

JMCC Public Opinion Poll No. 37

On Palestinian Attitudes Towards Final Status Negotiations and the declaration of the State - June 2000

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Introduction

- Most of the Palestinian people 51.6% do not expect a declaration of the Palestinian state by September.
- Most of the Palestinian people 59.8% do not expect that a final status agreement will be reached by September.
- The Palestinian people are divided on trusting the Palestinian leadership steadfastness in its declared positions in the final status negotiations on Jerusalem, settlements and refugees.
- Trust in Palestinian President Yasser Arafat remains relatively low at 31.8% while remaining the most trusted figure.
- Trust in Fateh remains low at 34.5% while remaining the most popular faction.
- About 90.2 percent of the Palestinian people still believe there is corruption within the Palestinian Authority institutions with varied degrees.
- 33.5% believe that the Palestinian leadership should resort to means other than peace negotiations such as confrontations and resistance, if the Palestinian and Israeli sides can't reach a final agreement by September 2000.

The latest public opinion poll conducted on 23 June 2000 by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre (JMCC) showed that the expectations of the Palestinian people regarding the possibility the leadership declares a state is limited and not high.

Only 37.8 percent of those interviewed expected the Palestinian leadership to declare a state while 51.6 percent expected the leadership not to declare a state. This is despite the fact that 48.3 percent see that a state should be declared in any case while 22.3 percent support declaring the state only after clinching an agreement with Israel. There are 21 percent of those interviewed who see declaring or not declaring a state unimportant.

Furthermore, there were lower expectations, but to a greater degree, on the possibility of reaching a final status agreement by the set date of September 2000. Only 17.8 percent said that both sides could reach a final solution in September while 59.8 percent expected that the two sides will not be able to reach a final solution by the set date. Of those interviewed, 19.7 percent found it difficult to expect anything at all.

As for how much the Palestinian people are confident and trust the negotiation performance of the Palestinian leadership and its handling of the current final status talks; it appeared that the extent of trust is low. Only 35.8 percent of those interviewed said they trust the method of managing these negotiations while 54.7 percent said they do not trust and are not confident to the method the leadership manages these negotiations.

Consequently, what affirms the low trust in the leadership is the division of the Palestinian people on their trust that the leadership will hold on to its declared negotiation positions. There are 20.3 percent who said they are very confident of the leadership's unwavering positions, 28.3 are somewhat confident while 20.5 percent expressed their total non-confidence and 25.3 percent are somewhat not confident.

In regards to the negotiation positions and the public opinion on some of the suggested comprises being talked about in the media, it appeared that the Palestinian people's tendencies lean more to holding on to the declared positions of the Palestinian people and PLO leadership. When asked about supporting the idea of solving the settlement problem by annexing part of the land where settlements are built to Israel and creating a Palestinian state on the remaining 70-80 percent, only 3.8 percent of those interviewed said this is an acceptable solution. But 64.7 percent rejected this solution while 26.2 percent said they prefer to study this option and think about it prior to making a position on it.

As for the refugee issue, only 10.8 percent said they accept a solution whereas the refugees are naturalized in their host countries and a small number returns through a family reunification program. In contrast, 48.8 percent said this solution is totally rejected and 34.9 percent said they need to think about this option and study it prior to making a position on it.

In respects to the issue of Jerusalem, 6.2 percent of the Palestinians said they will accept a solution keeping the city under Israeli sovereignty while giving the Palestinians a presence in its outskirts such as Abu Dees as well as the holy sites. Meanwhile, the majority, 62.3 percent, considered this solution bad and unacceptable.

Methodology

A random sample of 1200 people over the age of 18 were interviewed face-to-face throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip on 22, 23 June 2000. The interviews were conducted in randomly selected homes, and the subjects inside each home were also selected randomly according to Kish tables. The interviews were conducted in 59 sampling points chosen randomly according to population.

In the West Bank, 762 people were surveyed from the following areas: **Jenin:** Jenin, Tubas, Jenin refugee camp, Yamoun, Kafr Rai, 'Arraba, Zababdeh, Meithalun, Sanur. **Nablus:** Nablus, 'Azmut, 'Askar Refugee camp, Haris, Bidya, Nisf Jubeil, Beit Umrin, Huwwara, Beita. **Tulkarem:** Tulkarem, Anabta, Deir al-Ghusun, Kafar Jammal, 'Attil, Tulkarem refugee camp. **Qalqiliya:** Qalqiliya and Azzoun. **Hebron:** Hebron, Bani Na'im, al-Sasmmou', Dura, Idhna, al-Fawwar refugee camp, Beit Umar, Sair. **Bethlehem:** Bethlehem, Husan, Battir, Beit Tamir, Dheisheh refugee camp. **Jericho:** Jericho and Aqabat Jaber refugee camp. **Ramallah & Jerusalem:** al-Bireh, Jalazon refugee camp, Ramallah, Birzeit, Kafr Malik, Ni'lin, Abu Dis, Ezzariya, Bir Nabala, Kafr aqab, Qalandiya refugee camp, Jabal al-mukaber, Old City, Shu'fat, Beit Hanina, Wadi al-Joz, Sheikh Jarrah.

