

Center for Palestine Research & Studies (CPRS)

Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No (42)

15-17 July 1999

The Peace Process, Evaluation of PA and NGOs performance, Corruption in PA institutions, the PLC and NGOs, Status of democracy and human rights, Elections for the president and vice-president and political affiliation

These are the results of opinion poll # 42, conducted by the Center for Palestine Research & Studies, between 15-17 July 1999. The poll deals with the peace process, evaluation of PA and NGOs performance, corruption in PA institutions, the PLC and NGOs, status of democracy and human rights, elections for the president and vice-president and political affiliation

The total sample size of this poll is 1330 from Palestinians 18 years and older, of which 824 in the West Bank and 506 in the Gaza Strip. The margin of error is $\pm 3\%$ and the non-response rate is 3%.

1. The Peace Process

- **Support for the peace process rises from 70% to 75% in one month**
- **Support for armed attacks against Israelis drops from 45% to 39% in one month**
- **Trust in the intentions of the new Israeli government led by Barak rises from 23% to 29%**

The results of this survey indicate an increase in public support for the peace process. Support for the process stands today at 75% compared to 70% in June 1999. Similarly, trust in the peaceful intentions of the Israeli prime minister and his new government rose from 23% to 29%. Moreover, support for armed attacks against Israelis dropped from 45% to 39% during the same period. These results indicate that more than 5% of the total population have shifted positions toward supporting and trusting the peace process.

Despite the fact that support for violence against Israelis is still relatively high and despite the fact that 58% of the Palestinians remain unconvinced of Barak's peaceful intentions, the change in the public perception of the peace process remains politically significant given the fact that it comes immediately after the establishment of the new Israeli government but before the implementation of any of the Israeli commitments in the Wye River Memorandum. The change in public opinion may reflect rising expectations in the street from both Barak and the peace process.

Support for violence is high among supporters of Hamas (62%) and PFLP (53%), holders of BA degrees (52%), and students (46%) and low among supporters of Fateh (33%), those with elementary education (34%), workers (31%) and the retired (17%). Trust in the intentions of the Barak government increases among supporters of Fateh (42%), the illiterates (39%), farmers (41%), and the retired (39%). It decreases among supporters of Hamas (25%), holders of BA degrees (12%), students (15%), and specialists (9%).

2. Evaluation of PA and NGOs performance

- **Positive evaluation of the PLC performance reaches 40%**
- **Positive evaluation of performance of the cabinet reaches 47%, security and police 56%, and the presidency 58%**
- **Positive evaluation of the performance of the judicial and court system reaches 42%**
- **Positive evaluation of the performance of the opposition parties reaches 32%**
- **Positive evaluation of the performance of Palestinian NGOs reaches 59%**

The results show that the performance of the Palestinian opposition parties and factions receives the lowest positive evaluation (32%) among all institutions listed in the survey while the performance of the Palestinian NGOs receives the highest (59%) followed by the performance of the presidency (58%), the police and security services (56%), the cabinet (47%), the judicial and court system (42%), and finally, the PLC (40%).

These results indicate a limited rise in the positive evaluation of the performance of the presidency and the security services and a decline in the positive evaluation of the PLC, while the evaluation of the judicial system, the cabinet, and the opposition factions remain the same as it was three months ago.

This is the first time in which a question has been asked about the performance of the Palestinian NGOs. The survey was conducted during the campaign that was waged by certain official Palestinian circles and groups against the NGOs. Positive evaluation of the performance of the NGOs increases among residents of the Ramallah, Hebron and Rafah areas, those between the ages of 23-27 (70%), students (74%) workers (67%), and farmers (64%). It decreases among residents of the Deir al Balah area in the Gaza Strip (46%), those over 52 years old (44%), the retired (26%), and the unemployed (47%). No significant differences exist in the evaluation of the performance of the NGOs by supporters of the different factions. The NGOs received 65% positive evaluation from the supporters of Fateh and 68% from the supporters of Hamas. This result indicates that the street's evaluation of the performance of the NGOs does not necessarily reflect a certain political bias or a political-ideological position. Moreover, it seems that the campaign against the NGOs left little impact on the street.

