

Center for Palestine Research & Studies (CPRS)

Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No (34)

25-27 June 1998

The American Initiative, Armed Attacks, Palestinian State, Cabinet Reshuffle, Corruption, Democracy, Election of the President and vice President, Ownership of Satellite Dishes and Computers, and Subscription in the Internet Service

These are the results of opinion poll #34, conducted by the Center for Palestine Research & Studies, between 25-27 June 1998. The poll deals with the American initiative, armed attacks, Palestinian state, cabinet reshuffle, corruption, democracy, election of the president and vice president, ownership of satellite dishes and computers, and subscription in the Internet service. The total sample size of this poll is 1335 from Palestinians 18 years and older, of which 851 in the West Bank and 484 in the Gaza Strip. The margin of error is $\pm 3\%$ and the non-response rate is 3%.

1) The Peace Process

- **A majority of 51% opposes the US initiative for redeployment while 43% accept it.**
- **A serious rise in support for violence, the highest since 1994: 50% support it and 45% oppose it.**
- **Meanwhile 68% still support the peace process and 29% oppose it; but only 31% see a possibility for reaching agreement during final status negotiations, and 90% do not trust the intentions of the Israeli government and 76% do not trust the intentions of the Israeli people.**
- **Major decline in the percentage of those expecting the establishment of a Palestinian state from 62% in November 1997 to 48% today. But 58% support the transformation of the PA into a Palestinian state after the end of the transitional period in 4 May 1999.**
- **Fifty percent describe their economic and living conditions as worse than they were when the peace process started and 46% can not provide for their basic needs. Nonetheless, 65% are optimistic about the future.**

The results of this poll clearly indicate a major shift in Palestinian mood regarding the peace process. Despite the continued high level of support for the process in general, a majority is opposed to the American initiative for Israeli redeployment, does not believe in the possibility of reaching a mutually acceptable permanent settlement, and does not trust the

intentions of the Israeli government or the Israeli people. Moreover, a major drop occurred in the percentage of those who expect the peace process to lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the next few years. In addition, a majority perceives its economic conditions as becoming worse since the start of the peace process. As a result of all these factors, the poll shows a dramatic increase in support for violence against Israelis and a majority favoring a unilateral Palestinian decision to transform the PA into a Palestinian state on May 4, 1999 regardless of Israel's position.

A majority of 51% is opposed to the American initiative for Israeli redeployment from 13% of the West Bank territory while 43% support it. Opposition to the initiative is stronger in the Gaza Strip where it reaches 58% while it is only 46% in the West Bank. Opposition is also stronger among men, the young, residents of refugee camps, the more educated, the students, and supporters of opposition forces and factions. But even among supporters of Fateh, opposition to the initiative reaches 44% while 50% support it.

Meanwhile, the results show a dramatic increase in the support for violence against Israelis as 50% said they supported armed attacks against Israeli targets. Opposition to violence has dropped to 45%. Support for violence was highest in 1994 when it reached 57%. Since then it gradually dropped as the peace process made progress to reach 21% in March 1996. It began to rise again to reach 40% in April 1997 after the Israeli decision to build the Har Homa settlement in Arab East Jerusalem, and to 36% in September 1997 after Israel ignored a deadline for redeployment from the West Bank.

Support for violence increases in the Gaza Strip (54%) compared to the West Bank (47%). It also increases among residents of refugee camps, women, young people, students, and supporters of opposition factions and especially among supporters of Hamas (72%). But even among Fateh supporters, violence is supported by 44% and opposed by 53%.

Despite the rise in support for violence, a large majority of 68% still supports the peace process while only 29% oppose it. Nonetheless, a majority of 62% does not expect the final status talks to lead to mutually acceptable solutions to the difficult issues of borders, refugees, settlements, and Jerusalem. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of 90% does not trust the intentions of the Israeli government and 76% do not trust the intentions of the Israeli people. In addition, a major drop has been registered in the percentage of those who expect the peace process to lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state during the next few years. Seven months ago, 62% expected such a state while only 48% expect one in the current poll. This may explain the fact that a majority of 58% supports a unilateral Palestinian decision to transform the PA into a state when the transitional period ends in May 1999 without the need to wait for an agreement with Israel.

