

Center for Palestine Research & Studies (CPRS)

Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No (44)

14-16 October 1999

The Peace Process, PA Performance, Status of Democracy and Human Rights, Corruption, Reform, Elections for the Presidency and Vice-presidency, and Political Affiliation

These are the results of opinion poll # 44, conducted by the Center for Palestine Research & Studies, between 14-16 October 1999. The poll deals with the peace process, PA performance, status of democracy and human rights, corruption, reform, elections for the Presidency and Vice-presidency, and political affiliation.

The total sample size of this poll is 1316 from Palestinians 18 years and older, of which 823 in the West Bank and 493 in the Gaza Strip. The margin of error is $\pm 3\%$ and the non-response rate is 3%.

1. The Peace Process

- **75% support the current peace process and 21% oppose it**
- **52% oppose armed attacks against Israelis and 39% support it**
- **Trust in Barak's government stands at 19% in the aftermath of Sharm al Sheikh agreement**
- **86% support the collection of unlicensed weapons and 12% oppose it**

The results indicate that little or no change has taken place in the way the Palestinians view the peace process compared to our last survey one month ago. A large majority of 75% still supports the current peace process. Nonetheless, a slight increase took place in the percentage of those supporting violence against Israelis from 36% last September to 39% now. Opposition to violence dropped from 57% to 52% during the same period. The level of support for violence against Israelis began to decrease in early 1999 after it had reached a high level of 53% at the end of 1998 in the aftermath of the Israeli decision to suspend the implementation of the Wye River Memorandum.

The level of trust in the Israeli government under Barak's leadership stands today, after the conclusion of Sharm al Sheikh agreement, at 19%. Three months ago, it stood at 29% before dropping to 21% one month ago. These results show a negative change in the public perception of Barak's government and the future of the peace process. This change may have been the result of Palestinian disappointment with Barak's position regarding the continued settlements' construction in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the delays in the implementation of the Wye agreement.

On the other hand, the results show that there is an apparent "consensus," reaching 86%, among Palestinians in support for the campaigns conducted by the Palestinian police and security services to collect unlicensed weapons from citizens. This "consensus" may be a reflection of the depth of disgust felt by most people at the illegal use of guns in infighting among few armed groups, with particular reference to events in Nablus that preceded this poll. In these events, armed groups from the city and the Balata refugee camp exchanged fire and sought to intimidate each other and terrorize residents. Support for collection of unlicensed weapons increases in Jabalia (98%), Gaza City (93%), and Nablus (89%) and decreases in Hebron and Bethlehem (78%). It also increases in cities in general (93%) compared to refugee camps (82%) and among holders of BA degree (96%) compared to illiterates (77%). It is worth noticing that a large percentage of Hamas sympathizers (84%) supports the collection of unlicensed weapons, even if that percentage is slightly less than those who support such collection among Fateh supporters (90%).

2. Performance of the PLC, PA, and NGOs

- **Positive evaluation of the performance of the PLC reaches 37%**
- **Positive evaluation of the performance of the courts and judiciary reaches 40%**
- **Positive evaluation of the performance of the presidency reaches 53%, police and security services 53%, and the cabinet 44%**
- **Positive evaluation of the performance of Palestinian NGOs is the highest, reaching 60%**
- **Positive evaluation of the performance of the Palestinian opposition is the lowest, reaching 33%**

These results show a slight decline in the positive evaluation of the performance of the PLC from 40% three months ago to 37% in the current poll. Similarly, positive evaluation of the performance of the judiciary stands today at 40% compared to 42% three months ago. The evaluation of the performance of the presidency declined from 58% to 53%; police and security services from 56% to 53%, and the cabinet from 47% to 44% during the same period. But the positive evaluation of the performance of Palestinian NGOs remained the same, 60% in the current poll compared to 59% three months ago. The positive evaluation of the performance of the NGOs remains the highest among all institutions and groups listed in the poll. Positive evaluation of the performance of the Palestinian opposition remains the lowest, standing today at 33% compared to 32% during the same period.

Figure 44.1: Positive Evaluation of the performance of selected Palestinian Institutions and groups (July 1999 and October 1999)

3. Status of Democracy and Human Rights, Corruption, and Reform

- **Positive evaluation of the status of democracy and human rights in Palestine does not exceed 32% compared to 67% in Israel, 55% in the US, 50% in France, 32% in Jordan, and 29% in Egypt**
- **56% believe that people can not criticize the PA without fear**
- **38% believe that corruption exists in Palestinian NGOs**
- **63% believe that corruption exists in PA institutions; from among those 80% believe that it exists in ministries and governmental offices, 77% in police and security services, 51% in the PLC, and 42% in the office of the presidency**
- **59% believe that corruption in PA institutions will increase or remain the same in the future**
- **61% trust the intentions of the PA toward reforming its public institutions**

The results show that no change has taken place during the past three months on the way Palestinians view the status of their democracy. Positive evaluation of Palestinian democracy stands today at 32% compared to 30% one month ago and 31% three months ago. The level of positive evaluation of the status of democracy and human rights in Israel remained high at 67% compared to 69% one month ago and 70% three months ago. Positive evaluation of democracy in the US stands today at 55% compared to 58% one month ago and 60% three months ago. For France, it stands at 50% as it was a month ago. Evaluation of Jordanian democracy remained the same at 32% while increasing slightly for Egyptian democracy from 27% to 29% during the same period. The percentage of those who believe that people can not criticize the PA without fear dropped from 60% one month ago to 56% in the current poll.

