

Center for Palestine Research & Studies (CPRS)

Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No (43)

2-4 September 1999

The peace process, Donor Community Assistance, Domestic Palestinian Conditions, Elections for the president and vice-president and political affiliation, Home and Mobile Phones, Computers and Internet, and Satellites and TV Stations

These are the results of opinion poll # 43, conducted by the Center for Palestine Research & Studies, between 2-4 September 1999. The poll deals with the peace process, donor community assistance, domestic Palestinian conditions, elections for the president and vice-president and political affiliation, home and mobile phones, computers and Internet, and Satellites and TV Stations. The total sample size of this poll is 1320 from Palestinians 18 years and older, of which 824 in the West Bank and 496 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 remains high at 75% and opposition at 22%.**
- **Continued drop in support for violence reaching 36% and opposition to violence reaching 57%**
- **Only 25% expect the actual implementation of the Wye agreement**
- **Only 35% believe in the possibility of reaching a mutually acceptable permanent settlement in final status negotiations**
- **Before the signing of Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, trust in Barak's government dropped from 29% two months ago to 21% in this survey**
- **A large majority of 85% support a Palestinian referendum on a permanent settlement agreement**

The results indicate that support for the peace process remains high among the Palestinians at 75% with opposition to it standing at 22%. The level of support for the peace process dropped to 66% at the end of 1998 and began to increase gradually to reach 75% two months ago. The results show also a new drop in support for violence against Israelis to reach 36% today while opposition to violence stands at 57%. The percentage of support for violence increased to 53% at the end of 1998 after the Israeli freezing of the implementation of the Wye River agreement. But it began to drop gradually to reach 39% two months ago.

Despite these positive changes, Palestinian trust and confidence in the peace process is not high. Only 25% expect Israel to implement the Wye agreement. This poll was conducted during the last two days of negotiations over the implementation of the Wye River Memorandum leading in the last day of the poll fieldwork to the signing of Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum. The lack of confidence in the peace process can be seen also in the large percentage (55%) of those who believe that it is not possible to reach a mutually acceptable permanent status agreement and in the low percentage (21%) of those who trust the intentions of Barak's government. The percentage of trust in Barak's government stood at 29% two months ago before it dropped to its current level. The drop may have been caused by Barak's insistence on revising the Wye agreement and his refusal to release a larger number of security prisoners. It is likely that the level of trust in the Israeli government will increase again as Israel fulfils its commitments under the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement.

Finally, the results show that 85% of the Palestinians support the idea of holding a referendum among the Palestinians in the West Bank-Gaza and diaspora on any permanent status agreement reached between Palestinian and Israeli negotiators. Support for the referendum increases in refugee camps (89%) and among holders of BA degree (93%) and supporters of Fateh (90%) and DFLP (94%).

2. Donor Community Assistance

- **The European Union and its member states came first as the most contributing to the development of the Palestinian economy in the views of 23% of the people, followed by Japan with 15%, the US with 10%, and Arab countries with 8%**
- **Donor community support has a positive impact on the Palestinian conditions in the views of 42% and a negative impact in the views of 15%**
- **Most important areas of donor support are: education (25%), water (23%) and health (18%)**
- **Least important areas of donor support are: women programs, police, housing, roads, and democracy and human rights**
- **Positive evaluation of the performance of Palestinian NGOs reaches 59%**

The results show that the Palestinian street sees the European Union and its member states as contributing the most to the development of the Palestinian economy. The EU came first with 27% followed by Japan with 15%, the US with 10% and the Arab countries with 8%.

A large percentage of 42% tends to believe that the donor community support has a positive impact on the Palestinian conditions while 15% tend to believe that

it has a negative impact. The belief in the positive contribution of donors' support increases among residents of Jabalia (55%) and Rafah (57%), holders of BA degree (54%), farmers (54%), retired persons (52%) and supporters of Fateh (51%).

