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Arab World for Research and Development

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# Public opinion and living conditions among Gaza Palestinians amid Escalating Humanitarian Crisis



Subject  
**Press Release**

Date of Publication  
**26 May, 2025**

Date of data collection  
**12–14 May, 2025**

Sample size  
**551 Palestinians**  
currently residing  
in Gaza



**Overall Finding:** Gaza Palestinians endure starvation, insecurity, desperation, and displacement amid escalating humanitarian collapse; with an overwhelming majority hoping the war to end and to go back to pre-war life in Gaza.

## Highlights

- 98% of the Gaza population faces imminent starvation and insecurity.
- 94% suffer from anxiety and nightmares, and 77% feel sad due to the loss of at least one family member.
- 75% of IDPs plan to go back to their home communities when the war ends.
- 82% of Gaza 1948 refugees prefer to return to their home communities in historic Palestine (Israel).
- 60% select the UN and 22% the Palestinian Authority as the most trusted to manage humanitarian aid.
- 67% prefer a Palestinian leadership to govern Gaza.
- 85% believe that US President Donald Trump can end the war in Gaza.
- Gaza respondents are divided about the appointment of Mr. Hussein Al Sheikh.
- 38% of Gaza Palestinians would vote for Mohammad Dahlan as a future president, followed by Marwan Barghouti (21%), Hussein Al Sheikh (14%), and Mustafa Barghouti (6%).

**Ramallah, Palestine** – Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD) releases a new report capturing the voices of Gaza Palestinians who remain inside the besieged Strip. The data offers a stark and unfiltered portrait of widespread humanitarian suffering, internal displacement, psychological trauma, and shifting political aspirations amid one of the worst crises in Gaza’s modern history.

AWRAD conducted this public opinion survey between May 12 and 14, 2025, among Palestinians currently inside Gaza. At this time, a complete ban on humanitarian assistance has been in effect since March 2, while a more extensive military operation was ongoing. The same period witnessed the release of an Israeli–American citizen by Hamas. Simultaneously, US President Donald Trump was visiting Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

AWRAD conducted computer-assisted face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of 551 Palestinians in Gaza. The sampling design was developed to achieve a 95% confidence level with a  $\pm 4\%$  margin of error.

A two-step stratified sampling approach was employed. In the first step, the population was estimated at the Enumeration Area (EA) level. In the second step, each EA was further stratified by type of shelter—including buildings, makeshift shelters (both scattered and organized), and official shelters. This approach allowed AWRAD to account for significant demographic shifts caused by displacement during the ongoing conflict. (see Annex 1: Sample Distribution).

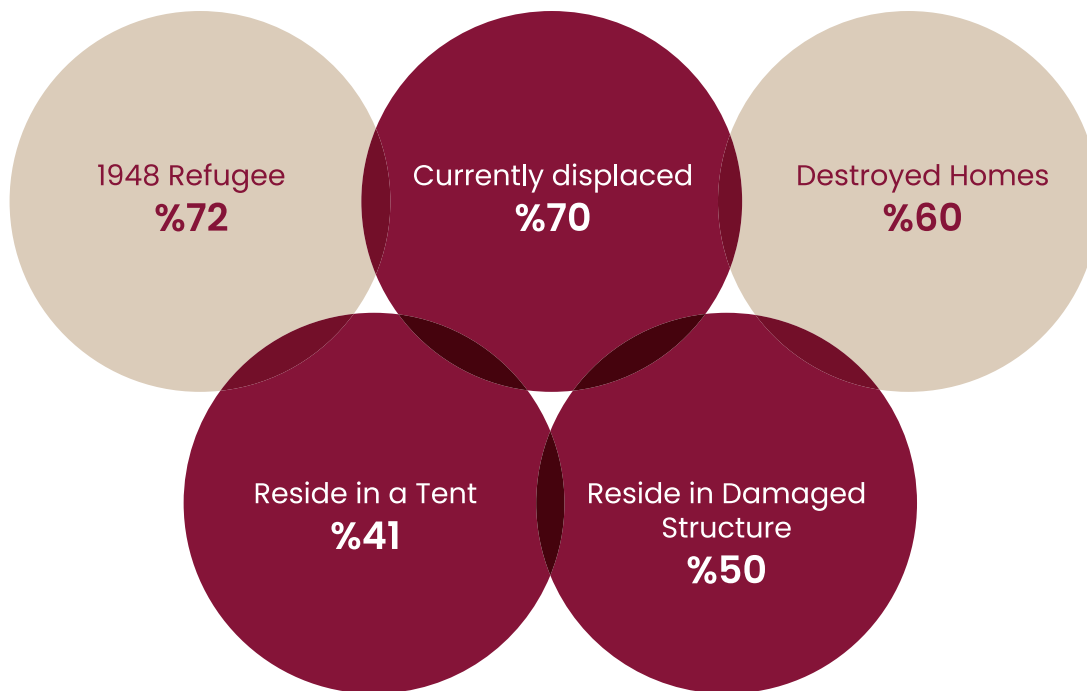
To ensure data reliability, AWRAD implemented rigorous field-level quality control (QC) and data quality

