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Final Report

**IFES Technical Assistance for
Municipal Elections in the West Bank and Gaza**

April 1998

written by

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Chapter 1

Executive Summary

From March 1996 through January 1998, the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), funded through a cooperative agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/West Bank and Gaza Mission, provided on-site technical assistance to the Palestinian Authority's (P.A.) Ministry of Local Government (MLG) and the Supreme Elections Committee for Local Elections (SEC) in the planning and organization of municipal council elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These elections will offer Palestinians in more than 325 villages, towns and cities in the West Bank and Gaza their first opportunity to elect local representatives under self-rule. No municipal elections have been held in the West Bank since 1976 (under Israeli occupation), or in Gaza since 1948 (under the British Mandate). The importance of municipal elections makes it essential that they are organized in a credible and professional manner.

A variety of political factors, including the impasse in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations that has delayed anticipated Israeli redeployment from West Bank territory, led the P.A. indefinitely to postpone the elections during the period of the IFES project. The P.A. has stated that, as just fifteen percent of the West Bank towns and villages in which municipal elections are slated to take place are under full Palestinian civilian and security control, it is not possible to schedule elections until further redeployment occurs and self-rule is expanded.

IFES, recognizing the organizational complexity of these elections, and the fact that they are likely to be scheduled on very short notice with little lead time, provided technical assistance to SEC members and to MLG election officials and staff to enhance their capacity to plan and carry out credible elections, whenever they might take place. IFES assistance focused on providing information and recommendations to lay the groundwork for a credible electoral process, upon which election officials could draw when significant election preparations begin and important policy and organizational decisions must be made. Working through its West Bank field office, IFES advised Palestinian election officials and staff on the drafting of a municipal government election law, on the organization of an effective process of registering voters, on election materials procurement and management, on pollworker training, and on the design of a voter education campaign. IFES' recommendations ultimately were synthesized, elaborated upon and compiled in a detailed, Arabic-language manual titled "Guide to the Planning and Organization of Local Elections in the West Bank and Gaza." (The English translation of the manual is included as an appendix to

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this report). Prior to the conclusion of the project, IFES organized two training workshops on election administration for SEC members and MLG election staff.

This report describes IFES' activities and the project staff and consultants who carried out these activities. It also describes the legal and organizational framework for the elections, and summarizes the outstanding political and administrative issues involved with municipal elections that must be addressed before election preparations can begin in earnest.

Chapter 2 Introduction

From March 1996 through January 1998, the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) provided on-site technical assistance to the Palestinian Authority's (P.A.) Ministry of Local Government (MLG) and the Supreme Elections Committee for Local Elections (SEC) in the planning and organization of elections for municipal councils in more than 325 villages, towns and cities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These elections, which the P.A. has postponed indefinitely due to political factors including the lack of further Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, will offer Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza their first opportunity to elect local representatives under self-rule. Indeed, it will be the first opportunity for many Palestinians to vote for local government under any circumstances. No municipal government elections have been held in the West Bank since 1976 (under Israeli occupation), or in Gaza since 1948 (under the British Mandate).

Because of its mandate to provide basic services and to foster local economic development, municipal government has great potential to improve day-to-day life for Palestinians under self-rule. During the Israeli occupation, the municipal infrastructure in West Bank and Gaza villages and cities deteriorated; the Israeli authorities severely constrained local councils' ability to deliver services and respond to local concerns. With self-rule, Palestinians have an opportunity to create more effective and democratic municipal government structures. Elections are the best mechanism to achieve this. As municipal elections have been delayed, many municipal council members, including mayors, have been appointed by the P.A. While some of the appointed councils have been relatively effective in service delivery, without elections the councils' membership cannot achieve the level of representation or pluralism desired by most Palestinians.

The importance of municipal elections makes it essential that they are organized in a credible, impartial and professional manner. The first elections held under self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza, the historic January 20, 1996 Legislative Council and *Ra'ees* elections,¹ established a relatively good precedent. These elections, in which more than 70 percent of eligible voters took part, were impressive for first elections and generated widespread enthusiasm among Palestinians. The P.A. received substantial international assistance for these elections, which helped develop a pool of Palestinians experienced in electoral administration. But recognizing the continuing need for international technical expertise to increase local capacity, as well as the fact that municipal elections

¹ Hereafter referred to as "the January 1996 elections."

will be more organizationally challenging than the 1996 elections, the P. A. requested assistance from IFES for the organization of these elections. The IFES assistance, delivered by the IFES West Bank field office's international and Palestinian staff and international consultants specialized in election planning and management, provided key P.A. decision makers, election officials and staff with information, recommendations, and training to enhance their capacity to plan and carry out credible, participatory municipal elections. In its assistance, IFES drew upon its knowledge of best election practices worldwide, of the experiences of other transitional democracies, of lessons learned in the January 1996 elections, and of the unique political environment in the West Bank and Gaza.

This assistance project followed nearly two years of previous IFES democracy support programs in the West Bank and Gaza. IFES' Palestinian programs began soon after the Declaration of Principles (DOP) was signed in September 1993. In January 1994, IFES conducted an assessment mission to the West Bank and Gaza, Israel, and Tunis (where the PLO leadership was then based) to examine the legal, political, and administrative issues involved in holding the first national elections in the West Bank and Gaza. In the summer of 1994, IFES began supporting Palestinian non-governmental organizations' and the P.A.'s civic education programs on elections, democratic systems, and effective political participation. The programs, organized in partnership with Palestinian NGOs and P. A. ministries, targeted women (particularly rural women), youth, and political prisoners released from Israeli prisons under the terms of the Oslo Accords, and were carried out through December 1995. In 1995, IFES also opened its Resource Center for Information and Training in the West Bank, a unique source of written materials on democratic transitions, elections and civil society from around the world. Immediately preceding the January 1996 elections, IFES sponsored nearly five hundred voter education workshops throughout the West Bank and Gaza. IFES also provided technical assistance in logistics planning, public relations, and other election matters to the Palestinian Central Election Commission (CEC), which oversaw the elections.

Delay in Holding Municipal Elections

When the IFES technical assistance project began in Spring 1996, municipal elections were widely anticipated to take place in the summer of that year, following directly on the January 1996 elections. Accordingly, the IFES project was designed with the assumption that elections would be held within six months after the start of the project. Unfortunately, since that time municipal elections have been indefinitely postponed.

The main reason for this postponement, and the one cited most often by Palestinian officials, is the stalemate in negotiations with Israel on the expansion of Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank. As of this writing, only 15 percent of the West Bank villages and towns slated to elect municipal councils are under full P.A. control. Palestinians expected Israel, according to the Oslo II and III Agreements, signed in 1995 and 1997, respectively, to withdraw the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)

from a significant amount of West Bank territory, and hand it over to the P.A., by 1996 or 1997. This redeployment has not yet occurred. The P.A. appears to have concluded that it is not politically feasible to hold municipal elections in any part of the West Bank and Gaza as long as Israel controls most of the territory in which West Bank municipal areas are located, or at the very least, until a redeployment of significant size takes place.

These conditions have been difficult to achieve in the last two years. In general, despite a few episodes of progress, the peace process has been marked by a negotiating stalemate and considerable mistrust since Benjamin Netanyahu's election as Israeli Prime Minister in May 1996. Palestinians argue that Israel's failure to implement or uphold signed agreements is the reason for this stalemate. The Oslo II and III Agreements, which followed the 1994 accords mandating Israel to hand over the West Bank town of Jericho and most of the Gaza Strip to the P.A.'s control,² stated that Israel would make a series of redeployments from the West Bank from 1995 through 1998. The Oslo II Agreement (also known as the Taba Accords), signed in September 1995, specified three 'zones' of West Bank territory, which were to have different levels of P.A. control and from which Israeli redeployment would take place in phases. In Zone A, which includes the major cities of the West Bank, the P.A. exercises full security and administrative control.³ In Zone B, the P.A. has a degree of civilian control, and Israel has ultimate security control. For example, Israeli forces can enter Zone B without Palestinian approval. Together, Zones A and B constitute about 30 percent of West Bank land; the majority of the Palestinian population lives in these areas. Zone C, which includes Israeli settlements, military installations and 'unpopulated areas,' is under exclusive Israeli control.

As per the terms of Oslo II, Israel withdrew its troops from Zone A, except Hebron, in November and December 1995. This agreement also specified that 'further redeployments [from Zones B and C] would take place within 18 months of the date of the inauguration of the Palestinian Legislative Council' in March 1996.⁴ These redeployments did not take place.

In January 1997, after the negotiation of the Oslo III Agreement (also known as the Hebron Agreement), Israel withdrew its troops from most of Hebron. 'Letters of assurance' prepared alongside the Agreement outlined a revised timetable for redeployment. Israel was to undertake three further withdrawals from Zones B and C, the first to be completed six weeks after the signing of the Agreement, and the third to be completed by mid-1998. These deadlines have come and gone

² These are the Cairo Accords, signed May 4, 1994 (also called the Gaza-Jericho Agreement), and the Early Empowerment Accords, signed August 29, 1994.

³ Israel maintains military checkpoints just outside of the cities of Bethlehem, Jenin, Nablus, Qalqilia, Ramallah, and Tulkarem, and Hebron, and controls part of Hebron city.

⁴ Article X-2.

with no subsequent redeployments taking place.

