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Daily Report

Supplement

Near East & South Asia

Palestinian Election Law

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F Clifton White Resource Center
International Foundation for Election Systems

Near East & South Asia

SUPPLEMENT

Palestinian Election Law

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19 December 1995

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Palestinian Election Law Text

JN1712064295 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic
9, 10, 11, 12 Dec 95

["Text" of the Palestinian Election Law as endorsed by the Palestinian Authority and signed by Chairman Yasir 'Arafat in Gaza on 7 December]

[9 Dec p 11]
[FBIS Translated Text]

Explanatory Note

The Palestinian Election Law of 1995 expresses the responsibility of the PLO and the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] toward the national rights of our Palestinian people and their desire to hold general elections, being the modern method of representing our people on democratic bases which enable them to exercise power and pass laws concerning their destiny and the building of their future.

This law applies to the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including holy Jerusalem, and is dictated by the circumstances and the nature of the interim period. It is not meant to undermine the right of the Palestinians in the Diaspora, particularly refugees, displaced persons, and deportees, who will be able to exercise their electoral right later after their return home.

The establishment of the PNA and the spreading of its sovereignty over the Gaza Strip and West Bank have provided the proper conditions to hold free and direct elections under international supervision that will allow our people to exercise their democratic right to govern themselves by themselves.

Elections are a right and a duty dictated by honorable citizenship, affiliation to the homeland, and respect for the will of the people and their democratic choice. This law aims at clarifying the rights and duties of citizens without imposing any restrictions on them.

Electing a PNA president and members of the Palestinian Assembly [al-majlis al-filastini], who will become members of the Palestine National Council [PNC], confirms the unity of the Palestinian people everywhere and constitutes an important step on the path of achieving their national rights and fair demands and the building of their future and their institutions, which will be accountable to the sovereign people. It also aims at achieving a democratic parliamentary system based on freedom of thought, freedom to establish parties, the minority's abidance by the decisions of the majority and the majority's respect for the opinion of the minority, social justice, equality, and nondiscrimination in public rights on the basis of religion, color, race, or sex, under the

supremacy of the law and the independence of the judiciary, and on the basis of complete loyalty to the spiritual and cultural heritage of Palestine and to tolerance among religions throughout the centuries.

The law stipulates the election of a PNA president and the Palestinian Assembly members, who will have a speaker elected from among them. This aims at emphasizing the democratic rule and separation among the various branches of government.

The provisions of this law take into consideration the circumstances of our people in the interim stage and the need to adopt a solid political structure that looks after their national interests so that their political system can be based on political pluralism without infringing on anyone's right to stand for election as an independent or as a candidate in a party or bloc list.

The law addresses the question of the inadmissibility of voting or running for election in more than one constituency. This principle also applies to the PNC members, whereby a PNC member will not be allowed to run for election in any of the 16 constituencies unless he cancels his registration from the PNC offices in the Diaspora.

The elections will be held on the basis of majority vote, the multi-seat constituency, and the open slate system, which is adopted in most countries. The Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and holy Jerusalem will be considered a single constituency in the elections for the executive PNA president. All areas will be divided into 16 constituencies, based on the distribution of the population [for the election of members of the Palestinian Assembly].

The law also guarantees the democracy and fairness of the election process and equality for all in campaigning in all official media.

Law No. 15 of 1995 on Elections

Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee,
President of the PNA,

Taking cognizance of the PLO statute; Law No. 5 of 1995 regarding the transfer of powers and responsibilities; Law No. 24 of 1960 on the election of a House of Representatives, which is in force in the West Bank, and the laws amending it; Decree No. 32 of 1960 by the general administrative governor on elections in the Gaza Strip; the approval of the PLO Executive Committee, the PNC presidency, and the PNA council; and by virtue of the powers invested in us, we decree the following law.

Part I: General Rules**Chapter 1: Definitions and General Rules****Article 1: Definitions**

The following words and expressions used in this law shall have the specific meanings defined below unless the context indicates otherwise:

President: President of the PNA who is elected directly by the people.

Assembly: The Palestinian Assembly.

Assembly Speaker: The chairman elected by the Palestinian Assembly members.

Region: The geographic region that consists of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including holy Jerusalem.

Interim Period: The interim period stipulated in the Declaration of Principles agreement between the PLO and the Government of Israel.

Voter: Every male and female Palestinian inhabitant of the West Bank, including Holy Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, who is qualified under the provisions of this law to exercise his electoral right and whose name appears in the final electoral roll.

Vote Caster: Every voter who exercises his or her right to election.

Candidate: Every Palestinian man or woman who is qualified for nomination to the post of president or to the membership of the assembly in accordance with the provisions of this law and whose name is on the roll of candidates for the post of president or assembly membership.

Initial Electoral Roll: The roll that lists the names of people eligible to exercise their electoral right. This roll shall be prepared and published for contestation purposes in accordance with the provisions of this law.

Final Electoral Roll: The final roll that lists the names of voters who have the right to elect in a constituency.

Candidate List: The final list of candidates for the post of president or assembly membership.

Constituency: Every part of the region to which this law allocates a specific number of assembly seats. The entire region shall be considered one constituency for the election of the president.

Party: Every political party or electoral grouping registered at the Ministry of Interior under a certain name and emblem for the purpose of naming candidates and taking part in the elections.

Election Court of Appeal: The court formed under this law to examine election contestations.

Article 2: Election of the President and Members of the Assembly

1. General, free, and direct elections shall be held in accordance with the provisions of this law to elect the PNA president and members of the Palestinian Assembly to assume power in the interim period.

2. Electing the PNA president and members of the Palestinian Assembly shall take place simultaneously in accordance with the provisions of this law.

Article 3: The System of Government in the Interim Period

1. Upon their election, members of the Palestinian Assembly shall automatically become members of the PNC in accordance with Articles 5 and 6 of the PLO statute.

2. Upon its election, the Palestinian Assembly's first task shall be drafting a Constitution for the interim period.

3. The constitutional system shall be based on the principle of the sovereignty of the people, democratic principles, separation of powers, independence of the judiciary, equality among citizens, and guaranteeing the basic rights of citizens.

4. The Palestinian Assembly shall exercise its legislative authority as part of its jurisdiction over the region as one geographic unit.

5. Following the election of the assembly, an executive authority shall be formed. This authority shall be chosen by the president and endorsed by the assembly.

Article 4: Calling for Elections

1. The chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and president of the PNA shall issue a presidential decree asking the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and Jerusalem to take part in general, free, and direct elections to elect the president and the members of the Palestinian Assembly. This decree shall also set a date for balloting.

2. The chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and president of the PNA shall issue a presidential decree announcing:

a. The names of the chairman and members of the Central Election Committee.

b. The names of the president and members of the Election Court of Appeal.

3. The above presidential decree shall set:

- a. A date for announcing the electoral roll and a date for publishing it for contestation.
- b. A date for nomination to the post of president and membership of the assembly.

4. The above presidential decrees shall be published in the Palestinian Gazette and in the local newspapers.

Article 5: Constituencies

1. The region consists of 16 constituencies as follows: Jerusalem, Jericho, Bethlehem, Hebron, Nabulus, Janin, Tulkarm, Qalqilyah, Tubas, Salfit, Ramallah, northern Gaza "Jabaliya", Gaza City, Dayr al-Balah, Khan Yunus and the eastern villages, and Rafah.

Each of the above constituencies includes its population centers as shown in the table annexed to this law. [table not given]

2. The system of regulations issued in accordance with the provisions of this law shall determine the number of the assembly seats in each constituency in proportion with the population of each constituency. At least one seat shall be allocated to each constituency. The above system shall also determine the constituencies in which seats should be allocated for Christians and the number of these seats. In addition, one seat shall be allocated to our people from the Samaritan sect in the Nabulus constituency.

3. The above system must be issued as soon as voters are counted and registered in the various constituencies.

4. Members of the assembly shall be elected in the constituencies in which they nominated themselves. These constituencies are shown in the annex to this law.

Chapter 2: The Right of Voting and Nomination

Section 1: The Right of Voting

Article 6: The Right of Voting

1. Voting is the right of every Palestinian, male or female, in the West Bank, including holy Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, provided he or she meets the conditions stipulated in this law to exercise this right, and regardless of religion, opinion, political affiliation, and social, economic, and academic status.

2. Each voter shall exercise his or her right of election in a free, direct, secret, and individual manner. Voting by proxy shall not be allowed.

3. It is impermissible for any voter to be listed in more than one constituency. A voter is not allowed to cast his vote in a constituency other than the one in which his name is registered.

Article 7: Eligibility for Election.

