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## **Iraq MPs fail for third time to elect new president**

### ***Депутати Іраку втретє не змогли обрати нового президента***

*За словами офіційних осіб, іракські законодавці втретє не змогли обрати нового президента через відсутність кворуму, що посилює політичну кризу в країні. Нездатність парламенту вибрати президента після минулорічних виборів відображає глибокий розкол між шиїтськими політичними угрупованнями. Федеральний суд Іраку дав законодавцям термін до 6 квітня, щоб обрати нового президента. Серед 40 кандидатів у президенти двоє вважаються лідерами: чинний Бархам Ахмет Саліх від Патріотичного союзу Курдистану (ПСК) та Р. Ахмед від конкуруючої Демократичної партії Курдистану (ДПК).*

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/30/iraq-mps-fail-for-third-time-to-elect-new-president>

Parliamentary source says less than two-thirds of legislators were present in parliament, falling short of quorum.

Iraqi legislators have failed for a third time to elect a new president for lack of a quorum, officials said, deepening the war-scarred country's political crisis.

The continued failure by parliament to select a president after last year's elections reflects a deep schism between Shia political groupings.

"The assembly adjourned its session until further notice," the parliament's press service said on Wednesday without giving a date for a new session.

Iraq's federal court has given legislators until April 6 to choose a new president.

Political scientist Hamza Haddad said if that deadline were missed, "we could reach a point where new elections are decided to break the deadlock."

A parliamentary source told AFP that only 178 out of 329 lawmakers were present in parliament Wednesday, far short of the two-thirds quorum required for the vote.

As in the previous two aborted votes, last Saturday and February 7, Wednesday's session was boycotted by a major Shia coalition bloc in parliament.

### Political paralysis

Half a year after legislative elections, Iraq still does not have a new president or prime minister, keeping the country in a state of political paralysis.

Parliamentarians must first elect the head of state, by convention a member of the Kurdish minority, with a two-thirds majority. The president then appoints the head of government, a post now held by Mustafa al-Kadhemi.

Among the 40 candidates for the presidency, two are considered the frontrunners: incumbent Barham Saleh, of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and Rebar Ahmed of the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

On February 13, Iraq's supreme court ruled out a presidential bid by KDP-backed veteran politician Hoshiyar Zebari, after a complaint filed against him over years-old, untried corruption charges.

Iraqi politics was thrown into turmoil following October's election, which was marred by record low turnout, post-vote threats and violence, and a months-long delay before the final results were confirmed.

The largest political bloc, led by Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr, had backed Zebari for the presidency before moving its support to Ahmed.

The failed votes in parliament have underscored the gulf in Iraqi politics between al-Sadr, the general election's big winner, and the powerful Coordination Framework, which called the boycotts.

The Coordination Framework includes former prime minister Nuri al-Maliki's party and the pro-Iran Fatah Alliance – the political arm of the Shia-led former paramilitary group Hashed al-Shaabi.

Alongside backing Ahmed for the presidency, al-Sadr intends to entrust the post of prime minister to his cousin and brother-in-law Jaafar al-Sadr, Iraq's ambassador to the United Kingdom.

That prospect is unpalatable for the Coordination Framework.