

National Opinion Poll

Overall Situation

Negotiations

The Framework Agreement

Fieldwork Date: 9-11 March 2014

Sample size: 1,200 Palestinians in the West Bank & Gaza Strip

Margin of error: $\pm 3\%$

Publication Date: 19 March 2014

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Highlights:

- 49 percent of Palestinian respondents are pessimistic about the future and 66 percent believe that things are heading in the wrong direction.
- 53 percent of respondents say that their family's economic situation is worse than it was a year ago. In contrast, 33 percent state that it has stayed the same.
- 52 percent support a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, while 46 percent oppose.
- 48 percent of respondents believe that the “Kerry Peace Plan” or Framework Agreement will fail in producing a final status agreement.
- 20 years after Oslo, 64 percent believe that Palestinians are now farther from achieving their goal of a Palestinian state.
- 55 percent of respondents say that they have received limited or no information on the current round of negotiations.
- 49 percent support the current round of negotiations, while 44 percent oppose it.
- 44 percent of Palestinian do not support a resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli situation involving further concessions, even if President Abbas states that it would best serve Palestinian interests.
- 77 percent of Palestinian respondents believe that the Palestinian Authority is serious about negotiations leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, while only 13 percent believe the same about Israel.
- 44 percent of respondents stated that Jerusalem is the most significant issue that could impede a final solution between Palestinians and Israelis.
- 48 percent would support an extension of negotiations *if* President Abbas were to accept the Framework Agreement as the basis of such a decision, while 45 percent would oppose, and 7 percent are uncertain.

Introduction:

These are the results and analysis of the latest Arab World for Research & Development (AWRAD) national public opinion poll, focusing on the overall political situation, negotiations, the peace process and the Framework Agreement also known as the "Kerry Peace Plan."

The questionnaire was fielded February 9-11, 2014, one week before President Abbas's March 17 meeting with President Obama at the White House. The poll was conducted in an atmosphere of uncertainty surrounding the core components of the Framework Agreement with the nine month window for negotiations, initially proposed by US Secretary of State John Kerry, drawing to a close and the future of negotiations nebulous.

For this survey, 1,200 Palestinian 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 (\pm) 3 percent. The survey was carried out by AWRAD researchers under the supervision of Dr. Nader Said-Foqahaa, President of AWRAD.

Analysis of Results

Section 1: Overall Conditions

The results reveal that a majority of Palestinians (66 percent) believe that Palestine is heading in the wrong direction. This belief is more widespread in Gaza (78 percent) than in the West Bank (59 percent). Similarly, pessimism about the future has reached (49 percent), while optimism stands at (48 percent). In terms of economic welfare and security, respondents express largely negative opinions. In regards to the economic situation, (53 percent) of respondents say that their economic situation is "worse" than it was a year ago. Furthermore, (33 percent) state that their economic situation has stayed the same, and 13 percent that it has become better. In terms of geographic distribution, (44 percent) of Palestinians in the West Bank say their economic situation has worsened while (69 percent) of Palestinians in Gaza express similar sentiments. In regards to internal security, (37 percent) of Palestinians feel that it has diminished in their region during the past year. (39 percent) believe that the security situation has not changed, and (23 percent) say that it has improved in their region.

Section 2: Negotiations

1. Continued support for the current round of negotiations, lower levels of hope in the peace process.

Current negotiations: Against a backdrop of "leaks" and unsubstantiated reports in the media regarding the contents of discussions between the Palestinian and Israeli negotiating teams (including proposals regarding the identity of Israel, and security arrangements in the Jordan Valley), (49 percent) of respondents state continued support for the current round of negotiations. In contrast, 44 percent oppose them.

The two-state solution: A majority of respondents (52 percent) support the principle of a two-state solution, while (46 percent) oppose. Support among West Bank respondents is higher (55 percent), than in Gaza (44 percent). Opposition in Gaza stands at (53 percent) and (42 percent) in the West Bank.

Peaceful approaches to independence: A majority of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza prefer a peaceful approach to achieving independence. (60 percent) of the respondents prefer one of the following methods to achieve independence: peaceful, non-violent resistance (22 percent); direct negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis (23 percent); and an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations (19 percent). In contrast, (36 percent) support some form of armed resistance.

2. Various factors shaping a general sense of uncertainty

The results illustrate that positions on the peace process, negotiations and the various propositions reported on by the media are influenced by various factors, including:

- Limited information: Only (8 percent) confirm that they have received a significant amount of information on the current round of negotiations, whether through media or the leadership. A majority of respondents (55 percent) either have limited or no information on the current talks.
- Trust in the negotiation team: According to the poll, only (14 percent) state that they trust the Palestinian negotiation team “to a large extent,” while 29 percent have no trust in the team. 30 percent say they trust it “to some extent,” while (22 percent) say they trust the team to “a limited extent.”
- Seriousness of the parties involved: While a majority of respondents (77 percent) believe that the Palestinian Authority is serious or “to some extent” serious about the peace negotiations, a majority does not believe that any other party, directly or indirectly involved in the process, is serious about negotiations that could lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. For instance:
 - (84 percent) of respondents do not believe that Israel is serious about peace negotiations;
 - (75 percent) of respondents do not believe that the USA is serious about peace negotiations;
 - (55 percent) of respondents do not believe that the European Union is serious about peace negotiations;
 - (55 percent) of respondents do not believe that the United Nations is serious about peace negotiations.