1. A person shall be considered eligible for voting if he meets the following conditions:

- a. To be of Palestinian nationality.
- b. He must be 18 years of age or above on the day of voting.
- c. He must be registered in the constituency in which he will exercise his election right.
- d. His name must be registered in the final electoral roll.
- e. He must not have been denied his right to vote in accordance with Article 8 of this law.

2. For the purposes of this law, a person is considered a Palestinian:

- a. If he was born within the borders of Palestine as defined by the British Mandate or if this person has the right to acquire Palestinian citizenship under the laws that were in place then.
- b. If this person was born in the Gaza Strip or the West Bank, including holy Jerusalem.
- c. If the provisions of Paragraph A above apply to any of his ancestors regardless of his place of birth.
- d. If he was a spouse of a Palestinian as defined above.
- e. Must not have acquired Israeli citizenship.

Article 8: Denial of the Right to Vote:

1. The following shall be denied the right to vote:

- a. Every person who has been denied that right by a court verdict, for as long as that verdict is valid.
- b. Who has lost his legal capacity by a court verdict.
- c. Any person sentenced to prison by a Palestinian court on charges related to honor or public decency, and who has not been rehabilitated according to the provisions of the law.

2. The competent departments must inform the polling station committees of any court verdict mentioned in Paragraph A above as soon as the process to register voters starts.

Article 9: Eligibility for Nomination to the Post of President

1. The candidate for the post of president must:

- a. Be a Palestinian.
- b. Have reached 35 years of age or above on the day of elections.
- c. Have a specific residence address in the region. A specific residence address means any place of residence owned, rented, or occupied by the candidate.
- d. Have his name registered in the electoral roll and meet the necessary conditions that entitle him to vote.

2. The application to stand for the post of president must be submitted to the Central Election Committee by:

- a. A party organization registered with the Central Election Committee.
- b. Any person whose name appears in the electoral roll and who meets the necessary conditions to stand for elections mentioned in Paragraph 1 above.
- c. Any person who stands as an independent candidate for the post of president must present with his application a list containing written endorsement from at least 5,000 voters.

Article 10: Nomination for the Post of President

Article 14 of this law shall apply to all candidates for the post of president. The PNA president shall be exempted from this provision.

Article 11: The President

1. The candidate who wins the election for the post of president shall become head of the executive authority and shall be considered member of the Assembly since he was directly elected for the post of president by the people.

2. It is impermissible to combine the posts of president of the executive authority and Assembly speaker.

[10 Dec pp 14, 23]
[FBIS Translated Text]

Article 12: Eligibility for Nomination to Assembly Membership

1. Every Palestinian, male or female, who is 30 years old or above on the day of voting, and whose name is listed in the final electoral roll, and who meets the conditions of voting, shall have the right to nominate himself for the assembly membership.

2. A person running for assembly membership should have a specific residence address in his constituency so that his nomination can be accepted. A specific residence address means any place the candidate owns, rents, or occupies within his constituency. This address must also be registered at the nomination office. If the candidate has more than one specific address, he has to mention this in the nomination application, specifying his permanent address.

3. Applications for assembly membership may be submitted to the committees of the constituencies by:

- a. Persons whose names are listed in the electoral roll.
- b. Parties registered at the Central Elections Committee.

c. Every independent candidate shall submit with his application a list containing at least 500 signatures of voters registered in the electoral roll of his constituency.

4. It is impermissible for any person to run in any constituency other than the one in which his name is registered.

5. It is impermissible for any person to nominate himself in more than one constituency.

6. It is impermissible for a person to run for the post of president and member of the assembly at the same time.

7. It is impermissible for a member of the PNC to run for the Palestinian Assembly membership unless he or she has transferred his or her civil registration from abroad, to one of the 16 constituencies, in accordance with a certified approval from the PNC presidency. The provisions of this article shall then apply.

8. The number of persons nominated by a certain party in any constituency shall not exceed the number of seats allocated to that constituency.

Article 13: Assembly Membership

1. The assembly shall consist of 83 members to be elected by the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including holy Jerusalem, through free and direct balloting according to the provisions of this law.

2. The assembly shall elect one of its members as speaker to be in charge of summoning the assembly, conducting its sessions, and preparing its agenda.

Article 14: Nomination and Public Office Positions

1. Keeping in mind the provisions of this law, Palestinian National Authority ministers, government or "public department" employees, mayors and local council members, and employees of the international organizations operating in the region shall not run for elections to the assembly unless they tender their resignations 10 days ahead of the date set for announcing the final candidate lists. Their resignations shall be accepted and considered legal.

2. Officers, noncommissioned officers, and National Security personnel shall not be allowed to run for the assembly elections unless their resignations are accepted by the competent authorities. Letters approving such resignations must be attached to candidacy applications.

3. Members of the judiciary, officers, noncommissioned officers, and National Security personnel who fail in elections shall not be allowed to return to their jobs.

Part II: Voter Registration

Article 15: The Right and Duty To Register in Voters List

1. Everybody who likes to exercise his right to vote and meets the requirements for eligible voters has the right to ask that his name be registered on the electoral roll.
2. Voters are not allowed to register their names in electoral rolls not belonging to their areas of residence.
3. Nobody is allowed to have his name registered in the electoral roll unless he or she meets the requirements for eligible voters in accordance with the provisions of this law.

Article 16: Registration

1. Polling station committees are assigned the task of registering voters in the electoral roll.
2. All eligible voters have the right to have their names registered in the electoral roll per a petition that should include the following:
 - a. Full name, in four parts.
 - b. Sex.
 - c. Date and place of birth.
 - d. Specific residence address.
 - e. Type and number of identity card.
 - f. Affidavit that the information included is true and correct.
 - g. The date the application is submitted.
 - h. Signature.
3. Identity cards issued in the region.
4. For the purposes of this law:
 - a. The term "permanent residence" means the voter's specific address in a polling station area, where he actually lives during the voter registration process.
 - b. The term "address" means the town, house, street, suburb, and any other characterization that could specify the voter's place of residence.
5. Any of the documents currently in use in the region can be used to confirm a voter's place of residence. The testimony of three persons aged 18 years or above, who are residing in the same area as the voter, can be deemed sufficient evidence in this regard. Likewise, documents proving that the voter has recently settled taxes or local fees in his own name in the place he claims to be his residence can also be deemed evidence of his place of residence.
6. Upon verifying all the information included in the application mentioned in Paragraph 2 above, the polling

station committee shall enroll the applicant's name in the electoral roll.

7. The registration of voters shall be done publicly so that international and local observers as well as newsmen can monitor the process.

Article 17: Objection to the Initial Electoral Roll

1. A person whose name does not appear on the initial electoral roll, or whose data is erroneously entered, may file a grievance to the polling station committee in order to register his name or correct the relevant data. He is also entitled to contest the registration of ineligible voters or the failure to register eligible ones in the list.
2. The contestation shall be submitted in writing, along with verification documents, within five days of the publication of the electoral roll.
3. The polling station committee shall make a decision regarding the contestations within seven days of their submission.
4. If the contestation pertains to someone else's registration or non-registration in the electoral roll, it is impermissible to make a decision on the contestation before the concerned person is informed so that he may defend himself.
5. The polling station committee's decision shall be subject to appeal before the Central Election Committee.
6. The initial electoral roll shall be corrected in light of the polling station committee's decision on the contestations submitted to it. If the polling station committee's decision is appealed, the correction will then be done in accordance with the Central Election Committee's decision.

Article 18: Appeal Against Polling Station Committee's Decision

1. Decisions by the polling station committee on contestations submitted to it shall be appealed to the Central Election Committee within three days from the date of notification.
2. The Central Election Committee shall adjudicate the appeal presented to it within three days of its submission. Its decision to sustain or overrule the appeal shall be final and incontestable before any other body.

Article 19: Final Electoral Rolls

1. At the expiry of the specified period for contestation and resolution of all cases pertaining to the initial electoral rolls, these lists shall become final and voting shall be carried out according to them.

2. Every polling station committee shall display to the public its own electoral roll at its headquarters. It shall also send a copy of the list to the constituency committee and the Central Election Committee.

3. The Central Election Committee shall prepare the general electoral roll according to the final electoral rolls submitted to it by the polling stations.

Article 20: Access to the General Electoral Roll

1. The general electoral roll is considered a public register and every citizen is entitled to see it.

2. The representative of any political party registered at the Central Election Committee has the right to see the register whether in the Central Elections Bureau or in the various constituency bureaus. All non-party candidates are also entitled to the same right.

