

Results of a public opinion poll among

Palestinians in the West Bank

Press Release

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A W R A D

Arab World for Research and Development

Key findings

Following the killing of the activist Nizar Banat, the percentage of respondents who believe that Palestine is heading in the wrong direction increased from 51% to 65%, followed by a decline in the level of optimism about the future, which dropped from 65% to 48%. The percentage of those who believe that the Palestinians are today far from realizing a state increased from 44% to 58%.

- The majority of respondents (69%) negatively view the PNA's handling of the killing of Banat and its aftermath.
- 60% of the respondents believe that the investigation committee formed by the Palestinian government is partial.
- 44% of the respondents believe that security forces in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are equally violating human rights.
- The negative evaluation of the performance of the Palestinian government increased from 37% before the killing of the activist Banat to 55% after his killing. The most dissatisfaction rates were in the fields of job creation (70%), fighting corruption (67%), and youth support (63%).
- 25% of the respondents support keeping the current government intact, as compared to 70% supporting the formation of a new government.
- 57% of the respondents reported that the economic conditions of their families have worsened compared to a year ago.
- 75% of the respondents support holding legislative and presidential elections immediately; 81% of the registered citizens expressed their intention to vote.

Key findings

- A list supported by Marwan Al-Barghouthi is the most popular one, followed immediately by a list supported by Hamas. The list supported by President Abbas ranks third.
- In a two-way presidential election, Marwan Barghouthi wins over Ismail Haniyeh - 68% and 32% respectively.
- 66% of the respondents indicated they have not been vaccinated against the COVID-19 Virus, of whom 41% indicated that they do not believe it is necessary for them to get vaccinated. Another 40% revealed their lack of confidence in the quality/efficacy of the vaccines.
- 74% of the respondents believe that the Palestinians came out victorious in the last war in the Gaza Strip.
- 67% of the respondents support the annulment of the Oslo Accords, and 61% of them oppose the continuation of security coordination between the Palestinian Authority and Israel.



Introduction

The following are results of a public opinion poll conducted by Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD), assessing Palestinian attitudes and perceptions regarding contemporary issues, including the performance of the Palestinian leadership and recent events in Jerusalem and in Gaza. The poll was conducted in two stages: first, after the war in Gaza and during the Jerusalem–Sheikh Jarrah protests; second, three weeks after the killing of the activist Nizar Banat, which resulted in protests and clashes between security forces and protesters in the West Bank.

The survey total sample was 1,215 adult Palestinians (18+) across all West Bank governorates, who were selected using probability, multi-stage random sampling selection method. The sample was distributed based on data obtained from the results of the Population Census (2017) and the updated population estimates. The interviews were conducted by expert field researchers, using computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI) data collection methods, while taking into account COVID-19 national health guidelines and safety protocols. The fieldwork was carried out in two phases; the first phase was conducted from 14–17 June 2021, and the data was collected from 705 adults, whereas the second phase was conducted from 13–15 July 2021, and the data was collected from a different representative sample with a total of 510 adults. The survey has a margin of error of ± 3 percent. The methodology and sample distribution are detailed in the annex below.

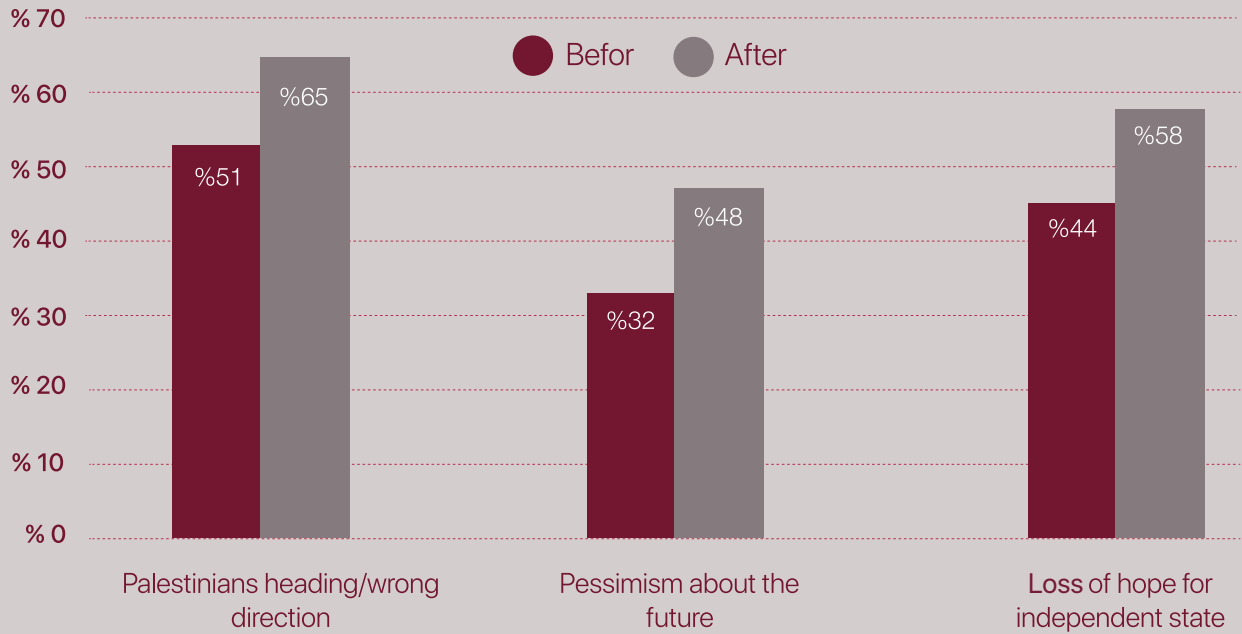
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Analysis of Results

