

**IRAQI VOICES**  
**PUBLIC ATTITUDES AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY**  
**IN TRANSITION**

**Findings from Focus Groups with Iraqi Men and Women**  
**(Conducted April 13 – 25, 2005)**

Prepared for the  
National Democratic Institute for International Affairs  
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## Preface

**Purpose.** As part of its continuing effort to help build and strengthen the institutions of democracy in Iraq, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) commissioned a series of focus group interviews to capture the views of a broad cross-section of Iraqis. The findings provide insight on the perspectives of ordinary Iraqi men and women regarding the current state of affairs in their country in the spring of 2005, assessments of the elections held in January and popular expectations and aspirations for the constitutional process now under way.

**Sample.** Between April 13 and 25, 36 focus groups were conducted with a representative selection of citizens - men and women, Kurds and Arabs, Sunni, Shi'a and Christian – throughout Iraq. Sessions were held in 15 cities: Amarah, Basra, Baghdad, Erbil, Fallujah, Hilla, Kirkuk, Kut, Mosul, Najaf, Nassariya, Samawah, Sinjar, Suleymania and Tikrit. Twenty-four sessions were conducted in urban settlements and 12 in rural areas. NDI contracted KA Research Ltd., an Iraqi public opinion research firm in Baghdad, to recruit participants and moderate the sessions with NDI supervision and analysis.

**Method.** Focus groups are semi-structured group interviews that proceed according to a research design that includes careful recruitment of participants. Groups are recruited to be homogeneous (according to gender, age, education, ethnicity and/or religious affiliation) for two reasons: in order to clarify the views held by a particular sub-group of the population and to enhance the comfort level of participants, so they feel they are among peers and that everyone involved is equally entitled to express an opinion. Focus groups are free flowing, open-ended and often unpredictable. Unlike polling, which is a quantitative research method in which a representative sample of an entire population enables data to be projected to the general population, focus groups are qualitative in nature and help us to understand language, motivation and values. While polling is able to tell us what certain percentages of the population think or believe, focus groups help us understand why certain segments of the population think or believe what they do.

**Realities of conducting opinion research in Iraq.** The focus groups discussed in this report are the first foray into professional, structured opinion research on NDI Iraq's part since a similar project, overseen by Thomas Melia and Brian Katulis, was carried out in the summer of 2003. Unfortunately, the difficulties encountered by the 2003 team have gotten worse, the atmosphere in which the research was conducted made even more challenging by insurgent attacks against westerners and Iraqis perceived as "collaborators." Severely restricted travel and the conspicuous vehicles and guards required to provide personal security rendered the on-site management and observation of focus group sessions by NDI staff and consultants virtually impossible, constraining our ability to interpret certain findings.

Thanks to Melia and Katulis, we had a sound foundation upon which to model this phase of the dialogue between Iraqi citizens and those trying to help them build their democracy. In the two years since that initial project, regional firms have developed methods, established local facilities and cultivated indigenous moderators and interviewers, all of which were integral to making this project possible if not perfect. The determination and dexterity of NDI's Iraq Team, both in Baghdad and in Washington, especially but not exclusively the Political Party Program, was another critical ingredient in bringing this project to fruition. Finally, NDI's Megan Doherty is essentially the co-author of this report. At an opinion research firm, a small team of analysts would have been involved in a project of this scope, but NDI had Megan, which was more than enough. Her willingness to dive into the focus group transcripts and understand what they were saying made her a partner in the interpretation; her

superior writing and editing skills are largely responsible for the presentation. Without Megan's efforts, the Iraqi voices discussed here would be much more faint.

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## Executive Summary

The focus groups explored Iraqi reactions to the January 30, 2005 elections and attitudes and expectations toward the impending constitutional process, including constitutional priorities, parliamentary competence, citizen participation and public access to information on the process and final document. They reveal a citizenry craving a say in its future yet fearful and frustrated by the violence and economic dislocation that currently characterize Iraqi life. The January election is generally viewed as a watershed event, but the delay in forming a government, and the inability of that government and the occupying forces to deal effectively with critical problems has resulted in a crisis of confidence in many quarters. The constitutional process now underway represents both an acid test and a historic opportunity for the nascent political institutions to demonstrate to a wary public that its leaders are capable of acting boldly and constructively on their behalf. The main findings of the research include the following:

### I. Life after the Elections

- **Iraqis feel their lives have changed little or not at all since the elections.** The economy, security conditions and the performance of political institutions are the three most influential factors in shaping Iraqi public opinion. While Iraqis believe the elections constituted a positive first step in terms of broad-scale democratic transition and ideological change, the lack of improvement in security and economic conditions since the elections and deficit of visible government progress have contributed to disillusionment and frustration.
  - **Economic Strife.** Iraqis are disappointed that the elections were not followed by tangible economic improvement, and many feel as if conditions have gotten worse. Across the country, Iraqis continue to grapple with widespread unemployment, inadequate distribution of ration cards and government inability to control prices.
  - **Tenuous Security.** Three months after the elections, security conditions remain volatile. While some participants from predominantly Shia regions reported marginal improvement, respondents in traditionally Sunni areas such as Tikrit, Fallujah and Salah Al-Din stated that conditions had either stayed the same or worsened.
  - **Political Institutions.** While Iraqis see the elections as a positive step, the subsequent delay in forming the government, political chicanery and the slow pace of reform elicit frustration and contribute to skepticism regarding the ability of the government to successfully draft a constitution by the August 15 deadline.
- **Criticism of the present situation does not necessarily equate to pessimism regarding the future.** In fact, many participants point out that democracy is a new process and evince hope for a brighter future, however slow it is in coming.
  - Iraqis maintain hopes for the future that are simple in concept, yet difficult in execution: an improvement in their basic quality of life including security, employment, a reasonable cost of living, political transparency and competent, effective government.

- **Iraqis remain committed to a unified state.** Many participants, particularly urban Sunni males, expressed concern over what they described as “denominational division,” the rising tide of sectarian antagonism. Moreover, the enduring Iraqi sense of unity is reflected in the constitutional priorities voiced by its people.
- **Concern over foreign military and political pressure, while usually not expressed hysterically, is a constant.** Some focus group participants claimed that powers such as Israel, Iran, and the United States are manipulating Iraq and that progress is not possible until foreign military are recalled and foreign political influences are curtailed. Many referred to the presence of foreign troops as a negative factor in the constitutional process.

## II. January Elections

- **Focus group participants were somewhat more likely than the general population to say they had voted in January.** This is particularly true when we take out the Sunnis who boycotted the election.
  - In essence, there are two categories of non-voters: those who wanted to participate but for some reason could not or did not, and those who consciously decided not to vote.
    - § In the first category are those who tried to vote but did not find their names on the lists, lost their forms or said ballots did not arrive at their polling place. Others wanted to vote, but were too concerned about security or the distance to election centers.
    - § In the latter category were the Sunnis who boycotted the election en masse, resulting in a number of focus groups in which none of the participants had voted. While a few expressed regrets, many maintained the view that that the elections were irrelevant or illegitimate.
- **Specific frustrations with the execution of the January 2005 elections paled in comparison to the dissatisfaction with the closed list.**
  - There was widespread and severe criticism of the closed list system across regions, sects, and genders. Participants were frustrated by the inclusion of corrupt, unfamiliar or inexperienced personalities on electoral lists and the lack of information on the individual candidates.

## III. Constitution

- **Iraqis are cautiously optimistic about the formation of a constitution.** With regard to constitutional development, focus group participants were most concerned about sectarian agendas, insufficient transparency and undue foreign influence. Many of the participants felt as if some of the most important decisions regarding the future of their country were being made behind closed doors.

- **The concept of a constitution has both form and substance.** While definitions varied from a document representing citizen's rights to a code of civic responsibility to a religious mandate based on the Quran, there is strong evidence that the Iraqi citizenry holds a clear and firm view of what a constitution is and why it is important.
- **There is a clear and consistent desire for a constitution that provides and protects rights.** Focus group participants listed their top constitutional priorities as human rights, gender equality, minority rights, security, economic and social rights, employment, freedom of expression, separation of powers and strengthening a unified Iraqi identity.
  - Regardless of gender, region, ethnicity or creed, the participants repeatedly emphasized that they have suffered in the past and look forward to a constitution which will genuinely protect them all.
  - Although there is some interest in Islamic governance, there is broad support for religious freedom. Islamic values, however, are seen by many as a unifying measure that could provide common ground.

#### IV. The Constitutional Process

- **Iraqis are divided over whether or not they believe the Iraqi parliament is capable and objective enough to draft a suitable constitution.** As a result of their success in the elections, many Shiites and Kurds are hopeful about the process because they have confidence in the leaders they elected. Conversely, many Sunni respondents fear that their interests will not be represented.
- **Levels of information on the constitutional process are quite uneven.** While some participants were very well versed on the process and timetable, others revealed a lack of knowledge concerning even the basics, suggesting a market for education and training on the constitutional and democratic processes occurring in their country.
- **Iraqis hold mixed views on the viability and necessity of the August deadline.** Earlier delays in government formation have caused many Iraqis to be skeptical about the administration's ability to meet its own deadlines.
  - Iraqis differ over whether or not the constitutional deadline should be extended. Many respondents want the constitution to be drafted promptly, and are likely to see delay as failure, while others want parliament to take its time and consult with experts, scholars, experienced constitutional drafters and religious leaders to develop the best possible constitution.
- **Citizen participation in the constitutional process is seen as important, although interpretations of participation vary.** The responses make it clear that Iraqis want to be active and have their voices heard; however, limited past experiences to participate in the political process foster doubt about the possibility of meaningful civic involvement at the individual level.

