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## FOREWORD BY THE CEC CHAIRMAN

Elections constitute a significant event in all democratic systems, particularly in developing democracies. A number of stakeholders contribute to the success of elections and the media is amongst the most important. The importance of the media stems from its ability to relay the events, to drive public debate and to disseminate important information, particularly in relation to the integrity and transparency of elections.

The 2005 presidential elections generated wide local and international media attention. As media interest in the legislative elections scheduled for 25 January 2006 intensifies, the CEC is ardently working to facilitate the work of all those involved. We are accrediting journalists and media representatives and providing them with all necessary information regarding the process. It is our hope that they will benefit from the facilities and services provided, especially the Media Centers in Ramallah and Gaza City, which were established to cover the polling and counting process. The CEC has requested that the electoral operation be documented by all media representatives in a neutral and objective manner.

The CEC welcomes local and international media coverage of the Palestinian elections and hopes that this guide will be of use to them during the elections.



**Dr. Hanna Nasir**  
**Chairman, CEC**



# Chapter One

## MEDIA SERVICES

The CEC seeks to provide media representatives with all the necessary information and services to enable unhindered coverage of the electoral operation. This guide outlines these services, explains the Code of Conduct that governs the media and lists some useful contact information.

### ***1. Media accreditation***

The CEC commenced the accreditation of local and international media representatives for the legislative elections on 24 December 2005 at the CEC HQ in Ramallah and the Regional Office in Gaza. The CEC accredits press members so that they can benefit from the media services provided by the CEC.

CEC media accreditation cards enable media representatives to enter polling centers, cover the polling and counting process, obtain updates and press releases issued by the CEC, and gain access to the facilities offered by the media centers in Ramallah and Gaza, which will be opened a few days before polling day.

#### **Accreditation requirements for media representatives:**

Media representatives should submit an application for accreditation to the CEC. In order for the application to be accepted. The applicant must:

- Be currently working in the media field.
- Prove his/her employment with an official media organization.
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct for journalists and media representatives issued by the CEC.
- Refrain from using CEC media accreditation cards for purposes other than those specified and from giving a media accreditation card to an unauthorized person.

**The accreditation application should include:**

- A completed accreditation form.
- One passport-size photo.
- A photocopy of the journalist's personal ID.
- A formal letter from a media organization verifying that the applicant is an employee of that organization.

**Online accreditation:**

To facilitate the accreditation process, the CEC has created an online accreditation system on the CEC website ([www.elections.ps](http://www.elections.ps)). Media representatives can submit an application for accreditation and a digital photo online. The applicant will receive his/her accreditation card from the CEC HQ in Ramallah or the Regional Office in Gaza within five days.

***2. Media Liaison Officers***

Media Liaison Officers are responsible for assisting and directing media representatives to information resources.

CEC Media Liaison Officers will be available at the CEC headquarters in Ramallah and the Regional Office in Gaza. Liaison Officers will respond to enquiries and provide media representatives with updates on both the electoral process and the media services provided by the CEC.

CEC Media Liaison Officers can be contacted on the following numbers:

**CEC HQ, Ramallah: (02) 2969700**

**CEC Regional Office, Gaza: (08) 2842973/4**

### ***3. Press Releases***

The CEC issues press releases on electoral preparations and developments. Press releases are distributed to accredited local and international media representatives and published on the CEC website.

### ***4. Press Conferences***

CEC press conferences are held regularly in Ramallah to brief journalists and answer their questions. Invitations are sent to all media representatives.

### ***5. Jawwal SMS Messages***

In the week leading up to Election Day, the CEC will send text messages to accredited media representatives with updates on breaking news or changes in the press conference schedule. This service is only available to Jawwal subscribers.

### ***6. Press Kits***

The CEC will provide press kits containing useful information such as contact lists for CEC officials, statistics relating to the electoral operation, detailed maps of polling centers in each electoral district and information on competing candidates in the 2006 PLC elections. Press kits will be available at the CEC HQ in Ramallah and the Regional Office in Gaza.

### ***7. Interviews with CEC officials***

Journalists wishing to arrange for an interview with a CEC official in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip should contact the CEC Media Liaison Officer in Ramallah or Gaza.

