

The **Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)** is an independent nonprofit institution and think tank of policy analysis and academic research. PSR was founded with the goal of advancing scholarship and knowledge on immediate issues of concern to Palestinians in three areas: domestic politics and government, strategic analysis and foreign policy, and public opinion polls and survey research. The center engages in several activities. It conducts academic and policy analysis studies. It organizes socio-political surveys and public opinion polls on current Palestinian political and social attitudes. It sponsors study groups and task forces on issues of critical importance to the Palestinians. Finally, it organizes conferences, public lectures, and briefings on current public policy issues. PSR is dedicated to promoting objective and nonpartisan research and analysis and to encouraging a better understanding of Palestinian domestic and international environment in an atmosphere of free debate and exchange of ideas.

This poll is part of PSR series of regular polls.

This poll has been conducted in cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Ramallah



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Press Release

Public Opinion Poll No (75)

94% of the Palestinians reject the “Deal of the Century;” large majorities support various responses to the plan including ending the WBGS split, the withdrawal of PA recognition of Israel, the ending of security coordination with Israel, the ending of the implementation of the Oslo agreement, and the resort to armed struggle; more than 80% believe the plan returns the conflict to its existential roots; support for the two-state solution drops to its lowest level since the signing of the Oslo agreement; and while about two-thirds endorse president Abbas’s policy against the plan, about 70% believe that he will not keep his word or follow through

5-8 February 2020

These are the results of the latest poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip between 5-8 February 2020. The period before the conduct of the poll witnessed several developments including the release of the Trump’s “Deal of the Century” and its immediate rejection by the Palestinian leadership. The Arab foreign ministers met in Cairo few days later and unanimously rejected the plan. A similar rejection followed by representatives of the Islamic countries. Despite the consensus, some Arab countries expressed timid welcome of US efforts and three Arab countries sent their ambassadors to the event in the White House in which the plan was announced. Internally, Fatah and Hamas issued conciliatory statements calling for reconciliation but this was not followed by any concrete measures and efforts to hold Palestinian elections witnessed some serious setbacks. In Palestinian-Israeli relations, tensions rose significantly during the fieldwork period as popular confrontations developed in various cities and signs of an emerging trade crisis were visible. This press release addresses many of these issues and covers other matters such as Palestinian parliamentary and presidential elections, general conditions in the Palestinian territories, the peace process and the future possible directions for Palestinians in the absence of a viable peace process. Total size of the sample is 1270 adults interviewed face to face in 127 randomly selected locations. Margin of error is +/-3%.

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Main Findings:

This quarterly poll was conducted one month earlier than planned in order to measure, in a timely manner, the immediate public response to the American plan known as the “Deal of the Century.” Findings show a

Palestinian consensus against the plan as a package and against each of its components, including the economic part if linked to acceptance of the political section of the plan. Moreover, more than 80% of the public believe that the plan has returned the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to its existential roots. The majority speculates that the Trump plan has been deliberately designed to ensure a Palestinian rejection in order for the US to allow Israel to unilaterally annex the Jordan valley and the Jewish settlements.

Findings also show that two-thirds of the public support president Abbas' policy against the plan. But the majority, ranging between two-thirds and three quarters, does not trust the president's word, as it believes he will not implement his own decision to end relations with Israel and the US. In response to the Trump plan, the overwhelming majority wants the president to end the split between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, to withdraw PA recognition of Israel, to end security coordination, to stop the implementation of the Oslo agreement, and to even resort to armed struggle.

Findings also show unprecedented decline in support for the two-state solution to less than 40%, the lowest reported by PSR since the signing of the Oslo agreement. They also show a rise in the percentage of those who think that the most effective means of ending the occupation is armed struggle; they also show a decline in the percentage of those who think negotiation is the most effective means.

