



مركز العالم العربي للبحوث والتنمية
Arab World for Research & Development

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July 2015

Results of AWRAD Palestine Poll

A National Opinion Poll in West Bank and Gaza Strip

Performance of Palestinian Leaders

Living Conditions

Popularity of Political Factions

Presidential Election

Negotiations

"ISIS"

Publication date: 29 July 2015

Fieldwork: 10-14 July 2015

Sample: 1200 Palestinian in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Margin of error: ± 3



Highlights:

- Only 1 percent of respondents believe that ISIS represents true Islam. An absolute majority of Palestinians (93 percent) believe that ISIS does not represent Islam.
- An absolute majority (93 percent) of Palestinians do not believe that the practices of ISIS are justifiable.
- 49 percent of respondents support the return to negotiations, while 46 percent oppose.
- 20 years after the Oslo Accords, a majority of respondents (62 percent) believe that the Palestinians are farther away from achieving their goal of a Palestinian state than they were two decades ago.
- 20 years after the Oslo Accords, a majority of respondents (62 percent) believe that the Palestinians are farther away from achieving their goal of establishing a Palestinian State than they were two decades ago.
- 65 percent of Gaza respondents and 42 percent of West Bank respondents stated that the economic situation of their families is worse than it was a year ago.
- Compared to the April 2015 AWRAD National Poll President Abbas enjoys a minimal increase in approval rating.
- 25 percent of respondents positively evaluated the performance of the government led by Rami Al- Hamdallah, and 34 percent of respondents gave an average evaluation of his government.
- A majority of Gaza respondents (70 percent) and West Bank respondents (51 percent) believe that the current state of affairs in Palestine is headed in the wrong direction.
- 36 percent of Gaza respondents and 44 percent of West Bank respondents stated that the security situation in their area is worse than it was a year ago.
- 49 percent of respondents support the return of negotiations, while 46 percent oppose.
- In a hypothetical presidential election, 38 percent of respondents would vote for Mahmoud Abbas, and 21 percent would vote for Khaled Mashal. However, 41 percent are undecided or will not vote.
- In a hypothetical presidential election, voters are more likely to select Marwan Barghouthi (46 percent) than Ismail Haniyeh (20 percent).
- Marwan Barghouthi (42 percent) is also the most popular candidate among a field of six competitors, if Mahmoud Abbas declines to run. Ismail Haniyeh (18 percent) is the next most popular, while Mustafa Barghouthi and Salam Fayyad would receive 5 percent of the vote and, finally, Ahmad Sadat and Ramadan Shallah would receive 3 percent or less.
- If PLC elections were held, 37 percent of respondents would vote for a Fatah list, 17 percent for a Hamas list, importantly 36 percent are still undecided .

Introduction

The following are the results and analysis of the latest Arab World for Research & Development (AWRAD) poll. This poll is part of AWRAD's Compass, which tracks the opinions, attitudes and perceptions of the Palestinian public in every corner of modern day Palestine.

The present survey was fielded from July 10-14, 2015. The poll was conducted in an atmosphere of general pessimism, generated from poor and declining conditions across the Arab World and in Palestine. Generally, Palestinians are growing increasingly frustrated and discontented with the failure of leaders to end or alleviate the siege of Gaza or make meaningful progress in reconciliation. More specifically, the poll was conducted against the immediate backdrop of evident political intrigue, as Yasser Abed Rabbo was forcibly expelled from his position in the PLO, replaced by Saeb Erekat.

AWRAD Palestine Poll is a nationally representative survey of 1,200 face-to-face interviews across the West Bank and Gaza. The sample is a random probability sample and yields a ± 3 percent margin of error. All socioeconomic groups are represented, and all geographic areas are covered by this poll. For more details on the sample, please refer to www.awrad.org. The survey was carried out by AWRAD researchers under the supervision of AWRAD's President, Dr. Nader Said-Foqahaa.

Descriptive Analysis

1. Overall Living Conditions:

- The results reveal that the economic situation of Palestinian families is worse than it was a year ago. Specifically, 50 percent of respondents state that the economic situation of their family is worse than it was a year ago, while 35 percent state that the economic situation of their family "did not change." Only 14 percent of respondents believe that economic situation of their families is better than it was a year ago. However, a slight increase (6 points) is noticed when compared to results in April 2015, as only 8 percent of respondents in this survey stated that economic situation of their families has improved.
- A visible gap exists between the views of Gaza and West Bank respondents. Only 6 percent of Gaza respondents believe that the economic situation of their family has improved since last year, compared to 19 percent in the West Bank. Furthermore, 65 percent of Gaza respondents state that the economic situation of their families is worse than it was a year ago, while 42 percent of West Bank respondents share that view.
- 35 percent of respondents believe that Palestine is heading in the right direction, a stable result from April 2015. However, 58 percent of respondents state that, in general, the current state of affairs in Palestine is heading in the wrong direction.

Notably, an evident geographic gap (19 points) exists between the opinions of Gaza and West Bank respondents. In Gaza, 70 percent of respondents believe that the current state of affairs in Palestine is heading in the wrong direction, while only 51 percent of West Bank respondents express the same sentiment. Alternatively, 24 percent of Gaza respondents believe that Palestine is heading in the right direction, while 42 percent of West Bank respondents agree.

