

Center for Palestine Research & Studies (CPRS)

Public Opinion Poll NO (25)

Armed Attacks, PNA Performance, The Palestinian Legislative Council, Corruption

December 1996

This is the twenty-fifth public opinion poll conducted by the Survey Research Unit (SRU), at the Center for Palestine Research & Studies (CPRS). It covers the topics of the peace process, armed attacks against Israelis, evaluation of the three branches of the Palestinian government and the police and security services, corruption in PA institutions and the status of democracy in Palestine and in other countries.

The SRU has been conducting regular public opinion polls to document an important phase in the history of the Palestinian people and to record the reactions of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to current events. The CPRS does not adopt political positions and does not tolerate attempts to influence the conclusions it reaches. It is committed to providing a scholarly contribution to the study of Palestinian politics. Toward this end, poll results provide a vital resource for researchers needing statistical information and analysis. The polls also give members of the Palestinian community an opportunity to voice their opinions and to seek to influence decision-makers on issues of concern to them.

The following is an analysis of the results obtained in the twenty-fifth public opinion poll conducted by the SRU in the period from 26-28, December, 1996.

General Background

The poll was preceded by continuous, but yet unsuccessful, efforts of Palestinian and Israeli negotiators to finalize the Hebron agreement. There were reports of continued Israeli efforts to build Jewish settlements in the Arab part of Jerusalem. Similarly, there were reports of Israeli settlement activities and land confiscation on other parts of the West Bank. Several demonstrations took place against Israeli settlement policy. Israeli soldiers opened fire on one of these demonstrations killing one and injuring 13 other Palestinians.

An armed attack carried out by PFLP members against Israeli settlers near Ramallah led to the death of a mother and her son and the wounding of five other members of the family. Israel imposed a siege on Ramallah for two weeks, and the Palestinian police succeeded in arresting the attackers who received sentences ranging between life imprisonment and 15 years in jail. The period before the poll also witnessed an incident in which an Israeli settler beat to death a Palestinian boy. Another Israeli shot to death a Palestinian worker from the Gaza Strip.

Elections at An-Najah university led to a victory for the Islamic bloc which received 39 seats compared to Fateh which received 36 only. There was talk of internal Palestinian dialogue. The Palestinian legislative council completed its debate about the civil service law and passed the local election law. In early December, a Palestinian prisoner died while in custody in a jail in Jericho.

Methodology

The questionnaire used in this poll was designed by CPRS researchers. Prior to the polling dates, the questionnaire was pre-tested on 50 respondents in the Nablus area. As in all of our polls, it includes numerous demographic and attitudinal variables. (See Table 1 for the demographic distribution of the sample and the attached list of questions.) Interviews were conducted between 26-28 December 1996 (Thursday, Friday and Saturday). The total sample is 1,307, with 804 from the West Bank and 503 from the Gaza Strip.

Sample Distribution

Demographic Distribution & Characteristics of Sample, weighted percentages & counts*

Characteristic	% of Total	Count	Characteristic	% of Total	Count
Region			Education		
West Bank	63.0	689	Up to 9 years	24.9	268
Gaza Strip	37.0	404	10-12 years	54.7	587
Total	100.0	1093	2-years College	9.0	97
			B.A.+**	11.4	122
Area of Residence			Marital Status		
City	41.6	454	Single	22.4	243
Town/Village	41.7	456	Married	74.8	812
Refugee Camp	16.7	182	Divorced or	2.8	30
			Widowed		
Age			Occupation		
18-22	20.7	226	Laborer	9.5	102
23-27	18.3	200	Craftsman	2.4	26
28-32	15.5	170	Housewife	42.3	454
33-37	13.0	142	Specialist***	2.1	23
38-42	8.8	97	Employee****	12.5	134
43-47	6.6	72	Merchant	5.6	60
48-52	5.2	57	Student	7.0	75
53+	11.8	129	Farmer	2.4	26
Refugee Status					
Refugee	40.7	442	Retired	0.7	7.0
Non-Refugee	59.3	645			
Gender			Religion		
Male	49.6	542	Moslem	95.0	1030
Female	50.4	550	Christian	5.0	56

* Note, as discussed more fully below, the sample size (expressed in counts and percentages) has been weighted in order to obtain unbiased estimates.

** Includes all post-secondary degree holders.

*** Specialists are defined as Professors/University Instructors, Engineers, Doctors, Lawyers, Pharmacists or Executives.