Aftermath of Nizar Banat Killing: The killing of Nizar Banat and the resulting protests and PA response have led to a significant decline in overall optimism for the future, and hope for an independent state. A comparison of results between the first phase and the second phase of the poll shows the following changes from before and after the latest internal events.

- **Future prospects:** The percentage of respondents who believe that Palestine is heading in the right direction declined by 19%, from 45% to 26%. In contrast, the percentage of respondents who believe that Palestine is heading in the wrong direction increased from 51% to 65%.
- **Optimism:** Respondent's optimism for the future declined from 65% to 48%, while pessimism has increased from 32% to 48%.
- **Hope for an independent state:** While 52% of the post-Gaza war sample said that they believe that Palestinians are closer to achieving a Palestinian state, only 36% of the post-Banat killing sample expressed the same belief. In contrast, the percentage of respondents who believe that Palestinians are farther from achieving a state has increased from 44% to 58%.

Figure 1: Hope and optimism before and after the killing of activist Nizar Banat



Living Conditions

- 57% of respondents state that their family's economic situation has worsened compared with one year ago. Less than one third (31%) say that their economic conditions have stayed the same, and only 11% say that they have improved.
- Three quarters of respondents say that the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted their household income, while 21% say that it has had no impact. Only 4% say that their income has improved during this period.
- Regarding perceptions of internal security, 44% say that they have not witnessed any change, while 42% say that internal security had diminished. Only 13% say that their sense of security had improved.

Figure 2: Percentage of respondents declaring deterioration of various aspects of living conditions

