

JMCC Public Opinion Poll No. 48

On Palestinian Attitudes Towards the Palestinian Situation in General

April 2003

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JMCC Public Opinion Polls are supported by a fund from Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Germany

Introduction

Significant Opinion Results

- The majority of Palestinians say that the war in Iraq had a negative influence on the Palestinian cause.
- Most Palestinians do not believe the newly created PA prime minister position will serve or hurt the Palestinian cause, and that Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) will not have an influence on the internal situation and the current PA reform process. However, the majority of Palestinians believe that the decision to create this position was due to external pressures and influence.
- Most Palestinians believe that PA Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) will not influence the peace process although more people believe he will assist in pushing it forward than those who believe he will be pushing it backwards.
- Most Palestinians believe in achieving their national goals through both negotiations and armed struggle believing that the peace process is passing through difficult times with an unclear future, yet a majority is pessimistic a peaceful settlement would be reached with Israel.
- The majority of Palestinians support the continuation of al-Aqsa Intifada in its current form with both popular (i.e. demonstrations, economic boycotts) and military resistance to end Israeli military occupation and establish a Palestinian state based on UN Resolution 242.
- The majority of Palestinians believe military operations (including suicide bombings) against Israeli targets (including Israeli civilians) are a suitable response to Israeli occupation within the current political situation. Most Palestinians support military operations both inside Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
- The majority of Palestinians recently watches the Qatar-based al-Jazeera Satellite Channel. More Palestinians listen to Voice of Palestine than other radio channels and read Jerusalem-based Palestinian daily al-Quds newspaper than other daily newspapers.

Intifada and Resistance

- A great majority of Palestinians, 75.3 percent, remained strongly or somewhat supportive of continuing the al-Aqsa Intifada—dropping from 80.7 percent which almost lasted all through 2002—with 22.2 percent somewhat or strongly opposed to the continuation of the Intifada rising from 16.6 percent last December and similar percentages all through the past year.

- A majority of those interviewed 56.4 said that the Intifada should continue in its current form not changing much since December 2002 when 58.8 percent said it should continue. The percentage of those who said the Intifada should stop rose to 21.4 percent from 17.2 percent last December and 13.6 percent in March 2002. Only 5.2 percent said it should remain as a popular resistance including demonstrations, boycotts and stone throwing compared with 3.1 last December. Another 5.2 percent said reactivation of armed resistance, targeting vital Israeli targets and intensifying military operations is how the Intifada's new form should be.
- Most Palestinians, 48.6 percent, believe that the continuation of the Intifada and negotiations together is the best path to achieve Palestinian national goals and end the occupation, basically not changing from the 49.7 percent who answered the same last December and 54.5 percent in March 2002.
- Throughout the Intifada, the majority of Palestinians, 53.0 percent, support the continuation of both popular and military forms of resistance compared with 58.3 percent last December and 66.3 percent in March 2002. A significant majority, 64.6 percent believes that Palestinian military operations against Israeli targets are a suitable response during the current political situation a drop from 69.3 percent last December and 73.6 percent in March 2002. Of those interviewed, 25.1 percent opposed military operations and consider them harmful to Palestinian national interests compared with 24 percent last December.
Yet, as in previous surveys this year, 43 percent do not see a difference between Palestinian military operations conducted inside Israel or in the occupied territories compared with 44.7 percent last December and 49.1 in March 2002, while only 17.5 percent support them inside Israel only and 12.6 percent support them inside the occupied territories only. Similar results were shown in December 2002.
- As for suicide bombing operations against Israeli civilians, there is a slight trend of decreased support for them since 59.9 percent of those interviewed somewhat or strongly supported them dropping from 62.7 percent last December, 64.3 percent last September, 68.1 last June 72 percent last March and 64 percent in December 2001. Of those surveyed, 30.3 percent somewhat or strongly opposed suicide bombings compared with 29.8 percent last December and 21.7 percent in March 2002.

