



مركز العالم العربي للبحوث والتنمية  
Arab World for Research & Development

*Quality Research ... Matters*

**PRESS RELEASE:**  
**2016 in Review, Expectations for 2017**

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Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD) conducted a public opinion poll of 1,200 adult Palestinians (18+) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, January 16-17. The survey measures assessments of living conditions and political developments, including the recent U.N. Security Council Resolution on settlements, the Seventh Fatah Congress and the election of U.S. President Donald Trump. The margin of error is  $\pm 3$  percent. The poll can be found online at [www.awrad.org](http://www.awrad.org).

**Optimism Persists in the Face of Eroding Conditions:** Palestinians believe their personal and community circumstances have worsened in the past year. Currently, 48 percent state that their personal economic situation has worsened, while 47 percent say their family's has also worsened. An additional 43 percent say that access to public services has worsened and 41 percent state the same of the security situation in their community. Further, a majority (58 percent) believes that Palestinians are further from achieving statehood with Gazans more negative than their counterparts in the West Bank. Despite these declining circumstances, Palestinians remain hopeful, with a majority (56 percent) stating they are more optimistic for the future than a year ago.

**Mixed Impression of Political Figures and Institutions:** Overall, Palestinians are lukewarm in their assessment of governmental figures and institutions, shifting between neutral or negative perceptions, depending on the object of evaluation. At a broad glance, Fatah and PA-affiliated figures and institutions receive slightly higher marks than their Hamas counterparts, though neither elicits much positivity. Specifically, 41 percent of respondents believe that the performance of President Abbas has remained the same over the last year, while 44 percent say the same of the PA, 41 percent of Fatah and 43 percent of the Hamdallah government. Across evaluations of all actors, respondents who believe performances have "stayed the same" constitutes the largest plurality.

In contrast, Hamas personalities or institutions are more likely to be seen negatively by respondents. Pluralities of respondents state that the respective performances of both Ismail Haniyeh (41 percent) and Hamas (43 percent) have worsened. The performance of government institutions, such as the security forces and the judiciary, is believed by the plurality of respondents to have stayed the same. In all instances, Gaza respondents are more likely than those in the West Bank to believe that performances of institutions have worsened.

**Rights and Freedoms Suffer in Gaza:** In the past year, respondents believe that rights and freedoms in Gaza have deteriorated significantly. A majority of respondents believe that the state of freedom of expression (51 percent), human rights (52 percent) and democracy (52 percent) has worsened since a year ago. This sentiment is particularly acute in Gaza, reaching at least 70 percent of respondents across all topics.



The same sentiment is not observed in assessments of the state of rights and freedoms in the West Bank. Overall, respondents are most likely to believe that things have stayed the same, neither regressing nor progressing. Pluralities observe no change in the state of freedom of expression (37 percent), human rights (39 percent) or democracy (39 percent). The rate of individuals who believe rights and freedoms have deteriorated exceeds those who believe they have improved, but in no instances do these rates exceed one-third of respondents.

**Daily Concerns and Priorities:** A plurality of respondents believes that “unemployment and poverty” is the issue that worries Palestinians most. This is followed by the Occupation (17 percent), economic development (16 percent), infrastructure (13 percent) and security (11 percent). Geographic variations are observed. Specifically, Gaza respondents are most likely to identify infrastructure as the largest worry, while those in the West Bank identify unemployment and poverty and economic development.

**Large Majorities Supportive of Elections:** Palestinians have become more supportive of all forms of elections by significant margins. When assessing the immediate conduct of local (71 percent), legislative (71 percent) and presidential elections (73 percent), large majorities say they have become more supportive in the past year. Support in Gaza exceeds support in the West Bank for all elections. This sentiment is also reflected in the preferred option to fill a potential vacancy in the presidency. If such a need arose, 72 percent believe the position should be filled by new elections in both the West Bank and Gaza. Despite enthusiasm for elections, Palestinians remain frustrated with their options. In a hypothetical legislative election, 41 percent of respondents say they have not decided who they will vote for or will not vote, a combined rate that exceeds support for mainstream options like Fatah and Hamas.

**Mixed Feelings, High Uncertainty on Fatah Congress:** A majority (52 percent) of respondents say they did not follow news of the recent Seventh Fatah Congress. Respondents are largely divided on the impact or constructive value of the conference, with high rates of uncertainty observed. Specifically, 34 percent believe the conference did not address issues important to Palestinians, with 30 percent unsure. A further 39 percent believe it did not resolve questions about leadership succession, with 42 percent unsure.