**** Employees are defined as School Teachers, Government Employees, Nurses or Lower-Level Company Employees.

Sample Selection

The sample in this poll was obtained using a multi-stage sampling technique. There are four stages in the process of randomly selecting units of the population into the sample. These are the following:

- 1) selecting population locations with probabilities proportional to size of sample (PPS);
- 2) selecting one or two random blocs from each location;
- 3) selecting a household using systematic random sampling; and
- 4) selecting a person 18-years or older from the household.

We used 120 population locations in this poll, from which 1,307 respondents were selected into the sample. In this poll, the gender distribution does not reflect expected population parameters and therefore had to be weighted to obtain unbiased estimates of the actual population. Specifically, we obtained an unequal distribution of men and women in the sample (*i.e.*, 41.5% men and 58.5% women), which was corrected by reducing the base of the sample size to $n=1,092$. This reduction does not affect the margin of error, but does equalize the gender distribution of the sample.

At the first stage of sampling, CPRS fieldworkers and researchers map the population centers randomly selected into the sample. These maps indicate the boundaries, main streets and clusters of residential neighborhoods in these areas. These areas are further divided into one or two sampling units (blocs), with each bloc comprising an average of 100 housing units.

Households are selected based on a systematic sampling procedure. For example, if the fieldworkers estimate the number of houses in the bloc to be 100 and were assigned 10 interviews, the fieldworkers divide 100 by 10, obtaining 10. The fieldworkers then conduct the first interview in the 10th household, the second in the 20th and so forth. Fieldworkers start their sample selection of households from a recognized landmark such as a post office, mosque or business. They are instructed to report the direction of their sampling routes and play an active role in drawing maps of each locality as well as estimating the number of housing units in each bloc.

Data Collection

Prior to the survey, our fieldworkers participate in a number of workshops and training sessions where we discuss the aims and methods of the poll. The topics we cover are household interviewing techniques, confidence building, mapping and sampling procedures. Four special training seminars were held prior to the poll which were attended by a total of 75 fieldworkers.

Fieldworkers are grouped into teams of two (male+female) who are supervised by senior CPRS researchers. Senior researchers visit the interview locations to discuss the survey process with the

teams. More than fifty percent of our fieldworkers are female, so as to facilitate work and to ensure the representation of women in the sample. Tallow for careful interviewing, fieldworkers are assigned a limited number of interviews (an average of 22 per team), 11 for each location.

The non-response rate for this sample is approximately 7%. Some respondents, we believe, were reluctant to state their views out of fear or disinterest in the present political circumstances.

Data Analysis

The data were processed through SPSS/DE, a computer program that is able to detect illogical answers and other inconsistencies. SPSS/PC was used for data analysis.

For this poll, we estimate the margin of error to be $\pm 3\%$.

Results

Unemployment

The results of this poll show that the total unemployment rate for the West Bank and Gaza Strip is 31%, which indicates 7-percentage point decline since September 1996 ([Poll #24](#)) and an 18-point decrease since March 1996 ([Poll #22](#)). As consistently found in previous polls, unemployment in the Gaza Strip (44%) is higher than in the West Bank (25%). The high rates can be mainly attributed to the continued closures of the West Bank and Gaza Strip since the February and March 1996 bombings. Note, these figures are based on respondents 18-years or older and on a definition of unemployment used by the International Labor Organization (ILO).

Overview

Attitudes toward the continuation of the peace process with Israel is rising at the same time that support for armed attacks against Israelis has increased. Such support for political strategies and positions that contradict the basis of continuing peace process, is partly explained by a positive or negative evaluation of the Palestinian government and its institutions. In other words, the findings of this and previous polls suggest that there are strong relationships between assessment of the domestic national reconstruction and transition to democracy efforts and support or opposition to the peace process. This observation can be measured in several attitudinal variables, tested by the strength of the relationship between these variables as well as tracked over time.

The Peace Process & Armed Attacks

There has been a significant rise in support for the continuation of the peace process, from 70% three months ago to 78.7% in this survey. This rise brings the level of support to what it was six months ago, before its deterioration last September 1996, after the intense and violent confrontations between Palestinian police and citizens and Israeli military and settlers. (See the analysis of [Poll #24](#) for a fuller discussion of Palestinian public opinion during this period).

