



Results of an Opinion Poll

Annapolis International Meeting Negotiations and Final Settlement Evaluation of Institutions and Leaders Elections and Political Support District-Related Issues

Publication Date: Sunday, 25 November 2007

Field work: 18-19 November 2007

Sample Size: 3200 Palestinians in The West Bank & Gaza

Margin of error: ± 2

AWRAD - Arab World for Research & Development

Ramallah – Gaza, Palestine

Tele-fax: 00972 2 2950957/8

E-mail: awrad@awrad.org

Website: www.awrad.org

- **For more information, please contact Team Leader - Dr. Nader Said**
- **With support from the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)**

One: Highlights

- 63% support (or support to an extent) the convening of the Annapolis meeting
- 45% believe that the Annapolis meeting will not result in any tangible/positive results for the Palestinians
- 40% believe that nothing will change as a result of Annapolis, and 15% believe that it will reinforce the occupation
- 55% believe that if the meeting fails, the situation will further deteriorate
- 67% believe that the living conditions for the Palestinians deteriorated since the eruption of Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000
- 95% say that the Jerusalem issue is very important, and 93% say that the prisoners issue is very important
- 72% support a final settlement of the conflict based on a two-state solution living side by side
- 60% oppose that Arab countries recognize Israel even if a Palestinian state were established
- 49% believe that Palestinian internal conflicts do not allow for a strong position in the negotiations
- 36% support the Arab Initiative as a framework for the negotiations, while 24% support related UN resolutions and 23% support the Road Map
- 48% evaluate the performance of Hanneyeh's cabinet as weak, compared with 26% feeling the same way about Fayyad's cabinet
- 36% blame Hamas for the latest Gaza clashes, and 7% blame Fateh
- 46% of Gazans blame Hamas for the clashes, while 9% blame Fateh
- If elections took place today, Fateh would receive 36% of the vote, compared with 14% for Hamas
- Fateh receives 43% of the Gaza vote, while Hamas receives 18%
- Abbas, Marwan Bargouthi, Fayyad or Mustafa Bargouthi are all capable of winning a presidential election over Hanneyeh
- Marwan Bargouthi would receive the highest vote (51%) against Hanneyeh (18%)
- The least favorite among all Fateh and Hamas candidates is Az-Zahar, who receives less than 1% of the vote
- In a two-way race between Dahalan and Zahhar in Gaza, Dahalan receives 41% of the vote, while Zahhar receives 20%
- Governors of Qalqilya, Nablus and Salfit get the best evaluations, whereas Governors of Jabalya, Rafah, and Gaza were on the bottom list.
- PLC members representing Qalqilya, Jericho and Salfit get the highest evaluations, whereas the representatives of Jabalya, Deir Balah and Khan Yunis governorates get the least favorable evaluations.
- Security is the most important priority for Nablus, Tulkarem and Gaza governorates.
- Hamas is least supported (less than 9%) in Nablus, Jerusalem, Tubas, Salfit, and Jenin, while it is more supported (25%) in Gaza. In Jabalya and Khan Yunis; Fateh gets the highest support (more than 48%), and the lowest in Jerusalem (22%).

Two: Analysis

Section One: Annapolis Meeting

This poll confirms most of the findings that a previous poll conducted by AWRAD (October 14-16) revealed. No changes are evident in attitudes or expectations as the meeting approaches. The meeting is planned for the 27th of November, yet there are no indications that its imminence is affecting the views of Palestinian respondents.

- More Palestinians know about the meeting now than one month ago, where (47%) of them say that they have information on the meeting and 27%, compared with 37% last month, say that they do not .
- Forty-seven percent support and 16% support to an extent, the convening of the Annapolis meeting. In comparison, 30% say that they oppose.
- Support for the convening of the Annapolis meeting is higher in Gaza (53%) than in the West Bank (47%). The supportive districts of the meeting are Khan Yunis (59%), Jabalya (58%), Jericho (56%), Deir Balah (54%), Ramallah and Tubas (50% each). The least supportive districts are Jerusalem and Hebron (38% support in each).
- Forty-five percent say that the Annapolis meeting will not result in any positive or tangible results for the Palestinians; and 40% say that nothing will change on the ground.
- In fact, 15% say that the Annapolis meeting will reinforce the occupation.
- In contrast, 26% believe that the meeting might ease restrictions and improve living conditions under the occupation.
- Only 11% believe that the meeting might be a forum to negotiate final status issues, including refugees, Jerusalem and settlements.
- The majority of respondents (55%) believe that if the meeting fails to achieve results, the situation will deteriorate. In addition, 34% believe that conditions will stay as is.

