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Subject: (Reuters) Iraqi panel invalidates votes for 52 candidates

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - An Iraqi review panel invalidated the votes of 52 candidates of the March election, officials said, possibly wiping out the slim lead of a Sunni-backed alliance. It was not immediately clear how many of the candidates barred for alleged ties to Saddam Hussein's banned Baath party had won seats in the March 7 ballot. If the result changed, the decision could spark anger among Sunnis just as the sectarian violence unleashed after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion recedes. The panel's ruling was confirmed by Ali al-Lami, a senior member of a commission that sought to bar candidates with Baath party links, Tariq Harp, a lawyer for Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's State of Law coalition, and Mustafa al-Hiti, a senior member of the winning Iraqiya alliance that was heavily backed by Sunnis.

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