



## **Results of an Opinion Poll**

**Living Conditions**

**Democracy and Freedoms**

**Performance of Government**

**Evaluation of Leaders**

**Peace Process**

**Elections**

**Aftermath of Egypt Election**

**Publication Date: --- July 2012**

**Fieldwork: 19-21 July 2012**

**Sample Size: 1200 Palestinians in the West Bank & Gaza**

**Margin of error:  $\pm 3\%$**

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### **Introduction**

These are the results and analyses of the latest Arab World for Research & Development (AWRAD) public opinion poll, focusing on the aftermath of the Egyptian Presidential election, Palestinian local election and other elections, state of democracy and freedom to protest, the performance of the Fayyad and Haniyeh governments, the peace process, and support for existing political parties and prospective future candidates.

The questionnaire was fielded July 19-21, 2012. For this survey, 1200 Palestinians were interviewed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. All socioeconomic groups were represented in the poll (for more details on the sample, please refer to [www.awrad.org](http://www.awrad.org)). The margin of error in this poll is plus or minus 3 percent. The survey was carried out by AWRAD researchers under the supervision of Dr. Nader Said-Foqahaa, President of AWRAD.

## Highlights

- 56 percent of West Bank and Gaza Palestinians believe that things are going in the wrong direction; the rate in Gaza increases to 63 percent.
- 52 percent approve of the performance of President Abbas; 43 percent disapprove.
- 46 percent approve of the performance of Prime Minister Fayyad; 48 percent disapprove.
- 33 percent approve of the performance of Prime Minister Haniyeh; 57 percent disapprove.
- 29 percent believe that the overall living conditions in the West Bank had improved since the appointment of the Fayyad government; 22 percent believe that the overall living conditions in the Gaza had improved since the appointment of the Haniyeh government.
- 64 percent of Gazans believe that living conditions had worsened since the appointment of the Haniyeh government; 34 percent of West bank respondents feel the same way about the Fayyad government.
- 83 percent support the conduct of local elections in October 2012.
- In a two-way presidential race, 46 percent would vote for Abbas and 20 percent would vote for Haniyeh; 34 percent would either undecided or would not vote.
- In a two-way presidential race, 38 percent would vote for M. Aloul and 23 percent would vote for Haniyeh; 39 percent would either undecided or would not vote.
- In a two-way presidential race, 41 percent would vote for Fayyad and 22 percent would vote for Haniyeh; 37 percent would either undecided or would not vote.
- In a two-way presidential race, 40 percent would vote for Mustafa Bargouthi and 20 percent would vote for Haniyeh; 40 percent would either undecided or would not vote.
- 65 percent oppose a meeting between President Abbas and Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shaul Mofaz in Ramallah<sup>1</sup>. 74 percent would support such a meeting if it resulted in the release of Palestinian prisoners.
- 50 percent support an immediate return to negotiations and 46 percent oppose.
- 54 percent believe that the PA in the West Bank is respectful of human rights, while 35 percent feel the same way about the government in Gaza.
- 55 percent describe the handling of public demonstrations by the PA in West Bank as harsh or too harsh.
- 61 percent describe the handling of public demonstrations by the government in Gaza as harsh or too harsh.
- 58 percent say that they are happy or to some extent happy with the results of the Egyptian presidential election. 29 percent say that they are not happy.
- 57 percent believe that the Mohamed Mursi victory will have no impact on achieving Palestinian independence.
- 49 percent, however, believe that the Mursi victory will have a positive impact on lifting the closure on Gaza.
- 64 percent support raising taxes on the wealthy.
- 64 percent support the preservation of the PA.

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<sup>1</sup> The survey was carried out before his resignation from his post in the Netanyahu-led government.

## **Analysis of Results:**

### **1. Evaluation of Living Conditions**

- The majority of respondents (56 percent) believe that things in Palestine are heading in the wrong direction. In contrast, 40 percent believe that things are going in right direction.
- More Gazans believe that things in Palestine are going in the wrong direction (63 percent) than their West Bank counterparts (52 percent).
- Only 30 percent of respondents believe that the overall situation has improved since the appointment of the Fayyad government. As much as 34 percent believe that there was no change and 32 percent believe that it has worsened.
- More West Bank respondents (34 percent) believe that the overall situation has worsened than Gaza respondents (28 percent) since the appointment of the Fayyad government.
- Only 22 percent of respondents believe that the overall situation has improved since the appointment of the Haniyeh government. As much as 23 percent believe that there was no change and 47 percent believe that it has worsened.
- Gazans are much more critical of the developments than West Bank respondents. As much as 64 percent of Gazans believe that the overall situation has worsened since the appointment of the Haniyeh government. 37 percent of West Bank respondents feel the same way.
- In spite of these negative evaluations, a majority in both regions (55 percent) express optimism about the future. This compared to 43 percent who express pessimism.

