

Center for Palestine Research & Studies (CPRS)

Public Opinion Poll NO (29)

Performance of the PNA, the Peace Process, the Status of Democracy in Palestine, and Corruption, 18-20 September 1997

These are the results of opinion poll #29, conducted by the Center for Palestine Research & Studies, between 18-20 September 1997. The poll deals with the performance of the PNA, violence, the Peace process, the status of democracy in Palestine, and corruption. The total sample size of this poll is 1320 from Palestinians 18 years and older, of which 813 in the West Bank and 507 in the Gaza Strip. The margin of error is + 3%, and the non-response rate is 3%.

Main Results

1. The Peace Process

- A majority of 56% opposes the West Jerusalem suicide attacks and 36% support them.
- A majority of 59% still supports the Oslo Agreement and 34% oppose it.
- A majority of 57% supports Palestinian-Israeli security cooperation and 36% oppose it.
- A majority of 56% supports the PNA decision to boycott some Israeli products and 39% oppose it.

The poll shows a relatively high level of support (36%) for the suicide attacks that took place in West Jerusalem during the past few weeks. Nonetheless, a majority of 56% opposes these attacks. Support for the suicide attacks of February-March 1996 did not exceed 21% as indicated by a [CPRS March 1996 poll](#). The level of support for violence against Israelis began to rise since then to reach 40% in April 1997.

Support for violence is higher among those affiliated with opposition groups: 64% among Hamas supporters vs. 33% among Fateh supporters, and 28% among the "nonaffiliated."

A majority of 72% considers the Israeli government to be the party most responsible for the deterioration in Palestinian-Israeli relations, the deadlock in the peace process, the imposition of restrictions on the movement of people, and the prevention of laborers from working in Israel. Only 18% consider those who commit suicide attacks to be most responsible for the current impasse, while 6% put the blame first on the Palestinian Authority. Women, younger people between 18-22 years old, and the less educated tend to put more blame on those who commit suicide attacks as follows: 23% of women vs. 13% of men, 26% of those between 18-22 years old vs. 13% of those between 48-53 years old, and 23% of illiterates and those with elementary education vs. 4% of those with BA degree. On the other hand, supporters of the peace process tend to put more blame on those who commit suicide attacks as follows: 20% of Fateh supporters and 18% of the nonaffiliated vs. 16% of Hamas supporters and 11% of the PFLP's.

It should be noted that in the aftermath of the suicide attacks of February-March 1996 and the Israeli imposed restrictions that followed, only 50% put the blame first on Israel while 31% blamed Hamas and Islamic Jihad for the difficult conditions. It is likely that the deadlock in the

peace process and the policies of the new right wing Israeli government may have persuaded more Palestinians to put less blame on the Islamic opposition and more on Israel.

A majority of 56% expressed support for the PNA's decision to boycott certain Israeli products while a large minority of 39% opposed it. Support for the decision is higher among professionals and employees (75% and 71% respectively) than merchants, housewives and farmers (49%, 51% and 44% respectively), and among supporters of Hamas (62%) than supporters of Fateh (56%).

Despite the deadlock in the peace process, the rise in support for violence against Israelis, the blaming of the Israeli government for the deteriorating conditions in Palestinian-Israeli relations, and the support for a boycott of Israeli products, a majority of Palestinians (59%) still supports the Oslo Agreement while about one third (34%) opposes it. As expected, support for the Oslo Agreement is high among Fateh supporters (76%) and within average (56%) among the nonaffiliated. Surprisingly however, support for the Agreement is also found among supporters of Hamas and PFLP (43% and 29% respectively). Support is also higher among housewives and the unemployed (65% each) than among students (44%). In a [June 1996 poll](#), CPRS found that 68% of respondents supported the Palestinian-Israeli "peace process."

Moreover, a majority of 57% expressed support for security cooperation between the Palestinian and Israeli security services, as stipulated by the Oslo Agreement, if Israel fulfills its commitment under the terms of that Agreement. As expected, support for security cooperation is higher among Fateh's supporters (69%) and about average (53%) among the nonaffiliated. A large minority (45%) of Hamas supporters, however, has also expressed support for such cooperation.