Section Two: Negotiations and the Peace Process

1. Framework for Negotiations

Palestinians were asked about the best frame of reference that must be used in the negotiations. About 36% chose the Arab Initiative to be the best frame of reference. Another 24% chose the various UN resolutions, and 23% thought the Road Map is the best frame of reference. About 17% believe that none of these documents is an appropriate frame of reference.

2. Relevance of Issues

- When asked to evaluate the importance of four issues under negotiation (refugees, Jerusalem, settlements and prisoners), the vast majority of respondents expressed that all of these issues are very important.

- Jerusalem came at the top of the list, with 95% saying that it is very important for negotiators to give it a priority.
- This was followed by the issue of prisoners, where 93% said that it is very important.
- Eighty percent said that the issue of refugees is very important (13% said was important) and 75% felt the same way about the issue of settlements (with an additional 14% saying this issue was important).

3. Scenarios for Final-Status Issues

When the respondents were asked about the final settlement for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they provided the following answers that confirm findings from our previous October poll:

A Two-State Solution

- Consistent with the previous poll (October 14) the majority (72%) still support (or support to an extent) a two-state solution based on the UN resolution 242 (a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza side by side with Israel). There was no significant difference between Gaza and West Bank in this regard.

Refugees

- The majority (75%) of the respondents support (or support to an extent) a solution of the refugee problem that is based on allowing the return of the majority of refugees to the West Bank and Gaza, and some refugees to the 1948 proper (Israel).

Jerusalem

- About (38%) of the respondents support (or support to an extent) a solution based on dividing the holy city of Jerusalem with Palestinian control of the East side and Israeli control of the West side, with the possibility of exchanging areas from each side. It was noticeable that the opposition (and opposition to an extent) to this scenario is still higher than the support (60%). These feelings might be related to the degree of importance of this issue to the Palestinians as expressed in the section above.

Settlements

- About 47% of the respondents oppose the scenario that stipulates dismantling the majority of settlements, but allows for a land swap that would provide for Israel's annexation of some settlements in exchange for land from the 1948 proper to be given to the Palestinians. In contrast, 30% support such a scenario.

4. Palestinian Authority and Arab Positions

- The majority (78%) support the participation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the Annapolis meeting. This contrasts to the finding that 49% of respondents do not feel that Palestinian internal conditions allow for a strong Palestinian stance in this meeting
- Moreover, Palestinians were divided on whether president Abbas and conference team will be capable of making achievements in relation to the Palestinian national goals, where 37% believe that they are not capable, and 35% believe that they are capable to an extent. Only 22% believe that they are capable
- In relation to the frame of reference for the negotiation, 36.2% prefer the Arab Initiative and about 24% prefer UN resolutions. Another 23% prefer that the Road Map be the frame of reference.
- When asked about the Arab world involvement in Annapolis, the majority (72%) supported their attendance at the meeting.
- In contrast, 60% opposed that Arab countries recognize Israel even if a Palestinian state is established. In comparison, 40% believe that they should recognize Israel if a state is established.

