

Center for Palestine Research & Studies (CPRS)

Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No (35)

30 July - 1 August 1998

The Peace Process, Domestic Situation, Economic Situation, Ability to Confront Threats, Presidential Elections and Political Affiliation

These are the results of opinion poll #35, conducted by the Center for Palestine Research & Studies, between 30 July to 1 August. The poll deals with the peace process, domestic situation, economic situation, ability to confront threats, presidential elections and political affiliation. The total sample size of this poll is 1325 from Palestinians 18 years and older, of which 817 in the West Bank and 508 in the Gaza Strip. The margin of error is $\pm 3\%$ and the non-response rate is 3%.

1. Peace Process

- **68% support the peace process and 29% oppose it**
- **Support for armed attacks declines to 44% and opposition to armed attacks rises to 49%**
- **Trust in the Israeli government is at 6% and in the Israeli people at 27%**

Support for the peace process did not change compared to last month, as 68% continue to do so. But support for armed attacks against Israelis declined to 44% compared to 50% last month, while 49% declared their opposition to it.

The level of trust in the Israeli government remained the same at about 6% only, while the percentage of those who believe that the Israeli people are sincere and serious about the peace process reached 27%. The poll indicates a significant decline in the percentage of those expecting the peace process to lead to the emergence of a Palestinian state in the coming years reaching 37% compared to 48% one month ago and 62% in November 1997.

The results show that a low level of expectation regarding the Palestinian state is evident especially in Bethlehem (26%), Jabalia (29%), Nablus (30%), Hebron and Deir al-Balah (31% each); among men (31%) compared to women (43%), the youngest (27%) compared to the oldest (50%), holders of BA degrees (18%) compared to illiterates (54%), students (18%) compared to housewives (44%), private sector employees (29%) compared to those employed in the public sector (45%), and among supporters of Hamas (31%) compared to supporters of Fateh (46%).

These results indicate that the Palestinian street has little confidence in the peace process despite its continued support for it, and that it sees in the current policies of the Israeli government an obstacle to the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Therefore, Palestinian support for the peace process seems conditional as a large percentage continues to support armed attacks against Israelis.

Support for armed attacks increases especially in the Gaza Strip (50%) compared to the West Bank (39%), in Khan Younis (61%), Deir al-Balah (55%), and Hebron (51%) compared to Jerusalem (28%), Ramallah and Bethlehem (36% each), and Tulkarm (35%), in refugee camps (53%) compared to cities and villages (41%), among the youngest (51%) compared to the oldest (45%), holders of BA degrees (52%) compared to illiterates (39%), students (54%) compared to laborers (34%), and among Hamas supporters (65%) compared to Fateh supporters (40%).

2. Domestic Situation

- **56% believe that corruption exists in PA institutions and 61% believe that it will increase or remain the same in the future;**
- **Corruption is seen especially in ministries by 78%, in security and police agencies by 69%, in PLC by 45%, and in the office of the presidency by 36%;**
- **83% believe the jobs can only be obtained through *wasta* (connections);**
- **Positive evaluation of Palestinian democracy does not exceed 33% compared to Israeli democracy (68%), and Jordanian (34%), and Egyptian (31%).**

The results show that a large percentage of 56% continues to believe that corruption exists in the PNA institutions, indicating a decrease of 8 percentage points compared to the situation a month ago. But the percentage of those believing that corruption will increase or remain the same increased from 58% one month ago to 61% now.

The results show that those who believe in the existence of corruption tend to see it mostly in ministries (78%), in security and police offices (69%), in the PLC (45%), and in the office of the presidency (36%).

The poll shows that a majority of 83% thinks that one can not find a job without *wasta* to a large or medium extent. The percentage of those who do not think that *wasta* is not essential does not exceed 7%.

Similar to previous polls, the results show a low level of positive evaluation of Palestinian democracy not exceeding 33% compared to 35% one month ago. Israeli democracy received a positive evaluation of 68%, the Jordanian 34%, and the Egyptian 31%.