In domestic matters, findings show a decline in Abbas' popularity and that of Fatah compared to our findings two-months ago. They also show a rise in the popularity of Hamas' Ismael Haniyyeh during the same period. If presidential elections were to take place today, 50% would vote for Haniyyeh. Findings also show a drop in the level of optimism regarding the prospects of holding of parliamentary elections soon. But optimism about the prospects for reconciliation increases a little compared to two months ago and about half of the public indicates that if elections were to take place today, they would contribute to the reunification of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

(1) US “Deal of the Century”:

- We presented to the respondents the various components of the American plan, known as the “Deal of the Century,” one component after the other, and asked them if they support or oppose each. We then asked the public about the entire plan as one package. Opposition to the package stood at 94% and support at 4%. Opposition to the components ranged between 91%, for the item on the billions in economic support conditioned on accepting the political plan, and 95%, for the item on Jerusalem and the Palestinian capital and the one on holy places.
- Similarly, 94% believe that a majority of Palestinians is opposed to the plan and 3% believe a majority supports it.
- By contrast, 70% believe that a majority of Israeli Jews support the American plan while 23% think a Jewish majority is opposed to it.
- A majority of 65% expresses support and 27% express opposition for the policy outlined by president Abbas against the Trump plan in which he stated that he is ending relations with Israel and the US including security relations. But a majority of 68% believes that the PA president will not implement his decision to end security coordination with Israel and 73% believe that he will not actually turn conditions to where they were before the Oslo agreement. This seems to be the reason why despite supporting his policy, a majority of 58% is dissatisfied with the actual response of the PA leadership to the American plan; 38% are satisfied.
- In light of the terms of the US plan, an overwhelming majority of 82% believe the plan brings the conflict with Israel to where it originally was, as an existential conflict, while 7% think the plan makes peace more attainable.
- If the Palestinians accept the Deal of the Century, what are the chances that such acceptance would lead to the end of the Israeli occupation and to the building of a Palestinian state? 58% think the chances are zero; 21% think the chances are less than 50%; and 7% think that the chances are more than 50%.

- We proposed to the public 10 possible responses to the American plan and asked it about its support and opposition to each response; expectation regarding what the PA will adopt or allow as a response; and its expectations regarding what will actually happen on the ground:
 - Public support is highest (90%) to the response of ending the split and reunifying the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, followed by waging a diplomatic warfare against Israel in international organizations (85%); withdrawing Palestinian recognition of Israel (84%); waging non-violent popular demonstrations (78%); ending security coordination (77%); ending the implementation of the Oslo Agreement (69%); waging an armed struggle or return to an armed intifada (64%). We found that a large majority (59%) is opposed and 37% are not opposed to the abandonment of the two-state solution and the adoption of a one-state solution; 56% are opposed and 40% are not opposed to a response in which the status quo is essentially maintained with no major changes introduced; and a 52% are opposed and 45% are not opposed to dissolving the PA.
 - An overwhelming majority of 83% anticipates that the PA leadership will not allow the dissolution of the PA; 73% anticipate that the PA leadership will not allow a resumption of armed struggle or an armed intifada; 67% anticipate that the PA leadership will not allow the abandonment of the two-state solution and the adoption of the one-state solution; 66% anticipate that the PA leadership will not stop security coordination with Israel; 60% anticipate that the PA leadership will not stop the implementation of the Oslo agreement; 55% anticipate that the PA leadership will not allow the withdrawal of the Palestinian recognition of the state of Israel. By contrast, a majority of 67% anticipates that the PA leadership will allow popular non-violent demonstrations; 65% anticipate that the PA leadership will allow waging a diplomatic campaign against Israel in international organizations; 58% anticipate that the PA leadership will maintain the status quo without any major changes; and 52% anticipate that the PA leadership will seek to end the split and reunify the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
 - With regard to expectations of what will actually happen on the ground as a Palestinian response to the American plan, 74% expect to see organized popular and peaceful demonstrations; 66% expect that the PA will wage a diplomatic campaign against Israel in international organizations; 61% expect to see a return to armed struggle or armed intifada; and, yet, 51% expect the status quo to continue without major change. By contrast, 69% expect the PA to remain committed to the two-state solution; 62% expect to see continued security coordination with Israel; 61% expect to see no ending of the Oslo agreement; and 54% expect to see no withdrawal of PA recognition of Israel. With regarding to ending the split and reunifying the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the public is divided: 48% expect it will happen and 46% expect it will not.
- Nonetheless, a majority of 69% believes the “Deal of the Century” will fail due to Palestinian opposition while 26% think it will succeed despite that opposition.
- We asked the public about its view on why the Trump Administration designed this its plan in the manner it did: a majority of 60% said the Administration deliberately wanted the Palestinians to reject the plan so that Israel can annex the Jordan Valley and the settlements while 34% thought the US actually expected the Palestinian weakness to force them to accept the plan.
- We asked the public to speculate about the motivation of the three Arab countries (UAE, Bahrain, and Oman) that participated in the event in the White House in which the Trump plan was revealed: 83% said they wanted to demonstrate their support for Israel; 6% said

