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German-Iraqi Cooperation for quality journalism: The Election Coverage Network Iraq starts today.
A project by MICT in partnership with and financed by UNAMI

The Election Coverage Network is a voter education project for the parliamentary elections in Iraq in January 2010. On July 5th 2009 a consortium of journalists from all parts of Iraq will start the production of radio interviews, reports, and information on election issues in cooperation with a German-Arabic team of editors working for the Berlin-based NGO MICT (Media in Cooperation and Transition gGmbH). The project is financed by UNAMI (United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq) and aims on providing the Iraqi people with background information about parties, candidates and details on the voting process. The products will be made available to a network of FM radio stations across Iraq. Furthermore they will be open to a worldwide audience on www.niqash.org/iraqvotes. The radio reports will be broadcasted in Arabic and Kurdish.

The radio reports will include voices from the streets and analysis on elections issues, background information about parties and candidates, technical and procedural details on the voting process and elections results as well as results from election monitoring. All contributions by the journalists will be designed in accordance with the basic values of professional journalism and in accordance with the Professional Code of Conduct for the Iraqi Media. Strengthening professional and independent journalism in accordance with principles such as impartiality, fairness and balanced reporting is the core challenge in order to enable the voters to form a critical opinion on parties and candidates. The participating radio stations are: Radio Baba Gurgur (Kirkuk), Radio Dijla (Suleymaniya), Radio Al-Yaum (Baghdad), Radio Al-Rawda Al-Husseiniya (Karbala), Radio Al-Diwaniya (Diwaniya), Radio Al-Nahrain (Waset), Radio Al-Merbed (Basra), Radio Dar Al-Salam (Baghdad), Radio Babel (Hilla) and Radio Sawt Kurdistan (Erbil).

As stated in Security Council Resolution 1770, UNAMI advises, supports and assists the Government of Iraq, at its request, on the development of processes for holding elections and referendums. UNAMI has been working with the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) in the implementation of regional elections for governorate councils that will be seen as credible and accepted by the Iraqi people.

MICT has been following and covering the political, cultural, and economic process in Iraq since early 2004. MICT's activities comprise the training of journalists and media producers, program and content development, production of radio programs, films and books, as well as media monitoring. The MICT network of correspondents and experts in Iraq has intensively covered the two elections in 2005, the constitutional process and the provincial elections.

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About MICT: www.mict-international.org

Listen to and read about the reports on: www.niqash.org/iraqvotes (arabic only)