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Poll No. 102 West Bank

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The current war will serve Palestinian national interests, boost Hamas' popularity and expedite Israeli-Arab normalization

A public opinion poll conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre, in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert- Stiftung, conducted in the West Bank including East Jerusalem, showed that the war in the Gaza Strip, ongoing for the past eight months, has clearly impacted Palestinian public opinion in the West Bank. On the one hand, it has resulted in a boost in Hamas' popularity and its leadership personalities and has improved its political status, while on the other, it has led to a setback in the popularity of Fatah, the PA and its key leaders. It is notable that the spike in Hamas' popularity has coincided with all previous Israeli wars on the Gaza Strip over the past two decades, aimed at weakening or eliminating Hamas.

Furthermore, the poll showed an ongoing and distinct split in Palestinian public opinion over a number of core political issues. This includes a clear division over the nature of a final solution, between a two-state or one-state solution. There was also a split in opinion over the best method of Palestinian resistance to achieve national goals, between armed, military resistance or diplomatic peaceful resistance. In regards to the new Palestinian government, it seems the public does not have high hopes or expectations for it, perhaps because the majority of the poll's respondents deemed Israel as the main party responsible for the government and PA's acute financial crisis, more than the PA or donor countries.

It should be noted that the poll was conducted in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, but did not include the Gaza Strip given the inability to secure a random sample because of the current situation in Gaza.

The poll showed that 39.6% of respondents believe the attack on Israel waged by Hamas, and the war that followed, serves Palestinian national interests. Meanwhile, 30.2% believe it harms national interests while 23.5% said it neither serves nor harms Palestinian national interests.

Furthermore, 41.4% of those polled said they expected that the current war between Israel and Hamas would end in favor of Hamas, while 34.3% said it would not end in favor of either side (Hamas and Israel) and only 6.3% answered it would end in favor of Israel.

In regards to how the war will affect Arab-Israeli normalization projects, the bigger percentage of respondents, 38.5% said the war would end with the advancement of normalization projects in contrast to 26% who expected it would end with a setback in normalization projects, while 29.8% said the current war would not have any effect.

On the question of what impact the war would have on the popularity of Hamas, the biggest percentage of respondents, or 55.1%, said it would end with a rise in Hamas' popularity, while 27.3% said they did not expect the war to have any change on Hamas' popularity and 13.1% of those polled said the war would result in a decline in Hamas' popularity.

In regards to a possible intervention by Iran and its allies in support of the Gaza Strip against the Israeli attack, the majority of respondents, 74.8% said they do not expect such an intervention, while 18.5% said they did.

Public split over method of peaceful political action versus military action to achieve national goals

Respondents were divided over the best method to end the occupation and establish an independent Palestinian state, with 44.5% saying peaceful, diplomatic political action is the best method, while 40.8% who said they support violent military resistance action as the best method of achieving national goals and 14.7% who said they did not know which one was best.

Regarding the formula for a final solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the percentage of those who said a Palestinian state in all of Palestine was the solution, rose to 30.1% after it was 26.4% last September, note that this option was not among the list of options given to the interviewees.

Meanwhile, the percentage of those who support the two-state solution rose to 32% while support for a binational state dropped to 25% after it was 29.5% in September, 2023.

The public does not trust any political personality or faction, with a rise in the level of trust in Hamas and in Marwan Al Barghouthi

It seems that the ongoing war has also impacted the level of the public's trust in Palestinian political personalities and factions. There was an increase among those who do not trust political factions to 65.5% in this poll after it was 59.4% in the October, 2023. Meanwhile, Hamas received the highest percentage of trust at 14.4%, followed by Fatah, at 10.6%.

Likewise, the percentage of those who do not trust any political personality rose to 65.7% after it was 57.8% in October, 2023. It is noteworthy that the highest level of trust was for Marwan Al Barghouthi, at 7.1% after it was 2.7% in October of last year, followed by Abu Obeida (Hamas spokesperson), at 3.6%.

Regarding the broad debate over the future of the Gaza Strip after the war, the biggest percentage of those polled, 52.2%, said they expected the Gaza Strip to remain under Hamas control, while 17.3% said they expected Gaza to be put under international administration after the war. 14% responded that they expected the PA to play a role in managing Gaza's affairs after the war, while 6.6% said they expected Gaza will be under Israeli control after the war.

