

Center for Palestine Research & Studies (CPRS)

Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No (33)

5-7 March 1998

Evaluation of the Performance of PLC and PA, the Status of Democracy, Corruption, Attitudes Toward Proposed Legislation on Weapons, Political Parties, and Public Assembly, the Peace Process, and the Iraqi Crisis

These are the results of opinion poll #32, conducted by the Center for Palestine Research & Studies, between 5-7 March 1998. The poll deals with evaluation of the performance of PLC and PA, the status of democracy, corruption, attitudes toward proposed legislation on weapons, political parties, and public assembly, the peace process, and the Iraqi crisis. The total sample size of this poll is 1328 from Palestinians 18 years and older, of which 822 in the West Bank and 506 in the Gaza Strip. The margin of error is $\pm 3\%$ and the non-response rate is 3%.

1. Evaluation of the Performance of the PLC and the PNA

- Positive evaluation of the performance of the PLC reached 49% in this poll compared to 51% in the December 1997 poll and to 42% in the September 1997 poll.
- Positive evaluation of the performance of the PLC increases among women (57%) compared to men (41%), illiterates (55%) compared to BA degree holders (37%), housewives (58%) compared to employees (37%), low income people (51%) compared to high income people (38%), and Fateh supporters (58%) compared to Hamas supporters (40%).
- The results also show a relatively high level of positive evaluation for the performance of the PLC district representatives from Rafah (63%), Hebron (62%), Jenin (58%), Ramallah (56%), and Nablus (53%), and relatively low level of positive evaluation for the performance of those from Deir al-Balah (40%), Jabalia (43%), Bethlehem (46%), and Jerusalem (47%).
- Positive evaluation of the performance of the Cabinet reached 59% compared to 61% three months ago. The highest levels of positive evaluation went to the government performance in the areas of education (71%), followed by maintenance of security (67%) and health (61%). The lowest levels of positive evaluation went to performance in the areas of the economy (25%) followed by the protection of human rights and democracy (38%). These findings are similar to those obtained three months ago.
- Positive evaluation of the performance of the judiciary reached 53%, the police forces (71%), and the presidency (74%). These results show similar trends as those obtained in the December 1997 poll.

- The positive evaluation of the performance of the opposition factions and political parties increased slightly from 37% in September 1997 to 40% in the current poll.

2. Attitudes Regarding Proposed Legislation:

The poll surveyed public opinion regarding important aspects of three proposed laws under consideration by the PLC. The proposed legislation deals with the right to public assembly, political parties, and carrying weapons.

- A large majority of 72% supports the proposed legislation requiring a PA prior permission for holding public meetings while only 23% oppose it. Support increases in the Gaza Strip, among the least educated, those with the least income, farmers and Fateh supporters. Support decreases in the West Bank, among the most educated, those with the highest income, and supporters of Hamas and small parties such as People's Party and Feda.
- A large majority of 74% supports the demand in the proposed legislation that Palestinian factions and organizations must license any weapons they might have, while only 20% expressed opposition to this requirement "under the present conditions." Opposition to the proposed legislation increases in the Gaza Strip (25%) compared to the West Bank (17%), among men (27%) compared to women (14%), those with BA degrees (41%) compared to illiterates (12%), and Hamas supporters (27%) compared to Fateh's (20%).
- A large majority of 72% supports the demand in the proposed legislation that Palestinian factions and organizations must register themselves at the Justice Ministry as political parties, while only 16% expressed opposition to this requirement "under the present conditions."

3. Status of Democracy in Palestine

- A minority of 28% believes that the Palestinian political system is moving in the direction of democracy and protection of human rights, while a large percentage of 47% believes that it is moving in a middle direction between democracy and dictatorship. The poll found that 46% believe that the status of democracy and human rights is good or very good. This percentage reached 50% in April 1997 and 34% in September 1997. Moreover, a majority of 56% believes that people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip can not criticize the PA without fear. This percentage stood at 58% in September 1997. Only 25% believe that there is free press in the Palestinian areas (compared to 21% in September 1997), while 35% believe that there is a free press to some extent only.
- The belief that people can not criticize the PA without fear increases in the Gaza Strip (63%) compared to the West Bank (52%), among refugee camp residents (67%) compared to residents of towns and villages (50%), BA degree holders (65%) compared to illiterates (47%), students (65%) compared to retired persons (33%), those with the highest income (65%) compared to those with the lowest income (55%), and supporters of the PFLP (75%) and Hamas (65%) compared to supporters of Fateh (52%).

