

Center for Palestine Research & Studies (CPRS)

Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No (37)

12-14 November 1998

The Peace Process and the Wye Memorandum, Elections for the President and Vice President, and Political Affiliation

These are the results of opinion poll #37, conducted by the Center for Palestine Research & Studies, between 12-14 November 1998. The poll deals with the peace process and the Wye memorandum, election of the president and vice president, and political sympathy. The total sample size of this poll is 1321 from Palestinians 18 years and older, of which 828 in the West Bank and 493 in the Gaza Strip. The margin of error is + 3% and the non-response rate is 3%.

1. Peace Process

- **A majority of 75% supports the peace process, but only 59% support the Wye agreement while 35% oppose it.**
- **A majority of 57% thinks that the Israelis gain more from the agreement while 18% only think that the Palestinians gain more.**
- **A majority of 78% thinks that the PA will implement the agreement but only 19% think that the Israeli government will implement it**
- **A majority of 54% opposes the security arrangements contained in the agreement and 64% fear that their implementation may lead to internal armed conflict among Palestinians**
- **A majority of 51% believe that the Palestinian negotiating team could have obtain a better agreement**
- **A majority of 53% opposes and 41% support the resort of the Palestinian opposition to violence against Israelis as a means of resisting the Wye agreement**
- **Only a minority of 38% expects the final status talks to succeed**
- **Palestinians are split on the unilateral establishment of statehood on May 4, 1999, with 46% supporting, and 47% preferring waiting for an Israeli-Palestinian agreement**
- **Only 45% expect the current peace process to lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the coming years**

The results of this poll, which was conducted two weeks after the signing of the Wye Memorandum in Washington D.C, show an important increase in the percentage of those supporting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process from 66% last month to 75% now. This is the highest percentage recorded by CPRS since December 1996. But

the support for the Wye agreement does not exceed 59% while 35% oppose it. A majority of 51% believe that the Palestinian negotiating team could have achieved a better agreement.

Support for the agreement increases in the Gaza Strip reaching 65% compared to 55% in the West Bank. It also increases among non-refugees (62%) compared to refugees (53%), among the illiterates (65%) compared to holders of BA degrees (43%), among farmers (72%), retired persons (71%), and housewives (61%) compared to students (44%) and specialists (30%), and among Fateh supporters (74%) compared to Hamas' (35%). Despite the fact that a majority supports the Wye agreement, only a minority of 18% sees in it more gains for the Palestinians, while a majority of 57% sees in it more gains for the Israelis, and only 12% see in it equal gains for both sides. Moreover, while a large majority of 78% thinks that the Palestinian side is committed to the implementation of the agreement, only a small minority (19%) thinks that the Israeli side is also committed. Furthermore, a majority of 54% opposes the security arrangement clauses in the agreement and a larger majority of 64% fears that their implementation may lead to internal Palestinian violent conflict. Fearing that, only 9% give the opposition the right to resort to violence against the PA as a means of expressing opposition to the agreement. By contrast, a much larger minority of 41% gives the opposition the right to resort to violence to express opposition to the agreement if it was directed against Israeli targets, while a majority of 53% opposes that.

It is noticeable that support for violence against Israelis in general has decreased by 10 percentage points from 51% one month ago to 41% today. Opposition to violence against Israeli targets increased from 44% to 53%.

It is also noticeable that a large percentage of 79% of those opposed to the agreement believe that it serves Israeli interests only while this percentage does not exceed 46% among supporters of the agreement. The percentage of those who believe that Israel will not implement the agreement increases sharply among those who are opposed to it (89%) compared to those who support it (66%). The percentage of those who oppose the security clauses of the agreement is larger (78%) among those opposed to the agreement compared to those who support it (41%). The percentage of those who are concerned that it might lead to internal armed conflict is larger (75%) among those opposed to the agreement compared to those who support it (60%). Also, the percentage of those who think that a better agreement could have been reached increases among its opposition (59%) compared to its supporters (48%). Support for violence against Israelis is higher (56%) among those opposed to the agreement and lower (34%) among its supporters. But the two sides, the opposed and the supportive, agree equally and in large percentage (89%) in their opposition to the use of violence against the PA as a means of expressing opposition to the agreement.

