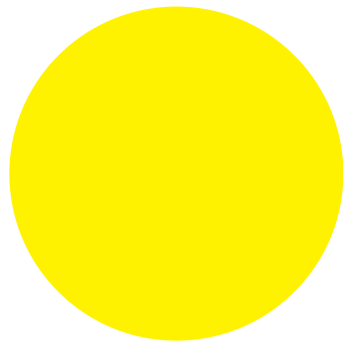


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President of the Committee of the Red Cross Mirjana Spoljaric Egger (C), accompanied by head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society Pir Hossein Kolivand (R), visits an area in Tehran, Iran damaged by airstrikes during the recent US-Israeli war on April 29, 2026.

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Iraq PM-designate faces fragile mandate amid weak public, factional backing

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Iraq's dominant parliamentary bloc nominated Ali al-Zaidi, a businessman and political newcomer, for prime minister after weeks of wrangling within the Coordination Framework. The bloc had initially backed former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, but after public US opposition and threats to suspend aid, alongside reported objections to incumbent Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, the alliance shifted toward



Ali Bidboo

a compromise nominee to break the deadlock. In an interview with Iran Daily, Iraqi

affairs expert Ali Bidboo said al-Zaidi was chosen not through consensus but by majority vote, arguing he lacks backing from both the Iraqi public and key political factions, casting doubt on his ability to deliver on his pledges.

IRAN DAILY: With figures such as Nouri al-Maliki initially in contention, what internal and regional factors led to another option ultimately emerging for the premiership? How do you assess the roles of the United States and Iran in this choice?

BIDBOO: After the United States effectively crossed Nouri al-Maliki off the list, another red line was drawn against al-Sudani following the recent [Iran] war and developments linked to his strong support for the Resistance Front. Two incidents appear to have altered Washington's assessment of al-Sudani. The

first was the repeated targeting of the US embassy in Baghdad, as well as the US consulate in Erbil. The second was the ambush on the road leading to Baghdad airport that left American soldiers and personnel wounded.

After various names were floated, Ali al-Zaidi eventually emerged. Yet his nomination was not supported by figures such as Humam Hamoudi or Abu Alaa al-Walai, partly because of his background and financial ties developed with certain parties. In fact, no consensus was reached; the decision was made through majority voting. When the Coordination Framework issued its letter assigning al-Zaidi to form a government, figures including al-Sudani, Nouri al-Maliki and Hadi al-Amiri declared support, citing the number of seats under their control. But figures such as Ammar al-Hakim and Ahmad al-Asadi did not specify their

parliamentary weight, and their support appeared personal rather than institutional. The names of Hamoudi and Abu Alaa al-Walai were absent altogether.

Al-Zaidi has spoken of turning Iraq into a balanced state regionally and internationally. What message does that carry for domestic and external actors?

In Iraq, a figure lacking sufficient backing — without support from the street on one side and from powerful parties on the other — will naturally struggle to achieve the success envisioned, let alone establish equilibrium in foreign policy. Al-Zaidi, not being fundamentally a political or security figure, may have been designated prime minister, but the street reacted with considerable shock. There had been expectations for a strong figure, not someone with little public profile whose identity is primarily economic

and who has sought to push through his path via party financial networks.

Without such support, he will not be able to project a balanced Iraqi posture internationally or in files involving the United States, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Also, if al-Zaidi acts solely in line with the preferences of several Coordination Framework leaders and runs affairs accordingly, he would naturally be reduced from prime minister to, in effect, an employee of the Coordination Framework.

That may, perhaps, suit some actors who prefer a new premier who neither builds a political party nor pursues an independent political role, but simply follows the directives of several Framework leaders. It should also be borne in mind that it remains unclear whether the cabinet can even secure a parliamentary vote of confidence.

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