016	5
3. THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 2020	6
3.1. Condition for Candidacy	6
3.1.1. Criteria for a Candidate	7
3.1.2. Election Campaign	7
3.2. Voter Registration	8
3.3. Polling Rate	9
3.4. Election Results	11
4. IPC ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION FINDINGS	14
4.1. Polling station setup and environment	15
4.2. Personnel in the Polling Stations	16
4.3. The Voting Process	17
4.4. Closing and Counting	17
4.5. Media Reports	18
4.6. International Observation	18
4.7. Results of Elections	19
5. RECOMMENDATIONS	23
Sources	25
Annexure – I	26
Annexure-II	27
Annexure – III	30

1. BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF JORDAN

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan holds a strategic location in the Middle East, sharing borders with Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Israel, and the West Bank. The state of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy, with its King holding most of the political power. The parliament consists of two Houses i.e. the Upper House and the Lower House. The members of the Lower House are elected directly through the general election while the members of the Upper House are appointed by the King. There are 130 seats in the Lower House and 65 seats in the Upper House. Out of 130 seats of Lower House, 15 seats are reserved for women, 12 for minorities including 9 for Christians, and 3 for Chechens and Circassians.¹

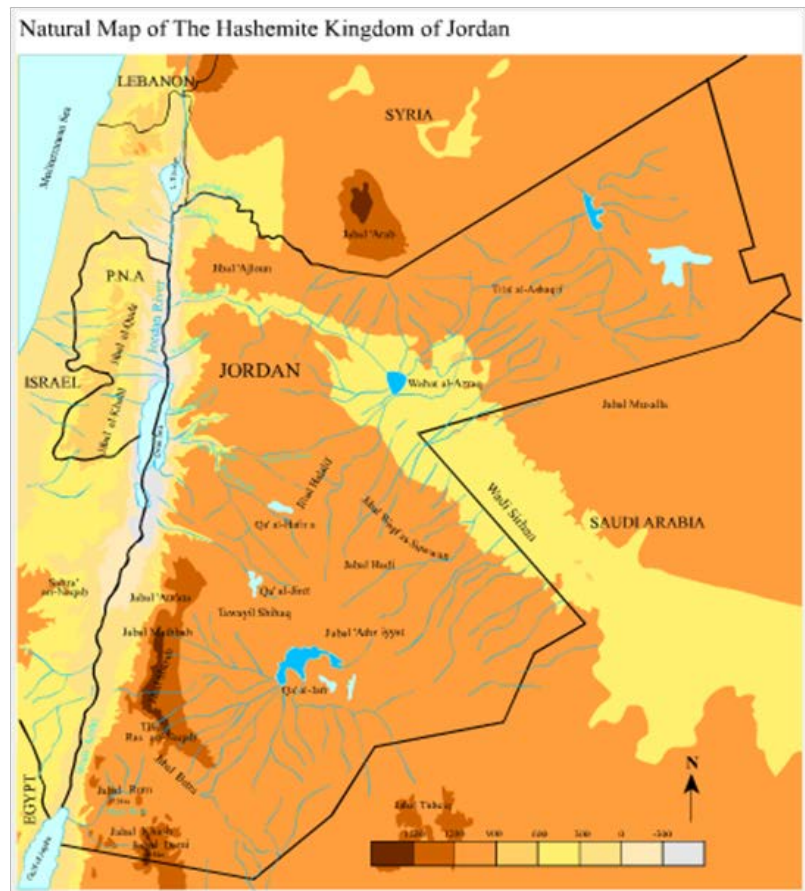


Figure i Political Map of Jordan

Jordan has traces of many civilizations. The ancient biblical kingdoms of Moab, Gilead, and Edom as well as the famed red stone city of Petra lie within its borders. A part of the Ottoman Empire until 1918 and later a mandate of the United Kingdom, Jordan has been an independent kingdom since 1946. It is among the most politically liberal countries of the Arab world, and, although it shares in the troubles affecting the region, its rulers have expressed a commitment to maintaining peace and stability.

1.1. The Government

The 1952 constitution, the Constitution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, is the most recent of a series of legislative instruments that have increased executive responsibility. The constitution declares Jordan to be a constitutional, hereditary monarchy with a parliamentary form of government. The king remains the country's ultimate authority and wields power over the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Jordan's central government is headed by a prime minister, who gets appointed by the King. The King also wields the power to select the cabinet. The cabinet coordinates the work of different departments and establishes general policy.

¹ "Jordan." European Forum, www.europeanforum.net/countries/jordan.

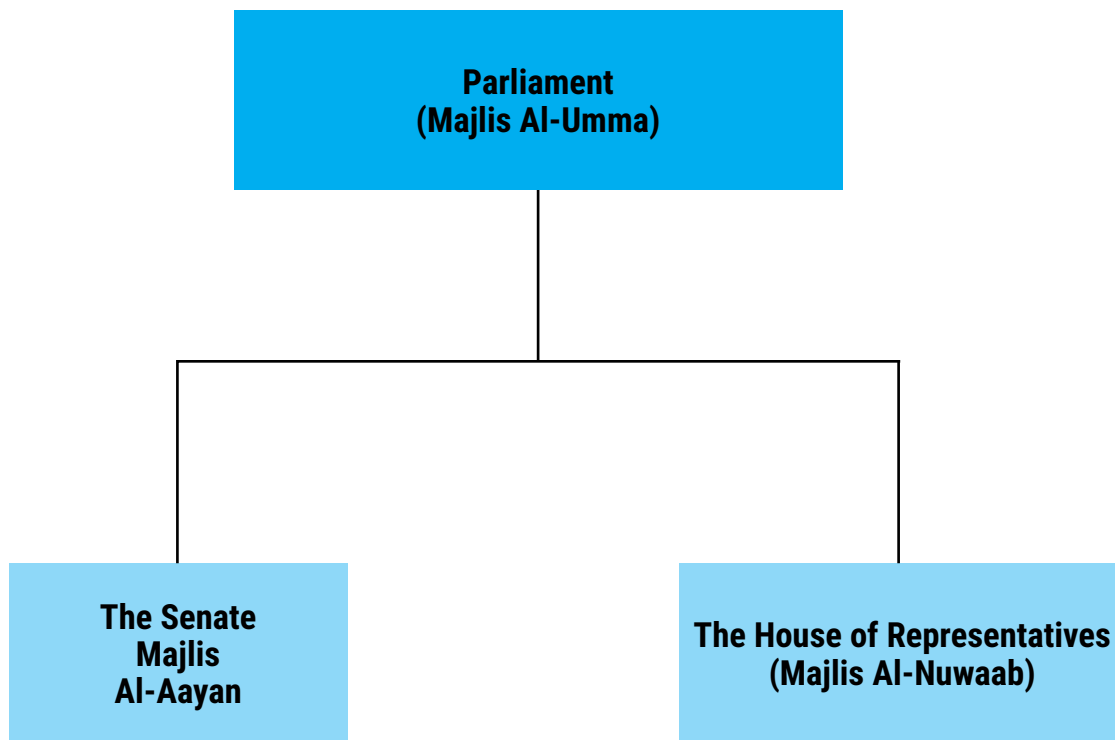


Figure 2 Houses of the Parliament

Jordan's constitution provides for a bicameral National Assembly (Majlis al-Ummah), with a Senate (Majlis al-A'yan) as its upper chamber, and a House of Representatives (Majlis al-Nuwwāb) as its lower chamber. The A'yan ("notables") of the Senate are appointed by the king for a four-year term; elections for the Nuwwāb ("deputies") of the House of Representatives are held every four years unless the monarch dissolves it earlier.