- The Shia respondents were eager to increase opportunities for direct civic participation in the upcoming constitutional process. Conversely, many Sunni respondents were less inclined toward direct citizen participation, seeking representation through party leaders or the appointment of a special commission to oversee constitutional drafting.
- Focus group discussions yielded suggestions to increase opportunities for civic participation through informal community meetings, public opinion questionnaires or radio or television campaigns.
- Notions of participation ranged from publishing a book or organizing a conference on the high end, to discussing with family and friends or merely seeking information on the other. Many respondents were enthusiastic about the focus groups and claimed they were participating because the discussions gave them an opportunity to air their voices.
- **Iraqis need reliable sources of information on the constitution.** Despite criticism of the amount and quality of information available through the media before the election, Iraqis intend to rely on television, radio and the internet for information on the constitutional process.
  - Focus group participants made a variety of valuable suggestions to address this problem, such as the use of pamphlets or volunteer committees to disseminate information.
    - Some discussants suggested that the media make an effort to introduce candidates and political processes to the public. Others articulated hope that civil society organizations would disseminate information.
    - Almost every focus group participant, regardless of gender, region or religion stated that they would participate in events to learn more about the constitutional process.

## Principal Findings

### I. Life in Iraq after the Elections

Three issues dominated focus group discussions as Iraqis reflected upon the impact of the elections: economics, security conditions and the post-electoral performance of political institutions. Specific comments vary according to demographics, but the prevailing sentiment among Iraqis is that their lives have changed little or not at all since the elections. Some individuals are optimistic and believe conditions have improved albeit minimally, others are pessimistic and claim things are getting worse. Focus group participants raised a multiplicity of issues and concerns ranging from the role of politicians and the birth of democracy in Iraq to complaints regarding worsening traffic in Baghdad.

Many Iraqis perceive the elections as a symbol of the movement towards a democratic society.

*“I didn’t notice an original, real or clear change but it is a step of the beginning of the democracy. It is a cultural phenomenon.”* (Female, 43, Engineer, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“There was no freedom before elections. Security and intelligence services personnel were chasing citizens. Only prisons and executions were waiting for us, but today we have freedom and democracy.”* (Female, 55, Housewife, Nassariya, Shia)

*“The election is like a revolution without battle.”* (Male, 45, Employee, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“The life after elections represents new life for Iraqis. We were living in darkness before, today we are able to see the light.”* (Female, 51, Teacher, Nassariya, Shia)

In different forms, this idea of a move towards democracy, choice and freedom being granted to the Iraqi people was raised in discussions by focus group participants of different genders, ethnic backgrounds, religious sects and regional affiliations.

*“Forming the national assembly that had been elected by the citizens, this is happening for the first time in Iraq, also the freedom of expressing opinions without any pressure.”* (Male, 35, Employee, Amarah, Shia)

*“In the previous regime election means Yes or No but now, we practiced free elections without any pressure or restrictions.”* (Male, 27, Freelance, Basra, Shia)

*“No one asked us to vote for Saddam; we feel that we are born again.”* (Male, 43, Instructor, Sinjar, Yazidi)

The birth of democracy is not viewed with pure optimism. Beleaguered by prolonged violent conflict and economic hardship, the Iraqi people are anxious for change and frustrated by the slow pace of tangible reform.

*“Until now the election did not give anything because the government did not take it is place.”* (Male, 49, Employee, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“It has been long since the elections finished and nothing tangible has happened.”* (Male, 29, Employee, Basra, Shia)

*“We have participated in the election in spite of terrorists...but nothing changed. The single positive thing is that I felt the democracy and freedom. But the political state is gone worse than the past.”* (Male, 40, Teacher, Kut, Shia)

*“Nothing was changed. Those who participated have not got any change, and those who have not participated haven’t got any change either.”* (Female, 27, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*“There were no changes after the elections and I was one of those who participated in the elections, but life after the elections worsened because of the operations of robbery and killing continued in addition to the unemployment...nothing has changed.”* (Male, 24, Employee, Salah Al-Din, Sunni)

## Economic Life

Most Iraqis believe that economic conditions have either remained the same or degenerated since the elections. In delineating their concerns, Iraqis refer to widespread unemployment, low salaries, rising prices, the cost of living, rations and ration cards.

*“The economical life wasn’t changed it is the same like before the elections. If there was a change, it is to worse for example the high prices, delays in food ration.”* (Female, 27, Employee, Sinjar, Yazidi, Kurdish)

*“The economical situation is very bad and the government did not change anything especially in living affairs like salaries and the absence of work opportunities.”* (Female, 33, Employee, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“I admit that there is unemployment and the infrastructure is still damaged but the government is trying its best.”* (Male, 26, Merchant, Basra, Shia)

Throughout the country Iraqis are struggling with the lack of adequate employment opportunities. This is exacerbated by the fact that young and highly-educated university graduates are increasingly finding themselves among the ranks of the unemployed.

*“The graduated are now without jobs, so how can we say that the economic situation is getting better... There is no monthly income for a lot of people, what they have the ration card only.”* (Male, 29, Employee, Basra, Shia)

*“No work chances are available for the young people and new graduates.”* (Female, 21, Student, Kut, Shia)

*“After the elections the unemployment increased and there weren’t work chances and I think that the security condition is the reason of all that.”* (Male, 22, Teacher, Amarah, Shia)

*“For me it is so worse, because of unemployment increase, no work opportunities and existing of class segregation, For example, my husband has graduated from college of agriculture but he is unemployed”*

*because of his being an Arabian, why? He sometimes works even as a porter to support us and I have a child and we have to pay rent, for our home.”* (Female, 28, Housewife, Tikrit, Sunni)

Complaints about prices are practically omnipresent. Even the marginal increases in salaries of a few occupations such as teachers and police officers fail to mitigate the effects of massive price inflation. Iraqis want improvements in their material life, and are consequently both frustrated and disappointed by the present government’s inability to control prices.

*“Not all Iraqis are government officials or school teachers. There are families that have no income at all. They are not affected whether the salaries were increased or not.”* (Female, 24, Housewife, Baghdad, Shia)

*“The salary is very high but it is not enough...if sugar is not supplied in the food ration card, they must buy it from the market in a very high price.”* (Male, 45, Employee, Mosul, Sunni)

*“There is a rise in prices and salaries are still the same, no change. For example, in the past 200.000 ID is enough for consuming product and vegetables, now 400.000 is not enough.”* (Male, 52, Professor, Hilla, Shia)

*“The economical condition is getting worse. When I go to the markets I see the severe raising of prices, I wonder what the poor families will do.”* (Female, 30, Teacher, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“The economical condition became worse not better; the employee’s salary raised but the prices rose at the same time.”* (Female, 25, Housewife, Najaf, Shia)

Many Iraqis are concerned about rations and the difficulty in finding ration items or being compensated when ration material is not available.

*“The economical situation after elections became worse because of prices, for instance, the monthly ration starts decreasing gradually. The major stuff we have not received after elections. Sometimes we were compensated and sometimes not.”* (Female, 20, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*“It is bad, there is a lack in the ration card and the prices of the essential nutrients have increase to double.”* (Male, 60, Retired, Samawah, Shia)

A few participants, mostly women, detect a marginal change for the better in their financial situation. They refer to factors such as higher salaries, better pensions for the retired, increased purchasing power and the consequent opportunity to focus on the broader elements of life beyond the quotidian challenge of subsisting.

*“There is a difference between today and before in the previous regime days, at that time our concern was only to buy food to keep us living whereas today increasing the monthly pension makes able to buy many things we have not seen in the previous regime’ days.”* (Female, 30, Housewife, Samawah, Shia)

*“Life is improved; salaries were increased unlike in previous days of the old regime. People now are able to buy goods and domestic equipments and materials that are used in everyday life are available and people are able to buy.”* (Female, 25, Employee, Nassariya, Shia)

*“Yes, the economical situation has been improved after the elections... There is a great difference in the style of living at the period of the former regime and now. There is a daily improvement in this field after the elections and the economical circumstances for the Iraqi individual have been improved.”* (Female, 39, Babysitter, Mosul, Christian)

## Security Conditions

Across the nation, security is a primary concern, even among those who cite marginal progress. While a handful of Iraqis are of the opinion that conditions have improved since the elections, most believe the security situation has either failed to progress or that it has deteriorated further.