Part III: Administration and Supervision of Elections

Chapter 1: Election Management Bodies

Article 21: Election Committees

1. The elections shall be administered and supervised by the following committees:

- a. The Central Election Committee.
- b. The constituency committees.
- c. The polling station committees.

2. Each of the above-mentioned committees shall exercise the powers and responsibilities entrusted to them according to the provisions of this law.

3. The Central Election Committee shall appoint the necessary administrative staff to help it exercise the powers and duties entrusted to it according to the provisions of this law. This staff shall consist of:

- a. The Central Election Bureau.
- b. The constituency bureaus.

Chapter 2: The Central Election Committee, the Central Election Bureau, and the Constituency Bureaus

Article 22: The Central Election Committee

1. The Central Election Committee is the highest body administering and supervising the elections. It is in charge of preparing for and holding the elections and of taking the necessary measures to ensure fair and free elections.

2. The Central Election Committee shall comprise nine members chosen from experienced and reputable Palestinian judges and senior academicians and lawyers.

3. The Central Election Committee members shall be appointed by the PNA president in the same presidential decree in which he calls for elections, following consultations with other members of the PNA, parties, and various political figures.

4. The chairman and the secretary general of the Central Election Committee will also be appointed by the PNA president in the same presidential decree in which he calls for the elections.

5. Any vacancy in the committee resulting from resignation, death, illness, or any other reason, will be filled by the PNA president, who will appoint a replacement, taking into consideration the provisions of Paragraph 2 of this article.

Article 23: The Independence of the Central Election Committee

1. The Central Election Committee is a corporate body enjoying complete financial and administrative independence. It shall not be accountable to any other governmental or administrative authority.

2. After completing all the election procedures, the committee shall automatically be dissolved and all its funds shall be transferred to the permanent Palestinian election committee, which is appointed by the PNA president.

Article 24: The Tasks and Powers of the Central Election Committee

The Central Election Committee shall have the power to:

1. Implement the provisions of this law to achieve the objectives sought from it.
2. Take all necessary measures to prepare for the elections and plan the measures and methods to supervise and monitor these elections.
3. To establish the regulations, stipulated by this law, in implementation of its provisions, provided that they are approved by the PNA.
4. To supervise the administration and the work of the election committees, the Central Election Bureau, and the constituency bureaus, and to monitor their compliance with the provisions of this law.
5. To administer and supervise the entire process of elections.
6. To provide equal opportunities and conditions for all constituencies and to publish this fact in the local papers.
7. To register the parties and their emblems and slogans.

8. To appoint the constituency committees and the polling station committees.
9. To approve applications for nomination to the post of president and Assembly membership, and to prepare the final list of candidates and publish it in the local papers.
10. To study contestations and appeals against the decisions of the polling station committees.
11. To establish its own regulations.
12. To appoint employees and advisers to work in its Central Bureau and in the constituency bureaus.
13. To issue cards of accreditation to international and local observers and to cooperate with them.
14. To repeat elections in any polling station if it is confirmed that violations have occurred which may influence the results of elections in any constituency.
15. To announce the final results of elections.
16. To exercise any other power entrusted to it under this law.

Article 25: Contesting the Central Election Committee's Decisions

1. Any decision made by the committee regarding any of the following can be appealed at the Election Court of Appeal within three days after notification. The court's verdict must be issued within five days after the presentation of the appeal.

- a. Acceptance or rejection of the application of nomination to the post of president or Assembly membership.
- b. Repeating or not repeating elections in any polling station.
- c. Acceptance or rejection of registration applications presented by any party.
- d. Determining the emblem or slogan that denotes a party, a coalition of parties, or a group of voters.

2. The appeal must be presented to the clerk of the above-mentioned Court of Appeal or via the Central Election Bureau or the constituency bureau. The presenter of the appeal must be given a paper indicating that his appeal has been received.

3. The appeal made in accordance with this article is exempted from any fees.

Article 26: The Central Election Bureau and the Election Administration Bureaus

1. The Central Election Bureau and the election administration bureaus shall be considered the executive body of the Central Election Committee. They shall be responsible for:

- a. Implementing all the decisions and regulations of the Central Election Committee.
- b. Monitoring the ballot casting and counting process and presenting reports in this regard to the Central Election Committee.
- c. Planning and preparing the electoral roll forms, the lists of candidates, the ballot cards, the ballot boxes, the election records, the rubber stamps, and other documents related to elections, defining their specifications, shapes, and means of storage and distribution to the election bureaus, constituencies, and polling station committees.
- d. Acting as a liaison between the Central Election Committee on the one hand, and the local and international supervisors, the local and foreign media, and the various government departments on the other.
- e. Keeping all records, documents, and electoral rolls, as well as the minutes of the election process and of the polling station and vote counting committees.
- f. Supervising the preparation and signing of the initial and final electoral lists, making sure that the initial electoral rolls are amended in accordance with the decisions made by the Central Election Committee or the polling station committees as a result of the contestations presented to them.
- g. Performing any other tasks assigned to them by the Central Election Committee.

2. The election administration bureaus in the various constituencies shall help the Central Election Bureau in performing any of the above-mentioned tasks. They shall also abide by its instructions and act as a liaison between the voters and candidates on the one hand, and the bureau on the other.

Chapter 3: The Constituency Committees

Article 27: The Constituency Committees

1. The constituency committees shall be set up in every constituency stipulated in the appendix to this law.

2. The constituency committee in every constituency shall comprise five members appointed by the Central Election Committee from lawyers, university professors, or holders of a university degree in political science, sociology, economy, or administration.

3. The Central Election Committee shall appoint a chairman and secretary general for the constituency committee from the five members.

Article 28: Tasks and Powers of the Constituency Committees

1. The constituency committee shall be responsible for administering, organizing, and monitoring elections in its constituency. It shall implement all the instructions

issued to it by the Central Election Committee. Its powers include:

- a. Supervising the preparation of the initial and final electoral rolls.
- b. Receiving applications for nomination to Assembly membership and referring them to the Central Election Committee, along with all attached documents, the day they are received.
- c. Reviewing the minutes issued by the polling station committees on the results of elections, verifying their accuracy and agreement with the provisions of this law and then presenting them to the Central Election Committee.
- d. Monitoring the vote casting and vote counting process at the polling and vote counting stations, and presenting reports in this regard to the Central Election Committee.
- e. Implementing all the instructions and directives given to it by the Central Election Committee.

Chapter 4: The Polling Station Committees

Article 29: The Polling Station Committees

1. The polling station committee is the basic unit in the administration of elections. Each committee shall be responsible for registering voters in the constituency, administering the polling stations, and practically organizing the vote casting and the vote-counting process.
2. The polling station committee shall have four members, one of whom will be named committee chairman. The members are appointed by the Central Election Committee at the recommendation of the constituency committee.
3. At the recommendation of the constituency committee, the Central Election Committee shall appoint a number of reserve members for the polling station committees in each constituency.

Article 30: Tasks and Powers of the Polling Station Committees

1. A suitable number of polling station committees shall be set up in each constituency in proportion with the number of voters in that constituency.
2. The polling station committee shall:
 - a. Register voters and prepare the initial and final electoral rolls.
 - b. Decide on the contestations made against the initial electoral roll and correct that roll in accordance with the decision it makes after examining these contestations.
 - c. Prepare and equip the polling stations in accordance with the provisions of this law, and declare the place of these polling stations.

d. Take the necessary measures to ensure a smooth vote casting process.

- e. Prepare the records of the vote-casting process for the election of president and Assembly members in accordance with this law.
- f. Count the votes in the elections for president and Assembly members and note the results of this vote-counting in special records in accordance with this law.
- g. Transfer all the records of vote-casting and vote-counting, the ballot cards, and ballot boxes to the constituency center and publish the result of vote counting at the polling station.
- h. Enable the candidates' representatives or agents to monitor the vote-casting and vote-counting process. It shall also listen to their objections and observations and make the necessary decisions in this regard and record this in special records.
- i. Enable the media people and the local and international observers to monitor the vote casting and vote counting process.
- j. The chairman of the polling station committee has the right to expel from the polling station or its yard any person who stirs or attempts to stir disorder, cause a riot, or attempt to obstruct the vote-casting and vote-counting process.

3. The chairman and members of the polling station committees must hold at least the General Secondary School Certificate.

Part IV: The Election Court of Appeals

Article 31: Formation of the Court

1. The Election Court of Appeal shall be formed of one president and four judges appointed by the PNA president in the decree calling for elections.
2. The court can convene in the presence of its president and at least two judges. At the discretion of its president, it may convene in full panel to examine important issues.

