







Summary Report

Visitor Programme to the Jordanian Municipal and Governerate Elections 2017

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The enclosed CD contains the detailed visitor porgramme report.

Speech by President of the Organization's Executive Office

Dr. Zuhair Abu Fares

Member of the Board of Commissioners of IEC (Jordan)



Exploratory Missions: A quality tool for interaction and sharing of experience.

Although still important, the literature and theory on elections is no longer sufficient to lead to elections that are consistent with international best practices.

There are well established conditions and requirements to ensure fair, transparent and trustworthy elections. Nevertheless, social, political and cultural factors which vary between different societies have to be taken into account when assessing the electoral experience in a society. Such factors and variables must not contradict with the values of democracy and public participation in making decisions that affect their present and pave their future. Elections will always be the most efficient and influential means of achieving such noble goals. In fact, it is one of the fundamental human rights.

It is a matter of fact that cumulative and shared experiences between the different EMBs play an important role in this regard. The ArabEMBs'exploratory visit to the elections in Jordan serve this purpose. In addition to facilitating exposure to electoral practices on the ground, such visits also contribute to improving the quality of elections for the overall goal of ensuring elections that enjoy the trust and confidence of the Arab world.

The recent ArabEMBs Mission to Jordan to observe the municipal and governorate elections was a step forward in the right direction.





Speech by the Head of Mission

Dr. Hanna Nasir

Chairman of the Central Elections Commission (Palestine)



It is my pleasure to head the Exploratory Mission of the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs), to learn about the experience of Jordan in organizing and running the municipal and governorate elections held in August 2017.

The Exploratory Mission represented a framework which encompassed electoral officials from ArabEMBs member and non-member states. It also provided participants the opportunity to network and share experiences and practices on election management. This is highly relevant to the main objectives of the Organization, to establish regional cooperation and exchange technical expertise of the different EMBs, for the purpose of improving performance in line with international best practices.

On behalf of my colleagues who took part in the Mission, I would like to seize the opportunity to express my appreciation to ArabEMBs, represented by its Executive Office, Secretary-General and supporting staff for their efforts in organizing and facilitating our Mission, which made it possible to achieve the desired goals.

I would also like to thank the Independent Election Commission of Jordan, represented by Chairman Dr. Khaled Al-Khalaldeh, for the outstanding support including hosting the mission and facilitating our work.

I would also like to pay tribute to the valuable and continuous support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to the ArabEMBs since its establishment.





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Background

In cooperation with the Independent Election Commission of Jordan (IEC) and with the support of UNDPs Regional Electoral Support Project for Arab States, the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs) organized an Exploratory Mission to the municipal and governorate elections held in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on 15 August 2017.

This was the first such mission organized by ArabEMBs and served as a practical translation of the objectives for which the Organization was founded. It demonstrates the key role of the Organization in creating opportunities for the exchange of experiences and knowledge among the EMBs, contributing to improved electoral performance in the entire Arab world.

The election visitor programme is based on the fact that observing an electoral process on the ground is essential to learning and sharing of experience and knowledge. It provides the opportunity to EMBs officials and the Organization's partners to visit the elections held in the Arab world as guests, where they are able to experience the technical and logistical electoral operations carried out by the EMB. It allows them to visit and experience the polling, counting, result tabulation and announcement centers and activities.



Mission Objectives:

The Mission was the first of its kind with the following objectives:

- On the ground exposure of the ArabEMBs officials to the experience of the municipal and governorate elections in Jordan.
- Providing a platform for networking and sharing knowledge and experience among the participating EMBs.
- Providing the Independent Election Commission of Jordan (IEC) with the opportunity to present its electoral experience to the region, thus transferring knowledge and success stories to other Arab countries.



Mission Composition

Participants

The Mission was headed by Dr. Hanna Nasir, Chairman of the Central Elections Commission of Palestine, and other members included (19) participants who were ArabEMBs member chairpersons, commissioners and officials from Tunisia, Somalia, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Mauritania, and officials from non-member states Egypt and Djibouti. The mission also included officials from the Electoral Affairs Department of the League of Arab States (LAS), UNDP and UNWomen.