Reform and Trust in Figures and Factions

- Of those interviewed, 38.6 percent said the position of PA prime minister neither serves nor hurts the Palestinian cause and the people, while 29.6 percent said it serves the cause and people and 22 percent said it hurts them.
- A majority of Palestinians, 67.8 percent, believe that the decision to create a prime minister's position came from external pressures and influences while only 6.2 percent said it came as a result of a Palestinian conviction that it is in the interest of the Palestinian people. About 19.2 percent said the position was created because of both external pressures and a Palestinian conviction it is in their interest.
- Most Palestinians, 44.5 percent, said that appointed PA Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) will not influence the peace process, while 30.4 percent said he will assist in pushing the peace process forward and 16.5 percent said he will assist pushing the peace process backwards. Only 7.4 percent said they do not know.
- Most Palestinians, 43.2 percent, said that Mahmoud Abbas will not have an influence on the current PA reform process, while 28.7 percent said he will push the reform forward and 17.4 percent said he will push the reform backward.
- Yasser Arafat and his mainstream Fateh faction are still the most popular amongst the Palestinian public with a drop in popularity. A drop to 21.1 percent of Palestinians who said Arafat is the most trusted Palestinian figure compared with 25.5 percent last December and 27.9 percent in March 2002.
- The second in line of trust is Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, founder and spiritual leader of Hamas, who was chosen by 9.7 percent of those interviewed dropping from 11.5 percent last December and March 2002.

- The third in line of trust is Marwan Barghouti, Fateh leader detained in Israeli jails, who was chosen by 3.7 percent compared with 5.2 percent last December and 2.8 in March 2002.
- There is 36.1 percent of Palestinians who do not trust any Palestinian figure compared with 30 percent last December and 32.1 percent in March 2002.
- As for Palestinian factions, Fateh maintained the most trusted faction sliding to 22.6 percent from 28.1 percent last December and 29.5 percent in March 2002.
- The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, was chosen by 22 percent compared with 20.1 percent last December and 19.8 percent in March 2002.
- There are 34.3 percent of Palestinians who do not trust any faction compared with 31.4 percent last December and 29.6 percent in March 2002.

Media

- A majority of those interviewed, 51.7 percent, said that they recently watch the Qatar-based al-Jazeera Satellite Channel the most, followed by Abu Dhabi Satellite Channel, 14.2 percent, and Hizbullah's al-Manar Satellite Channel, 7.8 percent.
- More Palestinians, 13.5 percent, said they recently listen to Voice of Palestine radio the most, followed by the Gaza-based Sawt al-Huriyeh, 12.1 percent, and Radio Israel (Arabic service), 6.1 percent. Only 0.3 percent said they listen the most to Radio Sawa (the FM Arabic service radio by the US government-funded U.S. International Broadcasting). Of those interviewed, 31.6 percent said they do not listen to the radio.
- The Palestinian Jerusalem-based daily newspaper al-Quds is recently most read by Palestinians, 37.1 percent, followed by Ramallah-based al-Ayyam, 14 percent, and Ramallah-based al-Haya al-Jadidah, 11.2 percent. Of those interviewed, 36.2 percent said they don't read newspapers.

Methodology

A random sample of 1201 people over the age of 18 were interviewed face-to-face throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 5 and 9 April 2003. 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:** Jenin, Jenin Refugee Camp (RC), Arabeh, Zababdeh, Aqabeh, Sarees, al-Jdaydeh, al-Yamoun, Kufr Rai' and Maythaloun. **Nablus:** Nablus, Rujeeb, Balata RC, Madama, 'Asira al-Qibilia, Sabasitia, Zawata, Kifl Haris and Marda. **Tulkarem and Qalqilya:** Tulkarem, Tulkarem RC, Qalqilya, Jayyous, Bala' and Beit Leed. **Hebron:** Hebron, Dura, Beit Ummar, Fawwar RC, A-Dahiria, Bani Naim and Tarqoumia. **Bethlehem:** Bethlehem, Bateer, al-Khader, Beit Sahour, a-Duha and Deheishe RC. **Jericho:** Jericho, Aqabet Jaber RC. **Ramallah & al-Bireh:** al-Bireh, Ramallah, Beit Rima, Kufr Malik, Jalazon RC and Nilin. **Jerusalem:** ad-Dahia, A-ram, Shufat, Beit Hanina, Beit Hanina a-tahta, Old City, Wadi Al-Joz, Jabal Al-Mukaber, al-'Issawia, a-Thori, Beir Nabala and Qalandia RC.