A majority of 66% believe that the most important donors' support is the one invested in the area of education followed by water and health (separately receiving 25%, 23%, and 18%). Areas identified as being least important are women programs, police, housing, roads, and democracy and human rights.

These results are similar to the ones obtained on our survey of January 1999. Public perception of the role of different donors remained stable except of that of the US, which dropped from 14% to 10%. Areas of priority remain also the same except for an added importance given to water from 17% to 23% in this survey. It is noticeable that the interest of the Gazans in water remained low in comparison to that of the West Bankers (13% vs. 28%) despite the seriousness of the water problem in the Gaza Strip. On the other hand, Gazans show a special interest in the problem of sewage in comparison with the West Bank (11% vs. 2%). As in the previous survey, however, the two areas show little interest in social issues such as women or democracy programs. This result may reflect the heavy economic burden felt by the two areas.

3. Domestic Palestinian Conditions

- **39% describe their economic conditions during the past three years as better than now and 28% describe them as worse than now**
- **50% are optimistic about their economic conditions during the next three years and 28% are pessimistic**
- **27% say that current Palestinian conditions force them to consider permanent emigration while 72% do not consider such a move**
- **35% believe that corruption exists in Palestinian NGOs while 62% believe that it exists in PA institutions. 60% of those who believe in the existence of corruption in PA institutions think that it will increase or remain the same in the future**
- **80% of those who believe in the existence of corruption in PA institutions see it in ministries, 74% see it in police and security services, 48% see it in the PLC, and 40% see it in the president's office**
- **A majority of 87% believe that *wasta* (personal and family connections) is involved to some degree in employment process**
- **Positive evaluation of Palestinian democracy reaches 30% compared to 69% for Israeli democracy, 58% for American democracy, 50% for French democracy, 32% for Jordanian democracy and 27% for Egyptian democracy**
- **60% believe that people can not criticize the PA without fear**

Personal economic conditions remain a major source of concern for the man in the street. About one third (32%) describe their economic conditions as being unchanged during the past three years, but 39% believe that their conditions were better than now, and 28% feel they are better off today. This result indicates that some 70% of the Palestinians do not notice any improvement in their economic conditions with the passing of time. Despite this negative perception, half of the Palestinians are optimistic about their future economic conditions, while only 28% are pessimistic.

Economic and other conditions seem to explain why about 27% of the Palestinians are considering permanent emigration. This percentage is higher than the one obtained last January which stood then at 21%. The desire to emigrate increases in the Gaza Strip (33%) compared to the West Bank (23%). The percentage increases especially in areas such as Bethlehem (35%), Jerusalem (30%), and Rafah and Kh(38% each). It increases also among the youngest (44%) compared to the oldest (10%), and among refugees (32%) compared to non-refugees (24%). It also increases among those with secondary education (36%), college graduates (33%), students (55%), craftsmen (39%), and supporters of Hamas (34%), PFLP (49%) and People's Party (39%). It is likely that the public perception of lack of improvement in many aspects of Palestinian national reconstruction provides the context for the emigration desires.

The results show that while only 35% of the Palestinians believe that corruption exists in Palestinian NGOs, a majority of 62% believes that it exists in PA institutions. Among those who believe that corruption exists in PA institutions, 80% see it in ministries, 74% in police and security services, 48% in the PLC, and 40% in the president's office. What makes things even worse is the belief of almost every one (except 6%) that *wasta* (personal and family connections) is essential in one degree or another in any employment. A larger percentage of Gazans compared to West Bankers (76% vs. 58%) tend to believe that *wasta* is highly prevalent.

No change is noticeable in the public's positive evaluation of Palestinian democracy which remained stable at 30%, while that of Israel's stood at 69%, the US 58%, and France 50%. Public evaluation of Jordanian democracy dropped from 38% two months ago to 32% today, and Egypt's from 33% to 27%.