2) Palestinian Domestic Politics

- **About 38% wish to see a comprehensive change in cabinet, while a majority of 51% supports a more limited change in which some ministers and senior officials are changed.**

- **Over 64% believe there is corruption in the PA and 58% believe that the corruption will increase or remain the same in the future.**
- **Only 35% give the Palestinian democracy a positive rating, while 57% believe that people can not criticize the PA without fear.**

Despite the high percentage of people who believe that corruption exists in PA institutions and agencies, and despite the low positive rating of the status of democracy in Palestine, a majority supports only a limited cabinet reshuffle. This finding may mean that the man in the street does not believe that a cabinet reshuffle, no matter how limited or comprehensive it may be, can satisfactorily address the problems facing the process of Palestinian national reconstruction.

The poll results show a majority of 51% supporting a limited change in government while 38% supported a comprehensive change that would replace all or most of the ministers and senior officials. Support for a comprehensive change increases among men (46%) compared to women (31%), and among young people, the more educated, students, and supporters of opposition factions.

The results also show that the percentage of those believing in the existence of corruption in PA institutions and agencies is still very high standing today at 64%. This percentage is similar to the one obtained in CPRS' last survey in early June 1998 and to those obtained during 1997.

The findings also indicate that Palestinians are not impressed by their own democracy as only 35% gave it a positive rating. A similar percentage was obtained in CPRS' poll # 29 in September 1997, while it reached 50% in April 1997. Similarly, the percentage of those who believe that people can not criticize the PA without fear remained high at 57%, compared to 58% in September 1997 and 52% in December 1996.

3) Election for the President and Political Affiliation

- **About 61% would reelect Yasir Arafat if elections were held today, while 2% would vote for Ahmad Yassin and 2% for Haidar Abdul Shafi**
- **The largest percentage of votes for a vice-president reaches 6% only and would go to Abu Mazin.**
- **Fateh remains stable at 43% while the Islamists continue to rise from 17% to 19%.**

The results clearly show that Arafat is the only Palestinian leader who can command the loyalty of the majority of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. He received 61% of the votes in this poll, while the next competitor received less than 2%. Both Ahmad Yassin and Haidar Abdul Shafi received 1.6% each, while 15 other Palestinians received less than 1.5% each. It is worth mentioning, however, that the Palestinian presidency received a 71% positive rating only one month ago. However, current results are not different from those

obtained in CPRS' poll # 30 in November 1997. It should be remembered that respondents were not given a list of candidates and had to select one from memory.

Results for the position of the vice-president were similar to those obtained in poll # 30 which indicated a lack of consensus in the Palestinian street with regard to the selection of a Palestinian leader other than Arafat. This also means that the subject is still open to all possibilities. Nonetheless, the results show Abu Mazin receiving about 6% of the votes followed by Sa'eb Erekat with 4%, Abu al-Ala' with 3%, Haidar Abdul Shafi with 3%, and Farouq al-Qaddumi, Al-Tayyib Abdul Rahim, and Nabil Sha'ath with 2% each. Another 11 Palestinians received less than 1.5% each while 65% said that they did not know or did not have any candidate.

The political affiliation results show Fateh maintaining its position with 43%, followed by Hamas with a slight increase from 12% last month to 13% today. Support for the Islamists increased from 17% last month to 19% in this poll.

4) Satellite, Computers, and Internet in Palestinian Homes

- **About 27% have satellite dishes at home**
- **About 12% own computers at home and among those 7% are Internet subscribers.**
- **About 2% have access to the Internet at work**

The poll results show that more than a quarter of the Palestinians has satellite dishes at home. The percentage is higher in the Gaza Strip, reaching 33%. More dishes are found in cities (33%) compared to refugee camps or villages and towns (about 24% each). One is more likely to find them in the areas of Jerusalem (52%), Ramallah (32%), Gaza City (41%), Deir al-Balah (37%), and Jabalia (31%), but less likely to find them in the areas of Jenin (9%), Nablus (13%), and Tulkarm and Qalqilia (15% each).

Home computers are owned by 12% of the people, especially in the areas of Jerusalem, Ramallah, Hebron, and Gaza City. The Internet is used by 2% of the people in their work place, while less than 1% use it at home (7% of those who own a computer at home have access to the internet).

