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## WELCOME LETTER BY THE CEC CHAIRMAN

The Central Elections Commission is, once again, making the final preparations to conduct a major election in Palestine. Last year, the Palestinian people voted to elect its President out of seven candidates. This time they will elect 132 people who will represent them at the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). This election is long overdue. The only time Palestinians had the chance to practice their fundamental civil and democratic rights to choose their representatives was 10 years ago.

In terms of elections in Palestine, much has changed over the past year. To begin with, the use of the civil registry for electoral purposes has been annulled by the PLC. This is a very positive development as the civil registry was an inaccurate and outdated record. Its use in last year's Presidential Elections led to many complications and confusion amongst voters. Now, only eligible voters who are registered on the voters' list will be able to cast their ballots on Election Day.

The CEC has spared no effort to register the largest possible number of eligible voters. After several voter registration drives and millions of dollars spent on voter education campaigns urging people to register, we now have the final voters' list. The list contains the data of 1,332,501 eligible voters, which represents about 80% of the estimated number of eligible voters in Palestine - a healthy percentage by any international standard.

There has also been a major change in the Palestinian electoral system with the ratification by the PLC of a new Elections Law, which combines the majority system with the system of proportional representation and divides the 132 seats in the PLC equally between the two systems. In light of these changes, Palestinian voters will be asked to cast two ballot papers instead of one on 25 January 2006. On one ballot paper, they will select a number of individual candidates, according to the number of seats allocated to their district (the country is divided into sixteen districts), and on the other ballot paper, they will select one electoral list out of several registered lists that are competing nationwide. The number of nominees competing for the 66 district seats is 414. The number of lists whose members are competing for the remaining 66 seats is 11.

As part of affirmative action, there is a quota for Christians in some districts and a minimum representation for women in the lists. The quota for Christians has been part of the elections law since it was originally drafted. The minimum representation for women, however, is a recent one and appears in the newly decreed law.

With all the internal changes and reform in the electoral law, one has to note that certain relevant issues continue to perturb the election process. Elections in Palestine continue to be conducted under extraordinary conditions imposed on Palestinians by an active military occupation. The extensive restrictions on movement that the Israeli Army enforces on the Palestinian population have continued to hamper the electoral process and to compromise the CEC's ability to conduct voter education and registration campaigns. At the time that this guide went to print, the CEC had not yet received any indication that the issue of election arrangements in the occupied city of Jerusalem had been resolved. In fact, Israeli Government officials have stated that they will not allow the PLC elections to be conducted in Jerusalem thus disenfranchising hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their right of democratic representation.

Finally, the upcoming PLC elections have generated wide interest and debate in Palestinian society. This interest has mostly been expressed in healthy and vibrant discussions among Palestinians about who we are, what we want to be and how we run our affairs. However, in some cases, unhealthy and illegal means have been adopted by individuals and groups who have tried to undermine the electoral process by attacking public organizations, including CEC offices. On Election Day, we hope that the voice of the electorate and the democratic process prevail rather than the language of violence and intimidation.

This guide was prepared by the CEC's Public Relations Department and whether you are a journalist or an election observer or simply a visitor, it is our hope that it provides all participants with the information needed as the elections approach. It contains informative material to guide you as you witness and observe the elections. We hope that it will enhance your understanding of the election process and the key issues of concern for Palestinian voters.

I would like to welcome you to Palestine and to thank you personally for your participation in what is such a significant event in the history of the Palestinian people.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'H. Nasir'.

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



# Chapter One

## The Central Elections Commission

### INTRODUCTION

The Central Elections Commission (CEC) is an independent body in charge of administering, conducting and supervising presidential and legislative elections in Palestine.

The CEC is headed by a board of nine members appointed by the President of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). The President also appoints the Chairman and the Secretary General of the CEC.

Members of the CEC are normally chosen from amongst senior judges, lawyers and academics of the Palestinian community.

### STRUCTURE

#### *a. The Commissioners*

- Dr. Hanna Nasir (Chairman)
- Dr. Rami Hamdallah (Secretary-General)
- Judge Eshak H. Muhana
- Judge Ass' ad Mubarak
- Judge Eman Nasereddin
- Judge Abdallah Ghuzlan
- Ms. Lamis M. Alami
- Judge Mazin H. Sisalim
- Dr. Mohammad Shubair (*Resigned 27 August 2005*)

## ***b. The Central Elections Bureau***

The Central Elections Bureau is the administrative and executive apparatus of the CEC and is headed by the Chief Electoral Officer who is appointed by the CEC and reports directly to it. The Bureau organizes plans, procedures and systems and presents them to the commissioners for ratification.

### **1. Chief Electoral Officer**

The Chief Electoral Officer is appointed by the commissioners of the CEC. The current Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Ammar Dwaik, was appointed in October 2004.

### **2. Functions of the Central Elections Bureau**

- Developing strategies for each phase of the electoral process and action plans for their implementation.
- Preparing the primary and final Voters' List.
- Raising voter awareness of the various phases of the electoral process and how to vote.
- Recruiting and training polling staff.
- Accrediting electoral lists, party candidates, and independent candidates.
- Accrediting local and international observers, and agents of political parties and independent candidates.
- Coordinating and liaising with all organizations concerned with the electoral process.
- Archiving all documents and files relating to the elections.

### **3. Departments of the Central Elections Bureau**

The Central Elections Bureau consists of the following departments:

#### **i. The Operations Department:**

Responsible for the devising, implementing and administering plans related to voter registration and polling, training of employees, and coordination between the electoral districts and the headquarters office.

#### **ii. The Administration Department:**

Supervises the administrative aspects of the electoral processes and attends to human resource matters.



**iii. The Electoral Affairs Department:**

Focuses on the registration of political parties and candidates; the accreditation of local and international observers, party agents and candidates; and provides them with the necessary information on the electoral process.

**iv. The Public Relations Department:**

This department provides voters with accurate and detailed information on the importance of the elections, and how to participate in its various phases. It also coordinates with the CEC's media relations department.

***c. CEC Offices and Branches*****1. The Headquarters Office:**

The Headquarters Office is located in the city of Ramallah and houses the office of the Chairman and members of the CEC. It also houses the offices of the Chief Electoral Officer and the various departments of the Central Elections Bureau.

**2. The Regional Office:**

The Regional Office is located in the Gaza Strip and is considered to be an extension of the Headquarters. The office coordinates with electoral districts in the Gaza Strip, supervises their work and submits reports to the Headquarters Office.

**3. Electoral District Offices:**

The Electoral District Offices supervise the implementation of the various electoral processes such as voter registration, polling, and counting of votes within the boundaries of each district. Each of the offices reports to the headquarters office.

Elections Law No. 9 of 2005 divides the country into 16 electoral districts, namely: Jerusalem, Jenin, Tubas, Tulkarm, Qalqilya, Nablus, Salfit, Ramallah and Al-Bireh, Jericho, Bethlehem, Hebron, North Gaza, Gaza City, Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah. There is one CEC Electoral District Office in each district.