assessment (DQA) procedures. Field supervisors directly observed 10% of interviews, and callback validations were conducted with 20% of the sample. Additional quality assurance measures included monitoring interview durations and evaluating the internal consistency of responses to key questions and demographic indicators.

## 1- Displacement & Shelter

- 72% of Gaza Palestinians are registered refugees originating from communities in historic Palestine (now Israel).
- 70% of respondents continue to be internally displaced, while 30% have stayed or returned to their home communities.
- 60% of Gaza homes are either destroyed (60%) or partially damaged (30%).
- Half of the population resides in or around fully or partially damaged structures, while 41% live in tents or cloth shelters. Only 5% reside in formal shelters and another 4% in substandard structures such as stores, warehouses, or barns.

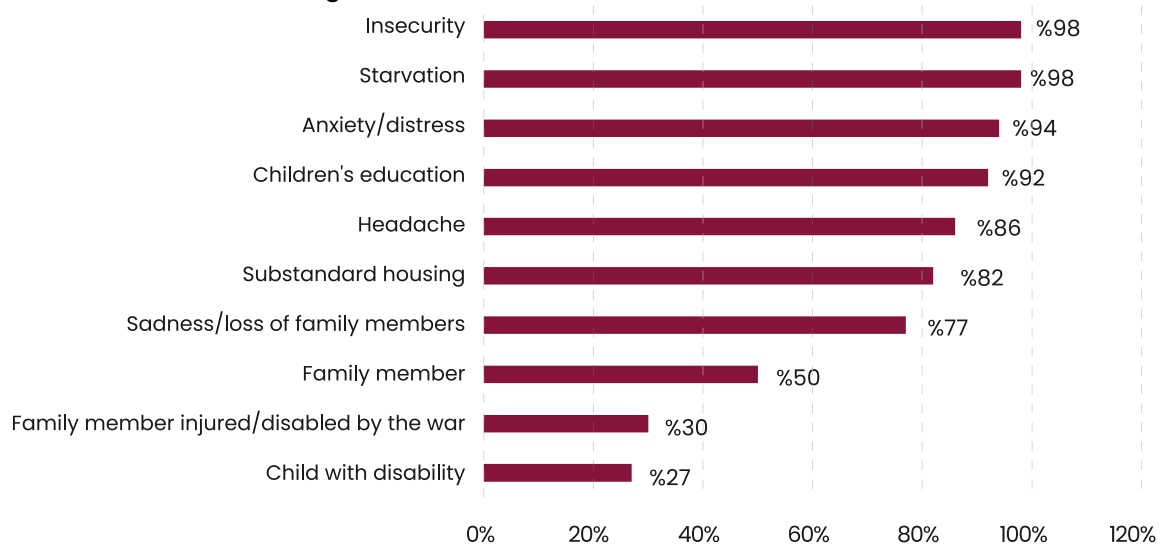
Figure 1: Displacement and Shelter Indicators in Gaza



