

## CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT

FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

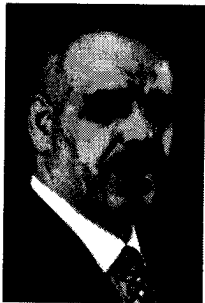
WASHINGTON DC \* MOSCOW \* BEIJING \* BEIRUT \* BRUSSELS

# Unity Alliance of Iraq

The Unity Alliance of Iraq is a non-sectarian grouping of parties and individuals who portray themselves as secular nationalists. The Alliance's main members, Interior Minister Jawad Bolani and his Constitution Party, and Ahmad Abu Risha and the Awakening Council of Iraq, considered joining Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law Coalition, but could not come to agreement on terms, and ultimately went their separate ways.

Party	Representation	Leader(s)
<b>Constitution Party</b>	Shi'i	Jawad Bolani
<b>Awakening Council of Iraq</b>	Sunni—Mainly in Anbar	Ahmad Abu Risha
<b>Charter Gathering</b>	Sunni	Abdulghafour al-Sammuraie
<b>Independent</b>	Kurdish Sufi	Nehru Kasnazani
<b>Independent</b>	Sunni—Minister of Defense	Saadoun al-Dulaimi
<b>Independent</b>	Sunni—Anbar tribal leader	Abu Azzam al-Tamimi

## Constitution Party



**Leader** Jawad al-Bolani

**Date of Founding & Notable Moments** 2004

**Seats in Parliament** None

**Seats in 2009 Provincial Elections** 3/440

**Notes** Interior Minister Jawad al-Bolani, a former air force engineer under the Baath regime, assumed his present position in the government in 2006. At the time, the ministry was heavily controlled by the Badr movement. Bolani, a self-styled moderate Shi'i, had previously served on the Iraqi Governing Council and on the committee that drafted the constitution in 2005. He has been a member of several political parties, including the Iraqi National Congress (INC), the Sadrist Trend, and the Virtue Party. In 2004, he launched the Constitution Party, which competed in the 2005 parliamentary elections as part of Ahmad Chalabi's INC list. The coalition, composed of ten political parties, won no seats in parliament.

When Nouri al-Maliki became prime minister in 2006, he appointed Bolani minister of interior. Bolani, who had just announced that he was severing connections to all political parties, declared his intention to clean up the ministry, firing employees and members of the security forces whom he saw as corrupt or too loyal to specific parties and militias rather than the state. Bolani also sought to dismantle the death squads that had established themselves under his predecessor, Bayan Jabr, but his reforms were only partially successful. Indeed, Bolani's critics claim that, far from being a loyal servant of the state, he is actually close to Moqtada al-Sadr and allowed Sadrist elements to infiltrate the ministry. He has also been accused of appointing members of his Constitution Party to high positions in the Ministry of Interior and usurping his position to secure gains in the January 2009 provincial elections.

In preparing for the 2010 parliamentary elections, the Constitution Party originally sought to join with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Dawa and the State of Law list, but Bolani could not reach an agreement with Maliki, so he turned instead to Sheikh Ahmad Abu Risha and Abdulghafour al-Sammuraie of the Mithaq Gathering. Bolani's decision not to join the State of Law alliance led to a storm of attacks by Dawa representatives and lawmakers. Maliki himself, possibly feeling threatened by another cross-sectarian alliance, has called on Bolani to maintain political neutrality, step down as head of the Constitution Party, and withdraw from the Unity Alliance of Iraq in order to preserve the impartiality of the Interior Ministry. Bolani's supporters have accused Maliki of hypocrisy, pointing to the fact that he is Dawa party leader, State of Law coalition leader, and prime minister all at once.