1.2. The Senate

The Upper House or Senate (Majlis al-Ayan) forms one half of the national legislature, the other being the House of Deputies. The Senate consists of 65 seats and members are appointed by the monarch from designated categories of public figures and long-serving politicians. The required age for membership is 40 years and none of its current members is associated with any party. The Senate advises the House of Deputies on general policies and together the two chambers can curb the King's powers. It is, in general, a respected institute, with a large influence in the public domain. Membership term in the Senate is four years, renewable by the King. The current president of the Senate is former Prime Minister Faisal al-Fayez.

1.3. The House of Deputies

The House of Deputies (the House of Representatives) is directly elected by Jordanian citizens through universal adult suffrage. It is elected for a four years term unless the monarch dissolves it earlier. From a total of 130 seats, 9 are reserved for Christian candidates, and 3 for Jordanians of Chechen or Circassian descent, according to the enacted Electoral Law of 2016. Furthermore, 15 seats are set for female representatives. The parliament has the right to approve, reject or amend legislation proposed by the cabinet. However, it is limited in its ability to initiate legislation and it cannot enact laws without the assent of the Senate.

2. ELECTION IN JORDAN

2.1. The Electoral System

The House of Representatives is elected through open list proportional representation from 12 governorates and three districts in Badia including Northern Badia, Central Badia, and Southern Badia.

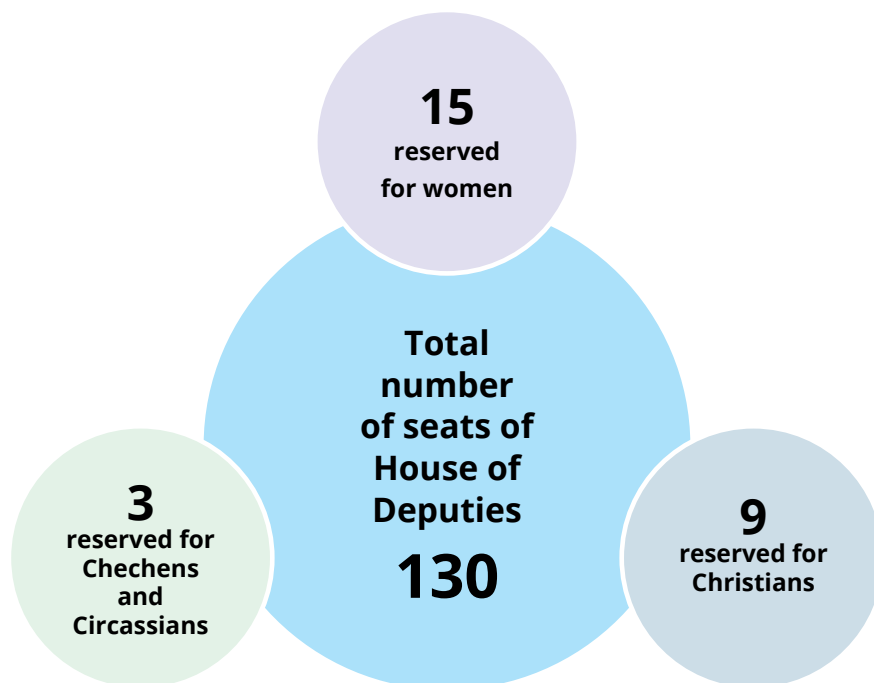


Figure iii Seat distribution in the Lower House of the Parliament

2.2. The Election Body

The process of parliamentary and other elections is conducted by the IEC of Jordan, which was established in 2012 as an independent body mandated with managing and supervising the electoral process. The IEC was established to ensure the conduct of parliamentary elections in line with international standards, and in a manner that ensures restoring citizen's confidence in the electoral process.

IEC began its work in May 2012 and held the elections for the seventeenth Jordanian Parliament in early 2013, the first elections to be managed by it since its establishment. The IEC mandate was expanded over time through constitutional amendments and passage of laws to include the administration of municipal elections. Since the expansion of the mandate of IEC, it has supervised several by-elections and municipal and local council elections far. It has also conducted three general Parliamentary elections after its inception in 2012, including the general election of 2013, 2016, and the current election of 2020.

The Commission has a Council of Commissioners composed of five members including a president and four members, appointed by royal decree for six years which is not renewable. Dr. Khaled Kalaldehy is the current Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the IEC.

2.3. History of Elections in Jordan

The state of Jordan became independent from the British Empire in 1946. During the period of the Transjordan Emirate, i.e., 1921-1946, five parliamentary elections were held, in the years 1929, 1931, 1934, 1937, and 1942². The 2020 election was the 19th parliamentary election since its independence. This election along with the parliamentary elections of 2013 and 2016 was conducted under the supervision of IEC.

2.3.1. Parliamentary Elections of 2013

The parliamentary elections for the 17th House of Representatives in Jordan were held on January 23, 2013. The final results were published on January 29, 2013. The voter turnout for the 2013 election was 56.7 percent with a total of 1,288,043 registered voters, who cast their ballots.

The elections were governed by various laws including the Constitution of 1952 as amended in 2011; the Election Law for the Lower House of the Parliament N. 25/2012; the IEC Law N.11/2012; the Political Party Law, N.16/2012; the Nationality Law, N.6/1954 (last amended in 1987); the Constitutional Court Law, N.15/2012; Penal Code 1960; and 14 Executive Instructions issued by the IEC.³

The Parliament in Jordan adopted a mixed electoral system for the 2013 elections, allowing the citizen to vote for a closed national list of 27 seats, in addition to the 108 single-member constituencies (in 45 electoral zones) of overall 150 seats. 15 seats were reserved for the women and 12 seats were reserved for Christian and Circassian candidates. The elections were held according to a mixed electoral system of a single-non-transferable-vote system and a proportional closed-list system.⁴ The Lower House, at that time, was composed of 150 seats.

The final voter list included 2,272,182 voters (51.8 percents are women and 48.2 percent men). Voter turnout was 56.7 percent. A total of 1,288,043 registered voters had cast their ballots.