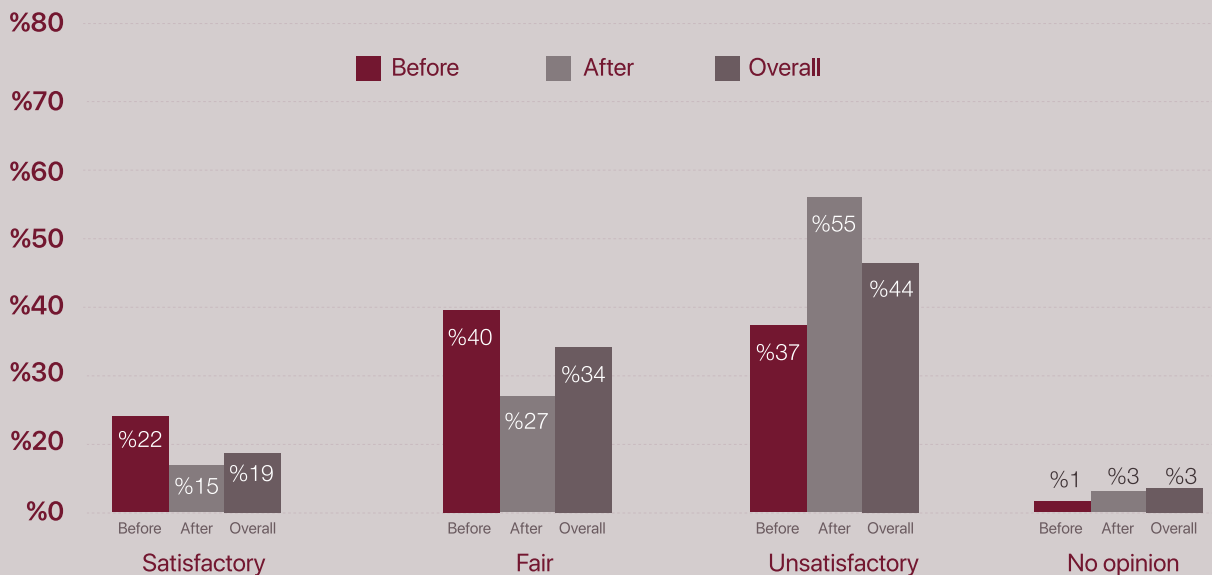


Government Performance

Respondents were asked to evaluate the performance of the Palestinian Government headed by Dr. Mohamad Ishtayeh.

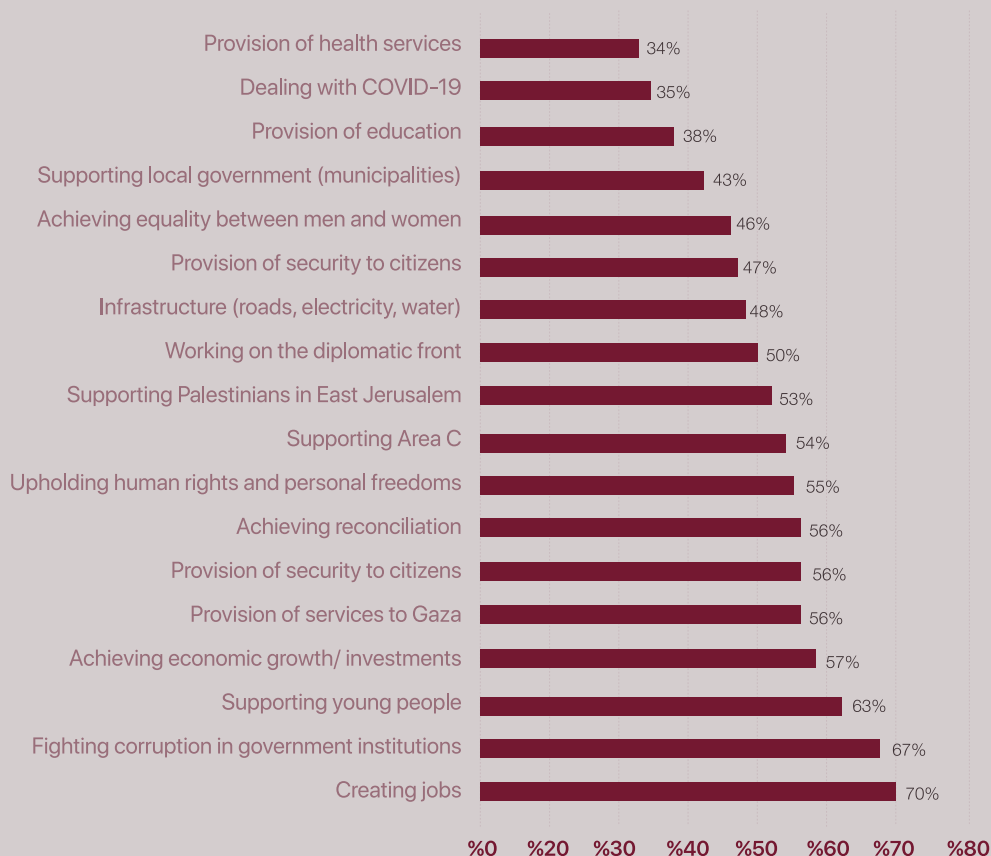
- The overall evaluation of the performance of the government tends to be on the negative side, with 44% saying it is unsatisfactory. In contrast, 34% say that it is fair, while 19% say it is satisfactory. The negative evaluation of the government has increased from 37% before the killing of activist Nizar Banat to 55% after.

