



المركز الفلسطيني للبحوث السياسية والمسحية

Palestinian Center for POLICY and SURVEY RESEARCH

Poll

Survey Research Unit

3 July 2019

The **Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)** is an independent nonprofit institution and think tank of policy analysis and academic research. PSR was founded with the goal of advancing scholarship and knowledge on immediate issues of concern to Palestinians in three areas: domestic politics and government, strategic analysis and foreign policy, and public opinion polls and survey research. The center engages in several activities. It conducts academic and policy analysis studies. It organizes socio-political surveys and public opinion polls on current Palestinian political and social attitudes. It sponsors study groups and task forces on issues of critical importance to the Palestinians. Finally, it organizes conferences, public lectures, and briefings on current public policy issues. PSR is dedicated to promoting objective and nonpartisan research and analysis and to encouraging a better understanding of Palestinian domestic and international environment in an atmosphere of free debate and exchange of ideas.

This poll is part of PSR series of regular polls.

This poll has been conducted in cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Ramallah



For further information, please contact

Dr. Khalil Shikaki or Walid Ladadweh
at the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research

Ramallah, Palestine
Telephone 02 296 4933
Fax 02 296 4934

e-mail: pcpsr@pcpsr.org
<http://www.pcpsr.org>

Press Release

Public Opinion Poll No (72)

Ninety percent do not trust the US Administration, 80% supported the boycott of the Bahrain workshop, 80% view the participation of Arab countries as an abandonment of the Palestinian cause, three quarters want the PA to reject the US “Deal of the Century,” and the majority expects Israel to annex parts of the West Bank. Despite fears of PA collapse, the majority supports PA decision not to accept partial custom revenues. On domestic issues, Shtayyeh’s government has not yet earned public confidence, the leak about ministers’ salary raise deepens perceptions of PA corruption, and the majority rejects setting preconditions for reconciliation

27-30 June 2019

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 27-30 June 2019. The period before the conduct of the poll witnessed several developments including the formation of a new government led by Mohammad Shtayyeh, the intensification of the PA financial crisis as the PA was unable to provide full salary payment to its public sector, and the leaking of documents indicating illegal salary hikes for ministers by the previous government. It also witnessed the continued failure of reconciliation talks between Fatah and Hamas and the inability of Israel and Hamas to reach a long term hudna or cessation of violence. Jifna, a predominantly Christian town in the West Bank, came under attack from some Palestinian Muslims who had quarreled earlier with one of its residents. Despite the personal nature of the attack, it nonetheless generated concerns about Muslim-Christian tensions. In Israel, the right wing won the elections but could not form a government leading to the dissolution of the new parliament with new snap elections called for in September. This Israeli development led the Trump Administration to postpone the release of its long-awaited peace deal, the so-call “Deal of the Century.” This was followed by the holding of an economic workshop in Bahrain in which the US Administration unveiled the economic side of its peace plan. Finally, tensions escalated in the region after Iran downed a US unmanned drone, a further threat to the region as concerns grow about a possible war. This press release addresses many of these issues and covers other matters such as Palestinian parliamentary and presidential elections, general conditions in the Palestinian territories, the peace process and the future possible directions for Palestinians in the absence of a viable peace process. 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:

Findings of the second quarter of 2019 show a widespread rejection of the US Administration, the “Deal of the Century,” and the Bahrain workshop: Ninety percent say that they do not believe or trust the US administration; about 80% supported the PA decision to boycott the Bahrain workshop; three quarters want the PA to reject the Trump peace plan when released; and more than three quarters believe that the US economic plan will not bring them economic prosperity. Similarly, an overwhelming majority reject the participation of Arab countries, like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan, in the Bahrain workshop and 80% view that participation as an abandonment of the Palestinian cause.

Findings also show that half of the public continues to oppose the two-state solution, a solution which is viewed by the majority as impractical or infeasible due to West Bank settlement expansion. The public is divided into three groups in its assessment of the most effective means of ending the Israeli occupation: armed action comes first followed by negotiations and then popular nonviolent resistance. Findings show that the majority expects the future Israeli government, that will be formed after the upcoming elections, to annex settlement areas in the West Bank, wage war against the Gaza Strip, and take measures that would bring about PA collapse.

On internal matters, the public is not yet willing to give the Shtayyeh government a passing grade, as most view its performance similar or worse than that of the previous government while a small number views positively that performance. Similarly, findings show that despite public support for the PA decision to refuse to accept the Israeli transfer of partial custom revenues, the majority is worried that this decision could lead to PA collapse. A large majority, more than two-thirds, views the sudden discovery that the former government has illegally increased the salaries of its ministers as an indication that PA corruption is deep rooted while only a quarter believes that PA corruption is limited and subject to accountability.