No high expectations regarding the performance of the new government; the public prefers a national unity government

On the question of the expectations of the Palestinian public in the West Bank regarding the performance of the new government, formed this March under Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa, the biggest percentage of respondents, 43.9% said they expected the performance of this government to be similar to the previous one. Meanwhile, 31.3% of those polled said they expect the performance of this government to be worse, while 17.3% said they expect it to be better.

On the formation of the new government, the poll results revealed that the biggest percentage of respondents, 30.9%, said they preferred a national unity government, followed by 25.5% who said they preferred an independent-majority government, followed by 21% who said they preferred a Hamas-majority government and finally, 9.7% who said they preferred a Fatah-majority government.

Current financial crisis will not lead to the collapse of the PA; Israel is responsible for this crisis more than others

Regarding the mounting financial crisis on the future of the PA, the majority of respondents, 62.1%, said they did not think the crisis would lead to the collapse of the PA, while 33.4% said they did expect it to lead to its collapse and 4.5% who said they had no answer.

The majority of respondents, 54%, held Israel responsible for the financial crisis, followed by 28.1% who said the PA was responsible and only 12.2% who said donor countries were responsible for the financial crisis.

Methodology:

A random sample of 715 people over the age of 18 was interviewed face-to-face throughout the West Bank between 22nd and 25th May 2024 the interviews were conducted in randomly selected homes, and the respondents inside each home were also selected randomly according to Kish tables. The interviews were conducted in 42 sampling points chosen randomly according to population.

In the West Bank 715 people were surveyed from the following areas:

Hebron: Hebron, Dura, Idhna, Tafuh, Deir Samet, Al Sura. **Jenin:** Al Yamun, Y'abed, Fahma, Anin. **Tubas:** Aqqaba. **Ramallah & al-Bireh:** Al-Bireh, Deir Dibwan, Silwad, Deir A'mmar, Beitillu, Beit Ur Al Fauqa. **Jerusalem:** Al-Ram, Al' Eizariya, Anata, Kufr Aqab, Qalandia refugee camp, Beit Hanina, Al-Thouri. **Bethlehem:** Beit Sahur, Al' Ubeidiya, Irtas, Dar Salah, Ayda Refugee Camp. **Nablus:** Nablus, Asira Al- Shamaliya, Jamma'in, Beit Iba, Beit Dajan, Askar Qadeem Refugee Camp. **Salfit:** Bidhya, Rafat. **Tulkarem:** Tulkarem, Attil, Kafr Jammal. **Qalqilya:** Qalqilya, Beit Amin.

The margin of error is ± 3 percent, with a confidence level of 95%.

Sample Distribution

27.3% said they live in villages, 4.2% refugee camps, and 68.5% in towns/cities.

49.7% were male, 50.3% female.

70.3% were married, 22.5% single, 5.5% widowed, 1.7% divorced.

The average age of the respondents was 40.5 years.

Occupation of Respondents

- 6.2% Students
- 13.3% Laborers
- 32.2% Housewives (not looking for a job)
- 4.2% Housewives (looking for a job)
- 2.8% Farmers/fishermen
- 0.8% Craftsmen
- 10.9% Businessmen/private business
- 6.9% Public Sector Employees
- 8.7% Private Sector Employees
- 0.8% Professionals (e.g., doctors/lawyers/pharmacists/engineers)
- 11.5% Unemployed
- 1.7% Retired

Results:

Q1- Hamas waged an attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 followed by a war between both parties, which is still ongoing. Do you think this serves Palestinian national interests? Does it hurt Palestinian national interests? Does it neither serve nor harm these interests?

	West Bank
	n= 715
It serves Palestinian national interests	39.6
It harms Palestinian national interests	30.2
It neither serve nor harm the Palestinian national interests	23.5
I don't know/no answer	6.7

Q2- Do you think the war between Israel and Hamas, which has been ongoing for seven months, will end in favor of Israel, Hamas, neither Israel nor Hamas, or both?

	West Bank
	n= 715
In favor of Hamas	41.4
In favor of Israel	6.3
In favor of neither party	34.3
In favor of both parties	8.3
No answer	9.7

Q3- Iran declared it might intervene along with its allies in support of the Gaza Strip against the Israeli onslaught. Do you expect such an intervention or not?

