
Swedish election observers to Palestinian presidential elections

The Government has decided to send election observers to the Palestinian territories for the forthcoming presidential elections on 9 January 2005.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has been instructed to recruit and train a maximum of 11 election observers, 7 of whom are to be short-term observers. The Swedish election observers will be part of the joint EU election observation mission.

"Sweden supports democratic development in the Palestinian territories and we therefore consider it important to contribute election observers to the forthcoming presidential elections. Free and democratic elections in the Palestinian territories would be an important step forward in the Palestinian reform process and can contribute to better conditions for a resumption of the peace process," says Carin Jämtin, Minister for International Development Cooperation.

The decision to send election observers was taken after an invitation from the Palestinian Central Elections Commission (CEC) to international organisations to monitor all phases of the election process.

The Palestinian territories will hold presidential elections on 9 January 2005 to appoint a successor to the late President Yasser Arafat. The purpose of election observers is to reduce the risk of irregularities in connection with the elections.