

JMCC Public Opinion Poll No. 31 - Part One

On Palestinian Attitudes Towards Politics - March 1999

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Introduction

JMCC's latest poll is a study on the stance of the Palestinian people regarding important and sensitive political issues, such as Israeli elections, executions, the justice system in Palestine and the future of the Palestinians should the peace process come to a dead end. It also deals with the position of the Palestinian people towards the relationship between the PA and the opposition and it concentrates on the quality and level of religious trends among Palestinians. Following is a summary of the most important findings:

- Half of the Palestinian people (50.2%) do not see any difference between the Likud and Labor Parties, while a minority (24.5%) expects an improvement in the political situation if the Labor Party wins.
 - The majority of the Palestinian people (70.7%) support a national coalition government; the majority (67.6%) believe there is a possibility for cooperation between Fateh and Hamas; the majority (81%) believe in including Hamas in a national salvation authority.
 - (63.9%) of the Palestinian people will increase their support for the PA if Islamic Shari'a law is implemented.
 - The majority (56%) oppose the return to armed resistance in the current situation; (35.7%) support it; (66.5%) oppose suicide operations and see them as harmful while (26.1%) support them in the current circumstances.
 - In case of the failure of the peace process where it reaches a dead end, the minority (18.3%) support the idea of one state (in all of Palestine) while the majority (63.5%) support the establishment of an Islamic state in all of Palestine if the peace process fails.
 - The issue of Jerusalem is the most important issue according to the majority of Palestinians (46.2%) followed by the issue of settlements (30.8%) and then the refugees (14.8%).
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Methodology

A random sample of 1199 people over the age of 18 were interviewed face-to-face throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip on 18, 19 March 1999. 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 60 sampling points chosen randomly according to population.

In the West Bank, 761 people were surveyed from the following areas: **Jenin:** Al-Yamoun, Jenin, Tubas, Arraba, Meithalun. **Tulkarem & Qalqiliya:** Tulkarem, Deir al-Ghusun, Kafr Jammal, Qalqiliya. **Nablus:** Nablus, 'Azmout, Haris, Nour Jbeil, Huwwara. **Hebron:** Hebron, Bani Naim, a-Samu', Dura, Ithna, Beit Umar, Sa'eer. **Bethlehem:** Bethlehem & Beit Sahour & Beit Jala, Battir, Beit Ta'mar. **Jericho:** Jericho. **Ramallah & al-Bireh:** Ramallah & al-Bireh, Birzeit, Kafr Malik, Nilin. **Jerusalem:** Abu Dis, Bir Nabala, Kafr 'Aqab, Jabal al-Mukaber, Old City, Shu'fat & Beit Hanina, Wadi al-Jos & Sheikh Jarrah.

In the Gaza Strip, 438 people were surveyed from: **Gaza North:** Jabaliya refugee camp, Jablajiya, Beit Lahiya. **Gaza:** Beach refugee camp, Sheikh Radwan, a-Rimal, Al-Daraj, a-Tufah, Zaytoun & a-Sabra, Shoujai'a. **Deir al-Balah:** Nuseirat refugee camp, Maghazi refugee camp, Dier al-Balah. **Khan Younis:** Khan younis refugee camp, 'Abasan al-Saghir, Khan Younis, Bani Shuheila. **Rafah:** Rafah refugee camp, Tal al-Sultan refugee camp, Rafah.

Sample Distribution

- 52.5% of the respondents were from West Bank, 11.0% from Jerusalem, 36.5% from the Gaza Strip.
- 36.7% said they live in villages, 16.6% in refugee camps, 46.7% in towns/cities.
- 49.1% were male, 50.9% were female.
- 65.1% were married, 27.6%, single, 3.9% widowed, 1.7% divorced, 1.7% no answer.
- The average age of the respondents was 34 years.

Occupation respondents

- Students 11.4%; Laborers 13.8%; Housewives 35.9%; Farmers/fishermen 2.6%;
 - Craftsmen 2.3%; Unemployed 4.7%; Retired 1.6%; Businessmen/private business 9.4%;
 - Employees e.g. secretaries/municipal employees/teachers/nurses 15.8%;
 - Professionals - e.g. doctors/lawyers/ pharmacists/engineers 1.6%; No answer 0.9%.
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Results

Q1. How optimistic or pessimistic are you about reaching a peaceful Arab-Israeli settlement? Would you say you are?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Very Optimistic	4.8	4.9	4.6
Optimistic	64.2	63.8	65.0
Pessimistic	23.9	24.0	23.5
Very Pessimistic	6.3	6.8	5.5
No answer	0.8	0.5	1.4

Q2. What is your opinion about the Oslo agreement? Can you say you strongly support, support, oppose, strongly oppose?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Strongly support	5.2	5.1	5.7
Support	50.9	51.1	50.5
Oppose	29.8	27.1	34.5
Strongly oppose	8.3	8.4	8.0
No answer	5.8	8.3	1.3

Q3. In general, do you support or oppose the current peace process between the Palestinians and Israel?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Support	63.7	63.9	63.4
Oppose	34.7	33.9	36.1
No answer	1.6	2.2	0.5

Q3-1 Do you strongly support, somewhat support, strongly oppose or somewhat oppose the current peace process between the Palestinians and Israel?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Strongly Support*	19.5	20.4	18.0
Support*	44.5	44.3	45.0
Strongly oppose**	15.1	14.6	16.0
Somewhat oppose**	19.8	19.4	20.3
No answer	1.1	1.3	0.7