## 2- Livelihood & Priorities

- 98% of survey respondents report experiencing starvation.
- 98% feel insecure about their lives and those of their family members.
- 94% report anxiety and nightmares, and 86% suffer from headaches.
- 92% of families with school-age children are highly concerned with their children's education.
- 82% report substandard housing conditions, including overcrowding and noise.
- 77% feel sadness due to the loss of one or more family members during the war.
- 27% of households care for at least one child with a disability, while 30% care for an injured family member, and 50% have at least one ill family member.

Figure 2: Risks and Priorities of Gaza Palestinians

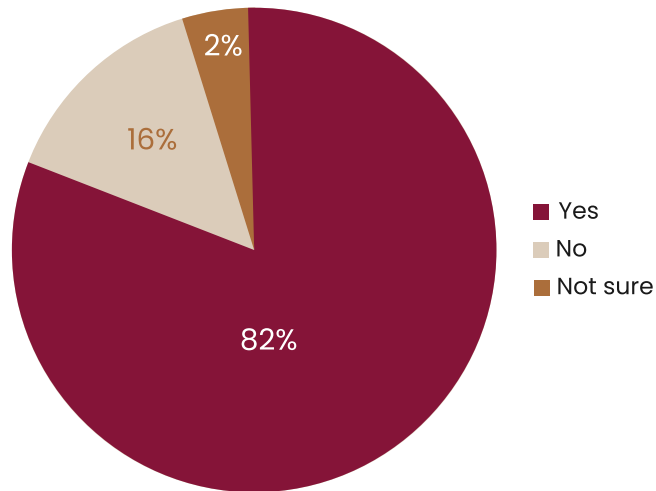


## 3- Where do Gaza Palestinians want to be?

- If given the option to return to and live under normal conditions in their place of origin in 1948 Palestine (Israel), 82% of Gaza's 1948 refugees say they would return.

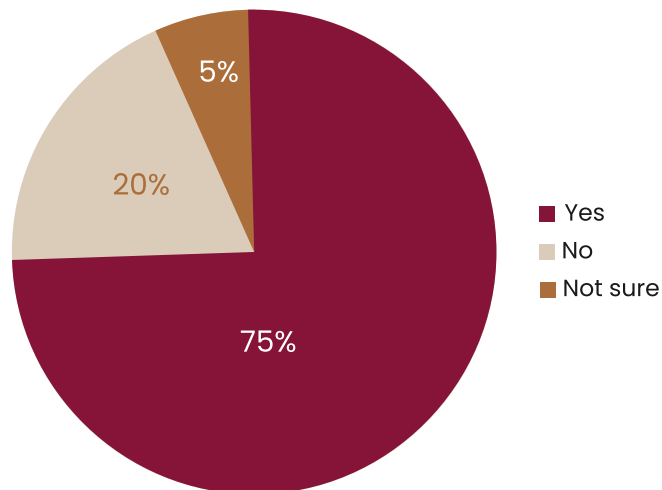


Figure 3: If given a choice to return to, and live under normal conditions, in their place of origin in 1948 Palestine (Israel), would you return?



- If the war ends and life returns to “normal,” 75% of Gaza Palestinians would return to their homes. One-fifth say they would not, mainly due to uncertainty about the prospects for return.

Figure 4: If the war ends and life returns to normal as it was before, do you plan to return to/stay in your place of residence in the Gaza Strip?



- When presented with four options under current conditions, most Palestinians in Gaza continue to favour destinations within present-day and historic Palestine. The largest share (40%) would prefer to remain in Gaza, 28% would choose to return to their original communities in the 1948 areas (now Israel), and 6% would opt to relocate to the West Bank. In contrast, 26% would choose to emigrate outside of historic Palestine.

