



المركز الفلسطيني
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PRESS RELEASE

Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No (53)

One month after the end of the Gaza War: a drop is found in the level of satisfaction with war achievements, in support for Hamas and Ismail Haniyeh, and in support for an armed intifada; but the public still favors Hamas' "way" over negotiations, and Hamas and Haniyeh are still more popular than Fatah and Mahmud Abbas

25-27 September 2014

These are the results of the latest poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip between 25-27 September 2014. The period before the poll witnessed successful implementation of the cease fire reached a month earlier after more than 50 days of armed confrontations in the Gaza Strip. But the reconciliation government failed to operate in the Gaza Strip during the period of war or ceasefire, and Fatah and Hamas exchanged accusations over who was responsible for that failure. The period of the fieldwork witnessed improvement in the Fatah-Hamas relations due to progress in reconciliation follow up talks in Cairo. It also witnessed Palestinian renewed activities at the UN with President Abbas delivering a speech at the UN General Assembly. This press release covers public perception of the war outcome, domestic Palestinian developments, elections, internal balance of power, and others. Total size of the sample is 1200 adults interviewed face to face in 120 randomly selected locations. Margin of error is 3%.

For further details, contact PSR director, Dr. Khalil Shikaki, or Walid Ladadweh at tel 02-296 4933 or email pcpsr@pcpsr.org.

Main Findings:

This post-war poll was conducted one month after the end of the war in the Gaza Strip. This report highlights important changes in public perception compared to the findings we obtained in our previous

poll which was conducted a month ago, immediately after the war end. Findings show a drop in satisfaction with the achievements of the war, probably due to the continued siege and blockade of the Gaza Strip. A drop was also found in the percentage of those who believed Hamas won the war, in the percentage of opposition to dissolving armed groups in the Gaza Strip, and in the popularity of Hamas and Ismail Haniyeh. Findings also show a rise in the popularity of Abbas and Fatah. Support for a third armed intifada went down in this poll as support for negotiations increased and a majority supported the two-state solution.

Despite the drop in support for the Islamists, Hamas and Haniyeh remain more popular than Fatah and Abbas. Moreover, a majority still supports launching rockets against Israel if the siege and the blockade are not ended. Furthermore, satisfaction with Abbas remains low. Finally, two thirds of the public oppose merging Hamas' al Qassam Brigades into the Palestinian National Security Forces.

Findings also show significant drop in the level of optimism regarding the chances for a successful implementation of the reconciliation agreement and indicate continued drop in the level of satisfaction with the performance of the reconciliation government. Indeed, a majority supports replacing the reconciliation government with a national unity government made up of factional leaders and politicians. Despite all that, a majority wants the reconciliation government to control crossings with Egypt and Israel and wants it to have control over Gaza's public sector including those in the security services.

Finally, findings show that a majority of the public has not heard about Abbas' plan to seek a deadline for ending Israeli occupation and establishing a Palestinian state. A majority of those who have heard about it do support it despite the fact that a majority expects the plan to fail.

(1) Gaza War:

- Belief that Hamas has won the Gaza War drops from 79% a month ago to 69% in this poll; 22% believe the two sides were losers. In the Gaza Strip, only 58% say Hamas came out a winner.
- Percentage of satisfaction with war achievements compared to the human and material losses sustained by the Gaza Strip drops from 59% a month ago to 49% in this poll. 50% are currently dissatisfied with the achievements. In the Gaza Strip, 59% are dissatisfied with war achievements.
- Despite that, an overwhelming majority of 80% supports the launching of rockets from the Gaza Strip at Israel if the siege and blockade are not ended. Support for launching rockets drops in the Gaza Strip to 72%.
- A majority of 57% believes that launching rockets from populated areas in the Gaza Strip is justified and 39% say it is unjustified. Among Gazans, belief that it is justified to launch rockets from populated areas drops to 48% while increasing in the West Bank to 62%.
- Opposition to disarming armed groups in the Gaza Strip drops from 57% a month ago to 50% in this poll. In the Gaza Strip opposition to disarming these groups drops to 42%.
- About two thirds (65%) believe that Iran, Turkey and Qatar combined have given the Gaza Strip the ability to remain steadfast against Israeli attacks and to be able to continue to launch rockets during the war; only 7% believe Egypt too has contributed to that.
- Moreover, only 21% describe Egypt's role in the ceasefire negotiations as positive while a majority of 57% describe it as negative.
- When asked about the party that should finance the Gaza reconstruction with five options provided to respondents, 30% said it should be Israel, 24% said donor countries, 23% said Arab countries, 10% said Palestinian taxpayers, and 10% said Hamas. When only two options were provided, 50% said Palestinian taxpayers should finance the reconstruction and 19% selected Hamas.