*“There are many gaps in Iraqi situation, although the security state goes better; we begin to feel safe a day after day.”* (Male, 29, Employee, Nassariya, Shia)

*“I don’t find any change happened, but in fact see a lack of stability and safety. Most families cannot ensure their security when they get outside the house, and I hope and pray for the Iraqi society to gain peace and safety.”* (Female, 39, Teacher, Kirkuk, Sunni)

*“The elections were honest but the security is still absent.”* (Female, 20, Student, Najaf, Shia)

*“There was no change but people are still terrified of the security situation.”* (Male, 38, Employee, Mosul, Sunni)

The focus groups indicate that Shia regions such as Samawah, Basra and Babylon among others, feel safer and more secure since the elections while the predominantly Sunni areas feel there has either been no improvement or that conditions have declined.

*“The terrorist operations are reduced now and situation is under control and in the hand of army and police forces.”* (Male, 60, Retired, Samawah, Shia)

*“I think life becomes a little bit better after the elections from the security situation. Before election it was very dangerous especially we are living in Al-Musyab area. There was continuous mortar shelling and blasting But now it becomes better; even the public utilities are improved, such as roads coating We are looking for better situation that I think it will be improved in future”.* (Female, 28, Housewife, Babylon, Shia)

*“After the electoral process the security situation became better than before. What is important is the security and freedom.”* (Male, 25, Freelance, Samawah, Shia)

*“There is a feeling of peace and settlement for many of the national guards and police personnel are distributing in the streets chasing terrorists...generally, the security situation after the elections improved.”* (Female, 28, Housewife, Kut, Shia)

In contrast to their Shia counterparts, many focus group participants from predominantly Sunni regions such as Tikrit, Falluja and Salah Al-Din for example, note that their security conditions were either stagnant at an unsatisfactory status quo or declining.

*“We were hoping that matters will become better after the elections, but what happened is the security situation getting to worst and the explosions increased and the situation did not become stable as we were expecting”* (Male, 42, Employee, Salah Al-Din, Sunni)

*“There is little improvement in the security situation. What we need is only security, little improvement is better than nothing”* (Female, 29, Translator, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“In the security situation confusion, terrorists, kidnapping and murder are the common state.”* (Male, 38, Lawyer, Falluja, Sunni)

Two views from the southern, predominantly Shia Arab town of Hilla illustrate conflicting perspectives on the post-electoral security situation.

*“The terrorist operations are reduced. As time is passing they become less and less because there will be a new government and security and police forces. When these forces work this affects and block the activity of terrorists. Explosions and kidnapping are also reduced.”* (Male, 33, Employee, Hilla, Shia)

*“Yesterday there was an organized assault by terrorists on patrols of Iraqi police and the national guards... This shows that the government has no influence.”* (Male, 29, Employee, Hilla, Shia)

## Political Life

NDI’s focus group research in 2003 detected Iraqi skepticism regarding the political organizations forming around them, and the performance of those institutions in recent months has likely reinforced, rather than mitigated, that skepticism. Delay in forming the government, political gamesmanship, administrative corruption and the lack of progress on the critical issues that effect their daily lives have contributed to frustration with politicians and government officials, chipping away at their already fragile credibility.

Much of the current dissatisfaction with the post-electoral performance of public institutions stems from the initial delay in government formation after the January 2005 elections and the government inability to meet the basic needs of a war-weary public. The lack of improvement in security conditions, in particular, has elicited widespread disillusionment in the fledgling government.

*“The elections were good, but the delay in forming the government is the negative aspect because the government is in charge with providing security and changes to Iraqi’s lives.”* (Female, 41, Housewife, Kirkuk, Christian)

*“I think life after elections became worse, for we don’t have security today, and the government that was established after elections has not done anything and didn’t solve the people problems, and has not achieved anything to make the people optimistic and trust their government.”* (Female, 25, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

In many instances Iraqis refer to the politicians as a source of present problems. A repeated sentiment is that those in positions of power or influence are more concerned with fulfilling their own needs and agendas than meeting the needs of the Iraqi people or working in the national interest.

*“Where is the government? They are busy with their own problems. We have not heard yet of any declaration or decision useful for the people to be optimistic for the future.”* (Female, 27, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*“We are following their activities but we see nothing only meetings, discussions and dashes. In another words; only talking.”* (Female, 24, Housewife, Baghdad, Shia)

*“We have not seen anything from the new government only its dashes about the presidency chair, or about distribution of ministry posts among them. People have not got any benefit from the new government. If the government and politicians have always conflicts I wonder how they will be able to improve and develop the country.”* (Female, 22, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*“We were happy to have a new government, but in fact we have not got any improvement... therefore elections were only ink on paper.”* (Female, 24, Housewife, Kut, Shia)

Many participants complain about the effects of administrative corruption, such as having to pay bribes to procure or maintain employment.

*“I graduated from an institute, but I can’t get a governmental job unless paying 300 dollars as a bribe, I don’t have money.”* (Female, 47, Housewife, Tikrit, Sunni)

*“The widespread administrative corruption is horrible.”* (Male, 29, Teacher, Samawah, Shia)

*“Life is better after elections than it used to be before elections. But several negative points increased after the elections, such as: bribes. When I apply for a job they asked for large amount of money which I can’t afford paying to ensure the job for me.”* (Female, 31, Housewife, Kut, Shia)

However, despite discontent with the lack of visible progress on vital issues and disappointment with the post-electoral performance of politicians and political institutions, the disillusionment and pessimism are far from universal.

*“High rank officers in the government are doing their duties properly and planning for better future for Iraq and trying to control and keep security. Therefore I expect the situation will be better.”* (Male, 28, Teacher, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“The existing parliament is a group of strugglers; most of them suffered injustice of Saddam and his gang. They are the future of Iraq. Improvement is noticeable in all governorates.”* (Female, 36, Housewife, Nassariya, Shia)

## Expectations

Iraqi expectations are hopeful, although that hope is both challenged and tempered by concerns regarding sectarian conflict and government performance. The expectations voiced by Iraqi men and women are deceptively simple in concept, but immensely difficult to fulfill. What the Iraqis are looking for is an improvement in their basic quality of life, be it security on the streets, safety from bombs and explosions or access to income and adequate rations.

*“We hope everything will change for better. We also hope that after forming the government and the ministries the economic and security situation will be better, and many chances of employment will be provided to reduce the unemployment. If the economic situation of an Iraqi is improved, most of problems will be overcome and solved.”* (Male, 27, Freelance, Basra, Shia)

*“We are expecting the best, but that takes a long time...there was a little change in security situation. But people are still feeling afraid.”* (Female, 22, Student, Baghdad, Sunni)

Numerous participants point out that democracy is a new process in Iraq, and that it will take time for it to settle and function properly. Illustrating a certain degree of resilience, many Iraqis have committed themselves to endure present hardships while hoping for the best. In the same vein, several focus groups yielded comments melding criticism of current conditions with hope for a slow-developing, but bright future.

*“There is still hope inside us that the change will be towards the best and development. I expect that the situation will improve to the best and because we hope that the government knows that Iraqis wish development to the best so it will be achieved.”* (Female, 30, Housewife, Basra, Shia)

*“In fact the elections didn’t do anything and didn’t change anything... but we hope and expect change could happen in the life of Iraqi citizen[s] and we pray day and night and ask God to improve the situation and give us security and stability and in my opinion it is a matter of time.”* (Female, 32, Housewife, Kirkuk, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“We were anticipating positive things after elections, but unfortunately we could not find positive change...but I am expecting settlement, prosperity and progress.”* (Female, 32, Chemist, Amarah, Shia)

One unsettling expectation for the future articulated widely across demographic lines is sectarian conflict, or what many Iraqis refer to as ‘denominational divisions.’ The fall of the Hussein regime in 2003 removed the ruling Sunni minority from power and placed governing authority in the hands of the previously oppressed majority Shiites. Sunnis are now vastly underrepresented in the Shia-dominated government, having had poor voter turnout due to security concerns and an organized boycott in many places. Individuals from all over the country express concern that the tension among religious sects will degenerate into further divisions among the Iraqi population.

*“As to my future expectations; as far as this denominational division exists I expect the situation will be worse. Unfortunately denominationalism appeared in government offices and in the check points. It will remain as long as the same denominational groups are controlling the government and planting the division inside the people unity. The leaderships and the higher references in the government they are denominationalist, therefore this process will carry on.”* (Male, 27, Student, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“We want to live as united citizens without differentiation between Arabic or Kurdish Muslim or Christian as we are all Iraqis. We want every one of us to respect the other’s opinion. I expect god and happiness as we hear from the news and the political parties that all the Iraqi sects will live in peace.”* (Male, 40, Retired, Kirkuk, Shia, Turkoman)

Expectations of sectarian conflict are most prevalent among the urban Sunni population, a community that appears to be acutely sensitive to this issue. However, the theme of hope for a united Iraq is expressed by individuals from all regions, ethnicities, genders and religions.