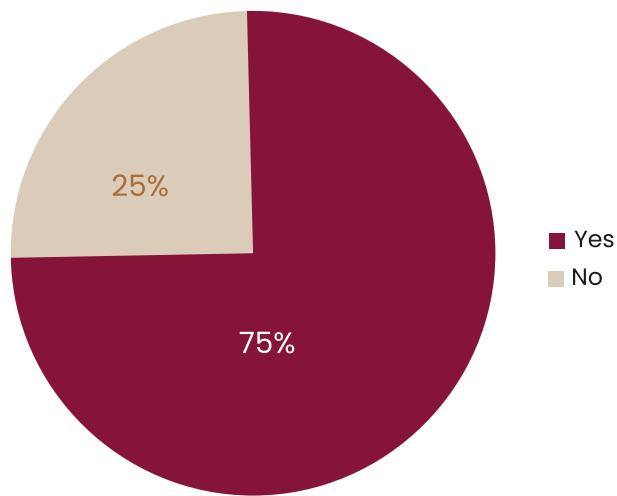


- At present, a majority of respondents (62%) consider staying in Gaza the most feasible and realistic option. In contrast, 26% view emigration as the most viable solution, while 7% believe that returning to their original communities in 1948 historic Palestine (Israel) is the most feasible.

#### 4- President Donald Trump: Hopes and Expectations

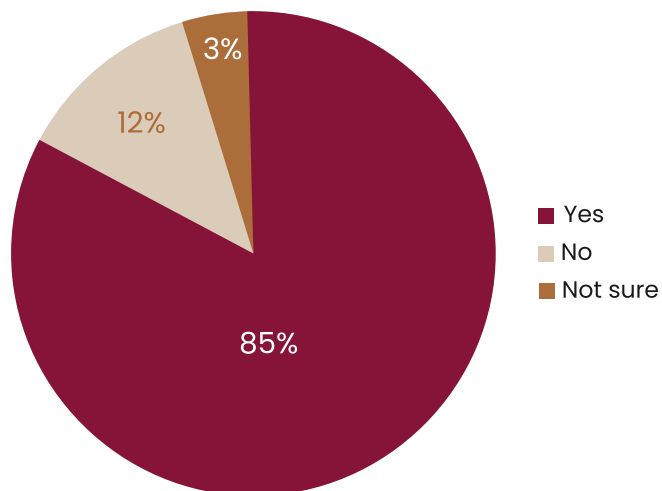
Three-quarters of Palestinians in Gaza reported following the news of Edan Alexander's release, and an equal proportion (75%) expressed support for his release by Hamas.

Figure 5: Support for Edan Alexander's Release



- 85% believe that U.S. President Donald Trump has the ability to end the war in Gaza, while 58% believe he actually will.

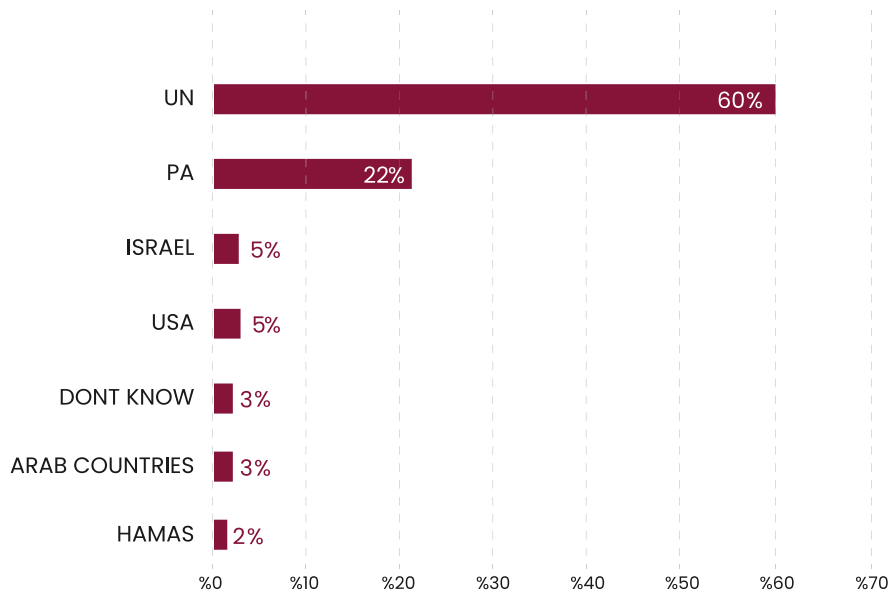
Figure 6: Do you believe that US President Donald Trump can stop the war in Gaza?



