



Results of an Opinion Poll In the West Bank and Gaza Strip

**Performance of Palestinian Leaders
Performance of Governments
The UN Bid to End the Occupation
Popularity of Political Factions
Presidential Election**

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Fieldwork: 30-12-2014 to 1-1-2015
Sample Size: 1200 Palestinian in the West Bank and Gaza
Margin of error: $\pm 3\%$**

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Highlights

- 1) The majority of respondents support a United Nations Security Council bid to establish a timeline to end the occupation.
- 2) Mistrust in both Fatah and Hamas is widespread.
- 3) The majority of respondents believe that Palestinians are farther from achieving their goal to establish an independent state, compared to two decades ago.
- 4) Marwan Barghouthi is the most popular leader.
- 5) If elections were held today, Mahmoud Abbas would win over Ismael Haniyeh and Khaled Mashal in head-to-head contests.
- 6) Respondents in Gaza are more supportive of Abbas, Fatah and Al Hamdallah than their counterparts in the West Bank.
- 7) The Hamas government and its leaders are locked in a close popularity contest with Fatah and its leaders among West Bank respondents.
- 8) Fatah remains the most popular political party among all Palestinians.

Introduction

The following are the results and analysis of the latest Arab World for Research & Development (AWRAD) national public opinion poll, focusing on presidential and legislative elections, as well as the performance of notable Palestinian leaders, political factions and government performance. The poll also focuses on the recent Palestinian bid to the United Nations Security Council to end the occupation.

The questionnaire was fielded December 30, 2014 to January 1, 2015. This period closely followed the UN Security Council's rejection of the Palestinian bid to establish a timeline ending the occupation. It also coincided with the continued delayed payment of PA wages to civil servants and two field visits by the Unity Government to the Gaza Strip, four months after the cessation of the conflict in the territory. For this survey, 1,200 Palestinians were interviewed "face-to-face" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. All socioeconomic groups are represented in the poll. For more details on the sample, please refer to www.awrad.org. The margin of error in this poll is ± 3 percent. The survey was carried out by AWRAD researchers under the supervision of President, Dr. Nader Said-Foqahaa.

Analysis of Results

Evaluation of Leaders

AWRAD asked Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to evaluate the overall performance of seven Palestinian leaders.

- Marwan Barghouthi receives the highest positive evaluation with 50 percent evaluating his performance as (good) while 29 percent evaluate it as (average) and only 10 percent as (poor). The rest (11 percent) say that they don't have an opinion. Positive evaluations of Marwan Barghouthi are higher among Gaza respondents (59 percent) than West Bank respondents (44 percent).
- 39 percent of respondents consider the performance of Mahmoud Abbas to be (good), and 28 percent consider it average. In contrast 31 percent evaluate his performance as (poor).

Positive evaluations of President Abbas are slightly higher in Gaza (41 percent) compared to the West Bank (37 percent).

- 35 percent evaluate the performance of Khaled Mashal as (good) and 29 percent believe it is (average), while 29 percent evaluate his performance as (poor).

Positive evaluations of Mashal are statistically equal in both regions. The rate of negative evaluations in the West Bank are (21 percent), half of the amount in Gaza (42 percent).

- 34 percent describe the performance of Rami Al-Hamdallah as (good), and 35 percent as (average), while 25 percent evaluate his performance as (poor).

Gazans are divided on the performance of Al-Hamdallah; 36 percent express positive evaluations while 32 believe it is negative. The largest group in the West Bank gives him an (average) evaluation.

- 34 percent describe the performance of Ismael Haniyeh as (good), and 32 percent as (average), while 29 percent evaluate his performance as (poor).

The rate of positive evaluations of Haniyeh is statistically equal in both regions. His negative evaluation in Gaza (39 percent), however, is much higher than in the West Bank (23 percent).

- 26 percent describe the performance of Mustafa Barghouthi as (good), and 40 percent as (average), while 24 percent evaluate his performance as (poor).

- 17 percent describe the performance of Salam Fayyad as (good), and 30 percent consider it (average), while 45 percent evaluate his performance as (poor). Positive evaluations of Fayyad are higher in Gaza than in the West Bank.