The aftermath of these confrontations may be reflected in a significant rise in support for armed attacks against Israeli targets, reaching 39% in this survey, interestingly, at the same time that there is a rise in support for the peace process. In March 1996, support for suicide attacks, which took place in February 1996, was only 21%, compared to 33% in March 1995 (see [Poll #22](#)). This rise in support for armed attacks might be attributed to several factors:

(1) the set-back in the peace process, most directly relating to delays in re-deployment of the Israeli military in Hebron and other occupied territories; (2) the September confrontations which were viewed positively by Palestinians; and (3) the fact that this attitude was measured after a recent armed attack against *settlers*. (As found in September 1995, 19% supported armed attacks against Israeli *civilians* which is quite low relative to the 70% support for attacks against *settlers* and 69% for attacks against *military* targets).

It should be noted that there are significant differences among Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in regard to support for armed attacks. These difference mainly relate to respondents' positions toward continuing the peace process with Israel and their affiliation with a political party or faction (see Table2).

Table 2
Continuation of the Peace Process by Attitude toward Armed Attacks, weighted percentages & counts

	Position on Peace Process		
	Support	Oppose	No Opinion
Support Attacks	34.8 (298)	63.7 (115)	23.0 (12)
Oppose Attacks	54.9 (469)	27.5 (50)	22.7 (12)
No Opinion	10.3 (88)	8.8 (16)	54.3 (28)

As displayed in Table 2, there is a strong relationship between support or opposition for the peace process and attitudes toward armed attacks. It is the case that a majority (54.9%) of those who support the process also oppose attacks. On the other hand, 63.7% of the respondents who oppose negotiations with Israel express support for armed attacks. Such an opinion is also reflected in a respondent's stated political affiliation, as responses from opposition parties and groups are more supportive of armed attacks than supporters of the peace process: for example, Hamas (70.1%), PFLP (64.0%) and Islamic Jihad (59.3%) compared to Fateh (32.1%) and Independent Nationalists (29.4%).

Performance of the Palestinian Government

Overall, most respondents assessed the performances of the Legislative Council, Judicial and the Executive (including the President and his Cabinet) branches of the Palestinian Authority between a range of very good and good. The highest positive evaluation continues to be enjoyed by the Presidency, with 74.9% of all respondents believing that its performance to be 'very good' (39.5%) or 'good' (35.4%). This is a slight overall increase since December 1996, when it reached 72%, but a significant rise in the highest level of evaluation, very good, category (from 29.2% in [Poll #24](#)). The second highest evaluation was given to the Executive Cabinet, which is comprised of Ministers of the Palestinian Authority and closely affiliated with the President. 62% of all respondents rated the Cabinet as 'very good' (18.3%) or 'good' (43.7%). Lastly, the performance of

the Palestinian Legislative Council received a positive evaluation of 48.9% from all respondents (indicating no change since September 1996), with only 10.6% rating it as 'very good', 38.3% as 'good' and 25% as 'fair' (see Chart 1).

Chart 1

Positive, Fair and Negative Evaluations of the Presidency, Cabinet and Legislative Council
 Straddling the Presidency and Cabinet, the Palestinian police and security services obtained a high positive evaluation, as 71.1% of all respondents assessed its performance as 'very good' (28%) or 'good' (43.1%). As a basis of comparison, albeit inexact, in September 1996, 62.2% of the respondents who said that they have had direct experience with the police and security services evaluated their performance positively. This rise in support might reflect the public's approval of their performance in the September confrontations with the Israeli military.

There are some notable demographic differences between respondents in their evaluation of the performance of their government and institutions. As with many attitudinal variables, and consistency found in previous surveys, West Bank, men and higher educated Palestinians tend to be more critical than their counterparts. Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5 show the demographic breakdown by region, gender and level of education for the evaluation of the Presidency, Cabinet, Council and police and security services. (Note, for each of the tables, the categories of evaluation are collapsed into three levels: positive=very good/good, fair and negative=bad/very bad).

Table 3

Evaluation of the Government by Region, weighted percentages & counts*

	Positive		Fair		Negative	
	West Bank	Gaza Strip	W. Bank	Gaza Strip	W. Bank	Gaza Strip
Presidency	72.6 (501)	78.6 (316)	9.9 (68)	10.7 (43)	9.2 (63)	4.7 (19)
Police & Security	68.4 (471)	75.4 (301)	14.4 (99)	13.4 (54)	11.5 (78)	8.1 (32)
Cabinet	59.2 (407)	66.6 (267)	18.3 (125)	17.4 (70)	13.7 (94)	9.6 (39)
Council	50.3 (343)	46.5 (187)	22.4 (152)	29.4 (118)	16.8 (114)	12.7 (51)

* The No Opinion category is excluded from Table 3, but percentages are based on the total number of responses.