## 5- Humanitarian Assistance and Governance

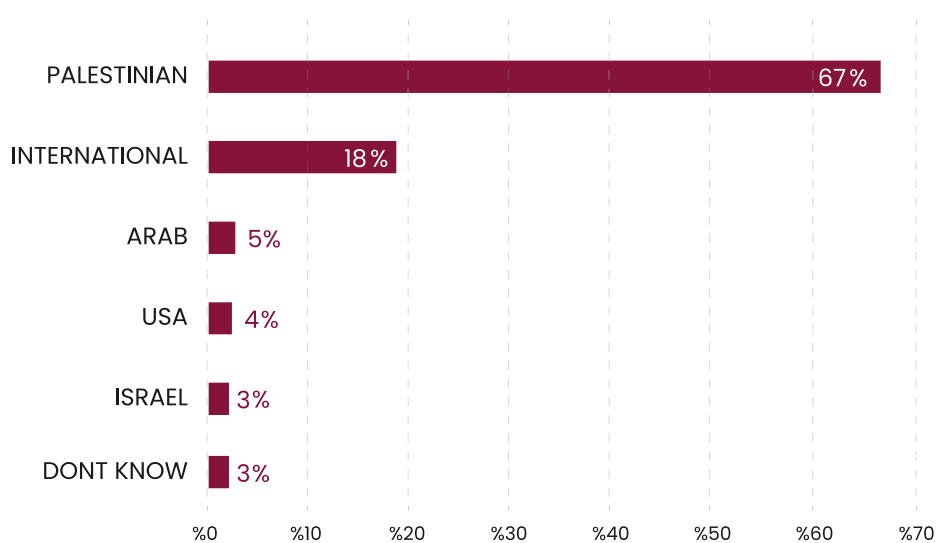
60% of respondents select the UN as the most trusted actor to manage and deliver humanitarian assistance to Gaza followed by 22% who trust the Palestinian Authority. In contrast, only 5% trust the United States, and fewer than 5% trust Israel. Less than 2% express trust in Arab governments or Hamas to distribute aid.

Figure 7: Trust in actors regarding the management of humanitarian aid



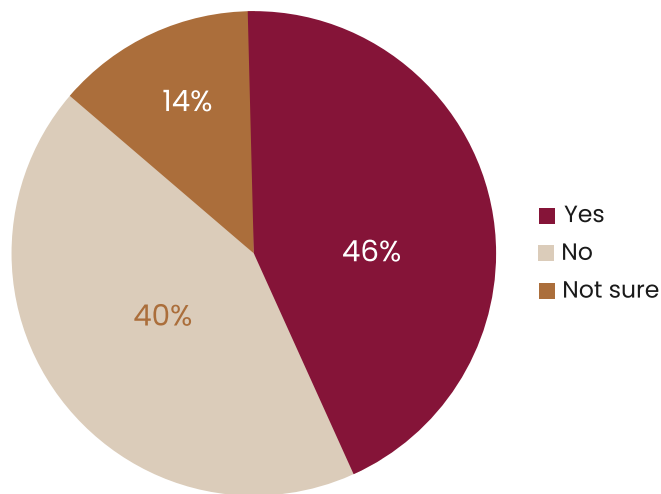
Two-thirds of respondents prefer that the governance of Gaza be led by Palestinian actors, while 18% favor an international arrangement, and 5% support an Arab arrangement. Fewer than 3% would choose the United States or Israel to govern the Strip.