Annex 1 - Shows Participants Data.



Organizing Team

The organizing team was headed by the President of the Organization's Executive Office and included the Secretary General, as well as UNDP employees and temporary staff who were specialists in elections and logistical operations.

Annex II - Organizing Team Data

The Mission included (19) support personnel including liaison officers, escorts, drivers, interpreters and photographers, who provided support to the Mission members during their site visits.

Annex III - Support Cadres in Figures

Volunteers also played a prominent role in making this mission a success. They assisted in accompanying the teams throughout election day, working and managing the operations room that monitored the different teams, running social networking sites during the mission and developing infographs on the municipal and governorate elections.

Annex IV - Volunteers Data

The Partners in Accomplishing the Mission

The Mission was accomplished in cooperation and coordination with the Independent Election Commission (IEC) of Jordan. Despite being busy preparing for elections, the IEC Chairman, Board of Commissioners and staff facilitated the visit by approving the Mission and its members, facilitating the issuance of visas, in addition to arranging the briefing day and providing the required data pertaining to the electoral process.



The Commission, represented by the Chairman, sponsored the activities of the briefing day and coordinated with the government to ensure the attendance of ministers concerned with local development. The Commission staff delivered the presentations of the briefing day.

The UNDP Regional Electoral Support provided advisory support as well as operational and logistical support to the Mission; the project covered all expenses including those of the participants, support staff, renting halls, supplies, transport, managing the accommodation, travel arrangements, contracting with suppliers, and finally supervising the activities to ensure they go as planned.

The Central Elections Commission (CEC) of Palestine provided strong support assigning the Chairman Dr. Hanna Nasir as Head of the Mission and Ms. Suheir Abdeen, head of Procedures and Training Department to facilitate the briefing day and the feedback sessions.



Mission Activities

The Mission continued for three consecutive days, from 14 to 16 August 2017. Below is the Mission agenda:

1. The Briefing Day

On Monday, 14 August 2017, the Organization held a Briefing Day, starting from 09:00AM until 05:00PM. The agenda of the Day included five dialogue sessions, which included the Chairman of the Independent Election Commission (Jordan), the Minister



of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, IEC officials, and experts from UNDP and UN Woman.

Annex V shows the the briefing day's presentations.

The briefing day was an opportunity for the Mission members to learn about Jordan's progressive political and electoral reform efforts toward democratization, and the changes in the structure and elections of local councils in Jordan. Also, it introduced



Presentations

the municipal and governorate electoral system, including the process of nomination, voting, result tabulation, form of the ballot paper, and the election preparation efforts by the Commission.

The Mission members learned about the latest measures taken by the IEC in managing certain aspects of the electoral process, including the use of sports halls as polling and counting centers and harnessing the means



of digital communication to scale up the reach out to voters for better turnout, particularly youth and firsttime voters. In addition, they reviewed the safeguards to election integrity and professionalism, including e-linkages and e-applications employed to facilitate the process, also the training methods and tools of election officials.

The last session was dedicated to explaining the polling, counting and result tabulation procedures to the participants, before they observe those activities during their site visits on Election Day.

2. Election Day Site Visits

On Tuesday, 15 August 2017 (Election Day), the Mission members visited the various electoral events including polling and counting centers, election operation rooms, results tabulation centers and the media center.



In view of the large number of members and in order to avoid any overcrowding at the polling and counting centers, participants were divided into five teams, four participants each, excluding the escort, driver and an interpreter (when required).

The site visits extended over two shifts; morning and evening. The morning visits started at 06:00AM to allow the teams to witness voting procedures as they commence until 14:00PM, and during this period each team visited one polling and counting hall, three polling & counting centers and an election operation room.

The evening visits started at 06:00PM to allow the participants to attend the closure of voting procedures and witness counting procedures at the room level, followed by results tabulation at the center level. Teams also visited results tabulation centers to observe the hardcopy forms being checked once received from the polling centers as well as receiving the sensitive material from the polling committees, in addition to the process of the results tabulation in the results centers at the district level. As visits came to an end, the teams headed back to the hotels.