In the **Gaza Strip:** 440 people were surveyed from: **North Gaza:** Jabalia RC, Jabalia, Beit Lahia, Beit Hanoun. **Gaza City:** Sheikh Radwan, a-Naser, al-Durj, Attufah, Sabra, al-Zaytoun, al-Shaja'ieh, al-Rimal South, al-Rimal North and Shati RC. **Deir al-Balah:** Deir al-Balah, Bureij RC, Maghazi RC and Nuseirat RC. **Khan Younis:** Khan Younis, Khan Younis RC, Bani Sahila, Abssan al-Kabeera and Abassan al-Saghira. **Rafah:** Rafah, Rafah RC, Tal al-Sultan RC.

The margin of error is 3 percent, with a confidence level of 95.

Sample Distribution

- 52.5% of the respondents were from West Bank, 10.8% from Jerusalem, 36.7% from the Gaza Strip.
- 32.5% said they live in villages, 15.8% in refugee camps, 51.7% in towns/cities.
- 47.6% were male, 52.4% were female.
- 68.4% were married, 26.0%, single, 3.8% widowed, 1.3% divorced, 0.5% no answer.
- The average age of the respondents was 34 years.

Occupation respondents

- Students 13.0%,
 - laborers 9.0%,
 - Farmers/fishermen 3.7%
 - Craftsmen 2.1%
 - Businessmen/private business 7.9%
 - Employees e.g. secretaries/municipal employees/teachers/nurses 17.5%
 - Professionals - e.g. doctors/lawyers/ pharmacists/engineers 2.1%
 - Housewives 37.1%,
 - Unemployed 6.3%
 - Retired 0.9%,
 - No answer 0.4%.
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Results

Q1. In general how optimistic or pessimistic do you feel towards the future?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
Very optimistic	2.3	1.8	3.2
Optimistic	41.1	38.9	45.0
Pessimistic	35.1	37.5	31.1
Very Pessimistic	21.2	21.7	20.5
No answer	0.3	0.1	0.2

Q2. How optimistic or pessimistic are you towards reaching a peaceful settlement for the Arab-Israeli conflict?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
Very optimistic	1.2	1.4	0.9
Optimistic	27.2	26.3	28.9
Pessimistic	40.5	40.5	40.7
Very Pessimistic	29.4	30.1	28.2

No answer	1.7	1.7	1.3
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Q3. In principle, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose peace negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
Strongly support	9.7	11.4	6.8
Somewhat support	41.6	39.7	45.0
Somewhat oppose	21.6	20.8	23.0
Strongly oppose	24.1	23.4	25.2
No answer	3.0	4.7	0.0

Q4. Under the current conditions, some believe that the peace process is dead and there is no chance of resuming the negotiations, while others see that the peace process is passing through difficult conditions with an unclear future and there is another group who believes that the peace process is still alive and there is a possibility of resuming negotiations?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
The peace process is dead and there is no chance of resuming the negotiations	37.6	39.3	34.5
The peace process is passing through difficult conditions with an unclear future	45.0	42.8	48.6
The peace process is still alive and there is a possibility of resuming negotiations	13.1	12.1	14.8
Others	1.0	1.4	0.2
Don't know	2.7	3.7	1.1
No answer	0.6	0.7	0.8

Q5. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the continuation of the al-Aqsa Intifada in the West Bank and Gaza Strip?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
Strongly support	40.5	35.2	49.8
Somewhat support	34.8	32.5	38.9
Somewhat oppose	13.5	17.1	7.3
Strongly oppose	8.7	11.6	3.9
No answer	2.5	3.6	0.1

Q6. There is a discussion within the Palestinian society on the benefit of continuing the Intifada, what is your opinion? Should the Intifada continue in its current form, should it continue but in other forms or should it the Intifada stop?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
The Intifada should continue in its current form.	56.4	47.2	72.3

The Intifada should continue in other forms	4.2	3.9	4.8
The Intifada should stop	21.4	28.4	9.3
By reactivating the popular characteristic of the Intifada*.	5.2	5.7	4.3
By reactivating armed resistance*.	5.2	4.9	5.7
By reinforcing national unity and organizing the Intifada*.	1.6	1.7	1.4
External help*	0.6	0.8	0.2
No answer	5.4	7.4	2.0