### ***8. Website: [www.elections.ps](http://www.elections.ps)***

The CEC website contains useful information for journalists. Topics include: electoral laws, details on the electoral system, election observation and the realities of holding elections under occupation. The website also includes the online accreditation service.

## ***9. Subscription to the mailing list***

The CEC website provides a subscription service to the CEC mailing list. Subscribers receive information and press releases issued by the CEC. Interested persons may join the CEC mailing list by submitting a special form available on the website.

## ***10. Media Centers***

The CEC will be operating two media centers, one in the city of Ramallah and the other in the city of Gaza. The aim of the Media Centers is to provide various services needed by journalists and the media as the Media Centers will be the main sources of information on Polling Day. The CEC will issue all press releases and hold press conferences at these centers to keep journalists updated on any developments in the polling and counting process. The two Media Centers will be linked through video-conferencing. Only accredited media representatives will be permitted to use the centers.

The Media Center in Ramallah is located at the Cultural Palace, Tokyo Street, while the Media Center in Gaza is located at Gaza International Hotel, next to the Ministry of Planning.

### **On-site services for media journalists in Ramallah**

<b>On-site services</b>	<b>Services include</b>
<b>Interview Room</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TV studio with live plasma screen, meeting table and elections background</li><li>• Make up room</li></ul>
<b>TV ready Press Conference Room</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Video Conferencing (Ramallah – Gaza)</li><li>• Pooling cameras</li><li>• Wireless microphones</li><li>• Simultaneous English/Arabic translations and vice versa</li></ul>



On-site services	Services include
<b>Live Feeds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live pool from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Cultural Palace theater</li> <li>- The Data Entry Center</li> <li>- Other locations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Looping national and district results presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Press Room</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 computers</li> <li>• Wireless Internet</li> <li>• Fax</li> <li>• Telephones</li> <li>• Printers</li> <li>• Photocopier</li> <li>• Cable TVs</li> </ul>

#### On-site services for media journalists in Gaza

On-site services	Services include
<b>Theater</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video Conferencing (Gaza – Ramallah)</li> <li>• Looping national and district results presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Press Room</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 computers</li> <li>• Wireless Internet</li> <li>• Fax</li> <li>• Telephones</li> <li>• Printers</li> <li>• Photocopier</li> <li>• Cable TVs</li> </ul>



## Chapter Two

# CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

### *1. Media coverage and the legal framework*

Elections Law No. (9) of 2005 guarantees the right of local and international media representatives to cover all phases of the electoral process and assigns the responsibility for media accreditation to the Central Elections Commission (CEC).

### *2. Standards and principles of media coverage*

Local and international media shall adhere to the following standards:

- **Professionalism:** Journalists should be professional in their coverage of the electoral process, commit to neutrality, objectivity and credibility, and refrain from publishing news that may invoke hatred, racism or tribal disputes.
- **Compliance with the law:** Journalists shall adhere to the laws and regulations issued in this regard as well as to the Code of Conduct for journalists issued by the CEC.
- **Accuracy:** The media shall seek accuracy in the information it provides to the public regarding the electoral process by ensuring that information is obtained from reliable sources.

### *3. Rights of media representatives*

Journalists covering the electoral process shall be entitled to the following:

- Media accreditation cards from the CEC.
- Entry into all polling centers and stations.
- Access to all services and facilities provided in the media centers in Ramallah and Gaza.
- To conduct interviews inside polling centers with voters, observers and agents of political parties and candidates. Interviews, however, inside polling stations are strictly prohibited.

- Meetings with CEC officials.
- Interviews with candidates and their representatives during the election campaign period.

#### ***4. Obligations of media representatives***

All accredited media representatives shall adhere to the following:

- Media personnel must wear accreditation cards issued by the CEC inside polling and counting centers.
- The display of colors, symbols or slogans that are similar to any of those belonging to partisan entities, electoral lists or candidates is prohibited.
- Media personnel must be disciplined, refrain from creating any disturbance inside polling stations and must leave the station when it is crowded to avoid hindering the polling process.
- Interviews shall not be conducted inside polling and counting stations.
- Media personnel are prohibited from taking photographs or video footage of voters filling in ballot papers.
- Obtaining the personal information of registrants or voters is prohibited.
- The media must refrain from interfering in the electoral process and from influencing the decisions of voters.
- Media personnel must follow the instructions of the Presiding Officer of the Polling Station.
- Interviews and questions shall be addressed to CEC officials only.