Despite the rise in support for the peace process and the noticeable decline in support for violence, a majority of 54% still does not believe that an agreement on final status issues is feasible. Also, the percentage of those who believe that the

peace process will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state has decreased from 49% one month ago to 45% in this poll. The results do not show any noticeable change in the percentage of those who support a unilateral establishment of a Palestinian state in May 1999 reaching 46% (compared to 45% one month ago), while the percentage of those preferring to wait until an Israeli-Palestinian agreement about it is concluded reaches 47% compared to 44% one month ago.

It is worth noting that support for the unilateral establishment of statehood rises in the Gaza Strip (53%) compared to the West Bank (40%). The percentage of those who support waiting increases slightly among those who believe that the peace process will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the coming years reaching 48% compared to 43% among those who do not think so. These results show that the Palestinian support for the Wye agreement is reserved and cautious, and that it derives from the high level of general support for the peace process and the conviction that there is no alternative to it as means of achieving Palestinian goals. The reserved attitude towards the Wye agreement comes from the belief that it serves Israeli interests rather than addressing Palestinian needs.

Despite that, Palestinian street seems to support taking risks for the sake of peace by supporting the agreement. But at the same time, it hesitates in preventing the opposition from using violence against Israelis in an attempt to attack the agreement, while showing no tolerance to those who want to oppose the agreement by resorting to violence against the PA.

2. Elections for the President and vice-President and Political Affiliation

- **In a three way contest, Arafat receives 45% of the vote, Ahmad Yasin: 10%, and Haidar Abdul Shafi: 7%.**
- **Fateh's support reaches 40%, Islamists: 17%, national opposition: 4%, and the non-affiliated: 39%**
- **In a contest for the vice-presidency involving 8 candidates: Abdul Shafi: 10%, Faisal Husseini and Sa'eb Erikat: 8% each, Hanan Ashrawi, Farouq Kaddomi (Abu Lutuf), and Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazin): 7% each, Ahmad Qurai' (Abu Ala'): 6%, and Nabil Sha'ath: 4%**
- **In a three-way contest for the vice-presidency: Abu Lutuf: 24%, Abu Mazin and Abu Ala' : 22% each**
- **In a two-way contest, Abu Mazin receives 42% and Abu Ala' 38%**
- **In another two-way contest, Abu Ala' receives 48% and Abu a-Lutuf 40%**
- **In yet another two-way contest, Abu Mazin receives 43% and Abu Lutuf 40%**

Arafat's popularity improved slightly compared to the findings of our October poll. In a three-way race for the office of the presidency, Arafat received 45% of the vote, compared to 43% last month. It is noticeable that Arafat's popularity is higher in the

Gaza Strip (52%) compared to the West Bank (40%). Ahmad Yasin received 10% of the vote with a decrease of three percentage points compared to the October results. Haidar Abdul Shafi received 7% of the vote with a similar decrease of three percentage points during the same period.

In a race for the vice-presidency, involving 8 candidates, Haidar Abdul Shafi received the largest percentage of votes (10% compared to 12% one month ago), followed by Faisal Hussein and Sa'eb Erikat with 8% each, followed by Abu Lutuf, Abu Mazin, and Hanan Ashrawi, with 7% each, followed by Abu Ala' with 6%, and finally, Nabil Sha'ath with 4%. It is noticeable that the popularity of Abu Lutuf, Nabil Sha'ath, and Faisal Hussein differs in the West Bank compared to Gaza. Abu Lutuf received 8% support in the West Bank, but only 5% in the Gaza Strip. Similarly, Faisal Hussein received 8% in the West Bank, but only 4% in the Gaza Strip. On the other hand, Nabil Sha'ath received 6% in the Gaza Strip compared to 2% in the West Bank. Among Fateh supporters, the results were as follows: Haidar Abdul Shafi: 13%, Faisal Hussein: 12%, Abu Mazin: 11%, Sa'eb Erikat: 10%, Abu Lutuf: 8%, Hanan Ashrawi: 7%, Abu Ala' : 7%, and Nabil Sha'ath: 4%. Supporters of Hamas gave more votes to Haidar Abdul Shafi (10%) and Hanan Ashrawi (9%).