**4. Registration and Polling Centers:**

Citizens eligible to vote go to these centers during the periods of voter registration and on Election Day. The registration and polling centers are distributed according to the population of each village, town or city.

## CORE ORGANISATIONAL VALUES OF THE CEC

The CEC core organizational values are intended to ensure that elections are conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner. Those values are:

### ***a. Transparency***

All election-related information including CEC decisions, operational strategies and budgets will be made available to the public.

### ***b. Neutrality and Impartiality***

Organisational systems are in place that ensure that operations such as hiring, procurement and financial planning are conducted with organizational integrity.

The CEC will also maintain its independence and neither yield to external pressure or influence nor discriminate against or favour one election stakeholder group over the other.

### ***c. Professionalism***

Professional systems and expertise will be sought to ensure that the elections will be conducted according to international standards.





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## Chapter Two

# The Palestinian Political System

The Palestinian political system has certain features that set it apart from other political systems in the world, as many factors and political institutions interlink to give it its special characteristic.

Two main political bodies created throughout the various phases of the Palestinian political struggle and the struggle to create a Palestinian state, constitute the political system in Palestine. Those two bodies are the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

The PLO was considered the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people inside and outside the occupied territories for over 30 years, where it struggled to return to the Palestinians their land and their rights. It entered into negotiations with Israel in 1993, which resulted in the signing of the Declaration of Principles (DOP) on Interim Self-Government Arrangements. The Palestinian National Authority was established in the light of the DOP.

## THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL AUTHORITY

### *a. Establishment*

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was established on the basis of the DOP signed by the PLO and Israel on 13 September 1993. The PNA was to be a temporary administrative body that would serve during the interim period and govern Palestinian affairs in areas of self-rule until the final status negotiations, which were at that time scheduled to take place three years later.

### *b. The Executive Authority*

#### **1. President of the PNA**

The President is elected in direct, free and regular elections every four years. The President is not entitled to run for office for more than two consecutive terms. The President promulgates laws ratified by the PLC, appoints the Prime Minister, authorizes the Prime Minister to form the government and appoints and terminates the services of representatives abroad.

#### **2. The Council of Ministers (the Government)**

The Council of Ministers is the highest executive and administrative body responsible for preparing the

ministerial program. The council is formed by the Prime Minister and a maximum of 24 ministers. The council is responsible for devising and implementing general policies, preparing the general budget, following up on the implementation of laws, supervising ministers and maintaining public order and internal security.

### **3. The Legislative Authority**

The legislative authority is represented by the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), which is the elected legislative authority responsible for the drafting and monitoring of legislation. The first PLC was elected in the general elections which were held on 20 January 1996. The first PLC session was held on 7 March 1996.

According to Elections Law No. 9 of 2005, the number of seats in the PLC was increased from 88 to 132 and allocated on an equal basis to the majority system (66 seats to the districts) and to the system of proportional representation (66 seats to the list system).

The legal term of the PLC is four years. The PLC acts according to its rules of procedures which govern parliamentary work in terms of committee formation and functions, the holding of sessions, the order of speeches, submission of draft laws and proposals and mechanisms for presenting questions and answers.

The PLC presidential office is composed of the Speaker, two Deputy Speakers and a Secretary-General. Traditionally, they are all elected from among the PLC members in the first term to serve a one-year term.

The PLC drafts legislation, monitors the performance of the Executive Authority, ratifies the budget, and responds to motions of confidence and votes of no-confidence in the government.

Since its election in 1996, the PLC has held nine ordinary rounds, during which 75 laws have been ratified and published in the Official Gazette.

### **4. The Judicial Authority**

According to Article (97) in Chapter Six of the amended Basic law, "the Judicial Authority is an independent authority which is the prerogative of the courts of all types and degrees. The law establishes the formation and competences of the courts. Court decisions are issued according to the Law and are declared in the name of the Arab Palestinian People."

The Palestinian courts are classified into three types: Shari'a and religious courts, the Supreme Constitutional Court, regular courts which consist of the Supreme Court (the Court of Cassation and the Supreme Court of Justice), the Court of Appeals, the Court of First Instance, and the High Administrative Court.



## Chapter Three

### The Palestinian General Elections

#### **ELECTIONS IN THE PALESTINIAN – ISRAELI AGREEMENTS**

On 2 January 1996, the general elections (presidential and legislative) were held in the West Bank (including Jerusalem) and Gaza based on the Palestinian - Israeli agreements on the election of the PLC President and members.

Article (3) of the DOP agreement signed by the two sides on 13 September 1993, stipulated that Palestinians should be able to conduct general elections to elect the members of the PLC in a free and direct manner under international supervision and monitoring. Article (3) also clarified that an agreement will be signed on the form and conditions of the elections, enabling them to be held within a maximum period of nine months from the date of which the DOP has entered into effect.

#### **THE FIRST PALESTINIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS**

On 20 January 1996, the first Palestinian general elections were held in the West Bank (including Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip in accordance with the Palestinian Elections Law No. 13 of 1995 and the presidential decrees issued in this regard.

Elections Law No. (13) of 1995 was based on the majority system. In this system, the candidate competing for the presidency of the PNA or for a parliamentary seat in the PLC wins upon receiving the highest number of votes.

According to this law, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were considered to be one electoral district for the purposes of presidential elections. However, for the PLC elections, Palestine was divided into 16 electoral districts (11 in the West Bank and 5 in the Gaza Strip). In this law, 88 seats were allocated to the 16 electoral districts; six seats were designated for Christians and one seat for the Samaritans.

#### **THE SECOND PALESTINIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS**

The second presidential elections were held on 9 January 2005, following the death of President Yasser Arafat. Based on Article (37) paragraph (2) of the Basic Law "If the position of the President of the Palestinian Authority becomes vacant ... then the Speaker of the PLC shall assume the responsibilities of the President of the PNA temporarily for a maximum period of 60 days during which free and direct

elections shall be conducted to elect a new President according to the Palestinian Elections Law.” As a result, the PLC Speaker at the time, Mr. Rawhi Fattouh, became the temporary PNA President (after resigning from his position) for a period of 60 days until the presidential elections were held.

### ***a. The 2005 Presidential Elections***

On 12 November 2004 Mr. Rawhi Fattouh, the interim Palestinian President requested that the Central Elections Commission (CEC) make preparations to hold the presidential elections within 60 days pursuant to Article (2/37) of the amended Palestinian Basic Law.

Presidential Decree No. (10) of 2004, which was issued by President Rawhi Fattouh, assigned 9 January 2005 as the date for holding free and direct presidential elections in accordance with Elections Law No. 13 of 1995.

### ***b. The Second Palestinian Legislative Council Elections of 2006***

The second PLC elections will be held on 25 January 2006, i.e., ten years after the first legislative elections which were held on 20 January 1996. The upcoming legislative elections will be different from the previous ones since they will be held according to a new electoral law.

## **THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE SECOND LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS (2006)**

The second PLC elections will be held on 25 January 2006 within a framework that is based on the amended Basic Law of 2003, the amended Elections Law No. 9 of 2005, the presidential decrees issued in 2005 and the regulations established by the CEC.

