

Center for Palestine Research & Studies (CPRS)

Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No (40)

15-17 April 1999

The Peace Process, Evaluation of PA Performance, Status of Democracy, Corruption, Death Penalty, Developments in Jordan, Elections for the President and Vice President, and Political Affiliation

These are the results of opinion poll # 40, conducted by the Center for Palestine Research & Studies, between 15-17 April 1999. The poll deals with the Peace Process, evaluation of PA performance, status of democracy, corruption, death penalty, developments in Jordan, elections for the president and vice president, and political affiliation.

The total sample size of this poll is 1315 from Palestinians 18 years and older, of which 820 in the West Bank and 495 in the Gaza Strip. The margin of error is $\pm 3\%$ and the non-response rate is 3%.

1. Peace Process

- **Support for the peace process reaches 70% and opposition 26%**
- **Support for armed attacks against Israelis rises to 45% and opposition reaches 48%**
- **Support for a declaration of independence on May 4, 1999 drops from 52% two months ago to 43% now, and support for postponement reaches 48%**
- **19% believe that Barak is more capable of moving the peace process forward, while only 3% think the same of Netanyahu, and 63% see no difference between the two**

Poll results show a high level of support for the peace process (70%) even if it indicates a slight drop from the 73% obtained two months ago. The results show that support for the peace process increases in towns and villages (75%) compared to cities (66%). The level of support is also affected by the level of education, with 78% among the illiterates and 57% among BA degree holders. Support for the peace process is also affected by occupation: it increases among farmers (86%) and housewives (79%) and decreases among students (61%). Support also increases among those with the least income (73%) and decreases among those with the highest income (57%). It increases among supporters of Fateh (84%) and decreases among supporters of Hamas (47%).

Despite the high level of support for the peace process, support for armed attacks against Israelis has risen from 41% two months ago to 45% in this poll. Opposition to armed attacks stands at 48%. This development shows a return to the pre Wye River agreement situation in which large sections of the Palestinian street supported

the peace process and armed attacks simultaneously. The consistent support for the peace process and the fluctuation in the support for violence point to the possible conclusion that many Palestinians view the latter as a means of moving the former forward and not as an alternative to it.

The results also reveal a decline in support for the unilateral declaration of statehood in 4 May 1999 standing today at 43% compared to the levels obtained two and three months ago (52% and 57% respectively). The decline may have been influenced by the recent talk by Palestinian officials about a possible postponement of the declaration. Support for postponement has increased from 39% two months ago to 48% today.

The poll shows that the Palestinians do not count much on the results of the Israeli elections. The majority (63%) does not see a difference between the Likud and Labor in terms of their ability to move the peace process forward. Nonetheless, more Palestinians (19%) think that a government led by Barak is better for the peace process, while only 3% believe that a government led by Nehatnyahu is better.

2. Evaluation of the Performance of the Palestinian Political Institutions

- **Positive evaluation of the PLC performance reaches 43%**
- **Positive evaluation of the presidency reaches 53%, security services 52%, cabinet 47%, the judiciary 42%, and opposition parties and factions 33%**

The results show a decline in the positive evaluation of the performance of all Palestinian political institutions. The PLC received a positive evaluation of 43%, compared to 49% three months ago. The presidency received a positive evaluation of 53%, compared to 56% three months ago. The security services received a positive evaluation of 52%, compared to 56% three months ago. The cabinet received a positive evaluation of 47% compared to 49% three months ago. Finally, the judiciary received a positive evaluation of 42% compared to 48% three months ago. It is worth mentioning that the highest level of positive evaluation for the PLC performance stood at 51% in December 1997, 63% for the cabinet in December 1996, 55% for the judiciary in April 1997, 77% for the security services in April 1997, and 79% for the presidency in April 1997.

3. Conditions of Democracy and Corruption in the Palestinian areas

- **Positive evaluation of Palestinian democracy reaches 26%, its lowest level since 1996**
- **Positive evaluation of democracy in Israel reaches 66%, in the US 54%, and in France 45%**
- **Positive evaluation of democracy in Jordan reaches 30%, and in Egypt 24%**
- **A majority of 56% believes that people, today, can not criticize the PA without fear (37%)**

- **Belief that corruption exists in PA institutions reaches 71%, its highest level ever, while a majority of 61% believes that it will increase or remain the same in the future**
- **People believe that corruption exists in ministries and government offices (76%), in the security services (77%), in the PLC (49%), and in the office of the presidency (40%)**

The results indicate that the positive evaluation of the state of democracy in Palestine has reached its lowest level ever with a percentage of 26%. Two months ago, that level stood at 36%, while the highest level stood at 50% two years ago. The percentage of those who believe that people can not criticize the PA without fear stands today at 56%.