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This visit is distinctive, highly organized and very well prepared. It aimed at raising the level of democratic practices to its highest levels. The democratic reform train in the Arab region has started its journey.

General Mohamed Qumsan

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The mission was excellent as it reaped the fruits of the outstanding efforts done by the "ArabEMBs". It is also considered a source of pride and the beginning of an Arab unity in the field of elections. Mohammad Mansery

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3. The Feedback Session

On Wednesday, 16 August 2017 (the day following the Election Day), the Organization held a two-hour feed-back session which covered:

- Views and observations on the Mission arrangements, technical activities, logistical support and recommendations for improvement.
- Main observations along the course of the electoral process and recommendations relevant recommendations.

Summary of the Mission's Observations and Recommendations

Recommendations and Observations on the Mission Arrangements

- Participants expressed the uniqueness of the Mission experience, where they had the chance to exchange experiences and knowledge, and learn and benefit from the Jordanian experience and the various measures taken by the Independent Election Commission (Jordan).
- They commended the high level of logistical and technical arrangements of the Mission and the efforts made by ArabEMBs and its partners in this regard.
- They confirmed the three-day duration of the Mi sion as sufficient for the objectives.
- They stated the Organization was thoughtful in creating the Mission, in particular they appreciated the team composition which depicted diversity of electoral backgrounds and enriched the process of sharing.
- They confirmed the sites visited were meaningfully planned; in terms of number and election activities visited therein.
- Some believed the schedule of site visits was hectic, noting that visiting one or two centers would have been enough to fulfill the objectives of the Mission.

• They highlighted the fact that, generally speaking, the site visits went smoothly, aside from certain occurrences where the team access to the center was disrupted by security, despite the IEC-issued tags they held.

Mission's Observations and Recommendations on the Electoral Process

The Mission members concurred that Jordan's municipal and governorate elections 2017 were characterized by integrity, transparency and neutrality, attributed to the measures taken by IEC to ensure a safe environment for voters to freely express thier will at the polling center.

The overall impression of the Mission was that the Jordanian experience in managing the electoral process was successful and stood out from an organizational, technical and logistical stand point, and provided a number of measures that could help the electoral processes of other EMBs in the region.



- The effectiveness of the electronic link between the polling and counting centers and the IEC headquarters, which served to expedite the results announcement and as a result foster voter trust in the process. The e-linkage between the centers made it easier to verify voter identity, ensure voter is in the correct polling room, and avoid double voting. This information was disseminated to all centers, and also served as a significant resource with statistical data and information available throughout the process to support prompt decision making.
- Using cameras and monitors to show the ballot paper during counting was as good practice, helping to enhance the credibility and acceptability of the results. The Mission recommends further improvements in the process by using larger monitors and installing them at higher positions to optimize visibility by observers and representatives present during counting.
- Using sports halls as polling and counting centers was a good creative solution, however it can be improved by:
 - Reconsidering the arrangement of the halls in a way that avoids the long voters queues and shortens the distance traveled by a voter to complete the entire voting process. This is particularly critical for elderly voters, those with disabilities and pregnant women. It will also help maintain improved control over the entire process.
 - Placing more booths and keeping sufficient distance between them to ensure voters privacy.
 - Increasing the number of polling and counting committees/stations in each sports hall rather than assigning a single committee/station per hall as is currently the case; this will help avoid the overcrowding and long waiting time that led to frustration and complaints expressed by some voters. Those voters were assigned to multiple

polling centers and committees/stations in the sports hall though in reality there was only a single committee/station serving all the voters.