### ***a. The Amended Basic Law of 2003***

The amended Basic Law serves as the constitution for the PNA and defines the system of government in Palestine. It also forms the basis of the constitutional reference from which the general elections are held. In 2002, Law No. 2 of 2005 amending some provisions of the amended Basic Law of 2003 was issued. It amended Article 5 of the amended Basic Law of 2003 which stipulates that “the Palestinian system of government is a democratic, representative system in which the president of the PNA is directly elected by the Palestinian people and the government shall held responsibility before the president and the Palestinian Legislative Council.”

Article (48) of Law No. 2 of 2005 on the amendment of some provisions of the amended Basic Law stipulates that “Members of the PLC shall be elected in general free and direct elections pursuant to the provisions of the

Elections Law. The law shall determine the number of members, the districts and the electoral system". Article (3/47) stipulates that "the legal term for the PLC is four years from the date of being elected. The elections will be periodically conducted every four years."

### ***b. Elections Law No. (9) of 2005***

On 18 June 2005 the PLC adopted Elections Law No. 9 of 2005. The law was ratified by PNA President Mahmoud Abbas on 13 August 2005 and was published in the Official Gazette.

### ***c. Presidential Decrees***

President Abou Mazen has issued a number of presidential decrees on the second parliamentary elections specifying the date of the election, the date for candidate nominations, the date of electoral campaigning, and other decrees in this respect (See Appendix 1).

### ***d. CEC By-Laws***

It is the prerogative of the CEC to put in place by-laws and procedures with the aim of clearly implementing the elections law. These by-laws are submitted to the Cabinet for ratification. The following by-laws have been adopted:

1. Electoral District boundaries and the localities that fall within it.
2. Early voting for security personnel.
3. Procedures for polling and counting.
4. Procedures for accrediting local and international observers.

## **THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM**

Elections Law No. 9 of 2005 adopted the mixed electoral system which combines the majority system (districts) with the system of proportional representation (lists) and where seats are allocated equally between the two systems.

### ***a. The Majority System (Districts)***

- Palestine is divided into 16 electoral districts, 11 in the West Bank and five in the Gaza Strip.
- Each district is allocated a number of seats in the parliament according to population numbers.
- In each district, a number of candidates compete for the seats allocated for that district.
- 6 seats are designated for Christians in 4 districts by a presidential decree issued in this regard.



### 1. Number of seats

The law assigns 66 parliamentary seats for the 16 districts. The electoral seats are allocated to electoral districts by presidential decree:

Electoral district	Total No. of seats	No. of seats assigned to Christians (from among the total No. of seats)
Jerusalem	6	2
Tubas	1	-
Tulkarem	3	-
Qalqilya	2	-
Salfit	1	-
Nablus	6	-
Jericho	1	-
Ramallah & al-Bireh	5	1
Jenin	4	-
Bethlehem	4	2
Hebron	9	-
North Gaza	5	-
Gaza	8	1
Deir al- Balah	3	-
Khan Younis	5	-
Rafah	3	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>6</b>

### 2. Polling

- Palestine is divided into 16 electoral districts.
- The voter selects a number of candidates not exceeding the number of seats assigned for that district.

### 3. Winning of seats

- The seats allocated to each electoral district are won by the candidates who obtain the highest number of valid votes in that district.
- Seats are won by Christians who obtain the highest number of votes in the district.
- In the event of obtaining an equal number of votes between two or more candidates for an electoral district with one seat, or an equal number of votes for the last seat in a multiple seats district, elections are held between two or more candidates within ten days. This also applies to the seat/seats assigned to Christian candidates.

## ***b. The System of Proportional Representation (Lists)***

- Palestine is considered one electoral district.
- Electoral lists are nominated nationwide. Every list is considered a closed list in terms of the order of names which is decided by the list. Candidates' names do not appear on the list ballot paper.
- Each list must include at least one woman in the first three names, at least one woman in the next four names and at least one woman in each of the five names that follow in the list.
- Each list must include a number of candidates no less than seven and no more than 66.

### **1. Number of seats**

The law assigns 66 parliamentary seats to the electoral lists

### **2. Polling**

- Palestine is considered one electoral district
- Voters choose only one electoral list.

### **3. Winning of Seats**

In the system of proportional representation, winning lists are allocated a number of seats in proportion to the number of valid votes obtained provided they get beyond the 2% minimum threshold. The number of seats assigned to each list is allocated in accordance with the Sainte-Laguë method, an internationally-approved method designed to eliminate the problem of fractions in the allocation process.

## ***c. Electoral Offences***

Elections Law No. 9 of 2005 specified certain acts that are considered electoral offences punishable by the law. Electoral offences include:

1. Bribery or vote-buying.
2. Feigning illiteracy.
3. Intimidating voters.
4. Deliberately causing chaos and interfering in the electoral process in ways that affect the secrecy of the process.
5. Impersonation, multiple voting, and falsifying ballot papers.

The Elections Law stipulates that any person who has committed an offence shall be punished with a penalty of either imprisonment, or a fine, or both.



## Chapter Four

### The Electoral Operation

The electoral operation is a complex process that comprises several tasks. The CEC is tasked with the preparation and oversight of the electoral operation through all its phases to ensure its integrity and success.

#### **VOTER EDUCATION**

The CEC conducts periodic voter education campaigns to introduce voters to the systems and procedures of the electoral process as specified by the elections law. Voter education campaigns aim at providing voters with the necessary information on all phases of the electoral process to enable them to practice their right to vote correctly.

##### ***a. Voter Education Campaigns For the PLC Elections***

The CEC has conducted voter education campaigns to encourage voters to participate in the second legislative elections and educate them on correct polling procedures.

To this end, multiple communication tools have been developed to reach the public. Posters, billboards, banners, fliers, and stickers constitute the main print tools. The CEC has sent SMS messages, produced numerous radio and television announcements and hundreds of television and radio spots have been played on local channels.

##### ***b. Door-to-door Distribution of Publications***

To ensure its publications are delivered to the maximum number of voters, the CEC has conducted a door-to-door distribution campaign in all electoral districts. Through this campaign, the CEC distributed 2,500,000 leaflets on various elements in the Elections Law, 250,000 copies of the voters' guide, 50,000 stickers for Jerusalem, and 30,000 posters on women's participation, the date of the election and the steps for polling.

### ***c. The Toll-free Number***

The toll free number 1800-300-400 was first introduced during the 2005 presidential elections. It proved to be a highly effective means of responding to voters' queries and has since been adopted as a permanent feature of the CEC's voter education department.

Call centre staff undergo intensive training on how to handle voters' queries and complaints. Voters can ask questions about any phase of the electoral process and obtain information on election issues, such as locations of polling centers, the voters' list, how to fill in ballot papers, etc.

### ***d. The Website***

In its preparations for the upcoming elections, the CEC launched its new website, which provides services for all election stakeholders such as voters, candidates, observers and media representatives.

