



مركز العالم العربي للبحوث والتنمية
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Public Opinion Poll in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Elections, Political Prospects and Relations with Israel

Monday, 31 October 2016

In the wake of the postponement of municipal elections originally scheduled for October 8 and on the heels of President Abbas's highly publicized attendance at the funeral of former Israeli president Shimon Peres, the Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD) conducted a national public opinion poll October 21-24 among 1,200 Palestinians (18+) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The poll focuses on the following issues: living conditions, internal political scenarios, relations with Israel, elections and political party support. The margin of error for this poll is less than 3 percent. The poll can be found online at www.awrad.org or call Dr. Nader Said at 0599204527.

Optimism on the Downturn: 70 percent of respondents believe that things in Palestine are going in the wrong direction. In addition, half of all Palestinians are pessimistic about the future. Correspondingly, a majority (54 percent) reports a downturn in their household economic situation. Negative views of the future, pessimism and declining economic conditions are reported at a much higher level in Gaza than in the West Bank. Economic and political concerns are widespread with approximately one third saying that their main concern is the economy and jobs, while another third says that their main concern is the continuation of the occupation and roadblocks.

Opposition to Dissolving the PA: The majority express opposition to the notion of dissolving the Palestinian Authority. One third of respondents support dissolving the PA; this number drops to 20 percent, however, if this were to lead to the return of full occupation.

If President Abbas were to step down rather than seek reelection, as has been previously reported, Palestinians, overwhelmingly, seek a democratic transition with an immediate election to select his successor. Small minorities support an appointment by the PLO or an assumption of authority by the speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council. Furthermore, almost half of the respondents agree with the creation of the position of a vice president, while one third disagrees.

Mixed Views on the Peace Process: Almost half of the respondents believe that Palestinians should remain committed to a two-state solution as the best means to



establish an independent state with an almost equal number (46%) supporting the resumption of peace talks. Similarly, a plurality of respondents continues to support the approach adopted by President Abbas with a smaller group supporting the Hamas approach. With respect to armed conflict, 50 percent of respondents are supportive with Gazans more inclined to support than West Banker respondents. At the same time, Gazans are also markedly more supportive of the Abbas approach to resolving the conflict, and slightly more supportive of the resumption of peace talks, than Palestinians in the West Bank.

Widespread Objection to Postponement of Elections: The majority of Palestinians continue to disagree with the decision of the High Court to postpone local elections. A greater number opposes the conduct of the elections in the West Bank only, as declared by the High Court. If local elections are conducted in the near future, the poll indicates a drop off in participation levels compared to previous polling in September with 67 percent now saying they will participate; a decline of 14 points. Correspondingly, significant numbers of Palestinians say their views of the PA, judiciary and major political parties have been negatively affected by the decision to postpone elections.

Almost Half of West Bank Respondents are Uncommitted: The largest group of respondents declares that they will not vote for any of the existing political parties or that they will not vote. Fatah continues to have the largest bloc of support among Palestinians with higher levels in Gaza than in the West Bank, followed by Hamas with the PFLP and PNI in low single digits and all other “Leftist” groups slowly disappearing from the popular map.

Some Interest in American Election: Only 29 percent of the respondents say that they are following the news of the US presidential election.

Detailed Results:

Section (1): General Directions

1. In general, would you say that things in Palestine are heading in the right direction or the wrong direction?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Right direction	32.9%	11.8%	25.0%
Wrong direction	60.1%	86.0%	69.8%
Don't know	6.9%	2.2%	5.2%

2. In general, are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Optimistic	53.5%	37.6%	47.5%
Pessimistic	44.9%	58.4%	50.0%
Don't know	1.6%	4.0%	2.5%

3. Is your family's economic situation better or worse than it was a year ago?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Better	14.6%	4.4%	10.8%
Stayed the same	39.0%	28.7%	35.1%
Worse	46.3%	65.8%	53.6%
Don't know	0.1%	1.1%	0.5%