Additionally, perceptions of previous rounds of negotiations and of a prolonged peace process also play a role in influencing perceptions of the current round of negotiations: These include:

- The Oslo Accords: 20 years after the signing of the Oslo Accords, (64 percent) of Palestinians believe that they are "further" from achieving their goal of an independent Palestinian state. In contrast, (32 percent) believe they are closer to this goal.

-Less hope for peace: The above results are confirmed by (65 percent) of Palestinians, who report that they have less hope in the peace process compared to one year ago. (32 percent) state that they have more hope.

3. Conditional support for further concessions

(22 percent) of respondents say they are willing to support a resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict involving further concessions, *if* President Abbas states that it would best serve Palestinian interests. Furthermore, (30 percent) of respondents state that they might consider supporting a deal involving further concessions *if* President Abbas declares that it would best serve Palestinian interests. In contrast, (44 percent) of respondents state that they are not willing to support a resolution that involves further concessions, *even if* President Abbas says that it would best serve Palestinian interests.

The absence of unconditional support for additional concessions may be due, in part, to the perception among some that if the current round of negotiations were to fail, there would be limited impact on the status quo. (28 percent) believe that "nothing will happen," if negotiations were to fail, while (25 percent) believe that President Abbas would return to the UN. In contrast, (13 percent) believe that the Palestinian Authority might collapse, and (28 percent) of respondents believe that a third Intifada (uprising) would break out.

Section 3: The Framework Agreement

1. General views towards the Framework Agreement

The majority (57 percent) of Palestinians have only limited familiarity with the reported-on Framework Agreement, while (37 percent) say that they are somewhat familiar, and a minority (6 percent) says that they are very familiar. Respondents are largely pessimistic or uncertain about the potential outcomes of the Framework Agreement. (48 percent) believe it will fail in leading to a final status solution and (37 percent) are uncertain what the results will be; only (15 percent) believe it will lead to a final status agreement. Gaza respondents (57 percent) are more pessimistic than those in the West Bank (42 percent). In contrast, West Bank respondents (43 percent) are more likely to be uncertain about its prospects than those in Gaza (27 percent).

2. Possible components of the Framework Agreement

The Jordan Valley: The majority of respondents (53 percent) disapprove of a reported proposal involving an Israeli military presence in the Jordan Valley that would phase out over time. In contrast, (20 percent) would approve such a measure, while (24 percent) say they are "in between." Gaza respondents are more likely to disapprove (64 percent) than those in the West Bank (47 percent), while West Bank respondents are more "in between" (31 percent) than those in Gaza (13 percent).

Identity of future states: The majority (57 percent) disapprove of a proposal granting "mutual recognition of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people and Palestine as the nation-state of the Palestinian people with guarantees for equal rights for citizens in both states." In contrast, (18

percent) approve of such a proposal, with (22 percent) saying they are "in between" approval and disapproval. Disapproval is higher in Gaza (71 percent) than the West Bank (48 percent), furthermore respondents in the West Bank (28 percent) are more likely to be somewhere in between than those in Gaza (11 percent).

Settlements and Land swaps: (70 percent) of Palestinians disapprove of the concept of Israeli retention of certain settlement blocs in exchange for land swaps, guided by the 1967 borders. (10 percent) approve of such a proposal, and (17 percent) state that they are "in between" approval and disapproval. Objection is higher in Gaza (80 percent) than the West Bank (63 percent). Once again, Palestinians in the West Bank (22 percent) are more likely to be somewhere in between approval and disapproval than those in Gaza (8 percent).

A Demilitarized Palestine: Of all reported-on components of a possible Framework Agreement, opposition is greatest to the idea of a demilitarized Palestinian state. (77 percent) of respondents disapprove of such a proposal, while only (8 percent) approve, and (11 percent) are in between. Disapproval is greater in Gaza (84 percent) than the West Bank (73 percent).

Resolution of the Refugee Question: The majority of respondents (58 percent) say they would approve a Framework Agreement that included "a just solution to the refugee issue that ends refugee suffering and state of uncertainty." In contrast, (22 percent) disapprove, while (17 percent) are somewhere in between. Approval is higher in Gaza (62 percent), where there is a larger concentration of refugees, than in the West Bank (55 percent).

East Jerusalem: A plurality (42 percent) of Palestinians say they would disapprove of a Framework Agreement that stated "the future capital of the state of Palestine is *in* East Jerusalem" while (36 percent) would approve and 18 percent are in between. Disapproval is greater in Gaza (53 percent) than the West Bank (35 percent), while respondents in the West Bank (38 percent) are more likely to approve than those in Gaza (34 percent). The findings reflect current ambiguity over the precise definition of East Jerusalem, as well as lack of clarity regarding the future status of the Old City. According to the poll, Palestinians view the issue of Jerusalem as the greatest possible impediment to resolving the conflict at (44 percent). (26 percent) believe that the issue of refugees might be the most significant impediment and (18 percent) believe that it is settlements.

3. Extension of negotiations

Palestinians are divided over a possible decision by President Abbas to accept any of the aforementioned elements of a Framework Agreement as the basis for an extension of current negotiations. (48 percent) would support such a decision, while (45 percent) would oppose, and (7 percent) are uncertain. Opposition is greater in Gaza (51 percent) than the West Bank (41 percent), though respondents in the West Bank (10 percent) are more likely to be uncertain than those in Gaza (3 percent).