	West Bank
	n= 715
I expect its involvement	18.5
I don't expect its involvement	74.8
I don't know/ no answer	6.7

Q4- Do you expect the war to end with a setback or advancement of Arab-Israeli normalization projects in the region?

	West Bank
	n= 715
I expect the war to end with a setback in Arab-Israeli normalization projects	26.0
I expect the war to end with an advancement of Arab-Israeli normalization projects	38.5
This war will not affect normalization projects	29.8
I don't know/no answer	5.7

Q5- Do you expect the war will end with a rise or drop in Hamas' popularity among the Palestinians?

	West Bank
	n= 715
Hamas' popularity will rise	55.1
Hamas' popularity will drop	13.1
Hamas' popularity will not change	27.3
I don't know/no answer	4.5

Q6- Palestinians have tried peaceful, diplomatic political action and violent military resistance to achieve the Palestinian goals of ending the occupation and establishing an independent state. Which do you support more?

	West Bank
	n= 715
I support peaceful, diplomatic political action	44.5
I support violent military resistance	40.8
I don't know/no answer	14.7

Q7- Some believe that the two state formula is the most preferred solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; others believe that Historical Palestine cannot be divided into two states, so the best solution would be to have a bi-national state from river to the sea where Palestinians and Israelis enjoy equal rights. Which solution do you prefer?

	West Bank
	n= 715
I prefer the two state solution: Palestinian and an Israeli	32.0
I prefer the bi-national state from river to the sea	25.0
Islamic State*	0.7
Palestinian State in all of Palestine*	30.1
There is no solution for the problem	7.8
Don't know/No answer	4.4

*These options were not given to the interviewee.

Q8- The Palestinian people have tried a Fatah–majority government and a Hamas–majority government, now there is a government with the majority of its ministers as independent figures, in your opinion and from the past experiences, which is the government that best serves the interests of the Palestinian people?

	West Bank
	n= 715
A Fatah–majority government	9.7
A Hamas–majority government	21.0
A national unity government	30.9
A government with the majority of its ministers as independent figures	25.5
No answer	12.9

Q9- Do you think that current Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mustafa is doing a good, average, or bad job?

	West Bank
	n= 715
Good	9.8
Average	23.9
Bad	33.6
No answer	32.7

Q10 - With the new Palestinian government with Dr. Mohammad Mustafa as prime minister, do you believe the government will perform better, worse, or similar to that of the former one?

	West Bank
	n= 715
Better than the former government	17.3
Worse than the former government	31.3
Similar to the former government	43.9
No answer	7.5

Q11- Which of these phrases expresses your expectations on the Gaza situation after the war?

	West Bank
	n= 715
I expect Gaza to remain under Hamas control after the war	52.2
I expect Gaza to remain under Israeli control after the war	6.6
I expect the PA to play a role in managing Gazan affairs after the war	14.0
I expect Gaza to be under international administration after the war	17.3
I don't know/no answer	9.9

Q12 – The Palestinian National Authority is going through a financial crisis that has worsened in the past months, culminating in not being able to regularly pay its employees. Do you expect this crisis to lead to the demise of the PNA?

	West Bank
	n= 715
Yes, it will lead to the demise of the PNA	33.4
No, it will not lead to the demise of the PNA	62.1
I don't know/no answer	4.5

Q13 – Who do you think bears more responsibility for the PNA’s financial crisis? Israel, the PNA or donor countries?

	West Bank
	n= 715
Israel	54.0
PNA	28.1
Donor Countries	12.2
I don't know/no answer	5.7

Q13-1 Which of the donor countries?

	West Bank
	n= 87
Arab countries	34.5
European countries	29.9
The United States	35.6

* This question for those who said Donor countries in Q-13

Q14- Which Palestinian personality do you trust the most?

	West Bank
	n= 715
Mahmoud Abbas	2.5
Marwan Al- Barghouthi	7.1
Yihya Al- Sinwar	2.7
Mustafa Al- Barghouthi	2.5
Abu Obaida	3.6
Others	7.4
Don't trust anyone	65.7
No answer	8.5

* This is an-open ended questions- no options were given to the interviewee

Q15– Which political or religious faction do you trust the most?

	West Bank
	n= 715
Fatah	10.6
Hamas	14.4
Others	1.1
Don't Trust anyone	65.5
No answer	8.4

* This is an-open ended questions- no options were given to the interviewee