Figure 3: Evaluation of the government before and after the killing of activist Nizar Banat



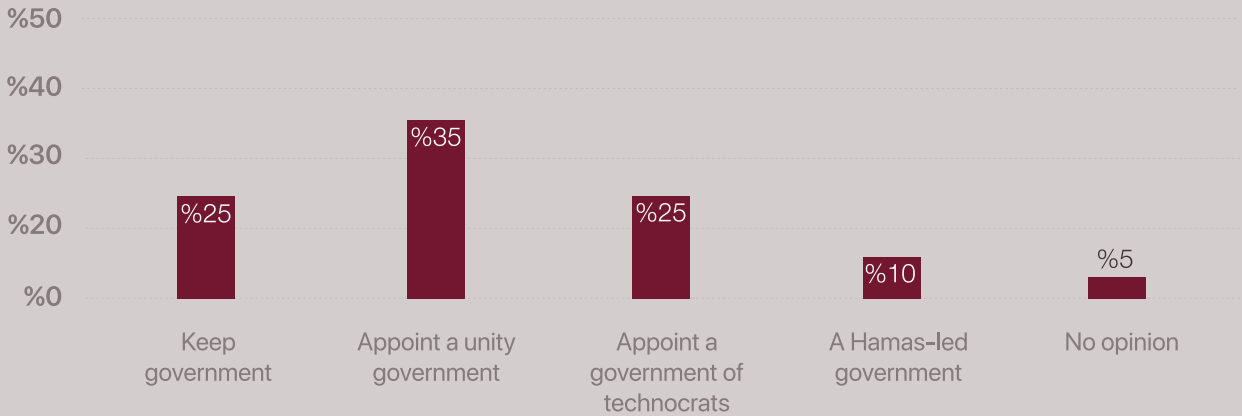
- Respondents are divided regarding the evaluation of the performance of the government on three issues: Dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic (32% satisfied, 33% somewhat satisfied, 35% dissatisfied), provision of health services (28% satisfied, 37% somewhat satisfied, 34% dissatisfied) and provision of educational services (24% satisfied, 37% somewhat satisfied, 38% dissatisfied).
- Respondents, however, tend to have a negative opinion on all other 15 areas of evaluation. The most dissatisfaction is in the areas of creating jobs (70%), fighting corruption (67%), and supporting young people (63%). The following figure provides the results on levels of dissatisfaction from the highest to the lowest.

Figure 4: Percentage of respondents who evaluate the performance of the government as (unsatisfactory)



■ **Priorities:** When asked to prioritize these issues, 18% of respondents selected job creation as their first priority, followed by political reconciliation (14%), fighting corruption (12%), provision of education (11%), provision of assistance to the poor (10%), supporting young people (9%), supporting Palestinians in East Jerusalem (6%), and provision of health services (5%).

Figure 5: Views of Government Change

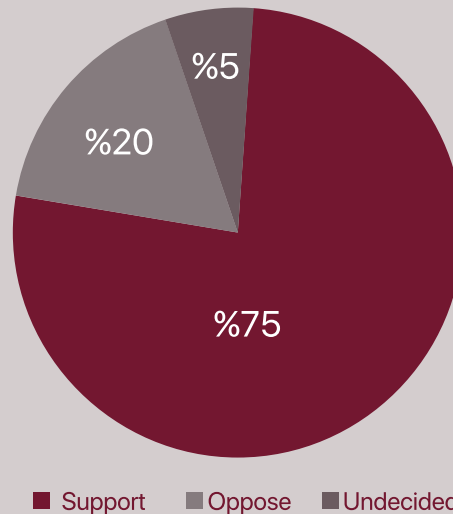


When asked if Dr. Ishtayeh government should be changed or stay as is, one quarter of respondents' support keeping the present government as is. Support for keeping the present government, however, declined after the killing of Banat from 30% to 19%. In contrast, 35% support the appointment of a unity government representing all political parties, while 25% support the appointment of a government of technocrats. Meanwhile, 10% support the replacement of the Ishtayeh Government by a government led by Hamas.

Support for Elections

Support for the conduct of election: 55% of respondents opposed the decision to postpone the legislative elections originally scheduled for May 22, 2021. In contrast, 36% supported the decision. However, it must be noted that three quarters of respondents continue to support the immediate conduct and a legislative election in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. One fifth oppose. Equally notable, 73% of respondents support the immediate conduct of a presidential election.