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

- **In elections for the presidency, Arafat receives 43% of the vote, Haidar Abdul Shafi 14%, and Ahmad Yasin 11%**
- **In elections for the vice-presidency Farouq Qaddumi receives the largest percentage of votes (8%), followed by Sa'eb Erikat (5%), Haidar Abdul Shafi (3%), Faisal al-Husseini, Ahmad Qurai' and**

Mahmud Abbas (2% each), and Hanan Ashrawi and Nabil Sha'ath (1% each)

- **Fateh receives the support of 38% of the people, Hamas 10%, PFLP 4%, Islamic Jihad 3%, and the non-affiliated 38%.**

The results show no change in the popularity of Yassir Arafat which stands today at 43%. The same is true with regard to Haidar Abdul Shafi (14%) and Ahmad Yasin (11%). Arafat's popularity remains higher in the Gaza Strip (46%) than in the West Bank (40%).

In the competition over the office of vice president, the results of this survey differ greatly from those obtained two months ago. The change has been caused by a different methodology employed in this survey. While we normally provide respondents with a list of names to select from, we have asked them this time to select a name from memory. The new methodology revealed that no single Palestinian leader is seen by the public as a natural successor to Arafat. Nonetheless, Farouq Qaddumi received the highest percentage of votes with 8%, followed by Sa'eb Erikat with 5%, Haidar Abdul Shafi with 3%, Ahmad Qurai', Faisal al Hussein, and Mahmud Abbas with 2% each, and Hanan Ashrawi and Nabil Sha'ath with 1% each. A majority of 55% could not or chose not to give the name of their preference, 15% declared that they do not intend to participate in the elections, and 7% gave their vote to persons who could not reach a 1% threshold.

It is worth mentioning that four of those candidates received a much greater percentage of support in our survey which was conducted two months ago when respondents were provided with a list of four names only. At that time, Abdul Shafi received 37%, Hussein 23%, Abbas and Qurai' 14% each.

Fateh recovered some of its popularity in this survey increasing its percentage from 35% two months ago to 38% in this survey. The Islamists received 16% of people's support divided over Hamas (10%), Islamic Jihad (3%) and Independent Islamists (3%). The PFLP dropped slightly from 5% to 4% and the percentage of the non-affiliated remained the same at 38%.

5. Home and Mobile Phones, Computers and Internet, and Satellites and TV Stations

- **Increase in home phone ownership from 42% in January 1999 to 45% today and in mobile phones from 21% to 29%**
- **Increase in satellite dish ownership from 27% in June 1998 to 38% today**
- **Al Jazeera satellite TV station is watched by 51% of those who own satellite dishes, followed by Egyptian TV (11%), ART TV (9%), and MBC TV (6%)**

- **Home computer ownership reaches 12% and Internet subscription reaches 14% among those who own computers at home and 5% among those who have computers at work**

The results show an increase in the percentage of home phone owners from 42% in early 1999 to 45% today, and a larger increase in the percentage of mobile phone ownership from 21% to 29% during the same period. It is noticeable that home phones are found more in cities (57%) than in refugee camps (40%) or towns and villages (36%). Home phones are equally found in the West Bank (45%) and the Gaza Strip (44%). But they are not equally found in homes of the rich (79%) compared to homes of the poor (35%).

Mobile phones are found more in the West Bank (37%) than in the Gaza Strip (14%) and in rural areas (34%) than in cities (25%).

Similarly, the results show an increase in the percentage of satellite dish ownership from the 27% recorded fifteen months ago to 38% today. Satellite dishes are found more in the Gaza Strip (45%) than in the West Bank (34%), in cities (48%) more than refugee camps (35%) or towns and villages (30%), and among the highest income people (74%) than the lowest income people (28%).

The results show that the most watched satellite TV station is *al Jazeera* (51%), followed by the Egyptian TV (11%), ART TV (9%), and MBC TV (6%). It is noticeable that more men (67%) watch *al Jazeera* than women (37%). The station is also popular among the holders of BA degree (76%) compared to illiterates (42%), and among those with the highest income (70%) compared to those with the lowest income (49%).