*“As for my expectations for the future; maybe competing sides on power and authorities will reach a unified view by putting the public interest above their own interests.”* (Female, 25, Housewife, Amarah, Shia)

*“We Iraqis are optimistic...I think that elections have unified the Iraqi people. All parties have participated.”* (Female, 32, Student, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“There are different sects in Iraq such as Shia, Sunni, Christian and others, each sect likes to ensure its rights on the constitution that if we give the right for one sect rather than other, that will excite problems in the constitutional process so we should care about these issues like ethnic, geographic and religious factors because there may be a gap inside the country.”* (Male, 22, Employee, Basra, Shia)

Some discussants commented with apprehension on the extended presence of American and other foreign military troops and their potential political influence, illustrating a lingering mistrust of the occupation forces. Other participants were more direct in drawing connections between foreign powers and domestic difficulties. For example, skepticism and suspicion linger in locations such as Falluja, in which a young Sunni man has the following to say about his expectations about the future of Iraq.

*“I am pessimistic for this situation, for stealing of Iraqi fortune by Iran, USA and Israel, also for the dear and programmed destruction of Iraq.”* (Male, 24, Freelance, Falluja, Sunni)

There are still some Iraqis, however rare, who not only despair over present conditions, but even express regret over the end of the Hussein regime.

*“I can say that the recent dead regime was better than nowadays.”* (Male, 24, Freelance, Falluja, Sunni)

*“We have no drinking water, and the electricity is shut down very often, oil products are not available especially the liquid gas, even if it is available we buy it with black market rates. We don't have such ability to cope with that difficult economical situation in addition to that the decrease of the ration items. Situation at Saddam's regime were better. We are afraid to face starving disaster because of the price increases.”* (Female, 21, Student, Kut, Shia)

## II. Elections

In discussing their participation in the January 2005 election, and the electoral system itself, Iraqis evince a range of attitudes toward current challenges that may help illuminate the road ahead.

### Participation

Participation in the elections by Shia Arabs, Christians of all ethnic background and the Kurds, regardless of religious affiliation, was significantly higher than Sunni Arabs. The call for a Sunni boycott and threats to Sunni lives and property prior to the election contributed to the low rate of participation. Almost every Shia participant voted and many were more deeply involved, acting as supervisors of election centers, monitoring ballot boxes or providing training sessions prior to the elections.

*“I participated as an elector and I went to the election center and was the first person to enter there because of my great happiness because it is the first time we witness such a thing after 40 years.”* (Male, 54, Amarah, Lawyer, Shia)

*“I participated in the elections as an election manager. I saw people were very optimistic. Some of them came walking from far distance from towns and villages.”* (Female, 32, Teacher, Amarah, Shia)

*“I participated by voting and I would elect in the future.”* (Male, 40, Company Manager, Baghdad, Shia)

*“My participation was by voting also I talked with my family about elections to urge them to participate.”* (Female, 23, Housewife, Basra, Shia)

*“I participated in elections and voted. I see it as a step towards democracy.”* (Male, 23, Student, Najaf, Shia)

Some acknowledged the security risk they faced in traveling to the election centers to vote, but claimed that the importance of the vote compelled them to participate despite the threat to their lives.

*“I have participated in spite of the risk and threat we’ve heard about. But it was a matter of principles and determination. I can never forget that day I went to give my vote to the person I was fully satisfied with.”* (Female, 22, Student, Babylon, Shia)

*“I participated by casting vote in spite of all of the threats we have heard. I was encouraging the others to vote.”* (Male, 28, Teacher, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“We participated in the last elections in spite of the bad security situation. We thought to give them a chance. We did not know most of them. But we voted for the person we thought was the best. We are looking forward for a better future.”* (Female, 22, Student, Baghdad, Sunni)

Non-voting Sunni respondents provided a variety of explanations for their actions that ranged from personal pragmatics to ideological objections.

*“I have not participated in elections for there was no election center in our district. If we had voting center in our area I would have participated.”* (Male, 28, Teacher, Baghdad, Sunni)

“I didn’t participate in latest elections firstly, because of the security condition in Mosul.” (Female, 22, Student, Mosul, Sunni)

*“I didn’t go voting because I know very well that nobody care of our opinion or views, therefore I abandoned elections. I believe whether I elect or not, nothing will happen.”* (Male, 37, Employer, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“All nominees came from abroad after the occupation. These characters did not understand the Iraqi citizens nor his suffering and his needs, they were like foreigners.”* (Female, 28, Student, Falluja, Sunni)

One reason which was repeated by several individuals in different Sunni areas concerned a broader political agenda, such as Islamic leaders requesting a boycott of the elections, resulting in focus groups in Falluja and Mosul with few or no voting Sunni participants.

*“The most important reason, we as Arab Sunnis took this decision from our parties and councils like Muslims Leaders Board not to involve in the elections. I don’t feel regretful about my decision not to participate in the elections and the evidence of this that the elections were held but until now nothing had been changed.”* (Female, 22, Student, Mosul, Sunni)

*“I decided not to vote and this is my own decision supported by the Sunni religion leaders announced that the elections are not legal that Iraq is occupied.”* (Male, Freelance, Falluja, Sunni)

*“Frankly, the Sunni sect was deprived of this election; we follow them, so if they voted we would vote too.”* (Female, 50, Retired, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“The democracy which they brought on the tank is not a democracy and I am not regret of not participating”* (Male, 45, Employee, Mosul, Sunni)

Many Sunnis asserted their view that the elections were not legitimate and therefore did not warrant participation. In articulating these claims, these Sunnis identified the presence of the occupation forces, specifically the American military, as invalidating both the elections and the new government.

*“How can we except these elections in the existence of U.S. forces on our land; the elections were not legitimate”* (Male, 40, Employee, Mosul, Sunni)

*“Even if the ballot box was in front of my house I would not go because our government was chosen by USA as to its wish and approval...I doubted the results of these elections; they are similar to the elections of Saddam’s regime. The results were already finalized, I am sure of that.”* (Male, 37, Employer, Baghdad, Sunni)

Other Sunnis offered less political reasons for not voting.

*“In fact I did not participate due to that the ballot forms did not arrive and I do not know the place to vote.”* (Male, Employee, 40, Mosul, Sunni)

*“I have not participated in elections for there was no election center in our district. If we had voting center in our area, I would have participated.”* (Male, 28, Teacher, Baghdad, Sunni)

The women participants from Saddam Hussein's former stronghold, the predominantly Sunni town of Tikrit, unanimously agreed that the elections have had no effect. The women see no role for themselves in the political processes developing in Iraq, processes they perceive as irrelevant to their lives. The decision not to vote, regardless of the reason, is a testament to their increasing disassociation from the whole process.

*"We didn't participate in elections, so they have no effect on our lives." (Female, 22, Housewife, Tikrit, Sunni)*

*"Tikrit doesn't participate in elections...and besides whom would we elect? We don't know anything about them, their aims, their biography. Should we write names that we didn't know?" (Female, 29, Teacher, Tikrit, Sunni)*

The non-voting Sunni participants expressed a broad array of sentiments over their self-exclusion from the election process including suspicion, indignation and regret.

*"We should have participated because we lost a voice." (Male, 52, Worker, Kirkuk, Sunni)*

*"We went to the polling center but our names were not present and we tried to participate and vote but we didn't allowed so we returned back, I don't feel sorry because of this, it is false and not honest elections, why our names are not present, this means that it is not true so that I do not feel sorry." (Female, 42, Housewife, Kirkuk, Shia)*

*"We didn't participate because of we were threatened, we participated by our hearts but we would participate in the next election." (Female, 34, Baghdad, employee, Sunni, Kurdish)*

*"The non-arrival of the boxes [in Mosul] was intended." (Male, 38, Employee, Mosul, Sunni)*

*"I could not participate, in fact I feel sorry for never participating in the elections." (Female, 39, Housewife, Kirkuk, Sunni)*

It is deceptively easy to oversimplify sectarian analysis. While there were many Sunni decrying the elections as unacceptable or illegitimate, it is important to note that this dissent was not entirely representative of or exclusive to the Sunni community. For example, there were some enthusiastic Sunni voters as well as some Shia who believed the elections were unlawful.

*"I didn't, it was a personal decision as the elections were held for the first time under illegal occupation so it is considered null and void. What is based on illegal foundation has no legal force." (Female, 30, Lawyer, Basra, Shia)*

The Christian participants from Mosul, both the men and the women, all voted in the elections and each individual mentions this fact with enthusiasm and pride.

*"I participated by voting It was so pleasant and unique experience and I encouraged the whole to go for having a new democratic Iraq, which dominated by freedom, security and independence. My participation was as a citizen and as a student; I went and participated freely for the sake of having new, free, independent Iraq due to improve our situation in future." (Female, 22, Student, Mosul, Christian)*

*“I participated as a citizen in the elections and in concern of my family, my wife, daughter and me, we voted in the polling center as my wife was a member in the higher electoral authority, and no one of us asked the other to vote for certain list but each one voted freely.”* (Male, 44, Teacher, Mosul, Christian)

On the whole, the Kurdish participants, both male and female were as enthusiastic about their participation in the elections as the Shia and the Christians.

