CAPAC
Canadian Arab Public Affairs Committee

On the Postponement of Palestinian Legislative Council Elections and Foreign Minister Hon. Anita Anand's Statement

For Immediate Release

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The Canadian Arab Public Affairs Committee notes the postponement of elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council, originally scheduled for 28 November 2026. While CAPAC is disappointed by this decision, this outcome is neither surprising nor unexpected. Conditions on the ground in Occupied Palestine including the devastated Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem render free, fair, and inclusive democratic elections unfeasible at present.

How can Palestinians be expected to conduct credible elections in what remains a war zone? In Gaza, three years of genocide have left 1.9 million people displaced (many multiple times), infrastructure in ruins, and essential services collapsed. Over 70 percent of Gaza has been seized by Israel, confining nearly two million people to the remaining 30 percent of the territory. Neither genuine recovery nor large-scale reconstruction has begun. Access to food, water, medical care, sanitation, electricity, and shelter remains blocked or severely limited for most residents, depriving them of life's essentials.

In the West Bank, human insecurity is rising daily as conditions deteriorate sharply. Widespread and violent military raids, together with settler terrorism, impair daily life and undermine the population's ability to access schools, hospitals, and livelihoods, and likewise their ability to participate safely in any electoral process. Logistical barriers persist, including more than 900 Israeli checkpoints and roadblocks across the West Bank (with Palestinian leadership citing over one thousand such barriers that have turned the territory into isolated cantons), as well as restrictions that have limited the Palestinian Central Elections Commission's ability to operate fully in East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

These obstacles are compounded by the occupation's deliberate and unlawful policies that undermine Palestinian governance and the practical capacity to hold elections.
As reported by the Ambassador of Palestine, H.E. Feda Abdelhady, in Ottawa, Israel has been withholding more than $6 billion in tax and clearance revenues owed to the Palestinian Authority under the Paris Protocol and related agreements. These funds constitute the majority of the Palestinian government's revenues and are essential not only for basic government functions, paying salaries, delivering services, and maintaining institutions, but also for organizing and administering elections. Israel's failure to transfer these resources, which it collects on the PA's behalf, has precipitated a severe fiscal crisis, partial salary payments, reduced public services, and institutional strain, further jeopardizing any prospect of a functional democratic process. Palestinian leadership has clearly stated the reasons for the postponement.

We also acknowledge the Joint Statement issued today by the Honourable Anita Anand, Foreign Minister of Canada, together with the Foreign Ministers of international partners. We echo the call for the Palestinian government to reconsider the postponement and urge that both legislative and presidential elections be held as soon as possible.

In this regard, we urge Canada to explicitly address in its statement the systematic disruptions and obstructive actions by Israel that have repeatedly undermined the conditions for free and fair elections and directly resulted in their postponement. This includes the events of 2021, when Israel prevented Jerusalem from being included in the electoral process and barred Palestinians in Jerusalem from participating, leading to the postponement and eventual collapse of those elections.

We further call on Canada to intensify its proactive, supportive, and constructive engagement and leadership. This must include concerted efforts to halt Israel's ongoing violations and obstructions of Palestinian social, economic, political, and civic life, and to help create the conditions necessary for genuine elections.

As one of the G7 countries with the strongest records of transparent democracy, human rights, and democratic values, we urge Canada to assume a significantly greater leadership role, together with its partners, on this long-standing and critical file, one in which people and civilians have suffered tremendously for over eight decades.
A credible and robust political process remains essential for stability, legitimacy, and the realization of justice and peace.

However, CAPAC rejects the recent statements by Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar, as well as similar claims by other Israeli radical lobbying groups in Canada, that frame the postponement solely as a breach of commitments by the Palestinian Authority and dismiss as "lies" any reference to Israeli-imposed obstacles. Such statements ignore the realities of a war zone, the ongoing occupation, severe restrictions on electoral access, the presence of more than one thousand Israeli checkpoints and barriers, and the withholding of billions in Palestinian revenues essential for governance and elections. They apply a double standard that overlooks the external obstacles imposed by the Israeli government and the dire conditions inflicted by its occupation, which make free and fair elections impossible at this time. Accountability must apply to all parties, including those whose actions and policies undermine the possibility of democratic processes alongside every other aspect of Palestinian life.

Despite these dire conditions, recent surveys including Arab Barometer polling from October 2025 and supporting data from the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research indicate that a majority of Palestinians, particularly in Gaza, prefer a two-state solution based on the pre-1967 lines over other options as the path to resolving the conflict. Support for diplomatic negotiations has grown relative to armed resistance in key measures. Many Palestinians express a desire for political renewal, capable leadership that delivers security, and the chance to remain in their land and rebuild their communities rather than emigrate. Palestinian reconciliation will be key to advancing this political renewal and a credible democratic process.

The international community must respond with immediate and collective action. This includes supporting the strengthening of Palestinian democracy, governance, and institutions; providing sustained humanitarian assistance to address the catastrophic situation in Gaza; pressing for the full release of withheld Palestinian revenues so that the PA can function and elections can be prepared; and advancing efforts to end the illegal occupation, realize Palestinian self-determination and independence, and achieve a just and lasting peace consistent with international law, United Nations resolutions, and the two-state solution.

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In this context, we respectfully urge the Government of Canada to elevate the Palestinian delegation in Ottawa to the status of a full embassy without delay, following the example set by France, the United Kingdom, and other European states that have already taken this important step. We further recommend that Her Excellency the Palestinian Ambassador be invited to present her credentials as the Ambassador of the State of Palestine, consistent with Canada's recognition of the State of Palestine in September 2025.

This elevation of diplomatic status should not be tied to or conditioned upon the holding of elections, which remain a local Palestinian matter profoundly affected by the occupation and the war-zone conditions, as well as the dire humanitarian, security, and economic situation it imposes on the Palestinian people.
Diplomatic recognition and representation are matters of principle and consistent with Canada's stated policy; they should proceed independently of the current obstacles to electoral processes.

We further urge the Government of Canada not to allow itself to be pressured or misled by Israeli radical groups that have distorted the facts and realities concerning Palestine and the Palestinian people for decades in Canada. We call upon the Government of Canada to carefully examine the realities on the ground and to exert additional pressure on the Israeli government to immediately cease its fascist, extreme, and repressive policies and actions that render a decent life for Palestinians and any prospect of democracy impossible. For these very reasons, Canada has already imposed sanctions on certain Israeli ministers for their actions against the Palestinian people, as well as sanctions related to the E1 settlement project.

The Palestinian people deserve free democratic elections and the right to vote. This fundamental right has been denied to them for over twenty years due to the Israeli policies and actions that have fostered radicalism and provided funding and support to militia factions in Gaza in order to deepen Palestinian divisions.

Canada is urged to continue and intensify its proactive, supportive, and constructive engagement, assistance, and leadership in these areas. Enabling the conditions for free and fair elections and a credible political process is essential for stability, legitimacy, and the prospect of peace.

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