



مركز العالم العربي للبحوث والتنمية
Arab World for Research & Development

24 August 2016

Results of an Online Poll of Local Government Experts on the Municipal Elections

Introduction: These are the results of an online study conducted with 205 experts in local government, each knowledgeable of political and social circumstances as they pertain to the upcoming local elections (October 8, 2016). The poll was completed through a representative sample of experts across all 16 governorates of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Participants included journalists, community activists, businesspeople, university professors, political activists, local governance experts and other professionals, such as lawyers, medical doctors and engineers. The study was conducted between 12-18 August 2016.

Skepticism of Significance: Less than a majority believes that the scheduled local elections are (important); the rest believe that they are somewhat important or not important. Only 47 percent will state that they are confident that the elections will be held as scheduled, while the rest believe the opposite or are uncertain.

There is little hope that the elections will improve the prospects for national reconciliation, with only one-fifth of respondents believing such a development will occur. A majority (59 percent) believes that the decision of Hamas to participate is a (positive) development for overall Palestinian interests, while 38 percent believe that it is negative or of no consequence.

Transparent Elections: A majority expects that the elections will be open and transparent, with one-fifth expressing doubt. Widespread positive perceptions of the Central Election Commission's performance are observed.

Issues and Criteria for Selection of Candidates: The largest plurality of experts believes that the most important issue at stake in the October election is the regular practice of democratic processes. The second most important issue is service delivery.

Party affiliation and familial allegiance are the two factors that experts believe will exert the greatest influence on voters. Experts consider "moral reputation" and "professional competence" of the candidate as less important factors to potential voters.

Election Predictions (Voter Turnout and Distribution of Seats): Survey respondents predict an overall turnout rate of roughly 60 percent. They also anticipate a tight race between Fatah and Hamas in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The two parties are predicted to earn roughly two-thirds of the seats with the remainder split between independents and Leftist parties.

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1. In your opinion, how important are local elections scheduled for October 8, 2016?

Important	48.4%
Somewhat Important	26.3%
Somewhat unimportant	14.2%
Not important	11.1%

2. Do you believe the elections will actually occur as scheduled?

Yes	47.4%
No	31.6%
Don't know	21.1%

3. Do you believe that the planned local elections will improve the prospects to achieve reconciliation?

Yes	21.1%
No	46.3%
will not make a difference	30.5%
Don't know	2.1%

4. On a local level, what is the most important issue at stake in the October elections?

Communal relations	4.2%
Service delivery (water, sanitation, electricity, education, healthcare...)	37.4%
Local policing and security	1.6%
Regular practice of democratic processes	46.3%
Don't know	10.5%

5. In your opinion, is the decision by Hamas to participate in the elections a positive or negative development for overall Palestinian interests?

Positive	58.9%
Negative	8.4%
Of no consequence	30.0%
Don't know, no opinion	2.6%

6. Which of the following factors will have the largest influence on voters in the local elections?

Family/tribal affiliation of candidates	36.8%
Party affiliation of candidates	37.4%
Moral reputation/ethics of candidates	11.6%
Professional competence of candidates	12.6%
Don't know/NO answer	1.6%

7. Do you expect the elections to occur in an open and transparent manner?

Yes	64.7%
No	20.0%
Don't know	15.3%

8. So far, what is your evaluation of the Central Election Commission in managing the local election?

Positive	69.5%
Negative	2.6%
Fair	19.5%
Don't know	8.4%

AWRAD's Election Monitor

9. As of today, what is your estimation of the voter turnout rate? (Average percentage) 60.0%

10. Based on your expert opinion, if you were to predict the distribution of seats among the following political parties in the October elections, what percentage of seats would you give to each in the **West Bank**?

Independents/non-aligned with parties	19.4%
Fatah	34.4%
Hamas	32.7%
Other nationalists/leftists groups	9.1%
Other Islamist groups	4.4%

11. Based on your expert opinion, if you were to predict the distribution of seats among the following political parties in the October elections, what percentage of seats would you give to each in the **Gaza Strip**?

Independents/non-aligned with parties	15.7%
Fatah	32.4%
Hamas	37.0%
Other nationalists/leftists groups	8.8%
Other Islamist groups	6.0%

Sample Distribution

Region

West Bank	83.2%
Gaza	16.8%

Age

18-29	9.1%
30-39	27.8%
40-50	27.3%
More than 50	35.8%

Gender

Male	75.8%
Female	24.2%