- Improving the external amenities such as shields to protect against the sun or rain, and good lighting source within the premises of the hall.
- Providing more training to the sports hall personnel.
- 4. The Mission did not see the justification for extending the voting hours in some districts, given that extensions should be prompted upon administrative, security or natural emergencies that may compromise the voting process. However, this was not the case during the election, which went smoothly and uneventful.
- 5. The Mission commends the competency and professionalism of the polling and counting staff, which was the outcome of the successful trainings delivered by the IEC; a training that was more practical than theoretical. The Mission recommends that future trainings orient the trainees to voting procedures specific to the elderly, illiterate and persons with special needs; stressing that such procedures should be consistent across all centers.
- 6. The Mission members positively underscored the simplicity and clarity of the ballot paper which was user-friendly, containing names as well as pictures of the candidates. The Mission recommends that this design of ballot papers be used for all municipal and local councils elections. The Mission nevertheless recommends using thicker ballot papers to avoid the stamp from bleeding through to the front of the paper and being superimposed over the co-inciding candidate(s) picture. This compromised the principle of equal opportunities among candidates as a result of variation in picture clarity.
- The Mission members were pleased with the representation of women in the elections, whether as voter, candidate or polling and counting committee member and their excellent performance in managing the polling centers.

- 8. The Mission noted that there was some obvious campaigning for certain candidates at the polling centers' doors and within the premises of the center without any response from the police officers in charge. This caused inconvenience and disruption to the voters and the potential to influence their choices. The Mission prompts the IEC to control such acts, notably by enforcing the role of the Head of the Center.
- 9. The Mission recommends reconsidering the level of security presence in front of the polling and counting center which was deemed too heavy; additionally, the Mission took note of the inconsistency in the responsibilities exercised by the security members in the different centers.
- 10. The Mission commends the structural and logistical organization of the electoral process, readiness of the centers and the availability of sensitive and non-sensitive electoral materials and supplies. However, to further improve the process, the Mission recommends the following:
 - Rethinking the concept of single gender centers which meant a family could not cast their votes in the same center. This can be discouraging and may lead to lower turnout.
 - In principle, planning for elections must be based on a 100% turnout rate. The Mission however, noted that Polling and Counting Committees received less ballot papers than the number of voters registered in the polling room.

- Reduce the number of voters allocated per ballot box (polling room) to take into consideration the time needed to vote. In some polling room there were more than one thousand voters assigned.
- 11. The Mission highly regards the process of result checking by matching the hardcopy to the softcopy forms once received at the result tabulation center, prior to being presented to the public. Such practice helps reduce the number of potential challenges and objections to the counting process. The Mission also recommends that signatories of the various polling and counting forms not be limited to the candidates' representatives, but also include the observers who are present in the polling room.























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UNDP is proud of its partnership with the ArabEMBs and to see it put together this successful initiative of regional cooperation. We hope the organization continues its journey of success and has a positive impact on electoral practices in the region. Najia Hashemee

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Annex I - Participants Data



Dr. Hanna Nasir Chairperson Central Elections Commission (CEC) Palestine



Mohamed Mnasri

Commissioner Independent High Election Comission (ISIE) Tunisia



Sarbast Rashid Chairperson Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) Iraq



Abdi Hersi

Chairperson National Electoral Commission Djibouti



Faten Younes

Director-General Directorate For Political & Refugees Affairs / Ministry of Interior and Municipalities Lebanon



General / Mohamed Komsan

Electoral Advisor / Prime Minister Egypt



Hadia Sabry

Minister Plenipotentiary General Directorate for Elections Affairs League of Arab States



Khadija Ali Commissioner National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) Somalia



Hisham Kuhail Chief Electoral Officer Central Elections Commission (CEC) Palestine



Nabil Azizi Commissioner

Independent High Election Comission (ISIE) Tunisia



Kolshan Ali Commissioner Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC)

Irag



General / Hamdy Elgazzar

Adviser to the Minister of Local Development and supervisor of the Secretariat sector for localities Egypt



Nada Abou Saleh Head of Section Directorate For Political & Refugees Affairs / Ministry of Interior and Municipalities



Khader Shamali

Director of Electoral Operations Central Elections Commission (CEC) Palestine



Mohamed Ntilitt

Lebanon

Head of Department National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) Mauritania



Mohamed Mohamud

Commissioner National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) Somalia



