

JMCC Public Opinion Poll No. 23

On Palestinian Attitudes Towards Current Issues

November 1997

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Introduction

Results of JMCC's November public opinion poll indicate a significant change in Palestinian public opinion on a number of political issues, which appears due largely to certain significant political events which occurred over the past three months. The main aspects of this shift in attitude can be summarized as follows:

- A significant increase in level of support to the Hamas movement in particular, and to political and religious opposition groups in general. The level of support and confidence in Hamas rose from 11.3% in July of this year to 17.3% in this poll. In addition, the level of support and confidence groups opposing the peace process (Hamas, Islamic Jihad, other Islamic organizations, PFLP, DFLP) went up to 25% from 20.1% in July. This may be due to popular sympathy gained by Hamas after the Israeli assassination attempt against Khaled Meshaal in Amman, and the subsequent release of Sheikh Yassin. Sheikh Yassin's return to Gaza was accompanied by popular festivals and media coverage that put Hamas and its leaders at the forefront of the news for some time.
 - The rise in levels of support for the peace process and those engaged in it, especially the Fateh movement and PA president Yasser Arafat. Support for the peace process rose to 74.2% from 68.7%. Support for Fateh increased from 34.8% in July to 40.9%. Moreover, levels of support for Arafat increased from 37.6% to 46.4%. This could be attributed to the latest political developments -- Israel's avoiding implementation of the agreements signed with the Palestinians, and the recent Israeli proposals on redeployment. These Israeli attempts to avoid their obligations under signed agreements appear to make the Palestinians then cling to these agreements. It may be too that President Arafat's firm position against the Israel's proposals and the increased tension in bilateral relations have caused the increase in confidence in his leadership. The extensive campaign in the Israeli media about the state of Arafat's health might also have contributed to an increase in Palestinian sympathies for him.
 - The increase in support both for Fateh and the opposition go hand in hand with a decrease in respondents who say the trust no one. People who felt they had no trust in anyone decreased from 31.2% in July to 17.3% in November. It may be that the escalating political crisis between Palestinians and Israelis has deepened the polarization among Palestinians, leading to a decrease in number of reluctant Palestinians and increasing the divisions between those who support and those in opposition.
 - On the economic level, only 19.2% of those surveyed believe that the peace process has had a positive impact on the Palestinian economy, while 68.3% believe that the peace process has had either a very negative or negative impact on the Palestinian economy. It is worth noting that these figures coincide with recent UN reports indicating a decline in living standards and national and individual incomes in Palestine during the peace process years.
 - Finally, 82% still believe that corruption is widespread in the Palestinian Authority; only 6.9% believe there is no corruption. 40.8% percent believe that the Authority is capable of handling this corruption, while 47.8% see the Authority as not doing enough to fight corruption.
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Methodology :

A random sample of 1,180 Palestinians, over the age of 18 years, were interviewed throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip on 19, 20 and 21 November 1997. The interviews were conducted on 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, 749 people were surveyed from the following areas:

Jerusalem: Old city, Beit Hanina, al-Ram, Dahiyat al-Bareed, Ezzariya, Jabal al-Mukaber. **Bethlehem:** Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour, Dheisheh Refugee Camp. **Hebron:** Hebron, Halhul, Beit Ummar, Bani Na'im, Dura, Sa'ir, Yatta. **Jenin:** Jenin, Jenin Refugee Camp, Ya'bad, Yamoun, 'Arabeh, Zababdeh. **Tulkarem:** Tulkarem, Tuklarem Refugee Camp, Anabta, Far'oun, Allar. **Qalqiliya:** Qalqiliya. **Nablus:** Nablus, Balata Refugee Camp, Beit Furik, Beit Dajan, Salfit, Huwwar, Einabus. **Ramallah:** Ramallah, Al-Bireh, Jalazon Refugee Camp, Jifna, Deir Abu Mashal, Biddu, Rammun. **Jericho:** Jericho, 'Aqbat Jaber.

