
IRAQI POLITICAL BLOCS STRUGGLE TO MEET DEADLINE TO REPLACE ABDUL MAHDI

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The constitutional deadline for nominating a new prime minister arrived Dec. 15 with no consensus candidate in view, even though a spokesman for Iraqi President Barham Salih said Dec. 12 that the president was committed to coming up with a candidate within the constitutional time frame.

Former Human Rights Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani threw his hat in the ring Dec. 13, announcing on his Twitter account that he has resigned from the Islamic Dawa party to become a candidate for the premiership. Sudani has not been nominated by any bloc in the parliament, although he is believed to be backed by Fatah bloc, which is the political front of the Iran-backed Popular Mobilization Units and former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law coalition, which together could form the largest bloc in parliament. However, the president sent a request on Dec. 15 to the parliament, asking to determine the largest bloc, in order to nominate a candidate for the premiership position, which indicates that Fatah was not able to form the largest bloc and Sudani candidacy was not successful. In fact, one of the main criticism against the parliament and government formed after the 2018 election is that the whole process of forming the government had not followed the constitution guideline which obliged the parliament to determine the largest bloc officially, which did not happen.

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