The website allows voters to verify their polling centers in addition to providing all information on all aspects of the electoral process. All users may subscribe to the CEC mailing list and receive updates of latest news.

In the website, visitors can find statistics on the voters' list as well as GIS maps that demonstrate the geographic boundaries of each electoral district.

The website provides information on candidacy requirements, provides candidates with nomination application forms and regulations for electoral campaigning.

The website also contains information on election observation, assigns sections for local and international observers, and provides observers with accreditation forms. It also has the observers' code of conduct.

Finally, the website contains a section for the media. Through this section media representatives can complete and submit an online media accreditation form enabling them to benefit from the facilities and services the CEC provides for journalists, including the Media Centre.

## **VOTER REGISTRATION**

The CEC conducted several voter registration drives by opening registration centers in the various electoral districts. In May 2005, the CEC allowed voters to register through power of attorney or by proxy. It also extended the registration period by another week following the PLC's decision to cancel the civil registry.

Following the Presidential Decree setting the date of the PLC elections for 25 January 2006 the CEC continued the registration campaign throughout the electoral districts offices. The CEC completed the final stage of supplementary registration on 20 December 2005 in preparations for the PLC elections. The final voters' list was prepared after a period of exhibition and challenges to verify the voters' data. The voters list contains the information of eligible voters (full name, gender, date and place of birth, residency, passport or personal ID number). The total number of registered voters up until 20 December 2005 was 1,332,501.

## NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the second PLC elections opened on 3 December and ended on 14 December 2005. The nominations period was, however, extended by 6 hours on 18 December following a court ruling, as compensation for the early closure of CEC offices on 13 and 14 December due to attacks on its offices.

District nomination applications were submitted to CEC electoral district offices. Nomination applications for the lists were submitted to the CEC HQ in Ramallah and the regional office in Gaza.

The elections law provides that candidates should be Palestinian, at least 28 years of age on polling day, listed in the final voters list and permanently residing in the Palestinian territories.

### *a. Candidature Based on the District System*

Applications for nomination for the districts should include a resignation letter - if the applicant is subject to Article 11 of the Elections Law and provided that the letter clearly indicates that the applicant's resignation was due to his/her nomination for the second PLC elections. Applicants should submit a list signed by 500 eligible voters in the candidate's electoral district. Applications for political party candidates should include a letter from the political party representative accredited by the CEC stating that they have nominated the applicant. Candidates should submit a receipt indicating the deposited insurance amount of 1,000 USD. Applications shall be delivered to the district office in the electoral district where the candidate intends to nominate him/herself either personally or through a legal agent.

### *b. Candidature Based on the List System*

Nomination applications for the lists should include the signatures of 3,000 eligible voters. Political parties accredited by the CEC are exempt from this procedure. Each electoral list should submit a copy of its electoral platform, a closed list of its candidates and a receipt for the deposited insurance amount of 6,000 USD in cash. Applications can be delivered to the CEC HQ in Ramallah or the Regional Office in Gaza.

Based on the provisions of the Elections Law, there should be a minimum level of women's representation in the electoral lists as mentioned previously.

Applicants are not allowed to be nominated in more than one district, in both the list and district elections at the same time, or in more than one electoral list.

## ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNING

According to the Elections Law, the period of electoral campaigning is of 21 days commencing on Tuesday 3 January 2006 and ending at mid-night on 23 January 2006. All electoral campaigning activities are required to end 24 hours before polling day. No election campaigning is allowed on Election Day itself.

### *a. Regulations on Electoral Campaigning:*

- **Right to campaign:** All candidates running for the post of President or PLC membership are guaranteed the right to campaign.
- **Venues of election campaigning:** Rallies or public election meetings are absolutely prohibited in mosques, churches, and buildings or facilities used for public or government services.
- **Contents of election campaigns:** Speeches, publications, advertisements, and posters must not contain inflammatory propaganda or accusations against other candidates. Campaigns are also prohibited from including material which invokes tribal, familial, or factional strife among groups of citizens.
- **Election campaign and the media:**

**Public Media:** In cooperation with Palestinian media officials, the CEC arranges for candidates to have equal and free time on public TV during which they can explain their political program without censorship. However, the TV spots are reviewed and any content that is inflammatory, violates public morals, or makes accusations against other candidates is removed.

**Private Media:** All private media, including radio, television and newspapers, must observe electoral campaign regulations. The most important regulations are the specified campaign period and the ban on inflammatory statements and accusations against other candidates. Violations of these regulations will be prosecuted by the Ministry of Communications. The Ministry is invested with the power to prosecute legal infractions concerning visual, audio, and print media.



## ***b. Funding of the Electoral Campaign***

1. Candidates and electoral lists are forbidden from receiving funding for their electoral campaigning from any external resources whether directly or indirectly, in accordance with the law.
2. The expenditure limit for the presidential campaign and/or the electoral list is one million USD or equivalent in legal currencies. The limit for spending on the candidate's campaigns for PLC membership is 60,000 USD or its equivalent in legal currencies.
3. Each list and candidate participating in the elections must present a detailed statement to the CEC within one month after the announcement of the final election results, listing all the sources from which they received funding and the amounts spent during the course of the election campaign.

## **POLLING AND COUNTING**

Voters will head for the polling centers to elect the members of the PLC on 25 January 2006. Polling will run from 7:00 am till 7:00 pm. 994 polling centers will be operating in the 16 electoral districts. Each polling center will consist of a number of polling stations. 17 polling centers will be operational for the early voting of security forces.

The voter will receive two different ballot papers; the first ballot contains the names of candidates competing for the seats allocated to each district. The voter puts an X or ✓ next to the name(s) of the candidates of his/her choice making sure that he/she does not exceed the total number of candidates allocated to his/her district.

The second ballot contains the names of the competing lists. The voter puts an X or ✓ next to the name of the list he/she chooses. Voters are not permitted to select more than one list. After the voter fills in the two ballot papers, they must be folded and each must be placed in its respective ballot box.

Illiterate voters or voters with special needs may be accompanied by someone to the polling center to assist in the filling of the ballot papers. The person who accompanies the illiterate voter or the voter with special needs does not have to be an eligible voter. He/she may be under the legal age and non-Palestinian.

At the time that this guide went to print, the CEC had not yet received any indication that the issue of election arrangements in the occupied city of Jerusalem had been resolved.

## EARLY VOTING FOR SECURITY FORCES

On 9 December 2005, the PLC ratified the amendment to Article (73) of the Elections Law. The amendment allows security personnel to cast their votes 48 hours before the official polling day.

In light of this decision, the CEC established special procedures for the early voting of security forces and assigned 23 January 2006 as the polling day for security forces. The CEC then referred the amendment to the cabinet for ratification.

## DECLARATION OF RESULTS

Elections Law No. 9 of 2005, regulates the declaration of results. The law assigned chapter eight for the counting of votes and preparing of preliminary elections results. Each polling station submits its results to the district office. The CEC then collects the results from all district offices.