#### ***5. General provisions***

The Presiding Officer of the Polling Station is entitled to check accreditation cards before allowing journalists to enter the Polling Station. The Presiding Officer regulates and facilitates the work of media representatives inside the Polling Station.

The relevant committee of the CEC may revoke the accreditation of any media representative or journalist in the event of a violation of the provisions of the law, the regulations or the Code of Conduct for journalists.



## Chapter Three

# MEDIA AND ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNING

### *1. The legal framework*

Elections Law No. 9 of 2005 regulates the role of the media during the period of electoral campaigning leaving the details to the CEC, which is responsible for setting procedures and organizing all aspects of the electoral process. Article (63) of the Elections Law stipulates that “the CEC in cooperation with official media outlets shall set up a special program in which it allocates the duration and time to which each candidate shall be entitled in the public media free of charge”. The second clause of the same article confirms the importance of “providing equitable and equal access for all election candidates.”

### *2. The role of the media*

The media is divided into two types: public and private. In order to maintain the rights of candidates to use the media to promote their political platforms during the electoral campaigning period, the CEC has established regulations that coordinate the media’s work.

### *3. Public media*

Public media outlets shall adhere to the following:

- Neutrality at every stage of the electoral process.
- Candidates are entitled to present their electoral platform without censorship, except in the case of activities that may disturb public order or cause offense to other candidates.
- Refrain from obtaining any financial compensation for broadcasting the electoral campaigns of candidates or electoral lists
- Refrain from broadcasting any additional advertisements, whether paid or unpaid, for any candidate or electoral list.
- Refrain from conducting electoral or campaigning activities that support a certain candidate or electoral list over another.

- Coordinate with the CEC to set up timetables that assign broadcasting periods for all candidates and electoral lists.

### **Coordination between the CEC and the public media**

Following a series of meetings between the CEC and the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation (PBC), aimed at coordinating campaign broadcasting for candidates and electoral lists it was agreed that the PBC will produce and broadcast a pre-recorded series of 1-hour TV talk-shows for each electoral list.

TV and radio advertisements will be broadcast for each list and candidate and aired at a standard time. The order of talk-shows and ads will be arranged according to the order that the lists and candidates occupy on the ballot papers.

Eight radio contests and 16 TV contests will be produced and broadcast with the aim of educating voters on the electoral process.

### **Monitoring media coverage during the electoral campaigning period**

In its commitment to ensure that all candidates and lists enjoy an equal opportunity to promote their electoral programs and to monitor the media's coverage of events, the CEC, in cooperation with a competent organization, will monitor the media's coverage of electoral campaigns to ensure that:

1. Candidates and electoral lists obtain equal air time.
2. The public media is committed to the legal period assigned for electoral campaigning.

Regular reports are submitted to the CEC at the end of the electoral campaigning period, the organization will prepare a detailed report on the results of the monitoring process, which will be delivered to the CEC.



#### ***4. Private media***

The private media should adhere to the following regulations when broadcasting any campaigning materials for candidates and electoral lists:

- Refrain from defaming other candidates.
- Refrain from using the logo of the Palestinian National Authority in electoral advertisements, articles, posters and pictures.
- Refrain from broadcasting any material that may invoke tribal or family feuds.
- Observe the legal timeline for electoral campaigning and refrain from broadcasting any materials before or after the official campaigning period.

Aside from these regulations, the media retains the freedom to deal with candidates and electoral lists independently and in compliance with its own policies.