### **2. Evaluation of Leaders**

- The approval rate for President Abbas continues to be higher than that of other leaders. For example, 52 percent say that they approve of his performance while 43 percent disapprove.
- The disapproval rate for the performance of Fayyad (48 percent) is slightly higher than his approval rate (46 percent).
- Haniyeh has the highest disapproval rate (57 percent) compared to 33 percent approval rate.

### **3. Support for Elections**

- The vast majority of Palestinians support conducting elections immediately. For example, 83 percent support the PA's announcement that local elections be held in October 2012. Only 14 percent oppose such an announcement.
- In addition, 87 percent support the immediate conduct of parliamentary and presidential election. Furthermore, 84 percent support the immediate conduct of Palestinian National Council (PNC).
- As much as 78 percent say that they would participate in the elections if they were held today. 22 percent say that they would not participate.

### **4. Reconciliation**

- 49 percent believe that Fatah is serious about ending the division, while 43 percent believe that it is not serious. Doubts about the seriousness of Fatah are somewhat higher in Gaza (47 percent) than the West Bank (40 percent).
- 28 percent believe that Hamas is serious about ending the division, while 61 percent believe that it is not serious. Doubts about the seriousness of Hamas are higher in Gaza (67 percent) than the West Bank (58 percent).

## **5. Negotiations**

- The majority of Palestinians (65 percent) oppose the meeting between President Abbas and Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shaul Mofaz that was planned to be held in Ramallah during June 2012. In contrast, 30 percent support such a meeting.
- If the meeting were held in another country, the support rate would rise to 38 percent and the opposition would decline to 56 percent.
- If the meeting would result in the release of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails, the majority of respondents (74 percent) would support the said meeting and only 20 percent would oppose.
- In general, however, 50 percent of respondents in the West Bank and Gaza support the immediate return to negotiations. In contrast, 46 percent oppose.
- Palestinians continue to choose peaceful means to end the occupation, where 60 percent chose one peaceful means or another. In summary, 29 percent chose direct negotiations as the best means, 17 percent chose non-violent resistance and 14 percent an international conference under the UN. In contrast, 26 percent believe that the best means to end the occupation is through armed resistance.
- It is interesting to note that 9 percent feel that nothing will work to end the occupation. This sentiment is more widespread in the West Bank (12 percent) than in Gaza (6 percent).

## **6. Freedoms and Human Rights**

- The West Bank government scores higher in the field human rights than the field of freedoms. For example, 54 percent of all respondents believe that the government in the West Bank is respectful of human rights, while 38 percent believe that it is not respectful. In comparison, 42 percent believe that the government in the West Bank is respectful of the right to protest, while as much as 50 percent believe that it is not respectful.
- 49 percent of respondents believe that West Bank government is respectful of freedom of speech, while 43 percent believe that it is not respectful.
- The majority of respondents give a negative evaluation for the Gaza government in the freedoms and human rights fields. For example, 50 percent believe that it is not respectful of freedom of speech and 54 percent believe that it is not respectful of the freedom to protest.
- 48 percent believe that the Gaza government is authoritarian while 42 percent feel the same way about the West Bank government.
- 55 percent describe the handling of public demonstrations by the PA in West Bank as harsh (32 percent) or too harsh (23 percent). 28 percent describe the handling of public demonstrations in the West Bank as (about right). In contrast, 6 percent believe that is lenient.

- 61 percent describe the handling of public demonstrations by the government in Gaza as harsh (32 percent) or too harsh (29 percent). 18 percent describe the handling of public demonstrations in the West Bank as (about right). In contrast, 4 percent believe that is lenient.
- Among Gazans, as much as 77 percent describe the handling of public demonstrations by the government in Gaza as harsh or too harsh. In contrast, 51 percent of West bank respondents describe the handling of public demonstrations by the PA in West Bank as harsh or too harsh

## 7. Aftermath of Egyptian Election

- While most Palestinians express satisfactions with the results of the Egyptian presidential race that took place last month, there are no illusions about the impact of these results on the various aspects of their life.
- 81 percent of all respondents say that they followed the news of the recent presidential election in Egypt. The rate of interest was higher in Gaza (91 percent) than in the West Bank (74 percent).
- 58 percent of all respondents say that they are happy (24 percent) or to some extent happy (34) with the results of the Egyptian presidential election. 29 percent say that they are not happy to some extent (16 percent) or not happy at all (13 percent).
- Gazans are more polarized about the results of the Egypt elections, where 55 percent express happiness with the results while 41 percent express unhappiness. In the West Bank, 59 percent express happiness and 22 percent unhappiness. As much as 19 percent in the West Bank are unsure about how they feel, compared to 4 percent in Gaza.
- As to their expectations of the newly-elected Egyptian President Mohamed Mursi of the Islamic Brotherhood Movement, the following results are illustrative:
  - **Achieve Palestinian independence:** The least expectations are in the area of achieving an independent Palestinian state where 57 percent believe that the victory by Mursi will make no difference. In contrast, 25 percent believe that it will have a positive impact on Palestinian independence, while 9 percent believe that it will have a negative impact.
  - **Improve living conditions among Palestinians:** Again, there no high expectations in this area where 49 percent believe that the victory by Mursi will make no difference. In contrast, 36 percent believe that it will have a positive impact on Palestinian living conditions, while 7 percent believe that it will have a negative impact.
  - **Achieve reconciliation:** As much as 42 percent of respondents believe that the victory by Mursi will make no difference in the field reconciliation. In contrast, 42 percent believe that it will have a positive impact on achieving Palestinian reconciliation, while 8 percent believe that it will have a negative impact.
  - **Lift the closure on Gaza:** The highest expectation of President Mursi is in the area of lifting the closure on Gaza, where 49 percent believe that his election will have a positive impact. 38 percent believe it will make no difference and 7 percent believe that the closure will be worse.
- In terms of impact on political affiliation and support for major Palestinian groups, the victory by Mursi had no significant impact.

