



Press Release

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Canberra, Australia

Palestinian Legislative and Presidential Elections Postponed

The Palestinian leadership have decided to postpone holding elections until the full participation of the Palestinian people of East Jerusalem is guaranteed. East Jerusalem is an integral part of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967. Israel illegally annexed East Jerusalem in 1980, and UN Security Council resolution 476 declared the annexation null and void on the basis of it having no legal validity and constituting a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

From the outset of the decision to hold elections in Palestine, it was made clear that they must be held with complete freedom in all Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. More than 90% of eligible voters registered to vote in the elections, indicating the extent of popular support for the elections and the high-level willingness to participate in the democratic process. There are 150,000 eligible voters in East Jerusalem; they must not be prevented from participating.

The Palestinian leadership have addressed Israeli authorities several times regarding the participation of all Palestinian territories in the elections, including East Jerusalem. Unfortunately, Israeli authorities resorted to evasion, procrastination and non-response. When they did finally respond, it was to state that the Israeli government will not allow elections to take place in East Jerusalem. Their refusal was justified by the pretext that there is no government formed yet in Israel.

Israel has also taken measures on the ground to obstruct election-related activities in Jerusalem. Occupation forces have prevented press conferences and meetings from taking place, shut down any election-related centers or institutions, and have already arrested multiple candidates (three have been detained so far).

The Palestinian leadership have requested intervention from the United States and the European Union. The EU has made efforts to assist, but unfortunately has not applied sufficient pressure, and has failed to convince Israel to fulfill its obligations set by international law to ensure the implementation of Jerusalemites' right to participate in elections.

As such, the Palestinian leadership have decided to postpone the elections. They have confirmed that if Israel yields to the pressure of the international community and agrees to elections being held, a new decree will be issued to organize and proceed with the elections immediately.

The General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific kindly urges the Australian, New Zealand and Pacific governments to place pressure on Israel to stop its suppression of the democratic process in all Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem.

For more information, please contact the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific: ph. (02) 6286 9193.