In the Gaza Strip, 431 people were surveyed from: Gaza city (Rimal, Sheikh Radwan, Shoujai'a, Nasir, Sabra, Zeitoun), Beach Refugee Camp, Khan Younis, Khan Younis Refugee Camp, 'Abasan, Bani Suhelia, Rafah, al-Sultan, Barazil, Rafah Refugee Camp, Jabaliya, Jabaliya Refugee Camp, Deir al-Balah, Deir al-Balah Refugee Camp, Bureij Refugee Camp, Nuseirat Refugee Camp, Maghazi Refugee Camp.

The major of error is plus or minus 3% with a confidence level of 95%.

Sample Distribution

- 57.1% of the respondents were from the West Bank
 - 36.5% from the Gaza Strip
 - 6.4% from Jerusalem
 - 31.6% said they live in villages
 - 22.3% in refugee camps
 - 46.1% in towns/cities
 - 45.6% were male
 - 54.4% were female
 - 62.0% were married
 - 24.9% were single
 - 4.1% were widowed
 - 2.9% were divorced
 - 6.1% No answer
 - The average of age of the respondents was 34 years.
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Occupation respondents

- Students 10.8%
- Waged laborers 11.6%
- Housewives 39.7%
- Employees e.g. secretaries/teachers/nurses/municipal employees 17.3%
- Businessmen/private business 8.2%
- Farmers/fishermen 2.2%
- Craftsmen 1.4%

- Professionals - e.g. doctors/lawyers/pharmacists/engineers 1.4%
 - Unemployed 5.5%
 - Retired 1.4%
 - No answer 0.5%
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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 |
|------------------|-------|-----------|------------|
| Very optimistic | 6.3% | 5.6% | 7.4% |
| Optimistic | 66.1% | 66.5% | 65.4% |
| Pessimistic | 20.3% | 21.0% | 19.0% |
| Very Pessimistic | 5.8% | 5.6% | 6.3% |
| No answer | 1.5% | 1.3% | 1.9% |

Q2. In general, do you support or oppose the current peace process between the Palestinians and Israel? Do you strongly support, somewhat support, strongly oppose or somewhat oppose?

| | Total | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
|--------------------------|-------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly support | 31.9% | 33.9% | 28.5% |
| Somewhat support | 42.3% | 40.6% | 45.2% |
| Strongly oppose | 9.4% | 10.1% | 8.1% |
| Somewhat oppose | 12.7% | 11.9% | 14.2% |
| No opinion / do not know | 2.5% | 2.5% | 2.3% |
| No answer | 1.2% | 1.0% | 1.7% |

Q3. In principle, do you strongly support or somewhat support or somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the resumption of peace negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel?

| | Total | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
|--------------------------|-------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly support | 33.3% | 34.0% | 32.0% |
| Somewhat support | 39.4% | 37.5% | 42.7% |
| Strongly oppose | 11.5% | 12.6% | 9.7% |
| Somewhat oppose | 11.7% | 11.6% | 11.8% |
| No opinion / do not know | 2.5% | 2.5% | 2.6% |
| No answer | 1.6% | 1.8% | 1.2% |

Q4. How confident are you that the Palestinians and Israelis will reach a satisfactory agreement on final-status issues?

| | Total | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
|----------------------|-------|-----------|------------|
| Very confident | 7.4% | 7.2% | 7.7% |
| Somewhat confident | 40.8% | 39.1% | 43.9% |
| Not confident | 30.2% | 31.2% | 28.3% |
| Not confident at all | 17.5% | 17.6% | 17.4% |
| No answer | 4.1% | 4.9% | 2.7% |

Q5. Which Palestinian Personality do you trust most?

| | Total | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
|---------------------|-------|-----------|------------|
| Yasser Arafat | 46.4% | 42.6% | 52.9% |
| Ahmed Yassin | 5.8% | 4.1% | 8.6% |
| Hadyar Abdel Shafi | 5.3% | 6.4% | 3.2% |
| Saeb Erekat | 2.7% | 2.9% | 2.3% |
| Hanan Ashrawi | 2.0% | 2.4% | 1.4% |
| Faisal Husseini | 1.4% | 1.3% | 1.6% |
| George Habash | 1.3% | 1.5% | 0.9% |
| Other personalities | 8.5% | 9.1% | 7.4% |
| Do not trust anyone | 16.9% | 18.3% | 14.4% |
| No answer | 9.7% | 11.4% | 7.3% |