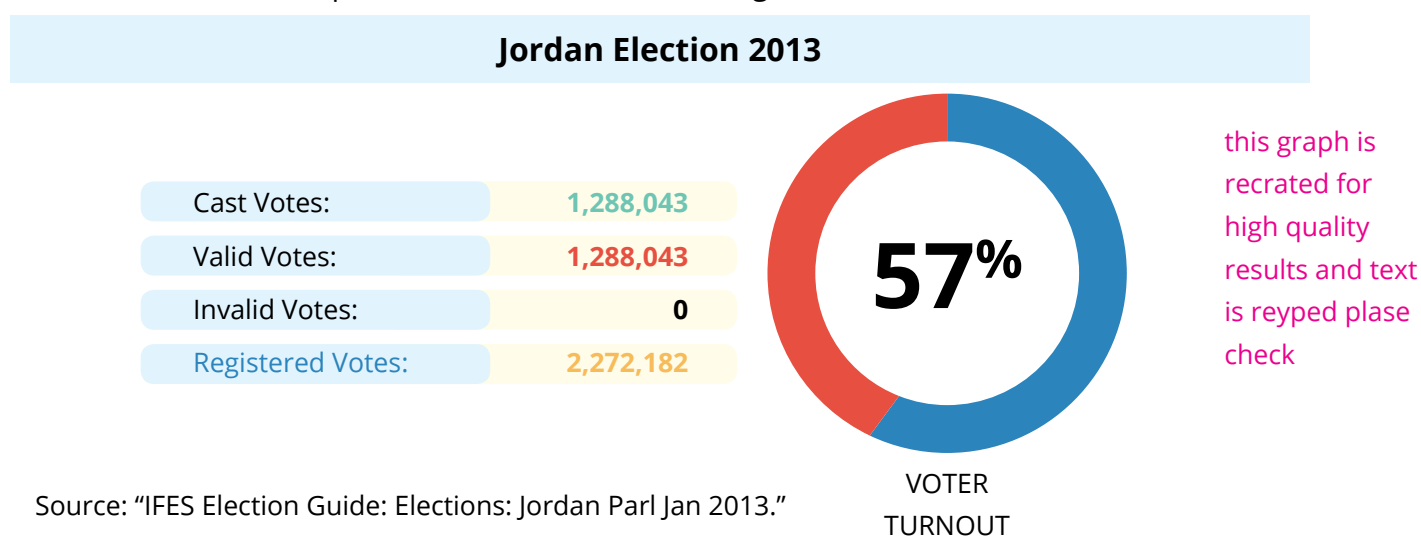


Figure iv Election results 2013

² "الهيئة المستقلة للانتخاب" 2013. الانتخابات النيابية 2013. www.iec.jo/ar-2013

³ ibid

⁴ "European Union Election Observation Mission", The Hashemite Kingdom Of Jordan Final Report Parliamentary Elections 2013, 2013.

2.3.2. The Parliamentary Elections 2016

The Parliament of Jordan in 2015 passed a new electoral law under which the number of members of parliament was lowered to 130 from 150. Under this new law, the electoral system was generally overhauled. The new electoral process replaced the previous one-person-one-vote system and instituted an open list proportional representation system. Out of 130 seats, 115 members were elected from 23 electoral districts using open list proportional representation, 15 seats were reserved for women and 9 seats were reserved for Christians, Chechens, and Circassians.⁵

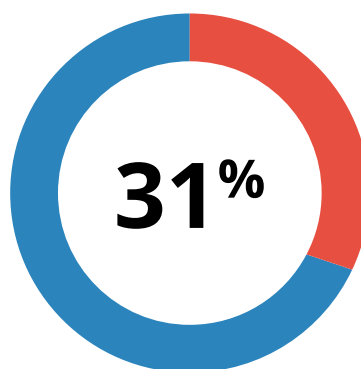
The parliamentary elections of 2016 were held under the new law passed in 2015. 226 lists competed, including 1252 candidates, throughout the Kingdom. The number of voters who cast their votes was around 1.5 million out of overall 4,134 million eligible voters. 52.9% of these voters were women and 47.1 %t were men. The voter turnout rate was 36%, statistically, a smaller number than previous elections but the overall number of voters who cast their votes was higher.

It is important to note that the result of the parliamentary elections held in 2016 returned a total of 20 women as MPs representing 15.4 percent of the 130 MPs. Of these 20 women, five won general seats beyond the 15 reserved seats, making the highest number of women in the parliament so far.

Jordan Parliamentary Election 2013

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Cast Votes:	1,490,200
Valid Votes:	1,278,723
Invalid Votes:	24,126
Registered Votes:	4,139,612



VOTER
TURNOUT

Source: "IFES Election Guide: Elections: Jordan Parl Sep 2016."

Figure v Election results 2016

⁵ "IFES Election Guide: Elections: Jordan Parliament 2016." IFES Election Guide | Elections: Jordan Parliament 2016, electionguide.org/elections/id/2965/.

3. THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 2020

The 19th Parliamentary elections for the House of Representatives were unique in the way that they conducted during a global pandemic as a result of which the turnout fell from 36% in the last election to 29%. The sharp fall in voter turnout has made these elections the least democratic election in its history.

As per reports, around 60 countries from across the world postponed elections due to the ongoing pandemic⁶ but few countries including Jordan chose to go ahead with theirs. The decision was taken because the authorities did not see any benefit in delaying the elections because the pandemic was far from being over.⁷

The detail of the election process is discussed below.

3.1. Condition for Candidacy

According to the election laws, the following are the conditions for the candidates contesting elections for the Lower House;

- He/she should be a national of Jordan for at least ten years.
- He/she should have completed thirty solar years of age on the day of polling.
- He/she should have not condemned to bankruptcy and has not regained his/her legal status.
- He/she should not have been sentenced to imprisonment for a period exceeding one year for a non-political crime and he has not been pardoned.
- He/she should not be imbecile or mentally unstable.
- He/she should not be a relative of the King to the degree specified by a special law.
- He/she should not have contracted with the government, public official institutions, companies owned or controlled by the government, or any public official institution, directly or indirectly, except for what was in the lease contracts of land and property and who was a shareholder in a company whose members are more than ten people.

Besides, those who intend to run for membership in the House of Representatives and hold one of the titles mentioned below must resign at least sixty days before the date set for polling:

- Ministers and employees of ministries, government departments, official and public institutions and bodies
- Employees of Arab, regional, and international bodies.
- The mayor of Oman, members of the Amman Municipality, and the staff of the Municipality
- Presidents of provincial, municipal and local councils, their members, and employees.

⁶ "How Countries Are Holding Elections During the COVID-19 Pandemic." Council on Foreign Relations, Council on Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org/backgrounder/how-countries-are-holding-elections-during-covid-19-pandemic.

⁷ Kristen Kao, E.J. Karmel. "Analysis | The Pandemic Compromised Jordan's Parliamentary Elections." The Washington Post, WP Company, 20 Nov. 2020, www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/11/20/pandemic-compromised-jordans-parliamentary-elections/.

3.1.1. Criteria for a Candidate

As per the law, whoever wishes to run for membership in the House of Representatives must be registered in one of the final lists of voters and pay an amount of five hundred non-refundable dinars that is credited as revenue to the treasury.

3.1.2. Election Campaign

The authorities of Jordan due to the pandemic had imposed strict restrictions on huge gatherings and rallies. Because of these restrictions, the gatherings carried out for campaigning purposes were very limited in their scale. But COVID restrictions did not deter the candidates from using public spaces to display their electoral posters and banners. The pandemic played a role in paving way for online election campaigning by the candidates as many used social media to reach out to their constituents.