## Awakening Council of Iraq



**Leader** Sheikh Ahmad Abu Risha, brother of the founder Abdulsattar Abu Risha, assassinated in 2007.

**Date of Founding & Notable Moments** September 2006

**Seats in Parliament** None

**Seats in 2009 Provincial Elections** 8/440

**Notes** The Anbar Awakening Council was created by Sunni tribal leader Abdulsattar Abu Risha, whose tribe is one of the components of the Dulaimi tribe, which exerts the most influence in Anbar. The Anbar tribes had allied with al-Qaeda after 2003, but relations soon soured when tribal leaders came to feel that al-Qaeda was undermining their historic rule in the country, which had always existed parallel to official government institutions. Al-Qaeda also sought to take over the tribes' traditional revenue sources, including smuggling goods across Anbar's border into neighboring states. The final straw was al-Qaeda's decision to declare Anbar part of the so-called "Islamic State of Iraq" and attack tribal leaders and their families.

Growing opposition to al-Qaeda led to the formation of the Awakening movement by members of the Abu Risha family and other Sunni tribal leaders in 2005. A clandestine movement at first, the Awakening Council and the Anbar Salvation Council went public in September 2006, announcing their intention to expel al-Qaeda. In light of their new goals, the councils received funding and support from the United States, which increasingly relied on their militias to fight al-Qaeda. The Awakening Council's successes in defeating al-Qaeda in Anbar helped bring stability to Iraq, thus increasing the Councils' popularity among Iraqis and undermining the influence of the Iraqi Islamic Party.

After the successes in Anbar, Awakening Councils and movements sprung up around the country. Abdulsattar Abu Risha attempted to unite the Awakening movements under his control, but his efforts failed. The movement suffered a further setback when he was assassinated in 2007, and his brother, Sheikh Ahmad Abu Risha, struggled to maintain control. While the Awakening Councils became increasingly popular, in the run-up to the provincial council elections they split along tribal lines. The Maliki government further weakened Awakening Councils by arresting leaders in provinces where they posed a serious threat to his coalition's electoral prospects.

The present Awakening Council of Iraq, led by Ahmad Abu Risha, participated in the January 2009 provincial elections in Anbar. Before the elections, it accused the Iraqi Islamic Party and the Independent High Election Commission of plotting fraud, and threatened to turn Anbar into "a graveyard for the IIP and its agents," by waging a tribal war if the Awakening Council did not win in Anbar. As it happened, the Awakening Council won first place there.

In preparation for the January 2010 parliamentary elections, Ahmad Abu Risha entered into negotiations with Maliki's State of Law alliance, and many analysts expected the Awakening Councils to join the coalition. Instead, Abu Risha joined with Jawad al-Bolani and the Constitution Party in negotiations with Iyad Allawi and Saleh al-Mutlaq of the Iraqi National Movement, but the talks failed.

Abu Risha has called on Arab countries to play a greater role in Iraq, charging unnamed Iraqi political organizations with receiving Iranian aid and support, while denying a charge made by his opponents that that he receives Saudi funding.

## The Charter Gathering

**Leader** Sheikh Abdulghafour Al-Sammuraie

**Date of Founding & Notable Moments** 2009

**Seats in Parliament** None

**Seats in 2009 Provincial Elections** None

**Notes** Abdulghaffour al-Sammuraie took over the leadership of the Sunni Endowment (Waqf) Bureau from Adnan al-Dulaimi in 2005, and in comparison to his predecessor, was seen as a moderate representative of the Sunni community. A former Baathist who had been close to former president Saddam Hussein, Sammuraie had delivered memorable speeches denouncing the Shi'a when Saddam was in power. He also strongly opposed the American presence in Iraq after the United States deposed the Baath regime, but he began cooperating with the United States in 2005, when he was nominated to head the Sunni Endowment Bureau. Sammuraie has since taken a strong stance against al-Qaeda and become more conciliatory toward the Shi'a.

In June 2009, in preparation for the upcoming parliamentary elections, Sammurai'e created a cross-ethnic party, the Charter Gathering. At the launch of the new organization, Mahmoud al-Samaidei, the deputy head of the Shi'a Endowment Bureau, announced that the group would join Sammuraie in an effort to create the first true merger of Sunni and Shi'i religious institutions under one political entity in order to eliminate sectarianism and violence. If the alliance endures, it will be Iraq's first and only example so far of non-sectarian cooperation between religious organizations.

---

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace