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STANDING ORDERS

FOR THE

PALESTINIAN

LEGISLATIVE

COUNCIL

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STANDING ORDERS FOR THE PALESTINIAN COUNCIL

Preamble

The Palestinian people in Palestine have expressed, through general free and direct elections, their determination to follow democratic rules in building their institutions and in exercising their national sovereignty.

Those elections have led to the birth of the first Palestinian Legislative Council of the Palestinian National Authority.

On that basis, it is necessary to establish the principles for the elected Legislative Council to develop its work, based on the principle of separation of powers, which confirms the independence of the legislative authority and its right to legislate and to control and inspect the works of the Executive Authority.

These Standing Orders have been established in order to organize the functioning of the Council, and regulate its acts, including the election of its organs, its decision making process, and its legislative procedures, as a first step necessary to reach national independence, the construction of an advanced democratic society, and the exercise of sovereignty on the homeland.

The provision of these Standing Orders guarantees the freedom /of formation of parliamentary blocks/ the freedom of opinion and expression, the freedom of opposition and constructive criticism, and the achievement of comprehensive cooperation between the Council and other constitutional institutions.

Article (1)

Definitions

In these Standing Orders, the following expression shall have the meanings mentioned below, unless stated otherwise:

1. The Council: the Palestinian Legislative Council
2. The President of National Authority: The President of the PNA
3. The Speaker: The Speaker (Raees) of the Palestinian Legislative Council.
4. The Council of Ministers: The Council of Ministers of the PNA.
5. The Office of the Council: The Office of the /presidency of/ Palestinian Legislative Council.
6. The Member : Elected PLC member.
7. Constitution: The Basic Law of the Authority for the interim period.
8. The Secretariat: The Secretary General and his or her assistants staff in the secretariat.
9. Absolute Majority: 50% + 1 of the number of PLC members present when voting is made.
10. Council Absolute Majority: 50% +1 of all PLC members

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11. Relative Majority: Majority of voters regardless of the number of members present.
12. Two-third majority: Majority of at least two-thirds of PLC members.

Title I Chapter 1

The Initial Meeting

Article (2)

- A) The President of the PNA shall call the meeting of the first ordinary term to take place at the beginning of the second week following the publication of the official results of the elections. He shall open the meeting and address a general speech to the Council.
- B) The Council shall at its first meeting elect the office of the Council. The position of the Temporary Speaker shall be filled by the oldest member. The secretarial work shall be performed by the youngest member. If for any reason, anyone of them could not fulfill his/ her duties then he is replaced by the next oldest / youngest member. Their duties come to an end by the election of the office of the Council.
- C) No discussion shall be held before the election of the Office of the Council.

Article (3)

Each Member individually shall swear the oath of office before the Council at the first meeting, as follows:

“ I swear before Almighty God to be faithful to the nation of Palestine, to keep the rights and interests of the people and nation, to respect the Constitution and to fulfill my duties to the best of my ability, as God is my witness.”

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Chapter 2 Election and Functions of The Office of the Council Article (4)

The Office of the Council shall consist of the Speaker, two Deputy Speakers, and the Secretary General, who shall be elected by the Council /in its first session/ by secret ballot.

The Office shall serve until the beginning of the next period of sessions of the Council. Vacancies shall be filled by election to be held according to articles (8,9,10) of this Bylaws.

Chapter Three Parliamentary Blocks Article (5)

Members with common goals and interests may gather or organize in parliamentary blocks provided that their number shall not be less than 5% of the total PLC members.

Article (6)

No member shall be allowed to be part of more than one parliamentary block.

Article (7)

Every parliamentary block shall have the right to set its own internal by-laws, provided that they do not contradict with the provisions of this standing orders and law.

Article (8) Election of the Speaker

The Temporary Office of the Council shall, with the approval of the Council, select three PLC members, who are not candidates, to help the Temporary Office count and sort votes/. Each Member of the Council shall be given a paper on which to write the name of the candidates of his or her choice for the Speaker. The Temporary Speaker shall call members one by one to place their paper in person. The candidate who receives the absolute majority of shall be declared elected. Otherwise, the Council shall proceed to a second round of voting, only between the two candidates who received the highest number of votes in the first round. A relative majority is sufficient at this stage. The Candidate who receives more votes shall be declared elected. A tie shall be resolved by lot, and the Temporary Speaker shall announce the result of the Speaker's election.

Article (9)

Election of the two Speaker's Deputies and Secretary General

The two Deputy Speakers and the Secretary General of the Council shall then be elected, following the same procedure as for the election of the Speaker. The Temporary Speaker shall then invite the elected Office of the Council to assume its responsibilities.

Article (10)

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Resignation from the Office of the Council

1. The speaker or any of his deputies or the secretary general has the right to submit their resignation from the office of the council .
2. The resignation should be submitted in written to the office of the Council .
3. The office of the council should submit the request of resignation to the Council in the next session which shall not be later than two weeks from the date of submitting the resignation
4. A resignation could be withdrawn before it is submitted to the Council .
5. Vacancies in the office of the council should be filled according to the rulings of this bylaw .

Article (11)

The office of the council shall entrust a general secretariat headed by the secretary general to supervise all the legal, administrative, financial, media, foreign relations, public relations and protocol affairs. It will be also responsible for implementing the Council's decisions and report them to concerned agencies, in addition to being responsible for the minutes of sessions, record keeping.

Article (12)

The Speaker shall represent the Council and speak on its behalf implement its will, and shall observe the implementation of the Basic Law and Standing Orders, and shall preserve its security and organization. The Speaker shall open, preside over, direct, control and announce the close of its meetings. The Speaker shall give the right to speak, shall decide the agenda of the Council, and shall authorize the Secretariat to publish the decisions of the Council. Generally, the Speaker shall ensure that the works of the Council progress well, and supervise all of its relations.

The Speaker may participate in the discussions. She shall vacate the chair while doing so.

Article (13)

If the Speaker is absent, or is participating in the discussions of the Council, the chair shall be taken by his first Deputy Speaker, if the First Deputy Speaker is also absent, the chair shall be taken by the Second Deputy Speaker, or in his/her absence by the oldest Member of the Council.

Article (14)

No Member of the Office of the Council shall be eligible to be a Minister or to hold any other governmental position.

Article (15)

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Government and Ministerial Statement

- A) After the President of the PNA selects members of the Council of Ministers, they will be introduced in a special session for vote of confidence after hearing their Ministerial statement, which specifies the program and policy of the government.
- B) In case the Council votes by absolute majority against giving confidence to the members of the Council of Ministers, or to any of them, then the President of the National Authority will submit a replacement in the second session, which shall not be later than two weeks from the date of first session.
- C) Upon conducting a Ministerial adjustment, or filling the vacant position for any reason , the new Ministers will be introduced to the Council in its first session convened for vote of confidence.
- D) No minister can assume his responsibilities before the vote of confidence .

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Title II Chapter 1

Meetings of the Council

Article (16)

The President of the PNA will call the Council to convene its ordinary annual session in two periods. Each such session period shall last for four months. The first period shall start in the first week of March and the second shall start in the first week of September. The Speaker, and upon the request of the Council of Ministers or quarter of the council's members, will call the Council to convene its extraordinary session. If the Speaker does not call for this session, it is considered as convened in the time and place specified at the request of its members or the Council of Ministers.

Article (17)

- 1.The Council shall meet in public shall meet every two weeks on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, unless the Council decides otherwise.
- 2.Committees' meetings shall take place in the week, which precedes the Council's session./

Article (18)

Terms for Legality of Council's Sessions

The quorum required to open a meeting of the Council shall be the presence of more than half of its members. Decisions shall be made by the absolute majority of votes of its members present, except as provided otherwise.

If a meeting does not have the quorum at the time specified for its start, the Speaker shall delay the start for 30 minutes. If the meeting remains without quorum, the Speaker shall adjourn it and shall announce the date and time for the next meeting, which shall be no later than one week from that date.

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Article (19)

/Draft Agenda/

The Secretary General shall distribute the decisions and minutes of the Council's previous session at least 48 hours prior to the next meeting.

Article (20)

- A) The Speaker shall present the agenda of the meeting for discussion and approval.
- B) The decisions and minutes of previous session, as well as the agenda shall be considered valid, so long as no member objects to any of them.
- C) The Council shall not discuss any subject not on the agenda of the meeting, except upon the request of the President of the PNA or the Speaker, or the written request of a minimum of 10 members. Except as provided otherwise in these Standing Orders, the Council shall decide to include any new subject added to the agenda by an absolute majority of members present after having one speech in favor and one speech against. Such speeches will not exceed five minutes in duration.

Article (21)

Termination of Sessions

The Speaker, following the approval of the Council, shall announce the interruption or adjournment of the meeting, and the date and time of the next meeting. The Speaker may however call the Council to meet before the agreed date and time in the case of urgency or following a request by the Council of Ministers.

Article (22)

Extraordinary Sessions

The Council shall convene an extraordinary "emergency" session based on a request submitted by the President of the PNA, or as per a written request submitted by one fourth of the Council Members. If the Speaker fails to call a duly requisitioned extraordinary session, the Council shall be considered as convened in the time and place made in the requisition.

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Chapter 2

Minutes of the Meetings

Article (23)

Minutes shall be recorded for each meeting of the Council, including discussions held, issues debated, and decisions made by the Council.

Article (24)

Following approval of minutes of a meeting, the Speaker and the Secretary shall sign them. The minutes shall be kept in the files of the Council, and a summary shall be published in a special publication of the Council.

Chapter 3

Secret Meetings

Article (25)

The Council may in exceptional cases be called to meet in secret, following a request from the President of the PNA, the Speaker, or one fourth of members. The Council shall decide whether or not to meet in secret, following a debate in which only two speakers in favor and two speakers against shall be heard.

Article (26)

- A. Upon convening a secret session, unauthorized persons shall evacuate the Council's hall and terrace. No person except the members of the council shall be present when the Council meets en camera, except with the permission of the Council.
- B. No civil servant of the Council shall attend the Council when it meets in secret, except by permission of the Speaker.
- C. When the justification for the Council to meet in secret ends, the Speaker shall propose to the Council that the secret session of the meeting shall end; upon the agreement of the Council, the Speaker shall reopen the meeting to the public.

Article (27)

The Secretary General shall take the minutes when the Council is meeting in secret. Such minutes shall be kept by the secretariat of the Council. Access to such minutes shall be restricted to the members of the Council, unless the Council upon an absolute majority vote decides to publish such minutes or any part thereof.

Article (28)

The Council may call a special meeting for the purpose of inviting any personality or guest to address the council. There shall be no other item on the agenda of any such meeting.

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Chapter 4

Speaking Order in Meetings

Article (29)

No Member shall speak unless he requests to speak, and until called to do so by the Speaker. The Speaker may deny a request to speak only in accordance with these Standing Orders. In case of conflict, the Speaker shall put the question to the Council, which shall take a vote by relative majority without discussion.

Article (30)

The Secretary General shall record the requests to speak as per the order and sequence he receives them. A request to speak upon a subject selected for consideration by a committee shall not be accepted until the report of the committee is submitted.

Article (31)

No Member may speak on any issue more than twice: once during the general discussion, and once during the debate on proposals and draft decisions.

Article (32)

The right to speak shall be given by the Speaker, in the order in which members request it. Any Member who has been called to speak may waive his right in favor of another member. In the event of disagreement, the right to speak shall be given in turn to a Member seeking an amendment to the proposal, to an opponent of the proposal, and to a supporter of the proposal under discussion.

Article (33)

The Speaker may give the Ministers the right to speak about a subject within the competence of their Ministries.

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Article (34)

The right to speak shall always be given in the following cases:

1. To request that the provisions of the Constitution or of these Standing Orders be respected.
2. To propose that discussion on the subject under debate shall be postponed.
3. To correct any facts.
4. To reply on a statement which affects the requester to speak in person.
5. To express the motion for no discussion.
6. To propose that the discussion on the subject under debate be postponed until the Council has dealt with another related item of business. Any such request shall take priority over the main subject under discussion; discussion on the main subject shall cease until the Council issues a decision about it. The right to speak in such cases shall not be given until the Member speaking has finished his/her statements, except in cases related to the respect for the provisions of the Constitution or of these Standing Orders, or to correct facts.

Article (35)

No Member may use impolite language or incite against public order.

Article (36)

If a Member does not comply with the provisions of Article 32¹ above, the Speaker may call him/her by name and draw his/her attention, and request him/her to maintain order, or may rule that s/he may no longer speak. If the Member challenges any such ruling, the Speaker shall refer the matter to the Council, which shall decide without discussion.

Article (37)

No Member may interrupt the speech of another or express comments about it. Notwithstanding the provisions of article (34), the Speaker only may request a Member speaking to comply with these Standing Orders at any time during his or her speech.

Article (38)

No speaker may repeat any point s/he has made, or that has already been made by another member, or go beyond the subject submitted for discussion. Only the Speaker may draw the attention of the Member speaking to this, and inform the Member that his or her point is sufficiently clear and requires no further explanation.

Article (39)

The Council may discipline a Member who fails to comply with these Standing Orders, or who does not comply with a decision of the Council forbidding or her to speak, by imposing any of the following penalties:

1. To prevent the Member from speaking for the remainder of the meeting;

¹The number of the Article should be modified to (35), but they did not make any changes in the Arabic version

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2. To instruct the Member to leave the meeting hall, and withdraw from the remainder of the meeting;
3. To exclude the Member from participating in meetings of the Council for a period not exceeding two weeks. The decision of the Council shall be made during the same session, after listening to the member in question or to his/ her representative (proxy).

Article (40)

If any Member refuses to comply with a decision of the Council, the Speaker may adopt all measures necessary, including the adjournment or postponement of the meeting, to enforce the decision. In such case, any penalty of no participation in meetings imposed on the Member shall be doubled.

Article (41)

The Speaker may announce his/her intention to interrupt the meeting, and may so interrupt it for up to 30 minutes in the case of disorder. If order is not restored when the meeting is reconvened, the Speaker may adjourn the meeting and announce the date and time for the next meeting.

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Chapter 5 Withdrawal of Membership

Article (42)

Membership is withdrawn in the following cases:

- A) Death;
- B) Conclusive civil sentence of a competent Palestinian court for a crime related to honesty and integrity.

Article (43)

Any proposal under article (32-B) above to deprive a person of membership shall be signed by 10 members of the Council and submitted to the Speaker. The Speaker shall notify the Member concerned and shall bring the question before the Council at its first subsequent meeting.

Article (44)

- 1) The Council shall refer any proposal under Article (43) above to the Legal Committee, which shall discuss it at its next following meeting. The Council shall, unless it decides otherwise, take its decision on the proposal in the same session.
- 2) The Member concerned shall have the right to defend himself before the Committee and before the Council.

Article (45)

If the report of the Committee recommends deprivation of membership, the Council shall upon the request of the Member concerned or upon a vote of the Council postpone the decision to a further meeting.

Article (46)

The Member who is subject to a proposal for the deprivation of membership may attend the meeting and participate in the debate on such proposal, but shall leave the meeting while the Council votes (makes the decision).

Article (47)

The Council shall decide on a proposal for the deprivation of membership by a majority of two thirds of the members. The vote on any such proposal shall be secret.

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Title III Chapter 1

Committees of the Council

Article (48)

1. The Council shall establish the following permanent committees, which shall discuss and report on any proposals referred by the Council or by the Speaker:

- 1) Jerusalem Committee;
- 2) Land and Settlements Committee
- 3) Refugees Affairs Committee (Refugees, Diaspora , Displaced)
- 4) Political Committee (Negotiations , Arab and International relations)
- 5) Legal Committee (Basic Law, Laws, and Judiciary)
- 6) Budget and Financial Affairs Committee;
- 7) Committee for Economical Affairs, (industry, commerce, housing, investments , supply , tourism and planning)
- 8) Interior Committee (Interior, Security, and Local Government).
- 9) Education and Social Affairs Committee (Education, culture, media, religious affairs, historic sites, social affairs, health, work and labor, prisoners, martyrs, injuries, war veterans, childhood, youth, and women;
- 10) Committee for Human Rights and Public Freedom;
- 11) Natural Resources and Energy Committee (water, agriculture, rural areas, environment, energy, animal resources and fishing)

2. The Council shall form a special committee, called the Council's Affairs' Committee, which shall comprise the Office of the Council in addition to some members.
3. The Council may form any other ad hoc Committees to fulfill temporary or permanent purposes and specific objectives.
4. The Council shall determine at the start of each ordinary term the number of members in each of its permanent committees to ensure that the committees perform their work in a suitable manner.

Article (49)

Selection of Committees' Members

- 1) The selection of the committees' members will be conducted in the first term of the Council. Each Member may submit a request to be appointed to any Committee. The Office of the Council shall coordinate and consult with all applicants, following which the Speaker shall submit the final list of appointments to the Council for approval.
- 2) On the proposal of the Office of the Council, the Council may change the composition of any committee at the beginning of the period of sessions of each year.

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Article (50)

The member should be a member of a committee and is allowed to be part of a second committee only.

Article (51)

1. No Minister may sit on any committee or be a Member of the Office of the Council.
2. No Office member shall be allowed to sit in any of the Committees set forth in Article (48 – 1) of this Standing Order.

Article (52)

Each Committee shall elect a Chairman and Secretary from among its members. In the absence of either the remaining members of the Committee shall elect a temporary substitute.

Chapter 2

Procedures of Committees

Article (53)

A meeting of a Committee shall be called by its Chairman, or upon the request of the Speaker in Coordination with the its Chairman, or on the request of a majority of the members. The meeting shall be called on at least 24 hours' notice. The calling notice shall be accompanied by the agenda of the meeting.

Article (54)

- A) Committees shall meet in secret. The quorum for a Committee shall be the majority of members. Decisions of Committees shall be made by relative majority. In the case of a tie, the Chairman shall have a casting vote.
- B) Committees may decide to hold public meetings.

Article (55)

Minutes shall be taken of each meeting of each Committee, which shall include the names of those members present and those members absent and a summary of discussions held and decisions made. The Chairman and the Secretary of the Committee shall sign each minutes.

Article (56)

The Speaker shall refer to the relevant Committee all documents related to the subject referred to it and within its scope.

Article (57)

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The Committees' through their Chairmen may request any Minister or responsible person within the PNA to give information on or clarify any point related to the subjects referred to it, or which lie within its scope.

Article (58)

- A. Ministers may attend meetings of the Committees. Committees may through their chairs request any Minister or concerned person to attend any of their meetings.
- B. Committees shall be addressed through their chairs.

Article (59)

- A) Members of the Office of the Council may attend any meeting of any Committee and participate in its debate but shall not have the right to vote.
- B) Any Member of the Council may attend any meeting of any Committee of which he is not a Member to participate in the discussion, but he shall not have the right to vote.

Article (60)

Committees' Reports

Each Committee shall submit a report regarding the subject, which has been referred to it, within the time determined by the Council. If it fails to do so, the Speaker may ask the Chairman of the Committee to explain the reasons for the delay, and to determine the time that the Committee deems necessary to complete its report.

The Speaker may bring the question before the Council for decision. The Council may include this subject in its agenda.

Article (61)

The report shall be submitted to the Speaker for inclusion in the agenda of the Council. The report shall be printed and distributed to the members of the Council at least 24 hours before the meeting, which will discuss it.

Article (62)

The report shall include the opinion of the Committee on the subject referred to it, with reasons, and minority opinions. The report shall be accompanied by the recommendations of the Committee and draft decisions, with explanatory memorandum.

Article (63)

The report of any committee shall be presented to the Council by its Chairperson. In his or her absence, the Speaker shall ask the Secretary of the Committee to present the report, or shall ask the attending members of the Committee to elect one of them to do so.

Article (64)

Any Committee, through its Secretary, may request to withdraw its report for further review, even if the Council has started to discuss it. Any such request shall be subject to the agreement of the Council.

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Title 5

Chapter 1

Draft Laws and Proposals

First: Draft Laws and Proposals submitted by the Ministerial Council/

Article (65)

- A) The Council of Ministers shall submit the text of any draft law /or proposal/ to the Speaker, accompanied by a preamble (its explanatory memorandum). The Speaker shall refer any such law to the relevant Committee to give its opinion in no later than two weeks from the date of referring the issue to it.
- B) A copy of the draft law should be distributed to all members 3 days at least from the date of the session designated to present it in the Council .
- C) After hearing the Committee's report, the Council shall start a general discussion to discuss the general principles before voting on accepting or rejecting the draft, in order to complete all necessary procedures related thereto. The Council may decide to start general debate without awaiting a report from the relevant committee.
- D) After the general discussion of the draft law, the Council will put it to vote of acceptance/. If the Council does not vote to accept the draft law, it shall be deemed not considered. If the Council votes to accept the draft law, the Council shall refer it to the relevant Committee to make the appropriate amendments in view of the general discussion.
- E) The Speaker shall refer the draft law to the Legal Committee to express its required legal opinion.

Article (66)

The Council of Ministers may request to retrieve any draft law it has submitted to the Council, provided that the Council has not voted on acceptance of such law.

II: Draft Laws or Proposals Submitted by Council Members or Committees

Article (67)

Any Member or Members, of the Council, /or any of its committees/ may submit a proposal for a new law, or to amend or repeal an existing law. Any such proposal shall be referred to the relevant Committee to express its opinion. It shall be accompanied by a description of the general principles and by a preamble. The Council shall hear the report of the Committee. If the Council accepts the proposal, then it shall be forwarded by the Council to the Legal Committee, which shall put it into the form of a complete draft law, and resubmit it to the Council during the same or the following period of sessions.

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Article (68) Bill Legislation Procedure

- A) Each draft law submitted to the Council shall be discussed in two separate readings as follows:
- a) In the first reading articles shall be debated - each article in turn - Following such debate, the Council shall vote on each article in turn and then on the draft law as an entirety.
 - b) The second reading shall take place in a period not exceeding one month from the date of acceptance by first reading, and shall be limited to discussing the proposed amendments and voting there-on. Another vote shall take place for the final amended articles.²
- B) A third reading (limited to discussing the proposed amendments) shall take place based on a written request of the Council of Ministers, or of one fourth of the members of the Council provided that the request is submitted before referring the proposal to the President of the National Authority for ratification. /It shall then be published in the official gazette/.

Article (69)

Draft laws shall be ratified by absolute majority (unless stated otherwise).

Article (70)

Upon ratification of the draft law in the third reading, or within two weeks after being ratified in the second reading, the Speaker shall forward it to the President of the PNA for assent and publication.

Article (71)

Enactment of Laws

- A) The President of the PNA shall issue the laws within one month after being forwarded to him, and shall return them to the Council within the above period, accompanied with his comments, or justification of his rejection. Otherwise the proposal shall be considered a decree, and shall be published immediately in the official gazette.
- B) If the President of the PNA returns the draft law as per the provisions of the above clause, it shall be re-discussed in the Council. Then, if the draft law has been ratified by absolute majority of the Council, it shall be considered as a law, and shall be published immediately in the official gazette.

Article (72)

Draft Laws not debated by the Council

² Same content, but in reversed order.

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The Speaker shall inform the Council of Ministers at the beginning of each legislative term, about the draft laws, which have been submitted by the Council of Ministers, and rejected by the Council as per article (65). If the Council of Minister does not request to discuss them, then the draft laws will be considered as if they do not exist.

However, if the Council of Ministers requests a debate on these draft laws, the provisions of Article (65) of this Standing Orders shall apply to them.

Article (73)

Proposals to amend or revise the Basic Law

- I. Any proposal to amend the Basic Law shall be submitted by articles in a written form, accompanied by a preamble.
- II. If the request for amendment is submitted by members, it must be signed by one-third of the Council members.
- III. Upon receipt of any such proposal, the Speaker shall inform the Council and refer it to the Legal Committee for opinion, after informing the Council of such request.
- IV. After the Committee returns it to the Council, the Council shall decide after hearing its report, by a relative majority to accept it or reject it. If it disapproves, it shall be considered as rejected; if it approves it is discussed according to Art. 68 of this Standing Orders.
- V. Any amendment or revision to the Basic Law shall require the approval of two-thirds of the members of the Council.

Article (74)

Public Budget Draft Law

- A) The Council of Ministers shall submit the draft annual budget to the Council at least four months before the beginning of the budgetary (fiscal) year.
- B) The Council shall refer this draft budget to the Budget and Finance Committee to study it, and to submit its detailed report and recommendations to the Council .
- C) The Council shall hold a special meeting to discuss the draft budget in view of the Committee's report and recommendations. The Council may approve the budget and its amendments before the new fiscal year begins/, or may refer it back to the Council of Ministers within a period not exceeding one month of its submission to the Council, accompanied by the comments of the Council. The Council of Ministers shall within a period not exceeding two weeks from the referral date introduce the required amendments and submit the budget again to the Council for approval.
- D) The Budget Draft Law shall be voted on chapter by chapter.
- E) It shall not be allowed to change the order of the titles the budget draft law, unless there is prior agreement between the Council and the Executive Authority.
- F) In case it were not possible to issue the general budget draft law before commencement of the new fiscal year, spending shall continue on the basis of monthly allocations with the

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rate of 1/12 (one of twelve) for every month of the budget of the past year, and within a period not exceeding three months.

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Chapter 2

First: Questions and Interrogatories

Article (75)

- 1) Any Member of the Council shall have the right to address a question to the Council of Ministers, or to a Minister, to ask about any subject, which is related to their scope, to ask about a fact which he doesn't know, or to clarify measures that have been taken or could be taken to deal with any subject.
- 2) The question or interrogation should be clear and specific without any comments

Article (76)

Conditions for posing questions

The questions shall be submitted in written to the Speaker who passes it to the related minister and puts it on the agenda of the nearest session under the condition that this should be only after one week from the date it was passed to the minister. The council will assign the first half an hour for questions unless it decides otherwise.

Article (77)

The minister will answer questions on the agenda and could ask to postpone the answer to another session assigned by the Council. In case of urgency the minister has the right to answer a question directed to him in the first session after notifying him even if it is not on its agenda. The minister should inform the Speaker and indicate it in the minutes of that session.

Article (78)

The Member who asked a question shall have the right to ask the Minister for clarification, and to comment on the answer once only.

Article (79)

The provisions relating to questions do not apply to questions made orally by the members to Ministers in the course of debate by the Council.

Article (80)

Conditions of Interrogation

- 1) The interrogation shall be submitted in writing, and shall specify the matters, which will be interrogated without any comment. The speaker assigns a date to read and discuss it as soon after hearing the minister's answer. Discussions should not exceed 10 days.
- 2) Interrogations have priority over all issues on the agenda except questions.

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- 3) A Member may, through the Office of the Council, and in writing, request the relevant Minister or the like to inform him/her of any documents related to his/her interrogation
- 4) Before the start of the discussion, the Member submitting the interrogation shall explain it to the Council. After the Minister or the like has replied, other members may participate in the discussion. If the Member submitting the interrogation is not satisfied, s/he may explain his or her reasons; s/he or any other Member may propose a motion of no confidence in the cabinet, or on any individual Minister, according to the constitution.
- 5) The Member submitting the interrogation may withdraw it , in which case it shall not be discussed except on the request of five or more members of the Council.

Chapter 3

Urgency Procedure

Article (81)

The Council may decide to adopt urgency procedure to deal with any question, including any motion of confidence or motion of reprimand to any Minister or to the Executive Authority as a whole. Any proposal to adopt urgency procedure shall be made by:

- A) any five members, submitted in writing;
- B) A written request submitted by the Council of Minister; or
- C) A written request submitted by the relevant Committee and shall be decided without discussion.

Article (82)

The Council and its Committees shall deal with questions taken under urgency procedure first before other questions. Any such question shall not be subject to time limits as laid down in these Standing Orders. The Council may decide to discuss a question to be taken under urgency procedure at the meeting to which it is submitted, in which case the relevant Committee shall report to the Council immediately, orally or in writing.

Article (83)

Any question discussed by the Council under urgency procedure may be discussed again in the cases provided under these Standing Orders, and shall not be subject to the relevant time limits.

Article (84)

- A) If the question to be discussed under urgency procedure is a draft law, the Council shall refer it to the relevant Committee. Such Committee shall determine first whether it believes the draft law can be discussed, and second shall examine the content of the draft law, and report to the Council on both matters. The question shall be presented to the Council in order to take its opinion whether first it shall discuss the proposal.
If it so decides, the Council shall proceed to debate the draft law.

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- B) In cases of necessity, the Council may decide by a vote of two-third of its members to discuss a draft law directly without prior reference to the relevant Committee.

Article (85)

Any question which have been rejected by the Council to be discussed under urgency procedure can be submitted again to the Council only one month after the date of rejection. However, the Council may submit the question again in less than one month by a vote of two-third of the members.

Chapter 4

Close of Discussion

Article (86)

The discussion on any matter before the Council shall be closed upon the decision of the Council, provided that at least two supporters and at least two opponents of the proposal have spoken in the following cases:

- A) 1 - Upon the proposal of the Speaker, if s/he believes there in no need for further discussion; or

2 - Upon the proposal of at least five members.

- B) The relevant Minister shall always be given the right to reply to the discussion.

Only one supporter and one opponent of any proposal to close the discussion shall be called to speak for period not to exceed five minutes each. The priority shall be given to the Member who requested to speak in the original subject, following which the Council shall vote on whether to close or continue the debate on such proposal. If such proposal is agreed, the Council shall proceed to the substantive "original" question.

Article (87)

No Member may request to speak after the discussion has been closed and before taking the opinion, except to determine the form of the proposal to voted upon.

Chapter 5

Votes of the Council

Article (88)

Only the Speaker may call a vote of the Council.

Article (89)

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- A) The decisions of the Council shall be made by absolute majority. In the case of a tie , the Speaker shall take a second vote. If the tie is not resolved, the Speaker shall have a casting vote.
- B) The provisions of paragraph “A” above shall not apply where these Standing Orders specifically provide otherwise.

Article (90)

If the proposal presented for discussion contains several questions, any Member may request with the agreement of the Speaker, for it to be divided and each will be voted on in parts separately.

Article (91)

A Member may abstain. Any such Member may explain his/her reasons for doing so after the vote and before the announcement of the result of the vote.

Article (92)

Abstentions shall not be counted either with votes in favor or with votes against. If the total of votes in favor and votes against is less than the quorum, the vote shall be postponed to a further meeting. In the second meeting, decisions shall be issued by absolute majority of those who actually vote, even though that their number is less than the majority, due to abstention of others.

Article (93)

- A) The quorum shall be verified immediately before any vote is taken.
- B) A vote on any proposal related to the Basic Law shall be taken by calling the members loudly by name.
- C) Except as provided in paragraph “B” above, any vote shall be taken by a show of hands, or by asking members to stand or sit, or by secret vote if a majority of members decides to do so.

Article (94)

The Speaker shall announce the decision of the Council as per the result of voting. No discussion may take place on a question once decided except as provided under these Standing Orders.

Title IV Chapter 1

Immunity of Members

Article (95)

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- A) A Member shall not be questioned, through either a civil or criminal procedure, because of his or her actions, opinions, or votes in the meetings of the Council and its Committees, whether open or secret, or because of any action outside the Council in the course of his or her function as a member, to enable them perform their parliamentary mission.
- B) No members shall be disturbed in any manner, nor shall any search be made of his or her possessions, house, car or office, and generally any real estate or transferable property, during the period of his or her immunity.
- C) No Member shall be asked, during the period of membership or subsequently, to testify on any subject related to his or her opinions or actions, or to information received in the course of his or her membership, unless he agrees to do so, and as per the prior consent of the Council.
- D) Members shall possess such immunity during the term of the Council. No penalty measures shall be taken against any member, unless apprehended in a criminal act. However, the Council shall be notified immediately about the measures taken against the member, so that the Council shall take the proper action in this regard. The Office of the Council shall assume this responsibility if the Council is not convened.
- E) A member shall not relinquish his/her immunity without a prior permission of the Council. Immunity shall not be dropped after ceasing to be Member of the Council, within the limits which have been included during the membership period.

Article (96)

- A) Any request to deprive a Member of immunity shall be submitted in writing to the Speaker by the President of the Supreme Court of Justice, accompanied by a memorandum including the detail of the alleged crime, its place and date, and the requisite proof for criminal proceedings to be entered.
- B) The Speaker shall inform the Council of any such request and shall refer it to the Legal Committee.
- C) The Committee shall study the request and shall submit a report to the Council within fifteen days. The Council shall decide to deprive a Member of immunity only on the vote of two-thirds of its members.
- D) The Member who has been deprived of immunity, shall have the right to attend session and meetings of Committees, as well as participate in debate and vote.

Article (97)

No Member shall be brought before the Civil Courts on the day of any meeting of the Council, whether as a plaintiff, defendant, or witness.

Article (98)

- A) Except for the Minister position, a Member of the Council shall not accept appointment in any public servant position whether in an executive or consultative capacity.

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Article (99)

Duties , Privileges and Rights of the members

The Council will issue a by-law stating the members' duties, rights and privileges.

Chapter 2

Complaints

Article (100)

Every Palestinian citizen has the right to submit a complaint concerning public affairs to the Council. Any such complaint shall be signed by the petitioner, and shall include his or her name, profession and complete address. Any complaint submitted on behalf of an organization or group shall be signed by a legal entity or a juridical person. No complaint may include impolite or improper language.

Article (101)

Every complaint shall be registered in the order of its submission, and shall be given serial numbers; the name, address, and profession of the petitioner shall be recorded, together with a summary of its subject. The Speaker may order to keep any complaint that does not meet the requirements established in the archive, and shall so inform the petitioner.

Article (102)

- A) The Speaker shall refer any complaint to the General Monitoring and Complaints Committee, or to such Committee within those remit the complaints falls.
- B) The General Monitoring and Complaints Committee shall examine the complaint referred to it, and shall decide to refer it to the Council of Ministers or to a relevant Committee, or to reject it.

Article (103)

The Council may ask the relevant Minister or Ministers to give clarifications "response" to any complaint referred to them.

Article (104)

The Speaker shall communicate the response to the complaint to the petitioner.

Chapter 3

Absence of Members and Permissions

Article (105)

No Member of the Council may be absent without informing the Speaker and giving reasons. No Member may be absent for more than three consecutive meetings without the

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consent of the Speaker. In the event of necessity, the Speaker may give any Member a leave for one month, and shall so inform the Council.

Article (106)

A) Any Member who is absent from the meetings of the Council or of its Committees, or is absent for a period longer than the permission "leave" he or she has been given, shall be considered as having renounced his/her allowances for the period of his or her absence. The Speaker may call the attention of the Council to any such absence; the Council may, upon the proposal of the Speaker, reprimand such member.

B) If a Member of any Committee is absent without permission or a justified reason for three consecutive or seven non-consecutive meetings of such Committee during the same period of sessions, s/he shall be considered to have resigned from such Committees. The Secretary of any Committee shall inform the Speaker of any such occurrence.

Chapter 4

Keeping of Order in the Council

Article (107)

- A) The Council shall be responsible for the keeping of its own order and security. For these purposes, a special police force for the Council shall be established, according to rules drawn up by the Council. The Speaker shall control the exercise of this function on behalf of the Council.
- B) No security force or police force shall enter the precinct of the Council, unless the Speaker decides otherwise.

Article (108)

No person may enter the chamber of the Council for any reason while it is in meeting, with the exception of its staff and employees.

Article (109)

Any person permitted to observe any meetings of the Council who causes disturbances or refuses to obey the rules shall be asked to leave the meeting. If s/he refuses to do so, the Speaker may order that the person be removed from the meeting and that appropriate measures be taken against him or her.

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Chapter 5

Resignation

Article (110)

Any Member wishing to resign shall submit his/her unconditional resignation to the Speaker. The Speaker shall submit such resignation to the Council after two weeks from its receipt, or at the first meeting to be convened after that. No resignation shall be considered as final until confirmed by the Council.

Article (111)

Any Member who has resigned may withdraw such resignation in writing to the Speaker before it has been decided upon.

Article (112)

The Speaker shall inform the Council of Ministers of any vacancy affecting any electoral constituency, which shall be filled in accordance with the Election Law of the President of the PNA and the members of the Legislative Council.

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Chapter 6

General Provisions

Article (113)

If the Council needs to elect a representative delegation, the proposed number of members shall be determined and selected by the Office of the Council, which shall then submit their names to the Council for approval. If the Council does not agree such proposal, the members of the delegation shall be elected by and from the Council. If the Speaker or either of the Deputy Speakers is a Member of any delegation, s/he shall preside it. Otherwise, the Council shall appoint the president of the delegation.

Article (114)

These Standing Orders may only be amended as per a proposal submitted by the Speaker or by one-third of the members of the Council. Any such proposal shall be submitted to the Council, which shall refer it to the Legal Committee. Such Committee shall study this proposal and submit its recommendations to the Council in a period not exceeding one month. Otherwise, the Council may consider the proposal directly, and shall not accept the amendment unless it is approved by absolute majority of the Council .

Article (115)

These Standing Orders shall enter into force upon approval, and shall be published in the Palestinian Official Gazette. Any other related legislation or rules previously in force in Palestine shall be repealed by these Standing Orders.