In the Gaza Strip, 438 people were surveyed from: **Gaza North:** Jabaliya refugee camp, Jabaliya, Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun. **Gaza:** Sheikh Radwan, a-Darj, a-Tufah, Sabra, a-Zaytun, a-Nasir, Shouja'ia, Rimal north and south and Beach refugee camp. **Deir al-Balah:** Nuseirat refugee camp, Deir al-Balah. **Khan Younis:** 'Absan al-Saghir, 'Absan al-Kabira, Khan Younis refugee camp, Khan Younis, Bani Suheila. **Rafah:** Rafah, Tal al-Sultan refugee camp.

Sample Distribution

- 54.2% of the respondents were from West Bank, 9.3% from Jerusalem, 36.5% from the Gaza Strip.
- 28.7% said they live in villages, 15.8% in refugee camps, 55.5% in towns/cities.
- 50.9% were male, 49.1% were female.
- 64.3% were married, 26.7%, single, 4.6% widowed, 1.6% divorced, 2.8% no answer.
- The average age of the respondents was 34 years.
- The margin of error is 3 percent, with a confidence level of 95.

Occupation respondents

- Students 11.4% laborers 15.1% Farmers/fishermen 2.7%
 - Craftsmen 1.6% Businessmen/private business 7.6%
 - Employees e.g. secretaries/municipal employees/teachers/nurses 18.2%
 - Professionals - e.g. doctors/lawyers/ pharmacists/engineers 2.4%
 - Housewives, unemployed and retired 40.1%
 - No answer 0.9%
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Results

**Q1. To what extent do you feel optimistic or pessimistic regarding the future in general?
Would you say that you are very optimistic, optimistic, pessimistic or very pessimistic?**

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
	n= 1200	n=762	n=438
Very optimistic	6.3	6.2	6.6
Optimistic	61.7	61.0	62.8
Pessimistic	23.8	23.9	23.5
Very pessimistic	7.4	7.7	7.1
No answer	0.8	1.2	0.0

Q2. In general, how do you evaluate the performance of the Palestinian Authority?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
	n= 1200	n=762	n=438
Very good	6.8	6.8	6.8
Good	53.9	56.6	49.3
Bad	25.2	22.7	29.5
Very bad	11.4	10.2	13.5
No answer	2.7	3.7	0.9

Q3. What is your opinion about the Oslo formula?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
	n= 1200	n=762	n=438
Strongly support	6.6	6.4	6.8
Somewhat support	51.3	52.3	49.8
Somewhat oppose	19.9	18.9	21.7
Strongly oppose	15.9	14.7	18.0
I don't know/No answer	6.3	7.7	3.7

Q4. Who is the Palestinian figure you trust the most?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
	n= 1200	n=762	n=438
Yasser Arafat	31.8	31.1	33.1
Ahmed Yassin	6.1	3.5	10.5
Haydar Abdel Shafi	4.2	2.9	6.4
Saeb Erekat	3.2	3.9	1.8
Other figures	14.5	13.5	16.7
I trust nobody	32.6	35.8	26.9
No answer	7.6	9.3	4.6

Q5. Which political faction do you trust the most?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
	n= 1200	n=762	n=438
Fateh	34.5	31.8	39.3
Hamas	12.0	10.2	15.1
PFLP	2.3	2.0	2.7
Other factions	3.9	3.7	4.5
I don't trust any faction	37.3	39.2	33.8
No answer	10.0	13.1	4.6

Q6. To what extent do you think corruption is widespread in Palestinian Authority institutions? Is it widespread to a great extent, widespread to some extent, widespread to a small extent, or not widespread at all?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
	n= 1200	n=762	n=438
To a great extent	33.5	32.2	36.1
To some extent	39.5	38.7	40.9
To a small extent	17.2	17.5	16.7
not widespread at all	5.1	5.3	4.5
No answer	4.7	6.3	1.8

Q7. The final status negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis began recently and it includes the issues of Jerusalem, refugees, borders and settlements. Are you confident of the method the Palestinian leadership is handling the negotiations of these issues or are you unconfident and worried?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
	n=1200	n=762	n=438
I am confident of the method the Palestinian leadership is handling the final status negotiations	35.8	35.4	36.5
I am unconfident and worried of the method the Palestinian leadership is handling the final status negotiations	54.7	54.1	55.7
I don't know	8.2	9.1	6.6
No answer	1.3	1.4	1.2

Q8. According to the signed agreements, Israel and the Palestinian Authority have to reach a final agreement on permanent status issues such as Jerusalem, refugees and settlements by September 2000, which is three months from now. What is your opinion?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
	n= 1200	n=762	n=438
I expect that they will reach a final agreement during the three months	17.8	16.8	19.6
They will not reach a final agreement within the three months	59.8	61.4	57.1
It is difficult to know the answer	19.7	18.8	21.2
I don't have an opinion	2.7	3.0	2.1

