



مركز العالم العربي للبحوث والتنمية
Arab World for Research & Development

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Public Opinion Poll in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Local Election and Evaluation of Leaders

27 September 2016

On the heels of the announcement by the High Court of Justice to postpone municipal elections scheduled for October 8, Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD) conducted a national public opinion poll September 18-21 among 1,200 Palestinians (18+) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The poll focused on the following issues: support for local elections, priorities for local government, evaluation of local councils, criteria for voting, approval ratings of leaders; and political party support. The margin of error for this poll is less than 3 percent. The poll can be found online at www.awrad.org or call us at 0599204527.

Widespread Objection to Postponement of Elections: The results of the poll indicate that the majority continues to support the conduct of elections as scheduled, with more than two-thirds expressing disagreement with the Court's decision. A separate majority described being upset upon hearing of the decision. Such views are more pronounced in Gaza than the West Bank.

Local Elections Serve Daily Needs: A plurality of respondents view municipal elections as addressing local services and needs. At present, a majority (55 percent) is dissatisfied with their current local council, with the level of dissatisfaction reaching 66 percent in Gaza. Furthermore, there is significant concern that the postponement is a prelude to the ultimate cancelling of local elections. This concern is especially prevalent in Gaza. A plurality in the West Bank blames the PA for the postponement, while a plurality in Gaza blames Hamas.

Priorities for Palestinians: Overall, the top priorities for Palestinians are: improving health services; promoting economic growth; the supply of water and electricity; and opportunities for youth. The top three priorities in Gaza are: improving the economy and providing employment opportunities, improving health services, and the supply of electricity. In the West Bank, the top priority is the supply of water, followed by improving health services and promoting economic growth.

Preferred Qualities in Lists: Voters place emphasis on professional competence and personal reputation/ethics of candidates on an electoral list when determining how will they vote. These qualities are followed by the education of the candidates on the list and their level of involvement with the community. The religiosity of a candidate was the fifth most important factor, while participation in the liberation struggle was the seventh.

Fairness of Elections: Respondents were divided on the role of the various political actors and government institutions (including the security services) in ensuring that the elections would be held in a free and fair manner. In addition, 16 percent say that they witnessed or



observed pressure or intimidation of political parties or candidates in their community during the preparations for the elections.

Approval of Leaders: The postponement of the elections does not appear to have had an adverse impact on the evaluation of Palestinian leaders. The approval rating of President M. Abbas increased from 37 percent in July 2016 to 45 percent in the current poll. However, his disapproval rating stands at 48 percent. The approval rate for Prime Minister R. Hamdallah also improved from 34 percent in July to 41 percent presently. His disapproval rating however is also at 48 percent. Ismael Haniyeh and his party Hamas garner their lowest approval rates in the present poll. Gazans are more critical of all leaders, especially Mr. Haniyeh and Hamas. While 44 percent of West Bank respondents express disapproval in the performance of Mr. Haniyeh, the rate reaches 75 percent among Gaza respondents. Hamas' disapproval rate is 43 percent in the West Bank, but almost doubles in Gaza, reaching 82 percent.

Detailed Results:

Section 1: Views on the Election

1. Municipal elections were scheduled for next month (8 October 2016). Did you support or oppose the conduct of these elections?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Supported	74.0%	78.4%	75.7%
Opposed	15.3%	18.0%	16.3%
Not sure	10.7%	3.6%	8.0%

2. If you supported the local elections, what was the most important reason for your support?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Importance of addressing local services and needs	49.5%	33.7%	43.4%
Importance of bridging political divisions/promoting national unity	20.9%	47.3%	31.1%
Importance of improving communal relations and security	14.7%	10.5%	13.1%
Importance of strengthening democratic practices	14.7%	4.2%	10.7%
Other	.2%	4.2%	1.7%

3. Are you for or against the High Court of Justice's decision to suspend local elections?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
For	21.6%	21.1%	21.4%
Against	66.5%	71.6%	68.4%
Don't know	11.9%	7.3%	10.2%

4. What was your reaction upon learning that the elections had been postponed?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Upset	50.1%	66.7%	56.3%
Happy	11.2%	9.8%	10.7%
Indifferent	38.1%	21.3%	31.8%
No opinion/Don't know	.5%	2.2%	1.2%

5. Who is responsible for the postponement of the elections?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
The PA	47.1%	16.4%	35.6%
Hamas	9.2%	44.4%	22.4%
Fatah	6.7%	9.6%	7.8%
All political factions	13.2%	18.0%	15.0%
Don't know	23.9%	11.6%	19.3%

6. Are you satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the performance of the local council in your community?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Satisfied	20.8%	13.1%	17.9%
Somewhat satisfied	29.7%	19.1%	25.8%
Somewhat dissatisfied	15.3%	14.4%	15.0%
Dissatisfied	32.1%	51.8%	39.5%
Not sure	2.0%	1.6%	1.8%

7. Do you believe that the elections will actually be held in the near future or will be canceled?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Will be held in the near future	50.1%	34.2%	44.2%
Will be canceled	33.7%	55.6%	41.9%
Don't know	16.1%	10.2%	13.9%

