



provides little time for new political leadership to emerge and is a serious impediment to little-known political contestants. Name recognition and access to resources by better-known candidates may play a disproportionate role in determining the winner of the January 2005 contest. Political party activity and voter education, both key elements of an ongoing democratization process, will not reach the level that might be expected in a presidential race.

These potential shortcomings result from following a legal mandate to call an election within 60 days of the death of the president and shoul

military occupation and curfew. Since the begi

certain benefits if they were to participate in voting. Public assurances that Palestinian residents of Jerusalem will not face any negative consequences for exercising their right to vote may help increase voter turnout.

The CEC estimates that the total number of possible Palestinian voters in Jerusalem may exceed 200,000. Some of the five post offices used in 1996 could accommodate the presence of only six voters at one time, and that calculation does not take into consideration observers and the media who will undoubtedly pay special attention to these centers. Consideration should be given to increasing the number of voting centers in Jerusalem.

#### *The Voter Registry and Technical Preparations*

In September and October 2004, the CEC conducted a technically sound voter registration process, which was monitored by an NDI international observation mission. Following Yasser Arafat's death and the announcement that a presidential election was to be held, the CEC reopened voter registration Nov. 24 to accommodate voters who had not registered, but who would like to vote in the presidential elections.

The CEC was established in 2002 as a new, independent electoral commission. The CEC

*Voter Education, Communication and Domestic Election Observation*

To date, voters have received lim

Jerusalemites need explicit reassurances from Israeli and Palestinian officials that exercising their voting rights in the January elections will not lead to sanctions in any form. NDI recommends that any agreement reached include specific protections and guarantees that voters in East Jerusalem will not suffer any consequences as a result of participating in these elections. On election day, a judicious deployment of Israeli security forces around polling stations will serve as an important confidence building measure that these guarantees are genuine.

Additionally, NDI recommends that any agreement reached should expand the number of locations used for purposes of voting. NDI also recommends special consideration be given to the training of poll workers, who are postal workers rather than CEC employees, and the transportation of ballots.

- 3) *Voter Education and Communication*: Recent amendments to the election law and the CEC's plans for incorporating the new regulations into this election, have led to a comp