The Israeli government argues that it must have adequate security guarantees from the P.A. before conceding more territory; many in the Netanyahu government strongly oppose the hand-over of additional West Bank land under any circumstances. The March and September 1997 fatal bombings in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, for which Palestinian extremists claimed responsibility, heightened Israeli concerns over security and stalled discussions over the size of the next stage of redeployment, with Israelis maintaining that the P.A. must fulfill its obligations as detailed in the Oslo Accords before redeployment can occur. Israel has floated proposed 'percentages' of West Bank territory from which it might be willing to redeploy its troops with the appropriate conditions and guarantees. The P.A. consistently has rejected these 'offers' as far too little. P.A. officials also state these proposals are unacceptable because they reportedly involve 'transferring' certain villages from Zone B to Zone A, but not bringing any new territory (from Zone C) under Palestinian jurisdiction. In any case, as result of the negotiating impasse, as of this writing more than 85 percent of the West Bank villages and towns slated to elect municipal councils remain in Zones B and C. The postponement of redeployment from these zones is the reason stated publicly by P.A. officials as to why municipal elections have not been held.⁵ Many Palestinians outside the P.A. leadership also feel strongly that local elections in the West Bank and Gaza should not be held until most of the villages, towns and cities in which elections will take place are under full Palestinian civil and security control. In this way, in the popular mind as well as the P.A.'s assessment, in the present political context municipal elections are intimately linked to redeployment and the expansion of self-rule.

The January 1996 elections were also delayed throughout 1994 and 1995 while Israeli and Palestinian negotiators conducted difficult negotiations concerning the timing, scope and modalities of Israeli troop withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. Protracted negotiations about the modalities of the Palestinian electoral process itself --over such fundamental issues as who could vote, where, and for what kind of legislature-- also caused repeated delays in the election calendar. But this highlights an important difference between those elections and municipal elections. Technically, the decision to call municipal elections is within the P.A.'s ability; agreement with Israel is not explicitly required. The legal framework for municipal elections (the Election Law and the Local Government Law) has been formulated by the P.A., as per the terms of its mandate. According to the Election Law, the Minister of Local Government sets the date of the elections.

⁵ Minister Eraqat has cited this reason on numerous occasions since mid-1997. For example, a January 27, 1998 article in *al-Quds* newspaper reported that 'the Minister of Local Government explained the postponement of [local council] elections as due to Israeli procrastination and noncompliance in implementing the redeployments by their set dates...at a time when the rate of Israeli security control over Palestinian areas [in the West Bank] reaches 85 percent.'

Indeed, there were several points in 1996 and 1997 when P.A. officials indicated their intention to hold elections, or even publicly announced dates that were reported in the Palestinian press. These points corresponded with moments in the peace process when Palestinian leaders felt that progress, specifically in the form of a redeployment from the West Bank, was possible. For example, from late 1995 through mid-1996, several historic events -- the full Israeli redeployment from the cities of the West Bank (except Hebron), the January elections, and the commencement of the Final Status negotiations with Israel in May-- gave many Palestinians, especially the P.A. leadership, hope that the peace process had gained a momentum that would lead to the Palestinians' gaining control over more West Bank territory. During these months, the Palestinian press frequently reported that municipal elections would be held in August 1996.

Soon after Netanyahu's election in May, however, Israeli-Palestinians relations grew extremely tense and negotiations stalled for months. Deadly clashes in September 1996 throughout the West Bank and Gaza between Palestinian police, Palestinian civilians and Israeli soldiers brought into sharp relief the need for a breakthrough, and a quickly-arranged Yasser Arafat-Netanyahu summit at the White House seemed to produce momentum. Some Palestinians also anticipated that the surge in national sentiment and support for Arafat that followed the September clashes might serve as a catalyst for municipal elections, in that they would be a way for the P.A. to exercise what autonomy it possessed in the face of 'Israeli intransigence.' Indeed, in fall 1996 the Minister of Local Government Dr. Sa'eb 'Eraqat often spoke of elections taking place in June 1997 (though no substantial preparations were undertaken).

It was the signing of the January 1997 Hebron Agreement that seemed to provide the greatest impetus for the P.A. to hold municipal elections, as it confirmed Israel's obligation to undertake three further West Bank redeployments, with the first stage due to occur within six weeks of Israeli troops' pullout from most of Hebron in January. Indeed, soon after the signing of the Agreement, Arafat appointed the 14 members of the SEC, and it convened several times to discuss plans for municipal elections. Minister 'Eraqat subsequently announced that elections would take place in June or August 1997. These hopes vanished, however, when Israeli and Palestinian negotiators soon failed to agree over the size and location of the proposed redeployments. When Israel announced in March 1997 that it would begin construction of a Jewish settlement on what Palestinians consider disputed East Jerusalem land, Arafat broke off negotiations. Since that time, despite on and off negotiations, intermittent summit meetings and intensive U.S. efforts to help the parties reach common ground, negotiations have been at an impasse, and no redeployment has occurred.

Another factor in the postponement of municipal elections is that as Palestinians' concerns about the

viability of the peace process have mounted, P.A. officials and the Palestinian public have turned their attention away from elections, toward political concerns considered more urgent, such as the status of Jerusalem, the potential for further Israeli redeployment from the West Bank, and tensions between the P.A. and Hamas. Some commentators have remarked that the 'lack of popular outcry' over the postponement of the local elections indicates that Palestinians are not really interested in electoral democracy, beyond their initial experience in January 1996. This conclusion would be erroneous. Palestinian political leaders, including PLC members, frequently have raised concerns about how long the MLG's appointment of mayors and council members will continue, and ordinary Palestinians repeatedly have expressed their preference for elections in public opinion polls.⁶ But it is clear that in the current political climate in the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinians consider other issues more pressing than municipal elections.

A third factor, pointed out by some analysts, has been the reluctance of the P.A. leadership to call for elections of any kind when they are feeling vulnerable. The stagnation in the peace process, as well as some of the measures Arafat has undertaken to limit opposition to the peace process and maintain security control, has caused many Palestinians to question whether the P.A. can really 'deliver' land and peace to the Palestinians. P.A. leaders are apparently not eager to call for elections that might serve to express popular opposition.

⁶ See, for example, various polls conducted by the Center for Palestine Research in Studies (CPRS) in Nablus, the West Bank on this issue.

Chapter 3 Background to Municipal Government Elections in the West Bank and Gaza

When municipal government elections finally are held in the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinians living in most of the villages, towns and cities in those territories will have a long-awaited opportunity to establish democratically-chosen local governments. These elections will be a crucial step on the road to self-rule and a democratic Palestinian polity. Building effective local councils will help to improve the daily lives of Palestinians; freely and fairly elected representatives are an integral part of this effectiveness. Local government, with its mandate to provide water, electricity, road repair, waste collection and other local services, as well as to issue business licenses and collect taxes, is the form of government closest to the people. Therefore the ability of local council officials to respond to the needs and demands of their constituencies will be a key factor in Palestinians' assessment of the benefits of self-rule. Free and fair elections will provide an opportunity for Palestinians to select the leaders whom they believe will be most effective in delivering local services.

In contrast to the Palestinian Legislative Council, an institution of governance created within the framework of the Oslo Accords, local government existed prior to the era of Palestinian Authority. Under the British Mandate, and then under Jordanian and Egyptian rule, various forms of municipal government and local councils existed in the West Bank and Gaza, although suffrage was limited to taxpayers (generally only wealthy notables). After the Israeli Occupation began in 1967, Israel more or less maintained the municipal government structure, and allowed local councils to convene. But they imposed so many restrictions, such as who could serve as council members or as mayors, prohibitions on levying local taxes and on issuing business licenses, and severe budgetary limitations, that municipal government, both in letter and in spirit, was largely powerless.

No local elections have taken place in the West Bank since 1976, when the Israelis convened municipal elections (using the Jordanian Election Law). Of the mayors elected at that time, all but one was eventually deposed, deported or assassinated. The last local elections in Gaza were held in 1948, under the British Mandate. During the period of Israeli occupation, all councils in Gaza were appointed, depriving Gazans of the opportunity to select local government leaders.

Under the P.A., new possibilities exist for more representative and empowered municipal government. Credible and competitive local elections are an essential part of building effective local

government. These elections will also be the second opportunity, following on the January 1996 elections, for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza to vote for their leaders under self-rule. In this way, municipal elections can also lay the groundwork for an impartial and open electoral system in the Palestinian self-rule areas. Also, it is likely that many in the new generation of Palestinian leaders will rise through the ranks through participation in municipal government.

Which Municipalities Will Elect Councils and Mayors?

The MLG has established five categories of municipalities in the West Bank and Gaza, in which four elections will be held. According to the most recent information available to IFES, 325 municipalities --villages, towns and cities-- are eligible to elect local councils.⁷

To the best of IFES' knowledge, the only document explaining this categorization is a proposal prepared by the MLG's Department of Inspection and Follow-Up in Summer 1996.⁸ This proposal appears to have acquired official status, although it is not a legal document. It is unusual, in comparison with the legal framework for local government in most countries, that this information is not presented in the Local Government Law or the Election Law. The Local Government Law states only that the MLG is responsible for identifying the location and boundaries of the local council areas.⁹ The Election Law makes no mention of this issue. IFES has strongly recommended that such information be promulgated in a formal legal manner in advance of the elections, as is normal practice in other countries.