The majority of the public remains pessimistic about the prospects for reconciliation. A majority is opposed to those preconditions imposed on reconciliation by Fatah, i.e., the “one gun” demand, and Hamas, i.e., the demand to keep the “resistance arms.” Nonetheless, two thirds of those who oppose these two preconditions reject Abbas’s demand to disarm Hamas. Those who support preconditions are divided equally: one half sides with Hamas’s and the other with Fatah’s. As we found in previous polls, the overwhelming majority demands the immediate removal of sanctions imposed previously by Abbas against Hamas and the Gaza Strip.

Finally, findings show that the domestic balance of power remains largely stable compared to the first quarter. Fatah did manage to increase the gap in its popularity with Hamas slightly in its favor. But the gap in the vote for Abbas vs. Ismail Haniyyeh, in a presidential election, narrowed slightly in Haniyyeh’s favor. Moreover, the demand for Abbas’s resignation continues to decline despite the fact that it remains very high. The overwhelming majority of the public demands the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections and oppose elections restricted to the parliament.

(1) The Bahrain economic workshop and Trump peace plan:

- An overwhelming majority of the Palestinians (79%) supports the PA decision to boycott the Bahrain economic workshop while 15% are opposed.
- After describing the details of the economic part of the US peace plan, we asked public if it thinks the US Administration will succeed in implementing it: two thirds (68%) say it will not succeed and 22% say it will.
- Similarly, the overwhelming majority of the public (76%) says that based on what it has heard about the outcome of the Bahrain workshop, it does not expect the US economic plan to lead to Palestinian prosperity; 17% do expect it to do that.
- An overwhelming majority of 90% indicates that it does not trust the US Administration when it says that the goal of the Bahrain workshop is to improve Palestinian economic conditions; only 6% trust the US Administration.
- Similarly, 80% say that the participation of Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan, in the Bahrain workshop signifies an Arab abandonment of the Palestinians while 12% believe the participation of these countries signifies support for the Palestinians.

- When asked if it believes that the PA leadership will show willingness to accept the Trump peace plan in order to benefit from its economic dimension, about two thirds (65%) say it will not while 27% say it will.
- When asked to choose between economic prosperity and independence, the overwhelming majority (83%) opts for independence; only 15% chose economic prosperity.
- Can economic prosperity be achieved under Israeli occupation? 73% say it cannot, as restrictions imposed by the occupation impede prosperity, while 24% say that it is possible to have prosperity while still under occupation.
- When we shift to the political dimension of the Trump peace plan, the overwhelming majority (86%) says that based on what it has heard so far about the plan, it feels pessimistic about its content while only 9% express optimism.
- We asked the public if it thinks acceptance of the Trump peace plan by the PA would lead to the end of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank: 85% say no; only 10% say yes it would.
- When asked if it thinks the Trump peace plan permits Israel to annex a large part of the West Bank, a large majority of 72% says it does and only 22% say it does not.
- Almost three quarters (73%) believe that in response to Palestinian rejection of the Trump peace plan, the US will impose further sanctions on the Palestinians; 18% say it will amend its plan in case of Palestinian rejection.
- Nonetheless, three quarters believe that the Palestinian leadership should reject the US plan; 15% say it should accept it with reservations; and 4% believe it should accept it without reservation.
- Moreover, a majority of 66% is opposed and 24% is not opposed to a resumption of dialogue between the Palestinian leadership and the Trump Administration. Official contacts between the PA and the US government were suspended by the PA after the US, in December 2017, recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

(2) Presidential and parliamentary elections:

- Only 41% of the public expect elections, parliamentary or parliamentary and presidential, to take place in the Palestinian territories in the near future; 47% believe no elections will take place.
- An overwhelming majority (71%) wants elections to be for both, a parliament and a president, while only 11% want parliamentary elections only. 13% do not want any elections.
- If elections were held for a parliament and a president, 73% want Hamas to participate and to allow them in the Gaza Strip while 21% say they do not want Hamas to participate or allow elections in the Gaza Strip.
- 57% of the public want president Abbas to resign while 35% want him to remain in office. Three months ago, 60% said they want Abbas to resign. Demand for Abbas' resignation stands at 49% in the West Bank and 71% in the Gaza Strip. Three months ago, demand for Abbas resignation stood at 55% in the West Bank and 68% in the Gaza Strip.
- Level of satisfaction with the performance of president Abbas stands at 37% and dissatisfaction at 58%. Level of satisfaction with Abbas stands at 42% in the West Bank and 27% in the Gaza Strip. Three months ago, satisfaction with Abbas stood at 34% (40% in the West Bank and 24% in the Gaza Strip).
- If new presidential elections were held today and only two were nominated, Mahmoud Abbas and Ismail Haniyeh, the former would receive 48% and the latter 42% of the vote (compared to 51% for Abbas and 41% for Haniyeh three months ago). In the Gaza Strip,