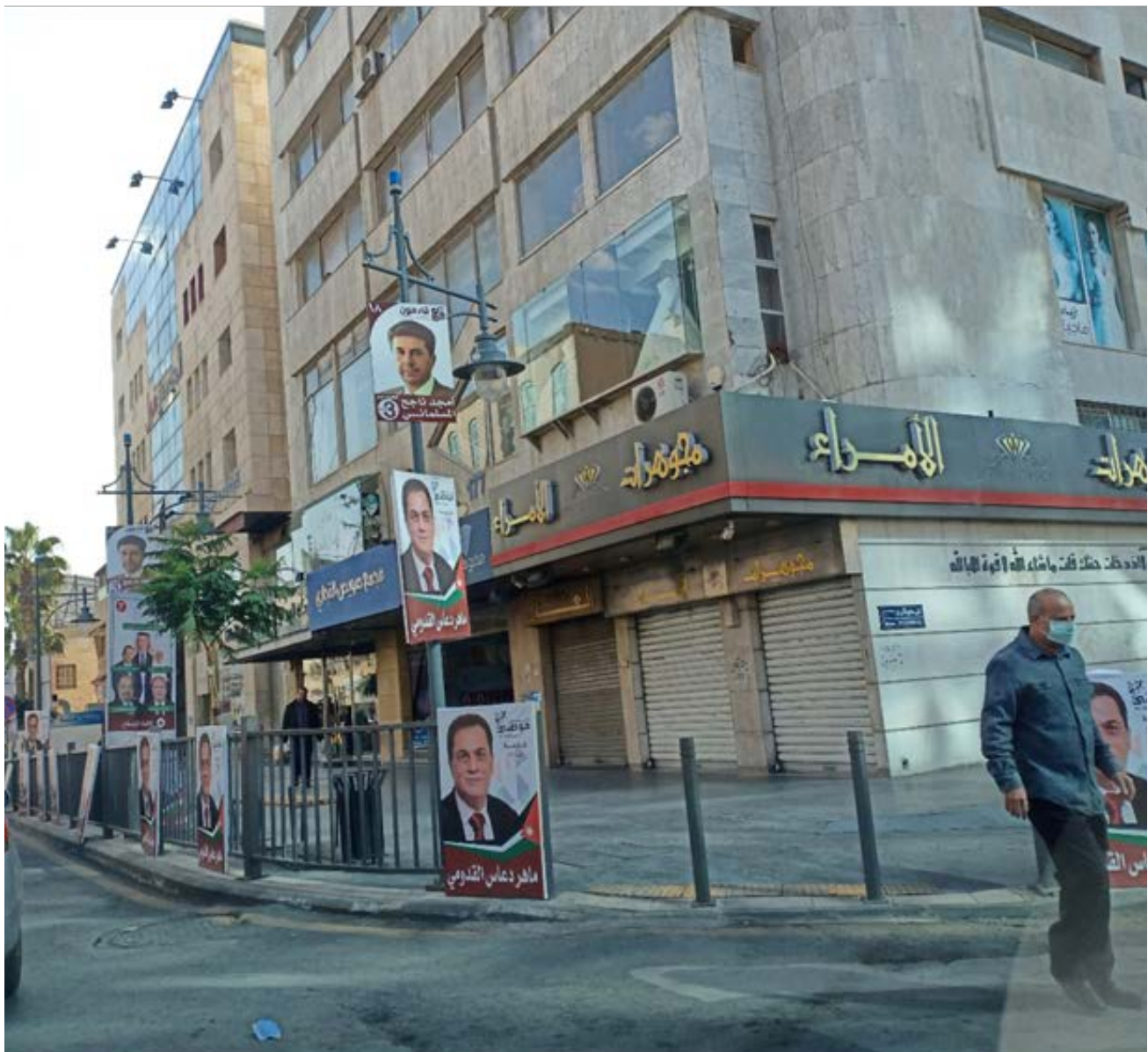


Figure vi Election campaign posters were visible on streets across Jordan. Candidates used posters and placards as well as social media for their election campaign

3.2. Voter Registration

Voter registration in Jordan is conducted by the Civil Status Department (CSD) of Jordan at the behest of IEC. CSD prepares a preliminary list of voters in accordance with their electoral districts and the provisions of the election law. After the presentation of the preliminary list, the voters are allowed to object to any discrepancy or error in data.

The voter can object either as “personal objection” or “objection to the others.” Within fourteen days of the presentation of preliminary voter lists, a “Personal Objection” request can be submitted. The nature of personal objection can be an exclusion of name from the list, a mistake in data, or a change of address.

Every voter, whose name is mentioned in the preliminary lists of voters, has the right to object to the Commission through the President of the Election Committee to the registration of others in the preliminary lists of voters within his constituency within a period not exceeding seven days from the day following the date on which the heads of the election committees presented the tables attached to the documents and data necessary.

Following the process of objection, the voter records are published online by the authorities as well as by any other means, it deems appropriate.

For the 19th parliamentary election, the final voter records were released on 5th October 2020. The detail of voters is as follows:

Total Number of Voters	4,640,643
Voters who participated in the Election	1387711
Polling Rate	29.90%

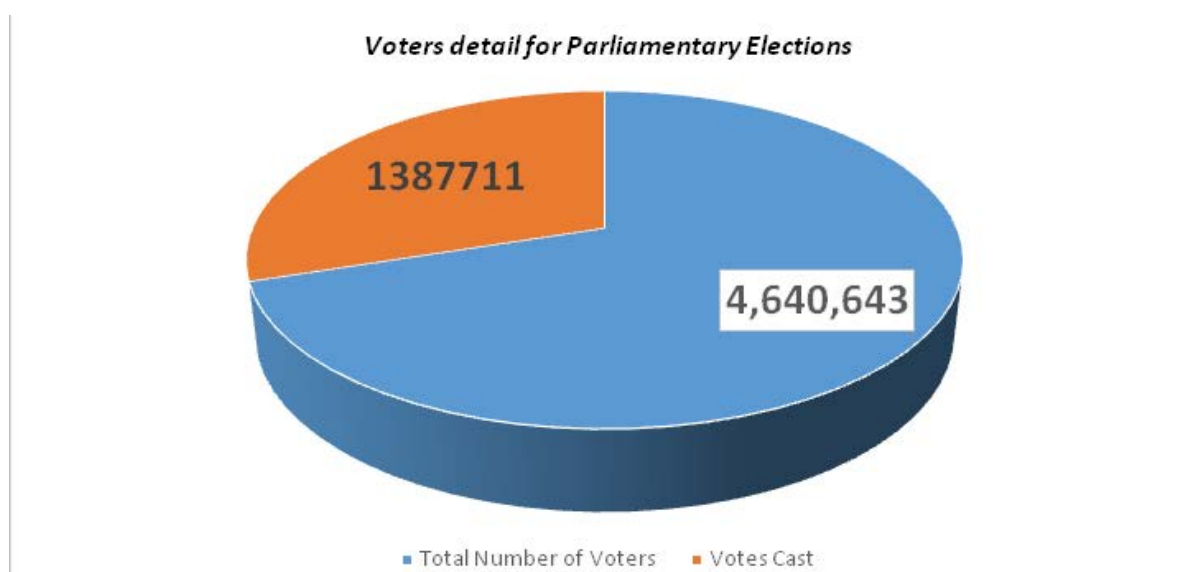


Figure vii Voters details for the Parliamentary Elections

3.3. Polling Rate

According to the results, the national polling rate was 29.9%, one of the lowest in the parliamentary election history of Jordan. Khaled Kalaldehy, the chief commissioner of IEC, said that “fear of coronavirus has impacted the level of participation”. Although the national turnout for the poll was low, however, some of the governorates recorded more than a 50% polling rate. The detail of the polling rate of governorates is mentioned in Table No. 6:

POLLING RATE AT THE GOVERNORATES		
Governorate	Circle	Polling rate
Capital	First	14.8%
Capital	the second	13.9%
Capital	The third	11.7%
Capital	The fourth	25.6%
Capital	Fifth	17.1%
Irbid	First	28.5%
Irbid	the second	45.4%
Irbid	The third	39.1%
Irbid	The fourth	43.8%
Balqa	Balqa	36.3%
Karak	Karak	54.6%
Even though	Even though	50.2%
Zarqa	First	15.7%
Zarqa	the second	28.0%
Divider	Divider	45.4%
Tafila	Tafila	49.3%
Madaba	Madaba	45.1%
Jerash	Jerash	50.9%
Ajloun	Ajloun	49.4%
Hitch	Hitch	37.8%
Northern Badia	North Bedouins	56.7%
Central Badia	Middle Bedouin	56.7%
Southern Badia	Southern Bedouins	65.7%
The percentage of voting at the national level		29.9%