The MLG proposal lists municipal areas in the West Bank and Gaza under five categories, based on population.¹⁰ (Refugee camp areas are not included.) It is important to note that councils in most of these municipalities already exist, as hold-overs from the municipal government system established

⁷ At times the Palestinian press has mentioned a higher number, such as 374, or even 500. The shifting figures suggest either that the media does not have accurate information, or more likely, that the final number has not been yet determined and municipalities are still being identified.

⁸ Ministry of Local Government, Department of Follow-up and Inspection, 'A Proposal for the Structure of Palestinian Local Government,' MLG/Jericho, 1996. See Appendix for an English translation of the Proposal.

⁹ The MLG has been undertaking categorization and classification of municipal areas since the summer of 1996, well before the Local Government Law was promulgated, which raises questions about the authority under which the MLG has taken these actions.

¹⁰ It is worth noting that accurate population figures are difficult to obtain for the West Bank and Gaza, due to the inability of Palestinian researchers to carry out a census during the Occupation. Since the establishment of self-rule, the P.A. has emphasized the need to conduct its own census. In January 1998, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) undertook a census of the West Bank and Gaza (and attempted to survey Arab East Jerusalem). Results of this census are not yet publicly available (as of April 1998). Since the majority of municipal government categorizations were made during 1996 and 1997, in the absence of new census data, some observers have questioned the accuracy of the population data upon which the MLG's classifications were made.

under Jordanian and Egyptian rule and maintained under Israeli occupation, but that council members and mayors are currently appointed.

Category A: These are so-called 'main municipalities' in the West Bank and Gaza. They are to elect a 15-person council and a mayor. There are nine main municipalities in the West Bank (Qalqilia, Jenin, Ramallah, Jericho, Hebron, Tulkarem, Nablus, al-Bireh, Bethlehem) and five in Gaza (Khan Younis, Gaza, Deir al-Balah, Rafah, Jabalia).

Category B: 'Urban centers' whose population exceeds 8,000 people, 'or which were established since a long time ago,' have councils with 13 members and a mayor. There are currently 41 such centers in the West Bank and Gaza.

Category C: Municipalities whose population is between 4,000 and 7,999 and 'those which were recently established,' will elect councils with 11 members and a mayor. 47 Category C municipalities have been identified in the West Bank and Gaza.

Category D: Municipalities whose residents number between 1,000 and 3,999 will elect a nine-person council and a mayor. 220 West Bank and Gaza towns and villages fall under Category D.

Category E: Villages with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants. These villages will not elect councils; instead, the MLG will appoint Local Development Committees of seven members. The MLG has identified 52 such villages.

As of April 1998, the only West Bank municipalities under full Palestinian control were the nine Category A municipalities. The other 284 West Bank council areas remain in so-called Zone B and Zone C. All 32 municipalities in Gaza are under the full control of the Palestinian Authority, as most territory in Gaza was transferred to the Palestinian Authority in 1994.

Appointment of Councils

Since the summer of 1996, the MLG has appointed council members and mayors in many municipalities in advance of the long-awaited elections. The MLG states that since a municipal government structure already exists, and must be able to fulfill its duties in the interim period before elections, appointments are required to fill council seats and mayorships vacated during the Israeli Occupation due to death, removal from office or resignation. Although some appointed municipal leaders have proven popular and effective in delivering local services under self-rule, the policy of appointments has caused controversy in some quarters. Palestinians have complained that appointing leaders, while perhaps justifiable as a short-term measure, is not an acceptable substitute for

elections because it denies voters their fundamental right to elect their leaders. Some critics of the P.A. have charged that the Authority has used the delay in elections to fill the councils, particularly in the most important cities, with supporters of the P.A. and particularly of P.A. *Ra'ees* Yasser Arafat, and that there is no formal mechanism for public consent of these appointments. They charge that these appointees will be well-positioned to run as incumbents, with an unfair advantage to win, when the municipal elections are finally held.¹¹

The Legal Framework

The basic legal framework for elected municipal government is found in two pieces of legislation approved by the Palestinian Legislative Council and ratified by Arafat. These are the Palestinian Local Councils Election Law (referred to in this report as 'the Election Law'), signed into law by Arafat in December 1996, and the Law for Palestinian Local Councils (referred to here as 'the Local Government Law'), promulgated by Arafat in October 1997. Indeed, these are the first (and as of this writing, only) two pieces of legislation promulgated by the P.A. As the Minister of Local Government has pointed out, with the passage of both laws, technically the P.A. is able to call for and hold elections whenever it chooses.

The new Local Government Law is historic because it unifies the local government legal systems of the West Bank and Gaza. The creation of a unified, clarified Palestinian legal system has been one of the most important objectives of the first stages of self-rule. Previously, local government in the West Bank and Gaza operated under a complicated mixture of Ottoman custom British Mandate, Egyptian and Jordanian legislation, and Israeli military decrees. The new law also provides for devolution of many powers to the local level.

In terms of the Election Law, some observers have questioned the P.A.'s decision to create a new law for the local elections, rather than adapt the law used for the 1996 elections, as this is generally considered a satisfactory law as per international standards. Indeed, it is more common practice internationally for a single law to govern all elections held in a particular country or territory. The reason for new legislation in this case is not entirely clear. Palestinian leaders, however, have long focused on preparing a distinct local government law. Recognizing the importance of democratically elected local government in the transition to self-rule, officials of the P.L.O. and later the P.A. began drafting legislation pertaining to local councils and local council elections soon after the signing of the Declaration of Principles in September 1993. In fact, the original committee appointed by Chairman Arafat to advise Palestinian negotiators on the elections called for in the

¹¹ For example, A 10-12 April 1997 poll conducted by CPRS found that of 1,314 West Bank and Gaza Palestinians surveyed, forty-two percent said they would vote for the appointed mayors and local councilmembers currently in place when elections are held.

D.O.P., and to begin planning for these elections, was titled 'The Committee on Elections and Local Government' (CELG). Its chairman was Dr. Sa'eb 'Eraqat, who now serves as Minister of Local Government. At one point, some Palestinian officials apparently even envisioned that municipal elections might precede the legislative and *Ra'ees* elections, or be held on the same day.

In early 1994, the CELG prepared a draft local election law. Later, the European Union, which provided comprehensive technical assistance to the CELG, and later the Central Election Commission (CEC) which replaced the CELG, in the organization of the January 1996 elections, prepared another draft law. This law was criticized by Palestinian officials and discarded. By the time the IFES local elections assistance project had begun in Spring 1996, yet another draft law had been prepared, this one by officials in the Ministry of Local Government. Some observers have noted that it closely resembles the Jordanian Municipal Government Election Law. It was a version of this MLG-prepared law that was ultimately submitted to the PLC; indeed, it was the first full piece of legislation to be considered by the Council.

The draft law was submitted to the PLC's judiciary committee in June 1996. This committee recommended revisions. The revised draft was sent to the full council, which recommended more changes and sent it back to committee. The PLC passed the law in October 1996 after final debate in the plenary session. Despite the stretch of time over which the law was pending before the Council, however, the debate both in committee and plenary sessions focused upon only two articles: the first, stating that residents of West Bank and Gaza refugee camps should not be allowed to take part in elections for local councils,¹² and the second, that candidates for mayor must have a bachelor's degree (both articles were ultimately jettisoned). In fact, the legislation was approved with such little debate that some council members were not even aware that it in fact had been passed and were under the impression, after that day's PLC session concluded, that it had been sent back to committee for further revisions.

Some observers felt that with the rushed debate, the PLC had squandered an opportunity for meaningful, detailed discussion that would lead to an improved process for the municipal elections. They considered the new law vague and problematic in some sections, and therefore as a step backwards from the legal framework for the January 1996 elections. Many, including IFES, had hoped that certain PLC members, who as candidates had been among the most passionate about the need to rectify shortcomings in the 1996 electoral process through an improved legal framework for municipal elections, would stimulate an in-depth discussion of the new law. The drafting of the 1995 Law had elicited vigorous public discussion from a wide cross-section of Palestinians. Many pointed

¹² See Chapter 6 for an explanation of the refugee camp residents voting issue.

to this discussion as an example of the debate and pluralism that characterizes Palestinian political culture. In fact, the PLC's consideration of the Election Law, and the lack of public debate surrounding it, illustrate another characteristic of the Palestinian political process, one particularly salient since Netanyahu's election and the ensuing stalemate in negotiations. This is the tendency for 'existential' concerns about the overarching political situation -the peace process and the future of the Palestinian polity- to overshadow the 'technical details' of nation-building, such as an election law, considered less significant. The PLC, as a forum for debate of such existential issues, is particularly vulnerable among P.A. institutions to this tendency: its legislative agenda must frequently be revised on short notice to allow for debate of fast-breaking developments in the peace process. In this way, passage of the Election Law reflected the volatile political context in which it was considered. During the summer of 1996, the overriding concerns of the PLC were the future of the peace process and criticisms of the deteriorating human rights situation under the P.A. When the Election Law was passed --some would say rushed through-- in October 1996, it was only weeks after severe unrest and violence had swept through the West Bank and Gaza, in protest against the Israeli government's excavation of an ancient tunnel near the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. At this time, in the face of mounting concerns about the viability of the P.A. and future prospects for expansion of Palestinian sovereignty, the PLC seemed eager to approve legislation that seemed to emphasize the nationalism and unity of the Palestinians in the face of increasing threats from Israel.

The Administrative/Organizational Framework for Local Elections

A lack of clarity exists regarding who, or what institution or governing body, is in charge of the electoral process. Similar confusion existed prior to the January 1996 elections, and as then, it is likely that this ambiguity will not be resolved until absolutely politically necessary. While this is perhaps not surprising in the Palestinian political environment, it does greatly hinder any advance planning for the local elections.

