

News from Copenhagen

President Lennmarker visits Middle East

OSCE PA President Goran Lennmarker travelled to Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Amman from 2 to 9 February on a visit to get acquainted with the situation in the Middle East and to follow up on recent developments in the region, in his capacities as President of the Assembly and Chairman of the Swedish Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee.

President Lennmarker's extensive visit to the region was mainly centred on the developments of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the prospects for a solution. He also discussed a variety of issues related to the OSCE PA with the Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian authorities including the need to further develop dialogue with the Mediterranean Partners.

Mr. Lennmarker emphasized the need for co-operation in fields such as preventive diplomacy, arms control, and the fight against terrorism and stressed the need for further development in human rights issues.

In Israel, Mr. Lennmarker was hosted by the Deputy Speaker of the Knesset, Colette Avital, who heads the Israeli Partner Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. In the Knesset, he also met the Head of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Tzachi Hanegbi. Mr. Lennmarker held meetings with representatives from the academic community and the Israeli Foreign Ministry, including Deputy Foreign Minister Majalli Whbee. His programme in Israel concluded with a dinner hosted by Israeli President Shimon Peres.

In Ramallah, President Lennmarker met the leadership of the Palestinian National Authority including President Mahmoud Abbas and Foreign Minister Riad al-Malki. He addressed the students of Al Quds University and finished his visit by meeting with representatives of the Palestinian Legislative Council.

In Amman, President Lennmarker met with Jordanian Prime Minister Nader Dahabi, Foreign Minister Salh Basir, and the Speakers of both Chambers of Parliament, Abdul Hadi Majali and Zaid Rifai. He also addressed a session of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament's Lower House.

President Lennmarker was accompanied during the visit by OSCE PA Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares, Dr. Thomas Horberg, Head of the Secretariat of the Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Swedish Parliament, and Senior Adviser Ann-Sofi Lindenbaum.



President Lennmarker with Colette Avital in Jerusalem



President Lennmarker with Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah



President Lennmarker with Nader Dahabi in Amman

OSCE PA will not observe Russian Presidential election

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Goran Lennmarker notified the Chairman of the Russian State Duma, Boris Gryzlov in a letter on 7 February 2008 that the Parliamentary Assembly is unable to accept the invitation to monitor the Russian Presidential election on 2 March 2008.

"As you know," Mr. Lennmarker wrote, "the Parliamentary Assembly did not send observers to the Presidential election

in Russia four years ago. For the same reasons that we did not send observers in 2004, as well as due to other conditions and circumstances, we unfortunately cannot accept your invitation to send a limited number of observers to Russia for the Presidential election taking place on March 2."

The Parliamentary Assembly observed the Russian Parliamentary elections in December 2007.