Section 2: Needs, Priorities and Issues

8. In view of the immediate needs of your community, how important are the following?
(Percentage of respondents who say that the following needs are very important or important)

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Improve health services	97.6%	99.3%	98.3%
Improve schools	96.0%	98.9%	97.1%
Pave and fix roads	95.3%	98.9%	96.7%
Promote economic investment and job creation	94.1%	98.7%	95.8%
Build a/Improve the sewage system	93.9%	99.1%	95.8%
Clean up the community	94.0%	98.4%	95.7%
Improve the supply of water	96.9%	99.3%	97.8%
Improve the supply of electricity	91.5%	99.1%	94.3%
Increase the role of women in local councils and decision making	78.7%	87.8%	82.1%
Reform collection of fees/taxes	71.6%	80.2%	74.8%
Improve opportunities for youth	94.3%	98.4%	95.8%
Build/organize recreational, cultural and sports facilities/activities	81.7%	90.4%	85.0%
Improve services for the elderly and disabled	91.2%	94.7%	92.5%
Enhance security and social cohesion in the community	93.9%	96.2%	94.8%
Build/improve day care/pre-school services	80.8%	89.3%	84.0%
Increase access to affordable housing	88.7%	96.2%	91.5%
Simplify processes for obtaining official licenses, permits, approvals, etc.	92.7%	94.2%	93.3%
Lower fees for services	94.8%	98.2%	96.1%

9. From the list of needs above, which is the most important to you personally? (First choice)

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Improve health services	14.7%	19.3%	16.5%
Promote economic investment and job creation	11.1%	23.1%	15.6%
Improve the supply of water	17.0%	8.7%	13.9%

Improve the supply of electricity	2.3%	16.9%	7.8%
Improve opportunities for youth	5.8%	9.8%	7.3%
Pave and fix roads	9.0%	2.4%	6.5%
Lower fees for services	8.4%	3.1%	6.4%
Improve schools	6.4%	4.4%	5.7%
Clean up the community	6.2%	2.0%	4.6%
Build a/Improve the sewage system	5.5%	2.4%	4.3%
Enhance security and social cohesion in the community	2.7%	3.3%	2.9%
Improve services for the elderly and disabled	3.9%	0.0%	2.4%
Simplify processes for obtaining official licenses, permits, approvals, etc.	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Increase access to affordable housing	1.7%	0.9%	1.4%
Increase the role of women in local councils and decision making	0.7%	1.1%	0.8%
Reform collection of fees/taxes	1.1%	0.2%	0.8%
Build/organize recreational, cultural and sports facilities/activities	1.1%	0.2%	0.8%
Build/improve day care/pre-school services	0.4%	0.0%	0.3%

10. From the list of needs above, which is the most important to you personally? (Second choice)

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Promote economic investment and job creation	8.7%	17.1%	11.9%
Improve the supply of electricity	5.1%	23.1%	11.9%
Improve opportunities for youth	7.6%	14.7%	10.3%
Improve the supply of water	11.7%	5.1%	9.2%
Improve health services	6.4%	11.3%	8.3%
Improve schools	8.8%	7.1%	8.2%
Lower fees for services	10.2%	3.8%	7.8%
Clean up the community	7.4%	2.2%	5.4%
Pave and fix roads	6.6%	2.9%	5.2%
Enhance security and social cohesion in the community	5.1%	4.0%	4.7%
Simplify processes for obtaining official licenses, permits,	4.0%	2.0%	3.3%

approvals, etc.			
Increase access to affordable housing	4.4%	0.4%	2.9%
Build a/Improve the sewage system	3.6%	1.1%	2.7%
Improve services for the elderly and disabled	3.1%	1.1%	2.3%
Build/organize recreational, cultural and sports facilities/activities	2.7%	1.3%	2.2%
Increase the role of women in local councils and decision making	1.5%	0.9%	1.3%
Reform collection of fees/taxes	1.6%	0.7%	1.3%
Build/improve day care/pre-school services	1.5%	1.1%	1.3%

11. West Bank Only: In your view, what was the main reason that, in many localities, only one list of candidates was registered for the elections?

Dominant parties pressured other parties into forming unity lists	23.3%
Leadership of families/clans decided to form only one list	22.1%
The people wanted unified lists to avoid conflicts in the community	20.1%
External forces pressured certain parties not to form lists	16.8%
Certain parties chose not to participate, thus limiting the choices available to voters	15.5%
Other	2.1%

12. Have you voted in any national or local elections before?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	65.5%	52.2%	60.5%
No	34.5%	47.8%	39.5%

13. Are you registered to vote in the local elections?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	76.4%	82.0%	78.5%
No	23.6%	18.0%	21.5%

14. If yes, did you intend to vote in the October 8 local council elections?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	76.3%	87.3%	80.6%
No	14.8%	9.8%	12.8%
Not sure	8.9%	3.0%	6.6%

Section 3: Voting Criteria

15. In voting for a local council list, how important are the following attributes? (Percentage of respondents who say that the following criteria are very important or important)