Figure (42.1): Positive Evaluation of the Performance of Selected Palestinian Institutions

3. Corruption in PA institutions, the PLC and NGOs

- **Belief that corruption exists in PA institutions drops from 71% to 64%; 58% believe that corruption will increase or remain the same in the future**
- **81% believe that corruption exists in ministries and governmental offices and 76% believe it exists in the security services and police**
- **51% believe that corruption exists in the PLC and 43% believe it exists in the office of the presidency**
- **43% believe that corruption exists in NGOs**

The results show a decrease in the percentage of those who believe that corruption exists in the institutions of the Palestinian Authority from 71% in June 1999 to 64% today. The results also show that the percentage of those who believe in the existence of corruption in the ministries and governmental offices is the highest reaching 81%, followed by the security services (76%), the PLC (51%), and finally, the office of the presidency and the NGOs (43% each).

The results indicate that while a decrease has indeed taken place in the percentage of those who believe in the existence of corruption in the PA institutions in general, an increase has taken place in the percentage of those who believe in its existence in ministries and governmental offices, in the office of the presidency, and in the PLC. The percentage of those who believe that corruption exists in the security services has remained almost the same as it was a month ago.

This is the first time in which a question about public perception of corruption in Palestinian NGOs has been asked. As mentioned earlier, the survey was conducted during the campaign that was directed against the NGOs. It seems from the results that the campaign has not been highly successful in negatively affecting public perception of the spread of corruption in the NGOs. The percentage of those who believed in the existence of corruption in these organizations was the lowest (along with the office of the presidency). Belief in the existence of corruption in the NGOs increases in the West Bank (48%), Tulkarm, Hebron, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem areas (48%, 57%, 59%, and 60% respectively), among men (49%), holders of BA degrees (63%), professionals (74%), merchants (54%), and those with the highest income (74%). It decreases in the Gaza Strip (36%), Khanyounis (28%), Deir al Balah and Rafah (32% each), Nablus (36%) and Jabalia (39%), and among women (37%), illiterates (30%), housewives (36%), and those with the lowest income (38%). Political affiliation has no impact on the belief of the existence of corruption in the NGOs. The percentage of Fateh supporters who believe in the existence of corruption in the NGOs is 42% while that of Hamas is 40%.

Figure (42.2): Belief in the Existence of Corruption in Selected Institutions

4. Status of democracy and human rights

- **Positive evaluation of Palestinian democracy rises from 27% to 31%**
- **A majority of 58% believes that people can not criticize the PA without fear**
- **Positive evaluation of democracy and human rights in Israel reaches 70%, in the US 60%, in France 51%, in Jordan 38%, and in Egypt 33%**

The results indicate a rise in the positive evaluation of the status of democracy and human rights in the Palestinian areas from 27% in June 1999 to 31% today. But the percentage of those who believe that people can not criticize the PA without fear has increased slightly from 57% to 58% during the same period.

The results also show that Palestinian public perception of the status of democracy in Israel has remained the same (70%), while it improved with regard to the US (from 58% to 60%) France (from 50% to 51%), Jordan (from 35% to 38%), and Egypt (from 29% to 33%).

