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## IRAQ'S AL-SADR STRUGGLES TO FORM COALITION GOVERNMENT

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Prominent Shia cleric and politician Muqtada al-Sadr is having a hard time drawing up a viable coalition government after his Sairoon bloc dominated Iraqs May 12 parliamentary poll.

Al-Sadr had hoped to form a coalition government with Vice-President Iyad Allawis Al-Wataniya bloc and Ammar al-Hakims National Wisdom Movement.

But the three blocs together do not have the 50-percent-plus-one majority (165 out of 329 seats in parliament) needed to form a governing coalition.

Last week, several Iraqi political parties reacted negatively after al-Sadr hinted at a possible alliance with the Iran-backed Fatah Coalition.

Some left-wing parties went so far as to say that they would throw in their lot with the opposition if such an alliance came to fruition.

However, Iraqs two main Kurdish parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, reportedly view the would-be alliance with Fatah in a positive light.

Although al-Sadr is a frequent critic of Iranian influence in Iraq, he nevertheless maintains close ties with Tehran.

For years, al-Sadr studied under Iranian clerics in the Iranian city of Qom, which has historically been a center of Shia religious scholarship.

Al-Sadr's Sairoon coalition dominated the May 12 poll, winning 54 parliamentary seats, according to official results.

Sairoon was followed by a Hashd al-Shaabi-linked coalition (47 seats) and Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi's Victory Bloc (42 seats).

Al-Hakims National Wisdom Movement, meanwhile, clinched 19 seats in the legislative assembly.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/iraq-s-al-sadr-struggles-to-form-coalition-government/1180355>

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