



[Iraq's Parliament Meets to Elect a New President in an Attempt to End Months of Political Deadlock](#)

This week, members of the Iraqi parliament met in the fourth recent attempt to end a year of political deadlock, this time electing Kurdish politician Abdul Latif Rashid as president, who in turn immediately named Mohammed Shia al-Sudani prime minister-designate. The move to elect a new head of state is aimed at putting an end to political paralysis that has debilitated the country for the past year. Iraqis last voted on October 10th of 2021 in a general election where the populist Shia Muslim leader Muqtada Al-Sadr won the majority of seats. The election was held early due to mass civilian protests against corruption, rampant unemployment, and decaying infrastructure. Despite winning, Al-Sadr was unable to receive the quorum required. Thus, in August, he withdrew his 73 lawmakers in an effort to prevent his political rival, the Coordination Framework, from having the numbers needed to themselves take control of the government. He later announced that he would quit politics, which caused the worst violence Baghdad had seen in years when his loyalists stormed the government palace and clashed with authorities. The violence did not cease until Al-Sadr ordered his loyalists to stop.

The latest parliamentary vote this week took place shortly after an attack which saw nine rockets land around the Iraqi capital green zone. The green zone houses parliament and other government buildings and news stations. The attack injured at least 10 people, and was not the first of its kind as a previous one took place last month as the parliament was holding a vote to confirm its speaker. Many believe these attacks were conducted in an effort to try and obstruct the political process.

The specific and strategic landing of the rockets supports this theory, but as of now, no one has claimed responsibility for the attacks. President Rashid's election raised concerns about the escalating tensions between the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. These two parties were unable to work out their differences and agree to one candidate as they have in the past. While most were happy about the election, about 20 members of parliament boycotted the vote. Protests once again began and many demand that Iraq stop using the government selection process implemented by the United States after its invasion in 2003.

Since October of last year, Iraq had failed to form a new government after the general election. The United Nations had previously warned that Iraq is running out of time, as the crisis was only breeding further instability. Now having been elected, the president and his prime minister selection will begin arduous negotiations to choose their cabinet. Under a power-sharing system meant to avoid conflict, Iraq's president is a Kurd, its prime minister a Shi'ite, and its parliament speaker a Sunni. Because it has only had a caretaker government for the past year with no president, parliament has not been able to approve an annual budget, leaving billions of dollars in oil revenue unspent.