One area of ambiguity concerns the role of the election commission. According to the Election Law, Article 2, the Supreme Elections Committee (SEC) is responsible for organizing the municipal elections.¹³ The Minister of Local Government, who is the SEC's chairman, announces the date of the elections (Article 3). Arafat appointed 14 fourteen members to the SEC in January 1997. But the SEC has only met a few times since then, and it lacks staff or an office. Therefore although the SEC technically exists, it is not yet an empowered, active body. This has effectively put the MLG in charge of the process in the interim, which some feel raises questions about a conflict of interest since the MLG oversees local government. The situation has been complicated by the fact that Dr. Sa'eb 'Eraqat, Minister of Local Government and SEC Chairman, also serves as one of the chief

¹³ The SEC is also sometimes referred to as 'The Higher Committee for Local Elections,' or the HCLE. IFES use the term 'SEC' to refer to the election commission.

negotiators with the Israelis. This position requires him to spend considerable time away from the MLG.

Also unclear is the role of the Central Election Commission (CEC), which oversaw the January 1996 elections, in the municipal elections process. The CEC was formed in December 1995, by a decree issued by Arafat, as a permanent institution. Although its members resigned soon after the January 1996 elections and it has since been effectively defunct, some observers have noted that it could be revived, which would create confusion about which body is ultimately in charge of the Palestinian electoral process. For example, a former CEC and current SEC member described the SEC as a 'subset of the overall permanent election commission, which is the CEC. The CEC has ultimate control over the process; it is the higher body.'¹⁴

A further administrative issue concerns the availability of election staff. Because municipal elections were expected to take place soon after the 1996 elections, it was assumed that the basic organizational structure assembled for those elections, including staff in the West Bank and Gaza, would be retained for the municipal elections. Due to the continued postponement of the elections, however, this structure has dissolved, and staff have been assigned to positions in other ministries or have moved on to other jobs. This means that much of the institutional memory from the 1996 elections has disappeared, and may not be easily accessible in the future. The MLG's Jericho and Gaza offices retain only a small election staff. While this is understandable and perhaps appropriate given the current low level of activity on the election front, the MLG and the SEC still need to be ready to identify, mobilize and train sufficient numbers of election staff to organize and carry out the municipal elections.

Special Features of Municipal Elections

For two main reasons, the organization of municipal elections will be more complicated than the January 1996 elections, even taking into account the experience gained in those first elections. First and foremost, municipal elections, as a rule, are always more logistically challenging than national elections because they involve hundreds of different elections taking place on the same day. In the West Bank and Gaza, according to the Election Law, each municipality constitutes an electoral district; therefore there will be at least 325 electoral districts, each with a race for more than ten council seats and many mayorships. There may be as many as 7,000 candidates for 3,200 seats. This is in contrast to the Legislative Council and *Ra'ees* elections, in which there were just 16 electoral districts (and one national constituency, for the *Ra'ees*) and only 674 candidates for the 88 seats on the Council. Also, as in 1996, many logistical aspects of the election process will demand close coordination with the Israeli authorities. The current geographic design of the West Bank (and to a

¹⁴ Personal communication with IFES, May 1997.

lesser extent the Gaza Strip), with pockets of Palestinian-controlled areas surrounded by Israeli-controlled territory, means that transport of election materials and workers through Israeli checkpoints within and between the West Bank and Gaza will require Israeli consent. Palestinians involved in the 1996 elections have spoken of the 'goodwill' between the two sides that facilitated some very difficult logistical arrangements. Given the current level of tension that exists between Palestinian and Israeli officials, however, this 'goodwill' may not be easy to come by for the municipal elections process. Second, these elections are likely to involve a much greater degree of political competition. In contrast to the 1996 elections, which were boycotted by the main Palestinian opposition groups, many opposition factions and movements, including Hamas, have stated their intention to participate in municipal elections.¹⁵ This will heighten the need for sound preparations and effective, impartial management of the process by the P.A.

Despite these challenges, Palestinians are not likely to be as patient with technical glitches, political oversights, and procedural shortcomings as they were for the January 1996 elections. They expect professional administration of the municipal elections, since, in the words of one

Palestinian human rights activist, "We have already held one election, so there is no excuse not to learn from our mistakes and improve the second time."

¹⁵ In the case of Hamas, apparently because Hamas does not consider municipal government elections, or municipal government itself, as part of the Oslo process, since it existed previously. Therefore, apparently it does not consider participation in municipal elections an endorsement of the peace process, which it officially rejects. But Hamas' formal participation has not been officially announced.

Chapter 4 Project Objectives and Activities

In the uncertain political environment prevailing in the West Bank and Gaza, IFES remained engaged with MLG officials and with other key Palestinian decision-makers to accomplish two main objectives. The first objective was to help election officials, as well as other authorities likely to play an important role in the organization of municipal elections, attain the knowledge, skills and capacity necessary to organize credible elections on very short notice. Like the January 1996 elections, whose date was officially announced only two months ahead of time, the municipal elections are likely to take place without much lead time. The second objective was to provide information and guidance to increase Palestinian authorities' understanding of the importance of free and fair elections and good election administration in general, and of how a sustainable, democratic electoral system-- of which municipal elections are an important part-- can be established in the long-term in the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinian Authority is very much a transitional entity, in which democratic ideas and practices are struggling, often with difficulty, to take root. IFES' assistance served to help these ideas take root by highlighting the importance of democratic elections within the P.A.'s system of governance, and to offer specific information about how such elections could be carried out in the Palestinian context.

Throughout the IFES project, IFES staff and consultants maintained a continuous, on-site dialogue with key P.A. decision makers, election officials and staff about the organization of municipal elections. In response to requests from the MLG and SEC members, IFES provided recommendations, background information, and training not otherwise available in the West Bank and Gaza to enhance Palestinians' capacity to carry out credible, competitive, participatory elections. IFES drew upon its knowledge of best election practices worldwide, of the experiences of other transitional democracies, of lessons learned in the January 1996 elections, and of the unique political environment in the West Bank and Gaza.

IFES' original project objectives and activities were formulated based on the assumption that the elections would be held by late summer, 1996 (six months from the commencement of the grant in March 1996). These objectives and activities involved intensive, short-term technical assistance in preparing for and holding municipal elections, and were to address most election preparation and election day needs. IFES assistance was to be provided through the IFES West Bank Resource Center established in early 1995 and draw upon IFES' international and local staff, as well as equipment, already in place from IFES' 1994 and 1995 programs in the West Bank and Gaza.

The original project objectives were:

- ▶ To strengthen key democratic processes and practices through supporting the creation of an impartial and open electoral legal framework, the first test of which will be the organization of the local elections.
- ▶ To foster the organization of free, fair and efficient local elections, the first in the history of the West Bank and Gaza.
- ▶ To help create a new generation of leadership, emerging through the local elections
- ▶ To build the capacity of local election officials and create a unique body of trained election officials in the Arab region.
- ▶ To contribute specific commodities, materials, equipment and supplies required for effective administration of the local elections, aiming particularly at the enhancement of voter participation and the integrity and security of the voting process.
- ▶ To help the Palestinian electorate be better informed about the electoral process through the dissemination of information about democratic electoral systems and avenues for effective participation.

To meet these objectives, IFES was to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Local Government, and to the Supreme Elections Committee, after it was created and became an active institution, in the following areas:

- ▶ creating a local government election law
- ▶ revision of the existing voter registry; preparation of that registry through a computerized system
- ▶ design and delivery of refresher training for pollworkers
- ▶ assistance in election materials management
- ▶ procurement of election supplies
- ▶ design and implementation of a public information campaign for the municipal elections

Because the elections did not take place during the period of the IFES assistance project, nor did the MLG or the SEC undertake substantial preparations in the areas listed above, IFES was not able to carry out most of the activities as originally envisioned. IFES did, however, strive to provide as much assistance as possible under the circumstances.

The continuing delay in holding local elections had obvious implications for the IFES project. During 1997, as the prospects for elections diminished, the lack of an empowered counterpart institution, such as a functioning election commission, and the number of issues in the election process that were undetermined and required decision-making at the highest levels of the Palestinian

leadership, made it increasingly difficult for IFES to provide assistance in the manner and scope originally envisioned. For instance, it was not possible for IFES to provide anything beyond general recommendations about pollworker training (such as assistance in the preparation of pollworker training manuals) until the registration and voting procedures were clarified; since the Election Law is not sufficiently detailed in this area, this would likely require, at the very least, discussions among and the drafting of by-laws by the SEC, whose legal ability to draft such by-laws was not clear either according to the Law. The P.A. did not want to take such actions when the prospects for elections seemed dim.

In summer 1997, as the stalemate in the peace process made municipal elections appear less and less imminent, IFES and USAID, in coordination with the MLG, developed revised project objectives and activities. IFES was to carry these out between the end of August and late December 1997, assuming the elections would still be postponed by that time and the original project activities still not possible to implement. The revised activities focused on providing guidance in the fundamentals of organizing credible elections, and information and recommendations upon which decision-makers could draw when the time arrived to begin serious election preparations. To this end, the revised activities were:

- ▶ preparation of a work plan for the MLG, outlining what the decisions the MLG/SEC must make, and what activities or preparations it could meaningfully undertake, before a credible election date was announced;
- ▶ preparation, in Arabic, of a series of detailed background papers explaining the pros and cons of various options for the organization of the elections (such as whether or not to use a voters register), and recommending action that should be taken on each issue discussed.