Article 32: Place for Convening the Court

1. The court shall have an official headquarters in one of the major cities in the region.
2. The court shall have two offices to register cases and accept queries, one in the Gaza Strip and another in the West Bank.
3. The court president may decide to convene the court at a place other than its official headquarters to facilitate matters for the litigants. He may also decide to convene the court in the place where the actual events of the case occur if he deems that necessary.

Article 33: Court Judges

The president and members of the court must be judges qualified to serve as judges in regular courts, and must have served for at least 10 years in the judiciary.

Article 34: Court Procedures

1. The court procedures must be characterized by seriousness and speed due to the nature of the cases examined.
2. The trial should not be postponed unless this is necessitated by the need to preserve the defense right, provided that this postponement does not exceed 24 hours.
3. All court procedures must be open to the public.

Article 35: Powers of the Court

The court shall examine the contestations or the appeals made to annul or amend the decisions of the Central Election Committee or those decisions which can be contested or appealed before the Election Court of Appeal according to this law.

Article 36: Date of Appeals, Submission of Contestations, and Verdicts

1. Unless the law stipulates otherwise, the appeal or contestation must be presented to court within two days after the contested decision has been announced. The court shall not look into any appeal or contestation submitted after that date.
2. The court shall decide on the contestations and appeals presented to it within a period not exceeding five days from the day of their submission.
3. The contestations or appeals may be presented to the court through the Central Election Bureau or the constituency committee bureaus.

Article 37: Representation Before the Court

1. The cases presented to the court cannot be examined in the absence of a practicing lawyer. The bill of appeal or the bill of contestation shall not be accepted by court unless it is signed by a practicing lawyer.
2. The Central Election Committee shall be represented at the court by one of its legal advisers.

Part V: The Election Process

Chapter 1: Nomination Applications

Article 38: Registration of Candidates for the Post of President

1. Candidates for the post of president must register with the Central Election Committee.

2. The registration of candidates for the post of president begins at the date set in the decree calling for elections. It shall continue for 12 days. Nominations shall not be accepted after the expiry of that period.

3. Every candidate to the post of president must pay \$3,000 to the Finance Ministry as a deposit, which will be refunded to him if he wins the elections.

4. No party shall be allowed to nominate more than one candidate for the post of president.

5. Nominations for the post of president must be submitted to the Central Election Committee on special forms. The nomination application must:

- a. Include the full name of the candidate, his age, address, and his registration number in the electoral roll. The form must be signed by the candidate.
- b. If the nomination is made by a party, the application—in addition to the points mentioned in Paragraph A above—must be signed by the representative of the party that is registered at the Central Election Committee. A copy of the registration certificate issued to that party by the committee must be submitted with the application.

6. The Central Election Committee shall register applications for the post of president as submitted to it, and issue a certificate to every applicant, including the hour and date of submitting the application and its serial number.

7. The Central Election Committee shall approve the application if it meets all the provisions of this law.

8. Nomination applications which do not meet the provisions of this law shall not be accepted. If any application is rejected, the Central Election Committee shall explain in detail and in writing its reasons for rejecting it.

9. An application shall be considered approved if the Central Election Committee does not inform the applicant otherwise within five days from the date of submitting it.

Article 39: Claims and Contestations

1. A person who submits an application for nomination to the post of president and has his application rejected by the Central Election Committee, and a person who objects to the nomination of another person to that post and has his objection rejected by the Central Election Committee, may appeal to the Election Court of Appeal within three days of notification. The court must decide on the appeal within five days.

2. The Central Election Committee shall be informed of the decisions made by the Election Court of Appeal and act according to them.

Article 40: Publication of Names of Candidates for the Post of President

1. The Central Election Committee shall publish a list containing the names of candidates for the post of president at least 22 days before the polling day. The list shall include the full names of candidates in four parts, the parties or coalitions to which they belong, or the word independent against the candidate's name if the candidate is running as an independent.

2. The list shall be published in the local newspapers.

Article 41: Representatives of Candidates for the Post of President

1. Every party registered at the Central Election Committee and every candidate for the post of president has the right to present to that committee a list of his representatives to that committee and to the polling station committees.

2. The said representatives have the right to represent the candidates before the Election Court of Appeal, the constituency committees, the polling station committees, and the vote-counting committees in any matter related to the elections.

3. The Central Election Committee must provide the polling station committees with the names of these representatives.

Article 42: Agents of Candidates for the Post of President

1. Every registered party and every candidate for the post of president has the right to appoint an agent or agents to monitor the various election processes, particularly vote-casting and vote-counting.

2. The names of these agents must be registered at the constituency committees. These committees shall issue a certificate of accreditation for every agent at least seven days prior to the elections day.

Chapter 2: Registration of Candidates for the Assembly Membership and Approval of Nomination Applications

Article 43: Registration of Candidates for Assembly Membership

1. Candidates for the Assembly membership must register at the constituency committee.

2. The registration of candidates for the Assembly membership starts at the date set in the presidential

decree calling for elections. It shall continue for 12 days. Applications submitted after that period shall not be accepted.

3. Every person who nominates himself for Assembly membership must pay \$1,000 to the Finance Ministry as a deposit, which will be refunded to him upon winning the elections.

4. No party shall be allowed to present more than one list of candidates in any constituency.

5. The number of individuals nominated by any party in any constituency shall not exceed the number of seats designated for that constituency, as shown in the appendix to this law.

6. The nomination applications must be submitted to the constituency committees on special official forms. The nomination application must:

a. Include the full name of the candidate, his age, religion, address at the constituency where he is qualified to stand for elections, his registration number in the electoral roll, and the name of the constituency in which he is nominating himself. The application must be appended by his signature and include the name and address of his accredited representative.

b. If the nomination is made by a party, then the nomination application must—in addition to the points mentioned in Paragraph A above—be signed by the representative of the party registered at the Central Election Committee, and must include a copy of the registration certificate issued by the committee to that party.

7. The constituency committee shall register the nomination applications presented to it and issue a certificate for every applicant, showing the hour and date the nomination is submitted and its serial number.

8. The constituency committee shall refer the nomination applications submitted to it for purposes of issuing the necessary decisions regarding them.

Article 44: Claims and Contestations

1. Any person who submits a nomination application and has his application rejected by the Central Election Committee, and any person who objects to the nomination of any other person, may file an objection with the Central Election Committee within two days after being notified of the decision to reject his nomination or within two days after the publication of the initial list of candidates.

2. The Central Election Committee must decide on the objection within three days of its submission.

3. If the Central Election Committee rejects the objection, the person who filed the objection may appeal its decision at the Election Court of Appeal within two days of his notification of the decision to reject his objection. The court shall decide on this appeal within five of its submission.

4. The final decisions on the objections presented to the Central Election Committee and the verdicts issued by the Election Court of Appeal shall be communicated to the constituency committees, which must act according to them.

Article 45: Publication of the Lists of Candidates

1. The constituency committee shall publish the final list of candidates to the Assembly membership in that constituency at least 22 days before the polling day. This list shall include the names of candidates in four parts, the parties or coalitions to which they belong, or the word independent against the name of the candidate if that candidate is running as an independent. The name of the constituency must be mentioned at the top of that list.

2. A copy of this final list must be sent to the Central Election Committee.

3. The final lists of candidates shall be published in the local newspapers.

Article 46: Representatives of Candidates

1. Every party registered at the Central Election Committee has the right to present to that committee a list of its representatives in the various constituencies or to the Central Election Committee. The Central Election Committee must issue a certificate for each of the representative. This arrangement shall also include lists of representatives of the independent candidates.

2. Any of these representatives can represent his candidate before the Election Court of Appeal, the Central Election Committee, the constituency committee, and the polling station committee in any matter related to the elections.

3. The Central Election Committee must provide the constituency committees and the polling station committees with the names of these representatives.

Article 47: Agents of Candidates

1. Every party and every candidate has the right to appoint an agent or agents to monitor the various election processes, particularly vote casting and vote counting, provided these agents are officially accredited by the Central Election Committee at least seven days before the polling day.

2. The names of these agents must be registered at the constituency committees. These committees shall issue a certificate of accreditation for every agent.

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Chapter 3: Political Parties

Article 48: Registration of Political Parties

1. Every political party wishing to take part in the elections should register first with the Ministry of Interior.

2. Political parties which have been registered with the Ministry of Interior have the right to submit the names of their candidates to the Central Election Committee and take part in the elections under the name, emblem, or motto which they have chosen for themselves.

3. The Central Election Committee shall keep a special register containing the names of the political parties which have been registered.