Figure 6: Support and opposition for the immediate conduct of legislative elections



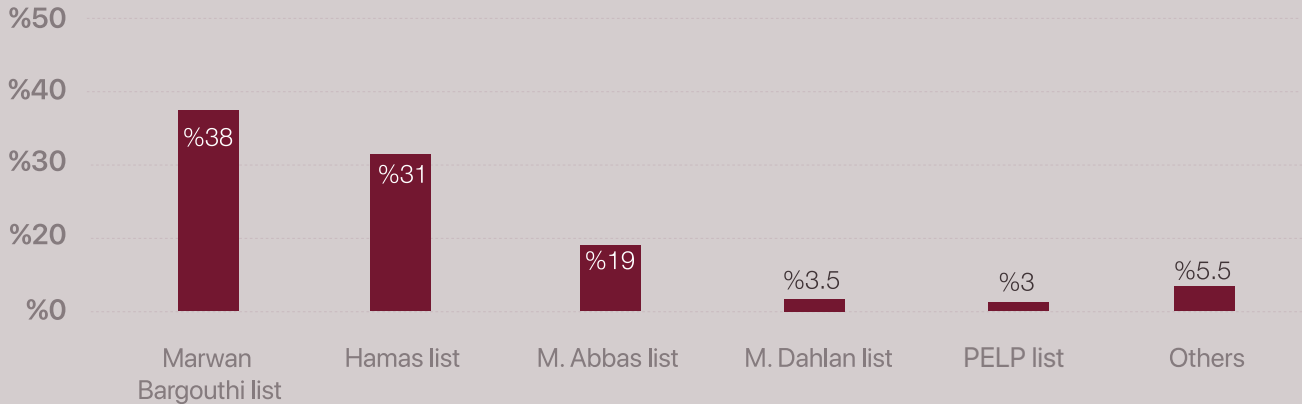
- High voter turnout expected: More than three quarters of the respondents say that they are registered to vote. Of this number, 81% say that they intend to vote in the next election. This equates to approximately 62% of the adult population.
- 90% of respondents support the participation of women as candidates in elections. Of note, 65% support a women's quota of at least 30%. Of this number, 24% support at least a 30% quota and 40% support a 50% quota. Another 24% support the participation of women with a quota of at least 20%. Only 10% say they do not support the participation of women as candidates. The rest (1%) are not sure.
- Support for the participation of young people as candidates for legislative elections is even higher, with 75% supporting a 50% quota; 17% at least 30% and 5% a 205 quota. Only 3% oppose or are undecided.

Voting Intentions

Respondents were asked to choose the lists and candidates they prefer, if elections were to take place today. According to the poll results, Hamas has made significant gains compared to previous polling, while Marwan Bargouthi continues to draw the most support, overall.

- In a choice between 10 lists, one led by Marwan Bargouthi receives the highest level of support (28%), followed by a Hamas list headed by Y. Al Senwar (19%), a list supported by M. Abbas (15%), and one backed by M. Dahlan (2.5%). All other listed lists are supported by 2% of respondents or less. Of note, more than 31% say they are still undecided or will not vote.
- Taking into consideration the historic patterns of voting of the undecided or will not vote category of respondents, AWRAD estimates the level of voting for each of the lists as follows:
 1. List supported by Marwan Bargouthi (38%)
 2. List led by Hamas (31%)
 3. List supported by M. Abbas (19%)
 4. List led by M. Dahlan (3.5%)
 5. List supported by PFLP (3%)
 6. All other lists (5.5%; none receiving the minimum threshold needed to gain seats).

Figure 7: Estimates for the outcome of a legislative election



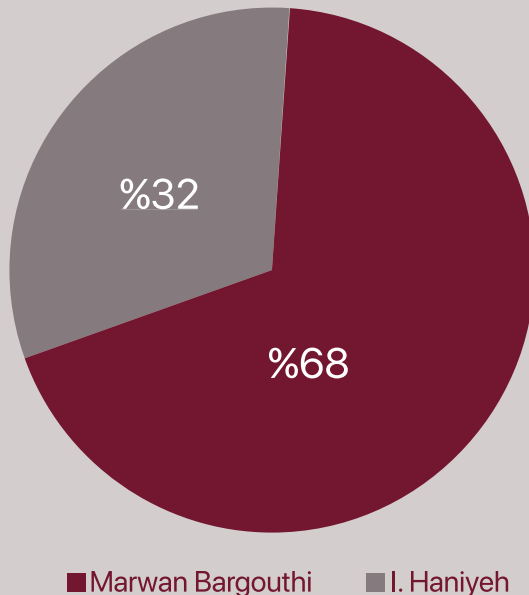
In a two-way presidential contest between M. Abbas and I. Haniyeh, 48% say they are undecided or will not vote, while 26% will vote for each Abbas and Haniyeh.