These background papers were eventually revised, updated, expanded, and compiled into a comprehensive, Arabic-language 'Manual for the Planning and Organization of Local Elections in the West Bank and Gaza,' prepared for the use of MLG, SEC and other Palestinian officials, as well as for current and future election staff; and

- ▶ organizational training workshops for SEC members and MLG election staff on the material in the background papers and the Manual.

The emphasis under the revised project plan was on the provision of detailed written material, supplemented by regular dialogue with MLG and SEC officials and by training workshops, to be used as a reference after the IFES project was completed and immediate on-site technical assistance

no longer available.

This chapter describes the activities accomplished or partially accomplished under the original and revised project plans.

I. Original Project Activities

Creating a Local Government Election Law

IFES provided expert assistance to the MLG in drafting an election law for the municipal elections. As explained in Chapter 2, the P.A. chose to prepare a new law for these elections. To assist in this process, from March through September 1996 as drafts were prepared, IFES provided MLG officials with exemplary electoral legislation from several countries. During the drafting process, IFES also provided detailed comments on various draft versions, with recommendations for improvements and clarifications, and met regularly with MLG officials to discuss these recommendations. IFES also responded to the MLG's requests for comparative information from other countries on specific areas of the law, such as the vote count and candidate registration.

The PLC approved the Law in October 1996. Unfortunately, most of IFES' recommendations were not reflected in the final version of the Law. As noted in Chapter 2, IFES, as well as Palestinian and other international observers, was not fully satisfied with the final version of the Election Law because many sections lacked sufficient detail and therefore did not fully explain how the electoral process would work. To help the MLG remedy this situation, IFES provided detailed recommendations to the MLG and the SEC concerning the preparation of by-laws, also known as executive regulations, to supplement and clarify the Election Law. In the 1996 elections, no comprehensive regulations had been prepared, and gaps in the law were instead addressed through decrees issued, in a piecemeal fashion, by Arafat. To avoid this highly unsatisfactory arrangement for the municipal elections, IFES recommended that the SEC prepare by-laws well in advance of the elections and widely distribute them to candidates and the voters. To enhance its capacity to do so, IFES prepared detailed comments for the MLG on the sections of the Law requiring clarification, along with sample language for the regulations, and provided several examples of by-laws from other countries, such as Ghana and South Africa. IFES also facilitated an Arabic-language information exchange between MLG election staff and the Yemeni election commission regarding the exemplary by-laws prepared by election officials in Yemen.

IFES also strove to promote public awareness of the Election Law. IFES translated into English and made available to the public the various drafts of the Law, and was consistently the only local or international organization in the West Bank and Gaza providing not only the text and translation, but also analysis, of the Law. In January 1997, after Arafat ratified the Law, IFES prepared for the

MLG the official English translation of the Law. IFES also coordinated the publication of the Arabic and English versions of the law, with project funds covering the cost of printing 30,000 copies of the law in Arabic and 6,000 in English. IFES also advised the MLG on distribution of the Law by preparing a dissemination plan.

IFES assistance in the area of electoral legislation originally was also to include the organization of two small public workshops on the draft legislation. The MLG chose not hold these workshops, so this activity was not carried out.

Revision of the Existing Voter Registry; Preparation of That Registry Through a Computerized System

IFES was to provide technical assistance to Palestinian election authorities in designing and implementing a plan for the revision of the voters register. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), a semi-autonomous institution based in Ramallah, the West Bank, had prepared the voters register in late 1995 for the January 1996 elections. This register, created through a massive door-to-door canvass of voters (Palestinians age 18 and older) in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, includes about one million names, or approximately 85 percent of those eligible to vote in the 1996 elections. Because the municipal elections were originally expected to take place six to nine months after the 1996 elections, Palestinian election officials believed the existing register would still be accurate enough to use, after corrections were made through a public revision period, for the municipal elections. The revision exercise was to give Palestinian voters the chance to correct errors on the list, or to register if they had not previously done so. IFES assistance was to include performing a professional audit of the existing register to determine its accuracy and to estimate the percentage of errors, helping the PCBS improve its computer capacity to update the register, training registration workers and data entry workers, and covering the costs of printing of voters lists and registration forms.

IFES' assistance could not be completed as planned because, due to the delay in holding elections, the revision of the registry did not occur during the project period. Given that registration/preparation of the voter register is one of the most important events in any electoral process, however, throughout the project IFES provided verbal and written recommendations to those likely to be involved in the revision process, and responded for requests for information about how other countries have organized their revision/registration processes effectively.

For example, in June 1996, IFES Project Consultant and Election Systems Specialist Juan Rial traveled to the West Bank and Gaza to gather information, and make initial recommendations about, current plans for the revision process. As a first step to assess the quality of the register, Mr. Rial

conducted an audit of very limited portions of the registry made available to him by PCBS. His assessment of these portions was that they contained sufficient information (name, address, date of birth and identification card number) for each registered voter. But he was still concerned about errors in the register, due to the high number of complaints expressed about the register on election day 1996. He strongly recommended that the PCBS complete the input of corrections from the January 1996 elections as soon as possible, since this would be an important step in improving the accuracy of the list, and provided detailed written instructions for how this might best be accomplished. He also prepared a general outline and time line for the revision process.¹⁶

In May 1997, Mr. Rial traveled again to the West Bank to assess PCBS' computer resources and staff capacity, its plans for avoiding repetition of the major technical errors noted in the November 1995 registration exercise, and its proposed budget for the registration/revision exercise (presented to the MLG in spring 1997). Unfortunately, though PCBS had previously welcomed IFES' assistance, upon Mr. Rial's arrival, PCBS officials expressed to IFES that all plans for registration were in place and that no outside assistance or coordination would be needed. In the absence of PCBS' partnership, IFES was able to present and discuss its recommendations only to the MLG. Mr. Rial's recommendations focused on how the revision exercise could be carried out more cost-effectively than the PCBS' proposed budget suggested.

One of the challenges concerning registration/revision is the fact that no definitive plans for the registration/revision process have been made, and the planning process now appears frozen until the prospect of elections is more likely.¹⁷ This leaves two central questions unresolved. First, who will need to be included on the register? The issue of who will be able to vote in local elections, and therefore who will be on the register and who omitted, has not been decided. Among others, pertains to Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, and residents of West Bank refugee camps, who are on the existing register because they took part in the January 1996 elections. (See Chapter 6 for a discussion of these issues.) Second, which institution will be in charge of the registration/revision process? As noted above, the register is currently housed at the PCBS; the PCBS has assumed the lead in the revision process according to the Election Law, which states that 'the registry will be prepared in cooperation with the PCBS' [*bi al-tanawwal ma'a al-Maktab al-Markazi lil-ihisa'at al-filistiniyya*]. However, the phrase "in cooperation with" is subject to interpretation as to the scope of PCBS's role in the process. PCBS officials have stated to IFES that they assume that the PCBS will be in charge

¹⁶ Since this audit, IFES was not able to obtain copies of the register for review, nor would the PCBS provide definitive information about the status of the register (i.e., whether corrections from the January 1996 elections had been made).

¹⁷ As IFES points out in the Manual (see Appendix), after the postponement of the elections, by the time the elections take place, the current register may be so out of date (more than three years) that in order to have an accurate and credible register, it may be necessary to conduct an entirely new registration to create a new register.

of the entire process, from updating the register used for the 1996 elections with corrections from election day, to preparing the register for local elections, including training not only data entry workers, but all registration field workers, to conducting a public information campaign for registration/revision. IFES has strongly advised against this arrangement and provided written guidance on alternative scenarios to the MLG (see the Manual).

Design and Delivery of Refresher Training for Pollworkers

IFES assistance was to help the MLG/SEC to prepare new training manuals and to train a group of core trainers, who would then train the revision workers/pollworkers. This plan was premised upon local elections taking place close on the heels of the January 1996 elections, and therefore upon pollworkers (most of whom were expected to be the same pollworkers who worked in the January elections) needing only a short refresher training course. IFES did not carry out this activity because, with the postponement of local elections, selection and training of pollworkers was deemed premature. Furthermore, IFES did not prepare draft training manuals (and strongly advised against the MLG doing so) because, as is noted elsewhere in the report, the procedures in which election workers will need to be trained, such as administration of registration and voting, are either not established at all, or not explained clearly in the Election Law. These procedures must be clarified before accurate training manuals can be written and any training can take place. However, IFES was able to interview pollworkers involved in the 1996 elections, and incorporated their recommendations for improvements needed for future training into guidance presented to the MLG. IFES also compiled for the MLG a list of the core trainers and pollworkers who worked in the January 1996 elections, so that contact information would be available if elections were announced on short notice.

Assistance in Materials Management: Creating a Logistics and Deployment Plan for the Elections

The lack of a practical, contingency-tested and comprehensive logistics plan --detailing the process of transporting election materials and manpower within and between the West Bank and Gaza before and after the election-- was one of the major shortcomings of the January 1996 elections. IFES was to assist the MLG in preparing a logistics plan, as well as in drafting procurement requirements for all election materials.

To this end, in June 1996, IFES Consultant Juan Rial prepared for the MLG a comprehensive logistics plan, which lays out a detailed time line for every part of the electoral process, emphasizing the areas in which IFES assistance was anticipated, such as registration, pollworker training, procurement of supplies, transport of materials, and contingency planning. IFES expanded upon this written plan in numerous discussions with MLG election staff, pointing out to them the most

important things to keep in mind when designing a successful logistics plan for municipal elections.