Home computer ownership remained stable at 12%, of which 14% have Internet connections. Internet connection reaches 5% among those with office computers.

Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No (44)

2-4 September 1999

	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%
Unemployment	23.0	21.0	26.0
	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%
1. Do you support or oppose the current peace process between Palestinians and Israelis?			
1) Support	74.5	72.8	77.2
2) Oppose	21.7	22.4	20.6
3) No Opinion	3.8	4.8	2.2
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.	34.7	34.1	35.7
2) There is no possibility to reach a solution acceptable to the two parties.	55.2	54.4	56.5
3) No Opinion	10.1	11.5	7.8
3. Do you trust the intentions of the new Israeli government headed by Barak towards reaching an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement?			
1) Yes	20.6	21.0	20.0
2) No	68.4	66.5	71.6
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	11.0	12.5	8.4
4) Do you support or oppose conducting a national referendum among Palestinians in West Bank, Gaza strip and the Diaspora on a permanent status agreement between Israel and the Palestinians?			
1) Support	85.2	84.2	86.9
2) Oppose	9.1	10.1	7.5
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	5.7	5.7	5.6

	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%
5) Palestinian-Israeli negotiations are currently underway (or have reached agreement) on the implementation of the Wye River memorandum. Do you expect that Israel will implement this agreement?			
1) Yes	24.9	22.7	28.6
2) No	63.2	64.3	61.5
3) No opinion / Don't Know	11.9	13.0	9.9

6. How would you describe your economic situation over the last three years compared to the situation today?

1) Better	39.2	40.1	37.6
2) Worse	27.6	25.9	30.5
3) Stayed the same	32.2	32.6	31.5
4) Don't Know	1.0	1.4	0.4

7. Are you optimistic or pessimistic regarding your economic situation over the next three years?

1) Optimistic	50.4	47.2	55.6
2) Pessimistic	27.5	29.2	24.8
3) Remain the same	14.3	15.9	11.5
4) Others	1.3	1.2	1.4
3) No Opinion/Don't Know	6.5	6.5	6.7

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

1) Yes	62.0	59.4	66.4
2) No	20.6	20.7	20.2
3) Not Sure	17.4	19.9	13.4

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

1) Increase	51.0	49.7	53.0
2) Remain as it is	8.8	6.6	11.9

3) Decrease	29.1	32.3	24.4
4) Don't Know/ No Opinion	11.1	11.4	10.7

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

10-1 Ministries and Governmental offices

1) Yes	79.6	78.0	82.0
2) No	8.4	8.1	8.8
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	12.0	13.9	9.2

10-2 Security forces and Police

1) Yes	74.2	73.0	75.9
2) No	14.1	13.7	14.6
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	11.7	13.3	9.5

10-3 Presidency Office

1) Yes	40.2	35.8	46.6
2) No	22.6	23.9	20.7
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	37.2	40.3	32.7

Total % West Bank% Gaza Strip%

10-4 PLC

1) Yes	47.9	47.1	49.1
2) No	24.5	23.1	26.5
3) No Opinion/Don't Know	27.6	29.8	24.4

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

1) Very Good	4.8	5.2	4.0
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2) Good	24.9	28.2	19.4
3) Fair	30.9	29.2	33.8
4) Bad	20.8	19.5	23.1
5) Very Bad	11.2	8.6	15.6
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	7.4	9.3	4.1

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

12-1 America

1) Very Good	32.6	29.7	37.4
2) Good	24.9	24.1	26.3
3) Fair	8.3	8.9	7.3
4) Bad	8.0	8.9	6.7
5) Very Bad	1.7	1.7	1.8
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	24.5	26.7	20.5

