



[Iraq Names Mohammed Allawi the Country's New Prime Minister](#)

Iraqi President Barham Salih appointed Mohammed Allawi, a former communications minister and member of the Iraqi parliament until 2005, as the country's new prime minister. Allawi's predecessor Adel Abdul Mahdi resigned from the post back in November of last year amid a wave of anti-government protests. Following his appointment, Allawi expressed support for the protests that have been taking place for the past four months and promised to fight corruption. He now has a month to form a new government, which must be approved by the Iraqi parliament. In an effort to do this, Allawi will assemble a team to negotiate with various political blocs and anti-government protesters.

Mohammed Allawi was appointed after Iraq's major political parties were unable to agree on a candidate. President Salih had threatened that if the parties weren't able to agree, he would be forced to appoint a caretaker prime minister until an election could be scheduled. Allawi is qualified for the role, having gained political experience as a two-time communications minister, and a member of parliament since 2005. Upon being appointed, Allawi immediately sought to appease protesters, and promised to pursue justice against the security forces that had used violence against protesters. Allawi has also promised to create jobs and fight corruption, a key complaint against the administration of his predecessor. Despite this, protesters chanted "Mohammed Allawi is rejected" in Baghdad's Tahrir Square, because they consider him to be too close to Iraq's traditional political establishment.

Mohammed Allawi has one month to form a new government and has promised to create a cabinet free of sectarianism and factionalism. He was backed from the start by influential Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr, who controls the largest bloc in Iraq's Parliament. Conversely, Allawi is opposed by the followers of former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, under whose administration Allawi served and resigned from due to Maliki's sectarian policies. In his inaugural address, Allawi promised to resign if he was unable to form a coherent government, or if he failed to adequately combat corruption. He also called on the protesters to continue their demonstrations and not to stop until their demands had been met.

One of the pressing issues that Mohammed Allawi will have to deal with in the infant months of his administration is the future of American troops in Iraq. The American Embassy in Iraq issued a statement in response to Allawi being named prime minister, saying Iraq was in need of an "independent and honest government committed to addressing the needs of the Iraqi people." Tensions between the United States and Iraq have escalated recently as a result of Iran's proxy activity in the country, and the American strike to kill Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad. Allawi will have to confront those issues, in addition to the social challenges that have long plagued Iraq.