Note, for nearly every category of the variable, Palestinians from the West Bank tend to be more critical of their government than Gazans. This trend is particularly evident for positive of the Presidency, police and security services and Cabinet. For the Council, however, there is a slight, but significant, regional difference between evaluations, as West Bankers and Gazans are nearly equally as likely to assess its performance positively or negatively. Moreover, Gazans are more likely to assess the performance of each branch of government as 'very good' than West Bankers. (For a regional breakdown, please see the attached list of questions and distribution of responses).

It is also the case that in their assessment of the government and its institutions, men tend to be much more critical than women. Table 4 shows that there is around a 10-percentage point difference between men and women in their positive evaluations of the Presidency, police & security services, Cabinet and PLC. Moreover, men are nearly twice as likely than women to give a negative evaluation to each of these branches. In the middle-range, fair, category there are no significant gender differences.

Table 4**Evaluation of the Government by Gender, weighted percentages & counts***

	Positive		Fair		Negative	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Presidency	70.6 (382)	79.0 (434)	10.0 (54)	10.4 (57)	10.9 (59)	4.2 (23)
Police & Security	65.4 (352)	76.5 (420)	16.2 (87)	11.9 (66)	14.6 (79)	5.7 (31)
Cabinet	57.1 (309)	66.7 (365)	18.1 (98)	17.8 (97)	17.6 (95)	7.0 (38)
Council	43.4 (233)	54.5 (297)	26.2 (141)	23.8 (130)	22.7 (122)	7.9 (43)

* The No Opinion category is excluded from Table 4, but percentages are based on the total number of responses.

Table 5 shows that there is a strong linear relationship between educational level and evaluation of performances. For each branch of government, respondents with higher educational levels tend to be more critical in their evaluations than those with lower educational levels. This is evident in the positive evaluation category as well as in the negative category. For example, 86.8% of the respondents with the lowest level of education evaluated the Presidency as 'very good' or 'good', but 69.8% of those with a B.A. degree or higher positively evaluated the Presidency's performance. On the other hand, 3% of the lowest educated gave a negative evaluation of the Presidency's performance. The percentage of negative evaluation increases to its highest point (16.1%) among the highest educated respondents.

Table 5**Evaluation of the Government by Educational Level, weighted percentages & counts***

	Positive	Fair	Negative
Presidency			
Illiterate-Elementary	86.8 (211)	10.2 (25)	3.0 (7)
Preparatory-Secondary	82.0 (454)	10.4 (58)	7.5 (42)
2-Year College	76.2 (67)	11.7 (10)	12.1 (11)
B.A.+	69.8 (76)	14.1 (15)	16.1 (18)
Police & Security			
Illiterate-Elementary	77.1 (192)	15.8 (39)	7.1 (18)
Preparatory-Secondary	77.6 (439)	13.6 (77)	8.8 (50)
2-Year College	70.9 (65)	16.2 (15)	12.9 (12)
B.A.+	58.7 (65)	15.9 (18)	25.4 (28)
Cabinet			
Illiterate-Elementary	74.3 (173)	17.6 (41)	8.1 (19)
Preparatory-Secondary	69.1 (381)	19.4 (107)	11.5 (63)
2-Year College	64.5 (56)	17.3 (15)	18.1 (16)
B.A.+	51.1 (59)	23.3 (27)	25.6 (30)
Council			
Illiterate-Elementary	63.9 (139)	23.9 (52)	12.1 (26)
Preparatory-Secondary	56.4 (303)	28.5 (153)	15.1 (81)
2-Year College	49.9 (43)	25.4 (22)	24.7 (21)
B.A.+	35.4 (39)	36.4 (40)	28.3 (31)

* The No Opinion category is excluded from Table 5, but percentages are based on the total number of responses.

The Palestinian Legislative Council

After one year since the Legislative Council elections, it seems that the Palestinian public is unsatisfied with the Council's performance. As discussed above, the Council received the lowest overall evaluation of all the branches of government, in this and the previous poll. Moreover, the public is not making an effort to contact Council Members in order to convey their concerns, positions and request; 90.9% of all respondents said that they did not try to communicate with any Members during this year. Yet, 42.7% think Council Members are ready to offer their help to those who ask for it, but 33.1% believe that they would not offer their help in solving a problem. It is also the case that barely a majority all respondents (51.7%) believe that Council Members 'know what ordinary people think'; while 29.7% say that Members 'don't know' what they think.