It is evident from the survey that the majority of the Palestinians views positively the state of democracy in Israel (66%), followed by that of the US (54%), and France (45%). The positive evaluation of democracy in Jordan remained unchanged at 30%.

The results also indicate that the belief in the existence of corruption in PA institutions has reached its highest levels ever, standing at 71%. Two months ago, that level stood at 54%, while the lowest level stood at 49% in September 1996. The percentage of those who believe that corruption will increase in the future or remain as it is today, increased from 58% two months ago to 61% today.

It is worth noticing that the belief in the existence of corruption in the security services has increased from 70% two months ago to 77% today. It has also increased from 37% to 40% with regard to corruption in the office of the presidency, and from 47% to 49% with regard to corruption in the PLC.

Belief in the existence of corruption increases especially in the Gaza Strip (76%) compared to the West Bank (68%), in Gaza City (80%) and refugee camps (78%) compared to towns and villages (65%), among men (79%) compared to women (62%), among the younger ages, between 18-22 years old, (75%) compared to those over 52 years old (66%), among holders of BA degrees (88%) compared to the illiterates (53%), among students (83%) compared to housewives (58%), among those working in the public sector (90%) compared to those in the private sector (78%), among the high income people (86%) compared to low income people (67%), and among supporters of Hamas (78%) compared to supporters of Fateh (70%).

4. The position on the death penalty

- **Only 10% support the death penalty in all normal, political, and security cases, while 27% oppose it in all cases**
- **65% support the death penalty in cases involving normal crimes only**
- **66% oppose the death penalty in political and security cases**

The results show that a majority of Palestinians (65%) supports the death penalty for normal crimes and 27% oppose it. A similar majority of 66%, however, opposes the death penalty in political and security cases, and only 10% support it.

Opposition to the death penalty in all normal and political cases increases in the West Bank (32%) compared to the Gaza Strip (18%), in Nablus (41%) compared to Deir al-Balah (13%), in towns and villages (30%) compared to refugee camps (18%), among women (30%) compared to men (23%), among those between 48-52 yeold (38%) compared to thosebetween 18-22 years old (25%), among the illiterates (36%) compared to those with BA degrees (27%), among the middle income people, with monthly earnings of JD 600-900, (36%) compared to high income (23%) and low income people (27%).

5. Recent Developments in Jordan

- **46% view positively the recent developments in Jordan, and 7% view it negatively**
- **35% believe that these developments will have no impact on Palestinian-Jordanian relations**

While about a third of the respondents believes that the recent changes in Jordan will have no impact on Jordanian-Palestinian relations, a larger percentage (46%) believes that they will have a positive one, and a small percentage (7%) believe they will have a negative one. The level of those who believe that it will have a positive impact increases among holders of BA degrees (50%) compared to the illiterates (40%), among students (50%) compared to laborers (38%), among those who work in the public sector (50%) compared to those working in the private sector (41%), and among those with the lowest income (46%) compared to those with the highest income (34%).

6. Elections and Political Sympathy

- **Only 24% support extending the life of the current PLC after May 4, 1999, while 54% support holding new legislative elections**
- **In presidential elections, Yassir Arafat receives the support of 46%, Ahmad Yasin 11%, and Haidar Abdul Shafi 10%**
- **In elections for the office of vice president involving three candidates, Haidar Abdul Shafi receives the support of 38%, Sa' eb Erikat 23%, and Faisal al-Husseini 22%**
- **In elections for the office of vice president involving Husseini and Erikat only, the first receives the support of 39% and the second 34%**
- **In elections for the office of vice president involving Abdul Shafi and Erikat only, the first receives the support of 48% and the second 36%**
- **In elections for the office of vice president involving Abdul Shafi and Husseini only, the first receives the support of 51% and the second 33%**

- **Fateh receives the support of 39%, Hamas 12%, Islamic Jihad 4%, the PFLP 3%, and the nonaffiliated stand at 38%**

The results indicate that a majority of 54% supports holding new legislative elections, while about a quarter supports the renewal of the mandate of the current PLC beyond May 4, 1999. A percentage of 14% supports neither choices. Support for holding new legislative elections increases in the Gaza Strip (59%) compared to the West Bank (50%), in cities (59%) compared to towns and villages (48%), among men (61%) compared to women (46%), among those between 18-22 years old (64%) compared to those over 52 years old (46%), among holders of BA degree (66%) compared to illiterates (41%), among students (64%) compared to housewives (44%), among those working in the public sector (67%) compared to those working in the private sector (59%), among the high income people (69%) compared to the low income people (50%), and among supporters of Fateh (55%) compared to supporters of Hamas (52%).