3. Economic Situation

- **26% seek permanent emigration due to current situation**
- **38% describe their economic situation during the past three years as better than now, 31% as worse; while 50% are optimistic about their economic future**

The unemployment rate for this poll is 26%, 19% in the West Bank and 38% in the Gaza Strip. Thirty eight percent described their economic condition as being better in the past three years than today, and 31% described it as being worse in the past three years than today, while another 31% said that it had been the same as today. These conditions lead some 50% of respondents to be optimistic about their economic future while 29% remain pessimistic.

Palestinian general conditions lead about 26% of the Palestinians to seek permanent emigration to other countries. The desire for emigration increases in the Gaza Strip (32%) compared to the West Bank (22%), and reaches 30% in Jerusalem. It also increases among residents of refugee camps (33%) compared to residents of villages (22%), men (36%) compared to women (17%), the youngest (33%) compared to the oldest (15%), holders of BA degrees (36%) compared to illiterates (10%), students (47%) and laborers (33%) compared to housewives (15%) and retired persons (16%), the unmarried (40%) compared to the married (23%). The results show no significant differences between supporters of Fateh (24%) and Hamas (27) in the desire to emigrate.

4. Ability to Confront Threats

- **36% only believe that the PA is capable of meeting security threats;**
- **29% only believe that the PA is capable of meeting economic threats.**

The poll reveals the existence of doubts in the Palestinian street in the ability of the PNA to meet security and economic challenges such as the threat to cut economic aid, embargoes, closures, and preventing workers from working in Israel in the economic side, and military invasion, siege and entrance of Israeli forces into Palestinian-controlled areas in the security side.

In fact, the percentage of those who believe that the PNA is fully capable of meeting security threats is not more than 10%, and those believing that it can fully meet economic threats is not more than 8%. Some 26% think that the PNA has a medium capability to meet security threats and 21% think it has a medium capability to meet economic threats. Some 44% expressed the belief that it has no capability to meet security threats and 50% said it has no capability to meet economic threats.

The percentage of those who believe that the PNA can not meet the security threats increases among men (50%) compared to women (37%), holders of BA degrees

(52%) compared to illiterates (42%), and among supporters of Hamas (54%) compared to supporters of Fateh (34%).

5. Presidential Elections and Political Affiliation

- **In a three-way race for the presidency: Arafat receives 48%, Ahmad Yassin 12%, and Haider Abdel Shafi 9%;**
- **In a three-way race for a vice-president: Abu Mazen receives 29%, Abu al-Ala' 23%, and Abu al-Lutuf 19%;**
- **Fateh declines to 39%, Hamas receives 12, and 38% are nonaffiliated.**

In a direct question about voting for the office of the president in case of a three-way race, Yasir Arafat received 48% of the votes, the lowest he has received since November 1994. Ahmad Yasin received 12% of the votes, the highest he has received since his release from prison and similar to the percentage he received in October 1995. Haydar Abdul Shafi received 9% of the votes, similar to what he used to receive during 1994-95 before the January 1996 elections.

One month ago, some 61% expressed their readiness to elect Yasir Arafat as president, while Abdul Shafi and Yasin received less than 3 percent each. The difference between the two polls lies in the way the question was presented. Last month, respondents were not given a list of candidates to choose from. Therefore, those who enjoy more name recognition benefited most. Arafat's name is much widely known than either Yasin or Abdul Shafi. In this poll, the respondents were given three names to choose from. In the last poll, some votes went to many other candidates other than Arafat whose name can be easily remembered. This time, those who gave votes to candidates other than Arafat, gave their votes only to Yasin or Abdul Shafi. Nonetheless, the difference between the two percentages in the popularity of Arafat may have also been due to other reasons such as the deadlock in the peace process, the continued existence of corruption and the lack of democracy.

In a race for the post of the vice president, respondents, who were given a list of eight names to choose from, voted to Abdul Shafi first with 12% of the votes, followed by Abu Mazin with 9% of the votes, Abu al-Lutuf with 8% of the votes, Faisal al-Husaini, Hanan Ashrawi, and Sa'eb Erekat with 7% each, and Abu al-Ala with 6% of the vote. But in a three-way race for the post of vice-president, respondents gave Abu Mazin the largest number of votes (29%) followed by Abu al-Ala' (23%) and then Abu al-Lutuf (19%).