*“Life is very much better than before, we are so happy after the elections. We elected whom we wanted and got what we wanted, we also felt happy for the government president Jalal Talabani.”* (Male, 26, Soldier, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“In Sinjar, we stood under rain because of the delay of the arrival of the boxes but we insisted and voted.”* (Male, 28, Instructor, Yazidi, Sinjar)

*“I participated as a citizen who is doing his duty toward his country.”* (Male, 34, Student, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“I was working in the election centers as paper importer and the elections were free and pure, there was a great participation in the elections.”* (Female, 27, Employee, Sinjar, Yazidi)

*“We participated freely and democratically without any pressure and confidently we voted for whom we want.”* (Male, 38, Employee, Sinjar, Yazidi, Kurdish)

## Electoral System

There were many comments made by the participants in praise of the present Iraqi electoral system in contrast to the ‘sham’ elections under the previous regime in which political opposition and the opportunity to exercise individual choice were virtually non-existent. Criticism of the elections focuses either on episodic administrative difficulties on election day or the use of the closed-list system.

*“The current electoral system is a democratic system as each one can go freely to the ballot boxes not like before. The elections were compulsory and the aim of which was to vote or not and we know the result previously but now in the opposite as we vote our list freely and we have a goal and there will be favorable results, and the recent system needs little change in the future to be applicable with the recent situation.”* (Male, 31, Freelance, Mosul, Christian)

*“It was democratic electoral system but we don’t know the extent of honesty of the results and we are in an occupied country now and the subject of elections is somewhat new for us.”* (Female, 39, Teacher, Kirkuk, Sunni)

*“The system was good and if it developed some more this will be better.”* (Male, 31, Teacher, Sinjar, Yazidi, Kurdish)

*“The current electoral system has positive and negative points. As elections supervisor I had the chance to notice some people were inclined to a certain list for it contained a well known character.”* (Female, 40, Housewife, Amarah, Shia)

A frequently cited positive aspect of the single-district electoral system used in January 2005 is the fact that it permitted the people to vote from wherever they were for whomever they wanted.

*“It is positive for example I am a Kurdish but I can elect the Kurdish list in Baghdad, Basra or Mosul.”* (Male, 40, Worker, Kirkuk, Sunni)

*“I think the existed elections system is better for it gives the freedom and elasticity in choosing whereas several centers system is limited, ethnic and separated, I also prefer to elect a list that contains several characters rather than electing only one person.”* (Female, 28, Housewife, Babylon, Shia)

*“The system was good as the lists were declared so you can vote freely wherever you are, near or far, so it was completely free and democratic.”* (Male, 38, Employee, Sinjar, Yazidi, Kurdish)

*“The one election center is better, for instance some people in Basra like to elect list in the middle of Iraq or in the north they can choose the list they want, so this is freedom.”* (Female, 22, Student, Babylon, Shia)

There was widespread and severe criticism of the closed list system across regions, sects and genders. Participants were frustrated by the inclusion of corrupt, unfamiliar or inexperienced personalities on electoral lists and the lack of information on the individual candidates. In discussing the merits and drawbacks of the list system, both Shia and Sunni participants raised concerns regarding widespread unfamiliarity and dissatisfaction with the candidate pool.

*“The current electoral system is not good for it depends on lists. We don’t know who is in the list except the chief of the list, and when the list is nominated the other unknown names are nominated too.”* (Female, 32, Teacher, Amarah, Shia)

*“Some lists contained of just one or two well known persons, the others were unknown.”* (Male, 20, Student, Najaf, Shia)

*“It requires choosing one list that includes several figures and one of these figures might be unqualified so you are obliged to choose that one. I think that this sort of system is not good. If the electoral system of open list provide the elector with more freedom in choosing the candidates, then it will be good.”* (Male, 26, Merchant, Basra, Shia)

*“We must recognize the persons, not the lists and the elections system must be changed.”* (Male, 45, Employee, Mosul, Sunni)

*“As an Iraqi person you can elect from any place you are in but the bad thing is that you did not know the candidates in the lists...you must elect persons not lists.”* (Male, 40, Employee, Mosul, Sunni)

*“I want to elect one person not a list. So we cannot elect a list of 30 or 27 names we want to elect one name, I see this process as unsuccessful.”* (Male, 37, Manager, Najaf, Shia)

*“The current electoral system is not bad but it needs an explanation about the candidates as many names and characters appeared in the national assembly but we didn’t know that they are included in the list that we nominated.”* (Male, 35, Employee, Amarah, Shia)

Some participants, especially Sunni Arabs, asserted that the closed list system promoted division among the Iraqi people, a troubling development in an already tense climate of sectarianism.

*“List electoral system will lead to civil war. Everyone follows his denomination. It is supposed to avoid ethnic and denominationalism. The multiple electoral system is able to defeat ethnic and denominationalism. I wish the current system will be changed to be multiple electoral system and we elect the one who will serve Iraq entirely.”* (Male, 28, Teacher, Baghdad, Sunni)

Equally, some express their worry about the persuasive role of religious figures in the closed list electoral system, as a list-based system can render lesser-informed voters more vulnerable to the influence of religious leaders who are able to command many votes.

*“I ask for changing the electoral system to the Israel or American system. All candidates in the list have the right to be nominate for presidency, it means a general election, and all sectors of Iraqi people can elect. When someone came to say that if you don't vote for a specific list, you will be damned because the religious authority had recommended that specific list. This may lead to cause violations. Most people are illiterate, so changing the system will be the best thing.”* (Male, 29, teacher, Samawah, Shia)

*“I saw a lot of people electing the list 169 for fear of entering hell.”* (Male, 33, Employee, Hilla, Shia)

*“The religious and tribal influence was very strong in the election. The reason was that you didn't have any idea about the candidate... So, people elected without knowing what this represents. This sort of system had a strong influence of the religious authority whether it was Shia or Sunni one.”* (Male, 50, Professor, Hilla, Shia)

*“I don't like the electoral system that was blessed by a person like Sistani. I prefer to elect one well known person such as Dr. Ayad Allawi who is secular and Shia... because he is a man of principles and non-aligned.”* (Male, 33, Teacher, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“People elected a specific list as the religious authority blessed it...we should choose another electoral system more suitable for our society to reduce such influences.”* (Male, 50, Professor, Hilla, Shia)

### III. Constitution

*“A country without Constitution is a mess. We must have Constitution.”* (Male, 37, Manager, Najaf, Shia)

Despite a variety of interpretations of the definition and purpose of a constitution, there is broad consensus among Iraqis that the timely drafting of a strong and comprehensive constitution is a prerequisite for stability. Iraqis clearly see the need for a constitution and hold fairly consistent views of the priorities and principles they hope to see embodied in their own constitution.

*“The constitution is a candle that brightens our road and from it we can get freedom, multiplicity, order and laws.”* (Male, 38, Employee, Sinjar, Yazidi, Kurdish)

*“Iraqis are ready and they would depend on the constitution that will be the start point toward the real democracy.”* (Male, 54, Lawyer, Amarah, Shia)

*“Constitution is very important to me and to all Iraqis, because the political, economical and general life of Iraqis will depend upon constitution.”* (Female, 40, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

#### Definitions

Although not all Iraqis are completely clear or confident in defining the term constitution, focus group findings strongly indicate that the Iraqi people want a charter that provides and protects rights and places limits on government.

*“Constitution is law of the government and this law must serve the Iraqi people and to save them from the anguish of the old regime.”* (Male, 47, Freelance, Samawah, Shia)

*“It is a group of regulations and laws that are serving the public interest, and letting the citizen know what are his rights and commitments. No government is established without constitution. It is the foundation of the government. If the constitution is weak that means the government is weak too. And if it is strong the government is strong too.”* (Female, 22, Student, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“In fact I do not know what the constitution is, but what we want is that Iraq is in prosperous and all Iraqis are secure and formulate free and fair government which presented us and implement our needs and live happily. The purpose of the constitution is to rule and organize the people.”* (Female, 47, Housewife, Mosul, Christian)

*“I think by constitution the government will be completed, and without constitution no government exists. Therefore it is a certificate of the government.”* (Female, 46, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

Some individuals see the constitution as a document representing citizen's rights and some see it as a representation of duties.

*“The constitution is the basic law of the country, how can the country work, its relation with other countries and its citizens, and also it is the rights and duties of the state towards the citizen and the rights of the citizen towards the state because citizens alone without an order will not be able to run their*

*lives.*” (Male, 40, Teacher, Sinjar, Yazidi, Kurdish)

*“To protect the rights of citizens and all groups of society. There are terms in constitution that few groups should not impose power or control the large groups of society. There are also terms about the progress of people and their freedom.”* (Male, 28, Teacher, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“It is the essential system in the country that arranges the individual relationship with the society, it is considered the highest law in the country, the purpose of the constitution is arranging the country rules and guaranteeing the individual’s rights so the constitution should be like that.”* (Male, 28, Worker, Amarah, Shia)

## Priorities

Human rights are the main constitutional priority among the Iraqi participants. Regardless of gender, region, ethnicity or creed the participants repeatedly mention that they have suffered in the past and look forward to a Constitution which will genuinely protect them all.

