

JMCC Public Opinion Poll No. 19

On Palestinian Attitudes Towards Current Issues

April 1997

- [Introduction](#)
- [Methodology](#)
- [Sample distribution](#)
- [Occupation of respondents](#)
- [Results](#)

Introduction

A comparison of the results between an unpublished JMCC poll on 7 March, 1997 and the current JMCC poll, shows a remarkable shift in the mood of Palestinian public opinion towards various aspects of the ailing peace process.

- In general, the level of trust in the peace process has decreased ever since the intensification of the Israeli settlement policies, particularly on Mt. Abu Ghniem. Compared to last month's unpublished JMCC poll, strong and some opposition to the peace process increased from 18.8% to 23.1%. Moreover, whereas in pervious polls the levels of support (strong or somewhat) for the peace process proved to have remained stable, in the last month support levels declined from 78% to 72.9%.
- Between 7 March and 3 April there has been a clear drop in support for various Palestinian factions, including Hamas. Support fro Fateh, for example declined from 40.6% in March to 38.5% in April. Support for Hamas dwindled from 11.8% to 10.6%. Furthermore, those who said they do not trust any political or religious faction increased from 21.3% to 25.9%.
- Over the last three weeks, trust in Palestinian President Arafat decreased from 47.4% to 43.4%, and the number of Palestinians who said they do not trust any Palestinian leader also increased from 15% to 18%.
- Although the majority of Palestinians oppose military and suicide bombing operations against Israeli targets, a large majority believe that these operations are an adequate response to the current political developments: 39.8% of the respondents said that they support military operations against Israeli targets compared to 47.7% who oppose them. The difference between support and opposition to military operations in the West Bank is very low (41.6% who support compared to 42.7% who oppose), whereas in the Gaza Strip, the difference between those who support military operations and those who oppose them is still about 18.7% (37.0% in Gaza support military operations compared to 55.7% who oppose them). Similar differences are also found between the West Bank and Gaza Strip in regard to suicide bombs, although the level of opposition to suicide operations is higher in both the West Bank and Gaza.
- An increase in Palestinian frustration with the current Israeli measures can be inferred from the level of support to popular protests against Israeli; 62.7% of Palestinian supports the intensification of demonstrations and popular protests. Moreover 31.3% of Palestinians believe that the PA (Palestinian Authority) should encourage these protests, and 37.5% say the PA should not interfere. Only 23.1% of the respondents say that the PA should prevent these popular protests.
- The majority of the Palestinians reject Israeli PM. Netanyahu's proposal to stop the implementation of the interim agreement and to begin with the final status negotiations: 68.0% of Palestinians believe that the Palestinian leadership should not accept the proposal.
- 39.8% of Palestinians believe that the economy is the single most important issue today, while 70.1% of Palestinians believe that the peace process has a negative or very negative effect on their economy.

Methodology

A random sample of 1,200 Palestinians, over the age of 18 years, were interviewed throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip on 3 and 4 April 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, 740 people were surveyed from the following areas: **Jerusalem:** Old city, a-Ram & Dahiya, Shu'fat, Shu'fat Refugee Camp, Silwan, Jabal al-Mukaber, Wadi al-Joz, Sheikh Jarrah, Beit Hanina. **Bethlehem:** Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Shahour, Battir, Sawahra, Nahalin. **Hebron:** Hebron, Fawwar Refugee Camp, Rihya, Bani Na'im, Halhul, Idhna, Sair. **Jenin:** Jenin, Jenin Refugee Camp, Tubas, Judeida, Sanur, Rummana, Anin. **Tulkarem & Qalqiliya:** Qalqiliya, Tulkarem, Ramin, Anbata, Kafr Jammal, Jayyous, Sida, Illar. **Nablus:** Nablus, 'Ain Beit Elam Refugee Camp, Salim, Rujeib. **Ramallah:** Ramallah, Al-Bireh, Silwad, Beit 'Anan, Amari Refugee Camp, **Jericho:** Jericho.

In the Gaza Strip, 460 people were surveyed from: Rafah Refugee Camp, Beit Hanoun, Khan Younis Refugee Camp, Khan Younis, Jabaliya Refugee Camp, Maghazi Refugee Camp, Rimal, Sabra, Deir al-Balah, 'Abssan, Bani Suheila, Jabalia, Bureij Refugee Camp, al-Tufah, Shuja'ia, Sheikh Radwan, Nuseirat Refugee Camp, Beach Refugee Camp.