Support for Fateh decreased from 43% one month ago to 39% in this poll; Hamas received 12%, and the nonaffiliated received 38%.

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	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %
6. Do you think that there is corruption in PA institutions? (if yes, go to the next question)			
1) Yes	55.8	52.6	61.2
2) No	24.3	25.8	21.8
3) Not Sure	19.9	21.7	17.0

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

1) Increase	50.9	47.4	55.8
2) Remain as it is	10.2	9.8	10.7
3) Decrease	29.9	32.7	26.0
4) Don't Know/ No Opinion	09.0	10.1	07.5

8. In your opinion, in which of the following PA institutions does corruption exist?

8-1 Ministries and Governmental offices

1) Yes	78.1	78.2	78.1
2) No	10.0	08.5	12.0
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	11.9	13.4	09.9

8-2 Security forces and Police

1) Yes	68.6	68.9	68.2
2) No	18.5	17.4	20.2
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	12.8	13.7	11.6

8-3 Presidency Office

1) Yes	35.9	37.2	34.1
2) No	28.2	24.6	33.3
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	35.9	38.2	32.6

8-4 PLC

1) Yes	44.9	49.8	38.1
2) No	30.2	23.2	39.9
3) No Opinion/Don't Know	24.8	27.0	21.9

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

1) Very Good	05.6	05.5	05.8
2) Good	26.9	28.4	24.5
3) Fair	34.5	33.2	36.6
4) Bad	15.1	14.5	16.0
5) Very Bad	10.6	08.7	13.7
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	07.3	09.7	03.5

Total % West Bank % Gaza Strip %

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

10-1 America

1) Very Good	31.6	29.2	35.5
2) Good	25.5	25.3	25.8
3) Fair	07.7	07.5	08.0
4) Bad	08.2	08.7	07.4

5) Very Bad	03.3	03.2	03.6
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	13.4	15.7	09.6

10-2 Israel

1) Very Good	41.4	37.2	48.1
2) Good	26.1	27.0	24.8
3) Fair	08.1	09.6	05.6
4) Bad	07.7	07.5	07.9
5) Very Bad	03.3	02.9	04.0
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	13.4	15.7	09.6

10-3 Jordan

1) Very Good	07.3	06.6	08.5
2) Good	26.1	23.5	30.3
3) Fair	25.2	26.0	23.9
4) Bad	17.2	19.3	13.9
5) Very Bad	06.5	07.5	04.9
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	17.7	17.2	18.5

10-4 Egypt

1) Very Good	06.7	03.9	11.2
2) Good	24.0	18.8	32.4
3) Fair	21.8	21.3	22.8
4) Bad	15.3	15.1	15.6
5) Very Bad	06.9	07.5	06.0
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	25.2	33.4	12.1

10-5 France

1) Very Good	25.9	21.3	33.2
2) Good	26.0	27.4	23.7
3) Fair	05.5	05.6	05.4
4) Bad	01.8	01.5	02.4
5) Very Bad	00.9	00.8	01.0
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	39.9	43.3	43.3

Total % West Bank % Gaza Strip %

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

1) Yes	38.2	38.6	37.6
2) No	57.6	56.3	59.7
3) Do not know	04.1	05.1	02.7

12. Does the situation in the Palestinian areas in the West Bank and Gaza force you to seek permanent emigration?

1) Yes	26.1	22.3	32.1
2) No	72.8	76.3	67.2
3) I don't know	01.1	01.4	00.8

13. Some people say that these days it is not possible to find a job without *wasta* (personal connections and nepotism). But others say that jobs are given based only on qualifications. Based on experience(s) you personally knew about, you say:

1) Jobs are obtained by <i>wasta</i> to a large extent	56.2	50.8	65.1
2) Jobs are obtained by <i>wasta</i> sometimes	27.0	29.4	23.1
3) Jobs are not obtained by <i>wasta</i>	07.3	08.6	05.1
4) I have no experience	09.5	11.2	06.8

14. To what extent do you think that the PLC plays an important role in formulating public policy in Palestinian areas?

1) To a large extent	17.7	19.4	15.1
2) To a moderate extent	30.4	29.5	31.8
3) To a low extent	11.3	11.0	11.7
4) Has no role	25.0	22.6	29.0
5) I don't know	15.5	17.5	12.4

15. To what extent do you think that the PA is able to face foreign security threats such as invasion, military siege, or entrance of Israeli forces into areas under Palestinian control?