Table 6 shows the relationship between the evaluation of the Council's performance in respect to contact with its Members and their ability to understand and solve problems of ordinary people.

Table 6
Evaluation of the Performance of the Legislative Council by Contact with Its Members, helping if asked, and Knowledge of Ordinary People, weighted percentages & counts*

	Evaluation of the Legislative Council's Performance		
	Positive	Fair	Negative
Contact with Members			
Yes	8.3 (44)	9.4 (25)	14.5 (24)
No	91.7 (484)	90.6 (244)	85.5 (141)
Would help if asked			
Yes	56.7 (300)	32.5 (88)	22.5 (37)
No	20.4 (108)	42.7 (115)	61.9 (101)
Know People's Problems			
Yes	59.1 (313)	46.5 (126)	46.9 (74)
No	24.1 (127)	36.2 (98)	43.8 (69)

* The No Opinion category is excluded from Table 6, but percentages are based on the total number of responses.

Based on Table 6, it appears that although nearly all people have not contacted any Members during this year, a positive evaluation of the Council's performance is related to the *perception* that its Members are ready to help with problems and understand how ordinary people think. It is the case that respondents who do not think that Members would help and that they don't know what ordinary people are twice and three times likely, respectively, to give a negative evaluation of the Council's performance. Conversely, those who believe that Council Members are easy to approach with their concerns, problems and requests give a positive assessment of its performance.

Corruption & *Al-Wasta* (Personal Connections and Nepotism)

Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip think that corruption constitutes one of the most serious problems in the process of state-building. The percentage of those who believe that there is corruption in the PA has increased from 49% three months ago to 52.7% in this survey. Moreover, respondents who think that there is corruption are split as to whether corruption will increase and/or remain the same or decrease in the future. Table 7 shows the distribution of responses on these issues by selected demographic variables.

Table 7**Corruption in the Palestinian Authority by Selected Demographic Variables, weighted percentages & counts***

	Corruption in PA Institutions and Agencies			
	Yes	No	Will Increase/Remain	Will Decrease
Region				
West Bank	56.9 (391)	23.7 (163)	41.2 (179)	45.0 (195)
Gaza Strip	45.5 (182)	25.1 (100)	45.0 (91)	38.4 (78)
Gender				
Men	63.8 (344)	19.5 (105)	42.0 (155)	44.7 (165)
Women	41.7 (229)	28.9 (158)	42.8 (114)	40.4 (108)
Education				
Illiterate-Elementary	38.7 (104)	32.0 (86)	32.6 (40)	47.0 (58)
Preparatory-Secondary	53.3 (311)	27.2 (159)	42.3 (145)	44.4 (152)
2-Years College	58.1 (56)	10.1 (10)	45.4 (28)	35.6 (22)
B.A.+	74.8 (91)	5.8 (7)	52.6 (50)	36.3 (35)

* The No Opinion category is excluded from Table 7, but percentages are based on the total number of responses.

As shown in Table 7, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are less likely than in the West Bank to think that there is corruption in the Palestinian Authority's institutions and agencies. It is also the case that women are less critical of the government than men. The most critical group is comprised of respondents who have obtained a B.A. degree education or higher, as 74.8% think there is corruption in the PA. Moreover, the highest educated are also most likely to think that it will increase or remain at the same level in the future. The strength of this opinion declines as education decreases, as only 32.6% of the least educated, compared to 52.6% of the highest educated think corruption will increase or remain the same. In terms of outlook toward the future on this question, there are no siggender differences. Gazans, once again, are more optimistic than West Bankers, as 44.7% compared to 38.4%, respectively, expect that corruption will decrease in the future.

One form of corruption, *al-wasta*, or the use of personal connections and nepotism to gain employment and other advantages within institutions, is also considered a significant problem to the public. A full majority of all respondents (56.6%) believe that *al-wasta* is *always* used to get a job, 26.6% say it is *often* used, and only 7.7% think that it is *never* used. The opinion that *al-wasta* is widespread (always used), prevails to a great extent among refugee camp residents (63.8%), B.A. degree holders (68.4%), professionals (75.3%), the unemployed (65.3%) and opposition parties, such as Hamas (66.5%), in comparison to Fateh supporters (52.8%).

