



Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center



## The Jordanian Civil Team for Observing the 2007 Parliamentary Elections

### Press release 2: Observing the Voting Process

Several polling centers throughout Jordan witnessed huge numbers of voters during the early hours of the morning, especially as reported by the observers at Karak, Tafileh, and Irbid (southern valley). Voter turnout in these areas exceeded 50% of the registered voters at 1pm.

The overall election process was reported as being peaceful and systematic in most polling centers across Jordan. Though the computer breakdowns occurring in the early morning caused confusion and overcrowdness, and deterred the voting process, these adverse impacts were largely minimised throughout the day.

The Jordanian Civil Team for Observing the Elections (JOCTOPE) reported that voters were able to vote in secrecy in 95% of the polling centers in Jordan, with the exception of only a few incidents in some centers where the voting was public, and where there were claims of illiteracy. Similarly, some incidents occurred where certain candidates' supporters deliberately showed their ballot papers to others in the polling station. JOCTOPE observers reported that vote buying continued throughout the day, and culminated in the final few hours.

Moving masses of voters in busses from one region to another caused chaos and crowding in certain polling centers. Transferring votes between electoral districts was witnessed by observers in different governorates of Jordan.

Observers reported that the ballot boxes were insufficient in certain polling centers, which lead to voters having to wait for some time before they have the turn to vote. This was especially depicted in the female polling stations, which happened to be not fully equipped to absorb the high female participation rates.

Cutting the edge of the ID card triggered certain questions on the validity of the card after its broken edge. Voters, as reported by the observers, were not quite convinced whether or not this was the optimal option to ensure the integrity and transparency of the voting process.



Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center



JOCTOPE observers reported continuous cases of voters facing difficulties in casting their votes in several governorates. This was mainly the result of their names not being registered at the voters' lists in the computer system, despite the fact that their ID card carries the name of their electoral district. On the other hand, several reports depicted voters casting their votes in a number of polling centers, using IDs that do not show their electoral district.

On a different level, observers brought back several reports of disorder and clashes breaking out in some polling centers. Certain incidents required the involvement of the police, as was the case in Khalil bin Ahmad School and the Primary Girls' School in Ma'an governorate/ first district, and Eastern Bayouda Girls School in Balqaa' governorate/ first district. The latter, as was reported, experienced a serious clash in the final hours of the day, between a policewoman and a number of female voters who attempted to double vote, and were escorted out of the polling station.

Regarding the size of the police presence at the polling stations, observers reported that 58% of the stations experienced normal numbers of police officials, compared to 42% of the stations that witnessed high numbers.

Observers reported that in 96% of the polling stations, officials were systematically checking the voters' ID cards before their voting. Moreover, 98% of the observation reports confirmed that the computer was used to inscribe the names and ID numbers of the voters. All observers reported that all voters' ID cards were cut and stamped to symbolise their voting.

Observers reported very few official complaints filed during the day (only in 2% of the centers), and the vast majority of the voters perceived that the polling station officials were managing their centers efficiently.

JOCTOPE team observed that 4% of the polling centers experienced cases of group voting, and that in half of these cases, other voters in the polling station were harmed by these masses.

The secrecy of voting was preserved in 95% of the visited polling centers, as opposed to 5% that witnessed breaches in the secrecy of voting.

99% of the questioned voters said they voted in secrecy, and that they folded their ballot papers before inserting them in the box. In 3% of the cases, voters



Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center



returned damaged ballot papers to the polling station officials, and were given new papers.

Observers reported that 13% of the voters said that they saw campaign material for certain candidates inside the polling stations. 87% said they did not.

The entire JOCTOPE reports confirmed that no armed persons at all entered any of the polling centers on that day. 2% of the observation reports said that some persons entered the polling station without the approval of the chairperson.

#### **Contact information:**

Tel: 5533112/ 4; Fax 5533118

Mobile: 0795559305 / 0795606010

Email: [ujrc@ujrc-jordan.org](mailto:ujrc@ujrc-jordan.org)