4. In your opinion, what are the issues Palestinians worry about most on a day-to-day basis?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Jobs and the economy	30.9%	44.4%	36.0%
Cost of living	26.4%	22.2%	24.8%
Housing	2.3%	1.3%	1.9%
The occupation	29.5%	20.0%	25.9%
Roadblocks and travel permits	8.5%	5.1%	7.3%
Other	1.3%	6.4%	3.3%
Don't know	1.1%	0.4%	0.8%

Section (2): The Palestinian Authority (PA)

5. Do you support dissolving the PA?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Support	30.7%	36.9%	33.0%
Oppose	61.9%	56.2%	59.8%
Don't know	7.5%	6.9%	7.3%

6. Do you support dissolving the PA, knowing that it could lead to the return of the occupation?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Support	19.4%	21.1%	20.0%
Oppose	73.3%	73.8%	73.5%
Don't know	7.4%	5.1%	6.5%

7. If President Abbas decided to step down as the president of the PA, what is the best method to select his replacement?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Immediate conduct of new elections in the West Bank and Gaza	79.5%	79.1%	79.3%
Appointment of a new president by the PLO	6.9%	12.0%	8.8%
The speaker of the PLC should assume the presidency, according to the Basic Law, until new elections can be held	4.5%	5.3%	4.8%
The position of president of the PA should remain vacant with authorities assumed by the head of the PLO	2.8%	1.3%	2.3%
Don't know	6.3%	2.2%	4.8%

Section (3): Local, PLC and presidential elections

8. Recently the high court in Ramallah postponed local elections? Do you agree or disagree with this decision?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Agree	22.7%	24.4%	23.3%
Disagree	66.7%	69.8%	67.8%
Don't know	10.7%	5.8%	8.8%

9. Do you agree or disagree with the high court's announcement that elections would go ahead in the West Bank only?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Agree	23.7%	12.4%	19.5%
Disagree	66.3%	82.2%	72.3%
Don't know	10.0%	5.3%	8.3%

10. Before the high court's initial decision to postpone the elections, a number of electoral lists, mainly Fatah, were disqualified in Gaza. Do you believe this influenced the court's decision?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	28.8%	38.9%	32.6%
Yes, to some extent	28.8%	28.4%	28.7%
No	26.1%	22.4%	24.8%
Don't know	16.3%	10.2%	14.0%

11. How did the postponement of the local elections influence your view of the following?

		West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
The judiciary	Positively	10.9%	13.1%	11.8%
	Negatively	35.6%	45.3%	39.3%
	No change	41.6%	34.7%	39.0%
	Don't know	11.9%	6.9%	10.0%
Fatah	Positively	13.6%	17.6%	15.1%
	Negatively	40.0%	45.8%	42.2%
	No change	36.0%	30.2%	33.8%
	Don't know	10.4%	6.4%	8.9%
Hamas	Positively	12.1%	28.0%	18.1%
	Negatively	36.7%	38.4%	37.3%
	No change	37.1%	26.2%	33.0%
	Don't know	14.1%	7.3%	11.6%
The PA	Positively	13.2%	14.9%	13.8%
	Negatively	37.7%	43.1%	39.7%
	No change	37.5%	34.9%	36.5%
	Don't know	11.6%	7.1%	9.9%

12. Were you registered to vote in the local elections?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	65.8%	75.8%	69.9%
No	34.2%	24.2%	30.1%

13. Do you believe elections at all levels are important at this time?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes, at all levels	81.1%	86.2%	83.0%
Just local	6.3%	4.4%	5.6%
Just legislative	2.1%	1.6%	1.9%
Just presidential	4.9%	4.4%	4.8%
Don't know	5.6%	3.3%	4.8%

14. The government announced that local elections would be conducted in 4 months. Do you plan to vote?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	62.4%	73.3%	66.9%
No	25.6%	20.2%	23.3%
Don't know	12.1%	6.4%	9.7%

15. Would you participate in legislative or presidential elections if East Jerusalem were excluded?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	43.3%	51.1%	46.2%
No	42.9%	39.1%	41.5%
Don't know	13.9%	9.8%	12.3%

16. If PLC elections were held today and the following parties ran, which one would you vote for?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
DFLP	1.2%	0.2%	0.8%
Hizb Tahrir	0.8%	0.1	0.5%
Islamic Jihad	1.6%	1.1%	1.4%
PFLP	1.5%	3.3%	2.2%