Abbas receives 43% of the vote (compared to 47% three months ago) and Haniyeh receives 52% (compared to 51% three months ago). In the West Bank, Abbas receives 52% (compared to 55% three months ago) and Haniyeh 36% (compared to 33% three months ago). If the competition was between Marwan Barghouti and Ismail Haniyeh, Barghouti receives 59% and Haniyeh 34%.

- In an open-ended question, we ask about potential Abbas successors: If president Abbas does not nominate himself in a new election, 27% prefer to see Marwan Barghouti replacing him, while 18% prefer Ismail Haniyeh. Mohammad Dahlan is preferred by 4% (1% in the West Bank and 11% in the Gaza Strip) and Khalid Mishal, Salam Fayyad, and Mustafa Barghouti are selected after him by 2% each.
- If new legislative elections were held today with the participation of all factions, 67% say they would participate in such elections. Of those who would participate, 30% say they would vote for Hamas and 39% say they would vote for Fatah, 10% would vote for all other third parties combined, and 21% are undecided. Three months ago, vote for Hamas stood at 32% and Fatah at 39%. Vote for Hamas in the Gaza Strip stands today at 38% (compared to 39% three months ago) and for Fatah at 33% (compared to 32% three months ago). In the West Bank, vote for Hamas stands at 25% (compared to 26% three months ago) and Fatah at 43% (compared to 45% three months ago).

(3) A new government led by Mohammad Shtayyeh:

- With more than two months passing since the formation of the Shtayyeh government, findings indicate that a majority, or a plurality, of the public views its performance as similar to that of the previous government in matters of security (53%), the economy (44%), the reunification of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (53%), the preparation to hold general elections (55%), and the protection of liberties and human rights (54%). But a percentage ranging between 45% and 24% indicates that it believes the performance to be worse than that of the previous government while a percentage ranging between 7% and 12% indicates that the performance of the Shtayyeh government is better than that of the previous government.
- Responding to a question about expectations regarding the ability of the Shtayyeh government to make progress in reconciliation and reunification, 59% expects failure; only 28% expects success.
- In a similar question about the ability of the new government to organize legislative or legislative and presidential elections in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, a majority of 52% expects failure and 34% expects success.
- In another question about the ability of the new government to improve economic conditions, a majority of 57% expects failure and 30% expects success.

(3) Domestic conditions:

- A majority of 62% supports and 29% oppose the PA decision to refuse to accept a partial transfer of custom revenues. However, a majority of 52% says that it is worried that this decision could lead to the collapse of the PA while 39% indicate that it could not. A majority of 65% believes that the new Israeli government that will be formed after the upcoming elections will continue to deduct money from the Palestinian custom revenues while 25% expect it to stop this practice.
- Positive evaluation of conditions in the Gaza Strip stands at 5% and positive evaluation of conditions in the West Bank stands at 20%.

- Perception of safety and security in the Gaza Strip stands at 67%. In the West Bank perception of safety and security stands at 59%. Three months ago, perception of safety and security in the Gaza Strip stood at 64% and in the West Bank at 57%.
- 26% of the public say they want to emigrate due to political, security, and economic conditions. The percentage rises in the Gaza Strip to 42% and declines in the West Bank to 18%.
- Only 40% of the West Bankers say that people can criticize the authority in their area without fear and 57% say that they cannot. Three months ago, 65% of West Bankers said they could not criticize the PA in the West Bank without fear.
- Perception of corruption in PA institutions stands at 80%. When asked about the measures taken by the previous government in illegally raising the salaries of its ministers, 67% indicate that they believe that this kind of corruption is deep rooted in the PA while only 25% think it is partial and subject to accountability; 4% think that there is no corruption in the PA.
- The public is divided over its assessment of the PA: 48% view it as a burden on the Palestinian people while 46% view it as an asset for the Palestinian people.
- Asked about the implications of the incident in the predominantly Christian town of Jifna in the West Bank, in which a group of Palestinians attacked the town, 69% indicated that they believe Palestinian Christian-Muslim relations are normal, as one would expect from the people who belong to one nation; but 24% thought relations between the two communities might be heading to greater tensions.
- We asked the public about its viewership habits in the last two months. Findings indicate that Al Jazeera TV viewership remains the highest, standing at 21%, followed by Palestine TV (14%), Maan TV (13%), Al Aqsa TV (12%), Palestine TV (9%), and al Al Arabiya and al Mayadeen (4% each).