Table 1 Polling rate at different governorates

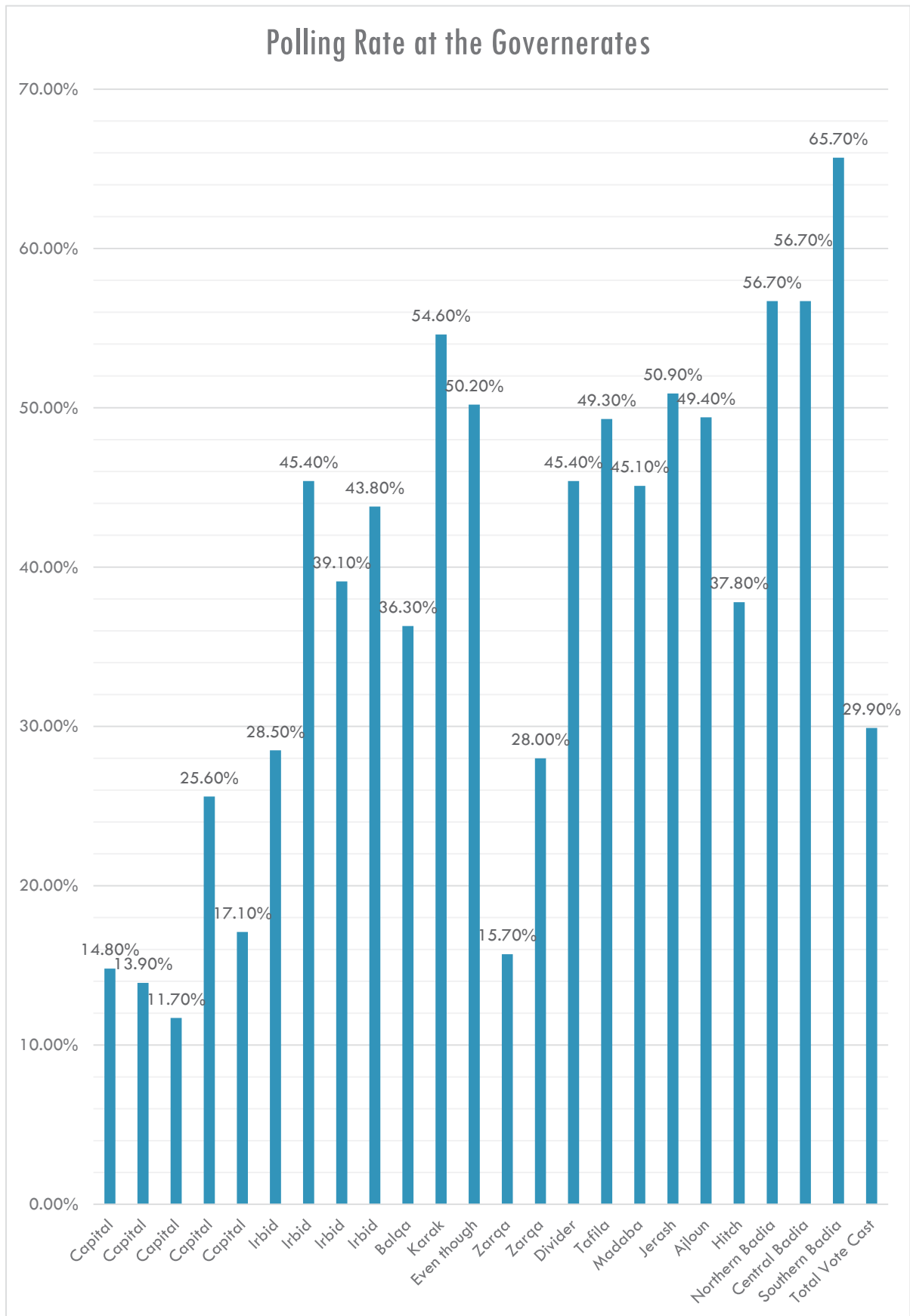


Figure No. 8 – Polling rate at governorates in Elections 2020

Figure viii Polling rates at governorates

3.4. Election Results

The IEC announced the end of the voting process for the parliamentary general elections at nine o'clock on November 10, 2020. The total number of votes cast was 1,387,711 which is 29.90% of the total number of voters. The percentage of male voters of the total votes cast was 34.12% (749,630) and female 26.11% (638,081)

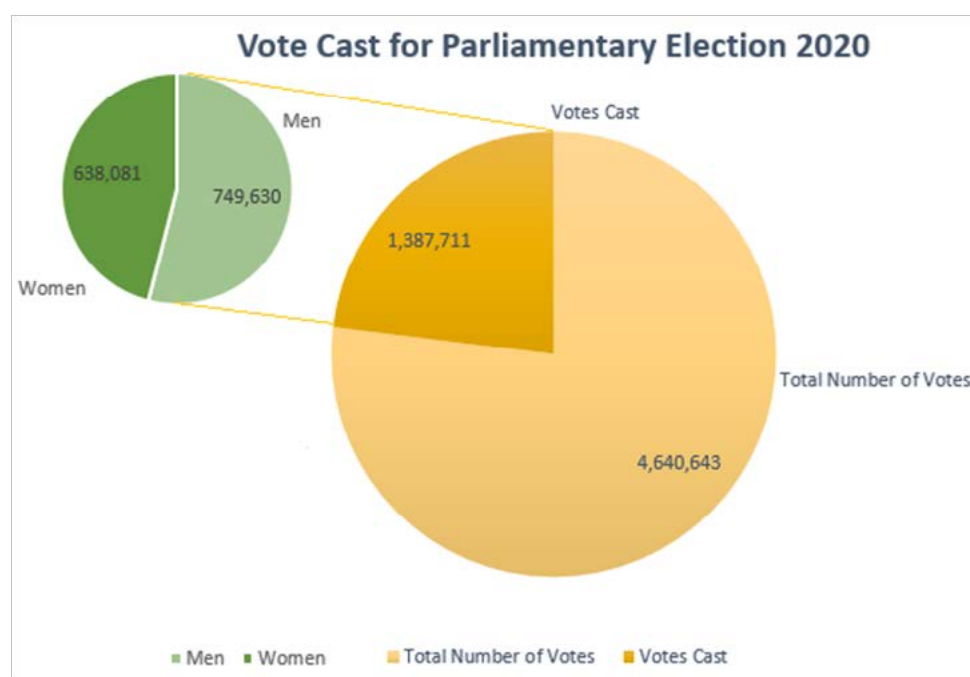


Figure ix Vote cast for Parliamentary Elections 2020

For 130 seats of the House of Representatives, 1674 candidates contested the election of whom 360 candidates were women. Of the 1674 candidates, 393 were affiliated with political parties. Unlike, 2016 elections female candidates won elections on seats reserved for them.