The CEC announces the preliminary election results 24 hours after preparation and the final elections results will be published in the Official Gazette. Voters will be able to obtain detailed lists of results within two weeks of Election Day.

The declaration of final results includes the total number of registered voters in the final voters' list, the total number of voters and the number of valid, invalid and blank ballot papers for both the lists and the districts elections.



# Chapter Five

## Election Observation

### THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR ELECTION OBSERVATION

Election observation is defined as the process of gathering information related to the electoral process in a systematic way, and the issuing of reports and evaluations on the conduct of electoral processes based on information gathered by the accredited observers without interference in the process itself. Election observation aims at:

- Detecting any infractions in the electoral process.
- Providing concerned bodies with remarks on the progress of the electoral process and decisions taken.
- Guaranteeing the integrity and neutrality of the electoral process.

Article (113) of Elections Law No. 9 of 2005 constitutes the legal framework for election observation. It confirmed the right of observers and media representatives to observe the electoral process. Article 53 of the Elections Law confirmed the right of electoral lists and candidates to appoint agents on their behalf to observe the electoral process.

Article 113/2 of the Elections Law conveyed the responsibility of accrediting observers to the CEC. The CEC issues accreditation cards to local and international observers and affirms the necessity of providing facilities to accredited observers.

The law included several articles that elucidate the code of conduct for agents during the electoral process. Article (83) of the Elections Law stresses the importance of the presence of candidates' agents during the counting of votes in a way that does not hinder the counting process in any way whatsoever or disturb order and security. Article (88) guarantees the right of observers to observe the process of gathering and preparing preliminary election results in the electoral district offices and clarifies that this right is guaranteed to candidates, their representatives and agents, as well as local and international observers.

# PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS OF ELECTORAL OBSERVATION

## *Election Observation must be*

**1. Comprehensive:** Observers must consider all the factors that affect the electoral process. Any limitation to the scope of the observation should be noted in statements and reports.

**2. Institutional:** Accreditation to observe the electoral process is granted on an institutional basis. Individual observers do not have the right to issue statements concerning their personal observation findings. In contrast, an accredited observation body is entitled to issue reports and make statements regarding the progress of the electoral process through delegated spokespersons.

**3. Transparent:** Observation bodies and observers should reveal all methods used in information gathering, including assumptions and methodologies upon which the observation and conclusions are based.

**4. Accurate:** Observation bodies and observers should use accurate and reliable information throughout the observation process and always refer to the sources of such information.

**5. Professional:** Observers and agents must observe the standards and principles of objectivity and neutrality and avoid selectivity in the evaluation of the electoral process. Thus observation bodies and political parties should train their agents and observers on the different aspects of the monitoring process.

**6. Respectful of Palestinian law and institutions:** Observation bodies and their observers must recognize and abide by the laws of the PNA and the regulations and procedures of the CEC.

## TYPES OF OBSERVERS

### *a. Local and International Observers*

Accredited local and international observers are entitled to observe the electoral process in Palestine. They are accredited from among civil society institutions, foreign NGOs, governmental missions and international organizations. Accredited observers should be neutral and objective in their work.

### ***b. Agents of political parties, electoral lists and independent candidates***

Like local and international observers, agents of political parties and independent candidates are not allowed to interfere in the electoral process. Unlike other observers, however, their participation in the elections is essential due to their partisan interests. Their presence secures the fairness of the elections and protects the rights of the candidates and parties they represent.

## **SUBMITTING OF COMPLAINTS AND REMARKS ON THE ELECTORAL PROCESS**

Only agents may submit written complaints on the progress of the electoral process on the forms prepared for this purpose. The Presiding Officer of the Polling Station must respond promptly to the complaints according to the standard procedures for the polling and counting process.

When the agent expresses his/her desire to press a complaint or make a written complaint, the Presiding Officer of the Polling Station in question must:

1. Give the agent a copy of the complaints protocol to fill in.
2. Ensure that all information regarding the center is correct.
3. Assist in the handling of complaints or remarks and describe how complaints are handled in the protocol.
4. Attach the complaints protocol along with the carbon copy of the district office for the opening and closing protocols and the counting protocol.

Observers are not permitted to make remarks or complaints regarding the electoral process in the polling stations. However, an observer may take notes and submit them to the observation body that he/she represents. The observation body may submit the written notes to the CEC.

Complaints or remarks are made upon the occurrence of a breach that negatively affects the electoral process and elections results.

## **OBSERVATION REPORTS**

Local and international observers issue their reports immediately after the end of the electoral process. They issue reports based on detailed information gathered from various polling stations. The reports, in turn, form the basis for judging elections and enhancing the acceptance of electoral results later on. Copies of issued reports are then delivered to the CEC.

## **OBSERVATION ON THE 2006 PLC ELECTIONS**

In preparation for the upcoming elections scheduled for 25 January 2006 the CEC has issued 67 invitations to states and governments and more than 50 invitations to international observation bodies to observe the PLC elections.

By 19 December 2005, 11 international observation bodies, 50 international observers and 254 local observation bodies had been accredited by the CEC. The CEC continues to receive applications from local and international observer groups.





## Chapter Six

### Electoral Districts

Under the majority system (districts), Palestine is divided into 16 electoral districts, 11 in the West Bank and five in the Gaza Strip. This chapter provides information on each electoral district in terms of population numbers, and the number of PLC seats assigned for each district (based on the presidential decree issued on 15 September 2005).

Electoral district	Area (²km)	Population numbers	Number of seats	Number of population centers	Number of polling centers	Number of polling centers for security forces
Jerusalem	344.5	398,333	6 (two for Christians)	52	48	1
Jenin	583	254,218	4	96	98	1
Tulkarem	246	167,873	3	42	61	1
Tubas	401.66	46,644	1	23	16	1
Nablus	605	326,873	6	73	103	1
Qalqilya	166.4	94,210	2	35	37	1
Salfit	203.7	62,125	1	23	24	1
Ramallah & al-Bireh	855.5	280,508	5 (one seat for Christians)	80	110	1
Jericho	592.8	42,268	1	16	16	1
Bethlehem	658.87	174,654	4 (two for Christians)	72	70	1
Hebron	996.6	524,510	9	157	157	1
North Gaza	61.15	265,932	5	6	50	1
Gaza	74	487,904	8 (one seat for Christians)	6	86	2
Deir al-Balah	58.4	201,112	3	8	34	1
Khan Younis	107.6	269,601	5	15	50	1
Rafah	63.7	165,240	3	7	34	1



## Chapter Seven

### Elections under Occupation

The political situation under which the legislative elections will be conducted in Palestine differs greatly from that in other countries due to the many challenges and obstacles imposed by the Israeli occupation. Such challenges constitute an obstruction to a free and fair electoral process.

## OBSTACLES FACING THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

### *a. Road Closures*

Although freedom of movement is a fundamental right guaranteed by all laws, the Israeli authorities continue to violate this right. The restrictions on movement constitute a grave violation of Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stipulates that “every individual has the right to free movement and to choose his/her residency within the borders of the state ...” Such breaches negatively affect the electoral process, and restrict the movement of voters, candidates and CEC staff.