Procurement

Based on the expectation that local elections would take place within several months of the January 1996 elections, the MLG presumed that many of the materials used in those elections would be available for the local elections. IFES was to assist the MLG in conducting an inventory of all unused materials, to conduct maintenance on some supplies, and to order some of the necessary supplies. IFES proposed to cover the cost of printing ballots, training manuals, posters, and the production of identification cards for election officials; the cost of repairing ballot boxes used in the January 1996 elections; and the cost of polling station supplies, including voting screens. IFES was not able to conduct an inventory of all remaining supplies from the January 1996 elections because unfortunately, these materials were never collected after the election for storage in one place and therefore, the MLG was not certain what existed or where it was located. IFES was told that many supplies had been lost, given to other ministries, or damaged (such as the cardboard voting screens purchased by the European Union). In December 1996, however, IFES was able to organize an inventory of the ballot boxes used in the 1996 elections, since these items were accessible, being stored in two warehouses in Jericho and in Gaza. The inventory counted 580 boxes needing repair (because of damage in the election) for re-use in the municipal elections. IFES project funds covered the repair of these boxes, which was completed in January 1997. As of this writing, all ballot boxes are stored in the West Bank at the Jericho headquarters of the MLG, in Abu Dis, and at the MLG Gaza headquarters in Gaza City. IFES anticipates that all other election supplies will have to be purchased for the local elections. IFES project funds also covered the purchase of maps of the West Bank, showing Zones A, B and C, and Gaza, for the MLG's use in logistics planning. The maps were the only election commodity purchased under this grant.

Public Information Campaign

IFES was to provide assistance to the MLG in developing a cost-effective, non-partisan information campaign to inform voters about the role of local government under self-rule, the importance of participating in the elections, and the specifics of the registration/revision and voting procedures. IFES was to assist the MLG in designing information materials (including public information spots for radio and television and written materials such as posters and brochures) and to cover the costs of designing and producing most of these materials. In addition, IFES was to cover some of the costs associated with setting up a media center at the MLG. This media center was to serve as a central information center from which all official election information would be conveyed, from before the election, to election day, to election night.

In June 1996, IFES media consultant Hank Valentino traveled to the West Bank and Gaza and prepared for the MLG an initial plan for the voter information campaign. The IFES plan presented a

cost-effective strategy for using a combination of media (radio, television, brochures, posters, etc.) to provide non-partisan information messages to voters on registration/revision of the register, the role of local government, voting rights and procedures, and other election day information, and suggested the timing of each stage of the campaign. Drawing upon voting statistics and analysis from the 1996 elections, the IFES plan also recommended that the information campaign target three population sectors whose participation in those elections was less than anticipated: rural women, men between 18 and 25 years old, and men older than 35.

In January 1997, after the MLG publicly announced a June 1997 election date, Mr. Valentino traveled to the West Bank to assist the MLG in the production of two basic public service announcements (PSAs) for Palestinian television stations. The purpose of these PSAs, which were to be aired immediately after the election date was announced, was to encourage Palestinians to check the voters register to ensure that their names, addresses and identification card information was present and accurate, or to register to vote if they had not done so previously. In coordination with the MLG, Mr. Valentino selected a Palestinian production company, Star 2000, based in al-Ram, the West Bank, and oversaw the production of the two PSAs. These included all basic information except the dates of revision/registration and other details to be added once the date of the election, and of the registration period, was known. Final edits --such as adding the dates of the election-- have not been made, pending the scheduling of the elections.

Additional Activity

IFES and USAID recognized that IFES' technical and material assistance, though substantial, would not meet all needs associated with the electoral process. Therefore, IFES proposed to assist the MLG in its efforts to secure additional funding for the local elections from other international donors. IFES succeeded in securing commitments from the governments of Japan and Norway to cover election day costs (such as pollworkers' stipends and related expenses, and vehicles for election officials), from the government of Canada, to cover training of security forces and candidates' representatives, and from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Mission in Jerusalem, to cover election day expenses and training of election workers. As of this writing, these funds were committed on paper, but had not been released pending the announcement of an election date.

II. Revised Objectives/Activities

As discussed above, in summer 1997, IFES, having completed all possible activities under the original project plan, modified the objectives and activities, in consultation with the MLG. The revised activities were approved by USAID in August 1997. Based on the revised activities, the

project was extended until December 31, 1997. The end-date of the project was later extended until January 31, 1998 to allow for completion of close-out activities.

The activities during the extension period focused on providing information and guidance to Palestinian election officials to enhance their knowledge of election issues and their ability to make well-informed decisions about how to organize local elections. First, IFES drafted short planning documents/background papers for the MLG, including a work plan that discussed the hierarchy of decisions that the MLG needs to make before election preparations could begin in earnest. From October through December 1997, IFES expanded upon these documents to prepare a comprehensive Arabic-language manual for the organization of municipal elections. The purpose of the Manual was to provide practical written guidance to Palestinian election officials, with the goal of enhancing their ability to make well-informed decisions about the conduct of elections, and to organize credible elections on short notice. The Manual covers in detail the following election administration issues, situated in the context of West Bank and Gaza:

- ▶ analysis of and commentary on the Election Law; recommendations for preparing by-laws
- ▶ the administration of the elections: forming an effective election commission, the importance of election staff
- ▶ ballot design
- ▶ facilitating the voting procedure for illiterate voters
- ▶ a comprehensive election calendar
- ▶ options for registration/revision of the voters register
- ▶ election worker training
- ▶ voter education

Preparation of the Manual

First, IFES assembled various documents, including background papers prepared earlier in the project, the work plan prepared for the MLG, and papers prepared by IFES in its technical assistance projects in other countries. This material was then synthesized for inclusion in the Manual. IFES next prepared a list of information that needed to be gathered or updated. In October, IFES/Washington project staff traveled to the West Bank and Gaza, where they met with officials from the MLG, members of the SEC, Palestinian NGOs concerned with the election process, Palestinians involved in the administration of the 1996 elections, and other actors to gather information about lessons learned from the January 1996 elections and about any new plans regarding municipal elections. IFES' local field staff supplemented this research. In November, IFES completed a draft English version of the Manual, and prepared appendices including sample election forms and a recommended list of election supplies. IFES/Washington program staff and selected Palestinians involved in the 1996 elections reviewed the draft for accuracy and for the

suitability of IFES' recommendations in the Palestinian context. In December, after revising the English version, the Manual and appendices were translated into Arabic, edited, and formatted for publication. The final English and Arabic versions were completed in late December. During the final IFES visit to the West Bank and Gaza in January 1998, IFES presented the Manual to Palestinian officials, NGOs, the donor community, and USAID.

Workshops

In addition, IFES also organized two workshops in Jericho and Gaza City, on January 26 and 27, respectively, on the Manual. (IFES distributed the Manual in advance so all participants would have a chance to review it carefully before the workshops.) These workshops were attended by SEC members and MLG election staff, and indeed were designed to initiate a dialogue, heretofore absent, between officials and staff on the election issues presented by IFES. Minister Eraqat presided over the Jericho workshop and assigned a deputy to represent him in Gaza since he was not able to travel from the West Bank on that day. IFES Senior Advisor for Election Administration and co-author of the manual, Mr. Joe Baxter, led the workshops. He presented and explained IFES' recommendations in detail, led a lively discussion on election planning, and answered questions about best practices in election administration. These workshops served as training for the attendees in election planning practices, based upon the Manual, and allowed IFES to discuss its recommendations in detail, as well as to answer questions. The workshops stimulated discussion between the MLG election staff and commission members about various election issues, and served to highlight to the commission members the importance of advance planning and thoughtful consideration of election issues they had previously considered insignificant. For example, Mr. Baxter led a discussion about the importance of ballot design, especially in the Palestinian municipal elections, in which there will be both a large number of candidate names for each council ballot (as many as fifty in some districts), and a large percentage of illiterate voters as well.

Chapter 5

Project Staffing

In response to the continued postponement of municipal elections, IFES took measures to reduce its on-site project staffing, while maintaining an on-site presence. This section describes the various stages of staffing and the key staff and consultants involved.

Throughout the project, IFES assistance in the organization of municipal elections was provided primarily through the IFES West Bank Resource Center (also referred to in this report as the IFES field office). The Resource Center opened in 1995 in el-Bireh, the West Bank. In fall 1995, IFES opened a satellite office in Gaza City, Gaza. For the municipal elections assistance project, IFES planned to draw upon the Resource Center's and the Gaza office's staff, as well as upon the equipment and materials assembled in both offices for IFES' previous project activities in the West Bank and Gaza.

The IFES project was marked by two phases: the first, during which an international on-site project manager, based out of the West Bank field office, oversaw the project; and the second, during which IFES/Washington program staff and IFES local staff, based in the West Bank, coordinated project activities.