## APPENDICES

### *Contact Information of Public Relations Officers at CEC district offices*

<b>PR officer</b>	<b>District address</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Jawwal</b>
Ammar Rafiq Deeb Arouri	Dahiyat Al Barid – Main St. <b>Jerusalem</b>	02-2345811 02-2345812	0599-673-310
Reem sharif khaled Omari	Al Nijmah Bldg. - Al Balou' <b>Ramallah &amp; Al Bireh</b>	02-2404202 02-2404203	0599-673-343
Islam khaled Kateeb Tamimi	Abu Aisha Bldg. - Al Moqata'a St. <b>Hebron</b>	02-2293229 02-2293911	0599-673-346
Walid Khaleel Ibraheem Ammar	Al Hafi Bldg. - Shwaika St <b>Tulkarem</b>	09-2684327 09-2684328	0599-673-338
Jalal Ahmad Issa Salman	Harwash Bldg. - Rafidia St. <b>Nablus</b>	09-2330115 09-2330116	0599-673-340
Magdoleen Mahmoud Mohammad Assaf	Al Shuhada' St. <b>Salfit</b>	09-2515921	0599-673-342
Mohammad Aref Mohammad Abu Arrah	Al Ghoor St. <b>Tubas</b>	09-2573004	0599-673-339
Abir Abed Al-Rahman Abed Al-Rahman Al-Mograbi	Abu Jihad St. Near Al Quds Open University <b>Jericho</b>	02-2325557	0599-673-344
Yasser Dakhallah Ali Salah	Al Jabal St. - Al Suq Al Markazi Way <b>Bethlehem</b>	02-2752001 02-2752002	0599-673-345
Faisal Hasan Ali Dawod	Mala'b Al Baladi St. <b>Qalqilya</b>	09-2946546 09-2946539	0599-673-341

<b>PR officer</b>	<b>District address</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Jawwal</b>
Hussein Ahed Hussein Ayaseh	Sukayna Bint Al Hussain St. <b>Jenin</b>	04-2437166 04-2437165	0599-673-337
Ashraf Nafez Abdel Hafiz Abu Salem	High Buildings St. Beit Lahia Project <b>North Gaza</b>	08-2475965 08-2475964	0599-673-437
Mohammed Mo'men Rajeh Ayesh Habib	Khartoum St. - Southern Al Remal <b>Gaza</b>	08-2833816 08-2834618	0599-673-438
Abed Errhman Mohammed Attaallah Abu elata	Abed Al Kareem Al 'Aklouk St. Southern Al Hadaba <b>Deir Al Balah</b>	08-2537420 08-2537421	0599-673-439
Ali Hasan Ahmed Nems	Al Mahatta St. Behind Sha'th Tower <b>Khan Younis</b>	08-2066564 08-2066563	0599-673-440
Osama Mousa Mahmoud Abu Obeid alla	Uthman bin Affan St. Across from Martyrs Sq. <b>Rafah</b>	08-2138670 08-2138720	0599-673-441

## ***Memorandum of Understanding on the Official Media***

Following joint meetings held between the CEC, referred to here after as “the Commission” and the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation (PBC), referred to here after as “the Corporation” regarding the broadcasting of electoral campaigns for electoral lists and candidates in the official media outlets, the broadcasting of TV and radio spots, and organizing of TV and radio contests to raise the awareness of voters, the two parties hereby agree on the following:

### **1. Media and the electoral process**

- a) The Corporation and all official media outlets shall adhere to the standard of neutrality at every stage of the electoral process and shall refrain from conducting electoral or campaigning activities that may be perceived as supporting a certain candidate, electoral list or political party over another.
- b) The Corporation shall refrain from broadcasting any paid or unpaid campaigns to any of the candidates or electoral lists other than those agreed on between the Commission and the Corporation in this Memorandum of Understanding.

### **2. Talk-shows**

- a) The Corporation shall produce and broadcast a TV talk-show series for each electoral list nominated for the second legislative elections. A one-hour episode (commercial free) shall be allocated to each electoral list. One episode shall be broadcast daily and it shall be re-broadcast the following day at a standard time for all electoral lists to be agreed upon by the Commission and the Corporation.
- b) All talk shows shall be televised between 7:00 am and 8:30 am. The recording of the talk shows shall commence on 3 January, 2006. The shows shall be recorded beforehand to be broadcast during the legal period of electoral campaigning.
- c) The participation of candidates from the electoral lists in Gaza shall be conducted via satellite.

- d) Participants from the electoral lists may review the questions two hours before the recording of the episode and shall be entitled to object to any question that constitutes a provocation against the list or its candidates or a breach of the neutrality of the Corporation.
- e) Participation is restricted to the representatives selected by the electoral list provided that their number does not exceed three representatives: two contestants/speakers, the presenter of the program, and a CEC monitoring officer. There shall be no audience participation or telephone calls.
- f) The talk-shows shall include TV spots prepared by the Commission, which shall be broadcast during the breaks.
- g) The Corporation may not request sponsorship of the episodes or contributions from any other body.
- h) The talk-shows are jointly sponsored by the Commission and the Corporation.