Road closures restrict the movements of all Palestinians. The Israeli authorities have constructed more than 600 road closures in the West Bank. Closures restrict the movement of Palestinians between villages and cities and prevent them from reaching registration and polling centers.

Road closures also restrict the movement of candidates between the Palestinian governorates, especially between Jerusalem and Gaza during the electoral campaigning period, which is the legal period within which candidates are allowed to conduct electoral campaigning activities.

Roadblocks also affect the work of the CEC. They prevent CEC staff from performing their duties and moving freely between registration and polling centers, distributing voter education materials to the voting public, and distributing electoral materials to registration and polling centers such as ballot boxes and ballot papers.

### *b. The Separation Wall*

The construction of the separation wall over confiscated Palestinian lands has had a destructive economic and social impact on the lives of the Palestinian people imposing further restrictions on movement between the Palestinian territories. In relation to the electoral process, the wall has undermined some aspects of the electoral process and impinged on its ability to be conducted in a free and transparent manner especially during the voter registration phase, the education and awareness campaign and the polling phase.

### *c. Election Arrangements in East Jerusalem*

Jerusalem has a unique political and religious status setting it apart from other districts. From the outset, attention has been focused on organizing elections in Jerusalem. Palestinian officials have declared that elections will not go ahead if the residents of Jerusalem are not permitted by Israel to vote.

The electoral district of Jerusalem is divided into two zones: East Jerusalem, which was annexed by Israeli forces in 1967. This zone – the Jerusalem municipality – includes the district behind the checkpoints which Israel considers to be under its authority. 250,000 Palestinians hold Israeli ID cards and reside in this municipality. Any election arrangements in East Jerusalem must be conducted in agreement with the Israeli authorities. There are also areas outside the annexed region known as the suburbs, in which 27 Palestinian residential localities are found. Israel considers it as part of the West Bank and, as such, it is subject to the same elections arrangements as the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The 2005 presidential elections in Jerusalem took place within the framework of the interim phase agreement. Polling took place in Israeli post offices that can only hold up to 5,400 voters. Thus the majority of Jerusalem ID holders were unable to vote in these post offices and had to travel to areas surrounding Jerusalem to vote in designated polling stations assigned by the CEC.

The Israeli authorities extensively hindered the participation of Jerusalem citizens in the elections, especially at the designated post offices. The appropriate number of workers required for a smooth voting operation was not provided which resulted in large queues at the designated post offices. Likewise, some workers deliberately impeded the checking of the names of voters in the voters' list.

The Israeli authorities also intimidated Jerusalemite voters by storming registration centers, recording the ID cards numbers listed in the voters' register and detaining members of the registration staff with the aim of preventing Jerusalem residents from participating in the electoral process.

In terms of the counting process, and in contrast to counting procedures in other electoral districts, the ballots were not counted at the polling stations (which were set up in Israeli post offices), but rather transported to the Jerusalem electoral district office in Dahiyat Al-Barid, where the counting process was carried out by CEC staff. It is worthy to note that electoral arrangements in Jerusalem for the 2005 presidential elections were not conducted in accordance with the required standards for free, fair and transparent elections.

#### **1. Jerusalem and the PLC Elections**

The CEC conducted a supplementary registration drive for the PLC elections which were scheduled for 17 July 2005. During that period, the Israeli authorities closed two registration centers in Jerusalem after detaining staff.

The Israeli Security Minister subsequently issued an order that prohibits CEC staff from working inside the city of Jerusalem. Registration centers were closed during the supplementary period and the period of exhibition and challenges (13 – 17 November 2005).

## **2. The Position of the CEC**

The CEC does not consider the above arrangements to be in accordance with the standards for free, fair and transparent elections. After the revised Elections Law was passed, the CEC chairman, Dr. Hanna Nasir, sent a letter to the head of the Negotiations Affairs Department in which he requested that both the issue of elections in Jerusalem and participation by prisoners in Israeli jails be addressed.

Regarding the elections in Jerusalem, the CEC requested in its letter to allow the registration of voters in the city knowing that the Israeli authorities prohibits the registration of voters in the city and prohibits activities of the CEC inside the city.

The CEC also requested to set new polling procedures instead of previous polling procedures in Israeli postal offices, and suggested that polling should be conducted in schools under the supervision of the CEC or at UN offices.

The CEC stressed the importance of having this issue settled as quickly as possible and reiterated that its resolution should not be left to the last moment as was the case during the presidential elections in which Israel agreed to polling arrangements ten days prior to Election Day.

### ***d. Prisoners' Participation In The PLC Elections***

The Israeli authorities arrested a number of Palestinians before the elections, with the aim of undermining its success. The Israeli authorities refuse to make any arrangements which might allow for the participation of prisoners in the polling process.

The CEC has raised the issue of their participation in the PLC, particularly in reference to nomination and voting. The CEC has requested that its staff be allowed to enter Israeli prisons to place ballot boxes in the jails. Alternatively, the CEC has suggested that such arrangements could be made in cooperation with the Red Cross.

The CEC has conducted a meeting with the Minister of Prisoners to discuss this issue and has affirmed the right of prisoners to participate in the elections.

Furthermore, a number of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails have nominated themselves for the PLC elections and several of those concerned have been members of the PLC council in the past.





لجنة الانتخابات المركزية - فلسطين  
Central Elections Commission - Palestine

حرية الاختيار حق...  
سرية الاقتراع واجب



## Appendices

### **PRESIDENTIAL DECREES ON THE PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (PLC) ELECTIONS**

#### ***a. The Call for PLC Elections***

##### **Presidential Decree # of 2005 on the call for legislative elections**

The President of the Palestinian National Authority  
Having reviewed the amended Basic Law of 2003; Elections Law No. 13 of 1995 and its amendments; and Presidential Decree No. 10 of 2004 regarding the call for the election of the President of the Palestinian National Authority and,  
Based upon the powers bestowed upon me, I hereby promulgate the following decree:

##### **Article 1**

The Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Jerusalem shall be called for the general, free and direct elections to elect the members of the Palestinian legislative council on Sunday, 17 July 2005.

##### **Article 2**

The process of voting for the candidates for the membership of the PLC shall be conducted on the basis of the final list of candidates, voters and the civil registry.

##### **Article 3**

Candidature shall commence on 5 June 2005 and shall last for 12 days.

##### **Article 4**

The electoral campaign shall commence on Saturday, 2 July 2005 and shall end on Saturday, 16 July 2005.

##### **Article 5**

The CEC shall conduct a supplementary registration for Palestinian voters who have not been able to register their names during the original registration period.

##### **Article 6**

The presidential elections set for 9 January 2005 and the PLC elections, the date of which is specified in Article 1 of this decree, shall be considered as one cycle of elections despite their discontinuity.

**Article 7**

Whatever goes against the provisions of this decree shall be considered null and void.