- Only 17 percent say that their support for Hamas has increased while 11 percent say that their support for the movement has decreased. As much as 66 percent say that the Mursi victory had no impact in that regard.
- Only 13 percent say that their support for Fatah has increased while 10 percent say that their support for the movement has decreased. As much as 71 percent say that the Mursi victory had no impact in that regard.

## 8. Financial Crisis:

- 78 percent of respondents support any effort by the PA to reduce reliance on foreign assistance and bolster self reliance. 21 percent oppose.
- 42 percent believe that Palestinians are now more self reliant than they were at the start of the Oslo process. The majority (52 percent), however, disagree with that statement.
- More Gazans (57 percent) disagree that Palestinians are more self reliant than West Bank respondents (50 percent).
- To face the severe financial difficulties that the West Bank government is facing, respondents support the following options the most:
  - Raise taxes on the wealthy (64 percent);
  - Cut civil service pay (46 percent);
  - Lay off civil servants in non-essential areas (35 percent);
  - Default on debts to local banks (29 percent).
- The following options are less popular:
  - Offer early retirement to older civil servants (27 percent);
  - Decrease public spending and services in non-essential areas (26 percent);
  - Increase loans from local banks;
  - Institute a system of national service (23 percent).
- The least popular option is:
  - Enforce current system of taxes and payment for utility usage.

## 9. The Future of the PA

- When asked about the future of the Palestinian Authority (PA), the majority of Palestinians (64 percent) expressed their support for its preservation. In contrast, 28 percent support its dissolution.
- The majority (62 percent) believe that the PA will be able to survive; 35 percent are defiantly sure about that and 27 percent believe that that is a possibility.
- In contrast, 28 percent believe that the PA will collapse; 9 percent are definitely sure about that and 19 percent believe that that is a possibility

## 10. Political Support

### 10.1 Factional support

- **Fatah continues to be most popular with decline in Gaza:** Support for Fatah among the public is at 41 percent (3 points lower than its March 2012 support). It reaches 43 percent in the West Bank and 38 percent in Gaza (declining by 5 points from 43 percent in March 2012).
- **Hamas continues to garner about 15 percent public support**, with higher rates in Gaza (19 percent) than West Bank (13 percent).
- **PFLP and Mubadara** receive 4 percent support.

- **All other groups** receive 2 percent support or less.
- 28 percent are either **undecided** or say that they will not vote.
- A United list of all leftist groups might receive 6 percent support while a Mubadra list might receive 7 percent. An Islamist list might receive more than 18 percent support.
- If only two lists ran for election, a PLO list would receive 48 percent of the vote and an Islamist list would receive about 20 percent. One third will be undecided or say that they will not vote.

## 10.2 Presidential elections

- **Open list:** Abbas leads a list of 17 presidential potentials receiving 27 percent support, only to be followed by Haniyeh (13 percent) and Marwan Barghouthi (12 percent). Fayyad in fourth place (5 percent), followed by Ahmad Sa'adat and Mustafa Barghouthi (4 percent each). Mohamed Dahlan and Khaled Meshaal receive about 2 percent each. All other potentials receive 1 percent or less.
- **Four-way races:**
  - Abbas (33 percent), Haniyeh (17 percent), Mustafa Barghouthi (12 percent) and Fayyad (8 percent). 29 percent are either undecided or will not vote.
  - Marwan Barghouthi (31 percent), Haniyeh (17 percent), Fayyad (15 percent) and Mustafa Barghouthi (10 percent). 27 percent are either undecided or will not vote.
  - Mahmoud Aloul (21 percent), Haniyeh (17 percent), Mustafa Barghouthi and Fayyad (16 percent each). 30 percent are either undecided or will not vote.
- **Two-way races:**
  - Abbas (46 percent) and Haniyeh (20 percent), with 34 percent undecided or will not vote.
  - Fayyad (41 percent) and Haniyeh (22 percent), with 37 percent undecided or will not vote.
  - Mustafa Barghouthi (40 percent) and Haniyeh (20 percent), **with 40 percent undecided or will not vote.**
  - Aloul (37 percent) and Haniyeh (23 percent), **with 40 percent undecided or will not vote.**