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مركز العالم العربي للبحوث والتنمية  
Arab World For Research & Development

## Results of an Opinion Poll

*Evaluation of government performance*

*Peace process*

*PLC and presidential elections*

*Local elections and priorities*

**Publication Date: 10 March 2010**

**Field work: 25-27 February 2010**

**Sample Size: 1,200 Palestinians in the West Bank & Gaza**

**Margin of error:  $\pm 3$  %**

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**The Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD) carried out a national opinion poll in the West Bank and Gaza during the period of 25-27 February, 2010. The poll questioned Palestinians on the following issues: Evaluation of government performance, Peace Process, PLC and Presidential Elections, Local elections and priorities. AWRAD interviewed a representative sample of 1,200 Palestinians of all socio-economic backgrounds.**

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

- **A vast majority (82 percent) support an immediate PLC election.**
- **Two thirds of Palestinians support the position of Fayyad Government to hold local election in July.**
- **37 percent in the West bank and 27 percent in Gaza feel that corruption is on the increase.**
- **57 percent of Gazans view negatively the performance of the Haniyeh Government in improving the economy.**
- **51 percent of Gazans negatively evaluate the performance of the Haniyeh Government in respecting personal and civil freedoms; while 38 percent of West Bank respondents feel the same way about the Fayyad Government.**
- **Gazans are much more critical of the Haniyeh Government than West Bank respondents; while the Fayyad Government receives lower evaluation in the West Bank than in Gaza.**
- **73 percent support the appointment of a woman (Dr. Laila Ghannam) as Governor.**
- **Only 8 percent feel that Mr. Obama is serious about establishing a Palestinian state.**
- **A PLO list will win over an Islamist one in an upcoming PLC election.**
- **Abbas, Fayyad, and Mustafa Barghouti win over Haniyeh in an upcoming presidential election.**
- **Independents will play a decisive role in local and national elections.**

## **Analysis of Results**

### **1. Evaluation of Government: Fayyad's Government is More Positively Viewed in Gaza than the Haniyeh Government**

#### **1.1 Economic Conditions**

- About 57 percent of the Gaza respondents negatively evaluate the performance of the Haniyeh Government in improving economic living conditions. In contrast, 25 percent of Gaza respondents feel the same way about the Fayyad Government (a gap of 32 points in favor of Fayyad).
- In comparison, 32 percent of West Bank respondents positively evaluate the performance of the Fayyad Government, while only 16 percent of them feel the same way about Haniyeh Government.
- It is interesting to note the evaluation of the Fayyad Government is higher in Gaza (46 percent) than it is in the West Bank (32 percent). While, the negative evaluation of Haniyeh is higher in Gaza (57 percent) than in the West Bank (38 percent).

#### **1.2 Security**

- On the issue of security, 38 percent of the total sample evaluates the performance of the Fayyad Government positively, compared with 26 percent for the Haniyeh Government.
- Among Gaza respondents, 32 percent perceive the performance of Fayyad in bringing more security into the West Bank negatively, while 38 percent perceive the performance of the Haniyeh Government in bringing security to Gaza negatively.
- Among West Bank respondents, 37 percent perceive the performance of the Fayyad Government in the field of security positively, compared with 18 percent who view the performance of the Haniyeh Government in Gaza positively.

#### **1.3 Corruption**

- It is interesting to note that there is more concern about corruption in the West Bank than in Gaza. About 37 percent of the respondents in the West Bank feel that corruption in their area is more compared with 2 years ago, while 27 percent of Gaza respondents feel that corruption had increased in their region.
- In contrast, 44 percent in Gaza and 31 percent in the West Bank feel that corruption has declined in their region.

#### **1.4 Personal and Civil Freedoms**

- In both regions, the poll shows that Palestinians are concerned with the respect of personal and civil freedoms. About 22 percent in both regions

positively evaluate the performance of their government in respecting freedoms (23 percent in the West Bank and 20 percent in Gaza).

- Gazans are, however, more dissatisfied with the performance of their government in this regard, where 51 percent negatively evaluate its performance in respecting freedoms, compared with 38 percent in the West Bank who negatively evaluates the performance of the Fayyad government.

### **1.5 Response to the Gaza floods**

About 41 percent evaluate negatively the response of the Haniyeh Government to the aftermath of the recent floods in Gaza, while 25 percent evaluate its response positively.

### **1.6 Appointment of a Woman Governor**

The President of the Palestinian Authority appointed Dr. Laila Ghannam as Governor of the Ramallah Governorate, the first of its kind in Palestinian history. About 73 percent of the respondents are supportive of this appointment, while 24 percent are in opposition.

## **2. Peace Process**

The most recent trip by US Envoy George Mitchell did not bring about optimism among Palestinians. In addition, the original enthusiasm about the elected President of the United States had immensely declined.

### **2.1 Mitchell's Recent Trip and Mr. Obama**

- Only 14 percent of Palestinians believe that the recent visit by Mr. Mitchell will bring about progress in the peace process. In contrast, 79 percent disagree with that notion.
- The current poll show that only 8 percent will confirm that Mr. Obama is serious about his desire to establish a Palestinian state, while 21 percent believe that (to some extent). In contrast, two thirds of the respondents believe that he is not serious. This is compared with 41 percent who felt that he was not serious after his Cairo speech in June 2009 (an increase of 26 points in negative evaluation).
- While 18 percent believe that Mr. Obama is capable of establishing a Palestinian State, and 16 percent believe that to some extent, about 63 percent believe that he is not capable.
- In general, only 16 percent are optimistic that a sovereign Palestinian state will be established under the presidency of Obama. In contrast, 73 percent are not optimistic.