Figure (42.3): Positive Evaluation of the Status of Democracy in Palestine and Selected Countries

5. Elections for the president and vice-president and political affiliation

- **In elections for the presidency, Arafat receives 44% of the vote, Haidar Abdul Shafi 14%, and Ahmad Yasin 12%**
- **In elections for the vice-presidency involving eight candidates, Abdul Shafi receives the highest percentage of votes (18%) followed by Faisal al-Husseini and Sa'eb Erikat (8% each), Hanan Ashrawi (7%), Ahmad Qurai' and Mahmud Abbas (6% each), Farouq Qaddumi (5%), and Nabil Sha'ath (2%)**

- **In elections for the vice-presidency involving four candidates only, Abdul Shafi receives 37% of the vote, followed by Faisal al-Husseini (23%), Mahmud Abbas and Ahmad Qurai' (14% each)**
- **Support for Fateh drops from 38% to 35%, Hamas reaches 11%, PFLP 5%, Islamic Jihad 3%, and the non-affiliated 38%.**

The results indicate that the popularity of Yassir Arafat has not changed during the past few months remaining at 44%, while the popularity of Haidar Abdul Shafi has risen in one month from 10% to 14%, and that of Ahmad Yasin from 11% to 12%. Arafat's popularity is higher in the Gaza Strip (53%) than in the West Bank (38%), while Abdul Shafi's popularity is equal in the two areas, and Yasin's is higher in the West Bank (14%) than in the Gaza Strip (8%).

Figure (42.4): Elections for the Presidency Among Three Candidates

In a competition for the office of the vice-president among eight candidates, Abdul Shafi receives the largest percentage of votes (18%) followed by Faisal al Husseini and Sa'eb Erikat (8% each), Hanan Ashrawi (7%), Ahmad Qurai' and Mahmud Abbas (6% each), Farouq al Qaddoumi (5%) and Nabil Sha'ath (2%).

In a competition for the office of the vice-president among four candidates only, Abdul Shafi receives the largest percentage of votes (37%) followed by al Husseini (23%), and Mahmud Abbas and Ahmad Qurai' (14% each). Abdul Shafi's popularity rises in the Gaza Strip (45%) and declines in the West Bank (32%). Similarly, Abbas' popularity rises in the Gaza Strip (16%) and declines in the West Bank (12%). Al Husseini's popularity is higher in the West Bank (27%) than in the Gaza Strip (16%). Similarly, Qurai's popularity is higher in the West Bank (15%) than in the Gaza Strip (11%).

Figure (42.5): Elections for the Vice-Presidency Among Four Candidates

Support for Fateh has dropped in one month from 38% to 35%, while support for Hamas has risen slightly from 10% to 11%, and for the PFLP from 3% to 5%. Total support for the Islamists remained unchanged at 17%. The percentage of the non-affiliated dropped from 40% in June to 38% in this survey. Support for Fateh in the West Bank declined to 32% and in the Gaza Strip to 40%. Hamas' popularity is the same in the two areas.

Figure (42.6): Political Affiliation

In conclusion, the results of this survey may indicate a possible change in the way public opinion responds to developments. In the past, public perception and evaluation of the process of national reconstruction, particularly that of the leadership and its performance, were as positive as that of the peace process. More support for the national reconstruction translated into more support for the peace process and vice versa. This may have been due to the tendency of the Palestinian street to defer to its leadership and to trust its wisdom in managing both processes. The results of this poll point out to a possible separation between people's perception of the two processes: increased support for and trust in the peace process did not translate into higher popularity for the leadership or higher positive evaluation of its performance.

Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No (44)

15-17 July 1999

	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%
Unemployment	18.0	15.0	24.0
	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%
1. Do you support or oppose the current peace process between Palestinians and Israelis?			
1) Support	74.9	73.6	77.0
2) Oppose	21.4	22.9	19.0
3) No Opinion	3.7	3.5	4.0
	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%
2. Do you trust the intentions of the new Israeli government headed by Barak towards reaching an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement with Palestinians?			
1) Yes	28.6	27.3	30.6
2) No	57.8	60.1	54.2
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	13.6	12.6	15.2
3. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of :			
3-1 the Palestinian Legislative Council?			
1) Very Good	8.7	7.3	11.1
2) Good	31.4	31.6	31.2
3) Fair	31.1	34.2	26.1
4) Bad	12.2	10.2	15.4
5) Very Bad	6.7	5.9	7.9
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	9.8	10.8	8.3
3-2 Palestinian Government (The Cabinet)			
1) Very Good	9.1	8.2	10.7
2) Good	38.2	37.6	39.1
3) Fair	25.5	27.3	22.7
4) Bad	12.7	11.8	14.0