(2) Presidential and Legislative Elections:

- If new presidential elections are held today and only two were nominated, Ismail Haniyeh and Mahmoud Abbas, the former would win a majority of 55% (compared to 61% a month ago) and the latter 38% (compared to 32% a month ago). Votes for Abbas and Haniyeh are close in the Gaza Strip with the former receiving 47% and the latter 50%. In the West Bank, Abbas receives 33% and Haniyeh 57%.
- Level of satisfaction with the performance of Abbas stays as it was a month ago at 39%. Satisfaction with Abbas stood at 50% before the Gaza war.
- If presidential elections were between Marwan Barghouti and Haniyeh, the former would receive 48% and the latter would receive 46% of the participants' votes. A month ago, Barghouti received 45% and Haniyeh 49%. Before the Gaza War Barghouti received the support of 58% and Haniyeh 38%.
- If presidential elections were between three: Mahmud Abbas, Marwan Barghouti and Ismail Haniyeh, Abbas would receive 22%, Barghouti 30%, and Haniyeh 43%.
- If new legislative elections were held today with the participation of all factions, 72% say they would participate in such elections. Of those who would participate, 39% say they would vote for Hamas and 36% say they would vote for Fatah, 5% would vote for all other third parties combined, and 21% are undecided. A month ago, vote for Hamas stood at 46% and Fatah at 31%. Before the Gaza war vote for Hamas stood at 32% and Fatah 40%. Vote for Hamas in the Gaza Strip stands in this poll at 40% and for Fatah at 39%. In the West Bank vote for Hamas stands at 38% and Fatah at 33%. These findings indicate a significant drop in Hamas' popularity in the West Bank compared to the findings a month ago when it stood at 47%. They also indicate a significant rise in Fatah's popularity in the West Bank from 27% to 33% during the same period.
- A majority of 69% wants elections to take place within few to six months from today, 11% want them to take place after a year or more, and 15% do not want elections.

(3) Domestic Conditions:

- Positive evaluation of conditions in the Gaza Strip continues to drop to 9% in this poll compared to 20% a month ago and 24% three months ago. Positive evaluation of conditions in the West Bank continues to drop as well standing at 24% in this poll compared to 32% a month ago and 33% three months ago.
- Perception of safety and security in the Gaza Strip increase from 22% a month ago to 31% in this poll. Three months ago, before the Gaza war, the percentage of safety and security in the Gaza Strip stood at 64%. In the West Bank perception of safety and security remains unchanged compared to a month ago, standing today at 47%; three months ago, it stood at 51%.
- Findings show that the percentage of Gazans who say they seek immigration to other countries stands at 44%; in the West Bank, the percentage stands at 22%.
- Viewership of Hamas TV, al Aqsa, drops from 37% a month ago to 24% in this poll. Al Jazeera viewership rises from 21% to 24%, Palestine TV from 16% to 20%, Maan-Mix from 11% to 12%, and al Arabiyya from 5% to 7%.
- Perception of corruption in PA institutions stands at 78% compared to 81% three months ago.
- 23% say there is press freedom in the West Bank and an identical percentage say there is press freedom in the Gaza Strip.
- 29% of the Palestinian public say people in the West Bank can criticize the authority in the West Bank without fear. By contrast, a larger percentage of 35% say people in the Gaza Strip can criticize the authorities in Gaza without fear.

(4) The reconciliation government and its role in Gaza after the war:

- Optimism about the success of reconciliation and the end of the split drops from 69% a month ago to 53% in this poll. Pessimism rises from 28% to 43%. Optimism remains high in the Gaza Strip (64%) compared to the West Bank (48%).
- Satisfaction with the performance of the reconciliation government drops from 46% a month ago to 36% in this poll. Dissatisfaction rises from 46% to 54%. It is worth mentioning that three months ago, right after its establishment, 61% had confidence in the reconciliation government.
- Indeed, 57% prefer to get rid of the reconciliation government and form a unity government in which leaders and politicians from all major factions would participate; 35% oppose such a step and prefer to keep the reconciliation government.
- A majority of 50% (64% in the Gaza Strip and 43% in the west bank) wants to place the reconciliation government in charge of the Rafah crossing, but 37% prefer to keep it under Hamas' control. The same applies to the crossings with Israel with 52% (63% in the Gaza Strip and 47% in the West Bank) wishing to place them under the control of the reconciliation government.
- 46% want the reconciliation government to be in charge of the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip and 34% want it placed in the hands of Hamas.
- Satisfaction with the implementation of the reconciliation agreement drops from 61% three months ago to 48% in this poll.
- 45% believe that Hamas has established a shadow government in the Gaza Strip and 40% reject this claim. But the belief that Hamas was responsible for hindering the functioning of the reconciliation government does not exceed 25% (37% in the Gaza Strip and 18% in the West Bank) while 36% believe that the PA and president Abbas were to blame for that and 18% blame the head of the reconciliation government.
- In light of the dissatisfaction with the performance of the reconciliation government, 52% believe the PA has become a burden on the Palestinian people and only 41% believe it is an accomplishment. Three months ago, right after the formation of the reconciliation government, 50% said the PA was an accomplishment and 45% said it was a burden.
- 80% want the reconciliation government to pay the salaries of the public sector in the Gaza Strip and 17% oppose that.
- 68% want the reconciliation government to be in charge of supervising the work of the employees of Gaza security sector who worked in the past under Hamas government; 29% disagree with that, wanting instead to keep these employees under Hamas' control.
- Nonetheless, 68% agree with Hamas' demand that security and police should remain under its control during the next 6 months, up until the elections; 28% disagree with that.

(5) Peace Process:

- Only 40% of the public has heard and 58% have not heard about President Abbas' plan to set a deadline for ending occupation and building a state. Among those who have heard about the plan 72% support it and 25% oppose it. Only 42% of those who have heard about the plan believe the chances for its success were medium or high and 58% believe its chances for success were low or non-existent.
- A majority of 53% supports the two-state solution and 46% oppose it. A month ago, 49% supported it and 50% opposed it.
- The public is divided over the most effective means of ending occupation and building a Palestinian state: 44% believe that armed confrontation is the most effective means; 29% believe negotiation is the best means, and 23% believe that popular non-violent resistance is the most

effective route to statehood. A month ago, 53% said armed confrontations were the most effective means while 22% selected negotiations, and 20% selected popular non-violent resistance.

- 60% say that the two-state solution is no longer practical due to Israeli settlement expansion and 36% think it is still practical. Similarly, 72% believe that the chances for establishing a Palestinian state next to the state of Israel in the next five years are slim or non-existent. Despite that, only 27% support and 71% oppose the abandonment of the two-state solution and the adoption of the one-state solution.
- A majority of 59% support and 35% oppose committing the reconciliation government to accept existing agreements with Israel. A month ago, 54% supported this position and 40% opposed it.
- The public is divided equally over the Arab Peace Initiative with 47% supporting it and an identical number opposed to it. But a majority of 56% is opposed to recognition of Israel as a Jewish state while 41% support this recognition.
- In the absence of viable negotiations, 83% support joining more international organizations; 79% support joining the International Criminal Court; and 63% favor resort to popular non-violent resistance. The public is divided equally over a return to armed intifada; a month ago 60% supported this alternative, but three months ago support did not exceed 41%. Findings show also that a majority of 53% is opposed to the dissolution of the PA while 44% support it.
- 57% believe that massive popular demonstrations could contribute to ending the Israeli occupation but 42% disagree with that.
- By contrast, a larger majority of 81% favors Hamas way of resisting occupation. Support for Hamas' way stood at 88% one month ago.
- Furthermore, 63% favor the transfer of Hamas' armed approach to the West Bank and 34% oppose that. One month ago, support for this transfer stood at 72%.
- In this regard, only 30% support the merging of Hamas' al Qassam Brigades into the PA's National Security Forces as a way of meeting the demand for disarming Hamas and 67% oppose that.

(6) Most vital Palestinian goals and the main problems confronting Palestinians today:

- 50% believe that the *first* most vital Palestinian goal should be to end Israeli occupation in the areas occupied in 1967 and build a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital. By contrast, 28% believe the first most vital goal should be to obtain the right of return of refugees to their 1948 towns and villages, 12% believe that it should be to build a pious or moral individual and a religious society, one that applies all Islamic teachings, and 10% believe that the first and most vital goal should be to establish a democratic political system that respects freedoms and rights of Palestinians.
- The most serious problem confronting Palestinian society today is the continuation of occupation and settlement activities in the eyes of 30% of the public, while 26% say it is the spread of poverty and unemployment; 22% believe the most serious problem is corruption in some public institutions, and 18% believe it is the siege of the Gaza Strip and the closure of its crossings.

This PSR Poll has been conducted with the support of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Ramallah.

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