12-2 Israel

1) Very Good	38.4	34.5	44.8
2) Good	31.0	30.5	31.9
3) Fair	6.9	8.2	4.8
4) Bad	6.1	6.9	4.6
5) Very Bad	1.6	1.5	1.8
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	16.0	18.4	12.1

12-3 Jordan

1) Very Good	6.1	5.5	7.3
2) Good	26.1	24.6	28.6
3) Fair	25.3	25.7	24.6
4) Bad	18.0	18.7	16.7
5) Very Bad	4.4	4.1	4.8

6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	20.1	21.4	18.0
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12-4 Egypt

1) Very Good	5.1	3.6	7.5
2) Good	21.4	18.8	25.7
3) Fair	19.7	16.4	25.3
4) Bad	18.9	18.6	19.4
5) Very Bad	4.5	3.6	5.9
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	30.4	39.0	16.2

12-5 France

1) Very Good	24.3	20.3	30.8
2) Good	25.6	23.7	28.8
3) Fair	3.9	4.9	2.4
4) Bad	2.8	2.7	3.0
5) Very Bad	0.8	0.5	1.2
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	42.6	47.9	33.8

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

1) Yes	34.7	36.2	32.1
2) No	60.3	58.5	63.2
3) Do not know	5.0	5.3	4.7

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

1) Yes	26.7	23.0	32.9
2) No	72.2	75.8	66.3

3) I don't know	1.1	1.2	0.8
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15. 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	64.6	57.7	76.0
2) Jobs are obtained by <i>wasta</i> sometimes	21.8	24.3	17.6
3) Jobs are not obtained by <i>wasta</i>	6.4	9.2	1.8
4) I have no experience	7.2	8.8	4.6

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

1) Yes	35.2	35.2	35.2
2) No	35.9	34.0	39.0
3) Not Sure	28.9	30.8	26.0

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

1) Ahmad Qurai' (Abu Ala')	1.6	2.0	1.0
2) Farouq Kaddomi	7.6	6.1	10.2
3) Mahmoud Abbas	1.5	1.5	1.6
4) Nabil Sha'ath	1.0	1.0	1.0
5) Sa'eb Erikat	5.3	5.6	4.9
6) Hanan Ashrawi	0.8	0.9	0.6
7) Faisal Hussein	1.8	2.4	0.6
8) Haidar Abdul Shafi	3.3	2.7	4.3
9) Others	7.3	8.6	5.1
10) Non of the above	1.1	1.3	0.8
11) Will not participate in the elections	14.9	14.7	15.2
12) No Opinion/Don't Know	53.8	53.3	54.7

18. Donor countries provide support for the Palestinians in the following fields:

18-1 In your opinion, which field is the most important? (select one only)

1) Water	22.5	28.4	12.8
2) Health	17.7	16.2	20.1
3) Education	25.4	23.4	28.8
4) Sewage treatment	5.6	2.2	11.4
5) Democracy & Human Rights	5.6	5.4	5.9
6) Institution Building	4.3	3.9	5.1
7) Roads	2.3	1.5	3.7
8) Security and Police	1.6	2.2	0.6
9) Agriculture	2.5	3.4	1.0
10) Housing	3.6	3.2	4.3
11) Women	1.6	2.1	0.8
12) Others	2.0	2.7	0.8
13) No Opinion/Don't Know	5.3	5.5	4.9
	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%

18-2 In your opinion, which field is the least important? (select one only)

1) Water	2.6	2.9	2.3
2) Health	2.9	3.4	2.1
3) Education	2.0	2.2	1.6
4) Sewage	4.4	5.5	2.7
5) Democracy & Human Rights	6.0	5.9	6.2
6) Institution Building	5.4	4.6	6.6
7) Roads	8.8	9.2	8.2
8) Security and Police	9.1	7.6	11.5
9) Agriculture	9.2	8.8	9.7

10) Housing	8.5	10.5	5.1
11) Women	14.3	10.5	20.6
12) Others	3.8	5.1	1.6
13) No opinion /Don't Know	23.1	23.9	21.8
	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%

19. As far as you know, which country among the donor community contributes most to the development of the Palestinian economy?