As per reports, less than 10% of the 130 members of the next parliament are from political parties because a majority of the candidates contested elections as independents, their loyalties rooted not in political parties but tribal and family allegiances. No seats were won by left-wing parties (social democrats, communists, nationalists), and not a single female candidate was able to secure a seat by gaining enough votes.⁸

The election results show the main opposition party, the Islamic Action Front (IAF) based National Coalition for Reform (NCR) won only 10 seats. IAF forged electoral alliances with Christian, ethnic minority, or tribal candidates in some areas to maintain two-thirds of its 15 seats.⁹ The report also elaborates that the majority of successful candidates are either wealthy business executives and tribal independents, while strong, reform-oriented members of parliament have lost their seats¹⁰. It also says that a hundred newcomers will join the new parliament, including approximately 20 retired senior military officers.

⁸ "Jordan." European Forum, www.europeanforum.net/countries/jordan. Retrieved on December 3, 2020.

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ Al Jazeera. "Women, Opposition Lose Seats in Jordan Election." Middle East | Al Jazeera, Al Jazeera, 12 Nov.

Division of Seats in the Lower House on Party Basis¹¹

S. No	Name of Political Party	No of Seats Won
1	Islamic Action Front (IAF)	10
2	Zamzam	5
3	Islamic Centrist (Wasat) Party	5
4	National Current Party	4
5	Justice and Reform Party	2
6	Ba'ath Arab Progressive Party	1
7	Civil Alliance Party	1
8	National Union Party	1
9	Al Awn Party	1
10	Jordanian United Front Party	1
11	Jordanian Social Democratic Party (JSDP)	0

Table 2 Seat distribution in the lower house a per parties

¹¹ ibid

Timeline of Elections in Jordan



Figure x Timeline of elections in Jordan

4. IPC ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION FINDINGS

A three members EOM of IPC, which was comprised of the Secretary-General IPC, Hon. Senator Barrister Muhammad Ali Khan Saif, Hon. Senator Ike Ekweremadu, IPC Chief Coordinator for Africa, and Ayaz Ahmed Soomro, Assistant Director Senate of Pakistan, observed the parliamentary election 2020 for the House of Representatives from November 7, 2020, to November 10, 2020. The EOM conducted their observation of the election process by employing the following mechanisms:

- i. The EOM members visited different polling stations at governorates to observe the election process and conduct interviews. To register their observations, election forms (see Annex- I) were filled.

Polling stations were visited in the following districts,

- Amman District
 - Jarash District
 - Irbid District
 - Yarmuk District
- ii. A qualitative open-ended Election Assessment form (see Annex II) filled by EOM in which general assessment regarding election environment and organization, campaigns as well as the role of IEC of Jordan, media, and the interest of people were recorded.
 - iii. The EOM also observed and interviewed the voters and the citizens of Jordan at the polling stations regarding their views for election and the process of election.
 - iv. The EOM thoroughly observed and inquired the staff at the PSs regarding the process of election and the issues, if any, they were facing to implement the process of election.

The subsequent sections present the key inferences drawn by the IPC EOM through the above instruments.

4.1. Polling station setup and environment

Election Day proceeded peacefully and calmly across Jordan. Polling stations opened as per the schedule i.e. at 7 am. Voting was conducted in an orderly and well-organized manner by the staff and no essential election materials were missing like ink, stamp, symbol list, ballots, and electoral rolls, etc. The polling station staffs were orderly managing the election process by following the Covid-19 SOPs for the voters.

Every voter was sanitized and provided a mask and gloves while they were casting their vote. The staff present at the PSs was seen observing the COVID SOPs.



Figure xi IPC Election Observation Mission at a polling station on election day

There were no issues concerning the security of ballot boxes. They were visible and sealed as per the code of practice issued by the concerned authorities.



Figure xii IPC Election Observation Mission with polling staff at a polling station in Irbid

Most of the polling stations saw a low turnout of voters, however, those who voted reflected a good understanding of the voting process. Perhaps, the COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed, in addition to other factors, to a reduced turnout of voters at the polling stations. The secrecy of the vote was well respected at the PSs visited by the EOM.



Figure xiii A voter being provided COVID-19 safety tools by the polling staff at a polling station in Amman City. At every polling station, the IEC had deputed staff to provide COVID-19 safety tools to the voters.

4.2. Personnel in the Polling Stations

The EOM observed the presence of all requisite staff at the polling stations. The presence of personnel from Police and Military outside polling stations was also observed.

The IEC staff was present throughout the EOM visits to observe the polling process. Though local observers were present at the polling stations international observers were absent, except for European Union Election Observation Mission members at one of the polling stations in Amman that was visited by EOM.

Other than the companions of disabled persons, no unauthorized personnel was seen at the polling stations visited by EOM. The majority of polling stations did not show any signs of disturbance or violence.

4.3. The Voting Process

The EOM did not observe over-crowding at any of the polling stations. The polling staff ensured social distancing among the voters. The voters were properly registered at each polling station and the voters' ID cards were checked through a scanner to avoid direct contact. Furthermore, at each polling station digital and manual record of voters was available that was checked by the staff. The ballots were properly signed and stamped before they were handed to the voters. Inking of voters after they had cast their votes was also ensured.

Voters, whose names were not on the voting list of particular polling stations, were guided by the polling staff to their designated polling station.

The conduct of polling staff was fair and they efficiently performed their duties. The voters were provided necessary assistance and guidance. The essential materials for voting were readily available during the whole process of election and no shortage was recorded at any place.

Furthermore, EOM recorded no incident of violence, harassment, rigging, bogus voting, or any other suspicious activity that could have impeded the process of transparency. Hence, it is safe to say that the process was transparent.



Figure xiv Polling staff checking ID of a voter at a polling station

4.4. Closing and Counting

The process of counting was transparent and orderly. IEC announced the end of the voting process for the nineteenth parliamentary general elections at 9 pm, after giving two hours extension in the time given initially, because of low turnout.

4.5. Media Reports

Although no major violation of the election process was reported, some media outlets reported that supporters of losing candidates flouted the curfew, imposed by the government, by closing off roads with burning tyres and rubbish bins.¹² Consequently, Interior Minister Tawfiq al-Halalmah resigned from his post and took “moral” responsibility for the unruly events that followed announcements of the results of the elections.¹³

4.6. International Observation

IEC, the prime institution for the conductance of elections in Jordan, is responsible for giving accreditation to international election monitoring bodies. According to the IEC website, 25 supervisory bodies were approved to monitor the general elections.¹⁴

IPC was invited by IEC for election observation which was duly accepted and EOM was formed. IEC organized a briefing session regarding the parliamentary election of Jordan for Election Observers on November 9, 2020. IPC EOM members attended the session during which Chairman IEC, Dr. Khalid Al Kalalkeh, briefed the delegation on IEC preparation for elections. The main focus of the briefing was the implementation of SOPs regarding COVID-19 as per the WHO guidelines.



Figure xv The Secretary-General of IPC asking a question from IEC Chairman at a briefing arranged by IEC for international election observers at IPC headquarters.

Briefing by IEC Chairman to the International Observer on November 9, 2020. The Secretary-General International Parliamentarian Congress asking the question from the Chairman IEC.

¹² Al Jazeera. “Women, Opposition Lose Seats in Jordan Election.” Middle East | Al Jazeera, Al Jazeera, 12 Nov. 2020, www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/12/women-lose-seats-in-jordan-vote.