**These answers were not included as part of the options read to the interviewees*

Q7. Some believe that the Intifada is the best path to achieve our national goals and end the occupation; others believe that the negotiations are the best way to do so. There are some who believe that the continuation of the Intifada and the negotiations together is the method to achieve Palestinian national goals, so in your perspective what is the best way to achieve our national goals?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
Only the Intifada	29.8	24.0	39.8
Only negotiations	15.2	19.7	7.5
Intifada and negotiations together	48.6	47.4	50.7
I don't know	5.3	7.4	1.8
No answer	1.1	1.5	0.2

Q8. The current Intifada includes popular characteristics such as the demonstrations and military characteristics. In your opinion, do you support the continuation of a popular or military Intifada or both of them together?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
I am with the continuation of a popular resistance Intifada	23.7	27.3	17.5
I am with the military resistance Intifada	11.2	12.0	10.0
I am with both of them	53.0	44.5	67.5
I don't know	8.5	12.6	1.4
No answer	3.6	3.6	3.6

Q9. Do you support the resumption of the military operations against Israeli targets as a suitable response within the current political conditions, or do you reject it and find it harmful to Palestinian national interests?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
A suitable response within the current political conditions	64.6	57.7	76.6
I reject it and find it harmful to Palestinian national interests	25.1	28.4	19.3
I don't know	8.1	10.8	3.4

No answer	2.2	3.1	0.7
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Q10. Are you with the resumption of the military operations only inside Israel, only inside the occupied territories or inside Israel and the occupied territories?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
Inside Israel only	17.5	18.4	15.9
Inside the occupied territories only	12.6	15.9	6.8
Inside Israel and the occupied territories	43.0	31.7	62.5
I am not with the resumption of the military operations	22.4	27.5	13.6
No answer	4.5	6.5	1.2

Q11. What is your feeling towards suicide bombing operations against Israeli civilians, do you support it or oppose it?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
Strongly support	37.8	31.1	49.3
Somewhat support	22.1	20.8	24.5
Strongly oppose	11.7	15.4	5.2
Somewhat oppose	18.6	19.6	16.8
I don't know	6.7	9.3	2.3
No answer	3.1	3.8	1.9

Q12. Some believe that a two-state formula is the favored solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict, while others believe that historic Palestine cannot be divided and thus the favored solution is a bi-national state on all of Palestine wherein Palestinians and Israelis enjoy equal representation and rights. Which of these solutions do you prefer?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
Two-state solution: an Israeli and a Palestinian	51.9	59.7	38.4
Bi-national state on all of historic Palestine	25.1	21.2	31.8
One Palestinian State with one nationality*	16.2	11.2	24.8
Islamic State*	3.1	2.8	3.6
I don't know	2.4	3.4	0.7
No answer	1.3	1.7	0.7

**These answers were not included as part of the options read to the interviewees*

Q13. The position of PA prime minister has been recently created; do you believe that this step serves the Palestinian people and cause? Or hurts the Palestinian people and cause? Or that it does not serve nor hurt the Palestinian people and cause?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
It serves the Palestinian people and cause.	29.6	31.8	25.7

It hurts the Palestinian people and cause	22.0	20.9	23.9
It does not serve nor hurt the Palestinian people and cause	38.6	36.4	42.3
I don't know	8.7	9.5	7.3
No answer	1.1	1.4	0.8

Q14. Do you believe that appointing of Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) as prime minister in Palestine helps pushing the peace process with Israel forward? Backwards? Or will not influence the peace process?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
Will assist in pushing the peace process between Israel and Palestine forward.	30.4	31.5	28.4
Will assist in pushing the peace process between Israel and Palestine backward	16.5	17.9	14.1
Will not influence the peace process	44.5	41.3	50.2
I don't know	7.4	7.9	6.6
No answer	1.2	1.4	0.7

Q15. Do you believe that appointing Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) as prime minister would assist pushing the current PA reform process forward? Backward? Or this appointment would not have an influence on the current reform process?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
Will assist in pushing the PA reform process forward.	28.7	30.0	26.6
Will assist in pushing the PA reform process backward.	17.4	18.3	15.9
Will not have an influence on the current reform process.	43.2	40.3	48.2
I don't know	9.2	10.0	8.0
No answer	1.5	1.4	1.3

Q16. Do you believe that the decision to create a prime minister's position came from external pressures and influences or as a result of a Palestinian conviction that this is in the interest of the Palestinian people? Or both?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
It came due to external pressures and influences.	67.8	66.9	69.3
It came as a result of a Palestinian conviction that it is in the interest of the Palestinian people.	6.2	5.8	6.8
Both, due to external pressures and as a result of Palestinian conviction that it is in the interest of the	19.2	19.6	18.6

Palestinian people.			
I don't know	5.7	6.3	4.8
No answer	1.1	1.4	0.5

Q17. In your opinion, what is the influence of the current war in Iraq on the Palestinian cause? Is it negative, positive, or does not have an influence?