1) United States of America	10.2	11.8	7.5
2) European Union	12.1	11.7	12.8
3) Germany	3.6	3.8	3.2
4) France	6.5	6.5	6.5
5) United Kingdom	0.3	0.2	0.4
6) Japan	14.7	11.3	20.2
7) Arab Countries	8.3	10.8	4.3
8) Others (specify_____)	6.4	4.8	9.1
9) International Organization	0.2	0.2	----
10) No Opinion /Don't Know	37.7	38.7	36.0

20. In general, how would you evaluate the impact of donor's support on Palestinian conditions?

1) Very positive	5.2	4.9	5.7
2) Positive	37.2	35.3	40.4
3) In Between	34.2	34.5	33.5
4) Bad	10.2	10.8	9.1
5) Very bad	4.9	5.0	4.8
6) No Opinion/Don't know	8.3	9.5	6.5

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

1) Haidar Abdul Shafi	13.8	13.0	15.1
2) Yaser Arafat	42.5	40.4	46.0
3) Ahmad Yassin	11.1	11.8	9.9
4) Others	0.8	1.0	0.6
5) No one	17.0	18.0	15.3
5) I will not participate in the elections	12.0	12.2	11.7
6) No Opinion / Don't Know	2.8	3.6	1.4

22. Concerning armed attacks against Israeli targets, you....

1) Support it	35.7	35.1	36.6
2) Oppose it	57.3	56.5	58.6
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	7.0	8.4	4.8

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

1) PPP	2.1	1.8	2.6
2) PFLP	4.0	3.3	5.2
3) Fateh	38.0	38.4	37.3
4) Hamas	10.4	9.9	11.3
5) DFLP	1.4	2.0	0.4
6) Islamic Jihad	3.0	3.0	2.8
7) Fida	0.2	0.2	-----
8) Independent Islamists	2.9	3.2	2.4
9) Independent Nationalists	3.0	3.5	2.2
10) None of the above	33.8	33.5	34.3
11) Others	1.2	1.1	1.5

A. Do you have?

Telephone at home

1) Yes	44.7	45.1	44.0
2) No	55.3	54.9	56.0

1) Yes	28.5	37.2	13.9
2) No	71.5	62.8	86.1

Computer at home

1) Yes	12.3	12.7	11.6
2) No	87.7	87.3	88.4

Subscription to the Internet at home

1) Yes	14.2	17.7	7.7
2) No	85.8	82.3	92.3

Subscription to the Internet at work

1) Yes	4.5	7.3	1.3
2) No	95.5	92.7	98.7

Satellite Dish at home

1) Yes	37.8	33.6	44.6
2) No	62.2	66.4	55.4

Which Satellite TV station you watch most?

1) AL-Jazeera	51.1	47.3	55.9
2) MBC	5.9	6.6	4.9
3) LBC	3.7	4.7	2.5
4) ART	8.5	9.0	7.8
5) Future	2.0	2.3	1.5
6) Syria	2.6	3.5	1.5
7) Kuwait	0.7	0.4	1.0

8) Abu Dabi	2.6	3.1	2.0
9) Bahrain	0.2	0.4	0.0
10) Ajman	0.2	0.4	0.0
11) Sharka	1.7	2.3	1.0
12) Egypt	10.7	7.0	15.2
13) Orbit	1.1	1.2	1.0
14) Jordan	1.1	1.6	0.5
15) Saudi Arabia	0.9	0.8	1.0
16) Israel	0.2	0.4	0.0
17) CNN	0.4	0.8	0.0
18) Algeria	0.2	0.4	0.0
19) Morocco	0.2	0.0	0.5
20) Dubai	2.2	2.0	2.5
21) Others	3.9	5.9	1.5