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	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %
Unemployment	27.0	22.0	35.0
1. How often do you follow the news?			
1) Always	24.0	22.5	26.2
2) Often	12.9	15.1	9.5
3) Sometimes	52.5	52.2	52.4
4) Not Sure	10.7	9.8	12.0
2. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the PLC?			
1) Very Good	12.4	14.4	9.4
2) Good	32.2	33.7	30.0
3) Fair	28.2	26.6	30.6
4) Bad	10.8	9.8	12.3
5) Very Bad	7.8	5.7	11.0
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	8.6	9.8	6.7
3. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the Palestinian government (the Cabinet)?			
1) Very Good	16.9	14.9	19.8
2) Good	36.1	36.3	35.9
3) Fa	25.3	25.8	24.5
4) Bad	9.9	10.9	8.5
5) Very Bad	6.6	5.1	8.8
6) No Opinion/ Do not know	5.2	6.9	2.5

4. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the judicial authority and courts?

1) Very Good	17.2	15.8	19.2
2) Good	30.7	29.8	32.1
3) Fair	19.7	17.1	23.6
4) Bad	10.6	11.6	9.1
5) Very Bad	5.9	6.0	5.7
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	16.0	19.7	10.4

5. Do you expect the current peace process to lead to the establishment of a Palestinian State in West Bank and Gaza Strip in the coming years?

1)Yes	48.4	47.9	49.3
2) No	35.5	37.5	32.0
3) Not Sure	16.1	14.6	18.7

Total % West Bank % Gaza Strip %

6. Following the peace process and the implementation of autonomy, your economic situation and standard of living has become :

1) Better	14.4	14.7	13.8
2) Worse	50.1	46.2	57.0
3) Stayed the same	34.8	38.5	28.4
4) Don't Know	0.7	0.6	0.8

7. Can your family provide for all the basic monthly expenses (for food, residence, health care and education)?

1) Yes	53.6	57.6	46.4
2) No	45.9	41.9	53.0
3) No Opinion/Don't Know	0.5	0.4	0.6

8. Are you optimistic or pessimistic with regard to the future of the Palestinian people?

1) Optimistic	64.6	60.2	72.4
2) Pessimistic	32.6	36.2	26.3
3) No Opinion/Don't Know	2.8	3.6	1.4

9. According to Oslo Agreement, the transitional period will end on May 4,1999. Some people see the necessity of transforming the PA into a Palestinian State at that date even if Israel objected. Others argue that the establishment of the state should wait until an agreement is reached with Israel. What do you think?

1) Support waiting till reaching an agreement with Israel.	34.3	34.7	33.5
2) Support establishing a Palestinian state right after the end of the transitional period even if there no agreements was reached with Israel at that time	57.8	55.8	61.4
3) Others (specify_____)	2.8	3.3	1.8
4) No Opinion /Don't know	5.1	6.2	3.2

10. The Government of the United States proposed a political initiative for an Israeli redeployment from 13% of the West Bank. What is your attitude toward it?

1) I accept the initiative	43.0	46.8	36.4
2) I oppose the initiative	50.5	46.3	57.8
3) Others (Specify_____)	1.2	1.3	1.1
4) No Opinion /Don't Know	5.3	5.6	4.8

Total % West Bank % Gaza Strip %

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

1) Yes	64.2	61.2	69.6
2) No	22.6	24.4	19.4
3) Not Sure	13.2	14.4	11.1

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

1) Increase	52.2	50.6	54.6
2) Remain as it is	6.0	6.8	4.8
3) Decrease	32.7	31.9	33.8
4) Don't Know/ No Opinion	9.1	10.6	6.8

13. If you want to evaluate the status of democracy and human rights under the Palestinian Authority, you would say it is:

1) Very Good	6.0	5.4	7.1
2) Good	28.6	28.5	28.6
3) Fair	35.3	36.3	33.5
4) Bad	15.6	15.0	16.8
5) Very Bad	9.8	9.3	10.6
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	4.7	5.5	3.4

14. And what about the status of democracy and human rights in other countries:

14-1 America

1) Very Good	33.5	29.6	40.2
2) Good	24.7	27.2	20.3
3) Fair	7.9	7.3	8.9
4) Bad	9.0	8.2	10.4
5) Very Bad	2.6	3.0	1.8
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	22.3	24.6	18.3