If Marwan Bargouthi were to run against Haniyeh, according to the poll, Marwan would receive 50% of the vote and Haniyeh 20%, while 30% are still undecided or will not vote. This leads AWRAD to estimate that if the two candidates were to run in an election today, Marwan would win (68% Marwan to 32% Haniyeh).

Marwan Bargouthi and I. Haniyeh

In a contest among 9 leaders from various political orientations (other than Abbas, Marwan and Haniyeh), according to the poll, Yahya Al Senwar - Hamas (24%) tops the list, followed by Mahmoud Aloul - Fateh (9%), Mohammad Ishtayeh - Fateh (6%), Mustafa Bargouthi - independent (5%), Mohammad Dahlan (4%), Salam Fayyad - independent (3%), Jibril Rojoub - Fateh (3%), Rami al Hamdallah - independent (2%), and Khalil Al Hayeh - Hamas (1%). The rest (43%) are undecided or will not vote.

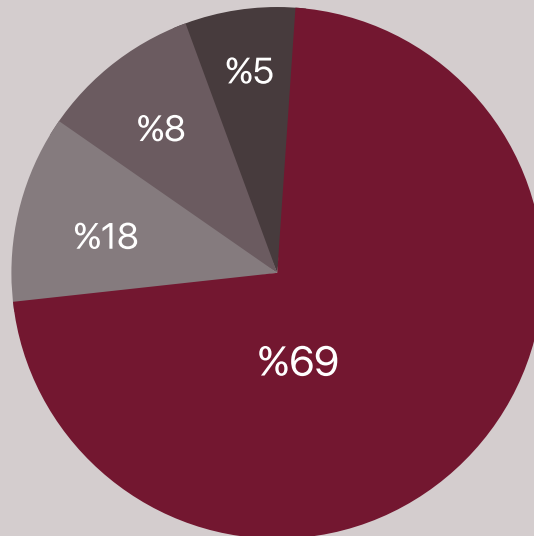
Figure 8: Estimates for the results of a two-way race



The Nizar Banat Case

- The majority of respondents (52%) believe that the killing of activist Nizar Banat reflects the nature of the PA political system, which is controlled by security concerns and does not allow space for expression of opinions. In contrast, 34% believe that the killing is a mistake made by individual actors/members of the security forces. 15% say that they don't know.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents (69%) disapprove of the PA's handling of the killing and its aftermath. Only 5% approve of it, while 18% are neutral. 8% say that they don't know.

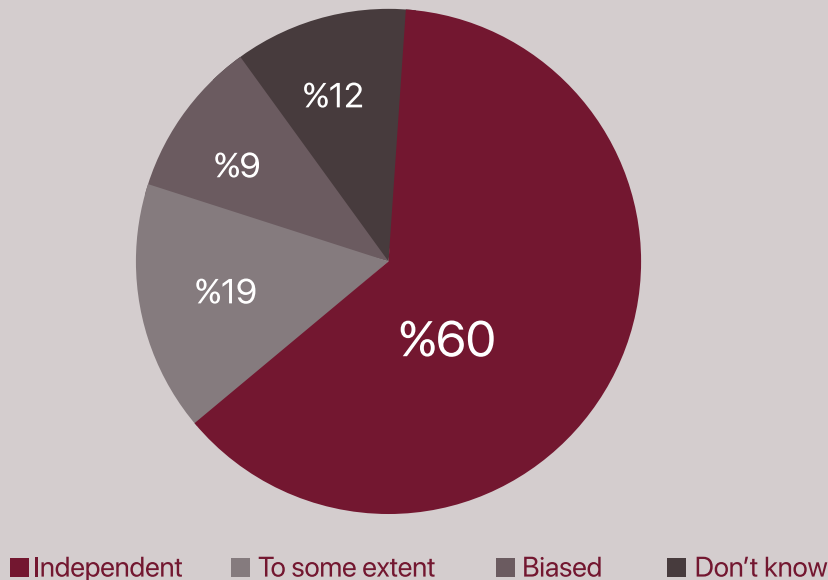
Figure 9: Views of the PA's handling of the killing of Banat and its aftermath



■ Approve ■ Disapprove ■ Neutral ■ Don't know

- The same findings apply to the assessment of the role of Fateh in the case, with 68% feeling that its handling of the killing was negative.
- Only 9% of respondents reckon that the investigation committee established by the PA is independent and impartial; 12% feel that it is independent to some extent, while 60% feel that it is partial and ineligible to handle the investigation. 19% say that they don't know.