they wanted to demonstrate support to Israel and the Palestinians, and only 3% said they wanted to demonstrate support for the Palestinians alone. The Arab League's unanimous decision to reject the Trump plan notwithstanding, 83% of the Palestinians believe that the Palestinians must nonetheless rely only on themselves while 14% believe they can rely on the Arab countries.

- A majority of 76% is opposed and 11% are not opposed to a resumption of dialogue between the Palestinian leadership and the Trump Administration. Official contacts between the PA and the US government were suspended by the PA after the US, in December 2017, recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Two months ago 69% said they were opposed to the resumption of dialogue with the US.
- A majority of 59% expects president Trump to lose the next US presidential election and 35% expect him to win it. Similarly, a majority of 53% expects the indictment of Netanyahu in corruption charges to lead to his ouster from leadership in Israel soon while 41% expect him to succeed in staying in power despite the indictment. Two months ago, 58% expected Netanyahu to be removed from power.

(2) The peace process:

- Support for the concept of the two-state solution stands at 39% and opposition at 59%. No description or details were provided for the concept. Two months ago, support for the concept stood at 42%. 36% of the public believe that a majority of the Palestinians supports this solution and 57% believe that the majority opposes it.
- A majority of 61% believes that the two-state solution is no longer practical or feasible due to the expansion of Israeli settlements while 33% believe that the solution remains practical. Moreover, 76% believe that the chances for the creation of a Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel in the next five years are slim or nonexistence while 22% believe the chances to be medium or high.
- The most preferred way out of the current status quo is "reaching a peace agreement with Israel" according to 22% of the public while 45% prefer waging "an armed struggle against the Israeli occupation." Only 15% prefer "waging a non-violent resistance" and 14% prefer to keep the status quo. Two months ago, 29% said that they prefer reaching a peace agreement with Israel and 39% said they prefer waging an armed struggle.
- When asked about the most effective means of ending the Israeli occupation, half of the public (50%) chose armed struggle, 21% negotiations, and 23% popular resistance. Two months ago, 47% chose armed struggle and 26% chose negotiations.

(3) Legislative and presidential election

- 62% of the public want president Abbas to resign while 33% want him to remain in office. Two months ago, 61% said they want Abbas to resign. Demand for Abbas' resignation stands at 52% in the West Bank and 78% in the Gaza Strip. Two months ago, demand for Abbas resignation stood at 52% in the West Bank and 73% in the Gaza Strip.
- Level of satisfaction with the performance of president Abbas stands at 37% and dissatisfaction at 60%. Level of satisfaction with Abbas stands at 47% in the West Bank and 22% in the Gaza Strip. Two months ago, satisfaction with Abbas stood at 37% (43% in the West Bank and 27% in the Gaza Strip).
- Only 33% think president Abbas is the best Fatah candidate for the presidency while 43% think that Fatah has better candidates; 25% say they do not know or have no opinion on the matter.
- If new presidential elections were held today and only two were nominated, Mahmoud Abbas and Ismail Haniyeh, the former would receive 44% and the latter 49% of the vote (compared to 49% for Abbas and 44% for Haniyeh two months ago). In the Gaza Strip,

Abbas receives 32% of the vote (compared to 37% two months ago) and Haniyeh receives 63% (compared to 56% two months ago). In the West Bank, Abbas receives 54% (compared to 58% two months ago) and Haniyeh 38% (compared to 34% two months ago). If the competition was between Marwan Barghouti and Ismail Haniyeh, Barghouti receives 57% and Haniyeh 38%.