(4) Reconciliation and the reconciliation government:

- 33% are optimistic and 63% are pessimistic about the success of reconciliation. Three months ago, optimism stood at 30%.
- When asked about the preconditions imposed by Fatah (the demand for “one arm”) and Hamas (the demand for the preservation of the “arms of the resistance,”) on reconciliation and reunification, a majority of 53% of the public indicates that it opposes such preconditions and 38% indicate support.
- Among those who support the imposition of preconditions (i.e., the 38% of the public), the respondents are divided evenly between those who support Hamas’s precondition (42%) and those who supported Fatah’s (41%).
- However, among those who oppose the imposition of preconditions (i.e., the 53% of the public), the majority of the respondents (67%) indicates its opposition to disarming Hamas while only 29% express opposition to preserving party-affiliated armed groups alongside the PA security forces.
- Moreover, the overwhelming majority (79%) demands that the PA immediately lift all the measures taken against the Gaza Strip, such as public sector’s salary deductions and the reduction in access to electricity; only 17% say that such measures should be removed only after Hamas fully hands over control over the Strip to the PA government.
- A majority of 51% (down to 41% in the Gaza Strip) believes that the chances for a Hamas-Israel agreement on a long term hudna or cessation of violence are slim while 36% believe the chances are medium and only 8% believe the chances are high.

5) The peace process

- Support for the concept of the two-state solution stands at 47% and opposition at 50%. No description or details were provided for the concept. Three months ago, support for the concept stood at 48%. 44% of the public believe that a majority of the Palestinians supports this solution and 48% believe that the majority opposes it. Similarly, 48% support and 45% oppose the Arab Peace Initiative.
- A majority of 56% believes that the two-state solution is no longer practical or feasible due to the expansion of Israeli settlements while 40% believe that the solution remains practical. Moreover, 71% believe that the chances for the creation of a Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel in the next five years are slim or nonexistence while 26% believe the chances to be medium or high.
- The most preferred way out of the current status quo is “reaching a peace agreement with Israel” according to 36% of the public while 34% prefer waging “an armed struggle against the Israeli occupation.” Only 15% prefer “waging a non-violent resistance” and a minority of 10% prefers to keep the status quo. Three months ago, 39% said that they prefer reaching a peace agreement with Israel and 30% said they prefer waging an armed struggle.
- The public is divided over the role of negotiations and armed struggle in the establishment of a Palestinian state next to the state of Israel: 38% think armed struggle is the most effective means; 35% think that negotiation is the most effective means; and 23% believe that non-violent resistance is the most effective. Three months ago, 37% said negotiation is the most effective means and 36% said armed struggle is the most effective means.
- Similarly, when asked about the most effective means of ending the Israeli occupation, the public splits into three groups: 38% chose armed struggle, 31% negotiations, and 23% popular resistance.
- In light of the suspension of peace negotiations, Palestinians support various alternative directions: 62% support popular non-violent resistance; 47% support a return to an armed intifada; 38% support dissolving the PA; and 31% support abandoning the two-state solution and demanding the establishment of one state for Palestinians and Israelis. Three months ago, 47% said they prefer a return to armed intifada and 41% said they prefer to dissolve the PA.
- A majority of 57% expects the Israeli right wing led by Netanyahu to win the upcoming Israeli elections and 18% expect the center-left led by Gantz to win the elections.
- A majority of 59% expects the future Israeli government, that will be formed after the upcoming Israeli elections, to annex some West Bank settlements while 30% think the Israeli talk of annexation is merely an election campaign slogan.
- Similarly, 52% expect the future Israeli government to force the PA to collapse while 38% believe it will seek to maintain the PA.
- A majority of 56% believes the future Israeli government will wage a war against the Gaza Strip while 33% expects it to seek a long term *hudna* of cessation of violence with Hamas.

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

- 44% 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, 33% believe the first most vital goal should be to obtain the right of return of refugees to their 1948 towns and villages, 13% 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 in the eyes of 32% of the public is poverty and unemployment while 29% say it is the continuation of occupation and settlement activities; 19% say it is the spread of corruption in public institutions; and 16% say it is the siege of the Gaza Strip and the closure of its crossings.