- The poll shows that 22% feel great comfort when dealing with official Palestinian offices, while 32% feel some comfort. Only 16% feel uncomfortable while dealing with official offices and departments.
- Only 35% of respondents have confidence in the ability of the Palestinian judicial authority to undo injustice inflicted upon them by a Palestinian side or by an official from a ministry or the security services. But 38% believe that it might be able to do so. Only a minority of 21% expressed confidence that it will not be able to do so.

4. Corruption:

- A majority of 61% expressed the belief that corruption exists in the PA institutions, while only 26% believe that it does not. The percentages of those who believe in the existence of corruption in PA institutions stood at 63% in November, 65% in September, 63% in June, and 57% in April 1997. About 50% of the respondents believe that corruption in PA institutions will increase or remain the same in the future, while 42% believe that it will decrease.
- The belief in the spread of corruption increases in the Gaza Strip (65%) compared to the West Bank (58%), among residents of refugee camps (70%) compared to city residents (61%), men (70%) compared to women (53%), young respondents (67% for those between 18-22 years old) compared to older ones (48% for those over 52 years old), refugees (68%) compared to non-refugees (57%), BA degree holders (84%) compared to illiterates (36%), students (80%) compared to housewives (49%), those employed in the public sector (83%) compared to the those in the private sector (70%), the highest income respondents (80%) compared to the lowest income ones (57%), and supporters of Hamas (76%) compared to supporters of Fateh (58%).

5. The Peace Process:

- Despite the current deadlock in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, 67% of the respondents continue to support the Oslo Agreement while 29% oppose it. A CPRS November 1997 poll found 68% supporting the "peace process" while a September 1997 poll found 59% supporting the Oslo Agreement and 34% opposing it. Support for the Oslo Agreement increases in the Gaza Strip (70%) compared to the West Bank (65%), in towns and villages (70%) compared to refugee camps (62%), and among women (74%) compared to men (58%), the oldest respondents (76%) compared to the youngest ones (58%), the illiterates (85%) compared to those with BA degrees (44%), housewives (75%) compared to students (49%), those with the lowest income (71%) compared to those with the highest income (%), and supporters of Fateh (81%) compared to supporters of Hamas (37%).

6. PA Performance During the Iraqi Crises:

- A majority of 65% found the performance of the PLC during the Iraqi crisis to be good or very good, while 62% thought the same of the Cabinet performance, and 57% of the performance of the security forces.

7. Political Affiliation:

- **Fateh received the largest level of support (46%) while Hamas came second with only 9%. The findings show a rise in support for Fateh from the 39% level it had in December 1997, while the level of support for Hamas decreased by three percentage points from the 12% it had three months ago. The total support for the Islamists stood at 14% compared to 18% last December. During the same period, the percentage of the independents and nonaffiliated decreased by three percentage points to the current level of 35%.**

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	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %
Unemployment	26.0	21.0	33.0

1. How often do you follow the news?

1) Always	27.8	28.7	26.5
2) Often	16.4	14.5	19.2
3) Sometimes	47.1	48.2	45.5
4) Not Sure	08.6	08.6	08.7

2. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the PLC?

1) Very Good	12.6	12.6	12.7
2) Good	36.8	38.9	33.6
3) Fair	30.9	29.2	33.5
4) Bad	07.6	06.2	09.8
5) Very Bad	05.0	04.5	05.7
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	07.0	08.5	04.7

3. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of your district representative in the PLC ?

1) Very Good	14.8	16.5	12.2
2) Good	37.1	39.0	34.1
3) Fair	23.2	20.5	27.3
4) Bad	10.6	09.1	13.0
5) Very Bad	05.5	04.3	07.4
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	08.8	10.6	06.0

4. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the Palestinian government (the Cabinet)?