### **3. Advertisements for the electoral lists.**

- a) Each electoral list is entitled to provide the Commission with a recorded TV and/or radio advertisement, with a 10-minute maximum broadcasting period.
- b) The Commission is entitled to remove any of the advertisement's content and it can refuse to broadcast ads that fail to abide by the electoral campaigning regulations assigned by the law.
- c) Recorded advertisements shall be delivered on DV Cam or Beta Cam cassettes, while radio ads shall be delivered on MP3 CDs.
- d) Advertisements shall be broadcast at a standard time. Broadcasting shall be equally distributed among the electoral lists based on the order they occupy on the ballot paper. (Beginning with the first list on the ballot).
- e) Advertisements shall be broadcast during the legal period assigned for electoral campaigning.

#### **4. Advertisement recordings for districts candidates**

- a) Each district candidate shall be entitled to provide the Commission with a recorded TV and/or radio advertisement, with a two-minute maximum broadcasting period.
- b) The Commission shall be entitled to remove any content in the advertisement or refuse the broadcasting of any ad that fails to abide by the electoral campaigning regulations assigned by the law.
- c) Advertisements shall be delivered on DV Cam or Beta Cam cassettes, while radio advertisements shall be delivered on MP3 CDs.
- d) Advertisements shall be broadcast during the legal period assigned for electoral campaigning.
- e) The order in which campaign ads are aired on television for candidates running for district elections shall follow the respective order (number) assigned to the districts . The order in which candidates' ads are broadcast shall be according to the order in which candidates appear on the ballot paper.
- f) The recording and broadcasting of episodes shall be regulated by a schedule agreed upon by the Commission and the Corporation.

#### **5. TV contests, TV and radio spots**

- a) The Corporation shall broadcast and produce eight (8) radio episodes, in the form of contests. Each episode shall be broadcast over a period of one hour, during which prizes shall be distributed to the participants.
- b) The Corporation shall produce and broadcast sixteen (16) TV episodes, in the form of contests conducted in the field in the Palestinian governorates. Each episode shall last for one hour, during which prizes shall be distributed to the participants.
- c) The Corporation shall broadcast five (5) different TV spots, each of which will run three times a day over a period of 15 days. Broadcast times shall be agreed upon by the Commission and the Corporation.
- d) The Corporation shall broadcast three (3) different radio spots, three times a day over a period of 30 days. Broadcast time shall be agreed upon by the Commission and the Corporation.
- e) The spots indicated in the previous paragraphs shall be produced by the Commission and at its expense.

## 6. Media and journal coverage

- a) The Corporation shall give special importance to covering the Commission's news.
- b) The Corporation shall allocate a camera operator to work full-time with the Commission. The camera operator shall be rewarded by the Commission.

### General provisions

- a) The Commission shall provide the Corporation with all materials related to the electoral process, which it may need to prepare for the programs indicated above.
- b) The Commission shall provide the Corporation with media materials, such as TV and radio spots, (as indicated in the third, fourth and fifth items), based on the dates agreed upon by the Commission and the Corporation.
- c) The Corporation shall provide the corporate or financial prizes indicated in the first and second items as follows:
- d) Seven (7) prizes shall be allocated to each program, i.e. fourteen (14) prizes for both programs.
- e) The value of each prize assigned for the television program is fifty US dollars (50 USD). The value of each prize for the radio program is one hundred shekels (100 NIS).
- f) The Corporation shall submit scripts (questions) for the episodes (as indicated in the first two items), and the Commission shall make amendments to the submitted questions.
- g) The Corporation shall broadcast a radio and a TV spot in the form of a script, five times a day for each spot, during the period of supplementary registration, 15/12/2005 and until 18/12/2005.
- h) The Corporation is entitled to broadcast commercials for national corporations during the televising of the programs.

Issued in Ramallah, on 21 December, 2005.

**DR. HANNA NASIR, CHAIRMAN,  
CENTRAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION**

**MR. BASIM ABU SOMAYYA, CHAIRMAN  
PALESTINIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION**



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