

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

INFORMATION AND PRESS DEPARTMENT



32/34 Smolenskaya-Sennaya pl., 119200, Moscow G-200; tel.: (495) 244 4119, fax: 244 4112
e-mail: dip@mid.ru, web-address: www.mid.ru

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Mikhail Kamynin, the Spokesman of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Answers a Question from ITAR-TASS News Agency Regarding the Formation of a New Government in Iraq

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Question: The leaders of Iraq's major parties have at last succeeded, four months since the December 2005 parliamentary elections, in agreeing on appointments to the top government posts. But the process of the establishment of a permanent administration is not yet over. How soon do you think it is possible to expect the appearance in Iraq of a new government and what impact this will have on the situation in the country?

Answer: As is known, key personnel appointments took place on April 22 at the second session of Iraq's parliament. Jalal Talabani was reelected as President. Mahmoud al-Mashhadani became Parliament Speaker. Jawad al-Maliki, a Shiite Dawa Party leadership member, was named Prime Minister. Within 30 days he has to put forward for consideration by parliament the members of his cabinet, for whose approval a simple majority of votes is required.

That the leading Iraqi politicians have finally managed to overcome the sharp inter-party differences and adopt important personnel decisions instills a definite optimism. Undoubtedly, this is a necessary step forward which creates prerequisites for normalizing the internal political situation in the country.

We hope that all the leading parties will be represented in the new government, this enabling it in practice to become a government of national unity and take into account the interests of all the principal ethnoconfessional groups. In this case it will be possible to speak of giving good grounds for lasting stabilization and the further development of the country. Moscow is convinced that the world community at this crucial stage must intensify its efforts to help the Iraqis find ways out of the protracted crisis. Russia has more than once said that it is ready to support international and regional initiatives designed to

facilitate attaining this goal.

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