Figure 8: Which actor do you support to govern Gaza?



46% of Gaza respondents support the appointment of Mr. Husein Al Sheikh as Vice Chair of the PLO's Executive Committee and the Vice President of the Palestinian Authority. In contrast, 40% oppose his appointment, while 14% are unsure or have no opinion.

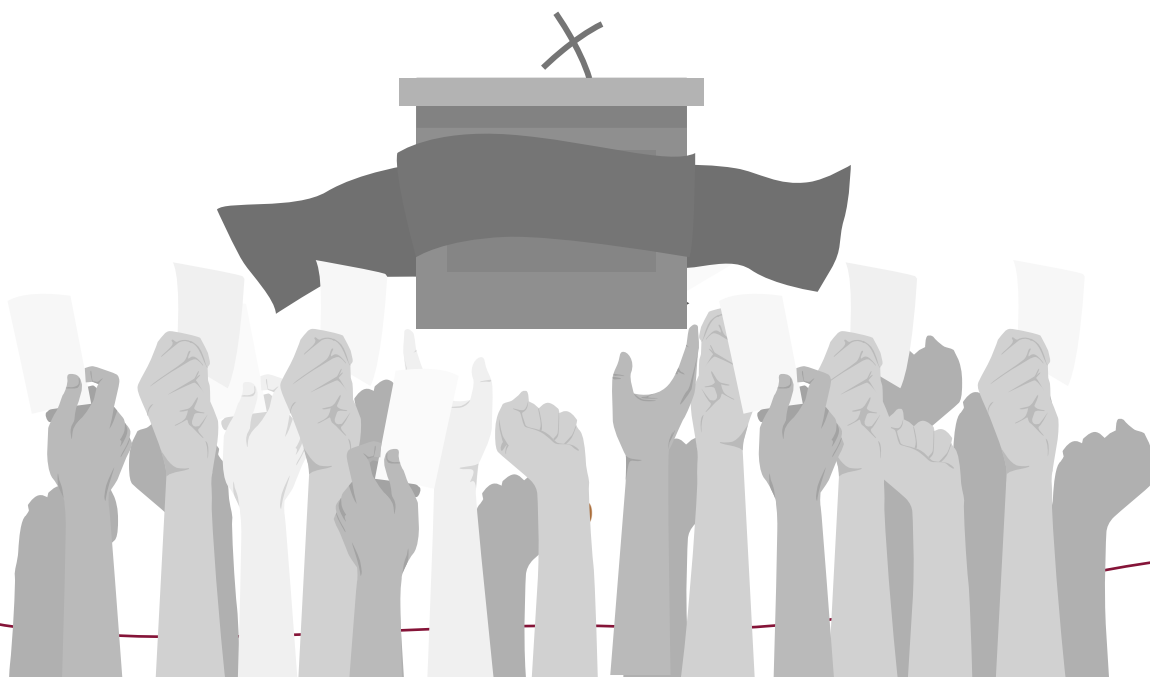
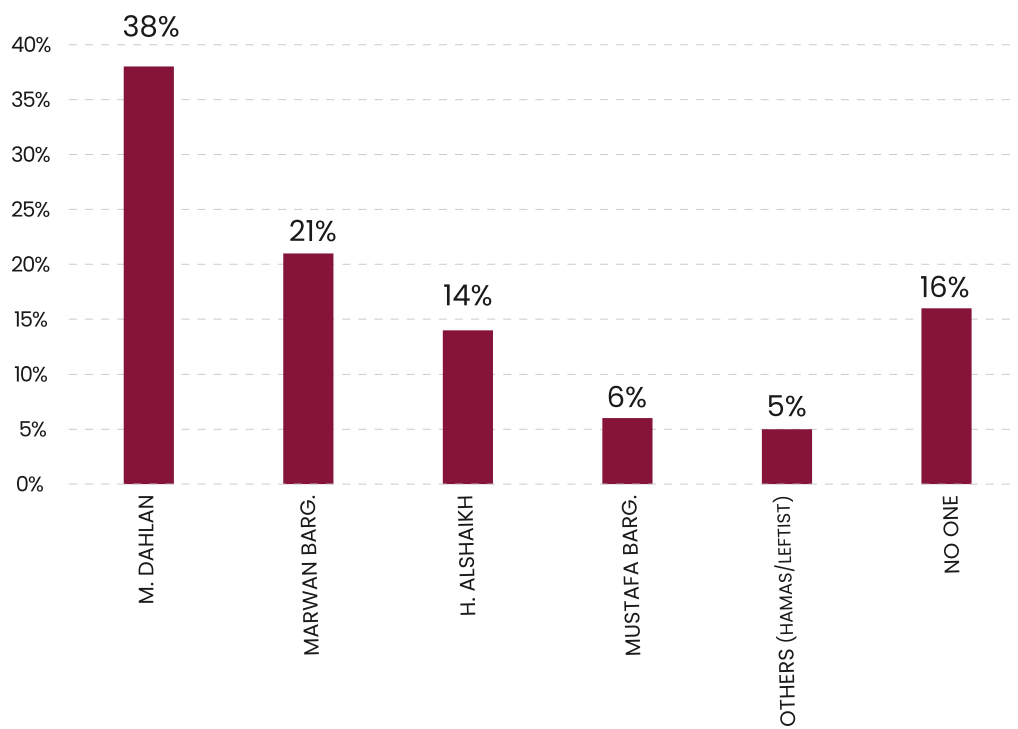
Figure 9: Do you support the appointment of Mr. Hussein Al Sheikh....?