** For those who answered "Support" in question 3*

*** For those who answered "Oppose" in question 3*

Q4. In general, how would you evaluate the performance of the Palestinian Legislative Council?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Very good	5.3	4.7	6.4
Good	44.3	47.6	38.6
Bad	33.2	28.0	42.0
Very bad	10.8	11.2	10.3
No answer	6.4	8.5	2.7

Q5. In general, how do you evaluate the Palestinians Authority's performance? Do you say it is very good, good, bad, or very bad?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Very good	7.2	8.2	5.7
Good	54.8	54.3	55.7
Bad	24.3	24.0	24.7
Very bad	10.7	10.1	11.6
No answer	3.0	3.4	2.3

Q6. Some participated in the PLC elections while others boycotted them, now three years after those elections, do you think the boycott decision was correct or wrong?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Correct	32.0	31.9	32.2
Wrong	57.2	55.5	60.3
No answer	10.8	12.6	7.5

Q7. Which of the following problems do you believe is the most important facing the Palestinian people?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Jerusalem	46.2	45.2	47.9
Refugees	14.8	14.5	15.5
Settlements	30.8	31.4	29.7
Other	2.1	2.1	2.1
No answer	6.1	6.8	4.8

Q8. Which Palestinian figure do you trust most?*

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Yasser Arafat	38.8	35.7	44.1
Ahmed Yassin	9.5	6.7	14.4
Haydar Abdel Shafi	6.1	4.9	8.2
Others	12.0	13.8	9.1
Don't trust anyone	26.8	30.4	20.5
No answer	6.8	8.5	3.7

Q9. Which political or religious faction do you trust most?*

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Fateh	37.6	35.0	42.2
Hamas	14.7	12.6	18.3
Popular Front	2.0	2.5	1.1
Islamic Jihad	2.6	2.7	2.3
Others	2.8	3.0	2.3
Do not trust anyone	31.0	33.0	27.6
No answer	9.3	11.2	6.2

**These questions were open-ended questions*

Q10. Do you trust or distrust the judicial and courts system in Palestine? Would you say you fully trust it, have some trust or distrust?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Fully trust it	21.7	26.2	13.9
Have some trust	35.0	33.2	38.2
Distrust it	36.8	32.3	44.5
No opinion	4.7	5.9	2.5
No answer	1.8	2.4	0.9

Q11. In the case of the establishment of a Palestinian state, do you think the state should be run according to Islamic law or according to secular non-religious laws?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Islamic Law	79.8	77.5	83.8
Secular non-religious Laws	15.8	18.7	10.7
No answer	4.4	3.8	5.5

Q12. Now, I will ask you about some Palestinian figures, please tell me if you trust, distrust, or have no information about them?

Total

	Trust	In Between	I distrust	I have no information	No answer
Yasser Arafat	62.9	16.7	16.2	2.9	1.3
Ahmed Yassin	54.6	24.0	14.1	5.7	1.6
Haydar Abdel Shafi	47.0	20.3	14.2	16.7	1.8
Faisal al-Husseini	35.9	27.6	20.9	13.4	2.2
Saeb Erekat	33.1	25.7	21.9	17.7	1.6
Hanan Ashrawi	32.7	28.1	25.8	11.5	1.9
Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen)	25.8	24.2	24.9	23.2	1.9
Jibril al- Rajoub	16.9	16.2	36.0	28.1	2.8
Muhammed Dahlan	13.3	18.7	31.5	33.9	2.6
Geroge Habash	13.2	16.7	37.6	29.2	3.3

West Bank

	Trust	In Between	I distrust	I have no information	No answer
Yasser Arafat	59.1	18.1	17.6	3.5	1.7
Ahmed Yassin	50.2	23.5	16.3	7.9	2.1
Haydar Abdel Shafi	44.5	19.4	13.9	20.2	2.0
Faisal al-Husseini	38.3	25.9	21.4	12.0	2.4
Hanan Ashrawi	34.2	27.2	25.4	10.6	2.6
Saeb Erekat	33.0	25.9	21.6	17.5	2.0
Mahmoud Abbas(Abu Mazen)	26.2	23.3	23.0	25.0	2.5
Jibril al-Rajoub	20.9	16.2	39.4	20.5	3.0
Gerorge Habash	17.2	18.0	35.6	25.5	3.7
Muhammed Dahlan	12.5	15.5	26.0	42.7	3.3

Gaza Strip

	Trust	In Between	I distrust	I have no information	No answer
Yasser Arafat	69.6	14.2	13.7	1.8	0.7
Ahmed Yassin	62.3	24.9	10.3	1.8	0.7
Haydar Abdel Shafi	51.4	21.9	14.6	10.5	1.6
Saeb Erekat	33.6	25.4	22.1	18.0	0.9
Faisal Husseini	31.5	30.6	20.1	16.0	1.8
Hanan Ashrawi	30.1	29.7	26.5	13.0	0.7
Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen)	24.9	25.8	28.3	20.1	0.9
Muhammed Dahlan	14.8	24.2	41.1	18.5	1.4
Jibril al- Rajoub	10.0	16.1	30.1	41.3	2.5
Geroge Habash	6.4	14.4	41.1	35.6	2.5