Figure 10: Views of the independence of the PA-appointed investigation committee

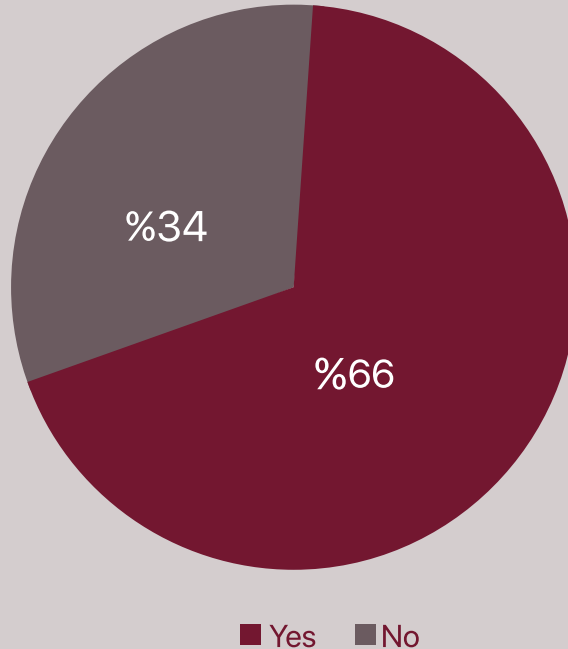


- 70% of respondents described the security forces handling of the protests that ensued after the killing as unacceptable; 15% as fair, while only 6% describe it as acceptable.
- The same pattern applies to the evaluation of the security agencies handling of the media and journalists, with 70% describing it as unacceptable.
- When asked about the claim that the demonstrations after the killing of Banat are part of a conspiracy against the PA and attempts to establish an independent state, 13% believe that this might be true and 16% true to some extent. In contrast, 60% believe that this claim is untrue and 11% say that they don't know.
- The largest group of respondents (44%) believe that security agencies in both the West Bank and Gaza are equally violating human rights. 27% believe that the security forces in the West Bank commit more violations, while 11% believe that the security forces in Gaza commit more violations. 18% don't know.

COVID-19 Pandemic

34% of the adults interviewed in the West Bank say that they have received the COVID-19 vaccination, while 66% say that they have not.

Figure 11: Have you received the COVID-19 Vaccine?



- Among the ones who haven't had the vaccination, 41% say that they don't believe that they should take it; another 40% say that they have no confidence in the quality/efficacy of the vaccines. Another 9% say that they have no access to the vaccines, while 2% say that they don't know how to access vaccines. 8% don't list any reason for not being vaccinated.
- Of the respondents, 22% positively evaluate the overall performance of the government regarding the vaccination portfolio (purchasing, distribution, and quality). In addition, 38% evaluate the performance as between positive and negative, while 36% as negative.
- With regard to assessing the performance of the government in providing vaccines to people with disabilities, respondents are divided. One third evaluate the performance as negative, while 28% as positive, and another 28% as between positive and negative. 12% don't know.

Jerusalem-Sheikh Jarrah Events

Israeli attempts to evict the residents of the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem resulted in protests in Palestine and in Palestinian communities in Israel. Respondents were asked to evaluate the positions/performance of a number of relevant parties regarding the issue.

- Hamas came out as the biggest winner in West Bank public opinion, where 66% assessing its position/performance as positive, while 22% assess it as fair and 9% as negative.
- Jordan came in second place, with 30% assessing its position as positive, and 38% assessing it as fair, while 29% as negative.
- Fatah's position is assessed by 18% as positive, while 32% assess it as fair, and 46% as negative.
- Only 12% assess the position of M. Abbas as positive, and 23% as fair. In contrast, 61% assess it negative.
- The EU receives a 7% positive evaluation and a 22% fair evaluation. In contrast, it receives a 66% negative evaluation.
- The UN receives a 5% positive evaluation and an 11% fair evaluation. In contrast, it receives a 79% negative evaluation.
- The position of the US government is assessed as positive by 4% of the respondents and as fair by 10%. In contrast, 82% assess it as negative.

The Latest Gaza War

During May 2021, Gaza witnessed a deadly armed conflict. The United Nations reported that during the May fighting, 260 Palestinians were killed, including 129 civilians, of whom 66 were children. Respondents were asked to evaluate the positions/performance of a number of relevant parties regarding the issue.

