



**Statement by UN Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process,  
Mr Robert Piper, on the upcoming local council elections in Palestine**

**Jerusalem, 24 August 2016**

United Nations Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Robert Piper met today with the Chairman of the Central Elections Commission (CEC), Dr. Hanna Nasir to discuss the latest preparations for the upcoming local council elections scheduled to take place on 8 October 2016 and issued the following statement:

"I am encouraged by the efforts of the CEC and the dedication of its staff in preparing for this important election which is to be carried out across the State of Palestine. It will be the first concurrent poll in the occupied West Bank and Gaza since 2006.

I welcome last month's signing of the electoral code of conduct by the various Palestinian political parties and encourage all concerned to adhere to it. Conducting the local elections in line with established international standards can contribute to advancing Palestinian reconciliation based on PLO principles. This would be vital for establishing a democratic, unified Palestinian state as part of a negotiated two-state solution. However, the lack of party unity or any attempt to influence the outcome of the elections, including through intimidation, threats, violence or coercion during the election campaign, risks widening divisions and undermining the Palestinian national cause.

I urge all parties to refrain from actions that could undermine the integrity of the process."

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