Figure 44.2: Positive Evaluation of the Status of Democracy in Palestine and Selected Countries

The percentage of those who believe that corruption exists in PA institutions remains the same, as it was one month ago (63%). Also the percentage of those who believe that corruption will increase or remain the same did not change, standing at 59%. Among those who believe that corruption exists in the PA, the percentage of those who believe that it exists in ministries and governmental offices remains the highest at 80%, followed by police and security services at 77%, PLC at 51%, and the presidency office at 42%. The belief that corruption exists in Palestinian NGOs stands today at 38% compared to 43% three months ago and 35% one month ago.

Despite the low level of positive evaluation of Palestinian democracy and human rights and the high level of belief in the existence of corruption in PA institutions, a large percentage of Palestinians (61%) trusts the intentions of the PA to reform its institutions. The percentage of those trusting PA intentions increases among women (66%) compared to men (56%), among holders of elementary school certificate (73%)

compared to holders of BA degree (41%), among workers (68%) and housewives (65%) compared to professionals (25%) and farmers (40%), among the low income people (64%) compared to midincome people (44%) and hincome people (37%), and among supporters of Fateh (73%) compared to supporters of the PFLP (50%).

These results show that while people have little expectations regarding PA ability or willingness to address the problem of corruption, most people tend to be optimistic and trusting about PA willingness to reform its institutions. This may mean that people expect a great deal from the recently appointed PA reform committee which started its work two months ago after the release of reports that were highly critical of PA institution building process. The failure of this committee to reach its declared objectives could cause a great deal of frustration and disappointment in the Palestinian street.

4.Elections of the President and vice President and Political Affiliation

- **In elections for the office of the president, Yasir Arafat receives 42% of the vote, Haydar Abdul Shafi 12%, and Ahmad Yasin 11%. Arafat's popularity reaches 50% in the Gaza Strip and 38% in the West Bank**
- **In elections for the office of the vice president among 8 candidates, Haydar Abdul Shafi receives 16%, followed by Sa'eb Erikat (9%), Faisal al Hussein and Mahmud Abbas (7% each), Farouq Qaddoumi and Hanan Ashrawi (6% each), Ahmad Qurai' (5%), and Nabil Sha'ath (3%)**
- **In elections for the office of the vice president among 4 candidates only, Abdul Shafi receives 36%, followed by al Hussein (22%), Abbas (14%), and Qurei' (10%).**
- **68% state that they will participate in a future election for the presidency and the PLC while 29% state that they will not participate in such election**
- **Support for Fateh stands at 36%, Hamas 10%, PFLP 3%, and the nonaffiliated at 39%**

The results show that Arafat's popularity has remained unchanged during the past several months standing at 42% in this poll, while Abdul Shafi receives 12% and Yasin receives 11%. But the gap in Arafat's popularity in the West Bank compared to the Gaza Strip increased slightly reaching 50% in the Gaza Strip compared to 38% in the West Bank. One month ago, Arafat's popularity stood at 46% in the Gaza Strip and 40% in the West Bank.

In the competition for the office of the vice president among eight candidates, we have returned in the current poll to our previous methodology, used in polls before the last one, in which we provided the respondents with a list of candidates. (In our last poll, respondents were asked to remember the name of their candidate from memory.) In this poll, Abdul Shafi remains on top with 16% of the vote, followed by Erikat (9%), al Hussein and Abbas (7% each), Qaddoumi and Ashrawi (6% each), Qurei' (5%), and Nabil Sha'ath (3%). In a competition among four candidates only, Abdul Shafi receives 36%, followed by al Hussein (22%), Abbas (14%), and Qurei' (10%). These results are similar to those obtained three months ago except for Qurei's popularity which stood then at 14%.