Section Three: Evaluation of Institutions and Leaders

1. Recent Clashes in Gaza

- In view of the latest events in Gaza where seven Palestinians were killed in a march on the commemoration day of the late President, Yasser Arafat, as well as the recent growing strife among political parties, especially Hamas and Fateh, an alarming number of respondents (69%) continue to believe that Palestinian society is heading in the wrong direction. Only 22% say that it is heading in the right direction.
- When asked who is to blame for the violent clashes, 36% blamed Hamas and its Executive Force. In comparison, 7% blamed Fateh. One-third of the respondents blamed both parties equally. In addition, 16% blamed outside forces for the violence.
- It was noticeable that blame for Hamas is much higher in Gaza (46%) than in the West Bank (30%). This did not translate to blame for Fateh, but rather to a higher blame for both parties at the same time, where 36% of West Bank respondents selected that option, compared with 27% in Gaza.
- The districts that blamed Hamas in an overwhelming manner were in Gaza: Jabalya (59%), Deir Balah (47%), Khan Yunis (44%), Gaza city (43%) and Rafah (39%). The lowest blame for Hamas was in Jerusalem (22%).
- Blame for both parties is highest in Tulkarem (41%), Qalqilya and Jerusalem (40% each), and Jericho (39%).

2. Fayyad's and Hanneyeh's Cabinets

- The two governments headed by Fayyad and Hanneyeh were evaluated. Fayyad's cabinet received a more positive evaluation, compared with Hanneyeh's, where 37% evaluated the performance of Fayyad's cabinet as good compared to 23% for Hanneyeh's.
- In contrast, 48% evaluated the performance of Hanneyeh's cabinet as weak, while 26% felt the same way about Fayyad's.
- The negative evaluation of Hanneyeh's cabinet is higher in Gaza than in the West Bank, where half of the Gaza respondents evaluated Hanneyeh's cabinet as weak, compared with 46% in the West Bank. One-third of Gaza respondents evaluate Fayyad's government as weak, compared with 22% in the West Bank.
- Positive evaluation for Fayyad is not restricted to West Bank districts. In fact, his highest ratings are in Qalqilya (51%), Salfit (47%), Jabalya and Rafah (44% each), followed by Tubas and Gaza City at (42%).
- Gazans are polarized about the evaluation of Fayyad's government. His negative ratings in the Gaza districts are as follows: Gaza city (35%), Deir Balah (34%), Khan Yunis (33%), Jabalya and Rafah (30% each). In the West Bank, his least favorable evaluation comes from Jenin (28%).
- Gazans are also divided on Hanneyeh's cabinet, where it received its most favorable evaluations from Gaza City (35%), Jabalya and Rafah (29%), Qalqilya, Hebron and Khan Yunis (27% each), and Deir Balah and Jenin (24% each).
- At the same time Hanneyeh's cabinet received negative evaluations from: Jabalya (58%), Nablus (56%), Bethlehem (53%), Deir Balah (51%), Khan Yunis (50%), Qalqilya (49%) and Rafah and Gaza City (47% each).

Section Four: Elections and Political Support

1. Voting for Lists

- Compared with the October Poll, Fateh does not gain any more support, where 36% said that they would vote for it in a possible legislative council election (compared with 40% during October). In Gaza, Fateh receives higher support (43%) than in the West Bank (32%).
- Hamas' popularity is still declining since the last election (January 2006), when it received 44% of the vote. The present poll shows that 14% will vote for the Change and Reform list (affiliated with Hamas with 18% in Gaza and 11% in West Bank). However, it is important to note that a decline in support for Hamas does not reflect itself in an increase in the popularity of Fateh or other lists. Instead, 41% declare that they are either undecided or say that they will not vote. These two groups made a significant difference in the final voting outcome during the 2006 election as hidden support for Hamas. At this time, these groups need to be further analyzed, to understand their potential impact on future elections.
- Finally, the poll shows very weak support for all the lists presented in the 2006 elections, where they receive between less than 1% and 3% of support.

- In the districts, Jabalya respondents gave Fateh the highest support (50%), closely followed by Khan Yunis (49%). They are followed by Deir Balah (43%), Bethlehem and Qalqilya (41% each). The lowest support for Fateh is in Jerusalem (22%), Ramallah (31%) Hebron and Jenin (30% each).
- Support for Hamas is highest in Gaza City (24%) and Hebron (17%). The least support for Hamas is in Nablus (8%) and Salfit, Tubas and Jerusalem (9% each).
- All other (independent groups) receive the highest support in Jerusalem (19%) and the lowest support in Khan Yunis (3%).
- Over 48% of the Jenin, Jerusalem, Ramallah and Tubas respondents are still undecided or will not vote.