Article 49: Conditions for Registering Political Parties

1. Every political party wishing to register itself shall submit a written application containing:

- a. The name, emblem, or motto identifying it and which will appear on the ballot.
- b. The name of its president and secretary general.
- c. The name of its representative to be accredited with the Central Election Committee as well as the names of its other representatives who are to be accredited with the Constituency Committees and the Polling Station Committees.
- d. The address of the political party's headquarters.

2. The application for registration should be accompanied by the following documents:

- a. A copy of the political party's constitution or bylaws signed by its president or secretary general.
- b. A written statement signed by the political party's representative affirming that the party does not advocate racism.

3. The applications for registration shall be submitted as of the date of the enforcement of this law and until the end of the nomination period fixed by the presidential decree calling for the elections in accordance with the provisions of Article 38 of this law. Applications which are submitted after the expiration of this period will not be accepted.

Article 50: Rejection of Registration

It is impermissible to register any political party:

- a. If the application submitted does not meet the conditions stipulated in Article 49 of this law.
- b. If the committee becomes certain about the incorrectness of the statements accompanying the application or the documents attached to it.
- c. If the application has been submitted following the expiration of the fixed period for nomination.
- d. If the political party has requested the adoption of a name, emblem, or motto belonging to another registered political party or another political party or organization which is not registered but well known in the region.
- e. If the political party has requested the adoption of an emblem or a motto indicating its affiliation with the Palestinian National Authority.

Article 51: Citing the Reasons for Rejection

1. If the Ministry of Interior refuses to register any political party, it should cite the reasons for that in detail.
2. It is impermissible for the Ministry of Interior to reject the registration of any political party unless the application for registration does not meet the conditions stipulated in Article 49 or is subject to the provisions of Article 50 of this law.

Article 52: Issuance of the Decision

1. The Ministry of Interior shall issue its decision on rejecting or approving the application for registration within three days from the date of its submission.
2. The application shall be considered as legally approved if the Ministry of Interior does not issue a decision rejecting it within five days from the date of its submission.

Article 53: Appealing the Decision Rejecting the Registration

1. The political party whose application for registration has been rejected by the Central Election Committee has the right to appeal this decision within three days from the date of notification.
2. The appeal shall be submitted to the election court of appeal directly or through the Central Election Bureau.
3. The court must decide on the appeal within seven days from the date of its submission.
4. If the court decides to accept the appeal, a copy of its decision shall be sent to the Central Election Committee so that it can act upon it.
5. An appeal which is made in accordance with this article shall be exempted of any fees.

Chapter 4: Election Campaigning

Article 54: Election Campaigning

1. Election campaigning is represented by the activities which are undertaken by registered political parties or candidates in order to explain their election programs to the public of voters.
2. The PNA and its organs shall remain completely neutral at all stages of the election process. The authority and any of its administrative or security organs are forbidden from engaging in any election activity or campaigning which might be construed as a support for any candidate at the expense of another or any political party at the expense of another.
3. Taking cognizance of the provisions of this law, the PNA and its Central Election Committee have the right to issue instruction bulletins and notices underlining the importance of elections and urging citizens to exercise their natural right to register in the electoral rolls, take part in the elections, and cast their votes in the ballot boxes.

Article 55: The Period Fixed for Election Campaigning

1. Election campaigning begins 22 days before election day and ends 24 hours before that day.
2. All campaigning activities are banned on the day before election day and also on election day.

Article 56: Coordination of Election Campaigning Activities

1. In order to organize the election campaigning activities of registered political parties and candidates, each Constituency Election Committee shall prepare a list of the public sites and places in its constituency which are assigned for election rallies, meetings, and processions. It shall also fix in that list, the public sites and places for mounting election posters and streamers.
2. The constituency election committees shall submit their lists to the Central Election Committee for approval. These lists shall then be distributed to the different constituency election bureaus through the Central Election Bureau.

Article 57: Election Campaigning in the News Media

1. The Central Election Bureau, in collaboration with the official Palestinian news media, shall prepare a special program on the dates and times fixed for free campaigning for all political parties and candidates taking part in the elections.
2. In drawing up this program, the Central Election Bureau shall consider the necessity to afford equal

and appropriate opportunities for political parties and candidates, bearing in mind the number of candidates named by each political party in the different election constituencies as well as for the post of president. These opportunities must be equal.

3. Any contestation against the aforementioned program shall be submitted to the Central Election Committee, which it must consider quickly.

Article 58: Restrictions on Election Campaigning

1. It is completely forbidden to hold election rallies or public meetings in mosques, churches, public administration buildings and offices or government establishments.

2. It is completely forbidden to mount election posters or streamers in public sites or places other than those which have been assigned by the constituency committees.

3. It is completely forbidden to use the PNA's motto in any election writings, drawings, or pictures.

4. It is completely forbidden for election speeches, bulletins, announcements, or pictures to include any instigation or defamation against other candidates or that might provoke tribal, family, or sectarian sentiments between different factions of the citizens.

Article 59: Security of the Election Campaign

1. It is the duty of the Palestinian security organs to maintain public order as well as the security of every citizen at all stages of the elections.

2. Any person who is not a member of the security organs is forbidden to carry any firearm or any other weapon or instrument which is punishable under the penal code or to fire bullets in any election rallies, processions, or meetings.

3. The Palestinian security organs shall coordinate with the chairmen of the constituency committees and the polling station committees in order to maintain peace and public order during election rallies, processions, and public meetings, especially during the casting and the counting of votes.

4. The Palestinian security organs are responsible for the adoption of all the necessary measures to ensure observance of the provisions of this law and to prevent any violation of its provisions in accordance with the provisions of Article 57 of this law.

Chapter 5: Forms, Ballots, and Other Election Stationery

Article 60: Ballots

1. Ballots shall be of two types: a red ballot for electing the president and a white ballot for electing Assembly members.

2. The ballot shall include the full name of the candidate. And, if he is a nominee of a political party, the name of the political party and its emblem or motto shall also be included. If the candidate is an independent, the word "independent" shall be mentioned.

3. The ballot shall include a square box next to the candidate's name to be marked with an X sign to indicate the name of the candidate who is elected by the voter.

4. The ballot for the election of the president shall include the names of all candidates for the presidency in the West Bank, including holy Jerusalem, and the Gaza Sector, as one election constituency. The ballots for the election of Assembly members in each constituency shall include the names of candidates in that constituency.

5. The names of the candidates in the ballots for the election of the president shall be listed according to the date of their registration with the Central Election Committee. The names of the candidates in the ballots for the election of Assembly members in each constituency shall be listed according to the date on which these names were submitted to the constituency committee in that constituency.

6. The ballots for the election of the president shall be uniform in shape, size, and color at all polling stations in the West Bank, including Holy Jerusalem, and the Gaza Sector. The ballots for the election of Assembly members in all the constituencies shall also be uniform in shape, size, and color and in a manner that differentiates them from the ballots for the election of the president.

7. The ballots for the election of Assembly members shall include the name of the constituency in which the voting takes place.

Article 61: Election Envelopes

1. Special envelopes shall be supplied so that the vote caster can put his ballot for the election of the president or Assembly members.

2. The color of the envelopes for the election of the president shall be red, and those for the election of Assembly members shall be white.

3. The back of the envelopes for the election of Assembly members shall carry the name of the constituency in which the voting takes place.

Article 62: Depositing Ballots and Envelopes

1. Some 24 hours before the time fixed for holding the elections, the constituency committee shall deposit at every polling station in its constituency a number of ballots and envelopes for the election of the president and Assembly members which is 25 percent more than the number of voters registered for that station.

2. The aforementioned ballots and envelopes shall be delivered to the polling station committees under an official record, which shall record actual delivery, the number of ballots and envelopes delivered, and the signatures of the members of the polling station committee.

Article 63: Ballot Boxes

1. There should be two ballot boxes at each polling station; one for the ballots to elect the president and the other for the ballots to elect Assembly members.

2. The ballot boxes for the election of the president must be distinct from the ballot boxes for the election of the assembly members. The boxes must be made according to the specifications which have been approved by the Central Election Committee.

Article 64: Voting Booths at Polling Stations

1. Several voting booths separated by curtains shall be set up at each polling station to enable voters to cast their votes in complete privacy.

2. The Central Election Committee shall determine the specifications of these booths so that they will be of one standard at all polling stations.

3. The Central Election Committee shall determine the number of booths at each polling station according to the number of voters who are registered in it.

Article 65: Electoral Roll

1. Each polling station shall have four copies of the final electoral roll for voters who are registered to vote at that station.

2. One copy of the electoral roll shall be posted in a prominent place at the polling station for all voters, observers, and candidates to see. The other copies will be used by the polling station committee for the purposes of holding, checking, and organizing the election process.