## **2.2 Negotiations and Coexistence**

- The vast majority (87 percent) supports the position of the Palestinian Authority not to hold direct negotiations before a total freeze over settlement expansion. Only 10 percent support that negotiations be continued even under the current conditions.
- The majority of respondents (82 percent) feel that coexistence between Palestinians and Israeli's is impossible under the current circumstances. This percentage declines to 52 percent if a Palestinian state is established side by side with Israel.

## **3. Presidential Elections**

The current poll confirms recent trends in Palestinian public opinion:

- The role of the independents and the undecided will be decisive in determining the outcome of a future election, where under some scenarios their percentage reaches to over 40 percent.
- The outcome of a presidential election will depend on the number of candidates, their affiliation and the nature of coalitions that will take place. If only two candidates ran, any PLO supported candidate will win over an Islamist candidate. If three candidates ran, one supported by the PLO, one supported by Islamic groups and one Independent, it will be a highly competitive race depending on who the Independent candidate is and what his support base is.
- For the first time a poll shows that an Independent candidate will come in second place after a Fateh candidate, where the Islamist candidate is close in third place.

**The current poll shows the following interesting results:**

### **3.1 Fateh, Islamic and Independent candidates**

A hypothetical Fateh candidate receives 37 percent of the support among the public, followed by an Independent candidate who receives 25 percent and an Islamist candidate who receives about 18 percent of the public support. In this case, about 20 percent are undecided or will not vote.

### **3.2 Three-way Races**

#### **Abbas, Haniyeh and Mustafa Barghouti**

In a three-way popularity contest between Abbas, Haniyeh and Mustafa Barghouti, Abbas receives 32 percent, Haniyeh 21 percent and Barghouti 22 percent. About one quarter will not vote or are undecided. If this scenario holds in a future election, AWRAD predicts the following results: Abbas (40 percent), Haniyeh (30 percent) and Barghouti (30 percent).

### **Marwan Barghouti, Haniyeh and Fayyad**

In a three-way popularity contest between Marwan, Haniyeh and Fayyad, Marwan receives 44 percent, Haniyeh 20 percent and Fayyad 14 percent. About 22 percent will not vote or are undecided. If this scenario holds in a future election, AWRAD predicts the following results: Marwan (53 percent), Haniyeh (28 percent) and Fayyad (19 percent).

### **3.3 Two-way Races**

#### **Abbas vs. Haniyeh**

In a popularity race, Abbas receives 43 percent support, and Haniyeh receives 26 percent. About 31 percent are undecided or will not vote. **In a two-way race for elections, AWRAD predicts that Abbas will receive 59 percent and Haniyeh 41 percent.**

#### **Mustafa vs. Abbas**

In a popularity race, Mustafa Barghouti and Mahmoud Abbas receive equal support (34 percent each). About 32 percent are undecided or will not vote. **In a two-way race for elections, AWRAD predicts a tight race between both candidates.**

#### **Abbas vs. Fayyad**

In a popularity race, Abbas receives 38 percent support, and Fayyad receives 17 percent. About 45 percent are undecided or will not vote. **In a two-way race for elections, and depending on how the large group of undecided vote, AWRAD predicts that Abbas will receive 66 percent and Fayyad 34 percent.**

### **3.4 Race among 11 Candidates**

On the assumption that Abbas and Marwan do not run for a presidential election, the poll shows the following results:

Fayyad receives the highest support with 22 percent, followed by Haniyeh at 19 percent and Mustafa at 16 percent. The highest scoring Fateh candidate is Dahlan at 9 percent. Aziz Duwaik of Hamas comes in fifth place with about 5 percent, followed by Saeb Erekat at about 3 percent and Ahmad Sadat of the PFLP at about 2 percent. Naser Qudwi, Mahmoud Zahhar, Naser Eldin Shaer, and Ahmad Qurei all receive less than 2 percent.

## **4. Palestinian Legislative Council Elections (PLC)**

In a popularity contest between all Palestinian factions, the poll shows the following results:

- Fateh receives 44 percent of the popular support, followed by Hamas at 20 percent. The PFLP and Mubadara receive about 4 percent support. All other nationalist groups receive about 5 percent and other Islamists groups receive about 2 percent. About 20 percent are undecided or will not vote.
- If only three lists ran, one led by Fateh, one led by Hamas and one of independents, Fateh would receive 44 percent, Hamas 21 percent and a list of Independents would receive 20 percent. Taking into consideration those who are undecided, **AWRAD predicts that Fateh would receive 47 percent, Hamas 30 percent, and Independents 23 percent.**
- If a PLO coalition led by Fateh is established, it would receive 49 percent support, compared with 23 percent for an Islamic-leaning list led by Hamas. Taking into consideration those who are undecided and Independents, **AWRAD predicts that a PLO list would receive 65 percent, compared with 35 percent for Hamas.**

## 5. Local Elections

The Government of Mr. Salam Fayyad called for the conduct of local elections by July 2010. Hamas rejected such a call.

- About two thirds of the respondents support the position of the Fayyad Government and call for an election in July; only 21 percent support the position of Hamas. A higher percentage of respondents in Gaza (70 percent) support the position of the Fayyad government, compared with 61 percent in the West Bank.
- The most important priority for Palestinians is job creation and poverty alleviation. About 49 percent see that as their first priority at the local level, while 76 percent see it as their first priority at the national level. The improvement of health services is their second priority, followed by security and fighting crime.