*“We need real human rights as a realistic principle and not only on paper.”* (Male, 47, Freelance, Samawah, Shia)

*“If we ensure human rights we ensure everything”* (Female, 40, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*“The priorities of the constitution are human rights, freedom on all its forms, personal, religious, ideological freedom and press freedom because the constitution will consist of the right of the citizen whether he is Muslim, Christian or others.”* (Male, 30, Manager, Mosul, Christian)

*“We need only our freedom, our rights, security and discipline for the country.”* (Female, 25, Employee, Nassariya, Shia)

In addition to human rights, other priorities raised by Iraqis in discussing their constitution were equality, citizenship and national identity, and the defusing of sectarian tensions.

*“The constitution must deal with Arab, Kurdish, Muslims, Shia, Sunni and Christians as the same.”* (Male, 22, Soldier, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“The important thing is citizenship...the most important thing is to own the Iraqi identity.”* (Male, 46, Employee, Baghdad, Shia)

*“The constitution is for the sake of Kurds, Arabs and all of the Iraqi nationalities and sects and should not differentiate between the Iraqi people.”* (Female, 46, Housewife, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“It must ensure the right of Iraqis without any bias.”* (Male, 48, Retired, Mosul, Sunni)

*“Constitution should unify all the sons of the country, unifying Shia and Sunni because we are all Iraqis and must confirm on Iraq unity.”* (Female, 28, Housewife, Kut, Shia)

*“We don’t need separation, we want single country, and the laws should work on each Iraqi person whether he is Kurdish, Arabic or Turkoman, all of us are in the same place.”* (Female, 24, Student, Kirkuk, Sunni)

Many advocated for the inclusion of women's rights in the forthcoming constitution, although none of these participants provided definitions or examples of the rights for women they wanted to see embedded in the constitution.

*"First, guarantee women's rights and justice between people"* (Female, 30, Housewife, Baghdad, Shia)

*"It must ensure the rights of Iraqis without any bias, giving the right of women."* (Male, 48, Retired, Mosul, Sunni)

*"Mostly, woman's rights, so we need someone to keep our rights like when we are walking in the street and someone face us and also in our job that is why we say that our rights are lost and there isn't justice"* (Female, 34, Baghdad, Employee, Sunni, Kurdish)

*"My priorities on the constitution are human rights and women having the same rights as men."* (Female, 42, Employee, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*"We want to participate in the preparation of the constitution as Kurds and I am a woman and I want my rights."* (Female, 25, Teacher, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*"Women's rights and equality in all the fields."* (Female, 50, Retired, Baghdad, Sunni)

Another priority which came to light during the focus group discussions is the critical issue of the role of Islam and Islamic principles. As NDI's focus group research in 2003 demonstrated, there is a relatively broad consensus that Islamic values should infuse the new political order and its constitutional foundations. Attitudes toward the appropriate degree of incorporation of Islamic principles into the constitution vary among three main perspectives: those who insist the Quran is the sole appropriate constitutional source, those who believe the constitution should at least be consistent with the Quran and tenets of Islam and the marginal advocates for an entirely secular constitution.

*"Islam has to be the main source of it."* (Male, 24, Freelance, Falluja, Sunni)

*"It should be Islamic as we are an Islamic country and our constitution the holy Quran."* (Female, 29, Housewife, Najaf, Shia)

*"The Quran is the best reference of law."* (Male, 29, Employee, Basra, Shia)

*"No laws contradicting the basics of Islam should be issued. We don't want a secular constitution, for it does not represent Iraqis."* (Female, 46, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*"We request that Quran be the important resource of constitution, but not Islam to be the constitution itself"* (Male, 37, Manager, Najaf, Shia)

There is, moreover, widespread concurrence that the new constitution should entrench respect and tolerance for all religions. Support for at least some freedom of religion, and therefore a less dogmatic government, reverberates across all communities in Iraq.

*"We need to practice a religious freedom"* (Male, 32, Teacher, Samawah, Shia)

*“Issuing laws depend on Islamic principles, that Iraq is Islamic country, human rights, freedom to think, equity, unity of Iraqi land, respecting other religions and denominations.”* (Male, 21, Student, Falluja, Sunni)

Other priorities are the provision for social and economic rights and interests, such as education or job security. These suggestions, relating more to legislative priorities than constitutional directives, betray the fact that many Iraqis, like most people, lack in-depth knowledge of constitutions and the constitutional development process. Moreover, these legislative priorities reflect the hopes and desires of everyday Iraqis.

*“My priorities on the constitution are security, settlement, defeating unemployment, and improving ration items. Ethnic, geographic, and religious factors will not affect these priorities.”* (Female, 35, Housewife, Amarah, Shia)

*“Human rights which includes education, health. There were many neglected things, the important things are arriving a health and education to villages and country sides.”* (Female, 31, Employee, Baghdad, Sunni)

## IV. Constitutional Process

Discussions concerning the development of the Iraqi constitution bring to light a number of attitudes and perspectives toward the current political process. Iraqi opinions regarding parliamentary capacity, the viability of the August 15 deadline, appropriate roles for civic engagement and sources for consultation and guidance illustrate the wide range of viewpoints as well as varying degrees of public access to accurate information on the parliament and its constitution-related activities, indicating the existence of ample opportunities for civic education initiatives.

### Parliamentary Capacity

Iraqis are divided over whether or not they believe the government can draft a suitable constitution by August 15, 2005. Views on parliament's independence and competence tend to vary according to sect.

The relatively high level of optimism that this topic brought out is expressed very simply by the following quotes from young Shia women:

*"Yes, I think so because they are Iraqi and we are Iraqis too."* (Female, 33, Teacher, Samawah, Shia)

*"We were hurt and injured from the previous regime. We are all looking forward to freedom. We trust the government to return our rights to us."* (Female, 36, Housewife, Nassariya, Shia)

*"Yes, I think the parliament is able to do that, for the members of the parliament are sons of Iraq, and they are working for the good of this country."* (Female, 31, Teacher, Nassariya, Shia)

The Shia and Kurdish participants appear optimistic about the prospect of a free parliament and its ability to draft a suitable constitution. This positive outlook is comprehensible in light of the relative success of the Shia and Kurdish candidates in the January elections. Many Shiites and Kurds have faith in the impending political processes because they feel that they have rightly selected qualified people whom they believe capable of meeting Iraq's constitutional challenge.

*"We have full trust in the figures that we elected. They are qualified and able to develop a suitable constitution for Iraq."* (Male, 25, Student, Basra, Shia)

*"Most of the members are clever and highly educated and they work as opposition for a long time and they have experience in this field specially that they live out side Iraq and they know a bout democracy in the west."* (Male, 21, Suleymania, Student, Sunni, Kurdish)

*"I think the parliament will be able to apply a suitable constitution for Iraq because it is democratically elected and it represents various nationalities and sects."* (Female, 36, Housewife, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*"In my opinion the parliament is able to draft a free constitution as the present people in it are highly educated, carriers of high degrees and thinkers so hope all the best from them."* (Female, 24, Student, Kirkuk, Sunni)

*"Of course, the constitution can be drafted and in concern with the parliament according to its abilities in my opinion the constitution will be drafted in a god manner but the question is whether the constitution*

*will be applied or not by the judicial, executive or legislative authorities, the important thing is the democratic application of it.”* (Male, 31, Freelance, Mosul, Christian)

As might be expected, Sunnis were more likely than other groups to voice concerns about sectarian agendas, insufficient transparency and undue foreign influence.

*“How should the parliament be free and impartial while a large segment of Iraqis like Arab Sunnis abstained from it? How should the parliament develop a constitution that serves the Iraqis?”* (Female, 24, Student, Mosul, Sunni)

*“I do not think that there will be free parliament... the elections were sectarian and ethnic and I see that the constitution will have faults.”* (Male, 45, Employee, Mosul, Sunni)

*“The members of the parliament have intensive sessions and disagreement between them due to that every sect wants its own benefits.”* (Male, 23, Student, Salah Al-Din, Sunni)

*“It is known there are many different political sects in the parliament and everyone of them has his desires and aims and we don’t know if they will reach an agreement about the constitution or not.”* (Male, 39, Teacher, Amarah, Shia)

Another critical concern is the presence of the US military force and Iraqi perceptions regarding the relationship of those forces to their parliament.

*“I don’t think so , for we are under occupation. The parliament will be limited, and its decisions will be reviewed by the occupation forces. It has not got the sufficient freedom to choose the law.”* (Female, 30, Teacher, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“Why do we consider that USA has greater authority than us? If the parliament can’t take its role, where is the freedom then?”* (Female, 24, Housewife, Baghdad, Shia)

*“Now we are an occupied country and I don’t think that the parliament is able to draft free constitution.”* (Female, 25, Lawyer, Kirkuk, Sunni)

*“In this time, the parliament has touches of the invader on it, so touches of the invader on Constitution too, if invasion forces walk away we will have a free Constitution.”* (Male, 37, Manager, Najaf, Shia)

*“I don’t think that the parliament has the ability to do that, because most of the members are supported by Iranian, Israel and US intelligence, for example, Dr. Allawi, Dr. Al-Jaffari and Abdul Aziz Al-Hakeem. If any of them want to formulate a constitution, no one will confess of it because of their relationships with Iran and Israel.”* (Male, 34, Professor, Kut, Shia)

*“In fact, as long as the American occupation still present I don’t think that there will be free constitution serving Iraq, now it is two years after fall of the previous regime and we didn’t see anything new and things become worse and I didn’t see a constitution and I don’t know if the constitution is going to be made.”* (Female, 39, Housewife, Sunni, Kirkuk)

## The Deadline

Iraqis are eager for stability and want the Constitutional Committee to draft a constitution as quickly as possible. However, many focus group participants expressed a desire for the Committee to take the necessary time to ensure the creation of a comprehensive and effective constitution and to sufficiently educate the Iraqi people on the constitutional process.