5) Very Bad	5.5	5.2	5.9
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	9.0	10.0	7.5
	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%

3-3 Judicial Authority and Palestinian Courts

1) Very Good	10.2	8.4	13.0
2) Good	32.1	31.1	33.6
3) Fair	19.9	17.8	23.3
4) Bad	16.3	17.8	14.0
5) Very Bad	7.1	6.9	7.3
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	14.5	18.0	8.7

3-4 Police and Security forces

1) Very Good	16.3	12.0	23.3
2) Good	39.2	39.5	38.7
3) Fair	19.1	20.0	17.6
4) Bad	13.3	14.7	11.1
5) Very Bad	5.3	5.0	5.7
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	6.8	8.7	3.6

3-5 Institution of Presidency

1) Very Good	17.6	13.9	23.7
2) Good	40.6	40.9	40.1
3) Fair	13.8	14.5	12.8
4) Bad	6.8	7.3	5.9
5) Very Bad	2.8	2.9	2.6
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	18.4	20.5	14.8
	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%

3-6 Opposition groups and factions

1) Very Good	7.2	6.3	8.7
--------------	-----	-----	-----

2) Good	24.9	24.8	25.1
3) Fair	26.0	24.5	28.5
4) Bad	18.4	17.0	20.6
5) Very Bad	4.2	4.0	4.5
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	19.3	23.3	12.6

3-7 Your district representatives at the PLC

1) Very Good	8.6	8.5	8.7
2) Good	34.6	36.6	31.2
3) Fair	19.8	18.5	22.1
4) Bad	17.0	14.1	21.7
5) Very Bad	6.1	5.2	7.6
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	13.9	17.0	8.7

4. 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')	6.2	6.3	5.9
2) Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazin)	6.2	5.0	8.3
3) Farouq Kaddomi (Abu Lutuf)	4.5	5.2	3.4
4) Nabil Sha'ath	2.4	1.2	4.3
5) Sa'eb Erikat	8.2	8.0	8.5
6) Hanan Ashrawi	6.8	7.7	5.3
7) Faisal Hussein	8.2	9.6	5.9
8) Haidar Abdul Shafi	17.6	14.1	23.3
9) Other (Specify_____)	1.0	0.6	1.6
10) No one	22.8	23.9	20.9
11) I will not participate in the elections	12.9	14.5	10.5
12) No Opinion /Don't Know	3.2	3.9	2.0

5. 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) Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazin)	13.8	12.3	16.1
2) Faisal Husseini	22.5	26.5	16.4
3) Haidar Abdul Shafi	37.2	31.8	45.3
4) Ahmad Qurai' (Abu Ala')	13.6	15.2	11.1
5) Other (Specify_____)	7.7	7.6	7.9
6) No Opinion /Don't Know	5.3	6.6	3.2

6. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the Palestinian non governmental organizations (NGO's):

1) Very Good	17.5	16.3	19.4
2) Good	41.6	44.1	37.5
3) Fair	19.1	18.3	20.4
4) Bad	7.4	7.0	8.1
5) Very Bad	2.3	2.4	2.0
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	12.1	11.8	12.6

7. Do you think that there is corruption in Palestinian NGO's?

1) Yes	43.1	47.6	35.6
2) No	30.9	27.4	36.6
3) Don't Know/ No Opinion	26.0	24.9	27.8

Total % West Bank% Gaza Strip%

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

1) Very Good	7.1	5.8	9.3
2) Good	24.1	24.3	23.7
3) Fair	29.7	29.0	30.8
4) Bad	21.2	24.1	16.6

