

**Results of an Opinion Poll**

**Arab Spring**

**UN Initiative**

**Palestinian Political System**

**Internal Issues/Priorities**

**Elections**

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**Fieldwork: 22-24 November 2011**

**Sample Size: 1200 Palestinians in the West Bank & Gaza**

**Margin of error: + 3 %**

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**Introduction**

These are the results and analyses of the latest Arab World for Research & Development (AWRAD) specialized public opinion poll, focusing on the implications of the Arab Spring on Palestinians, as well as on internal priorities and reform needs. The poll also gauged Palestinian opinions on the effectiveness of the UN bid for statehood. In addition, the poll questioned Palestinians on their views on a number of internal issues and priorities including elections. The questionnaire was fielded November 23-25, 2011.  For this survey, 1200 Palestinians were interviewed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.  All socioeconomic groups were represented in the poll (for more details on the sample, please refer to www.awrad.org).  The margin of error in this poll is plus or minus three percent. The survey was carried out by AWRAD researchers under the supervision of Dr. Nader Said-Foqahaa, President of AWRAD.

**Analysis of Results**

**Overall Outlook: Divided about the future**

Palestinians are divided when it comes to the future with 49 percent who believe that things are moving in the right direction, whereas 46 percent have the opposite view. More Gazans (50 percent) believe that things are moving in the wrong direction than West Bank respondents (43 percent). This regional difference in views is due, in part, to personal economics, which 53 percent of Gazans report as having worsened during the last 2 years for their families, compared with 41 percent in the West Bank.

**Arab Spring: Democracy for Arab countries, but little impact at home**

Palestinians believe that recent Arab revolutions will have a positive impact on democracy and human rights in the region (63 percent). A majority of 56 percent believe that these revolutions will also lead to increased political support for Palestinians, and 44 percent believe that they will lead to improved living conditions for Palestinians in neighboring countries. Additionally, 38 percent believe that the Arab Spring will lead to more financial support to the Palestinians.

A majority of 60 percent believe that Arab revolutions will benefit Islamic groups regionally, with only a third of respondents stating that support for Hamas will increase as a result of the Arab Spring.

Overall, Palestinians are split on whether the Arab Spring will actually have a positive impact on the ground in Palestine. As much as 50 percent, for instance, believe changes in Egypt will have a positive effect on the Palestinian situation, whereas only 31 percent have a similar view of the impact of the uprising in Syria. These results were attained before the latest Egyptian elections and the decisive win of Islamic groups.

As to the potential for revolution taking place in Palestine, 28 percent predict that a revolution might take place against the government in the West Bank, and 30 percent predicted a revolution against the government in Gaza. The majority, however, do not believe that such an event will take place.

**Pursuit of UN Recognition: High support but low expectations**

The present poll reveals a slight increase in support of the UN bid for statehood; 70 percent compared to 64 percent in October. A quarter of the respondents remain neutral on the initiative with 11 percent opposed.

Support for the UN initiative, however, is matched by low expectations. As much as 50 percent believe that the UN effort has not lead to any changes, whereas 36 percent believe that the Palestinian cause was advanced, with 12 percent believing that it has been set back.

A majority of 52 percent of respondents view the UN bid as benefiting President Abbas. In addition, 48 percent believe it will similarly boost support for Fatah. Only 13 percent believe that it will lead to higher support for Hamas.

**Political Priorities: Reconciliation and external relations**

In terms of political priorities, Palestinians continue to place the highest importance on achieving national reconciliation with 96 percent stating that it is important or somewhat important.

The second political priority for respondents was to strengthen relations with Arab countries (92 percent), followed by sustaining ties with the West (87 percent) and continuing to pursue statehood through the UN (86 percent).

A majority of 79 percent believe that it is important or somewhat important to resort to non-violent means to end the occupation, while 64 feel the same way about the continuation of negotiations with Israel. At the bottom of the list of priorities is support for armed attacks to end occupation with 43 percent stating that it was important or somewhat important.

**Internal Priorities: economic development and job creation are top priorities**

When asked to choose the top internal priority, 45 percent opt for economic development and job creation, followed by improving the security situation at 17 percent and combating corruption in the West Bank at 16 percent. In fourth place is improving educational services (11 percent) followed by improved health services (7 percent). At the bottom of the list of priorities is combating corruption in Gaza (5 percent).

Within these results are a number of regional variations. While respondents in both Gaza and the West Bank and Gaza rank economic development as their first priority, the second priority among West Bank respondents was combating corruption within the government in the West Bank (22 percent), and the third priority was the improvement of the security situation (12 percent). In Gaza, the second priority was the improvement of the security situation (24 percent) and combating corruption within the Gaza government (11 percent). While improvement in education was equally prioritized by both Gaza and West Bank respondents, improvement to health services was more important to West Bank respondents (8 percent) compared with Gaza respondents (4 percent).

In general, over 82 percent of the respondents believe that corruption is present in both the West Bank and Gaza.

**Perception of Democracy and Transparency: Negative evaluations of both governments**

While Palestinians have negative views towards the governments in both Gaza and the West Bank when it comes to the observance of democracy and human rights, a higher percentage of respondents believe that the government in the West Bank is more democratic, transparent and respectful of human rights when compared with the government in Gaza. For example, 42 percent believe that the government of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad is transparent, compared with 23 percent who hold the same view of the Haniyeh government. In addition, 36 percent believe that the Fayyad government is accountable to the people, whereas 22 percent believe the same to be true about the Haniyeh government. While 44 percent believe that the Fayyad government respects freedom of speech, only 21 percent believe that the Haniyeh government does the same.