**High Hopes Following Security Council Resolution:** News of the recent U.N.S.C. Resolution condemning Israeli settlements was followed by roughly one-half (50 percent) of the population. Of those who followed, a majority (50 percent) believes the Resolution will have a positive impact on the Palestinian cause.

**Trump Administration:** The United States presidential election was followed at a greater rate (62 percent) than both the U.N.S.C. resolution and the Seventh Fatah Congress. A majority (55 percent) says they are aware of President Trump’s positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Three quarters (75 percent) of respondents believe that Palestinian leaders should not engage the new U.S. Administration on resuming negotiations. A majority (57 percent) of respondents also believes that moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem would result in Palestinian protests.

## **Tables and Full results:**

### **Section (1): General Directions**

#### **1. Compared to one year ago, are you more or less optimistic about the future?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
More optimistic	62.1%	46.9%	56.4%
Less optimistic	35.3%	52.2%	41.7%
I don't know	2.5%	0.9%	1.9%

#### **2. Compared to one year ago, has your personal economic situation improved or worsened?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Improved	17.6%	5.8%	13.2%
Stayed the same	46.9%	25.1%	38.8%
Worsened	35.2%	69.1%	47.9%
I don't know	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%

#### **3. Compared to one year ago, has the economic situation in your family improved or worsened?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Improved	17.5%	4.2%	12.5%
Stayed the same	48.4%	25.1%	39.7%
Worsened	33.5%	70.7%	47.4%
I don't know	0.7%	0.0%	0.4%

#### **4. Compared to one year ago, has access to public services (water, power, sanitation) in your community improved or worsened?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Improved	24.8%	2.9%	16.6%
Stayed the same	56.3%	13.3%	40.2%
Worsened	18.3%	83.8%	42.9%
I don't know	0.5%	0.0%	0.3%

#### **5. Compared to one year ago, has your community's security improved or worsened?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Improved	21.8%	15.3%	19.4%
Stayed the same	45.1%	30.0%	39.4%
Worsened	32.3%	54.7%	40.7%
I don't know	0.8%	0.0%	0.5%

## Section (2): Government Performance

6. Compared to one year ago, how do you rate the performance of:

		West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
<b>President Abbas</b>	Improved	18.5%	16.2%	17.7%
	Stayed the same	45.3%	33.1%	40.8%
	Worsened	30.9%	47.1%	37.0%
	I don't know	5.2%	3.6%	4.6%
<b>The Palestinian Authority</b>	Improved	21.9%	17.1%	20.1%
	Stayed the same	47.3%	37.6%	43.7%
	Worsened	26.3%	42.4%	32.3%
	I don't know	4.5%	2.9%	3.9%
<b>Fatah</b>	Improved	20.6%	18.4%	19.8%
	Stayed the same	44.2%	34.7%	40.6%
	Worsened	28.2%	43.3%	33.9%
	I don't know	7.1%	3.6%	5.8%
<b>Ismael Haniyeh</b>	Improved	9.9%	14.2%	11.5%
	Stayed the same	39.9%	27.1%	35.1%
	Worsened	33.5%	53.6%	41.0%
	I don't know	16.7%	5.1%	12.3%
<b>Hamas</b>	Improved	10.9%	14.7%	12.3%
	Stayed the same	38.9%	25.8%	34.0%
	Worsened	35.7%	56.0%	43.3%
	I don't know	14.4%	3.6%	10.3%
<b>The security forces</b>	Improved	22.5%	19.3%	21.3%
	Stayed the same	50.0%	29.6%	42.3%
	Worsened	22.7%	47.6%	32.0%
	I don't know	4.8%	3.6%	4.3%
<b>The judiciary</b>	Improved	21.7%	15.1%	19.3%
	Stayed the same	45.7%	34.0%	41.3%
	Worsened	23.9%	45.3%	31.9%
	I don't know	8.7%	5.6%	7.5%
<b>The government led by Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah</b>	Improved	17.9%	9.8%	14.8%
	Stayed the same	46.4%	38.2%	43.3%
	Worsened	23.5%	43.1%	30.8%
	I don't know	12.3%	8.9%	11.0%