5) Very Bad	12.5	11.1	14.8
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	5.3	5.7	4.7
	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%

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

9-1 America

1) Very Good	33.7	31.6	37.0
2) Good	26.3	25.9	26.9
3) Fair	8.5	9.1	7.5
4) Bad	8.3	9.0	7.1
5) Very Bad	2.1	2.4	1.6
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	21.2	21.9	20.0

9-2 Israel

1) Very Good	41.1	37.0	47.7
2) Good	28.7	29.4	27.7
3) Fair	9.2	9.4	8.9
4) Bad	6.7	7.6	5.3
5) Very Bad	2.0	2.4	1.2
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	12.3	14.3	9.1

Total % West Bank% Gaza Strip%

9-3 Jordan

1) Very Good	10.2	8.9	12.5
2) Good	27.8	25.5	31.4
3) Fair	26.0	26.2	25.7
4) Bad	16.4	18.5	13.0
5) Very Bad	4.8	6.1	2.8
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	14.8	14.8	14.6

9-4 Egypt

1) Very Good	8.6	6.0	12.8
2) Good	24.2	19.8	31.4
3) Fair	20.8	19.9	22.1
4) Bad	16.3	16.7	15.6
5) Very Bad	6.8	7.7	5.3
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	23.3	29.9	12.6

9-5 France

1) Very Good	25.5	22.5	30.2
2) Good	25.0	23.7	27.1
3) Fair	5.6	5.2	6.1
4) Bad	2.1	2.4	1.6
5) Very Bad	0.8	0.9	0.6
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	41.1	45.3	34.4

10. Do you think that there is corruption in PA institutions?

1) Yes	63.6	63.4	64.1
2) No	19.5	18.7	20.8
3) Not Sure	16.9	17.9	15.1

Total % West Bank% Gaza Strip%

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

1) Increase	50.0	48.9	51.8
2) Remain as it is	7.9	7.4	8.6
3) Decrease	31.3	32.6	29.1
4) Don't Know/ No Opinion	10.8	11.1	10.4

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

12-1 Ministries and governmental offices

1) Yes	80.9	80.5	81.7
--------	------	------	------

2) No	10.0	9.8	10.4
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	9.1	9.8	8.0

12-2 Security forces and police

1) Yes	76.1	76.1	76.1
2) No	14.4	12.6	17.1
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	9.5	11.3	6.7

12-3 Presidency Office

1) Yes	42.8	44.3	40.4
2) No	25.4	21.6	31.5
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	31.8	34.1	28.1

12-4 PLC

1) Yes	50.8	54.7	44.5
2) No	30.5	25.3	38.7
3) No Opinion/Don't Know	18.8	20.0	16.9

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

1) Yes	37.7	34.5	42.8
2) No	58.1	61.0	53.5
3) Do not know	4.2	4.5	3.8

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

1) Haydar Abdul Shafi	13.6	13.5	13.6
2) Yasser Arafat	43.9	38.1	53.4
3) Ahmad Yasin	11.7	14.0	8.1
4) Others	0.7	0.7	0.6
5) No one	18.8	19.6	17.4
6) I will not participate	9.7	12.0	5.9
7) No Opinion / Don't Know	1.7	2.1	1.0

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

1) Support	38.5	39.2	37.4
------------	------	------	------

2) Oppose	55.9	54.7	57.8
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	5.6	6.1	4.8

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

1) PPP	0.9	1.0	0.8
2) PFLP	4.6	4.7	4.3
3) Fateh	34.9	31.8	39.9
4) Hamas	11.2	11.4	10.9
5) DFLP	1.1	1.6	0.4
6) Islamic Jihad	3.1	3.6	2.2
7) Fida	0.2	0.1	0.4
8) Independent Islamists	2.9	3.5	1.8
9) Independent Nationalists	3.7	4.4	2.6
10) None of the above	35.8	35.6	36.0
11) Others	1.7	2.2	0.8