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

Sample Distribution

- 51.4% of the respondents were from the West Bank
- 38.3% from the Gaza Strip
- 10.3% from Jerusalem
- 29.1% said they live in villages
- 24.5% in refugee camps
- 46.4% in towns/cities
- 46.8% were male
- 53.2% were female
- 64.4% were married
- 28.8% were single
- 5.3% were widowed
- 0.9% were divorced
- 0.6% No answer
- The average of age of the respondents was 34 years.

Occupation respondents

- Students 11.8%
- Waged laborers 10.8%
- Housewives 38.6%
- Employees e.g. secretaries/teachers/nurses/municipal employees 17.5%
- Businessmen/private business 7.7%
- Farmers/fishermen 1.6%
- Craftsmen 1.6%

- Professionals - e.g. doctors/lawyers/pharmacists/engineers 2.2%
 - Unemployed 6.6%
 - Retired 1.3%
 - No answer 0.3%
-

Results

Q1. 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	29.1%	24.9%	35.9%
Somewhat support	43.8%	43.1%	45.0%
Strongly oppose	11.2%	13.9%	6.7%
Somewhat oppose	11.9%	13.0%	10.2%
No answer	4.0%	5.1%	2.2%

Q2. How has the Arab-Israeli peace process affected our economy. Has it had a very positive, positive, negative, or very negative effect on our economy, or has it had no effect at all?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Very positive	2.1%	2.0%	2.2%
Positive	17.8%	18.4%	17.0%
Negative	42.7%	42.0%	43.7%
Very negative	27.4%	24.6%	32.0%
Had no effect at all	6.6%	8.6%	3.3%
No answer	3.4%	4.4%	1.8%

Q3. In your opinion, which of the following is the single most important issue facing Palestinian society today?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Completing negotiations with Israel	23.1%	24.3%	21.1%
Improving our economic situation	39.8%	37.2%	43.9%
Achieving democracy and freedom of expression	11.8%	12.7%	10.4%
Maintaining order and security	10.9%	12.0%	9.1%
Decline of religious observance	10.8%	10.0%	12.2%
No answer	3.6%	3.8%	3.3%

Q4. Which Palestinian Faction do you trust the most?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Fateh	38.5%	35.8%	42.8%
Hamas	10.6%	9.9%	11.7%
PFLP	1.4%	1.8%	0.9%
DFLP	0.7%	0.9%	0.2%
Islamic Jihad	1.4%	1.4%	1.5%
PPP	0.4%	0.5%	0.2%
FIDA	0.4%	0.5%	0.2%
Pro peace secularists	0.6%	0.7%	0.4%
Othe Islamic Organization	5.0%	7.2%	1.5%
Others	1.3%	1.2%	1.3%
Do not trust anyone	25.9%	25.0%	27.4%
No answer	13.8%	15.1%	11.9%

Q5. Which Palestinian political or religious personality do you trust most?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Yasser Arafat	43.4%	38.2%	51.7%
Ahmed Yassin	6.0%	4.9%	7.8%
George Habash	1.4%	1.6%	1.1%
Nayef Hawatmeh	0.4%	0.5%	0.2%
Haydar Abdel Sahfi	3.6%	3.5%	3.7%
Faisal Husseini	2.3%	2.6%	1.7%
Hanan Ashrawi	2.0%	3.1%	0.2%
Saeb Erekat	1.7%	1.6%	1.7%
Mahmoud Abbas	1.0%	0.8%	1.3%
Others	7%	6.6%	7.6%
Do not trust anyone	18.0%	22.3%	11.1%
No answer	13.2%	14.3%	11.9%

Q6. In general, how would you rate the overall performance of the Palestinian Authority? Would you say that its performance has been very good, good, bad, or very bad?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Very good	12.5%	12.3%	12.8%
Good	67.1%	65.1%	70.2%
Bad	13.1%	13.2%	12.8%

Very bad	2.9%	3.9%	1.3%
No answer	4.4%	5.5%	2.9%

Q7. In general, how would you evaluate the performance of the Palestinian Legislative Council?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Very good	6.9%	7.2%	6.5%
Good	46.9%	48.0%	45.2%
Bad	24.6%	23.8%	25.9%
Very bad	7.3%	5.8%	9.8%
No answer	14.3%	15.2%	12.6%