Popular Struggle	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%
PNI	4.9%	3.1%	4.3%
Hamas	11.6%	12.0%	11.8%
Fatah	30.1%	49.6%	37.4%
FIDA	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
PPP	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Other	1.5%	2.2%	1.8%
Did not decide yet	25.5%	16.0%	21.9%
I will not vote	20.7%	12.0%	17.4%

17. Do you believe the PA should create the position of vice president?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Agree	51.0%	45.3%	48.9%
Disagree	29.8%	41.8%	34.3%
Don't know	19.2%	12.9%	16.8%

Section 4: Peace and Negotiations

18. In recent weeks, there have been a number of clashes, including in Jerusalem. To what do you attribute the renewed protests?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Lack of economic opportunity	12.0%	17.1%	13.9%
Lack of faith in current Palestinian leadership to find solutions	13.4%	13.6%	13.4%
Frustration with failure of the peace process	10.0%	10.4%	10.2%
Frustration with settlement expansion	9.8%	18.7%	13.1%
Loss of hope in the future	6.8%	7.1%	6.9%
All of the above	47.1%	30.9%	41.0%
Don't know	0.9%	2.2%	1.4%

19. Do you support a renewal of armed conflict at this time?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	44.8%	58.0%	49.8%
No	46.5%	39.3%	43.8%
Don't know	8.7%	2.7%	6.4%

20. In your opinion, would a renewal of armed conflict benefit Palestinian interests?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	37.2%	51.8%	42.7%
To some extent	24.8%	23.3%	24.3%
No	31.0%	23.6%	28.2%
Don't know	6.9%	1.3%	4.8%

21. Do you support the resumption of peace talks, whether under French, Egyptian, Russian or other international auspices?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Support	44.0%	48.2%	45.6%
Oppose	44.5%	46.2%	45.2%
Don't know	11.5%	5.6%	9.3%

22. If one leads to the resolution of the national struggle, which approach do you support more?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
The approach of President Mahmoud Abbas	29.3%	45.3%	35.3%
The approach of Hamas and Ismael Haniyeh	16.7%	16.0%	16.4%
Other	26.8%	25.8%	26.4%
Don't know	27.2%	12.9%	21.8%

23. In your opinion, should Palestinians remain committed to a two-state solution as the best means to end the ongoing national struggle, regardless of any lack of progress so far?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	54.4%	38.7%	48.5%
No	37.5%	52.7%	43.2%
Don't know	8.1%	8.7%	8.3%

Section (5): US presidential election

24. Are you following the news on the US Presidential election?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	32.1%	24.0%	29.1%
No	67.9%	76.0%	70.9%

Sample Distribution

Region	%	Gender	%
West Bank	62.5	Male	48.8
Gaza	37.5	Female	51.3
District	%	Age	%
Jenin	6.7	18-30	42.8
Tulkarm	5.0	31-40	18.6
Qalqilya	1.7	41+	38.7
Nablus	8.3	Marital Status	%
Salfit	1.6	Single	26.7
Tubas	1.6	Married	68.6
Ramallah & Al Bireh	8.3	Other	4.8
Jerusalem	10.0	Educational level	%
Jericho	1.8	Up to 9 years	20.4
Bethlehem	4.8	Secondary (10-12)	46.9
Hebron	12.8	More than 12 years	32.6
Jabalya	7.2	Occupation	%
Gaza	14.6	Laborer	13.6
Deir Al Balah	5.3	Employee	13.9
KhanYunis	5.3	Farmer	1.0
Rafah	5.3	Merchant	5.4
Residence	%	Professional	1.1
City	50.7	Craftsman	4.3
Village	25.3	Student	11.2
Refugee Camp	24.0	Housewife	37.1
Work Sector	%	Does not work	11.4
Government	25.1	Retired	1.0
Private	67.6	Reported Relative Income	%
NGOs	2.6	Above average	6.4
Other	4.8	Average	66.5
Refugee status	%	Below average	27.2
Refugee	47.9		
Non-refugee	52.1		