**Article 8**

The President and members of the CEC, as well as all competent authorities, each within its own jurisdiction, must implement this decree. The decree shall enter into force upon its issuance and shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Issued in the city of Gaza on 08/01/2005.

***b. The Reform of the Central Elections Commission (CEC)*****Presidential Decree # of 2005 on appointment of CEC commissioners**

President of the PLO Executive Committee

President of the Palestinian National Authority

Based on the powers bestowed upon me and the public interest,

I hereby promulgate the following decree:

**Article 1**

Following the resignation of the previous commission, the CEC shall be comprised of the following:

1. Dr. Hanna Nasir as president of the Commission
2. Dr. Rami Hamdallah as Secretary General of the Commission.
3. Judge Ishac Muhanna as member
4. Judge As'ad Moubarak as member
5. Judge Iman Nasser Eddin as member
6. Judge Abdallah Gazlan as member
7. Ms. Lamis Al-Alami as member
8. Judge Mazin Sisalem as member
9. Dr. Mohammad Shubair as member

**Article 2**

All competent authorities, each within its own jurisdiction, shall implement this decree. The decree shall enter into force upon its issuance and shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Issued in the city of Ramallah on 01/04/2005

## ***c. The Postponement of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) Elections***

### **Presidential Decree # of 2005 Concerning the Postponement of PLC Elections**

President of the PLO Executive Committee  
President of the Palestinian National Authority

Having reviewed:

The amended Basic Law of 2003;  
The General Elections Law No 13 of 1995 and amendments to it;  
The Presidential Decree No. 5 dated 8 January 2005;  
And the CEC's letter no M.T 939-2005 dated 23 May 2005.

And based on:

The national consensus towards adopting a new electoral law which passed a third PLC reading;  
Our comments on the 3rd PLC reading of the draft of the new elections law, which were made in accordance with the national consensus arrived to in Cairo;  
The authorities given to us;  
And the public interest.

We decree the following:

- 1- The date for holding new PLC elections, specified in presidential decree No 5 dated 8 January 2005 is hereby cancelled.
- 2- A new date for holding PLC elections will be announced by a presidential decree that will be issued after legal procedures and national consultations have been completed.

All relevant parties must abide by this decree which is effective as of the date of its issuance.

This Decree is to be published in the Official Gazette

Issued in the city of Ramallah on 03/06/2005

## ***d. The Call for Palestinian Legislative Elections on 25 January 2005***

Presidential Decree # of 2005 on the call for PLC elections

President of the PLO Executive Committee

President of the Palestinian National Authority

Having reviewed:

The amended Basic Law of 2003 and its amendments

Elections Law No. 9 of 2005 and Presidential Decree No. 11 of 2005 concerning the postponement of the Palestinian Legislative Council elections and,

Based upon the powers bestowed in us and the public interest

We hereby decree the following:

### **Article 1**

The legislative elections shall be held in Jerusalem and all Palestinian governorates on Wednesday, 25/01/2006.

### **Article 2**

Candidature for PLC membership shall commence on Thursday, 24/11/2005 and end at a time specified by the law.

### **Article 3**

Presidential Decree No. 11 of 2005 and any other provisions that violate this decree are hereby cancelled.

### **Article 4**

All competent authorities, each within its own jurisdiction, must implement this decree. The decree shall enter into force upon its issuance and shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Issued in the city of Gaza on 20/08/2005

Mahmoud Abbas

President of the PLO Executive Committee

President of the Palestinian National Authority

## ***e. The Allocation of PLC Seats to Electoral Districts***

Presidential Decree on the Allocation of PLC Seats to Electoral Districts

Presidential Decree No. ( ) of 2005

President of the PLO Executive Committee

President of the Palestinian National Authority

Having reviewed:

Article 3/2 of the General Elections Law of 2005,  
Statistics of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS),  
Statistics of the Central Elections Commission (CEC) and,  
Based upon the powers bestowed upon me

I hereby decree the following:

### **Article 1**

Members of the PLC shall be allocated to the 16 electoral districts stipulated in Article 2/A of the Elections Law of 2005 as per the number of population therein:

Electoral District	No of Seats	Christian Seats
Jenin	4	
Tubas	1	
Tulkarem	3	
Qalqilyah	2	
Salfit	1	
Nablus	6	
Jericho	1	
Ramallah & al-Bireh	5	1
Jerusalem	6	2
Bethlehem	4	2
Hebron	9	
North Gaza	5	
Gaza	8	1
Deir al-Balah	3	
Khan Younis	5	
Rafah	3	

**Article 2**

All competent authorities, each within its own jurisdiction, shall implement this decree. The decree shall enter into force upon its issuance and shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Issued in the city of Gaza on 15/09/2005

Mahmoud Abbas

President of the PLO Executive Committee

President of the Palestinian National Authority

***f. Formation of the Elections Cases Court***

Presidential Decree No ( ) of 2005 on the Formation of the Elections Cases Court

President of the PLO Executive Committee

President of the Palestinian National Authority

Having reviewed:

The amended Basic Law of 2003 and its amendments,

The provisions of Article (29) of Elections Law No. (9) of 2005 and,

Upon authorization for the Supreme Jurisdiction Council and,

The Powers bestowed upon me and the public interest,

We hereby promulgate the following law:

**Article (1)**

The Elections Cases Court shall be comprised of a president and eight judges as follows:

1. Mr. Issa Abu Sharar as president
2. Mr. Amin Wafi as member
3. Mr. Sa'ad Shuhbair as member
4. Mr. Fathi Abu Sorour as member
5. Mr. Mustafa al-Qaq as member
6. Mr. Ali a- Farra as member
7. Mr. Hasan al-Jadbah as member
8. Mr. Mohammad al- Omar as member
9. Mr. Mohammad al-Hajj Yasein as member

**Article (2)**

All competent authorities, each within its own jurisdiction, shall implement this decree. The decree shall enter into force upon its issuance and shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Issued in the city of Ramallah on 31/10/2005

Mahmoud Abbas

President of the PLO Executive Committee

President of the Palestinian National Authority

***g. Candidate Nominations for the PLC Elections***

Presidential Decree

No. ( ) of 2005

On Candidate Nominations for the PLC Elections

President of the PLO Executive Committee

President of the Palestinian National Authority

Having reviewed:

- The amended Basic Law of 2003 and its amendments
- The general Elections Law No 9 of 2005 concerning the elections and,
- Based upon the powers bestowed upon me and the public interest,

I hereby promulgate the following decree:

**Article (1)**

The legislative elections shall be held in Jerusalem and all Palestinian governorates on Wednesday, 25/01/2006.

**Article (2)**

Candidature for PLC membership shall commence on Saturday, 03/12/2005 and shall last for 12 days. Political parties and movements or those who are not affiliated to a political party or movement shall prepare their official electoral lists and nominate their candidates for the legislative elections and submit them to the competent authorities during that period.

**Article (3)**

Electoral campaigns shall commence on Tuesday, 03/01/2006 and end on Monday night, 23/01/2006.

**Article (4)**

Whatever goes against the provisions of this decree shall be considered null and void.