Q8. To what extent would you say that the Palestinian Legislative Council fulfills the needs of the Palestinian people?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Fulfills the needs well	25.8%	27.3%	23.5%
Fulfills the needs but with no effect	48.1%	46.2%	51.1%
Fulfills the needs in a bad way	12.8%	11.4%	15.2%
No answer	13.3%	15.1%	10.2%

Q9. How would you rate the overall performance of the following Palestinian Authority apparatuses:

a. Security Apparatus

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Good	52.8%	52.4%	53.3%
Fair	31.3%	31.4%	31.3%
Bad	10.0%	9.2%	11.3%
No answer	5.9%	7.0%	4.1%

b. Palestinian Legislative Council

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Good	33.8%	34.2%	33.3%
Fair	27.7%	28.0%	27.2%
Bad	24.1%	21.8%	27.8%
No answer	14.4%	16.0%	11.7%

c. Ministerial Cabinet (The Executive Authority)

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Good	34.3%	33.6%	35.4%
Fair	26.6%	26.1%	27.4%
Bad	19.0%	21.6%	14.8%
No answer	20.1%	18.7%	22.4%

Q10. Do you think that President Arafat conducts his work as the head of the National Authority in a good way, a fair way or a bad way?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Good	67.8%	61.4%	78.3%
Fair	21.8%	24.2%	18.0%
Bad	6.2%	8.8%	2.0%
No answer	4.2%	5.6%	1.7%

Q11. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has suggested stopping the implementation of the Interim Agreement (Oslo II) and beginning the final status negotiations. Do you think that the Palestinian leadership should accept this suggestion or not?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Should accept this suggestion	11.0%	8.8%	14.6%
Should reject this suggestion	68.0%	67.6%	68.7%
Don't know	14.5%	16.1%	12.0%
No answer	6.5%	7.5%	4.7%

Q12. Do you support the continuation of military operations against Israeli targets as an appropriate response under current political conditions or do you oppose them and believe they harm Palestinian national interests?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Support military operations	39.8%	41.6%	37.0%
Oppose military operations	47.7%	42.7%	55.7%
No answer	12.5%	15.7%	7.3%

Q13. What about the suicide bombing operations?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Support suicide operations	32.7%	35.0%	28.9%
Oppose suicide operations	54.5%	48.6%	63.9%
No answer	12.8%	16.4%	7.2%

Q14. What about the intensification of Palestinian demonstration and protests against Israel? Do you support or oppose it?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Support intensification	62.7%	59.5%	67.8%
Oppose intensification	28.6%	29.5%	27.2%
No answer	8.7%	11.0%	5.0%

Q15. There are numerous ideas for solving the problems stemming from the recent violations of some aspects of the agreement (Abu Ghniem, Har Homa, closure of institutions, etc...). Some believe that the answer is to intensify the negotiations, other say the negotiations should be stopped, and others say the answer lies in intensifying popular protests. What is your opinion?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Intensify the negotiations	33.9%	31.5%	37.8%
Negotiations should be stopped	25.7%	25.0%	26.7%
Intensify popular protests	29.3%	30.1%	27.8%
Others	3.5%	4.3%	2.2%
No answer	7.6%	9.1%	5.5%

Q16. In your opinion what should the PA (Palestinian Authority) do regarding popular protests. Do you think the PA should encourage these protests, should not interfere in these protests, or should the PA prevent these protests?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Encourage these protests	31.3%	25.9%	40.0%
Not interfere in these protests	37.5%	45.4%	24.8%
Prevent these protests	23.1%	19.1%	29.6%
No answer	8.1%	9.6%	5.6%

Q17. Currently there is a discussion about municipal elections in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Some believe that Palestinian refugees should participate in municipal election whereas others do not believe they should because of the political ramifications of their participation? What is your opinion?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Refugees should participate	70.5%	60.9%	85.9%
Should not participate	20.2%	26.9%	9.3%
No answer	9.3%	12.2%	4.8%

Q18. Some think that the level of corruption in the Palestinian Authority is high; others think that there is corruption but it is not widespread while others think there isn't any corruption. What do you think?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
There is a great deal	34.8%	30.3%	42.2%
There is a fair amount	44.0%	45.5%	41.5%
There is hardly any at all	11.8%	13.2%	9.3%
No answer	9.4%	11.0%	7.0%