7. Compared to one year ago, what is your opinion about the overall state of the following in the West Bank?

		West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
<b>Freedom of expression</b>	Improved	22.0%	25.8%	23.4%
	Stayed the same	42.3%	28.2%	37.0%
	Worsened	32.7%	35.1%	33.6%
	I don't know/no opinion	3.1%	10.9%	6.0%
<b>Human rights</b>	Improved	19.7%	24.4%	21.5%
	Stayed the same	45.6%	28.9%	39.3%
	Worsened	31.7%	35.3%	33.1%
	I don't know/no opinion	2.9%	11.3%	6.1%
<b>Democracy</b>	Improved	18.8%	24.2%	20.8%
	Stayed the same	44.3%	29.6%	38.8%
	Worsened	33.9%	34.9%	34.3%
	I don't know/no opinion	3.1%	11.3%	6.2%

8. Compared to one year ago, what is your opinion about the overall state of the following in the Gaza Strip?

		West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
<b>Freedom of expression</b>	Improved	6.8%	10.7%	8.3%
	Stayed the same	21.9%	16.4%	19.8%
	Worsened	38.3%	72.2%	51.0%
	I don't know/no opinion	33.1%	0.7%	20.9%
<b>Human rights</b>	Improved	5.7%	10.2%	7.4%
	Stayed the same	21.9%	17.6%	20.3%
	Worsened	40.4%	71.3%	52.0%
	I don't know/no opinion	32.0%	0.9%	20.3%
<b>Democracy</b>	Improved	5.3%	10.2%	7.2%
	Stayed the same	22.1%	16.9%	20.2%
	Worsened	40.0%	71.8%	51.9%
	I don't know/no opinion	32.5%	1.1%	20.8%

**Section (3): Daily Concerns/Priorities**

9. In your opinion, what are the issues Palestinians worry about most on a day-to-day basis? (Open ended)

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
<b>Unemployment &amp; poverty</b>	20.0%	25.5%	22.5%
<b>Occupation-related issues (roadblocks, closures)</b>	14.0%	21.0%	16.6%
<b>Economic development</b>	20.0%	8.0%	16.4%
<b>Infrastructure (Electricity, water, roads)</b>	1.0%	31.0%	12.5%
<b>Security</b>	15.0%	3.0%	10.6%
<b>Education</b>	9.5%	2.0%	6.8%
<b>Domestic issues (housing, marriage)</b>	4.8%	3.2%	4.2%
<b>Social issues (crime, violence)</b>	6.0%	1.5%	4.1%
<b>Political division (West Bank vs. Gaza)</b>	2.0%	2.8%	2.4%
<b>Health</b>	3.5%	1.0%	2.4%
<b>Corruption</b>	2.2%	1.0%	1.5%

**Section (4): Elections**

10. Compared to one year ago, are you more or less supportive of the immediate conduct of elections?

		West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
<b>Local elections (Municipal)</b>	More supportive	66.1%	78.0%	70.6%
	Less supportive	24.8%	17.8%	22.2%
	I don't know	9.1%	4.2%	7.3%
<b>Legislative elections</b>	More supportive	66.2%	78.9%	71.0%
	Less supportive	25.1%	17.1%	22.1%
	I don't know	8.7%	4.0%	6.9%
<b>Presidential elections</b>	More supportive	67.5%	81.8%	72.8%
	Less supportive	24.3%	14.2%	20.5%
	I don't know	8.3%	4.0%	6.7%

**11. If there were a vacancy in the presidency, how should the position be filled?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Hold new elections in both West Bank and Gaza	67.6%	78.0%	71.5%
Palestine Liberation Organization and the National Board appoint a new president	9.9%	8.0%	9.2%
Appointing the President of the Palestinian legislative Council a President of the PA according to the basic law until new elections	7.6%	6.9%	7.3%
President position should remain vacant, and the Palestine Liberation Organization manage the PA without president	2.5%	3.1%	2.8%
I don't know	12.4%	4.0%	9.3%

**12. If elections were held today for the presidency, which of the following candidates would you choose?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Mahmoud Abbas	33.3%	31.6%	32.7%
Ismael Haniyeh	15.7%	18.9%	16.9%
I don't know/ not sure	16.3%	9.8%	13.8%
I will not vote	34.7%	39.8%	36.6%

**13. If elections were held today for the presidency, which of the following candidates would you choose?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Marwan Barghouti	47.3%	58.0%	51.3%
Ismael Haniyeh	13.5%	16.9%	14.8%
I don't know/ not sure	10.9%	5.3%	8.8%
I will not vote	28.3%	19.8%	25.1%