2. US Role in the Peace Process

- A majority of 81% believes that the Albright visit demonstrates a US bias in Israel's favor
- Only 10% believe that the Albright visit gives the peace process a push forward.

The visit of the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright to the region did not help in enhancing the credibility of the US role in the peace process. Eighty one percent of the Palestinians said that the visit showed that the US policy is biased in Israel's favor while 11% said it was balanced. Moreover, the visit did not help in injecting some optimism in the Palestinian street. Only 10% of respondents said that the visit gave the peace process a push forward while 37% said that it did not, and 44% said it had no impact at all on the peace process. More men (90%) than women (72%) tend to see an American bias. Also the more educated tend to see an American bias as 97% of BA degree holders vs. 67% of illiterates tend to see a US bias. US bias is also seen more by professionals (96%), merchants (94%), and employees (95%), but less by housewives (71%). Political affiliation has little impact on the views of respondents as 81% of Fateh supporters, 83% of Hamas supporters, and 79% of PFLP supporters and the nonaffiliated characterize the US role as biased in Israel's favor.

3. The Status of Democracy in Palestine

- Serious decline in the positive evaluation of Palestinian democracy from 50% in April 1997 to 34% today.
- A decline in the evaluation of the status of the freedom of the Palestinian press from 28% in December 1996 to 21% today.

- A rise in the percentage of those who think that people can not criticize the PNA without fear from 52% in December 1996 to 58% today.
- A rise in the level of trust in the Palestinian judicial system from 26% in December 1996 to 34% today.

The poll shows a clear negative reversal in people's perception of the status of Palestinian democracy as only 34% gave it a positive evaluation describing it as "good" or "very good." Five months ago, 50% of respondents gave Palestinian democracy a positive rating. On the other hand, only 32%, compared to 20% five months ago, described the status of Palestinian democracy as "bad" or "very bad." Positive evaluation of Palestinian democracy is higher among women (38%) than men (29%), among those with elementary education (44%) than those with university degree (33%), among housewives (39%) than students (24%) and among supporters of Fateh (41%) than supporters of Hamas, the PFLP and the nonaffiliated (25%, 26% and 30% respectively).

The poll shows also that the perception of press freedom under the Palestinian Authority is worsening. Only 21% expressed the belief that the Palestinians have a free press while 25% said that they do not. In December 1996, 28% of respondents said that the Palestinians had free press. The belief that the Palestinians have a free press is higher among older people (25% among those over 53 years old) than younger people (13% among those between 18-22 years old), among the illiterates (29%) than those with BA degree (17%), among housewives (23%) than students (10%), and among Fateh's supporters (28%) than supporters of Hamas, the PFLP and the nonaffiliated (14%, 21%, and 17% respectively).

The results show an increase in the percentage of those who believe that people can not criticize the Palestinian Authority without fear from 52% in December 1996 to 58% today. The percentage of those who share this view is higher in the Gaza Strip (61%) than in the West Bank (55%), among BA degree holders (62%) than illiterates and those with elementary education (50%), among st(72%) than housewives and merchants (56% and 48% respectively), and among supporters of Hamas, the PFLP and the nonaffiliated (69%, 66%, and 62% respectively) than supporters of Fateh (52%).

On the positive side, the poll shows a rise in the level of street trust in the Palestinian judiciary and courts from 26% in December 1996 to 34% today. The trust in the judiciary is higher among women (37%) than men (30%), among the old (43% among those over 53 years old) than the young (30% among those between 18-22 years old), and among the illiterates and those with elementary education (44%) than those with BA degree (23%), and among housewives (39%) than employees and students (26% and 33% respectively), and among supporters of Fateh (43%) than supporters of Hamas, the PFLP and the nonaffiliated (21%, 18% and 31% respectively).