1) Very Good	21.1	18.7	24.8
2) Good	38.3	43.2	30.6
3) Fair	23.5	21.3	26.8
4) Bad	08.2	06.6	10.6
5) Very Bad	04.4	04.1	05.0
6) No Opinion/ Do not know	04.5	06.1	02.2

	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip%
5. How do you evaluate the performance of the government in the following areas:			

5-1 Education

1) Very Good	28.8	26.6	32.2
2) Good	42.5	42.5	42.6
3) Fair	17.3	18.4	15.6
4) Bad	05.7	06.2	05.0
5) Very Bad	01.8	01.9	01.7
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	03.8	04.4	02.9

5-2 Health

1) Very Good	19.7	17.9	22.6
2) Good	41.5	40.3	43.4
3) Fair	20.4	21.5	18.8
4) Bad	10.6	10.8	10.2
5) Very Bad	03.8	04.0	03.5
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	04.0	05.6	01.5

5-3 Economy

1) Very Good	04.9	06.0	03.2
2) Good	20.4	20.5	20.1
3) Fair	29.4	27.9	31.7
4) Bad	26.8	26.0	28.0
5) Very Bad	12.9	11.9	14.5
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	05.6	07.7	02.5

5-4 Democracy & Human Rights

1) Very Good	09.0	10.3	07.0
2) Good	28.5	27.2	30.6
3) Fair	28.5	27.5	30.0
4) Bad	16.9	16.8	17.2
5) Very Bad	09.2	08.1	10.9
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	07.8	10.1	04.2

5-5 Security of Citizens

1) Very Good	26.9	22.1	34.1
2) Good	39.7	40.1	39.1
3) Fair	19.5	20.8	17.5
4) Bad	06.9	07.2	06.4
5) Very Bad	03.7	04.7	02.0
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	03.4	05.0	00.9

	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip%
6. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the judicial authority and courts?			
1) Very Good	16.2	13.8	19.8
2) Good	37.0	38.5	34.7
3) Fair	19.4	17.3	22.6
4) Bad	07.2	07.6	06.6
5) Very Bad	03.8	02.9	05.2
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	16.4	19.9	11.1

7. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the Palestinian police and security services?

1) Very Good	31.7	30.4	33.9
2) Good	39.6	39.7	39.4
3) Fair	17.4	17.2	17.7
4) Bad	05.3	06.1	04.1
5) Very Bad	02.3	01.8	03.1
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	03.7	04.8	01.9

8. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the institution of the Presidency?

1) Very Good	36.6	33.5	41.4
2) Good	37.1	39.6	33.2
3) Fair	13.1	11.8	15.0
4) Bad	03.0	03.4	02.5
5) Very Bad	02.3	02.0	02.8
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	07.9	09.7	05.1

9. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of the Palestinian opposition parties? (Cancelled from P31) Translated

1) Very Good	10.6	09.7	12.0
2) Good	29.7	30.5	28.6
3) Fair	26.6	23.6	31.3
4) Bad	16.3	17.8	14.0
5) Very Bad	03.2	02.9	03.5
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	13.6	15.5	10.6

10. In your view, do we have a free press?

1) Yes	24.8	24.3	25.5
2) To some extent	34.7	32.6	37.9
3) No	30.7	30.6	30.8
4) No Opinion/ Do not know	09.9	12.5	05.8

Total % West Bank % Gaza Strip%

11. In your opinion, can people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip criticize the Palestinian Authority without fear ?

1) Yes	37.1	38.8	34.2
2) No	56.1	51.7	62.9
3) Do not know	06.8	09.5	02.8

12. Some people say that they feel comfortable dealing with Palestinian officials in the authority, but others say they feel uncomfortable. Based on your own personal experience, you feel:

1) Very comfortable	22.0	25.4	16.9
2) Comfortable	32.4	31.2	34.3
3) In between	19.3	16.9	23.0
4) Uncomfortable	11.3	09.2	14.4
5) Very uncomfortable	04.5	04.4	04.8
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	10.4	13.0	06.6

13. If you have been unjustly treated by an official Palestinian authority, such as a ministry or a security service, do you feel that the judicial authority and the Palestinian courts are capable of removing that injustice ?