Supporters and opponents of continuing the negotiations with Israel also differ in their views toward corruption and *al-wasta* in Palestinian Authority institutions and agencies (see Table 8).

Table 8**Perception of Corruption and Al-Wasta by Attitude Toward the Peace Process, weighted percentages & counts***

	Corruption in the PA		Necessity of al-Wasta to Obtain Employment		
	Yes	No	Always	Sometimes	Never
Peace Process					
Support	47.7 (408)	77.0 (139)	53.5 (457)	29.0 (248)	8.5 (72)
Oppose	28.0 (239)	10.6 (19)	70.8 (128)	17.8 (32)	5.4 (10)

* The No Opinion category is excluded from Table 8, but percentages are based on the total number of responses.

Noting the strength of the statistical (not numerical) relationship, respondents who think that there is no corruption in the PA are more likely to support the continuation of the peace process with Israel. Also, 70.8% of opponents of the negotiations greatly believe that al-wasta is a widespread problem within the PA. Barely a majority of supporters of the negotiations share this concern.

Dealing with Palestinian Authority Institutions

On the positive side, a majority of Palestinians (55.9%) say they feel comfortable (to a great or some extent) when dealing with official Palestinian institutions and agencies. Only 16.2% feel the opposite. This percentage increases slightly among Hamas supporters (20%), PFLP (28.6%) and declines to 11.1% among respondents affiliated with Fateh. It should also be pointed out that the majority of all respondents (54.3%) are confident that the Judicial branch of government and the court system have the ability to rectify any injustice imposed by the Palestinian Authority.

In a more general assessment of leaders of the Palestinian Authority, a majority of respondents believe that they are descent and honest. Specifically, more than a majority (60.9%) agree or strongly agree that Judges are honest, as are leaders of the police and security services (58.9%), Ministers (53.1%) and lastly the Members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (52.2%). Table 9 shows that confidence rises among women, the less educated and Gazans.

Table 9**Confidence in Ruling-Elite by Selected Demographic Variables, weighted percentages & counts**

	Strongly Agree & Agree that Leaders are Honest			
	Judges	Security Forces	Ministers	PLC Members
Region				
West Bank	57.4 (383)	54.3 (368)	49.2 (327)	48.8 (331)
Gaza Strip	66.8 (267)	66.8 (268)	59.6 (239)	57.8 (230)
Gender				
Men	56.7 (299)	50.9 (273)	48.2 (255)	46.0 (247)
Women	65.1 (351)	77.1 (363)	57.9 (311)	58.3 (314)
Education				
Illiterate-Elementary	66.7 (172)	69.4 (182)	63.3 (153)	59.7 (175)
Preparatory-Secondary	62.9 (364)	62.5 (366)	56.0 (324)	54.6 (319)
2-Years College	53.9 (51)	45.8 (44)	45.2 (43)	42.8 (42)
B.A.+	45.9 (55)	31.0 (38)	24.3 (29)	31.9 (38)

* The No Opinion category is excluded from Table 9, but percentages are based on the total number of responses.

Interestingly, there is a strong relationship between respondents' belief that there is corruption in the Palestinian Authority and confidence in the leaders of the Judiciary, Legislative Council, police & security and Ministers. Unsurprisingly, respondents who think that there is corruption tend to also think that these leaders are not honest. Table 10 displays this relationship.

Table 10
Corruption in the Palestinian Authority by Confidence in Leaders, weighted percentages & counts*

	Leaders Are Honest				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree/Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Judges					
Corruption	40.2 (58)	48.2 (244)	52.9 (135)	77.1 (88)	75.5 (33)
No Corruption	39.7 (57)	28.9 (146)	13.8 (35)	11.9 (14)	13.9 (6)
PLC					
Corruption	40.7 (41)	40.8 (188)	55.7 (175)	83.3 (126)	77.4 (37)
No Corruption	39.0 (39)	33.5 (154)	16.3 (51)	8.2 (12)	5.7 (3)
Ministers					
Corruption	31.2 (27)	42.9 (206)	56.8 (166)	78.7 (120)	83.5 (45)
No Corruption	43.1 (37)	32.0 (153)	16.1 (47)	9.6 (15)	9.1 (5)
Security					
Corruption	38.1 (51)	41.5 (208)	59.1 (140)	80.9 (119)	85.7 (49)
No Corruption	37.8 (50)	33.4 (168)	13.3 (32)	7.1 (10)	3.5 (2)

* The No Opinion category is excluded from Table 10, but percentages are based on the total number of responses.