Mahmoud Ibrahim General Directorate for Elections Affairs League of Arab States



Suhair Dwaik

Head of Electoral procedures Department Central Elections Commission (CEC) Palestine



Ionica Berevoescu Policy Expert UN Women Romania

Annex II - Organizing Team Data



Dr. Zuhair Abu Faris Head of the Executive Office (ArabEMBs) Member of the Board of Commissioners (IEC)



Badrieh Al Bilbisi Secretary General of the ArabEMBs



Najia Hashemee Regional Electoral Support Project/UNDP



Abdallah Al Omari Liaison officer and technical follow-up to the Mission



Mais Al Atiat Regional Electoral Support Project/UNDP



Qusai Al Amaireh Operations and field coordination officer to the Mission



Ban Kasto Regional Electoral Support Project/UNDP



Annex III - Support Cadres in Figures



Escorts



Translator



Liaison Officers Of The Operations' Room



Photographer



Social Networking Officer



Videographer



Graphic Designer



Drivers







Annex IV - Volunteers Data



Doa'a Al-Akhras Team escort



Mohammad Abu Eid Team escort



Ahmad Al-Dawod Team escort



Ahmad Fleifel Team escort



Abdul Abu Shaaban Team escort



Tamara Al-Zoubi Liaison Officer (Operations Room)



Mohammad Mousa Liaison Officer (Operations Room)



Sajah Al-Bishtawi Liaison Officer (Operations Room)



Abdul Hussein Graphic Designer



Mohammad Al-Maridi Social Networking Officer

Annex V - Briefing Day's Presentations



First Session: Features of Gradual Political and Electoral Reform Followed by Jordan in its Democratic Development Process



H.E. Khaled Kalaldeh Chairman of the Jordan Independent Election Commission (IEC)



H.E. Mousa Al Mayatah Minister of Political and Parliamentary Affairs



H.E. Walid Al Masri Minister of Municipalities



Second Session: Features of Municipal and Governorate Elections of 2017

First Presentation Titled:

"Features of Electoral System used in Municipal and Governorate Elections: Impact on candidacy, voting and results mechanisms and statistics"

Presentation Link:

https://goo.gl/XbvJfu



Mr. Mohammad Al Qatawneh Director of Legal Affairs, IEC (Jordan)

Second Presentation Titled:

"Terms and Procedures of Voter Registration for Municipal and Governorate Elections and Electronic Applications"



Mr. Mahmoud Al Zibin IT Director, IEC (Jordan)

Presentation Link:

https://goo.gl/yR3Ct9



First Presentation Titled:

"Measures of Electoral Process Integrity, its Management and Procedures "



Dr. Awwad Karadsheh Director of Electoral Operations, IEC (Jordan)

Second Presentation Titled:

"Voter education and voter information on Municipal and Governorate Elections"

Presentation Link:

https://goo.gl/MWuDTg



Mr. Sharaf Abu Rumman Director of Communications and Media Directorate, IEC (Jordan)

Third Presentation Titled:

Presentation Link:

https://goo.gl/aCRBt7

"Electronic Linking and Measure of Electoral Process and Electronic Applications"

Presentation Link:

https://goo.gl/dBNsSe



Mrs. Suhair Rahhal Head of Software Division, IEC (Jordan)



Fourth Session: Capacity Building



"Training Staff Working on Elections"



Mrs. Samar Al Tarawneh Head of Training Division, IEC (Jordan)

https://goo.gl/k4zBbW

Presentation Link:

Second Presentation Titled:

"Planning and implementing the training process"



Mr. Ali Al Juneidi Training Coordinator, IEC (Jordan)

Presentation Link:

https://goo.gl/k4zBbW



First Presentation Titled:

"Measuring women's representation in local governments. The role of EMBs"



Mrs. Ionica Berevoescu

Policy Specialist

UNwomen

Presentation Link:

https://goo.gl/MNZi8Y

Second Presentation Titled:

"Jordan Case Study on women's representation in local governments "

Presentation Link:

https://goo.gl/uZwUuH



Mr. Richard Chambers Chief Technical Advisor UNDP