The results show that a large minority of 29% does not intend to participate in a future election for the president and the PLC while 68% intend to participate in such election. The percentage of those not wishing to participate in the future election is the highest ever registered since we started polling in 1993. The highest percentage of nonparticipation stood at 23% in January 1994 while the lowest stood at 14% in July 1995. The percentage of nonparticipation in future elections increases in the areas of Jerusalem (36%) Hebron (38%), and Khan Younis (36%) and decreases in the areas of Tulkarm and Jabalia (20% each) and Nablus (23%). It also increases among holders of BA degree (39%) compared to the illiterates and holders of the elementary school certificate (24%), among professionals (50%) and craftsmen (38%) compared to the unemployed (23%) and workers (24%), among the highest income people (38%) compared to the lowest income people (27%), and among supporters of Hamas (45%) compared to supporters of Fateh (13%) and the PFLP (21%).

Support for Fateh reached 36% compared to 38% last month. Hamas' support stands today at 10%, as it was last month. The percentage of the nonaffiliated remained the same at 39%.

**Results of Public Opinion Poll # 44
14-16 October 1999**

	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %
Unemployment	17.0	15.0	22.0
1. Do you support or oppose the current peace process between Palestinians and Israelis?			
1) Support	74.8	72.2	78.9
2) Oppose	21.3	23.5	17.7
3) No Opinion	3.9	4.3	3.4
2. After signing (Sharm el-Sheikh) agreement, do you trust the intentions of the new Israeli government headed by Barak towards reaching an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement with Palestinians?			
1) Yes	19.0	16.1	23.7
2) No	68.7	71.7	63.7
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	12.3	12.2	12.6
3. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of :			
3-1 the Palestinian Legislative Council?			
1) Very Good	6.1	6.0	6.3
2) Good	31.1	30.1	32.9
3) Fair	30.8	32.5	28.2
4) Bad	12.7	11.7	14.5
5) Very Bad	8.2	6.8	10.5
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	11.1	12.9	7.6
3-2 Palestinian Government (The Cabinet)			
1) Very Good	7.7	8.2	6.9
2) Good	35.5	36.0	34.7

3) Fair	27.9	28.0	27.7
4) Bad	10.8	9.6	12.8
5) Very Bad	5.9	5.1	7.4
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	12.2	13.1	10.5

3-3 Judicial Authority and Palestinian Courts

1) Very Good	8.8	8.5	8.8
2) Good	31.2	28.8	35.1
3) Fair	23.4	22.3	25.2
4) Bad	14.3	15.5	12.3
5) Very Bad	7.0	7.5	6.1
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	15.5	17.4	12.5

3-4 Police and Security forces

1) Very Good	13.9	13.9	14.0
2) Good	38.7	35.8	43.6
3) Fair	22.8	22.1	24.1
4) Bad	12.9	14.5	10.3
5) Very Bad	5.4	5.8	4.7
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	6.3	7.9	3.3

3-5 Institution of Presidency

1) Very Good	14.4	13.5	15.9
2) Good	38.6	40.8	34.9
3) Fair	15.7	14.8	17.2
4) Bad	6.5	6.2	7.1
5) Very Bad	3.0	2.1	4.5
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	21.8	22.6	20.4

3-6 Opposition groups and factions

1) Very Good	6.5	7.3	5.3
2) Good	26.6	27.8	24.5
3) Fair	22.2	19.7	26.3
4) Bad	17.6	18.7	15.8
5) Very Bad	4.6	4.1	5.4
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	22.5	22.4	22.7

3-7 Your district representatives at the PLC

1) Very Good	7.7	8.7	6.1
2) Good	31.7	31.7	31.6
3) Fair	20.8	19.8	22.5
4) Bad	15.1	14.5	16.1
5) Very Bad	6.9	5.5	9.2
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	17.8	19.8	14.5

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')	5.3	5.7	4.7
2) Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazin)	6.7	6.6	7.0
3) Farouq Kaddomi (Abu Lutuf)	6.3	7.2	4.7
4) Nabil Sha'ath	3.1	1.4	5.8
5) Sa'eb Erikat	8.9	9.0	8.7
6) Hanan Ashrawi	6.4	6.9	5.6
7) Faisal Hussein	7.0	7.9	5.5
8) Haidar Abdul Shafi	16.3	11.8	23.8

9) Other (Specify_____)	0.8	0.5	1.2
10) No one	20.2	21.5	17.9
11) I will not participate in the elections	15.2	17.3	11.7
12) No Opinion /Don't Know	3.8	4.2	3.4

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)	14.3	16.3	11.7
2) Faisal Husseini	22.2	27.0	15.7
3) Haidar Abdul Shafi	36.0	29.6	44.5
4) Ahmad Qurai' (Abu Ala')	9.6	11.4	7.1
5) Other (Specify_____)	11.0	11.1	10.7
6) No Opinion /Don't Know	6.9	4.6	10.3

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

1) Very Good	16.2	17.6	14.0
2) Good	43.7	43.2	44.6
3) Fair	17.1	18.4	15.0
4) Bad	5.5	5.8	5.0
5) Very Bad	1.9	1.0	3.4
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	15.6	14.0	18.0

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

1) Yes	38.0	40.9	33.2
2) No	31.2	31.2	31.3
3) Don't Know/ No Opinion	30.8	27.9	35.5

8. An Inter-ministerial committee for administrative reform was formed by the PA after the publication of international reports concerning Palestinian institutions building. Do you trust the PA intentions towards reforming its institutions?