Respondents are divided on the merit of Mr. Al Sheikh appointment. For example, 44% believe it will help achieve national unity, 40% disagree. Regarding national liberation, 46% think his appointment will not be helpful. Expectations are highest in the area of institution-building: 50% believe his appointment would contribute positively, while 35% disagree. If a presidential election were held among Gaza Palestinians today, 38% would vote for Mohammed Dahlan, followed by Marwan Barghouti (21%), Husein Al Sheikh (14%), and Mustafa Barghouti (6%). Candidates from leftist and Islamist groups received less than 2% each.



Figure 10: Support for Presidential Candidates among Gaza Palestinians



## Annex 1: Sample Distribution

| Category                          | Subcategory                                 | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------|
| Gender                            | Female                                      | 49%        |
|                                   | Male                                        | 51%        |
| Original Governorate of Residence | Gaza                                        | 34%        |
|                                   | Khan Younis                                 | 20%        |
|                                   | North Gaza                                  | 20%        |
|                                   | Deir al-Balah                               | 15%        |
|                                   | Rafah                                       | 12%        |
|                                   |                                             |            |
| Level of Education                | 9 years or less                             | 41%        |
|                                   | 10–12 years                                 | 30%        |
|                                   | Diploma (1–2 years)                         | 8%         |
|                                   | Bachelor's degree or higher                 | 21%        |
| Refugee Status                    | Refugee                                     | 72%        |
|                                   | Non-refugee                                 | 28%        |
| Current Displacement Status       | Displaced                                   | 31%        |
|                                   | Not Displaced                               | 69%        |
| Current Governorate               | Deir al-Balah                               | 49%        |
|                                   | Khan Younis                                 | 31%        |
|                                   | Gaza                                        | 23%        |
|                                   | North Gaza                                  | 11%        |
| Shelter Type                      | Tent in a camp or informal shelter          | 36%        |
|                                   | Damaged apartment or house                  | 35%        |
|                                   | Storage units/warehouses                    | 5%         |
|                                   | Makeshift                                   | 5%         |
|                                   | UNRWA-run shelters/schools                  | 3%         |
|                                   | Palestinian government-run shelters/schools | 1%         |