Article 66: Records

1. The Central Election Committee shall determine the specifications of the record forms which must be available at the bureaus of the constituency committees and polling station committees.

2. All events relating to the different stages of the election process shall be reported in an accurate and

detailed manner in these records and signed by the competent officials.

Article 67: Conclusion

1. The Central Election Committee shall determine the shape and type of seal which must be used by all committees in the entire election process.

2. The aforementioned seals must be designed in such a way that they cannot be copied. They shall be kept by the competent committees in a safe place.

Chapter 6: Voting

Article 68: The Committee Supervising the Voting

1. Voting shall be supervised by the polling station committee stipulated in Article 29 of this law.

2. The members of the aforementioned committee shall report at the polling stations at 0600 hours sharp on the day fixed for the elections.

3. In the absence of the chairman, one member, or all members of the committee, the constituency committee shall send another from the appointed reserve members to replace the absentee member. In the absence of all the committee members, the Central Election Committee shall appoint a substitute committee from the reserve members.

4. The committee shall immediately notify the constituency committee of any sudden change in its formation.

5. In the case of any delay resulting from the formation of the committee due to the absence of one or all members, the fixed voting period shall be extended by the same time as that caused by the delay. In the presence of at least three members of the committee, the voting process may be started pending the arrival of the fourth member.

6. If it is impossible to form a committee, voting may be postponed until the following day.

Article 69: Presence of the Candidates' Agents

1. The polling station committee shall allow the accredited agents of the candidates to be present in a suitable place at the polling station. The committee shall report their names and presence in the record. It shall also enable them to observe the voting process and enter into the record any observation or objection they make concerning the voting process and issue the appropriate decisions in this respect.

2. It is impermissible to allow the presence of more than one agent for each candidate at the polling station. In

the case of a political party, each party candidate shall have one agent present.

Article 70: Voting Record

1. Before the beginning of the voting process, the polling station committee shall prepare a record containing the names of the members of the polling station committee who are present, the names of the accredited agents of the candidate who are present, and the certificates of their accreditation.

2. The aforementioned record shall be stamped with the seal of the committee and signed by its members as well as the agents of the candidates who are present.

Article 71: Stamping Ballot Boxes

1. Before the beginning of the voting process, the chairman of the committee shall open the two ballot boxes before the committee members and the agents of the candidates to make certain that they empty of any ballots.

2. The chairman of the committee shall then close the two ballot boxes, seal them with red wax and stamp them. The boxes shall not be opened until the counting of votes.

Article 72: Voting

1. The voting begins at 0700 on the day fixed for the elections and ends at 1900 on the same day.

2. The voting shall take place in the following manner:

a. The chairman of the polling station committee, or any chosen member of the committee, shall check the identity of the vote caster against his name in the electoral roll for the polling station.

b. The chairman of the committee or his chosen representative from the members of the polling station committee shall give the vote caster a ballot for electing the president and another for electing Assembly members together with an envelope for each after stamping them with the polling station's seal. He shall keep with him the identity card of the vote caster.

c. The vote caster shall then proceed to the booth at the polling station where he will mark each ballot in the square next to the name of the candidate. He shall then put the ballot in the special envelop provided.

d. The vote caster shall then place each envelop in the ballot box provided for it within the sight of the polling station committee members, agents, and observers.

e. The chairman of the polling station committee or his chosen representative from the committee members shall delete from the electoral roll the name of the vote caster who has cast his vote and hand him his identify card to show that the bearer has already cast his vote.

f. The vote caster must leave the polling station as soon as he has cast his vote.

g. It is impermissible to allow at any time inside the polling station a number of vote casters who are more than double the number of the existing booths.

Article 73: Identification of Vote Casters

1. It is possible to check the identity of the vote caster from the election card which has been issued to him under Article 16 of this law and from his personal identity card or any other document which is acceptable to the polling station committee, provided the vote caster's name is included in the final electoral roll.

Article 74: Marking the Ballot

1. The vote caster shall place the mark [X] in the square provided in the ballot next to the name of the candidate he chooses. He is not permitted to place the mark on more than one candidate for the post of president, or on more Assembly candidates than the number of seats allocated for the constituency.

2. Should the vote caster make any mistake on either ballot, he may return the erroneous ballot to the chairman of the polling station committee and request a new one. He will not be given a new ballot until the one replaced has been invalidated and placed in the special envelope provided for this purpose.

3. If the vote caster is illiterate or handicapped in a manner that prevents him from marking the ballot himself, he may seek the assistance of another vote caster that he trusts with the approval of the polling station committee after it has made sure of the vote caster's real desire. The vote caster may request the chairman of the polling station committee to observe his voting.

Article 75: Security Measures

1. It is the responsibility of the chairman of the polling station committee to maintain peace and order inside the polling station.

2. A number of security men in official uniform shall be posted outside the polling station and in the surrounding grounds to carry out the orders of the chairman of the polling station committee. These security men must not go inside the polling station except when ordered by the chairman of the committee for the time that it is necessary to maintain peace and order as decided by the committee.

Article 76: Conclusion of Voting

1. When voting time is over, the chairman of the polling station committee shall announce the polling station

closed and permit only those present inside the station to cast their votes.

2. Once those present inside the polling station have cast their votes, the members of the polling station committee and the accredited agents shall then cast their votes. Their names shall be entered at the end of the list of voters and each of them shall sign his name next to his name on the list.

3. Once the voting is over, the polling station committee shall immediately begin counting the votes without any delay at the same polling station.

Chapter 7: Determination and Announcement of Election Results

Section 1: Counting of Votes at the Polling Station

Article 77: Counting of Votes

1. Counting of votes shall take place in the presence of all the members of the polling station committee and any members of the constituency committee who may wish to attend as well as the agents of the candidates, international and local observers, and representatives of the press and the media.

2. With the exception of those mentioned in Paragraph 1 above, no person shall be allowed into the vote counting center unless there is room and his presence does not disturb peace and order or interfere with the counting process in any way.

3. The polling station committee shall begin by opening the two ballot boxes at the same time. It will then open the envelopes and sort out the ballots for the president and those for the Assembly. After sorting out the ballots for the Assembly, the committee will put them back in the box and close it. The committee will then begin by counting the votes for the election of the president.

Article 78: Counting the Votes for the Election of the President

1. The chairman of the polling station committee shall distribute the ballots for the president in equal numbers to every two members of the polling station. One member will read and the other will record. At the end, four records shall be prepared according to Article 81 of this law.

2. The candidates or their agents as well as the international observers have the right to look at any ballot after it has been read if anyone of them requests that.

3. Once the vote counting is over, it is essential to make sure that the number of ballots, including the invalid and blank ones, are equal to the number of vote casters entered in every list which the polling station committee

members have prepared and the number of vote casters whose names have been deleted from the electoral roll during the voting process. A record shall be prepared to this effect in four copies.

4. If the numbers do not tally, the count shall be repeated in the same way. If the repeat count shows any difference that might affect the final result of the election, the voting shall be repeated according to a decision by the Central Election Committee.

5. All contestations which are made by the candidates and their agents during the vote counting and the decisions by the committee on them shall be reported in the special records.

6. The candidates or their representatives or observers may obtain a copy of the records and request the chairman of the polling station committee to sign them.

Article 79: Counting of Votes for the Election of Assembly Members

1. Once the votes for the election of the president have been counted, the committee shall immediately begin counting the votes for the election of Assembly members.

2. The votes for the election of Assembly members shall be counted according to the same procedure explained in Article 78 of this law.

Article 80: Invalid or Blank Ballots

1. A ballot is considered invalid:

- a. If it is not one of the official ballots prepared by the Central Election Bureau.
- b. If it is not stamped by the polling station committee's seal.
- c. If the ballot for the election of the president has been marked for more than one candidate. If the ballot for the election of Assembly members has been marked for more candidates than the number of seats allocated for the constituency.
- d. If it entails a change in the order of the candidates or their names.
- e. If it is not one of the ballots of the constituency in which the voting has taken place.
- f. If it contains signs or writings indicating the identity of the vote caster.

2. The ballot shall be considered blank if it does not contain any indication whatsoever in favor of any of the candidates.

Article 81: Depositing the Records and Ballots

1. Once the counting is over, the polling station committee shall prepare and compile two final records; one

for the election of the president and the other for the election of Assembly members.