- Hamas (and other armed groups) came out as the biggest winners in West Bank public opinion, with 72% assessing their position/performance as positive, while 18% assess it as fair and 7% as negative.
- Fatah's position is assessed by 18% as positive, while 35% assess it as fair, and 44% as negative.
- Arab countries in general receive a 14% positive evaluation, with 38% evaluate their position as fair. In contrast, 45% evaluate their position as negative.
- Only 11% assess the position of M. Abbas as positive, and 24% as fair. In contrast, 61% assess it as negative.
- The EU receives a 5% positive evaluation and a 20% fair evaluation. In contrast, it receives a 70% negative evaluation.
- The UN receives a 3% positive evaluation and an 13% fair evaluation. In contrast, it receives an 80% negative evaluation.
- The position of the US government is assessed as positive by 2% of the respondents and as fair by 13%. In contrast, 81% assess it as negative.

Overall, respondents believe that Palestinians came out as the victor of the latest armed conflict (74%). More than one fifth of the respondents (22%) believe that none of the two parties (Israelis and Palestinians) won the war. Only 3% believe that Israel won the armed conflict. On the diplomatic front, 82% of respondents believe that Palestinians won the war, while 3% believe that Israel won the diplomatic war. 12% believe that none of the two parties won the diplomatic war.

The vast majority (80%) believe that Hamas came out stronger in terms of its popularity among Palestinians after the war, while 4% believe that Islamic Jihad was the winner. The same percentage believe that Fateh is the winner of Palestinian public opinion. However, 11% believe that none of the Palestinian parties (6%) came out with stronger popularity or they don't know (5%).

Negotiations and Peace Process

In view of the events in Jerusalem and Gaza, as well as internal decline in trust and hope, the views on the peace process and negotiations have witnessed dramatic negative shifts compared to polling throughout the past three decades.

- Two thirds of respondents support the annulment of the Oslo Accords, while only 26% oppose that.
- At the same time, 61% oppose the continuation of security coordination between the PA and Israel, while 35% support its continuation.
- For the first time in the last 3 decades, the level of support for the principle of a two-state solution dips to 36% from consistent majority support. At the same time, 60% oppose the principle of a two-state solution. If given a choice, the same percentage (60%) supports a unified Palestinian state on historic Palestine, while only 30% support continue to support a two-state solution, while 8% support a one-state solution with Palestinians and Israelis living together.
- Loss of hope in the peace process after 30 years now stands at 72%. Only one quarter have more hope, and 4% don't know.
- The majority of respondents (54%) support seeking remedies through international mechanisms (e.g., ICJ) if negotiations fail. In contrast, 39% oppose.
- 54% oppose the resumption of negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis at the present time.
- 53% oppose economic and trade relations with Israel, while 43% continue to support such relations.

Annex: Sampling methodology and sample distribution

AWRAD team utilized the following process to select a representative random sample:

- To select a representative sample, the team used the total number of adult populations distributed across localities (2017 PCBS Population Census¹ and later estimates), as a sample frame.
- Each governorate was divided into localities in accordance with the electronic list of all the localities in the Palestinian Territories, as defined by the PCBS. Localities were defined using standard international measures for population and urbanization.
- Every locality was divided into statistical divisions, and then into housing units (streets, roads, footpaths, etc.), the researchers selected the household using sampling intervals (ex. 1 out of every 10 households in every divisions).
- To ensure a highly representative sample, the research team began with the northeast point in the first division, then the northwest in the second division, and so forth.
- The research team always count the households clockwise, from right to left.
- In the first building, the household was selected from the first floor, in the second building, the household was selected from the second floor and so forth.
- Inside the household, the researchers used Kish table to select the adult member to interview.

<https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2557.pdf>

The table below presents the sample distribution of the two samples:

Variable		Percentage
Gender	Male	50.3
	Female	49.7
Marital status	Single	24.7
	Married	71.8
	Other	3.4
Refugee Status	Refugee	26.8
	Non-refugee	73.2
Current employment status	Laborer	15.8
	Employed	12.9
	Farmer	1.6
	Business owner	9.0
	Professional	1.8
	Craftsmen	4.2
	Student	9.5
	House caregiver	36.9
	Unemployed	6.5
	Retired	1.8
Work sector	Government	13.5
	Private	78.5
	NGO/INGO	4.3
	Other	3.7
Level of education	Less than 9 years	20.0
	years 9-12	43.2
	More than 12 years	36.8
How would you describe your family's income compared to the families in your area?	More than average	10.1
	Average	72.3
	Less than average	17.6

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