Q9. If both the Israeli and the Palestinian sides could not reach a final agreement on the agreed date of September 2000, what in your opinion should the Palestinian leadership do? Do you approve to extend the date and continue the negotiations or to stop the negotiations with Israel, or it has to refer to different means other than negotiations such as confrontation and resistance?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
	n=1200	n=762	n=438
Approve to extend the date and continue with peace negotiations with Israel	34.6	37.5	29.5
End peace negotiations with Israel	25.7	23.6	29.2
Refer to other means other than peace negotiations such as confrontations and resistance	33.5	31.4	37.2
I don't know	5.4	6.3	3.9
No answer	0.8	1.2	0.2

Q10. During the current final status negotiations on the refugees issue, there are suggestions of compromised solutions including: containing a large number of refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, reunification of a number of refugee families in Israel about few tens of thousands and compensating the rest of the refugees at their present habitation. What is your opinion of this suggested solution?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
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	n=1200	n=762	n=438
The mentioned solution is totally rejected	48.8	43.2	58.4
The mentioned solution should be studied and deeply thought of before making a viewpoint on it	34.9	36.9	31.5
The mentioned solution is acceptable and good	10.8	12.7	7.3
I don't know	4.5	5.8	2.3
No answer	1.0	1.4	0.5

Q11. During the current final status negotiations on Jerusalem there are suggestions of compromised solutions including: The Palestinian Authority will have total responsibility over religious sites, the Aqsa and Holy Sepulcher, as well as administrative responsibilities over East Jerusalem. The capital of Palestine will become parts of Jerusalem neighborhoods such as Abu Dis while postponing final resolution of the political future of east Jerusalem to the future. What is your opinion of this suggested solution?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
	n=1200	n=762	n=438
The mentioned solution is acceptable	6.2	5.4	7.3
The mentioned solution should be studied and deeply thought of before making a viewpoint on it	26.3	28.6	22.4
The mentioned solution is unacceptable	62.3	59.1	68.0
I don't know	3.8	4.9	2.1
No answer	1.4	2.0	0.2

Q12. During the current final status negotiations on borders and settlements are suggestion of compromised solutions including: Annexing part of the Palestinian territory where settlements are built on to Israel-part as final and part as temporary-and establishing a Palestinian state on the remaining part which is between 70-80 percent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. What is your opinion of this suggested solution?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
	n=1200	n=762	n=438
The mentioned solution is acceptable as a final solution for the issue of borders and settlements	3.8	4.9	2.0
The mentioned solution should be studied and deeply thought of before making a viewpoint on it	26.2	29.7	20.1
The mentioned solutions is rejected as a final solution to the issue of borders and settlements	64.7	58.7	75.1
I don't know	4.3	5.5	2.3
No answer	1.0	1.2	0.5

Q13. How much is your confidence that the Palestinian leadership will continue to insist on its negotiation position represented in ending the occupation over the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jerusalem, return of refugees and establishing an independent state. Are you very confident, somewhat confident, somewhat unconfident, or totally unconfident that the Palestinian leadership will hold on to its mentioned stances in the current final status negotiations?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
	n= 1200	n=762	n=438
Very confident that the leadership will hold on to its mentioned stances	20.3	19.4	21.9
Somewhat confident that the leadership will hold on to its mentioned stances	28.3	27.4	29.7
Somewhat unconfident that the leadership will hold on to its mentioned stances	25.3	24.9	26.0
Unconfident at all that the leadership will hold on to its mentioned stances	20.5	21.0	19.7
I don't know	4.9	6.3	2.7
No answer	0.7	1.0	0.0

Q14. There has been a lot of talk lately on the issue of declaring a Palestinian state by 13 September 2000 which is the date for reaching a final agreement. What is your opinion? Do you believe that the Palestinian leadership should declare the establishment of a Palestinian state on that date in any case or should the declaration of establishing a state only take place if there is an agreement with Israel or the issue of declaring a Palestinian state on that date is not important in your opinion?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
	n= 1200	n=762	n=438
There should be a declaration of a Palestinian state this September in any case	48.3	46.4	51.8
There should be a declaration of a Palestinian state this September only if there is an agreement with Israel	22.3	27.0	14.2
The issue of declaring a state or not on that date is anyway not important	21.0	18.9	24.7
I don't know	6.6	6.0	7.5
No answer	1.8	1.7	1.8

Q15. Regardless of your personal opinion, do you expect that the Palestinian leadership to declare a Palestinian state this September?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
	n= 1200	n=762	n=438
I expect the Palestinian leadership to declare a Palestinian state in September	37.8	35.9	41.1
I expect the Palestinian leadership not to declare a Palestinian state in September	51.6	51.8	51.1
I don't know / I don't have an opinion	10.2	11.9	7.3

No answer	0.4	0.4	0.5
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