*“It is not easy to draft a constitution in a short time because the future of Iraq cannot be made within two days.”* (Male, 28, Instructor, Sinjar, Yazidi, Kurdish)

*“They need time because if they would form it in a short time we would not guarantee rights so we want good law that is why it should be studied and that would be guaranteed.”* (Female, 22, Student, Baghdad, Shia, Kurdish)

*“Hastiness in writing the constitution will harm a wide range of people so it needs much time.”* (Male, 40, Employee, Mosul, Sunni)

Earlier delays in government formation have caused many Iraqis to be skeptical about the administration’s ability to meet its own deadlines. If the constitution is not drafted promptly, many Iraqis may perceive the delay as a failure of the government.

*“We are longing for our rights so we want from the parliament to draft a constitution as soon as possible and gaining benefits of freedom within a short period not waiting for another 35 years.”* (Male, 39, Teacher, Sinjar, Yazidi, Kurdish)

*“I think period is sufficient to write the constitution and there is no need for postponing or extension. Each extra day is delaying people from having their rights.”* (Female, 30, Housewife, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“Any delay in the political process will lead to delay in economical and social progress.”* (Female, 32, Teacher, Amarah, Shia)

## Levels of Information

With some notable exceptions, the Iraqi people who participated in the focus groups are vague and uncertain about the constitutional process and its deadlines.

*“We don’t know about dates, but constitution will be formed during the coming months.”* (Female, 23, Housewife, Basra, Shia)

*“The elections are happening for the first time. Therefore, we don’t have information and experience about the constitution, from my point of view there should be specialized people to talk with us in all life’s sides, achieving all the society requirements and build relationships correctly and without troubles.”* (Male, 43, Teacher, Kirkuk, Sunni)

*“I don’t know anything about the constitutional process, and I know nothing about the final date of constitution writing”* (Male, 22, Baghdad, Freelance, Sunni)

*“We are ignorant about what is going on till now, especially, about the declaration date. So everyday we hear that it would be declared soon but we didn’t hear anything about the constitution.”* (Female, 33, Housewife, Sinjar, Yazidi, Kurdish)

The relatively low levels of specific knowledge of the constitutional process lead to a desire for more information.

*“We have poor information about the constitutional process and we want to know what is happening”* (Female, 25, Teacher, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“We do not know about forming Constitution, and we wish to know about it, also we do not know about final date of forming Constitution.”* (Female, 45, Housewife, Tikrit, Sunni)

## Consultation & Citizen Participation

The Iraqi people do not want to be silent bystanders to the changes taking place in their country—they are passionate about their national future and desire to play an active role in its formation. Some claim that they are already engaged in the constitutional process through their involvement in political parties or civil society organizations. The opportunities and obligations facing current political actors revolve around providing credible information and legitimate opportunities to the Iraqi people to react, respond and achieve some level of meaningful input in the constitutional process.

*“I wish I belong to a party who represents me and to convey my voice serving my country. I am planning to join a party to convey my voice to the constitutional process. But till now I have not done so.”* (Male, 28, Teacher, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“I will plan to transport my voice through out one of the institutions of the civil society, assemblies or meetings held in districts and constituencies to explain the constitution or through out the internet.”* (Male, 43, Engineer, Mosul, Christian)

Almost every participant is of the opinion that the Iraqi citizens should be involved in the preparation of the constitution. This disposition toward citizen participation is clear, even when specific examples of possible involvement are not offered.

*“Citizens have to participate in this process and the parliament must listen to people opinions.”* (Male, 35, Freelance, Nassariya, Shia)

*“Citizens must participate in writing constitution for it is their destiny. People may know about the constitution from the means of media, especially by voting before the final document. In such a way citizens may participate in writing”* (Female, 32, Teacher, Amarah, Shia)

Several Iraqis believe that their participation in the focus group discussions provided them with an opportunity to share their voices and contribute to the constitutional process.

*“We do not belong to any side, so how can our voice be delivered, but we wish if you help us with this, also the associations, by transferring our views and benefit from, not to ignore our views because of our being women.”* (Female, 22, Housewife, Tikrit, Sunni)

*“In case that you company will convey my opinion to the committee that will write the constitution then I will consider myself as a participant in forming the constitution.”*(Male, 33, Employee, Salah Al-Din, Sunni)

Many believe that since the constitution is generated from parliament, citizens should turn to parliament for guidance and education on the constitution. Also, many participants stated that the Iraqi people should extend their opinions and views to the parliament as a means of civic engagement in the constitutional process.

*“The parliament should open an educational center as it is not enough through newspapers and TV, because there might be hidden or ambiguous points so these discussions will clarify them through the educational centers. Through conferences the parliament will listen to different and important points of the citizens.”* (Male, 31, Employee, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

There are those Iraqis who say that they or the public at large is not up to the task or that there is not enough time for public consultation. Others say that drafting the constitution is the sole responsibility of parliament and that parliament is able to develop the constitution without citizen input. These responses are minority, less-intensely held views than the ardent convictions of Iraqis who strongly desire citizen participation in the constitutional process.

*“I don't think that the citizens will participate in the process because he might be not graduated or have no specialization.”* (Male, 23, Freelance, Falluja, Sunni, Kurd)

*“We cannot have the ability to make 25 million Iraqi participate in writing the constitution but we can make their representatives to be among a committee which will form the constitution.”* (Male, 33, Employee, Salah Al-Din, Sunni)

*“I'm not planning to do anything as I feel I have participated in the preparation of the constitution when I elected the members of the national assembly.”* (Male, 25, Student, Basra, Shia)

Some suggest that consultation is not necessary and that the members of parliament are qualified or capable enough to prepare the constitution without assistance from experts or institutions from outside parliament or outside the country. Others broadly suggest that all groups in society should be consulted.

*“It is not necessary to consult, because the Parliament members are highly qualified, educated and knowledgeable of law. They are able to write constitution.”* (Male, 25, Employee, Baghdad, Shia)

*“I think that it is true to consult all the society classes like women, Christian religion men and Yazidi etc”* (Male, 40, Employee, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

The majority of the participants, however, recommend one specific group or another, either civil society organizations or religious councils. The focus group discussions demonstrate that many Shia, Sunnis and Kurds, both male and female, strongly believe that religious leaders should be consulted in the constitutional process. In addition to religious leaders, Iraqis refer to academics, professors and other high level experts as groups or individuals warranting consultation. Iraqis are careful to note that whoever is ultimately consulted by the government must possess relevant qualifications and expertise.

*“The parliament has to consults groups of religious men and parties if there is a problem with the constitution so problems can be solved through out discussions.”* (Female, 42, Employee, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“The parliament must ask a committee which consists of professionals in the political, cultural, security, social and religious and all aspects of life to form the constitution.”* (Male, 33, Employee, Salah Al-Din, Sunni)

*“I think that we consult the United Nations.”* (Male, 60, Retired, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“I think Parliament should consult the sheikhs of Iraqi tribes, for they know better the Iraqis condition and their problems and sufferings they can reflect the real image of citizens to the constitution.”* (Male, 28, Teacher, Baghdad, Sunni)

## Sources of Information & Guidance

The vast majority of the participants claim they intend to access information on the constitutional process through the media, especially TV and satellite TV. Political parties and civil society organizations also appear to be favored means of gaining information for many Iraqis, particularly the Kurds. Some suggest there should be conferences and education sessions to help the Iraqi people learn about the constitution.

*“The most important resource that we depend on is television, press, and magazines; also we get information from people who appear in TV who is members of the committee.”* (Female, 40, Najaf, Shia)

*“I’m planning to get information from Internet as it contains several web-sites dealing with this matter.”* (Male, 25, Medical assistant, Hilla, Shia)

*“We have to get information about the constitution from the parties and we have to be sure if this constitution will serve the people or not.”* (Male, 60, Retired, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“It is better to join a party by which I can get information. I am intending to do so to get information. I think this is better than the means of media, for media does not give always full information. There are certain confidential information concern the government I can’t find in the means of media, but I can get from the party.”* (Male, 28, Teacher, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“I think that getting information through parties clarifies what is going on the constitution to the society.”* (Male, 31, Employee, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“There are many sources like the mass media and the civil society institutions and this is to know the preliminary principles of the constitution.”* (Male, 40, Farmer, Amarah, Shia)

*“There should be conferences and courses to depend on because the radio and the TV are not enough and we don’t listen to all the news. This is something important to be done because the constitution is a law that the country depends on.”* (Female, 29, Housewife, Najaf, Shia)

The Iraqis who participated in the sessions refer to various sources for guidance on the final document to be voted upon in the constitutional referendum currently slated for October 2005; these sources include their immediate family, media, academic and educational sources and their individual value systems. However, among those participants who are inclined to seek guidance on the final document, the majority will turn to religious leaders.