Popularity of Political Parties

- Fatah continues to have the largest popular support base with 38 percent; the popularity of the party is higher in Gaza (45 percent) than in the West Bank (34 percent).
- Hamas is the second most popular political party (21 percent), with 22 percent support in the West Bank and 20 percent in Gaza.
- 3 percent of respondents support the PFLP.
- All other parties have 1-2 percent support.
- 31 percent of respondents are either undecided or will not vote (36 percent in the West Bank and 24 percent in Gaza).

Mistrust in Fatah and Hamas is low, while 39 percent of the respondents say that they trust Hamas the least, 37 percent say the same about Fatah. 24 percent say that they do not know.

Presidential Election

1. Marwan Barghouthi vs. Ismael Haniyeh: Marwan Barghouthi would win this contest 43 percent to 27 percent. In this potential matchup, Marwan Barghouthi receives a majority vote of 51 percent in Gaza and 39 percent in the West Bank. Haniyeh receives 29 percent in Gaza and 25 percent in the West Bank. Of note, 36 percent of West Bank respondents are either undecided or will not vote.
2. Mahmoud Abbas vs. Ismael Haniyeh: Mahmoud Abbas would win this contest 38 percent to 29 percent. In this potential matchup, Abbas receives 44 percent in Gaza, and 34 percent

in the West Bank. Haniyeh receives 31 percent in Gaza and 29 percent in the West Bank. 37 percent of West Bank respondents are either undecided or will not vote. Similar results appear in the case of a race between Abbas and Khaled Mashal.

3. If President Abbas decided not to run for election and the following six candidates did, the results show that Marwan Barghouti is the most viable candidate (39 percent), followed by Khaled Mashal (24 percent). Other listed candidates (Salam Fayyad, Mustafa Barghouti, Ahmad Saadat and Ramadan Shalah) receive 2-4 percent support each. 26 percent are either undecided or will not vote.

Leader Trusted to Achieve an Independent State

When respondents were asked to select the Palestinian leader most qualified to achieve an independent State, the following results were observed:

- Mahmoud Abbas continues to be considered the most qualified leader to achieve an independent Palestinian state (26 percent).
- Khaled Mashal (residing outside of Palestine), Marwan Barghouti (in Israeli prison) and Ismael Haniyeh all place second with about 12 percent each.
- In fifth place is Mohammad Dahlan (6 percent).
- All other leaders listed in the poll receive 2 percent or less.
- 25 percent of respondents do not consider any of the leaders qualified to lead Palestinians to independence.

Prime Minister

- Respondents prefer a government led by Al Hamdallah (43 percent) than a government led by Haniyeh (29 percent). This sentiment is more widespread in Gaza than in the West Bank.
- In Gaza, 53 percent prefer a government led by Al Hamdallah while 36 percent of West Bank respondents feel the same way (a 17-point gap). Support for Haniyeh as the preferred Prime Minister is equal in the West Bank and Gaza (29 percent). 31 percent either do not prefer any of the two or have no answer.
- In terms of trust, 41 percent trust a Hamdallah-led government and 31 percent trust a Haniyeh-led government. Interestingly, the level of support for both is equal in the West Bank (33 percent). Trust in a Hamdallah-led government is much higher in Gaza (53 percent) than trust in a Haniyeh-led government (28 percent).

Reconciliation Government

- Most respondents retain hope in the ability of the Reconciliation Government; 25 percent believe that it is capable of managing the reconstruction of Gaza and 38 percent believe that it is capable “to some extent.”
- 32 percent believe that the Reconciliation Government is “incapable” of reconstructing Gaza.

The Peace Process

- Only 33 percent of respondents believe that Palestinians are now closer to achieving an independent Palestinian state than 20 years ago, when the Oslo Accords were signed. 58 percent believe that Palestinians are now farther from achieving their goal.
- Two thirds of Palestinians are supportive of pursuing a draft resolution in the UN Security Council to develop a timeline for ending the occupation. In contrast, 22 percent are against such an initiative.