Overall, there is a strong linear correlation between opinions on corruption and honesty of the leaders. Specifically, respondents who believe that there is corruption in the PA do not think that their leadership is honest. Note, however, that respondents who seem to be most critical of Ministers and leaders of the Security Forces, as 83.5% and 85.7%, respectively, strongly disagree that they are honest and also hold the opinion that the PA is corrupt. Palestinians also appear to be not as critical of Judges and PLC Members in this respect, as a relatively less percentage of respondents believe there is corruption and strongly disagree that they are honest. With this said, it should also be mentioned that of all these leaders, Judges receive the highest level of public confidence in terms of being the most honest regardless if they think that the PA is corrupt.

The Status of Democracy in Palestine

Criticism of the Palestinian Authority seems to be linked to larger critic of the transition to democracy in Palestine. Although 42.9% of all respondents assessed the status of democracy in Palestine as positive (33.7% as fair and 22.8% negatively), this is low compared to their evaluations of democracy in Israel, the USA and France, but higher than for Jordan and Egypt (see Chart 2).

Chart 2

Status of Democracy in Palestine, Israel, USA, France, Jordan and Egypt, weighted percentages

Criticism of the status of democracy in Palestine under the Palestinian Authority is stronger among certain demographic groups in this survey. Table 11 shows that men tend to be much more critical than women as are the less educated respondents.

Table 11

Evaluation of the Status of Democracy in Palestine by Selected Demographic Variable, weighted percentages and counts*

	Status of Democracy		
	Positive	Fair	Negative
Gender			
Men	35.0 (185)	37.2 (197)	27.4 (145)
Women	50.7 (274)	30.3 (163)	18.2 (99)
Education			
Illiterate-Elementary	45.6 (118)	35.3 (92)	18.6 (48)
Preparatory-Secondary	46.4 (268)	32.4 (187)	20.9 (121)
2-Years College	35.4 (34)	33.2 (31)	29.8 (28)
B.A.+	29.2 (35)	34.2 (42)	35.1 (43)
Political Affiliation			
Fetah	40.2 (246)	32.9 (161)	16.0 (79)
Hamas	31.0 (32)	35.9 (37)	32.5 (34)
None	38.2 (104)	37.6 (103)	24.0 (66)

* The No Opinion category is excluded from Table 11, but percentages are based on the total number of responses.

Dissatisfaction with the Palestinian Authority extends to other pertinent issues for the transition to democracy in Palestine. A sizable percentage (52.7%) of all respondents think that people, today, cannot criticize the Authority without fear. This opinion is also reflected in the low percentage (27.7%) of respondents who think that the press is free in Palestine. Moreover, only 35.3% expressed their belief that Palestine is heading toward democratic rule, while only 14.7% think the opposite (*i.e.*, their government is heading toward dictatorship). As with the evaluation of the status of democracy in Palestine, certain demographgroups are more critical of the PA: specifically, men, West Bankers, opposition parties and groups as well as more educated Palestinians.

Although only around 15% of all respondents think that Palestine is heading toward a dictatorship, most respondents (38.7%) believe that their government is developing with both democratic and dictatorial tendencies. This view is strongly related to opinions toward the status of democracy in Palestine, including the freedom of expression and the ability to criticize the PA without fear (see Table12).

Table 12**Rule Tendency by Opinions on the Status of Democracy in Palestine, Freedom of the Press in Palestine, weighted percentages & counts***

	Rule Tendency		
	Democracy	Combination	Dictatorship
Evaluation of Democracy			
Positive	63.7 (240)	36.5 (151)	16.6 (26)
Fair	26.2 (99)	41.0 (170)	22.2 (35)
Negative	10.1 (38)	22.5 (93)	61.3 (97)
Freedom of the Press			
Yes	37.7 (145)	25.7 (108)	11.4 (18)
Somewhat	31.9 (123)	38.0 (159)	24.6 (39)
No	27.3 (105)	34.7 (146)	62.5 (100)
Criticism of PA			
Without Fear	51.9 (200)	30.6 (128)	24.2 (39)
With Fear	38.2 (147)	59.7 (250)	71.6 (114)

* The No Opinion category is excluded from Table 12, but percentages are based on the total number of responses.