March - October 1996

In March 1996, at the commencement of the municipal elections assistance project, Mr. Al Dahlo served as the international on-site project manager. Since July 1995, Mr. Dahlo had served as project manager for IFES' previous projects relating to the January 1996 elections. Mr. Dahlo, a Canadian election organization and civic education expert, supervised a staff of six Palestinians in the West Bank office and two in the Gaza office, all of whom had worked on IFES' previous projects. In June 1996, Mr. Dahlo, who had to return to Canada, was replaced by Dr. Rafael Lopez-Pintor, an election specialist from Spain. Soon after Dr. Lopez-Pintor's arrival in June, two of the project's key international consultants, Dr. Juan Rial, a Uruguayan election systems specialist, and Mr. Hank Valentino, an American voter education expert, traveled to the project site. During his two-week visit, Dr. Rial analyzed and presented to the MLG recommendations on the draft Election Law, met with officials from the MLG and the PCBS to discuss plans for voter registration/revision of the voters register, and prepared for the MLG a detailed calendar and logistics plan for the elections. Mr. Valentino met with election officials and Palestinians involved in the 1996 elections to design for the MLG a plan for the voter education campaign.

Also in June 1996, IFES/Washington Program Officer for Africa and the Near East Pamela Reeves

traveled to the West Bank to conduct Dr. Lopez-Pintor's orientation and training and to oversee the consultants' visit. At IFES/Washington, Amy Hawthorne joined the staff as Program Officer for the Middle East and North Africa, providing home office support for the field staff and general project oversight.

During the summer and early fall of 1996, the P.A. continued to defer action on the Election Law. In response to this delay, but also recognizing that the fluidity of the Palestinian political scene meant that local elections could be called suddenly, IFES decided to maintain its on-site presence, but in a scaled-back form. IFES closed its Gaza office, and terminated the contracts of all local Palestinian staff except three core staff. In October, IFES further reduced its on-site presence. Dr. Lopez-Pintor had to depart the post in mid-October, due to a previous commitment. USAID and IFES chose not to replace him until a credible election date was announced, and to maintain two local staff, Hakam Shahwan, MLG Liaison Officer, and Khalil Ghanem, Office Manager/Accountant, who were to be managed by IFES/Washington. Their activities would be supplemented by periodic visits by the IFES Program Officer and international consultants. In mid-October, after Dr. Lopez-Pintor's departure, Program Officer Amy Hawthorne traveled to the West Bank for consultations with IFES' local staff, USAID, and MLG and other Palestinian officials involved in issues surrounding municipal elections.

October 1996 - January 1998

During this period, IFES local staff Hakam Shahwan and Khalil Ghanem, under the supervision of IFES/Washington, maintained regular close contact with MLG and other relevant P.A. officials, and provided information to local and international NGOs planning to be involved with municipal elections. Although this arrangement of operating without an on-site project manager was unusual for IFES, it proved effective in this context by allowing IFES to maintain direct, ongoing dialogue with Palestinian officials, and to respond quickly to specific requests for information and assistance, while reducing project expenses.

In January 1997, in response to the MLG's announcement that municipal elections might take place in June, IFES media consultant Mr. Hank Valentino traveled to the West Bank to help the MLG prepare for the first stages of the voter information campaign. During his visit, he oversaw the production of two short public service announcements explaining to voters the importance of checking their names on the voters register (this being the first major election activity that will take place after elections are announced).

In May 1997, Program Officer Amy Hawthorne and Consultant Juan Rial traveled to the West Bank and Gaza. During their visit, they focused on providing recommendations to the PCBS and the

MLG on the proposals pending for voter registration/revision of the voters registry. They also met with key Palestinian officials and NGOs involved in the electoral process. They also held consultations with USAID/West Bank and Gaza to discuss future project plans in light of the continuing delay in municipal elections. As a result of these consultations, Ms. Hawthorne, Mr. Rial, and IFES local staff prepared a detailed revised project work plan, in Arabic, for the MLG. The work plan specified the areas in which IFES could realistically provide assistance before a credible elections date was set and meaningful preparations begun. The work plan, which was later expanded, provided the basis for USAID's extension of the IFES project until January 1998, and it served as the outline for what later evolved into the IFES Manual described in the previous chapter (and included in the Appendix).

In October 1997, Program Officer Amy Hawthorne and IFES Senior Advisor for Election Administration Mr. Joe Baxter, an election specialist with 25 years of experience in election organization in the US and Africa, traveled to the West Bank and Gaza. The purpose of their visit was to gather detailed and up-to-date information for the Manual. Together with IFES local staff, they met with USAID/West Bank and Gaza representatives, officials from the MLG in the West Bank and Gaza, the SEC and the PCBS, Palestinians involved in administering the January 1996 elections, local and international NGOs concerned with the election process, and others to discuss lessons learned from the 1996 elections, plans for municipal elections, and related matters. With substantial input from IFES/West Bank local staff and consultants, Mr. Baxter and Ms. Hawthorne completed a draft of the Manual in November; local staff translated the Manual into Arabic in December.

In January 1998, Ms. Hawthorne and Mr. Baxter made a final visit to the West Bank and Gaza. During their visit, they presented the completed Manual to Palestinian officials and to USAID, conducted two training workshops for SEC members and MLG staff on the Manual, and held close-out meetings with USAID. They also completed the West Bank field office close-out, including disposition of field office property and termination of local staff contracts.

Chapter 6

Major Outstanding Issues Surrounding Municipal Elections

In contrast to P.A. officials' public assertions that all plans for municipal elections have been made and all basic preparations completed, in fact this is not the case, largely because several fundamental issues have yet to be resolved. Meaningful preparations for the elections cannot occur until these issues are addressed. The most important among them concern the Election Law, the administration of the elections, who can vote, and how (and whether) voters will be registered. Given the chronic instability that marks the political scene in the West Bank and Gaza, this lack of clarity is not surprising, especially in regard to sensitive political issues. As was the case in the 1996 elections process, for the municipal elections Palestinian officials are likely to postpone decisions on contentious issues until the last minute, to allow maximum opportunity for negotiation and consensus. While IFES is cognizant of the need for this flexibility, we are also concerned that failure to address any of these issues well in advance of the decision to hold municipal elections will result in an administrative and political incoherence that could affect the integrity of the process. Furthermore, failure to resolve these issues greatly impedes the planning and organization of the elections. These issues are addressed here in brief. The Manual (see Appendix) covers each in detail and contains further recommendations.

The Election Law

An election law provides the legal and organizational framework --the roadmap-- for the electoral process; therefore it must be clear, consistent, and sufficiently detailed if the elections are to proceed in an organized and credible manner. As discussed earlier in this report, in the Election Law there are numerous gaps of information about key aspects of the process. The Law is vague or silent on many issues, including the electoral calendar, the role of the SEC, the voting and vote count procedure, the announcement and adjudication of results, and other critical issues. Failure to address these issues in a formal legal manner before the election will hinder further election planning, and lead to confusion and disorganization in the process. It is crucial that the Law be clarified and/or elaborated upon as early as possible to ensure a smoothly-administered election process, one in which the Palestinian public can have confidence. As of this writing, however, it was unclear exactly how this might be accomplished. One option, recommended by IFES, is that the SEC review the Law carefully for inconsistencies and ambiguities, and prepare a detailed set of regulations having the force of law to supplement and clarify the Election Law. This is standard practice of election commissions in many countries. Another option, whose procedural and legal feasibility is unclear, is that the Law should be sent back to the PLC for revision (in effect, meaning that a new law would be drafted).

Administration of the Elections

It is not clear, both in the Election Law and in practice, which institution, the SEC or the MLG, is in charge of the election process. Part of the confusion is due to the fact that the Election Law does not make sufficiently clear the legal powers of each, or the administrative boundaries between them. According to the Law, the SEC is in charge of organizing and overseeing the municipal elections, although the Minister of Local Government sets the date. This is in contrast to the 1995 Election Law (governing the PLC and *Ra'ees* elections), which included articles on the size, independence, powers and functions of the election commission. In addition, the SEC has not been an empowered, active body, which had led the MLG, perhaps by default, to assume the lead role. Some (particularly MLG officials themselves) contend that this is not a matter for concern since so little election planning has actually occurred and that once the elections are imminent, the SEC will assume its lead position. But the current arrangement establishes a dangerous precedent. *As the ministry that supervises local councils, the MLG must assume a neutral role in the election of those councils.* For this reason, and secondarily for the sake of organizational coherence, it is important that the MLG's role in the process be clarified and ultimately limited.

Who Will Vote, and Where

The basic issue in any election is who is eligible to vote. Eligibility is typically based first and foremost on citizenship. Since Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza lack citizenship, eligibility to vote is determined instead by 'residency.' According to Article 9 of the Election Law, those eligible to vote must 'be a resident in the area of the local committee on whose [voters register] his name appears.' Article 1 defines 'resident' as 'a Palestinian citizen who resides within the area of jurisdiction of a local committee, where he has a permanent residence or work.' The term 'residency,' however, is ambiguous, particularly in terms of West Bank refugee camp residents and residents of municipal East Jerusalem.

Participation of West Bank and Gaza Refugee Camp Residents in Municipal Elections

According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which is mandated to administer Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria, Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank's 19 refugee camps constitute 11 percent of the West Bank's Palestinian population of 1.4 million people. Fifty-five percent of Gazans, or more than 380,000 people, reside in Gaza's eight UNRWA camps.¹⁸

The issue at hand is whether the residents of these camps should be able to vote in municipal elections. The P.A. leadership has not made (or has not publicly announced) a definitive decision on

¹⁸ UNRWA Fact Sheets for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, issued March 1997.

this issue. Given the immense political importance and sensitivity associated with issues concerning Palestinian refugees, the P.A. has been reluctant to stir up public debate before absolutely necessary. For Palestinians, the four million refugees among their population are the ultimate representation of exile, dispossession, and the right of return; raising the topic usually prompts intense reactions. Nonetheless, the matter of West Bank and Gaza refugee camp dwellers' participation in municipal elections does need to be discussed and resolved well in advance of the elections due to the organizational and logistical concerns involved (see the Manual for a discussion of these issues).