2. Each of the two records shall be made in four copies.

3. Each record shall include:

- a. The name and number of the polling station.
- b. The names of the agents or representatives of the candidates who attended the counting process.
- c. The number of voters registered at the polling station.
- d. The number of vote casters and the number of ballots with which they voted.
- e. The number of those who declined to vote.
- f. The number of invalid ballots, blank ballots, and replaced ballots.
- g. The date of vote counting.

4. The record for the election of the president shall contain in addition to what is mentioned in Paragraph 3 above the names of the candidates for the presidency, the number of votes obtained by each of them, and their ranking order. The record for the election of Assembly members shall contain in addition to what is mentioned in Paragraph 3 above, the names of the candidates for Assembly membership, the number of votes obtained by each of them, and their ranking order.

5. Each of the two records shall be signed by the chairman and members of the polling station committee and whoever wishes among the candidates or their agents and representatives who are present. All copies of the records must be signed.

6. One copy of each of the two aforementioned records, accompanied by all valid, invalid, and blank ballots as well as the other records which have been entered during the casting and counting of votes, along with any contestations which have been made during these operations, shall be deposited with the constituency committee which shall keep them in a safe place.

7. One copy of the two aforementioned records will be sent to the Central Election Committee and another to the Election Court of Appeal. The last copy of the records will be displayed at the polling station. All records must be stamped officially by the chairman of the polling station.

Section 2: Initial Election Results

Article 82: Initial Election Results in the Constituencies

1. The constituency bureau shall receive and collect copies of all records that are sent to it by the polling station committees in its constituency. It shall add the election results recorded in them as soon as possible.

The following persons have the right to supervise the process of adding and preparing the initial results in the constituency:

- a. Members of the constituency committees and bureaus and their employees.
- b. The candidates.
- c. The accredited representatives and agents of the candidates.
- d. The officially accredited local and international observers.
- e. Accredited journalists.

2. The bureau will then declare the initial election results in its constituency, announcing the names of the elected candidates and the number of votes obtained by each of them in the constituency.

3. Once this is over, the constituency committees shall send to the Central Election Committee copies of the records which they received from the polling station committees and the initial election results in every constituency.

Article 83: The General Initial Election Results

1. Once the Central Election Committee has received all records and initial results from the different constituencies, the Central Election Bureau, under the supervision of the Central Election Committee, shall add the results and prepare the general initial election results for the election of the president and Assembly members.

2. The Central Election Committee shall publish the general initial election results in the news media.

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Section 3: Vote Counting and Final Election Results

Article 84: Vote Counting by the Constituency Committee

1. After receiving all the election records from all polling station committees, the constituency committee will start counting the votes in its constituency.

2. Vote counting shall be done publicly and shall take place at the headquarters of the constituency committee the following day. Only the following persons shall be allowed to attend the vote counting:

- a. Members and employees of the constituency committee.
- b. Candidates.
- c. Accredited representatives and agents of the candidates.

- d. Officially accredited local and international observers.
- e. Accredited journalists.
- f. Security men, but only if so requested by the chairman of the constituency committee.

3. Vote counting by the constituency committee includes an examination of all the election records sent to it, including the objections, contested ballots, and the results of voting noted in them.

4. The constituency committee shall listen to the candidates, their representatives, or agents who submit objections. The committee shall decide on each objection, and then announce the results of elections in its constituency.

5. The constituency committee must indicate in its report to the Central Election Committee any violations it discovers in voting in any polling station that would affect the results of the elections and the distribution of seats among candidates in that constituency, and recommend a repeat of the elections in the polling stations where violations occur.

6. The election results announced by the constituency committee must include the following:

- a. The total number of voters registered in the constituency.
- b. The number of vote casters in the constituency.
- c. The number of voters who declined to vote.
- d. The number of valid ballots in elections for president and assembly members.
- e. The number of invalid and blank ballots in elections for president and assembly members.
- f. The names of candidates for the post of president and a countdown of the votes each candidate has obtained.
- g. The names of Christian candidates for assembly membership in the constituency in which seats for Christians are allocated, and a countdown of the votes each of them has obtained.
- h. Date and time of vote counting.
- i. The signature of the chairman and members of the constituency committee.

7. The candidates and their representatives or agents have the right to ask the Central Election Committee to reconsider the decisions made by the constituency committee regarding the objections submitted to it.

Article 85: Forwarding the Minutes to the Central Election Committee

After all procedures stated in Article 84 of this law are observed, the chairman of the constituency committee shall personally hand the Central Election Committee all minutes, documents, and relevant material, along with

a report on the procedures taken and results reached in his constituency.

Article 86: Vote Counting by the Central Election Committee

1. After receiving all the minutes, documents, and relevant material, as well as the reports prepared by the constituency committees, the Central Election Committee shall carry out the final vote counting.

2. The final vote counting shall take place publicly at the headquarters of the Central Election Committee within a maximum of five days from the voting day. Only the following persons shall be allowed to attend the vote counting:

- a. The members and employees of the Central Election Committee.
- b. The candidates.
- c. The accredited representatives or agents of candidates.
- d. The officially accredited local and international observers.
- e. The accredited journalists.

3. The Central Election Committee shall study all the constituency committees' reports and decisions on the objections filed by the candidates and their agents or representatives, and shall listen to whatever these candidates or their representatives have to say.

4. Once the aforementioned procedures are observed, the Central Election Committee shall announce the final results of the elections.

5. If it transpires that a violation has occurred at any polling station in a manner that would affect the results of voting for the post of president and assembly members, or affect the distribution of seats among candidates in any constituency, the Central Election Committee shall decide that elections be repeated within 10 days at the polling stations where such violations have occurred.

6. The announcement of the final results of the elections shall include the following:

- a. The total number of voters registered in the final electoral rolls.
- b. The number of the voters who cast their votes.
- c. The number of voters who refrained from voting.
- d. The number of valid ballots in the election of president and assembly members.
- e. The number of invalid ballots in the election of the president or the assembly members.
- f. The number of the blank ballots in the election of president or assembly members.

- g. The names of candidates for the post of president and a countdown of votes won by each.
- h. The names of candidates for assembly membership and a countdown of votes won by each.
- i. The names of Christian candidates for assembly membership in constituencies where seats are allocated for Christians, as well as a countdown of votes won by each.
- j. The date and time of the final vote counting.
- k. The signatures of the chairman and members of the Central Election Committee.

Article 87: Contesting the Decisions of the Central Election Committee

- 1. The parties and their candidates, agents, or representatives shall have the right to appeal to the Election Court of Appeal against the decisions of the Central Election Committee within two days of the publication of the final results of elections.
- 2. The aforementioned court shall issue its ruling within five days and shall inform the Central Election Committee of its decisions, which shall be enforced.

Section 4: The Elected Candidates

Article 88: The Elected President

- 1. The candidate winning the largest number of votes shall win the post of president.
- 2. If leading candidates obtain equal votes, elections will be repeated for them within 10 days.
- 3. If only one candidate runs for the post of president, he will be considered the winner if the number of valid ballots he obtains are more than the invalid and blank ones.
- 4. The Central Election Committee shall issue an official certificate to the winner of the post of president.

Article 89: Elected Members of the Assembly

- 1. The seats allocated for each constituency shall be won by the candidates who obtain more votes than others in that constituency, taking into consideration the provisions of Paragraph 2 above.
- 2. The seats allocated for Christians shall be occupied by Christian candidates who obtain the largest number of votes. Nothing shall prevent them from nominating themselves, like others, in other constituencies.
- 3. If two or more leading candidates win equal votes, elections will be repeated for them within 10 days.
- 4. The Central Election Committee shall issue official certificates to the winning candidates.

- 5. The final results of the elections shall be published in the Palestinian Gazette.

Chapter 8: By-elections for the Post of President and Assembly Members

Section 1: By-elections for the Post of President

Article 90: Vacancy of the Post of President

- 1. The president's post shall be considered vacant in any of the following cases:
 - a. Death.
 - b. Resignation.
 - c. Loss of legal capacity.
- 2. The president shall lose his legal capacity once a legal verdict to this effect is issued by a specialized Palestinian court and endorsed by a two-third majority of the assembly members.
- 3. If the post of president becomes vacant due to any of the reasons cited in Paragraph 1 of this article, the speaker of the assembly shall assume the president's tasks temporarily for a period of no more than 60 days, during which elections will be held to elect a new president.

Article 91: Elections

- 1. By-elections shall be held to fill the vacant post of president in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 2 of Article 90 of this law and in accordance with a decree issued by the speaker of the assembly.
- 2. The by-elections to fill the vacant post of president must take place within 60 days of the occurrence of the vacancy.
- 3. The by-elections to fill the vacant post of president shall be held in accordance with the provisions of this law.
- 4. The final electoral rolls prepared in accordance with the provisions of this law shall be adopted when by-elections are held. For that purpose, these rolls must be amended to account for deaths, people reaching the legal age for election and nomination, and changes in place of residence.