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Being in touch with the needs of the community	99.1%	99.3%	99.2%
Personal reputation and ethics of the candidates	99.3%	98.7%	99.1%
Professional competence	97.3%	96.9%	97.2%
Educational attainment of the candidates	91.6%	96.0%	93.3%
Having access to/influence in government institutions	92.7%	94.4%	93.3%
Supportive of women rights	80.7%	89.6%	84.0%
Members' participation in the national struggle	71.8%	86.7%	77.4%
Being independent from any party	68.7%	79.1%	72.6%
Being religious	67.6%	76.0%	70.8%
Candidates are from my family/clan	45.9%	39.3%	43.4%
Representation of women on the list	33.2%	45.3%	37.8%
Membership in a political party that I support	32.5%	37.8%	34.5%

16. From the above list of attributes, which is the most important in determining how you will vote? (First choice)

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Professional competence	20.5%	22.9%	21.4%
Personal reputation and ethics of the candidates	23.2%	17.8%	21.2%
Educational attainment of the candidates	20.0%	21.8%	20.7%
Being in touch with the needs of the community	12.8%	15.6%	13.8%
Being religious	7.6%	7.3%	7.5%
Having access to/influence in government institutions	4.4%	2.9%	3.8%
Members' participation in the national struggle	3.5%	2.4%	3.1%
Supportive of women rights	2.5%	2.4%	2.5%
Membership in a political party that I support	2.8%	1.6%	2.3%
Being independent from any party	1.2%	4.0%	2.3%

Candidates are from my family/clan	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Representation of women on the list	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%

17. From the above list of attributes, which is the most important in determining how you will vote? (Second choice)

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Being in touch with the needs of the community	20.1%	22.9%	21.2%
Professional competence	17.7%	19.6%	18.4%
Personal reputation and ethics of the candidates	19.7%	12.9%	17.2%
Having access to/influence in government institutions	13.2%	5.8%	10.4%
Educational attainment of the candidates	7.6%	14.2%	10.1%
Being religious	6.5%	7.3%	6.8%
Members' participation in the national struggle	4.7%	5.8%	5.1%
Being independent from any party	4.3%	4.7%	4.4%
Supportive of women rights	2.7%	3.6%	3.0%
Membership in a political party that I support	1.1%	2.2%	1.5%
Candidates are from my family/clan	1.6%	0.2%	1.1%
Representation of women on the list	0.8%	0.9%	0.8%

18. Were you satisfied with the lists running in your community?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	53.3%	55.8%	54.2%
No	46.7%	44.2%	45.8%

19. If no, why?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
My preferred party was not running a list	7.8%	10.6%	8.8%
The candidates were not professionally competent enough	58.7%	46.7%	54.3%
The lists had very similar agendas	12.4%	12.1%	12.3%
Other	21.1%	30.7%	24.6%

20. In your opinion, were the various political actors and government institutions (including the security services) in your community working to ensure that the elections would be held in a free and fair manner?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	37.7%	27.6%	33.9%
To some extent	22.7%	32.2%	26.3%
No	22.4%	36.7%	27.8%
Don't know	17.2%	3.6%	12.1%

21. Did you witness or observe pressure or intimidation of political parties or candidates in your community during the preparations for the elections?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Yes	15.7%	16.9%	16.2%
No	74.9%	74.4%	74.8%
Don't know	9.3%	8.7%	9.1%

22. If you could choose, which elections would you most prefer to be held at the present time?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Legislative	16.9%	32.4%	22.8%
Local/Municipal	48.4%	30.9%	41.8%
Presidential	28.0%	32.0%	29.5%
None of the above	6.7%	4.7%	5.9%

Section 4: Political Views

23. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the performance of President M. Abbas?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Approve	48.3%	38.9%	44.8%
Disapprove	43.8%	58.9%	49.5%
Not sure/No answer	7.9%	2.2%	5.8%

24. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the performance of the government led by Dr. Rami Hamdallah?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Approve	42.9%	38.4%	41.2%
Disapprove	42.6%	57.1%	48.0%
Not sure/No answer	14.6%	4.4%	10.8%

25. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the performance of Ismail Haniyeh in the Gaza Strip?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Approve	33.4%	21.3%	28.9%
Disapprove	44.3%	75.3%	56.0%
Not sure/No answer	22.3%	3.3%	15.2%

26. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the performance of Hamas in the Gaza Strip?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Approve	30.4%	15.8%	24.9%
Disapprove	42.7%	81.8%	57.3%
Not sure/No answer	26.9%	2.4%	17.8%

27. Which one of the following parties is the closest to your political views?

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
DFLP	1.3%	1.1%	1.3%
Hizb al Tahrir	1.1%	0.4%	0.8%
Islamic Jihad	1.5%	2.9%	2.0%
PFLP	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%
Palestinian Struggle Front	0.9%	0.4%	0.8%
Al Mubadara	2.1%	3.1%	2.5%
Hamas	12.4%	14.0%	13.0%
Fatah	31.9%	46.0%	37.2%
Fida	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%
PPP	0.7%	0.0%	0.4%
Other	2.8%	1.8%	2.4%
None of the above	41.3%	26.4%	35.8%