

Israel's Shimon Peres runs for presidency

by UPI

JERUSALEM - Israeli Vice Premier Shimon Peres announced his candidacy for the state presidency in Jerusalem on Wednesday with the support of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

The 84-year-old former prime minister made the announcement at a meeting of the Kadima party, saying it was a difficult decision to make because of his age, Haartez reported.

"I decided to accept this position after numerous requests, first and foremost by the prime minister, (members of the Knesset), and many others, who have asked me to give a contribution, and I must say perhaps my last contribution ... in service of the state," he said. "The president does not have a lot of powers but he has the authority to do good deeds and to express enthusiastic faith.

The presidential elections are the only Knesset vote conducted via secret ballot. The vote is set for June 13, the Jerusalem Post said.

Peres lost a race for president in 2000.

He has two opponents in the race -- Reuven Rivlin from the Likud, and Labor's Colette Avital, Ynetnews said.

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