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Palestinian Right to Information Law Would Rank 36th Globally

An assessment of Palestine's draft Law on the Right of Access to Information by the Centre for Law and Democracy using the RTI Rating (www.RTI-Rating.org) has found that the draft would obtain a rather modest score of 92 points out of a possible 150, around the middle of the 95 countries globally with right to information (RTI) laws.

"The Arab world lags well behind other regions of the world in terms of adoption of RTI legislation," said Toby Mendel, Executive Director of the Centre for Law and Democracy. *"While we welcome this Palestinian initiative, we also note that the draft needs to be significantly improved if it is to provide a strong basis for realisation of the RTI."*

A Note prepared by CLD makes a number of recommendations to bring the draft Law into line with international standards. Some key recommendations include the following:

- Requesters should not have to provide reasons for their requests.
- Public authorities should be required to provide assistance to requesters.
- All exceptions should include a harm test and public interest override.
- The independence of the oversight body, the Commissioner General of Information, should be enhanced.
- Officials should be protected where they disclose information in good faith pursuant to the law.

CLD urges relevant Palestinian actors, and in particular the Council of Ministers, to bring the draft Law more fully into line with international standards before it is passed.

The note and accompanying RTI Rating are available at: <http://www.law-democracy.org/live/palestinian-right-to-information-law-would-rank-36th-globally>.

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