Section 2: By-elections to Assembly Membership

Article 92: Vacancy of Assembly Seats

- 1. The position of an assembly member shall be considered vacant in any of the following cases:
 - a. Death.
 - b. Resignation.
 - c. Loss of legal capacity.

d. Failure to attend assembly sessions due to chronic illness or imprisonment for no less than one year.

2. An assembly member's resignation shall be submitted to the assembly speaker. The resignation shall take effect 10 days after its submission.

3. An assembly member shall lose his legal capacity if a verdict to this effect is passed by a competent Palestinian court, and if the assembly endorses such a verdict by a majority of votes.

4. If the remainder of the member's term exceeds one year, by-elections shall be held in the constituency of the assembly member whose seat has been declared vacant in accordance with the provisions of this law regarding the election of assembly members.

5. The provisions of Article 91 of this law shall apply to the by-elections held to elect a new assembly member.

Article 93: Election Expenses

1. The Palestinian National Authority, in coordination with the Central Election Committee, shall earmark all the funds needed to finance the election processes, the work of various election committees, and the activities of their administrative organs.

2. None of the aforementioned funds may be spent except in accordance with the regulations issued by the Central Election Committee.

3. The PNA shall not finance or assist any candidate in his or her election campaign.

4. Every party participating in the elections and every winning candidate shall submit a detailed account of all sources of finance and the amount of money spent during the election campaign to the Central Election Committee within 20 days of the announcement of the final election results.

Article 94: Monitoring the Financing of the Election Campaign

1. It is impermissible for the parties or candidates taking part in elections to obtain funds from any external or foreign source to finance their election campaigns.

2. Any political party representative or independent candidate running for elections shall be held responsible for any violation committed in contravention of the provisions of Paragraphs 2 and 4 of Article 93 of this law, and in Paragraph 1 of this article. Once convicted, he shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months, or a fine not exceeding 500 dinars, or both penalties.

Part VI: Election Crimes

Article 95: Encroachment on Voters' Freedom

1. Whoever uses or threatens to use force or violence against any person to:

- a. force him or influence him to vote for or withhold his vote from a certain candidate,
- b. force him to attend or not attend an election meeting or rally;

2. Whoever instigates a person, helps him or enables him to vote in the elections while knowing he is not legally qualified for that;

3. Whoever obstructs or tries to obstruct a voter in anyway whatsoever to prevent him from exercising his legitimate right to cast his vote in complete freedom; and

4. Whoever forces any voter in anyway whatsoever to reveal the identities of candidates he voted for, or reveal the contents of his ballot;

Shall be deemed as having committed a crime. Once convicted, he shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of not more than one year, a fine of not more than 1,000 Jordanian dinars, or both penalties.

Article 96: Bribery

1. Any person who, directly or indirectly, gives, lends, offers, or promises to give a voter money, benefit, or anything else to make him vote in favor of a certain candidate or refrain from voting for him;

2. Any person who, directly or indirectly, accepts or asks for money, loan, benefit, or anything else, whether for himself or others, for the purpose of voting or not voting for a certain candidate, or for the purpose of influencing others to vote or refrain from voting; shall be deemed as having committed a crime. Once convicted, he shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of not more than three years, a fine of not more than 3,000 Jordanian dinars, or both.

Article 97: Illegal Voting

1. Any person who obtains, or asks to obtain any voting card in the name of another person, whether dead, alive, or imaginary;

2. Any person who produces or uses forged or incorrect identification documents;

3. Any person who assumes the identity of another voter;

4. Any person who casts more than one vote in any polling station;

5. Any person who casts a vote while knowing that he has no right to do so;

Shall be deemed to have committed a crime. Once convicted, he shall be punished to imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year, a fine of no more than 1,000 Jordanian dinars, or both penalties.

Article 98: Election Materials

1. Any person who holds, destroys, and conceals, or helps to hold, destroy, and conceal any of the election material mentioned in this law without being authorized to do so by the Central Election Committee, or in contravention of the provisions of this law;

2. Any person who prints, produces, or prepares any of the election material mentioned in this law without having a written authorization from the Central Election Committee;

Shall be deemed to have committed a crime. Once convicted, he shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of not more than one year, or a fine of not more than 1,000 Jordanian dinars, or both penalties.

Article 99: Ballot Cards and Election Records

1. Any person who forges or reports false information in the election records and the voter lists prepared under this law;

2. Any person who inserts or permits the insertion of ballots in any ballot box in the names of persons who have not voted or who do not exist;

3. Any person who, knowingly, provides false information with regard to the nomination's application, announcement, date of submission, or date of registration;

4. Any person who conceals, destroys, or distorts any document of contestation or appeal filed by any party or candidate in accordance with this law;

5. Any person who conceals, destroys, or tampers with any nomination application submitted by any party or candidate; shall be deemed to have committed a crime. Once convicted, he shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of not more than one year, or a fine of not more than 1,000 Jordanian dinars, or both penalties.

Article 100: Other Crimes

Any action or inaction, and any abstention, failure, or negligence in performing any duty dictated by this law, for which no specific penalty is stipulated, shall be considered a crime punishable by imprisonment for a period of not more than three months, or a fine of not more than 200 Jordanian dinars, or both.

Article 101: The Members and Employees of the Election Committees

If the perpetrator of any of the criminal acts provided for in this chapter is a chairman or member of an election committee, an administrative employee of this committee, or any other person authorized to perform any official task in accordance with this law, he shall, once convicted, be sentenced to imprisonment of not more than three years, or a fine of not more than 3,000 Jordanian dinars, or both penalties.

Part VII: Interim and Final Provisions

Chapter 1: Interim Provisions

Article 102: Elections in Jerusalem

1. Palestinian voters in Jerusalem shall be registered and electoral rolls shall be prepared for them there in accordance with the provisions of this law.

2. Any person from the Jerusalem constituency who nominates himself for the post of president or assembly membership must have a specific address within the region under the jurisdiction of the PNA or under the jurisdiction of the assembly after its election.

3. Vote casting in Jerusalem shall take place in accordance with the provisions of the interim phase agreement between the PLO and Israel, signed in Washington on 28 September 1995.

4. While observing the above, the provisions of this law shall apply to the elections that take place in Jerusalem as well as to any other constituency.

Article 103: Local and International Monitoring, Newsmen

1. All election activities stipulated in this law shall be conducted openly and publicly to enable local and international observers to monitor these activities at all stages and to enable local and international media men to cover the elections.

2. Local and international observers and newsmen shall be accredited by the Central Election Committee and shall be issued cards by this committee upon request.

3. All committees and persons overseeing the implementation of the provisions of this law, including Palestinian policemen, shall facilitate the work of those holding accreditation cards in accordance with Paragraph 2 above.

Article 104: Dissolving the Palestinian Committee for Local Government and Elections

1. With the issuance of this law, the Palestinian Committee for Local Government and Elections shall be automatically dissolved.

2. All measures and appointments by the above committee in preparation for the elections shall remain valid.

Article 105: The PNA president shall issue a decree calling or proroguing ordinary and extraordinary assembly sessions.

Article 106:

1. Each member of the Palestinian Assembly must submit a report on his financial status and that of his underage children, declaring any real estate, companies, and money they have, to the speaker of the Palestinian Assembly.

2. The reports noted in the previous paragraph shall be kept with the speaker of the Palestinian Assembly, who must take the appropriate measures to keep them confidential.

Chapter 2: Final Provisions

Article 107: Issuing Regulations

1. The Central Election Committee shall introduce the necessary regulations for the implementation of the provisions of this law.

2. The above regulations shall take effect once they are endorsed by the PNA and published in the Palestinian Official Gazette.

Article 108: Notification

Any announcement, decision, or order communicated to any person under the provisions of this law shall be considered legal and done in accordance with standard procedure one day after it is delivered by hand to the concerned person or 24 hours from the time it is sent to that person via registered mail.

Article 109: Revoking Previous Laws

The House of Representatives Election Law No. 24 of 1960, the laws amending it, and the regulations issued according to it, shall be revoked. The General Administrative Governor Decision No. 32 of 1960 and any other decisions conflicting with the provisions of this law shall also be revoked.

Article 110:

All concerned parties, each in his area of specialization, shall implement the provisions of this law. It shall take effect as of the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

Issued in the city of Gaza on 7 December 1995, corresponding to 14 Rajab 1416, Hegira.

[signed] Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and president of the Palestinian National Authority