4. Corruption and the Reshuffling of the Cabinet

- For the fifth time, continued rise in the percentage of those who believe that corruption exists in the institutions of the PNA to reach 65%.
- A Significant majority of 83% support the decision by the PNC to demand that the PNA President reshuffle his cabinet.

The poll shows that the percentage of those who believe that corruption exists in the institutions of the PNA is still on the rise for the fifth consecutive time. It now stands at 65% compared to 63% in June 1997, 57% in April 1997, and 49% in September 1996. But the percentage of those who

believe that corruption will increase or remain the same in the future decreased from 57% three months ago to 47% in this poll. The percentage of those who believe that corruption exists in PNA institutions is higher in the Gaza Strip (67%) than in the West Bank (63%), among men (74%) than women (56%), among holders of MA degree (100%) and BA degree holders (80%) than illiterates (46%), among professionals (82%) and employees (78%) than housewives (56%) and farmers (57%), and among supporters of the PFLP (81%) and Hamas (77%) than supporters of Fateh (64%) and the nonaffiliated (61%).

It seems that people's anxiety over the extent of corruption is behind the high level of support (83%) for the PLC's resolution calling on the PNA President to reshuffle his cabinet within a month. Prior to the PLC resolution, a special parliamentary committee has found that some ministers were involved in corruption and mismanagement. It is possible that the decrease in the percentage of those who think that corruption will increase, or remain the same, is due to people's expectations that the Council's activities in pursuing the subject would lead the executive branch to take measures against it.

Support for the PLC resolution is higher in the Gaza Strip (85%) than in the West Bank (81%), among city residents (87%) than residents of towns and villages (78%), among men (89%) than women (77%), among MA and BA degree holders (100% and 94% respectively) than illiterates (72%), among professional and employees (100% and 93% respectively) than farmers and housewives (74% and 76% respectively), and among PFLP supporters (92%) than supporters of Fateh, the nonaffiliated and Hamas (85%, 79% and 78% respectively).

5. Evaluation of the PNA Performance

- **The Presidency receives the highest positive evaluation (73%) of all the PNA institutions.**
- **A decline in the positive evaluation of the performance of the PLC, despite its role in uncovering corruption, to reach 42%.**
- **The "opposition" receives the lowest positive evaluation for its performance (37%).**

The poll shows an increase in the positive evaluation of the performance of the institution of the PNA presidency from 68% three months ago to 73% today. The evaluation of the performance of the security services remains at about the same with 68% of positive rating vs. 69% three months ago and 77% five months ago.

In the third place came the performance of the Cabinet with 56% positive rating. Three months ago, the Cabinet received 53% positive rating. It is surprising to see the Cabinet receiving such a relatively high rating despite the overwhelming support, given by the street, to PLC resolution demanding that the President reshuffle his cabinet.

The performance of the Judicial Authority came fourth with 49% positive rating. The rating of the judicial authority stood at 51% three months ago and 55% five months ago. The decline in the positive rating of the judiciary is surprising in light of the finding that shows an increase in the level of trust in it, from 26% to 34% , as mentioned earlier.

Most surprising however, is the continued decline in the positive rating of the PLC performance reaching 42% despite the major role played by the Council in uncovering corruption in the PNA institutions and despite the overwhelming support for the Council's resolution regarding this

matter. The positive rating of the performance of the Council is lower in the Gaza Strip (38%) than in the West Bank (45%), among men (35%) than women (50%), among BA and MA degree holders (32%) than illiterates (45%), among employees (33%) and students (36%) than housewives (51%) and professionals (47%), and among supporters of the PFLP (24%), Hamas (32%) and the nonaffiliated (37%) than Fateh's (54%).

6. Political Affiliation

- **A decline in the popularity of Fateh from 41% three months ago to 37% today.**
- **The combined percentage of the non-affiliated and the independents hits its highest level in four years to reach 47%**

The poll shows that Fateh's popularity has declined from 41% three months ago to 37% today. Fateh is more popular in the Gaza Strip (42%) than the West Bank (34%); among craftsmen (41%) and workers (39%) than professionals, students, and housewives (32%, 35%, and 35% respectively). Support for Hamas and the PFLP remains about the same at 9% and 3% respectively. The percentage of the nonaffiliated remained the same also at 35%, but the combined strength of the nonaffiliated and the independents increased to reach a record high of 47%.