1) Yes	61.3	61.6	60.9
2) No	26.9	26.0	28.3
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	11.8	12.4	10.8

9. The Palestinian security services have been conducting campaigns to collect unlicensed weapons from citizens, do you support or oppose these campaigns?

1) Support	86.5	84.1	90.4
2) Oppose	11.2	13.4	7.6
3) No Opinion / Don't Know	2.3	2.5	2.0

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

1) Very Good	5.8	7.0	3.9
2) Good	26.0	26.2	25.8
3) Fair	28.5	28.0	29.4
4) Bad	21.4	20.5	22.9
5) Very Bad	11.5	10.3	13.5
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	6.8	8.0	4.5

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

11-1 America

1) Very Good	31.1	28.0	36.1
2) Good	24.4	25.5	22.6
3) Fair	6.9	6.3	7.9
4) Bad	10.0	11.0	8.4
5) Very Bad	3.0	3.4	2.5

6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	24.6	25.8	22.5
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11-2 Israel

1) Very Good	37.7	32.7	46.0
2) Good	29.6	31.6	26.4
3) Fair	5.4	5.5	5.1
4) Bad	8.4	8.9	7.5
5) Very Bad	3.2	3.2	3.2
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	15.7	18.1	11.8

11-3 Jordan

1) Very Good	4.9	4.8	5.0
2) Good	26.6	24.6	29.9
3) Fair	22.6	21.3	24.8
4) Bad	18.3	19.8	15.7
5) Very Bad	6.8	6.4	7.5
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	20.8	23.1	17.1

11-4 Egypt

1) Very Good	4.8	3.9	6.3
2) Good	24.4	20.0	31.7
3) Fair	18.7	16.6	22.2
4) Bad	19.3	21.6	15.5
5) Very Bad	7.2	5.9	9.3
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	25.6	32.0	15.0

11-5 France

1) Very Good	25.9	20.7	34.6
2) Good	23.7	23.1	24.5
3) Fair	4.9	5.1	4.5
4) Bad	5.3	5.9	4.4
5) Very Bad	1.0	0.6	1.6
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	39.2	44.6	30.4

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

1) Yes	63.4	61.1	67.2
2) No	17.7	18.1	17.1
3) Not Sure	18.9	20.8	15.6

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

1) Increase	50.6	50.0	51.5
2) Remain as it is	7.9	7.9	7.7
3) Decrease	29.3	30.6	27.5
4) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	12.2	11.5	13.3

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

14-1 Ministries and governmental offices

1) Yes	80.0	80.2	79.8
2) No	9.6	9.0	10.4
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	10.4	10.9	9.8

14-2 Security forces and police

1) Yes	76.5	75.8	77.6
2) No	16.0	15.0	17.5
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	7.5	9.2	4.9

14-3 Presidency Office

1) Yes	41.9	41.3	42.9
2) No	27.8	26.7	29.4
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	30.3	32.0	27.7

14-4 PLC

1) Yes	51.1	51.0	51.1
2) No	30.0	28.8	31.6
3) No Opinion/Don't Know	18.9	20.2	17.3

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

1) Yes	38.1	39.2	36.2
2) No	55.9	54.0	58.9
3) Do not know	6.0	6.8	4.9

16. If new elections for the PLC and PA Presidency were held today, would you participate in these elections?

1) Yes	67.5	67.5	67.4
2) No	28.9	28.3	29.8
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	3.6	4.2	2.8

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

1) Haydar Abdul Shafi	11.7	11.2	12.6
2) Yasser Arafat	42.2	37.6	49.7
3) Ahmad Yasin	10.7	11.3	9.7
4) Others	1.6	2.2	0.5

5) No one	17.2	19.2	13.9
6) I will not participate	14.4	16.1	11.6
7) No Opinion / Don't Know	2.2	2.4	2.0

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

1) Support	39.5	41.1	36.9
2) Oppose	52.3	50.6	55.1
3) No Opinion /Don' t Know	8.2	8.3	8.0

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

1) PPP	0.9	1.1	0.5
2) PFLP	3.2	2.4	4.6
3) Fateh	36.6	36.2	37.2
4) Hamas	9.7	9.8	9.5
5) DFLP	1.2	1.6	0.5
6) Islamic Jihad	2.6	2.5	2.8
7) Fida	0.1	0.1	0.0
8) Independent Islamists	2.8	3.3	2.0
9) Independent Nationalists	3.9	4.1	3.5
10) None of the above	37.5	36.8	38.6
11) Others	1.5	2.1	0.8