1) Definitely, yes	34.6	36.9	30.9
2) Maybe	38.2	36.6	40.8
3) No	12.2	10.1	15.5
4) Definitely no	09.2	08.8	09.9
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	05.7	07.6	02.9

14. Do you think that there is corruption in PA institutions ? (if yes, go to the next question)

1) Yes	60.7	58.1	64.7
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2) No	25.5	24.7	26.7
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	13.8	07.6	08.6

15. Will this corruption in PA institutions increase, decrease or remain as it is in the future ?

1) Increase	38.5	35.4	43.0
2) Remain as it is	11.3	11.9	10.5
3) Decrease	41.5	41.5	41.6
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	08.6	11.3	04.9

	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip%
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16. If you want to evaluate the status of democracy and human rights under the Palestinian Authority, you would say it is:

1) Very Good	09.2	09.8	08.3
2) Good	36.8	38.9	33.7
3) Fair	30.4	28.3	33.5
4) Bad	13.1	11.2	16.0
5) Very Bad	04.6	04.3	05.1
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	05.9	07.5	03.4

17. In your opinion, what direction is the government heading toward ?

1) Democracy and human rights	28.4	27.2	30.2
2) Dictatorship	14.1	12.6	16.5
3) Between	46.5	46.5	46.6
6) No Opinion	11.0	13.7	06.7

18. There are different Palestinian views regarding the proposed Public Assembly Law, which is being discussed now by the PLC. Some think that people should have the right to hold public meetings without prior permission from the Palestinian Authority, while others think that holding such public meetings should require prior permission. What do you think ?

1) No need for prior permission from the PA	22.6	25.0	19.0
2) Prior permission by the PA should be a requirement	72.4	69.5	76.8
3) Others (specify,-)	01.0	00.7	01.6
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	04.0	04.8	02.6

19. The PLC is currently debating a proposed law regarding carrying weapons. The proposed law requires Palestinian factions and organizations to license any weapons they may have. Some people support the requirement that factions and organizations license their weapons, while others oppose such a requirement at the present time. What do you think ?

1) I support the requirement that Palestinian factions and organizations license their weapons	74.0	77.6	68.5
2) I oppose the requirement that Palestinian factions and organizations license their weapons	20.0	16.9	24.9
3) Others (specify,-)	02.4	01.6	03.6
6) Don't Know/ No Opinion	03.6	04.0	02.9

20. The PLC is currently debating a proposed law regarding Political Parties. The proposed law requires Palestinian factions and political parties to register themselves in the Ministry of Justice as political parties. Some people support the requirement that factions register themselves, while others oppose such requirement under the present circumstances. What do you think ?

1) I support the requirement that Palestinian factions register themselves in the Ministry of Justice	72.0	70.6	74.2
2) I oppose the requirement that Palestinian factions register themselves	16.1	14.9	18.0

in the Ministry of Justice

3) Others (specify,-)	00.6	00.7	00.6
3) No Opinion/ Do not know	11.3	13.8	07.3

21. Given the current conditions of the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, do you support or oppose the Oslo Agreement ?

1) Support	66.6	64.7	69.6
2) Oppose	28.9	29.3	28.3
3) No opinion/Don't know	04.5	06.1	02.0

22. How do you evaluate the performance of the following institutions towards the recent American-Iraqi crisis ?

22-1 PLC

1) Very Good	23.6	23.4	23.8
2) Good	41.7	41.2	42.5
3) In Between	15.3	14.4	16.8
4) Bad	07.1	07.8	06.0
5) Very Bad	02.1	01.9	02.5
6) No opinion/Don't Know	10.2	11.3	08.5

22-2 Executive Authority (Cabinet)

1) Very Good	20.0	19.6	20.6
2) Good	41.9	43.7	39.1
3) In Between	17.7	15.7	20.9
4) Bad	07.7	08.2	07.0
5) Very Bad	01.5	01.2	01.9
6) No opinion/Don't Know	11.2	11.6	10.5

22-3 Police and Security Forces

1) Very Good	19.4	20.8	17.4
2) Good	37.6	37.2	38.2
3) In Between	17.9	16.1	20.6
4) Bad	09.7	10.0	09.2
5) Very Bad	04.0	03.3	05.1
6) No opinion/Don't Know	11.4	12.6	09.5

23. Which of the following political trends do you support?

1) PPP	01.1	01.1	01.0
2) PFLP	02.5	02.2	03.1
3) Fateh	45.6	42.3	50.8
4) Hamas	09.1	07.9	11.1
5) DFLP	01.1	01.3	00.7
6) Islamic Jihad	02.4	03.2	01.2
7) Fida	00.3	00.4	00.1
8) Independent Islamists	02.9	03.4	02.0
9) Independent Nationalists	03.1	03.6	02.3
10) None of the above	29.4	31.8	25.7
11) Others	02.5	02.8	01.9