Appendix

Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %	
	32.0	24.0	44.0
Unemployment			
1. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the PLC?			
1) Very Good	09.9	10.2	09.5
2) Good	32.5	34.9	28.6
3) Fair	31.4	29.4	34.7
4) Bad	10.2	09.1	11.8
5) Very Bad	06.8	05.3	09.3
6) No Opinion/ Do not know	09.2	11.1	06.1
2. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the judicial authority and courts?			
1) Very Good	12.7	11.8	14.0
2) Good	35.9	37.6	33.1
3) Fair	22.8	20.0	27.4
4) Bad	10.1	10.5	09.5
5) Very Bad	04.1	04.3	03.7
6) No Opinion / Do not know	14.4	15.8	12.2
3. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the Palestinian police and security services?			
1) Very Good	24.2	21.8	28.1
2) Good	43.9	45.3	41.7
3) Fair	19.4	20.1	18.2
4) Bad	6.4	5.8	7.3
5) Very Bad	3.3	2.8	4.0
6) No Opinion/ Do not know	2.9	4.2	0.8
4. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the Palestinian government (the Executive Cabinet)?			
1) Very Good	15.3	14.3	17.0
2) Good	40.8	39.3	43.2
3) Fair	20.8	20.2	21.7
4) Bad	09.6	10.4	08.3
5) Very Bad	04.5	04.3	04.7
6) No Opinion/ Do not know	09.0	11.5	05.1
5. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the institution of the Presidency?			
1) Very Good	32.3	26.8	41.2
2) Good	41.0	42.3	38.9
3) Fair	13.3	15.2	10.3
4) Bad	05.1	05.4	04.5
5) Very Bad	02.0	02.5	01.2
6) No Opinion/ Do not know	06.3	07.8	03.9
6. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the Palestinian opposition parties, movements and factions?			
1) Very Good	11.9	10.0	15.0
2) Good	25.4	23.9	27.8
3) Fair	25.6	25.6	25.6
4) Bad	18.2	19.6	16.0
5) Very Bad	05.4	04.7	06.5
6) No Opinion/ Do not know	13.4	16.2	09.1
7. If you want to evaluate the status of democracy and human rights under the Palestinian Authority,			

you would say it is:

1) Very Good	08.6	10.0	06.3
2) Good	24.9	25.4	24.3
3) Fair	26.8	27.3	25.8
4) Bad	20.7	18.8	23.7
5) Very Bad	11.4	08.6	16.0
6) No Opinion/ Do not know	07.6	09.9	03.9

8. In your view, do we have a free press?

1) Yes	20.6	20.4	20.9
2) To some extent	49.7	54.0	42.7
3) No	24.6	21.6	29.4
4) No Opinion/ Do not know	05.1	04.5	07.0

9. In your opinion, can people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip criticize the Palestinian Authority without fear?

1) Yes	35.6	36.8	33.5
2) No	57.6	55.3	61.3
3) Do not know	06.8	07.9	05.1

	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %
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10. Some people say that they feel comfortable dealing with Palestinian officials in the authority, but others say they feel uncomfortable. Based on your own personal experience, you feel:

1) Very comfortable	20.9	24.6	15.0
2) Comfortable	28.9	30.1	27.0
3) In between	21.6	20.0	24.1
4) Uncomfortable	13.6	10.9	17.9
5) Very uncomfortable	04.5	03.6	05.9
6) No opinion / Do not know	10.6	10.9	10.1

11. If you have been unjustly treated by an official Palestinian authority, such as a ministry or a security service, do you feel that the judicial authority and the Palestinian courts are capable of removing that injustice?