- We asked about potential Abbas successors: If president Abbas does not nominate himself in a new election, 36% prefer to see Marwan Barghouti replacing him, while 24% prefer Ismail Haniyeh. Mohammad Dahlan is preferred by 6% (1% in the West Bank and 12% in the Gaza Strip), Mustafa Barghouti by 4%, and Khalid Mishal and Salam Fayyad by 3% each.
- We also asked the public about its willingness to participate in the upcoming elections and if so, to whom it will vote. If new legislative elections were held today with the participation of all factions, 68% say they would participate in such elections. Of those who would participate, 32% say they will vote for Hamas and 38% say they will vote for Fatah, 12% will vote for all other third parties combined, and 18% are undecided. Two months ago, vote for Hamas stood at 32% and Fatah at 40%. Vote for Hamas in the Gaza Strip stands today at 43% (compared to 41% two months ago) and for Fatah at 30% (compared to 32% two months ago). In the West Bank, vote for Hamas stands at 22% (compared to 24% two months ago) and Fatah at 45% (compared to 46% two months ago).
- We asked the public about its expectations regarding the outcome of the upcoming elections: 39% (44% in the West Bank and 31% in the Gaza Strip) expect Fatah to win the upcoming legislative elections while only 26% (19% in the West Bank and 37% in the Gaza Strip) expect Hamas to win.
- A plurality of 45% of the public expects general elections to take place in the Palestinian territories in the near future; 43% believe no elections will take place. Two months ago, a majority of 52% expected elections to take place soon.
- 43% support the holding of simultaneous parliamentary and presidential elections and oppose a separation between the two, while 20% say they support the holding of parliamentary elections to be followed few months later by presidential elections, and 23% prefer simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections but do not oppose separating them by few months.
- 46% (51% in the West Bank and 37% in the Gaza Strip) say that if Israel prevented Palestinian legislative elections in East Jerusalem, voting should be made possible for the residents in any polling station in the Jerusalem governorate or in the West Bank; 46% disagree and say that no election should take place if Israel prevents it in East Jerusalem. Two months ago, a majority of 56% said that if Israel prevented East Jerusalemites from voting in the city, they should be allowed to vote in any polling station in the Jerusalem governorate or in the West Bank.
- 51% trust and 42% do not trust the integrity of the Palestinian Election Commission in managing the election process. Similarly, only 45% believe, and 45% do not believe, that the upcoming parliamentary elections will be free and fair.
- Moreover, only 47% trust, and 47% do not trust, the ability of the West Bank Palestinian police to protect the election process and the ballot boxes with integrity and without bias. Similarly, only 49% trust, and 40% do not trust, the ability of the Gaza Strip police to protect the election process and the ballot boxes with integrity and without bias.
- A majority of 63% say that it will not be possible, and 32% say it will be possible, for all candidate lists, especially Hamas', to conduct their election campaigns in the West Bank without restrictions or interference from the Palestinian security services. Similarly, a majority of 55% says that it will not be possible, and 39% say it will be possible, for all

candidate lists, especially Fatah's, to conduct their election campaigns in the Gaza Strip without restrictions or interference from the Gaza security services.

- 70% believe that if Hamas wins the upcoming elections, Fatah will not accept the results and will not allow it to form a government with full jurisdiction in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; 24% think Fatah will indeed allow Hamas to do so. Similarly, 60% believe that if Fatah wins the upcoming elections, Hamas will not accept the results and will not allow it to form a government with full jurisdiction in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; 34% think Hamas will indeed allow Fatah to do so.

