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Election body: 70,000 register to vote in Gaza

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Around 70,000 people have registered to vote in the Gaza Strip since the Central Elections Commission began updating the electoral roll two days ago, a statement from the group said Wednesday.

Some 257 registration centers will be open for one week to update the electoral roll in the Gaza Strip, with an estimated 350,000 unregistered eligible voters living in Gaza.

The roll has not been updated in Gaza since Jan. 2005 and the operation of the CEC in Gaza is seen as a boost to reconciliation efforts between Fatah and Hamas.

The centers are open from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. daily and the registration process is operating according to plan, the CEC said.

The voter registration process is due to be completed by Feb. 18 and, in theory, an election could then be called three months later.

The last parliamentary vote was held in 2006, when Hamas swept to power, ending the dominance of Fatah. The following civil war split Palestinians both geographically and politically.

Both the parliament and the president's terms have expired during the electoral impasse.

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