14-2 Israel

1) Very Good	42.1	38.5	48.5
2) Good	26.9	27.9	25.1
3) Fair	6.6	6.9	6.0
4) Bad	9.0	9.0	9.1

5) Very Bad	2.9	3.3	2.2
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	12.5	14.3	9.2
	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %

14-3 Jordan

1) Very Good	8.1	5.9	12.0
2) Good	27.6	25.0	32.2
3) Fair	22.3	23.1	20.8
4) Bad	18.2	20.6	14.0
5) Very Bad	6.7	8.4	3.8
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	17.0	16.9	17.2

14-4 Egypt

1) Very Good	8.2	4.0	15.4
2) Good	23.8	20.0	30.5
3) Fair	19.9	18.6	22.2
4) Bad	15.5	15.6	15.4
5) Very Bad	6.9	7.6	5.5
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	25.8	34.2	11.1

14-5 France

1) Very Good	27.1	23.3	33.7
2) Good	25.3	23.8	28.0
3) Fair	4.1	3.5	5.2
4) Bad	2.9	3.1	2.6
5) Very Bad	1.1	1.3	0.8
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	39.5	45.0	29.7

15. The Palestinian President is currently holding discussions and consultations to form a

new cabinet. Some people see that there is a need for a comprehensive change that would replace all or most of the ministers and senior officials, while others argue that most of those are fine and only some should be changed.

15-1 What do you want?

1) I want a complete reshuffling that replaces most of the current ministers	37.6	38.0	36.7
2) I want a partial reshuffling that replaces only some of the current ministers	51.1	48.3	56.2
3) Others (Specify_____)	2.8	3.1	2.5
4) No opinion /Don't know	8.5	10.6	4.6
	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %

15-2 What do you expect to happen?

1) I expect a complete reshuffling that replaces most of the current ministers	17.8	18.0	17.8
2) I expect a partial reshuffling that replaces only some of the current ministers	65.9	70.0	63.6
3) Others (Specify_____)	3.5	4.1	3.5
4) opinion /Don't know	12.5	7.8	.1

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

1) Yes	39.0	40.0	37.3
2) No	56.8	55.2	59.6
3) Do not know	4.2	4.8	3.1

17. Concerning the armed attack against Israeli targets, I....

1) Support	49.7	47.1	54.2
2) Oppose	44.8	46.5	41.8

3) No Opinion /Don't Know	5.5	6.4	4.0
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18. If separate elections for the president of the Palestinian Authority were held today, whom would you choose?

1) Yasser Arafat	61.4	58.2	67.1
2) Ahmad Yassin	1.6	1.6	1.6
3) Haidar Abdul Shafi	1.6	1.8	1.2
4) Others (Less than 1% each)	6.0	6.1	5.8
5) No one	14.3	15.5	12.2
6) No Opinion / Don't Know	15.1	16.8	12.1

19. If separate elections for a Vice President of the Palestinian Authority were held today, whom would you choose?

1) (Mahmoud Abbas) Abu Mazin	5.9	4.6	8.0
2) Saib Erikat	3.6	3.8	3.4
3) Ahmad Qurai' (Abu Al-Ala')	3.2	3.2	3.4
4) Haidar Abdul Shafi	2.6	1.5	4.5
5) Farouq Al-Qaddomi	1.8	1.8	1.8
6) Tayyeb A. Rahim	1.7	0.4	4.1
7) Nabil Sha'ath	1.6	1.2	2.2
8) Others (Less than 1.5% each)	15.1	17.8	10.3
9) No one	21.3	21.1	21.7
10) No opinion/Don't know	43.2	44.6	40.6

	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %
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20. Which of the following political parties do you support?

1) PPP	1.5	2.3	0.2
2) PFLP	3.7	3.1	4.6

3) Fateh	43.0	42.3	44.2
4) Hamas	13.4	13.1	13.8
5) DFLP	0.8	1.0	0.3
6) Islamic Jihad	3.0	3.1	2.9
7) Fida	0.6	0.8	0.2
8) Independent Islamists	2.5	3.3	1.1
9) Independent Nationalists	3.3	3.7	2.8
10) None of the above	25.8	24.6	28.0
11) Others	2.4	2.7	2.0