**14. If elections were held today for the legislative council, which of the following party lists would you choose?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Fatah	34.3%	42.0%	37.2%
Hamas	11.9%	19.1%	14.6%
PFLP	2.5%	2.2%	2.4%
PNI	1.9%	2.0%	1.9%
Islamic Jihad	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%
PPP	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%
DFLP	0.5%	0.2%	0.4%
HizbTahrir	0.5%	0.2%	0.4%
Popular Struggle	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%
FIDA	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	1.2%	1.8%	1.4%
Did not decide yet	20.4%	13.6%	17.8%
I will not vote	25.1%	17.1%	22.1%

**Section (5): Fatah Congress**

**15. Did you follow news about Fatah's recent party Congress?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	51.9%	42.7%	48.4%
No	48.1%	57.3%	51.6%

**16. In your opinion, did the Congress address issues important to Palestinians?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	13.8%	13.1%	13.5%
To some extent	22.5%	24.4%	23.2%
No	29.9%	39.3%	33.5%
I don't know	33.8%	23.1%	29.8%

**17. In your opinion, were questions about future leadership succession resolved at the Congress?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	20.4%	18.2%	19.6%
No	34.0%	46.9%	38.9%
I don't know	45.6%	34.9%	41.6%



**Section (6) UN Security Council Resolution**

**18. Did you follow news about the recent UNSCR condemning settlement construction in the occupied West Bank?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	54.4%	43.3%	50.3%
No	45.6%	56.7%	49.8%

**19. If yes, how do you view the resolution?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Positive impact on the Palestinian cause	44.9%	60.0%	49.8%
Will have no impact (positive or negative) on the Palestinian cause	42.9%	29.7%	38.6%
Negative impact on the Palestinian cause	8.8%	8.7%	8.8%
I don't know/no opinion	3.4%	1.5%	2.8%

**20. How do you view the U.S. abstention from the vote?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Positively	18.7%	27.6%	22.1%
Negatively	50.2%	53.1%	51.3%
I don't know/no opinion	31.1%	19.3%	26.6%

**Section (7): U.S. Presidential Elections**

**21. Have you followed news about the U.S. presidential election?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	65.0%	56.4%	61.8%
No	35.0%	43.6%	38.2%

**22. Are you familiar with President Trump's positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	58.6%	48.2%	54.7%
No	41.4%	51.8%	45.3%

**23. Do you believe Palestinian leaders should engage President Trump on resuming negotiations?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	25.3%	25.8%	25.5%
No	74.7%	74.2%	74.5%

**24. If the U.S. were to relocate its embassy to Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, what do you believe would be the impact?**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
No impact	22.7%	24.4%	23.3%
Palestinian protests	56.2%	58.7%	57.1%
Arab regional protests	10.5%	12.2%	11.1%
I don't know/no opinion	10.7%	4.7%	8.4%

## Section (8): Statehood

25. Compared with one year ago, do you believe that we (Palestinians) are closer to achieving statehood/ending occupation?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	36.4%	29.6%	33.8%
No	52.5%	67.3%	58.1%
I don't know/ no opinion	11.1%	3.1%	8.1%

## Sample Distribution

Region	%	Gender	%
West Bank	62.5	Male	50.5
Gaza	37.5	Female	49.5
District	%	Age	%
Jenin	6.7	18-30	42.3
Tulkarm	5.0	31-40	23.3
Qalqilya	1.7	41+	34.4
Nablus	8.3	Marital Status	%
Salfit	1.6	Single	24.6
Tubas	1.6	Married	71.8
Ramallah & Al Bireh	8.3	Other	3.6
Jerusalem	10.0	Educational level	%
Jericho	1.8	Up to 9 years	19.3
Bethlehem	4.8	Secondary (10-12)	44.3
Hebron	12.8	More than 12 years	36.4
Jabalya	7.2	Occupation	%
Gaza	14.6	Laborer	14.0
Deir Al Balah	5.3	Employee	17.4
Khan Yunis	5.3	Farmer	1.1
Rafah	5.3	Merchant	5.9
Residence	%	Professional	.6
City	50.5	Craftsman	2.3
Village	25.5	Student	12.2
Refugee Camp	24.0	Housewife	35.8
Work Sector	%	Does not work	9.7
Government	26.3	Retired	1.1
Private	67.1	Reported Relative Income	%
NGOs	3.7	Above average	6.9
Other	2.9	Average	62.8
Refugee status	%	Below average	30.3
Refugee	45.0		
Non-refugee	55.0		