2. Voting for President

Eleven-Way Race

- In an 11-way race that includes 3 Fateh personalities, 3 Hamas personalities, 2 independents, and 3 leftists (PPP, DFLP, and PFLP), Abbas and Marwan Barghouti received the strongest support with 22% and 15% of respondents' support, respectively. They are closely followed by Hanneyeh (14%).
- The three Fateh candidates together would receive about 40% of the vote, while the three Hamas candidates would receive about 16% of the vote.
- Fayyad and Mustafa Barghouti would receive about 4% of respondents' support each.
- M. Dahalan received 3.4% of respondents' support, higher than the two Hamas candidates (Zahhar and Naser Eldin Al Sha'er, a minister under the Hamas government). In fact, Dahalan received about 8.4% of the Gaza vote, compared with less than 1% for Zahhar. Naser Eldin Al Sha'er received 1.1% of the vote.
- The three leftist candidates receive about 2% altogether.
- As in the previous poll, about 34% of the respondents said they are either undecided or will not vote.

Two-Way Races

A more realistic scenario is one that includes only two competing candidates: one representing the PLO and another the Islamist movement.

- The results show that Marwan Bargouthi, Abbas, Fayyad and Mustafa Bargouthi could all win in a race against Ismael Hanneyeh, the most favorable Islamist candidate.
- Marwan Bargouthi is the most popular candidate, while Zahhar is the least popular.

Marwan Bargouthi vs. Hanneyeh

According to the results, Marwan Bargouthi has the highest potential to win over Hanneyeh. He received 51% of respondents' support, compared to 18% for Hanneyeh.

Abbas vs. Hanneyeh

Abbas received 44% of respondents' support, winning over Hanneyeh who received 20%. Abbas received the highest support in Jericho and Salfit (54%), while he received the lowest support in Jerusalem (33%), Jenin and Hebron (40% each). Hanneyeh received the highest support in Gaza City (31%) and Hebron (25%) and the lowest support in Jenin (13%), Salfit and Nablus (12% each).

Fayyad vs. Hanneyeh

Fayyad received 40% of respondents' support, and would win over Hanneyeh, who received 23%.

Mustafa Bargouthi vs. Hanneyeh

Mustafa Bargouthi received 42% of respondents' support and would win over Hanneyeh, who received 21%.

Dahalan vs. Zahhar

Dahalan received 29% of respondents' support and would win over Zahhar who received 20%. Dahalan received 41% of the vote in Gaza, while Zahhar received only 20%. However, it is important to notice that the percentage of those who would not participate in the elections increased from an average of 22% to over 36% if these two candidates ran in the elections.

Section Five: Development-Related Issues

Priorities

- It was clear from the data that the largest group of respondents is interested in two main issues: the improvement of economic conditions and the uprooting of chaos and insecurity.
- About one third of the respondents cited the need to improve economic conditions as their first priority, only to be followed by the need to bring about a more secure environment for the community with 29% citing that as the most critical priority. Health and education services were also cited as priorities by about 14% of the respondents.
- Just over 3% said that improving the environment and roads are the most important priorities for them.
- It is interesting to notice that a larger percentage of Gaza respondents (34%) voted for improving the security situation than those who voted for improving economic conditions (31%).
- Furthermore, it is interesting to find that the need for internal security is higher among Gaza respondents (34%) compared with West Bank respondents (27%).

This might be partly due to the latest clashes between Fateh and Hamas that resulted in the killing of seven Palestinians, all supporters of Fateh.

Evaluation of Institutions:

- About 36% of respondents evaluated the performance of PLC members as weak, with an additional 6% evaluating their performance as less than average. Only 8% said it was excellent and 18% said it was good. The rate of dissatisfaction in Gaza is higher, where 49% say the performance of PLC members is weak, compared with 28% among West Bank respondents.
- When asked about the performance of their Governor's office, about 25% said it was weak. About 4% said it was less than average, 23% medium, 3% good and only 7% said it was excellent.
- As for the performance of Local Councils, 24% described their performance as weak, 5% as less than average, 23% as medium, 29% as good and 16% as Excellent.
- In relation to government institutions, 25% described their service delivery as weak, while 7% described it as excellent.