**Article (5)**

All competent authorities, each within its own jurisdiction, shall implement this decree. The decree shall enter into force upon its issuance and shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Issued in the city of Ramallah on 20/11/2005.

## ***h. Amendment to Article (73) of the Elections Law Regarding the Early Voting for Security Forces***

Law No. ( ) of 2005

On the Amendment of Article (73) of the Elections Law No. (9) of 2005

President of the PLO Executive Committee

President of the Palestinian National Authority

Having reviewed:

Article (41) of the amended Basic Law of 2003 and its amendments and,

Based on what has been approved by the Palestinian Legislative Council in its session held on 08/12/2005 and,

Based on the powers bestowed upon me

We hereby promulgate the following law:

**Article (1)**

Article (73) of the Elections Law No. 9 of 2005 shall be amended to read as follows:

1. Polling day shall be an official holiday.
2. Polling shall commence at 7 am on the assigned Election Day and shall finish at 7 pm on that day.
3. The CEC may, upon the request of the presiding officer the polling station, extend the polling period following a decision of the CEC Chairman, provided that it does not exceed two hours. The extension should only be limited to polling stations where extension is a necessity and to people already present at the polling stations.
4. The CEC may establish regulations which enable the security forces to cast their votes 48 hours prior to polling day as per Article 2 above, provided that the counting of their votes shall be conducted at the



same time of the counting of votes for the general elections, whereby the electoral process is considered as an indivisible unit.

**Article (2)**

Whatever goes against the provisions of this law shall be considered void and null.

**Article (3)**

All competent authorities, each within its own jurisdiction, shall implement this law. The law shall enter into force upon its issuance and shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Issued in the city of Gaza on 08/12/2005

Mahmoud Abbas  
President of the PLO Executive Committee  
President of the Palestinian National Authority

## NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS IN THE VOTERS' LIST UNTIL 20 DECEMBER 2005

Electoral district	Number of registered voters
Jerusalem	48,439
Jenin	101,664
Tulkarem	73,340
Tubas	20,775
Nablus	129,379
Qalqilya	33,713
Salfit	26,641
Ramallah & Al- Bireh	106,061
Jericho	16,073
Bethlehem	69,209
Hebron	186,052
North Gaza	98,535
Gaza	174,375
Deir al-Balah	79,051
Khan Younis	103,377
Rafah	65,817
Total	1,332,501

## TIMELINE FOR THE SECOND PLC ELECTIONS

No	Electoral process	Date	Details
1	Commencement of candidate registration for the electoral districts and the electoral lists	Saturday 3/12/2005	1. Commencement of candidate nominations in the 16 electoral districts and for electoral lists nationwide at the CEC HQ in Ramallah and the Regional Office in Gaza
		Wednesday 14/12/2005	2. The last day for submitting nomination applications for the electoral districts and the electoral lists
		Saturday 17/12/2005	3. Final day for processing candidacy applications by the CEC
2	Publishing the preliminary list of candidates	Sunday 18/12/2005	Publishing the preliminary list of candidates for the electoral districts and electoral lists

3	Challenging the preliminary lists of candidates for the electoral districts and the electoral lists	Sunday 18/12/2005	1. Submission of applications for challenges for the preliminary list of candidates
		Tuesday 20/12/2005	2. Final day for the submission of applications for challenges
		Wednesday 21/12/2005	3. Final day for the processing of challenges and notification of resolutions
4	Submission of appeals to the competent court	Thursday 22/12/2005	1. Submission of appeals to the competent court
		Saturday 24/12/2005	2. Final day for the submission of appeals
		Thursday 29/12/2005	3. Final day for the settlement of appeals for the district elections
		Saturday 31/12/2005	4. Final day for the settlement of appeals for the electoral lists
5	Withdrawal of candidates	Sunday 1/1/2006	Final day for the withdrawal of candidates for the districts and the lists

6	Final list of candidates	Monday 2/1/2006	Publishing of the final list of candidates
7	Accreditation of agents for independent candidates and the lists	Monday 2/1/2006	1. Commencement of the accreditation of independent candidate agents in the 16 electoral districts, and the accreditation of agents of electoral lists at the CEC HQ in Ramallah and the Regional Office in Gaza
		Tuesday 17/1/2006	2. End of the accreditation period
8	Electoral campaigning and early voting for security forces	Tuesday 3/1/2006	1. Commencement of electoral campaigning
		Monday 23/1/2006	2. Final day for electoral campaigning
		Monday 23/1/2006	3. Polling day for security forces: 7:00 am - 7:00 pm
		Tuesday 24/1/2006	4. Refrain on this day from conducting any electoral campaigning activities
9	Polling day	Wednesday 25/1/2006	Polling day: 7:00 am -7:00 pm

## THE SAINTE-LAGUË METHOD FOR THE CALCULATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN THE SYSTEM OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

In this method, parliamentary seats are allocated amongst lists in proportion to the number of valid votes obtained by each list. The use of this method provides medium and smaller sized parties with opportunities for wider participation in parliament.

### *a. The Counting Inputs*

- The total number of valid votes won by each electoral list nationwide based on the system of proportional representation.
- The total number of valid votes for each electoral list.
- The counting threshold which equals 2% or more of the total number of valid votes won by all lists.
- This does not mean that each electoral list which crosses the threshold shall obtain a seat, but that it shall have the right to enter the competition.

### *b. The Counting Method*

- The counting threshold equals: 2% or more of the total number of valid votes won by all lists.
- The percentage of valid votes obtained by each list is calculated to determine which one qualifies.
- The number of valid votes of each party which has crossed the threshold is divided by successive odd numbers 1/3/5/7..., etc.
- The division results are then be arranged in descending order.
- Seats are then allocated according to that order starting from the highest number.

### c. Illustrative example

	List (A)	List (B)	List (C)	List (D)	Total valid votes
Valid votes	8700	6800	5200	3350	24050
Divided/1	8700(seat No.1)	6800( seat No.2)	5200 (seat No.3)	3350 (seat No.4)	
Divided/3	2900 (seat No.5)	2266.66 (seat No.6)	1733.33 (seat No.7)	1116.66 (seat No.11)	
Divided/5	1740(seat No.7)	1360(seat No.9)	1040	670	
Divided/7	1242.85 (seat No.10)	971.43	742.85	478.57	

• The above example assumes that the No. of seats designated for electoral lists are (11) seats nationwide and the no. of electoral lists are (4):

- List (A): obtained 8700 votes, i.e. 36.2% of the valid votes, and won 4 seats which are ( 1,5,7,10)
- List (B): obtained 6800 votes, i.e. 28.3 % of the valid votes, and won 3 seats which are ( 2,6,9)
- List (C): obtained 5200 votes, i.e. 21.6 % of the valid votes, and won 2 seats which are ( 3,8)
- List (D): obtained 3350 votes, i.e. 13.9 % of the valid votes, and won 2 seats which are ( 4,11)

NB: The number of seats mentioned in the table above is for illustration purposes only. It is not an preferential indication of any seat whatsoever.



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