- On the one hand, a majority of Palestinians (54 percent) remain optimistic about the future. This constitutes a 2-point increase from April 2015. On the other hand, 41 percent of respondents are pessimistic about the future. Optimistic views are more widespread in the West Bank (59 percent) and less so in Gaza (51 percent). A 5-point increase in optimism is observed in Gaza since April 2015.
- When asked about the security situation, 20 percent of respondents believe the security in their area of living has improved. An additional 39 percent of respondents state that the security situation in their area of living has remained the same. However, 41 percent of respondents stated that the security situation is worse than it was a year ago. There are significant differences between the West Bank and Gaza; 44 percent of West Bank respondents believe that the security situation is worse compared to 36 percent of Gaza respondents who express the same sentiment.

2. Leadership and Government:

- Currently, 44 percent of respondents are satisfied with the general performance of President Abbas. In contrast, 49 percent of respondents express dissatisfaction. A final 7 percent of respondents stated that they have no answer or do not know. Greater dissatisfaction is observed in Gaza (56 percent) than the West Bank (46 percent).
- 34 percent of respondents describe the performance of the Hamdallah government as average. A further 25 percent evaluate its performance positively, while 31 percent evaluated it negatively. Positive evaluations are higher in West Bank (28 percent) than Gaza (21 percent).

3. Evaluation of Political Leaders:

- Positive evaluations of President Abbas are slightly increasing. Currently, 32 percent of respondents believe the performance of President Mahmoud Abbas is positive, a 2-point increase since April of 2015. On the other hand, 35 percent evaluate his performance as negative, while 28 percent consider it to be average. A final 5 percent of respondents stated that they do not know or have no answer. Although there are no differences in positive evaluations of the President between respondents in the West Bank or in Gaza, but in Gaza, more respondents evaluate his performance negatively (44 percent in Gaza and 29 percent in the West Bank)

- Among the different Palestinian political actors, Marwan Barghouti receives the highest positive evaluations, and lowest negative evaluations. Specifically, 47 percent of respondents believe that performance of Marwan Barghouti is positive, while 13 percent consider it negative. While 28 percent state that his performance is average, 12 percent do not know or have no answer. Respondents in Gaza (52 percent) are more likely to evaluate Marwan Barghouti performance as positive than those in the West Bank (44 percent), though positive evaluations remain high in both territories.
- In comparison, 31 percent of respondents evaluate the performance of Ismail Haniyeh as positive, while 32 percent believe it was negative and 29 percent consider it average. A final 8 percent of respondents do not know or have no answer. Even though there are no differences in the positive evaluations between Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, respondents in the latter territory are more likely to express negative evaluations of Haniyeh (44 percent in Gaza and 25 percent in the West Bank).
- In a two-way, presidential race between Mahmoud Abbas and Khaled Meshaal, 38 percent of respondents would vote for Abbas and 21 percent for Khaled Meshaal. It is important to observe that none of the candidates could win a majority of the votes. Furthermore, the *largest segment of respondents (41 percent) stated that they will not vote (25 percent), or are undecided or have no answer (16 percent)*. The results are similar in a potential two-way presidential race between Mahmoud Abbas and Ismail Haniyeh.
- In a two-way presidential race between Marwan Barghouti and Ismail Haniyeh, Barghouti receives 46 percent of the vote while Haniyeh would receive 20 percent. In this scenario, *34 percent of respondents will not vote, are undecided or have no answer*. Gaza respondents (47 percent) are more supportive of Marwan Barghouti than West Bank respondents (39 percent).
- When asked to choose between six different political leaders running in a hypothetical presidential election, Marwan Barghouti receives 42 percent of the popular support, while Khaled Meshaal receives 18 percent. All other candidates, including Dr. Salam Fayyad, Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, and Ahmad Saadat, will individually receive 5 percent or less of the vote. *It is very important to note that a large group of respondents (28 percent) will not vote, are undecided or do not have an answer*.

4. Popularity of political factions:

- If PLC elections were held today, 37 percent of respondents will vote for a Fatah list and 17 percent of respondents will vote for a Hamas list. A PFLP list, Islamic Jihad list and a Mubarada list receive between 1 and 2 percent. All other lists might individually get less than 1 percent of the vote. It is possible that a unified

list of left wing political parties will be able to garner a larger portion of the vote. Once again, the largest segment of respondents (36 percent) state that they will not vote, are undecided or do not have an answer.

5. Negotiations:

- Currently, 49 percent of respondents support a return to negotiations between the PA and Israel, while 46 percent oppose. The current figures indicate a 5-point increase in the support for the resumption of negotiations since April 2015.
- The majority of respondents (62 percent) believe that 20 years after the Oslo Accords, Palestinians are farther away from achieving their goal of a establishing the Palestinian state. In contrast, 26 percent believe that Palestinians are closer.

5. ISIS:

- Only 1 percent of respondents believe that ISIS represents true Islam. An absolute majority of Palestinians (93 percent) believe that ISIS does not represent Islam.
- Furthermore, an absolute majority (93 percent) of Palestinians do not believe that the practices of ISIS are justifiable, while 6 percent of respondents do not know have no answer.