While views of the government in the West Bank are generally more positive than those of its Gaza counterpart, both governments have high negatives. For example, while 42 percent believe that the Fayyad government is transparent, 49 percent hold an opposite view. In addition, while 36 percent believe that the Fayyad government is accountable, 55 percent disagree.

The Gaza government under Haniyeh receives even lower favorability ratings with 22 percent stating that it is transparent, accountable, and democratic and respectful of freedom of speech. In contrast, 56 percent of the respondents disagree that it has the above-listed qualities.

While the performance of the Fayyad government is evenly evaluated between the West Bank and Gaza, the Haniyeh government receives a higher negative evaluation among Gaza respondents than West Bank respondents. For example, 47 percent of West Bank respondents view the performance of the Haniyeh government negatively in the field of respecting freedom of speech. The percentage jumps to 74 percent of Gaza respondents who feel the same way. Additionally, while 46 percent of the West Bank respondents view the performance of the Haniyeh government negatively in the field of accountability, the percentage is 73 percent in Gaza.

**Trust in Institutions and Political Parties: National institutions the most trusted**

Palestinians have the most trust in national institutions such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). The PLO continues to be the most trusted institution at 73 percent, followed by the PA (68 percent) and the PLC (65 percent). The PNC is regarded with trust by 59 percent. Palestinians also have relatively high trust in NGOs with 64 percent expressing that they trust them.

Fatah and its institutions also receive high rankings in terms of trust. For example, 68 percent say that they trust Fatah and 62 percent trust Fatah’s Central Committee and Revolutionary Council. Al-Mubadara (Mustafa Barghouthi’s Palestinian National Initiative) is trusted by 52 percent. As much as 49 percent express trust in youth groups, while 43 percent say that they trust Hamas and the PFLP. In addition, 39 percent say that they trust the Third Way, Hamas’s Political Bureau and Hamas’s Shura Council.

**Trust in Leaders: Marwan, Abbas, Sa’adat**

When asked to evaluate a number of leaders, respondents give Marwan Barghouthi their highest positive evaluation (86 percent), followed by President Abbas (72 percent) and Ahmad Sa’adat (69 percent). Mustafa Barghouthi and Salam Fayyad follow with 65 percent and 63 percent respectively. 49 percent say that they have a positive view of Khaled Mashaal and 41 percent of Naser Qudwi. Ahmed Qurie receives 37 percent followed immediately by Naser Eldin Al Shaer at 36 percent. Ramadan Shallah receives a positive rating from 33 percent and Mohamed Dahlan from 27 percent.

Lack of respondents’ familiarity may have played a role in these ratings. Of note, 39 percent chose “don’t know” when evaluating Ramadan Shallah; 38 percent the same for Al Shaer; and 33 percent did not evaluate Naser Qudwi.

**Presidential Elections: Abbas and Marwan Lead**

In a four-way race between Abbas (Fatah), I. Haniyeh (Hamas), Fayyad (independent) and Mustafa Barghouthi (independent), the results are as follows:

* Abbas at 44 percent.
* Haniyeh in second at 18 percent.
* Mustafa Barghouthi at 11 percent.
* Fayyad at 8 percent.
* 20 percent are undecided or will note vote.

In a scenario where Marwan Barghouthi is the candidate for Fatah, the results are as follows:

* Marwan Barghouthi at 40 percent
* Haniyeh at 17 percent
* Fayyad in third place at 16 percent
* Mustafa Barghouthi in fourth place at 9 percent.
* About 18 percent are undecided or will note vote.

In a presidential contest that includes 12 leaders of the Palestinian political spectrum, the following results emerge:

* Abbas receives 31 percent.
* Marwan is in second at 17 percent.
* Haniyeh is in third place at 12 percent
* Fayyad at 10 percent.
* Mustafa Barghouthi and Khaled Mashaal at 6 percent each.
* Sa’adat and Dahlan at 2 percent each.
* All other listed leaders (Qurie, Qudwi, Al Shaer and Shallah) receive 1 percent or less each.

**PLC Elections: Fatah in the lead**

According to AWRAD’s poll, the majority of Palestinians (85 percent) support the conduct of a parliamentary election next May 2012 as agreed to in the revised Cairo Agreement between Abbas and Mashaal. If these PLC elections took place today, the results are as follows:

* Fatah would receive 46 percent of the vote (49 percent in the West Bank and 42 percent in Gaza).
* Hamas would receive 17 percent of the vote (14 percent in the West Bank and 22 percent in Gaza).
* One quarter of the respondents say that they are either undecided or will not vote.
* All other small parties receive 1-3 percent each.

**Local Elections:**

If local elections were held today and only four lists ran, the results are as follows:

* A list of nationalists led by Fatah would receive about 43 percent (44 percent in the West Bank and 40 percent in Gaza).
* A list of Islamists led by Hamas would receive 17 percent (15 percent in the West Bank and 20 percent in Gaza).
* A list of independents would receive 18 percent (13 percent in the West Bank and 26 percent in Gaza).
* A list of leftists would receive about 4 percent.
* More than one fifth of the respondents would be undecided or would not vote.