West Bank and Gaza camp residents, as well as those refugees registered with UNRWA but living in other parts of the West Bank and Gaza, were able to vote in the January 1996 elections because they were considered residents. (Refugees living outside the territories were not able to take part in the elections, based upon the same criteria.)

For the municipal elections, the assumption appears to be that West Bankers living in refugee camps will not vote, but that Gazans will. A workshop on refugee camp participation, convened by the MLG in April 1997, resulted in a recommendation by refugee camp leaders that West Bank camp residents should elect refugee camp councils, rather than vote for the geographically-nearest council. The leaders recommended that these camp elections be held on a separate day.

There are several reasons why West Bank refugee camp residents may be excluded from the process. First, some contend that depending upon how the electoral constituencies are drawn, residents of West Bank refugee camps technically do not 'reside within the area of jurisdiction of a local committee.' For example, while Balata and Askar refugee camps are situated adjacent to Nablus municipality, and Dheisheh Camp is very near the city of Bethlehem, these camps are not *within* the boundaries, or municipal jurisdiction of, these cities. Municipal services in the camps, such as electricity, sanitation, water and education, are provided by UNRWA, not by the municipal government of the adjacent cities. If refugee camp residents are considered residents of the municipal council areas adjacent to the camps by virtue of their ability to vote for the adjacent municipal councils, then the question arises as to who --UNRWA or the P.A. through the municipal councils-- is responsible for the camps. Some contend that if refugee camp residents vote for adjacent or nearby councils, or if local council area boundaries are drawn to include refugee camps, then the role of UNRWA, and therefore their status as refugees, will be in jeopardy. Some believe that this would be part of a broader trend to resolve the Palestinian refugee issue through decreasing UNRWA services to the refugees. As one commentator noted, 'This would continue the Israeli policy, which since the mid-seventies has been trying to convert refugee camps into neighborhoods of nearby cities as a first step toward having the camps integrated into their host societies, thus

imposing a status quo policy and [effectively] canceling the refugees' right of return."¹⁹

The participation of refugee camp residents is also sensitive because most Palestinians, both inside the territories and in the Diaspora, feel that if refugee camp dwellers vote for the municipal council located nearest to their camp, they will effectively be declaring their official and permanent residence in that council, thereby negating their theoretically *temporary status* as refugees, who have the right to return to their places of original residence according to international law (and UN Resolution 194, among others).

Because the residents of Gaza refugee camps generally are considered somewhat differently, it is assumed that they will take part in municipal elections. The percentage of the Gazan population living in refugee camps --more than one-half of the entire Gaza population-- is much greater than that in the West Bank (only eleven percent). In addition, the Gaza camps are much more closely physically integrated into the cities and towns of the Gaza Strip, in contrast to the refugee camps in the West Bank, many of which are more visibly distinct from other population areas. For example, most of the municipality (officially recognized as such) of Khan Younis is a refugee camp, and it is difficult to discern where the camp ends and the city begins. For this reason, many Palestinians (both West Bankers and Gazans) feel that it is not politically or logistically feasible to exclude Gaza refugee camp residents from the municipal elections. Yet some Palestinians feel that these practicalities aside, for moral reasons refugee camp dwellers in Gaza should not take part in municipal elections for the same reasons that West Bank camp residents should not: doing so may affect their status as refugees.

Jerusalem Participation

Due to the highly controversial and indeed explosive nature of the issue of Jerusalem's current and future status among Palestinians and Israelis, the P.A. tends to avoid making any definitive public statements on the role of Jerusalem in municipal elections. For example, the MLG's list of municipalities in which municipal elections will be held states only that 'the position of the city of Jerusalem remains the same as it was prior to 1967.'²⁰ Most Palestinian Authority election officials, however, discuss municipal elections with the assumption that Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem will not take part. These Palestinians, who number more than 120,000, have the status of permanent Israeli residents (because Israel considers East Jerusalem part of the State of Israel) and they carry special Jerusalem identification cards attesting to this status. Palestinians in East

¹⁹ Najeh Jarrar, 'The Effect of Election Participation on the Rights Palestinian Refugees,' *Journal of Involuntary Migration*, Vol. I, no. 2 (Winter 1997), 1-14.

²⁰ Ministry of Local Government, Department of Follow-up and Inspection, 'A Proposal for the Structure of Palestinian Local Government,' MLG/Jericho, 1996.

Jerusalem were allowed to take part in the January 1996 elections after intensive negotiations with the Israelis.²¹ Regarding municipal elections, Israelis state that Palestinian residents of Jerusalem will never be able to elect a municipal council for Arab East Jerusalem as long as Israel controls the city. They point out that Palestinian residents of Jerusalem have the right under Israel law to vote for members of the Jerusalem City Council and in this way their rights of municipal representation are ensured (almost no Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, however, take part in city council elections).

Many Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza state, and some P.A. officials express privately, that it is inappropriate from a philosophical standpoint to hold municipal elections for any part of Palestinian territory so long as the issue of control of Jerusalem is unresolved. They state that 'We should never hold municipal elections for any part of Palestine until the residents of Jerusalem can participate. Municipal elections without elections for a Jerusalem council are meaningless.'

Aside from these general political sensitivities, there is another important issue to consider. This is the potential impact of municipal elections on the large number of Palestinian Jerusalem residents living 'secretly' outside the boundaries of municipal Jerusalem. Due to the extreme shortage of housing in East Jerusalem and other hardships experienced by Palestinians living in the Israeli controlled city, in recent years many Palestinian East Jerusalemites have moved outside the city limits to P.A.-controlled West Bank suburbs, while officially maintaining their Jerusalem residency status (through their identity cards). Under the Netanyahu government, the Israeli Ministry of the Interior has become much more aggressive about questioning, and revoking, the residency rights of Palestinians in Jerusalem. While the Ministry of the Interior states that it is simply enforcing existing regulations, Palestinians assert that the Israeli government, in an attempt to reduce the Palestinian population of Jerusalem so as to strengthen its own claims over the city in advance of final status talks, are revoking Palestinians' residency rights indiscriminately and with no recourse. The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) office in Jerusalem estimates there may be as many as 60,000 East Jerusalemites living 'secretly' in the West Bank.²²

Some Palestinian East Jerusalemites currently living outside the city are concerned that registering for or voting in municipal elections could cause them to lose their Jerusalem residency rights. For

²¹ This was because the elections were 'national,' that is, Palestinians in East Jerusalem were electing legislators to represent them in the Council, but these legislators have no authority to legislate on any matters related to the status of Jerusalem. They were also voting for a president of the P.A. who in this capacity has no authority to undertake definitive action on issues related to the status of Jerusalem.

²² Personal communication with ICRC representative, Jerusalem, April 1998. Palestinian human rights activists estimate that more than 2,000 Palestinians have had their Jerusalem residency rights revoked in the past several years.

instance, they fear that if they register to vote for the councils in the West Bank municipalities in which they currently reside (by invoking the live/work provision of the Election Law, discussed below), the appearance of their names on the voters register may cause the Israeli authorities to question their Jerusalem residency and on that basis, to revoke their Jerusalem residency rights.

Live/Work Provision

The Law states that a voter's ability to register to vote is dependent on 'fulfilling the requirements of voters,' which include being a 'resident in the area of the municipal committee in whose register his name appears.'²³ The definition of resident, according to Article 1 of the Law, is the place where one lives or works. While there are certain considerations that may provide a rationale for the live/work provision, its implications should be considered carefully by those organizing the elections. But the Law does not specify how living or working in a particular municipal council area is to be established at the time of registration: what documents must the voter present to affirm that he lives or works there? For example, it could have a detrimental impact on the quality of the voters register --one of the key elements of a credible election-- by increasing the likelihood of fraudulent/double registrations, unless sufficient procedural safeguards are devised to prevent such abuses.

Registration

Ambiguity also exists regarding the registration process for municipal elections. The Election Law calls for the registration of voters to commence ninety days before election day, but there is not a consensus among key decision makers as to what kind of registration will take place, or whether registration should be required at all. Most Palestinian election officials anticipate that what will take place is in fact a revision of the existing register (created for the 1996 elections), rather than the creation of an entirely new register. It was assumed that new register would not be needed because the municipal elections would take place soon after the PLC/Ra'ees elections and therefore the register would still be accurate. However, if too much time passes before the municipal elections are held, the register may well become out of date and a new registration may be required. Some Palestinian officials have stated that no register should be used at all and voters should instead present their identification cards (Israeli or Palestinian) on election day. They recommend this as the best remedy for the problems encountered with the register in the January 1996 elections (mistakes in identification card numbers, names left off, etc.), and also attest that it would resolve the issue of Jerusalem residents voting (discussed above). Whatever Palestinian election authorities choose to do, they must reach a decision before any meaningful election preparations can begin. A detailed discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each option is found in the Manual (see Appendix).

²³ Article 9 B, Election Law.

APPENDICES

A:

Maps of West Bank and Gaza

B:

List of Municipal Council Areas in West Bank/Gaza

C:

The Palestinian Local Government Election Law

D:

IFES Manual for Municipal Elections

**A Guide for the Planning and Organization of
Local Government Elections in the West Bank and Gaza**