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ وصول كافة الجهات الرقابية الدولية المعتمدة للرقابة على الانتخابات النيابية. “الهيئة المستقلة للانتخاب” www.iec.jo/ar

4.7. Results of Elections

Following candidates got elected from 294 Lists

SR.	GOVERNORATES	DISTRICT	WINNERS
1	Amman	Amman (First district)	1. Andre Hawari 2. Khalil Attia 3. Musa Hantash 4. Abdulrahman Al-Awaysheh, 5. Suleiman Abu Yahya 6. Mayyada Ibrahim Ibrahim - Women's Quota seat
		Amman (Second district)	1. Ayoub Khamis, 2. Ahmed Jamil Asha, 3. Dirar Al-Harasis 4. Ghazi Al-Beddawi, 5. Abed Mohammed Elayyan, 6. Fayez Basbous
		Amman (Third district)	1. Saleh Armouti, 2. Khaled Al-Bustanji, 3. Hussein El-Harassis 4. Ahmed Safadi, 5. Omar Al-Naber, 6. Khaldoun Hina
		Amman (Fourth district)	1. Mohammad Yahya Al-Maharmah, 2. Abdullah Munawar Abu Zaid 3. Mughayyar Alhamlan , 4. Khair Abu Sa'alik
		Amman (Fifth district)	1. Nimer Al-Sulaihat, 2. Yanal Al-Fraihat, 3. Osama Al-Ruhayyel 4. Nassar Al-Qaisi, 5. Firas Al-Sawa'eer, 6. Najeh Al-Idwan, 7. Adnan Mushawaga
2	Irbid	Irbid (First district)	1. Abdel Moneim Al-Awdat , 2. Khaled Al-Shloul, 3. Mohammed Jaradat, 4. Mohammed Al-Ababneh, 5. Zuhair Al Saeedin, 6. Rashid Al-Shouha
		Irbid (Second district: Al Ramtha and Bani Kinanah)	1. Khaled Abu Hassan, 2. Abdul Salam Al-Thiabat, 3. Fawwaz Al-Zoubi 4. Yahya Obeidat, 5. Amal Al-Bashir - Women's Quota seat

		Irbid (Third district)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Salem Al-Omari, 2. Mohammed Ageel Shatnawy, 3. Yasar Al-Khasawneh, 4. Wael Razzouq
		Irbid (Fourth district)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mejhem Al-Sqour, 2. Ali Al-Ghazzawi, 3. Jafar Rababa'a, 4. Mohammed Bani Yassin, 5. Atta Hussein Ibdah
3	Balqa	Balqa	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Talal Al-Nsour, 2. Ahmad Al-Sarahneh, 3. Mohammed Al-Alaqmeh, 4. Abdul Halim Al-Hmoud, 5. Dirar Al-Dauod, 6. Emad Al-Idwan, 7. Nidal Al-Hiyari, 8. Aref Al-Sa'aydeh, 9. Fadi Al-Idwan 10. Ra'ed Al-Smirat, 11. Dina Awni Al-Bashir - Women's Quota seat
4	Zarqa	Zarqa (First district)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Salameh Al-Balwy, 2. Merza Bolad, 3. Mohammed Al-Dahrawy 4. Hayel Ayyash, 5. Raed Rabbaa, 6. Mohammed Awwad Al-Khalaileh, 7. Mohammed Ali Abu Se'ileq, 8. Mohammed Moussa Al-Ghweiry
		Zarqa (Second district)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ahmad Qasim Al-Khalaileh, 2. Ali Salem Al-Khalaileh, 3. Omar Oglah Al-Zyoud, 4. Suleiman Al-Qallab, 5. Rahaq Al-Zawahra - Women's Quota seat
5	Aqaba	Aqaba	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hasan Salah Al-Riyati, 2. Rawa'a Al-Gharabli - Women's Quota seat, 3. Obaid Yassin Thani, 4. Hazem Al Majali
6	Badia	Northern Badia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dhiab Al-Masaeed, 2. Habis Al-Shabib, 3. Ghazi Al-Muqbel, 4. Hadya Al-Sarhan - Women's Quota seat

		Middle Badia	1. Bassam Mohammed Al-Fayez, 2. Mohammed Anad Al-Fayez, 3. Abdelsalam Al-Khdeir, 4. Abeer Al-Jbour - Women's Quota seat
		Southern Badia	1. Saleh Sari Abu Tayeh, 2. Eid Mohammed Al-Nuimat, 3. Tawfiq Almara'yah, 4. Zainab Salameh Al-Moussa - Women's Quota seat
7	Tafilah	Tafilah	1. Mohammed Al-Saudi, 2. Mohammed Al-Mrayat, 3. Abdullah Ali Awwad, 4. Islam Tabashat - Women's Quota seat, 5. Osama Al-Qawabah
8	Ajloun	Ajloun	1. Bilal Al-Momani, 2. Firas Al-Qudah, 3. Safaa Al-Momani - Women's Quota seat, 4. Khaldoun Al Shwayyat, 5. Farid Hadda
9	Ma'an	Ma'an	1. Mahmoud Ibrahim Al-Farajat, 2. Tayseer Mohammed Krishan, 3. Mohammed Sulayman Al-Halalat, 4. Shadi Abdullah Fraij, 5. Aisha Ahmed Al-Hasanat - Women's Quota seat
10	Karak	Karak	1. Ahmad Qatawneh, 2. Ghazi Al-Thnaibat, 3. Ayman Hazza' Al-Majali, 4. Odeh Nawaysheh, 5. Salem Al-Dmour, 6. Ali Madallah Tarawneh, 7. Haitham Ziyadin, 8. Ayman Al-Madanat, 9. Taleb Al-Sarayrah, 10. Jamil Al-Hashoush, 11. Marwa Al-Suob - Women's Quota seat
11	Madaba	Madaba	1. Nassar Al Haisa, 2. Abdul Rahim Maayah, 3. Saleh Al-Wakhyan, 4. Majdi Al-Yaqoub, 5. Asma'a Al-Rawahneh - Women's Quota seat

12	Mafrq	Mafrq	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nawwaf Al-Khawaldeh, 2. Abdul Karim Al-Dughmi, 3. Ismail Al-Mashaqba, 4. Yazan Shdeifat, 5. Rima Abu Al-Eis - Women's Quota seat
13	Jerash	Jerash	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Zaid Al-Atoum, 2. Nawash Qouqza, 3. Majid Rawashdeh, 4. Omar Ayasrah, 5. Fayza Al-Shehab - Women's Quota seat

Table 3 Elected Candidates

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

After thoroughly observing the election process, the IPC EOM has formulated the following recommendations for reforms in different areas that are vital for establishing a strong democratic culture in a society.

The first and foremost focus of these recommendations is the authorities with decision-making powers including the IEC followed by suggestions for political parties and civil society, that can be taken to develop public trust in the election process and strengthen democracy in Jordan.

i. Increasing Electoral rate

It is highly important for Jordan to increase its electoral rate by creating an equitable electoral system that is representative of the Jordanian population as well as suited to the political realities of the country. For it to happen, discussions should continue between a broad base of political stakeholders, both in parliament and outside. Electoral models that were proposed in the past, including one by the National Dialogue Committee, could be used as a starting point for future discussions.

ii. Voters' Awareness

One of the reasons behind the low turnout of the voters in Jordan was the lack of awareness regarding the measures that the IEC had taken to ensure voters' safety. Voters must be aware of the fact that their safety comes first for the state in such extraordinary circumstances that the state would never put their health at risk.