Q6. How did the peace process between the Palestinians and Israel affect our economy?

| | Total | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
|-------------------------------|-------|-----------|------------|
| Very positive | 1.9% | 1.7% | 2.1% |
| Positive | 17.3% | 19.4% | 13.7% |
| Negative | 42.6% | 42.3% | 43.2% |
| Very negative | 25.7% | 22.4% | 31.3% |
| Did not have an effect at all | 7.8% | 9.6% | 4.6% |
| No answer | 4.7% | 4.6% | 5.1% |

Q7. Which Palestinian political or religious faction you trust most?

| | Total | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
|-----------------------|-------|-----------|------------|
| Fateh | 40.9% | 38.2% | 45.7% |
| Hamas | 17.3% | 16.3% | 19.0% |
| PFLP | 2.0% | 2.0% | 2.1% |
| Islamic Jihad | 1.8% | 0.9% | 3.2% |
| DFLP | 0.9% | 1.1% | 0.7% |
| PPP | 0.7% | 0.9% | 0.2% |
| FIDA | 0.4% | 0.7% | 0.0% |
| Other Islamic Faction | 3.0% | 4.1% | 0.9% |
| Other Factions | 1.2% | 1.2% | 1.2% |
| Do not trust anyone | 17.3% | 17.4% | 17.2% |
| No answer | 14.5% | 17.2% | 9.8% |

Q8. In general, how do you evaluate the Palestinian Authority's performance? Do you say its performance is very good, good, bad or very bad?

| | Total | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
|-----------|-------|-----------|------------|
| Very good | 12.0% | 10.3% | 15.1% |
| Good | 59.4% | 60.6% | 57.3% |
| Bad | 17.1% | 17.4% | 16.7% |
| Very bad | 7.3% | 6.8% | 8.1% |
| No answer | 4.2% | 4.9% | 2.8% |

Q9. Do you support or oppose the method that the President Yasser Arafat administers his work as the National Authority's President? Strongly support, somewhat support, strongly oppose or somewhat oppose?

| | Total | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
|--------------------------|-------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly support | 36.2% | 33.9% | 40.1% |
| Somewhat support | 34.4% | 34.3% | 34.6% |
| Strongly oppose | 7.1% | 7.9% | 5.8% |
| Somewhat oppose | 14.2% | 14.8% | 13.2% |
| No opinion / do not know | 5.3% | 6.0% | 4.2% |
| No answer | 2.8% | 3.1% | 2.1% |

Q10. In your opinion, how spread is the corruption, if found in the Palestinian Authority's (PA) institutions? It is very spread, fairly spread, little spread, or not spread at all / no corruption?

| | Total | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
|-----------------------|-------|-----------|------------|
| To a great extent | 28.3% | 27.5% | 29.7% |
| To some extent | 35.1% | 35.4% | 34.6% |
| To a small extent | 18.6% | 17.1% | 21.1% |
| Not widespread at all | 6.9% | 6.8% | 7.2% |
| I don't know | 8.3% | 10.9% | 3.7% |
| No answer | 2.8% | 2.3% | 3.7% |

Q11- Regarding the Palestinian Authority's attempts to handle the issue of corruption, do you believe that the Palestinian Authority is exerting a lot of effort, adequate effort or not doing enough to handle the corruption issue?

(This question asked only to those who didn't answer not spread at all / no corruption in Q. 10 above)

| | Total | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
|------------------|-------|-----------|------------|
| A lot of effort | 7.4% | 7.8% | 6.8% |
| Adequate effort | 33.4% | 31.1% | 37.5% |
| Not doing enough | 47.8% | 47.0% | 49.2% |
| I don't know | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.0% |
| No answer | 11.3% | 14.0% | 6.5% |