As can be expected there is a consistency of responses in regard to opinions on the direction of the Palestinian government. Respondents who believe that Palestine is becoming a democracy with respect for human rights are also more likely to believe that their freedom of expression is protected. On the other hand, those who think that Palestine is heading toward dictatorial rule, strongly believe that they cannot criticize the PA without fear and that the press is not free. Palestinians who think that the government is developing with both tendencies, give a 'fair' evaluation of the status of democracy in Palestine, think that press is 'somewhat' free, but a solid majority believe that they cannot criticize their government without fear.

The opinion that speech is restricted, however, hardly hinders the respondents from voicing their criticism of the government for corruption in its institutions and the practice of al-wasta. In other words, as shown in Table 13, people who believe that Palestine is becoming a dictatorship criticize their government for corruption.

Table 13**Rule Tendency by Opinion on Corruption in the PA and the Use of Al-Wasta, weighted percentages & counts***

	Rule Tendency		
	Democracy	Combination	Dictatorship
Corruption in PA			
Yes	40.1 (155)	57.5 (24)	81.0 (129)
No	36.5 (141)	18.4 (77)	9.5 (15)
Al-Wasta			
Always Used	44.3 (171)	65.0 (273)	72.6 (116)
Often Used	33.5 (130)	22.9 (96)	20.0 (32)
Never Used	11.5 (44)	5.9 (25)	2.6 (4)

* The No Opinion category is excluded from Table 13, but percentages are based on the total number of responses.

Although a sizable percentage of people think Palestine is becoming a democracy, they also believe that there is corruption in the government, generally and in the form of al-wasta. These respondents differ, however, than those who think that Palestine is heading toward dictatorship by believing that corruption will decrease in the future. People who think that their government is becoming a dictatorship, are less optimistic about the future. They strongly believe that the level of corruption in the PA will increase or remain at the same level in the future (see Table 14).

Table 14

Rule Tendency by Attitude toward the Future of Corruption, weighted percentages & counts*

	Rule Tendency		
	Democracy	Combination	Dictatorship
Corruption in the Future			
Increase/Remain the Same	23.3 (42)	43.8 (117)	63.9 (88)
Decrease	62.0 (112)	43.2 (114)	21.0 (29)

* The No Opinion category is excluded from Table 14, but percentages are based on the total number of responses.

Attitudes toward the status of democracy in Palestine-including the freedom of press and expression-are related to positions on peace process, but it is so with opinions on armed attacks. Table 15 shows that opponents of continuing the negotiations with Israel as well as supporters of Armed attacks against Israelis are dissatisfied with their government in terms of allowing freedom of speech in the press, criticism of the PA without fear and the overall status of democracy in Palestine.

Table 15

Attitudes toward the Peace Process and Armed Attacks by Status of Democracy in Palestine, Criticism of the PA and Freedom of the Press, weighted percentages and counts*

	Peace Process		Armed Attacks	
	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
Evaluation of Democracy				
Positive	49.2 (412)	18.6 (33)	39.1 (162)	47.6 (248)
Fair	34.3 (287)	29.3 (52)	30.3 (126)	34.2 (178)
Negative	16.5 (138)	52.1 (92)	30.6 (127)	18.2 (95)
Criticism of PA				
Without Fear	40.8 (348)	24.1 (44)	39.0 (165)	37.6 (199)
With Fear	49.3 (412)	69.9 (126)	54.0 (229)	53.0 (280)
Freedom of Press				
Yes	30.9 (264)	12.5 (23)	27.4 (117)	28.0 (148)
Somewhat	34.2 (292)	26.2 (47)	29.8 (127)	34.5 (183)
No	31.8 (272)	60.3 (109)	40.7 (173)	34.5 (183)

* The No Opinion category is excluded from Table 15, but percentages are based on the total number of responses.

The finding of the previous polls suggest that the position of Palestinians from the West Bank & Gaza Strip toward the continuation of the peace process is strongly related to their attitudes toward

domestic issues. In other words, supporter opponents on the peace process differ greatly in other areas of concern.

Namely, supporters of the peace process are more likely than opponent, to be optimistic about their governments ability to reduce corruption in its institutional agencies. Supporters also give higher evaluations of their government-officials & institutions, as are women, less educated & Gazan respondents.

On the other hand, opponents of the peace process with Israel tend to also criticize their government for issues pertaining to the transition to democratic rule in Palestine, especially for the ability to voice their opinions without fear.