In a three-way race, Abu Lutuf received 24% followed by Abu Mazin and Abu Ala' with 22% each. Abu Ala' s popularity was slightly higher in the Gaza Strip (26%) compared to the West Bank (22%). But Abu Lutuf's popularity was higher in the West Bank (27%) than in the Gaza Strip (19%). Abu Mazin's popularity, on the other hand, was almost equal in both areas. Fateh supporters gave equally to Abu Mazin and Abu Lutuf (24% each) and almost equally to Abu al-Ala; (23%). But Hamas supporters gave more votes to Abu Lutuf (28%).

In a two-way race different combinations were presented. In the first, Abu Mazin received 42% and Abu Ala' 38%. In this case, the West Bank gave Abu Mazin 44% and Abu Ala' 35% while Gaza gave Abu Mazin 38% and Abu Ala' 44%. Fateh supporters gave 48% to Abu Mazin and 37% to Abu Ala' . In the second combination, Abu Ala' received 48% and Abu Lutuf 40%. In this case, the West Bank gave 44% to Abu Lutuf and 42% to Abu Ala' , but the Gaza Strip gave Abu Ala' 58% and only 34% to Abu Lutuf. Fateh supporters gave 48% to Abu Ala' and 40% to Abu Lutuf. In the third combination, Abu Lutuf received 40% and Abu Mazin 43%. The West Bank gave Abu Lutuf 47% and Abu Mazin 39%. Gaza Strip gave Abu Lutuf 30% and Abu Mazin 48%. Fateh supporters gave 45% to Abu Mazin and 39% to Abu Lutuf. These results show that despite his general popularity among Palestinians, Abu Lutuf is weaker than the other two in the Gaza Strip and among Fateh supporters.

Fateh maintained its level of support at 40% (compared to 38% last month). Support for Hamas reached 11% (compared to 12% last month), while support for Islamists in general reached 17%. Support for the national opposition reached 4%, and the level of non-affiliated remained almost as it was last month at 39%.

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	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %
Unemployment	24.0	21.0	29.0
	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %
1. Do you support or oppose the current peace process between Palestinians and Israelis?			
1) Support	75.2	74.0	76.9
2) Oppose	21.2	21.2	21.1
3) No Opinion	3.7	4.9	2.0
2. Regarding the permanent status negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides over Jerusalem, refugees, borders, and settlements, I believe			
1) There is a possibility to reach a solution acceptable to the two parties.	37.8	33.4	44.2
2) There is no possibility to reach a solution acceptable to the two parties.	53.9	56.9	49.7
3) No Opinion	8.3	9.7	6.2
3. 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	44.8	43.4	46.8
2) No	21.5	23.2	19.0
3) No Opinion/Don't Know	33.7	33.4	34.2
4. 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.	46.6	49.7	42.1

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	45.5	40.4	52.8
3) Others (specify_____)	2.8	2.9	2.7
4) No Opinion /Don't know	5.1	7.0	2.4



Now, we would like to ask you few questions about the Wye Plantation agreement (summary points of the agreement are read):

5. Do you support or oppose this agreement?

1) Support	58.6	54.5	64.5
2) Oppose	35.3	38.2	31.2
3) No Opinion/Don't know	6.1	7.4	4.3

6. In your opinion, who gained more from the agreement, the Palestinians or the Israelis?

1) The Palestinians	17.9	15.5	21.3
2) The Israelis	57.1	58.3	55.4
3) Both to the same extent	12.3	11.5	13.4
4) None of them	5.4	5.4	5.3
5) No Opinion/ Don't Know	7.4	9.3	4.6

7. Do you think that the Palestinian Authority will implement the agreement?

1) Yes	77.6	74.5	82.1
2) No	13.8	15.6	11.0
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	8.7	9.9	6.9

8. Do you think that the Israeli government will implement the agreement?

1) Yes	18.6	18.4	18.9
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2) No	72.8	72.0	73.8
3) Don't Know/ No Opinion	8.6	9.5	7.3
	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %

9. Do you support or oppose the Palestinian security commitments contained in the agreement and dealing with security arrangements that the PA should implement against armed Palestinian opposition in order to prevent armed attacks against Israeli targets?

