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**AWRAD’s Election Day Poll among Palestinian Voters during Palestinian Local Council Elections, 20 October, 2012**

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**Introduction**

 These are the results of AWRAD’s **election – day poll** among Palestinian voters run on the 20th of October 2012 during the local Palestinian elections, which were conducted in 93 West Bank communities. AWRAD interviewed 820 voters exiting 202 voting station in 49 voting centers located in 19 communities including major cities (Jenin, Tulkarem, Nablus, Qalqilya, Jericho, Ramallah, Al Bireh, Bethlehem, Hebron and Yatta) and small towns and villages (Tubas, Qabatiya, Ateel, Salfit, Bedya, Aseera Shamaleya, Birzeit, Abu Dis and Beit Jala). The sample was selected through systematic random selection.

**Main Results**

**Socio-Economic Profile of Voters**

* Women comprise 45 percent and men 55 percent of the voters.
* Youth (18-30 years old) played a decisive role in the vote. Youth comprise 38 percent of the voters within this age group (their representation in the overall population is 23 percent), 48 percent of the voters are 31-50 years old and the rest (15 percent) are older than 50.
* Government employees comprise 27 percent of the voters, 66 percent of voters work in the private sector, and 7 percent work with NGOs.
* Refugees comprise 28 percent of the voters, while 72 percent are non-refugee.
* Self-reported level of household income: 18 percent above average, 62 percent average and 20 percent below average.

**Evaluation of the Election**

* 88 percent of the voters say that they are very pleased (58 percent) or somewhat pleased that they participated in the voting. 10 percent are indifferent and only 2 percent are displeased.
* 93 percent believe that their vote makes a difference, while only 4 percent believe the opposite.
* 92 percent say that the election was fair (76 percent), or somewhat fair (15 percent). Only 2 percent say that the election was unfair.
* 93 percent of the voters are satisfied (67 percent) or somewhat satisfied (26 percent) with the performance of the Central Election Commission. Only 4 percent are dissatisfied.

**Reasons for Participation**

* When asked to select the most important reason behind voting, 52 percent said “*voting is a civic duty.”*
* 21 percent of the voters said “*local councils serve an important role in the community*”.
* Other reasons include: membership /support of a political group (9 percent), expression of displeasure with the current office holders (8 percent), desire to vote for a family candidate (5 percent).

**Reasons for selecting a list**

Voters ranked the relevance of the following criteria in their selection of a list to vote for as follows:

* Credibility of the candidates on the list (46 percent).
* Agenda of the list (15 percent).
* Political views of the list (14 percent).
* Social-cultural agenda of the list (10 percent).
* Representation of a family member in the list (7 percent).
* Connectivity of list members to national leadership (6 percent).

**Immediate Priorities**

Voters have high expectations from the new leaders of local councils:

* 35 percent say that their immediate priority is to improve conditions to enable economic development and job creation; in addition, 4 percent believe that the priority is to encourage more investment.
* 26 percent say that the improvement of infrastructure is their most urgent priority.
* 17 percent chose the improvement of services (water, electricity) as their most urgent priority.
* 5 percent believe that the new local council must focus on improving community internal relations and 4 percent believe it should focus on reducing bureaucracy in the work of the local council.
* Only 1 percent chose cultural activities and facilities as their most urgent priority.

**Campaign Material**

Voters ranked the importance of the following means for obtaining campaign material and information on the lists as follows:

* Internet (19 percent).
* Informal sources of information such as relatives and friends (18 percent).
* Posters/billboards (16 percent).
* Written publications such as pamphlets (13 percent).
* Meetings/gatherings (12 percent).
* Radio and TV (9 percent each).
* Phone/mobile (5 percent).

**Political Background of Voters**

* Self-identified Fatah supporters comprise 50 percent of voters with Jenin registering the highest percent (70) among these voters.
* Independents comprise 28 percent of the vote.
* Supporters of Islamist groups comprise 10 percent of voters with 18 percent of the vote in Hebron (11 percent Hamas, 5 percent Hizb Tahrir and 2 percent Islamic Jihad).
* Leftist – leaning voters comprise 12 percent of voters.