*“I’m planning to get guidance from religious leaders as they have the great role in this context.”* (Male, 26, Merchant, Basra, Shia)

*“I need guidance from the Islamic Scientists Institution (Muslim Ulama Council), as they know more than us and I care about their opinion.”* (Male, 25, Worker, Kirkuk, Sunni)

Every individual who participated in the focus groups claims they would attend conferences or group work about the constitutional process if such an event were available. While this is somewhat of a socially expected response, it does speak to the Iraqi appetite for information and input on the constitution.

*“Yes, we have a shortage in the information of the constitution so these conferences are very useful for us especially for us as women.”* (Female, 33, Employee, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“The committees which are responsible for forming the constitution should do a clarifying process about voting on the constitution’s materials and giving a complete picture on this subject.”* (Male, 35, Employee, Amarah, Shia)

A theme which comes through repeatedly is the fact that the Iraqis have no desire to relive their past. They want a more open and equal society. They no longer wish to be left in the dark concerning their country, its politics and politicians.

*“The previous Constitution was applied on Iraqis although they didn’t accept it, but we don’t want this to happen now, we want equality and justice between people, we want every Iraqi people to know about Constitution and its items.”* (Female, 22, Housewife, Tikrit, Sunni)

*“In the recent regime there was a constitution changed as the president wanted. The aim of [the constitution] is to keep Iraqi rights.”* (Male, 25, Employee, Nassariya, Shia)

## Conclusion

An examination of Iraqi attitudes in spring 2005 highlights the fact that there is a big difference between an election and a democracy. Myriad interrelated factors complicate the next phase of the journey toward legitimate self governance. While the January election represents a crucial psychological and substantive step forward, the impact of that step was compromised by the delay in assembling a government. There is broad based public agreement on the need to enshrine religious rights and civil liberties in the constitution, but the mechanics of the process are all too obscure to the average Iraqi. The persistent and lethal insurgency and inability of occupying or indigenous forces to quell it, the economic strains on the Iraqi people and the imperatives and uncertainties of the constitutional process all contribute to an atmosphere laden with potential yet fraught with challenges.

At this point in time, the opportunities and obligations facing the government, political parties and civil society organizations revolve mostly around the constitution. There is a pronounced desire among the Iraqi people for information on and a voice in the constitutional process and the institutions must find ways to provide both. The capacity of the Transitional National Assembly to draft an appropriate constitution is suspect, particularly in Sunni quarters. The protection of minority rights and tolerance for diversity must be propelled by leadership that can frame and explain difficult choices and compromises so the complicated realities of democracy can prevail over the tidy clarity of the zero-sum-game. Finally, the August 15 deadline, while seen variously as critical, artificial and secondary to the issue of ensuring quality, is real and presents a serious test: the institutions must either meet it, or prove themselves able to explain why it was not met and why other considerations took precedence. Failure to meet the drafting deadline does not bode well for success in communicating to a frustrated public the reasons for that failure.

If the average Iraqi senses that he has access to good information on the process and substance of the constitution, and feels as if he has avenues, however basic and indirect, to participate in that process, both the resulting document and the institutions that produce it will enjoy greater legitimacy. The political institutions did not live up to public expectations and desires in the months following the election, so the stakes are that much higher now. This research indicates that the Iraqi public is watching closely, anxious to make its voice heard on the next major step towards a diverse, unitary and hopefully democratic state.

## Appendix

### Demographic Composition of the Focus Groups

#### Number of Participants Per Group

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
<b>Location</b>	Amarah	Amarah	Baghdad	Baghdad	Basra	Basra
<b>Area</b>	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban
<b>Moderator</b>						
<b>NoteTaker</b>						

#### Gender:

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
Male	8	-	-	-	-	-
Female	-	8	9	-	8	8
Mixed	-	-	-	9	-	-

#### Age Groups:

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
18+	8	8	9	9	-	8
18-30	-	-	-	-	8	-

#### Ethnicity/Sect:

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
Arab-Shia	8	8	3	3	6	7
Arab-Sunni	-	-	5	4	2	1
Kurdish	-	-	-	1	-	-
Others	-	-	1	1	-	-

#### Education/Social Class Level:

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
Low	2	2	2	2	2	2
Medium	4	4	5	5	4	4
High	2	2	2	2	2	2

	Group 7	Group 8	Group 9	Group 10	Group 11	Group 12
<b>Location</b>	Basra	Basra	Erbil	Falluja	Hilla	Basra
<b>Area</b>	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban
<b>Moderator</b>						
<b>NoteTaker</b>						

#### Gender:

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
Male	-	-	-	8	8	-
Female	8	8	8	-	-	8
Mixed	-	-	-	-	-	-

#### Age Groups:

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
18+	-	8	8	8	8	8
18-30	8	-	-	-	-	-

#### Ethnicity/Sect:

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
Arab-Shia	7	7	-	-	8	1
Arab-Sunni	1	1	-	8	-	5
Kurdish	-	-	8	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	2

**Education/Social Class Level:**

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
Low	2	2	2	2	2	2
Medium	4	4	4	4	4	4
High	2	2	2	2	2	2

	<b>Group 13</b>	<b>Group 14</b>	<b>Group 15</b>	<b>Group 16</b>	<b>Group 17</b>	<b>Group 18</b>
<b>Location</b>	Kut	Mosul	Mosul	Mosul	Najaf	Nassariya
<b>Area</b>	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban
<b>Moderator</b>						
<b>NoteTaker</b>						

**Gender:**

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
Male	-	7	8	-	-	-
Female	8	-	-	8	7	7
Mixed	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Age Groups:**

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
18+	8	7	8	8	7	7
18-30	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Ethnicity/Sect:**

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
Arab-Shia	8	-	-	-	7	7
Arab-Sunni	-	7	-	-	-	-
Kurdish	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	8	8	-	-

**Education/Social Class Level:**

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
Low	2	2	2	2	2	2
Medium	4	4	4	4	3	3
High	2	1	2	2	2	2

	<b>Group 19</b>	<b>Group 20</b>	<b>Group 21</b>	<b>Group 22</b>	<b>Group 23</b>	<b>Group 24</b>
<b>Location</b>	Samawah	Samawah	Sinjar	Sinjar	Suleymaniya	Salah-Al Din
<b>Area</b>	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban
<b>Moderator</b>						
<b>NoteTaker</b>						

**Gender:**

<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>
Male	7	-	8	-	8	7
Female	-	7	-	8	-	-
Mixed	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Age Groups:**

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>
18+	8	7	8	8	8	7
18-30	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Ethnicity/Sect:**

<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>
Arab-Shia	7	7	-	-	-	-
Arab-Sunni	-	-	-	-	-	7

Kurdish	-	-	8	8	8	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Education/Social Class Level:**

<b>Total</b>	7	7	8	8	8	7
Low	2	2	2	2	2	1
Medium	3	3	4	4	4	4
High	2	2	2	2	2	2

	Group 25	Group 26	Group 27	Group 28	Group 29	Group 30
<b>Location</b>	Baghdad	Basra	Erbil	Falluja	Babylon	Kirkuk
<b>Area</b>	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
<b>Moderator</b>						
<b>NoteTaker</b>						

**Gender:**

<b>Total</b>	8	8	8	8	8	8
Male	8	8	8	-	-	8
Female	-	-	-	8	8	-
Mixed	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Age Groups:**

<b>Total</b>	8	8	8	8	8	8
18+	8	8	8	8	8	8
18-30	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Ethnicity/Sect:**

<b>Total</b>	8	8	8	8	8	8
Arab-Shia	2	7	-	1	8	1
Arab-Sunni	6	1	-	7	-	5
Kurdish	-	-	8	-	-	1
Others	-	-	-	-	-	1

**Education/Social Class Level:**

<b>Total</b>	8	8	8	8	8	8
Low	2	2	2	2	2	2
Medium	4	4	4	4	4	4
High	2	2	2	2	2	2

	Group 31	Group 32	Group 33	Group 34	Group 35	Group 36
<b>Location</b>	Kut	Mosul	Najaf	Nassariya	Suleymaniya	Tikrit
<b>Area</b>	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
<b>Moderator</b>						
<b>NoteTaker</b>						

**Gender:**

<b>Total</b>	8	8	8	8	8	8
Male	-	-	-	8	-	-
Female	8	8	8	-	8	8

**Age Groups:**

<b>Total</b>	8	8	8	8	8	8
18+	8	-	8	8	8	8
18-30	-	8	-	-	-	-

**Ethnicity/Sect:**

<b>Total</b>	8	8	8	8	8	8
Arab-Shia	8	-	8	8	-	-

Arab-Sunni	-	8	-	-	-	8
Kurdish	-	-	-	-	8	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Education/Social Class Level:**

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
Low	2	2	2	2	2	2
Medium	4	4	4	4	4	4
High	2	2	2	2	2	2