	Total N=1201	West Bank N=761	Gaza N=440
Has a negative influence	56.1	55.2	57.7
Has a positive influence	16.6	15.6	18.2
Does not have an influence	15.2	16.0	13.9
I don't know	10.1	10.6	9.1
No answer	2.0	2.6	1.1

Q18. Which television station do you recently watch the most?*

	Total N=1201	West Bank N=761	Gaza N=440
Al-Jazeera	51.7	51.2	52.5
Abu Dhabi	14.2	12.4	17.3
Al-Manar	7.8	7.4	8.6
Al-Arabia	5.3	4.3	7.0
Palestine	3.7	1.2	8.0
MBC	1.7	2.0	1.1
Iraq	1.6	2.4	0.2
Al-Amal	1.2	1.7	0.2
Jordan	1.0	1.6	0.0
Others	10.3	13.9	4.1
I don't watch	1.1	1.3	0.7
No answer	0.4	0.6	0.3

**The question was open-ended*

Q19. Which radio station do you recently listen to the most?*

	Total N=1201	West Bank N=761	Gaza N=440
Palestine	13.5	8.5	22.0
Sawt al-Hureya	12.1	4.7	24.8
Israel	6.1	8.4	2.0
Ajyal	3.8	6.0	0.0
London	3.4	1.8	6.1
Monte Carlo	3.2	3.5	2.7
Amwaj	2.9	2.2	4.1
Hebron	2.9	4.6	0.0
Al-Quds	2.6	4.1	0.0
Sawt al-Ahlam	2.4	3.8	0.0
Quran al Kareem	2.1	1.8	2.5
Tareeq al-Mahabeh	1.6	2.5	0.0
Jordan	1.2	2.0	0.0
Bethlehem 2000	1.2	1.8	0.0

Sawt al-Arab	1.0	0.8	1.4
Others	7.4	7.5	7.3
I don't listen	31.6	34.6	26.6
No answer	1.0	1.4	0.5

**The question was open-ended*

Q20. Which newspaper do you recently read the most?*

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
Al-Quds	37.1	44.8	23.6
Al-Ayyam	14.0	11.6	18.2
Al-Haya al-Jadeeda	11.2	8.8	15.2
Others	1.2	1.1	1.6
I don't read	36.2	33.4	41.1
No answer	0.3	0.3	0.3

**The question was open-ended*

Q21. Which Palestinian personality do you trust the most?*

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
Yasser Arafat	21.1	18.5	25.5
Ahmed Yassin	9.7	6.8	14.5
Marwan Barghouthi	3.7	4.1	3.2
Abdul Aziz Rantisi	3.4	2.8	4.5
Sa'eb Erekat	2.3	3.0	1.1
Haider Abdul Shafi	2.3	1.4	3.9
Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas)	1.8	1.7	2.0
Ramadan Shalah	1.1	0.9	1.4
Ahmad Sa'adat	1.1	1.1	1.1
'Abdallah al-Shami	1.1	0.8	1.6
Hanan Ashrawi	1.0	1.3	0.5
Other figures	7.6	7.2	8.2
I don't trust anyone	36.1	40.7	28.2
No answer	7.7	9.7	4.3

**The question was open-ended*

Q22. Which Palestinian political or religious faction do you trust most?*

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
	N=1201	N=761	N=440
Fateh	22.6	18.0	30.7
Hamas	22.0	17.7	29.3
Islamic Jihad	6.3	6.6	5.9
PFLP	2.0	1.6	2.7
Other Islamic faction	1.2	1.2	1.4
Other Factions	1.9	1.8	2.0
I don't trust anyone	34.3	41.1	22.5
No answer	9.7	12.0	5.5

**The question was open-ended*