**Voting Patterns**

* The majority **of Fatah supporters** voted for the officially-endorsed lists where there were no alternative Fatah lists.
* In cities where there was more than one Fatah list, the vote was divided, with some cities favoring the unofficial Fatah list. By way of illustration:
* **Nablus**: 50 percent of Fatah supporters voted for Nablus Al Wataniyeh al Mustaqelah (headed by Mr. Ghassan Shakaa), while 45 percent voted for the official Fatah list.
* **Ramallah**: Only 29 percent of Fatah supporters voted for the officially-endorsed unity list, while 58 percent voted for the alternative list (Abna’al Balad).
* **Hebron**: the official list received 85 percent of the Fatah vote.
* **The independent vote** was diverse, but inclining to the unofficial Fatah lists where available. For example:
* **Nablus**: 65 percent of self-identified independents voted for Nablus Al Wataniyeh al Mustaqelah, while 23 percent voted for the official Fatah list.
* **Ramallah**: as in Nablus, the majority of independents (53 percent) voted for the alternative Fatah list (Abna’al Balad), 16 percent voted for Al Mustaqbal list and only 11 percent for Al Mustaqelah list.
* **Hebron**: One third of the independents voted for Al Khalil Madina Asreya (independent Islamist list), and around 30 percent voted for the official Fatah list.
* **The Islamist vote** was significant in Hebron: as previously indicated, at least 18 percent of the vote in Hebron came from Islamist supporters. The majority of them (60 percent) voted for Al Khalil Madina Asreya (list predicted to come in second place), while 10 percent say that they voted for the official Fatah list.

**AWRAD’s Exit Poll**

In addition to the election-day poll, AWRAD carried out an exit poll to predict the results in three major cities: Nablus, Ramallah and Hebron. AWRAD interviewed a sample of 3,500 voters in the three cities. AWRAD was able to correctly predict the results of the election in the three cities under consideration. While AWRAD will not be able to predict the exact number of seats for each list as this is based on a complex system of vote count, it was able to reach the following predictions for the approximate distribution of votes and potential representation in the three cities, with a margin of error +/- 4 percent. Lists in red are the ones that crossed the threshold (8 percent of the vote) and will obtain seats.

**AWRAD’s Exit Poll Results (20 October 2012)**

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| **Hebron** | **Nablus** | **Ramallah** |
| Alestiqlal Wa al Tanmiya  | 52% | Nablus al Wataniyah al Mustaqela | 58% | Abna’ al Balad  | 58% |
| Alkhalil Madina Asreya | 24% | Isteqlal wa al Tanmiyah | 35% | Ramallah al Mustaqbal | 30% |
| Alkhalil Almustaqelah | 6% | Nablus Lljamee’ | 7% | Ramallah al Mustaqelah | 12% |
| Alkhalil Almuwahada  | 6% |  |  |  |  |
| Almubadara | 6% |  |  |  |  |
| Bilmusharaka Nastatee’ | 4% |  |  |  |  |

The results show the following interesting trends:

* In two of the three cities (Ramallah and Nablus), the unofficial Fatah list received the most support, while the officially-endorsed Fatah list is winning in Hebron.
* Approximately 22 percent of the votes in Hebron (shaded) will not be counted as four lists might not reach the needed minimum threshold (i.e. 8 percent).
* The exit poll confirms a voting gender gap, where women tend to vote at lower rates, compared to men, for Fatah lists:
* Nablus: 62 percent of female voters voted for Nablus al Wataniyah al Mustaqela, while only 26 percent of them voted for the official Fatah list. In contrast, 53 percent of male voters voted for the official Fatah list and 41 percent voted for Nablus al Wataniyah al Mustaqela.
* Ramallah: women voted at a higher rate for Ramallah al Mustaqbal than men. 45 percent of female voters voted for Ramallah al Mustaqbal, while 35 percent of them voted for Abna’al Balad. In contrast, 61 percent of the male voters voted for Abna’al Balad and only 26 percent of them voted for Ramallah al Mustaqbal.
* Age is also important, where younger (18-30) and older (over 50 years) voters voted at higher rates for Nablus al Wataniyah al Mustaqela, while middle age voters (31-49) tended to vote for the official Fatah list. In Hebron, voting for the Fatah list decreased with age.

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