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Teachers' Strike: A Survey

Majority believes the strike is justified; and Considers the government's handling of strike to be unreasonable

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The following are highlights from the most recent AWRAD survey of Palestinian public opinion. The survey was divided into two parts: a representative, face-to-face sample of 500 throughout the West Bank (margin of error +/- 4%) conducted February 28-29, and an online survey of 200 opinion leaders (political party leaders, civil society leaders, high-ranking government and private sector officials, journalists, youth activists, and professionals) conducted February 29 to March 3.. For the full results, please refer to www.awrad.org.

Widespread interest in the strike: While interest in the strike is higher among opinion leaders, an overwhelming majority of the general public and opinion leaders are following the news of the teachers' strike on a regular basis. In addition, while the majority of opinion leaders state that they are aware of the demands of teachers, the general public is less certain.

Majority finds strike to be “justified”: Two-thirds of public opinion leaders and 61 percent of the general public consider the strike to be fully justified. A further 27 percent of opinion leaders and 23 percent of the general public find the strike somewhat justified. Only 5 percent of opinion leaders and 13 percent of the general public find it unjustified.

Official response to the strike “unreasonable”: The majority of opinion leaders (57 percent) and the general public (50 percent) find the PA's response to the strike to be unreasonable. In addition, 24 percent of both groups find it somewhat unreasonable. Only 5 percent of opinion leaders and 7 percent of the general public find it reasonable and about 13 percent of both groups find it somewhat reasonable.

Majority: The PA must meet strikers' demands, unwilling to contribute: The majority of opinion leaders and the general public believes that the PA has the budget to meet the strikers' demands. Three-quarters of the opinion leaders believe that the PA should reduce security expenditures to accomplish this. In contrast, the majority is unwilling to accept proposed increases in taxes and fees to meet these demands.

Majority of the general public believes the impact of the strike has been negative: Despite widespread support for the teachers' right to strike, a majority of the general public believes that students have been negatively impacted. Public opinion leaders are divided on this issue.

Teachers' strike might lead to further unrest: About three-quarters of opinion leaders and two-thirds of the general public believe that the teachers' strike might lead other civil service sectors to protest pay or policy.

Evaluation of institutions: Both the Palestinian Authority and the Teachers' Union receive negative reviews from both groups for their handling of the strike. A majority, however, has a positive opinion of the way the media has covered events.