Section Six: District-Related Results

This poll paid close attention to district-related issues and needs. A sample of 200 residents of each district was questioned on issues of relevance to them including services, local councils, governorate, and the role of government.

1. Priorities

Restoring Security

- Nablus is the district where respondents cited restoring security as the most important priority of all districts, where 41% of the sample named it as their most important priority. This coincided with the fact that the PA institutions are currently executing a campaign to restore security in the district (especially in the city of Nablus).
- Nablus was followed closely by Khan Yunis and Tulkarem, with 37% and 36% of the respondents in those districts citing “restoring security” as their utmost priority. They were followed by Gaza City (35%), Middle Gaza (33%), Jabalya (32%) and Qalqilya (31%).
- The districts perceived by their citizens to have the least need for restoring security were Ramallah (18%), Bethlehem (19%), Salfit (20%), Jerusalem (21%), Jericho (23%) and Jenin (24%).

Economic Development

- As expected, all respondents believe that their districts are in need of economic development. In Bethlehem 46% cited the need for economic development as their utmost priority, more than any other district.
- Bethlehem was followed by Jabalya (40%), Hebron and Rafah (37% each), Nablus (34%) and Tulkarem (33%).

Other Priorities

- Jerusalem and Salfit respondents gave the issue of road maintenance a relatively higher ranking than other districts (with 8% and 7% respectively). These two districts are greatly impacted by the wall and roadblocks.
- Respondents from Salfit, Jericho, Tubas, Ramallah and Jerusalem are more interested in health services than respondents in other districts.
- Education was more important to respondents from the districts of Hebron, Khan Yunis, Ramallah, and Jenin.

2. Evaluation of Institutions

PLC members:

- The highest scores were received by the Qalqilya representatives (two Fateh MPs), who received an overall 45% positive evaluation. They were followed by representatives from Jericho (39%), Salfit (36%), Hebron (32%), and Ramallah (30%). The overall positive evaluation of the Jabalya representatives was the least (16%), followed by Khan Yunis (18%), Tulkarem (19%), and Jenin (20%).
- The least favorable ratings were in Gaza districts, where 60% of the Jabalya respondents evaluated the performance of their MPs negatively. Jabalya was followed by Khan Yunis with 56% of respondents giving a negative evaluation of their MPs, Gaza Middle at 55%, and Gaza City and Rafah at 49% each.

Government Institutions

When respondents were asked about the role of Government in providing services to their districts, they responded as follows:

- The most favorable evaluation of government services was in Qalqilya (53%), Tulkarem (52%), Hebron (48%), Salfit (47%) and Jericho (46%).
- The least favorable evaluation was in Jabalya (51%), followed by Gaza city (41%), Khan Yunis and Rafah (38% each), and Gaza Middle - Deir Balah (35%).
- In the West Bank, the least favorable evaluation of government institutions was among Jerusalem residents (who are under Israeli control), with a 33% negative evaluation, and Nablus also at 33%.

Governors' Offices

- Again, the most favorable evaluation went to the Qalqilya governorate (with 55% giving a positive evaluation). The Nablus governorate followed closely at (42%) and Salfit (40%).
- All Gaza governors received a lower evaluation compared with those in the West Bank, with the least favorable evaluation going to the Jabalya Governor's office, 55% of its respondents gave it a negative evaluation. It was followed by Rafah (44%), Gaza City (40%), Gaza Middle – Deir Balah (36%) and Khan Yunis (33%).

Local Councils

This question did not specify any local council, but rather sought to evaluate the performance of all councils within each district.

- The most favorable evaluation was for the local councils in the Hebron district (68%), followed by Qalqilya district (60%), Ramallah district (56%), Salfit district (54%) and Tulkarem district (52%).
- The local councils within the district of Gaza City received the least favorable evaluation (58% describe their performance as weak or less than average). They are followed by the councils in Jabalya (49%), Khan Yunis and Jericho (33% each).
- The most favorable evaluation in Gaza went to the Rafah district's local councils (43%).