(4) Domestic conditions:

- Positive evaluation of conditions in the Gaza Strip stands at 5% and positive evaluation of conditions in the West Bank stands at 21%.
- Nonetheless, perception of safety and security in the Gaza Strip stands at 74% and in the West Bank at 58%.
- 23% of the public say they want to emigrate due to political, security, and economic conditions. The percentage rises in the Gaza Strip to 28% and declines in the West Bank to 19%.
- Only 42% of the West Bankers say that people can criticize the authority in their area without fear and 54% say that they cannot. In the Gaza Strip, 55% say that people in the Gaza Strip can criticize Hamas authority without fear and 42% say they cannot.
- Perception of corruption in PA institutions stands at 85% while perception of corruption in the institutions controlled by Hamas in the Gaza Strip stands at 65%.
- The public is divided over its assessment of the PA: 47% view it as a burden on the Palestinian people while 46% view it as an asset for the Palestinian people.
- With more than ten months passing since the formation of the Shtayyeh government, findings indicate that a majority, or a plurality, of the public views its performance as similar to that of the previous government in matters of security (50%), the economy (41%), the reunification of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (50%), the preparation to hold general elections (49%), and the protection of liberties and human rights (51%). But a percentage ranging between 26% and 42% indicates that it believes the performance to be worse than that of the previous government while a percentage ranging between 13% and 24% indicates that the performance of the Shtayyeh government is better than that of the previous government. These findings indicate a slight decline in public's positive evaluation of the of the Shtayyeh government compared to our findings two months ago.
- Responding to a question about expectations regarding the ability of the Shtayyeh government to make progress in reconciliation and reunification, 55% expects failure; only 35% expects success. In a similar question about the ability of the new government to organize legislative or legislative and presidential elections in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, a plurality of 48% expects failure and 41% expect success. In another question about the ability of the new government to improve economic conditions, a majority of 55% expects failure and 35% expects success.
- Half of the public (50%: 58% in the West Bank and 38% in the Gaza Strip) believes that it will not receive a fair trial if it finds itself in a Palestinian court while 42% (33% in the West Bank and 55% in the Gaza Strip) believe that will receive a fair trial.
- A majority of 54% (64% in the West Bank and 40% in the Gaza Strip) thinks that the Palestinian judiciary rules according to whims and interests; 41% disagree and believe that it rules according to the law.
- We asked the public about its viewership habits in the last two months. Findings indicate that Al Jazeera TV viewership remains the highest, standing at 20%, followed by Al Aqsa TV and Palestine TV (14% each), Maan TV at 13% each, Palestine Today TV at 10%, al Mayadeen at 5%, and Al Arabiya at 4%.

(5) Reconciliation:

- 40% are optimistic and 56% are pessimistic about the success of reconciliation. Two months ago, optimism stood at only 36%.
- 49% are optimistic, and 45% are not optimistic, that the upcoming legislative elections will contribute to the reunification of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
- A majority of 58% believes that the chances for a Hamas-Israel agreement on a long term hudna or cessation of violence are slim while 30% believe the chances are medium and only 8% believe the chances are high.

(6) Most vital Palestinian goals and the main problems confronting Palestinians today:

- 49% believe that the first most vital Palestinian goal should be to end Israeli occupation in the areas occupied in 1967 and build a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital. By contrast, 30% believe the first most vital goal should be to obtain the right of return of refugees to their 1948 towns and villages, 10% believe that it should be to build a pious or moral individual and a religious society, one that applies all Islamic teachings, and 10% believe that the first and most vital goal should be to establish a democratic political system that respects freedoms and rights of Palestinians.
- The most serious problem confronting Palestinian society today in the eyes of 29% of the public is the continuation of occupation and settlement activities followed by poverty and unemployment in the eyes of 28%, and the spread of corruption in public institutions (25%); 14% say it is the siege of the Gaza Strip and the closure of its crossings.