To address this issue IEC, in addition to other steps, needs to formulate a policy for extraordinary circumstances and situations that can play part in public awareness.

iii. Increasing women participation in the Parliament

Currently, only 15 seats are reserved in the House of 130 members which is less than 12% of total seats. Women are underrepresented in Parliament. The current inequality of the vote concerning the reserved seats for women could be significantly remedied by providing them seats in each of 23 constituencies and without prejudice to the right of women to be elected outside of the reserved seat system.

To bridge the gap of female representation in the Parliament, political parties in Jordan should ensure mandatory women nominations in their party lists to increase their representation in the parliament.

iv. Strengthening the political parties

As earlier mentioned, the majority of seats in the recent elections in Jordan were won by independent candidates while political parties performed poorly. This points towards two issues, i.e., the weak role of political parties in the Parliament and lack of public trust

in political parties. Jordan needs to strengthen political parties in the country through legislation. And to raise public trust in political parties, political parties should be bound to make their funding public.

v. Ensure the independence of the Independent Election Commission

To ensure IEC independence as an institution, it should be given budgetary and financial autonomy as well as permanent staff. Members of the IEC Board of Commissioners should be nominated through the transparent procedure and with clear and consistent criteria for selection to guarantee its independence.

vi. Creating flexibility for aspiring candidates

The election law in Jordan bars citizens, who have less than 10 years of citizenship, from contesting elections which is in contradiction with the Constitution that guarantees the right to contest elections to all citizens irrespective of the period of their status as citizens of the state. Furthermore, the criteria for age to be a member of the House of Representatives should be decreased from 30 years to encourage youth to participate in political processes.

vii. Role of Civil Society

Civil society in Jordan should be encouraged to play a pro-active role in election-related activities by the state authorities. And for civil society to ensure the effectiveness of their work, it is imperative to enhance cooperation and coordination among themselves.

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Annexure – I

SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1 IPC EOM in front of IEC HQ in Amman



Photo 2 General Secretary IPC with the Chairman of IEC Jordan



Photo 3 IPC EOM member with the Chairman of IEC Jordan



Photo 4 IPC EOM at a polling station in Janna district



Photo 5 IPC EOM posing in front of a polling station sign



Photo 6 SG IPC Senator Muhammad Ali Saif with Senator Ike Ekweremadu



Photo 4 IPC EOM at a polling station in Janna district



Photo 5 IPC EOM posing in front of a polling station sign



Photo 6 SG IPC Senator Muhammad Ali Saif with Senator Ike Ekweremadu



Photo 10 Election posters of candidates at a road side in Jordan



Photo 11 Election posters of candidates



Photo 12 Polling staff checking the ID of a voter

Annexure – II

Election Observation Questionnaire

a) Implementation of the election legislation?

b) Performance of the election administration?

c) Conduct of election campaign?

d) Role of media?

e) How do you analyze the role of Independent Election Commission

Voting Day Processes

Results process and public reaction

2. Please share your insights with regard to the general arrangements?

Comments with regard to;

a) The interest of the people in the election process

b) Polling Stations arrangements

c) Conduct of Polling Staff

d) Were the results reported accurately, honestly, and on time?

e) The overall environment on Voting Day? (any incidents of polarization, harassment, threat, on voters expression reported)

Any challenges and recommendations for the elections

Further comments if any

[illegible]

Annexure – III

Election Observation Form

Ps Name		Polling station Reg. No	
Registration		Women's Station? (Y/N)	
District		Union Council	
Time of arrival at PS		Time of departure from PS	

Please try to take pictures and collect any material and forms at Polling Stations if and when possible

POLLING STATION SET UP AND ENVIRONMENT

1	Was the polling booth opened by 7 am?	Yes	No	1
2	Is the ballot box visible and sealed?	Yes	No	2
3	Is the booth set up so that the polling can be conducted in secret?	Yes	No	3
4	Does the booth have all the necessary materials such as ink, stamp, symbol list, ballots, electoral rolls, etc? <i>(If no, please explain in Notes section)</i>	Yes	No	4
5		Yes	No	5
6	Is the polling booth overcrowded?	Yes	No	6
7	Is any campaigning occurring within vicinity of the polling station?	Yes	No	7
8	Would accessing the polling booth be difficult for people with disabilities? <i>If yes, please describe in Notes section</i>	Yes	No	8

PERSONNEL IN THE POLLING BOOTH

9	Are all polling booth staff present? <i>If no, please indicate who is missing</i>		Yes	No	9
10	Are the following present inside the polling booth?	Candidates <i>(if yes, specify org)</i>	Yes	No	10
		Election agents <i>(if yes, specify group)</i>	Yes	No	
		Polling agents <i>(if yes, note which parties)</i>	Yes	No	
		Police Officers on duty <i>(if yes, specify police or military)</i>	Yes	No	
		Representatives of the Electoral Commission	Yes	No	
		Accredited Observers <i>(if yes, specify who)</i>	Yes	No	

		Persons under the age of 18 who accompany voters	Yes	No	
		Companions of disabled voters	Yes	No	
11	Are observers and/or candidate agents able to observe the process adequately?		Yes	No	11
12	Did observers, agents, security personnel, or unauthorized people interfere with process? <i>If yes, explain in Notes</i>		Yes	No	12
13	Is there any male staff working in a female polling station/booth? <i>If yes, indicate how many male and how many female</i>		Yes	No	13

VOTING PROCESS					
14	Did Voters registered in Formal Electoral Roll	always	Sometime	Never	14
15	Are polling staff checking IDENTITY of voter	always	Sometime	Never	15
16	Are voters being properly inked and ticked off the voter list	always	Sometimes	Never	16
17	Are ballots stamped and signed on the back before given to the Voter	always	Sometimes	Never	17
18	Was anyone turned away for not having proper ID	always	Few	None	18
19	Was anyone turned away because they were not on the electoral roll	always	Few	None	19
20	Were any ineligible voter allowed to vote (<i>for example, someone not on the electoral list or with an already inked finger</i>)	always	Few	None	20
21	Did polling station staff conduct their duties fairly and responsibly? <i>If no, please explain in Notes section.</i>		Yes	No	21
22	Were any voters assisted to vote? <i>If yes, please describe by whom in the note section</i>		Yes	No	22
23	Did polling station run out of material at any time during the voting process		Yes	No	23
24	Was the voting process disrupted or suspended at any time during the day? <i>If yes, explain why in the note section</i>		Yes	No	24
25	Did you witness any incidents of violence or intimidation? <i>Notes section If yes, please describe in</i>		Yes	No	25
26	So far, how many tendered or challenged ballots have been cast? <i>Please Presiding Officer</i>				26
27	Overall, were there any major problems with the voting process?		Yes	No	27

CLOSING AND COUNTING				
28	Were voters in line at closing (10:00pm) allowed to cast their ballot?	Yes	No	28
29	Did officials follow the procedures for counting?	Yes	No	29
30	Were fair and impartial decisions made regarding invalid ballots? <i>If no, please explain in Notes section</i>	Yes	No	30
31	Did the ballots reconcile properly at the end of the count?	Yes	No	31
32	Did officials count the counterfoils of women ballots for gender disaggregated	Yes	No	32
33	Were observers and agents allowed to witness the counting process and receive copy of the results form? <i>If no, please explain in Notes section</i>	Yes	No	33
34	Was the final result count posted outside of the polling station?	Yes	No	34



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Block C, Ataturk Avenue,
G-5, Islamabad-Pakistan

92-51-924 4713

92-51-924 4723

www.ipcongress.org

communication@ipcongress.org

IPCongress_

Secretariat.IPCongress