1) Able to large extent	10.4	11.4	8.7
2) Somehow able	25.6	23.9	28.2
3) Able to a lower extent	13.2	12.4	14.5
4) Unable	43.9	44.1	43.5
5) I don't know	07.0	08.2	05.0

Total % West Bank % Gaza Strip %

16. To what extent do you think that PA is able to face any foreign economic threats such as the threat to cut economic aid, wheat and food stuff, and impose economic embargo, closure of borders, and work stop?

1) Able to a large extent	07.6	08.3	06.5
2) Somehow able	21.4	22.7	19.3
3) Able to a lower extent	14.9	13.6	17.1
4) Unable	49.9	48.0	53.0
5) I don't know	06.2	07.4	04.1

17. Concerning armed attacks against Israeli targets, I...

1) Support	43.6	39.4	50.3
2) Oppose	49.4	53.3	43.0
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	07.1	07.3	06.7

18. Do you think the Israeli people are sincere and serious in their intentions to reach a peace settlement with Palestinians?

1) Yes	26.9	28.4	24.5
2) No	66.4	63.9	70.3
3) NoOpinion	06.7	07.7	05.3

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

1) Haidar Abdul Shafi	08.6	09.1	07.8
2) Yaser Arafat	48.1	45.1	53.0
3) Ahmad Yassin	11.5	13.0	09.1
4) Others	01.7	02.2	01.0
5) No one	16.0	16.9	14.6
5) Will not participate	10.8	10.0	12.3
6) No Opinion / Don't Know	03.3	03.9	02.2

20. If separate elections for a Vice President of the Palestinian Authority were held today, and the following names were nominated as candidates, whom would you choose?

1) Ahmad Qurai' (Abu Ala')	06.0	05.8	06.3
2) Farouq Kaddomi	07.8	08.6	06.4
3) Mahmoud Abbas	08.6	08.3	09.1
4) Nabil Sha'ath	03.3	01.7	05.8

5) Sa'eb Erikat	07.2	08.3	05.5
6) Hanan Ashrawi	07.2	07.1	07.5
7) Faisal Husseini	07.4	08.8	05.3
8) Haidar Abdul Shafi	11.8	07.9	18.0
9) Others	00.9	01.1	00.6
10) Non of the above	22.8	25.5	18.4
11) Will not participate in the elections	11.5	10.6	13.0
12) No Opinion/Don't Know	05.4	06.3	04.1

Total % West Bank % Gaza Strip %

21. If separate elections for a Vice President of the Palestinian Authority were held, and only the following names were nominated as candidates, whom would you choose?

1) Ahmad Qurai'	23.0	23.3	22.6
2) Farouq Qaddomi	19.1	22.9	13.6
3) Mahmoud Abbas	28.9	28.8	29.2
4) None of the above	24.7	22.0	28.6
5) No Opinion/Don't Know	04.2	02.9	05.9

22. A radio program called (Cities and Health) sponsored by the (Community Health Department) is being broadcasted in the Palestinian Radio at 9:00 AM every Saturday. Have you ever listened to this program for at least once?

1) Yes	10.8	11.8	09.1
2) No	89.2	88.2	90.9

23. Which of the following political parties do you support?

1) PPP	01.4	01.8	00.6
2) PFLP	03.4	02.9	04.4

3) Fateh	39.0	36.2	43.4
4) Hamas	12.0	12.7	11.0
5) DFLP	00.6	00.7	00.4
6) Islamic Jihad	02.7	03.3	01.7
7) Fida	00.1	00.0	00.3
8) Independent Islamists	02.6	03.0	01.9
9) Independent Nationalists	03.8	04.8	02.1
10) None of the above	33.3	33.7	32.7
11) Others	01.2	01.0	01.5