1) Definitely, yes	33.9	34.4	33.1
2) Maybe	35.6	36.7	33.9
3) No	11.4	9.6	14.4
4) Definitely no	12.1	11.0	14.0
5) No Opinion/ Do not know	06.9	08.4	04.5

12. Do you think that there is corruption in PA institutions? (if yes, go to the next question)

1) Yes	64.9	63.4	67.3
2) No	18.4	16.5	21.5
3) No Opinion/ Do not know	16.7	20.1	11.2

13. Will this corruption in PA institutions increase, decrease or remain as it is in the future?

1) Increase	38.2	34.8	43.4
2) Remain as it is	09.2	09.8	08.2
3) Decrease	41.1	44.6	35.9
4) Do not know	11.5	10.8	12.5

14. Several suicide attacks against Israelis took place in West Jerusalem during the past few weeks. Do you support or oppose these attacks?

1) Support	35.5	33.9	38.1
2) Oppose	55.5	56.0	54.9
3) No Opinion/ Do not know	09.0	10.2	07.0

	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %
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15. The Oslo Agreement stipulates a requirement for security cooperation between the Palestinian

Authority and Israel. If Israel fulfills its commitment under the agreement, do you support or oppose security cooperation between the Palestinian security services and the security services of Israel?

1) Support	57.1	57.4	56.6
2) Oppose	35.8	34.2	38.4
3) No Opinion /Do not Know	07.1	08.4	05.0

16. Lately, the Palestinian Authority has imposed a boycott of certain Israeli product. Do you support or oppose the imposition of this boycott?

1) Support	55.8	55.8	55.8
2) Oppose	39.3	38.4	40.8
3) No opinion /Do not know	04.9	05.8	03.4

17. The Israeli-Palestinian peace process is going through a major crisis leading to the suspension of negotiations and the Israeli imposition of restrictions on the movement and travel of Palestinians and the prevention of laborers from working in Israel. Who, in your opinion, is the party most responsible for the situation we are in?

1) Israeli government	72.2	69.9	75.9
2) Those who carry out suicide attacks against Israelis	17.8	18.2	17.0
3) Palestinian authority	05.7	06.5	04.5
4) Others. Specify	04.3	05.4	02.6

18. After a special parliamentary committee found that some ministers were involved in corruption and mismanagement, the Palestinian Legislative Council has demanded that the President of the Palestinian Authority reshuffle his Cabinet within a month. Do you support or oppose this demand?

1) Support	82.7	81.2	85.1
2) Oppose	08.1	06.9	09.9
3) No Opinion /Do not know	09.2	11.9	05.0

Total % West Bank % Gaza Strip %

19. Given the current conditions of the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, do you still support or oppose the Oslo Agreement?

1) Support	59.2	56.2	64.0
2) Oppose	34.0	34.6	33.0
3) No opinion /Do not know	06.8	09.2	03.0

20. US Secretary of State, Madeline Albright visited the Palestinian areas and Israel in the past few days. While some say that her visit demonstrated that the US policy in the region is balanced, others argue that it has shown that US policy is biased in favor of Israel. What do you say?

1) Balanced	10.8	10.5	11.2
2) Biased in Israel's favor	80.7	79.5	82.6
3) Others. Specify	00.6	00.7	00.4
4) No opinion /Do not know	07.9	09.3	05.7

21. And what about the future of the peace process between us and the Israelis, did the visit in your opinion serve to give it a push forward?

1) Yes	09.8	09.2	10.7
2) No	36.6	38.0	34.3
3) Had no impact	43.6	41.2	47.3
4) No opinion/ Do not know	10.1	11.6	07.7

22. Which political party do you support?

1) PPP	01.0	00.7	01.4
2) PFLP	02.9	02.9	03.0
3) Fateh	36.9	33.8	41.9
4) Hamas	09.3	08.8	10.1
5) DFLP	00.8	01.4	00.0
6) Islamic Jihad	01.8	01.5	02.2
7) Fida	00.2	00.2	00.2

8) Independent Islamists	03.1	03.6	02.4
9) Independent Nationalists	06.0	07.6	03.6
10) None of the above	35.3	36.8	32.9
11) Others	02.6	02.7	02.4