1) Support	38.3	34.8	43.5
2) Oppose	53.6	55.9	50.4
3) No Opinion/ Don't Know	8.0	9.3	6.2

10. Are you worried that the implementation of the Palestinian security commitments will lead to internal Palestinian strife between the PA and the opposition?

1) Yes	64.3	64.9	63.5
2) No	29.3	27.8	31.5
3) No Opinion/ Don't Know	6.4	7.4	5.0

11. Do you think that the Palestinian negotiating team could have achieved a better agreement?

1) Yes	51.4	53.1	49.0
2) No	40.8	36.7	46.7
3) No Opinion/ Don't Know	7.8	10.2	4.3
	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %

12. Do you think that the Palestinian opposition has the right to express its opposition to this agreement by acts of violence directed against Israeli targets?

1) Yes	41.4	43.2	38.7
2) No	52.8	49.5	57.5
3) No Opinion/ Don't Know	5.9	7.3	3.8

13. Do you think that the Palestinian opposition has the right to express its opposition to this agreement by acts of violence directed against the Palestinian Authority and its security services?

1) Yes	8.8	9.5	7.8
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2) No	87.4	85.9	89.5
3) No Opinion/ Don't Know	3.8	4.6	2.7
	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %

14. Concerning the armed attacks against Israeli targets, I...

1) Support	41.2	41.1	41.2
2) Oppose	53.1	51.7	55.1
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	5.7	7.2	3.6

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

1) Haidar Abdul Shafi	7.4	7.9	6.7
2) Yaser Arafat	44.7	39.6	52.2
3) Ahmad Yassin	10.3	11.5	8.5
4) Other (Specify_____)	1.4	1.4	1.4
5) No one	16.6	19.1	12.9
6) I will not participate in the elections	17.8	18.3	17.2
7) No Opinion /Don't Know	1.8	2.3	1.1

16. 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')	5.8	5.1	6.9
2) Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazin)	6.9	6.6	7.3
3) Farouq Kaddomi (Abu Lutuf)	6.7	7.7	5.3
4) Nabil Sha'ath	3.5	2.0	5.6
5) Sa'eb Erikat	7.6	7.0	8.5
6) Hanan Ashrawi	7.0	7.1	6.9
7) Faisal Husseini	7.8	10.8	3.5
8) Haidar Abdul Shafi	10.3	8.4	13.0
9) Other (Specify_____)	0.5	0.4	0.7

10) No one	24.5	26.7	21.3
11) I will not participate in the elections	16.1	14.6	18.2
12) No Opinion /Don't Know	3.3	3.6	2.9

17. 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')	22.3	19.4	26.3
2) Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazin)	21.6	21.7	21.4
3) Farouq Kaddomi (Abu Lutuf)	23.5	26.6	19.2
4) No One	30.5	30.1	31.1
5) No Opinion /Don't Know	2.0	2.1	1.9

18. 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')	38.2	34.6	43.6
2) Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazin)	41.6	44.0	38.1
3) No One	19.1	20.4	17.2
4) No Opinion /Don't Know	1.0	1.0	1.1

19. 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')	47.7	42.3	55.7
2) Farouq Kaddomi (Abu Lutuf)	39.8	43.8	33.9
3) No One	11.9	13.5	9.6
4) No Opinion/Don't Know	0.6	0.5	0.7

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) Farouq Kaddomi (Abu Lutuf)	39.9	46.6	30.1
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2) Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazin)	42.8	39.1	48.2
3) No One	15.6	13.3	19.1
4) No Opinion / Don't Know	1.6	1.0	2.6
	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %

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

1) PPP	1.7	1.8	1.5
2) PFLP	3.0	3.2	2.8
3) Fateh	39.8	39.1	40.7
4) Hamas	10.9	10.7	11.1
5) DFLP	0.6	1.0	0.0
6) Islamic Jihad	3.6	2.5	5.1
7) Fida	0.1	0.2	0.0
8) Independent Islamists	2.9	3.7	1.8
9) Independent Nationalists	4.2	4.7	3.5
10) None of the above	31.6	30.9	32.6
11) Others	1.7	2.2	0.8