The results indicate that Yassir Arafat' s popularity remains the same (46%) as it was two months ago. The same is true with regard to Ahmad Yassin' s (11%) and Haidar Abdul Shafi (10%). Arafat' s popularity stood at 51% in the Gaza Strip and 43% in the West Bank. Yassin and Abdul Shafi' s popularity is almost equal in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

In a competition among eight candidates for the position of the vice president, Abdul Shafi received the highest percentage of votes (14%), followed by Sa' eb Erikat (8%), Faisal al-Husseini and Farouq al Qaddoumi (7% each), Ahmad Qurai' and Hanan Ashrawi (6% each), Mahmoud Abbas (4%), and Nabil Sha' ath (3%).

In a competition among three candidates for the position of the vice president, Abdul Shafi received 38% of the vote, followed by Erikat (23%) and Hussein (22%). Abdul Shafi received more votes in the Gaza Strip (48%) than in the West Bank (31%), while the other two received more votes in the West Bank than in the Gaza Strip.

When the competition was among Abdul Shafi and Erikat only, the first received 48% and the second received 36%. When it was among Abdul Shafi and Hussein, the first received 51% and the second 33%. When it was among Hussein and Erikat, the first received 39% and the second 34%.

The results show a slight increase in support for Fateh (39% compared to 37% two months ago). Hamas' popularity remain the same as it was two months ago) (12%); and so did the PFLP' s (3%). The total support for the Islamists stood at 19%, and the nonaffiliated stood at 38%.

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15-17 April 1999

	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %
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Unemployment	20.0	15.0	27.0
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	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %
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1. Do you support or oppose the current peace process between Palestinians and Israelis?

1) Support	70.2	69.7	70.9
2) Oppose	26.0	26.3	25.7
3) No Opinion	3.8	4.0	3.4

2. According to Oslo Agreement, the transitional period will end on May 4,1999. Some people see the necessity of transforming the PA into a Palestinian State at that date even if Israel objected. Others argue that the establishment of the state should wait until an agreement is reached with Israel. What do you think?

1) Support waiting till reaching an agreement with Israel.	47.9	46.2	50.7
2) Support establishing a Palestinian state center after the end of the transitional period even if there no agreements was reached with Israel at that time	42.8	43.8	41.2
3) Others (specify_____)	3.9	3.8	4.0
4) No Opinion /Don't know	5.4	6.2	4.0

3. In few months, Israel will hold elections for the prime minister and the Knesset, in which the Labor party, led by Barak, the Likud, led by Netanyahu, and perhaps a center party, led by Yetzhak Mordakhai, will compete. Who among them, in your view, is the most capable of moving forward the Palestinian Israeli peace process?

1) A government led by Netanyahu and the Likud	2.8	3.3	2.0
2) A government led by Barak and Labor	19.3	18.8	20.2
3) A government led by Mordakhai and the center party	3.5	3.5	3.4
4) There is no difference between the three	63.3	61.5	66.5

5) No Opinion /Don't Know	11.0	12.9	7.9
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4. Palestinian courts have recently issued sentences involving the death penalty. Some were issued in cases of normal crimes of murder and rape, while others involved political and security cases. Do you support or oppose these sentences of the death penalty?

1) I support the death penalty in all cases	9.7	7.7	12.9
2) I oppose the death penalty in all cases	26.8	32.1	18.2
3) I support it in some cases and oppose it in others	60.6	56.8	66.9
4) No Opinion /Don't Know	2.9	3.4	2.0

4-1 Support of death penalty

1) I support the death penalty in cases of normal crimes	65.0	59.0	74.0
2) Others and do not know	35.0	41.0	36.0

4-2 Opposition to death penalty

1) I oppose the death penalty in political and security cases	66.0	71.0	59.0
2) Others and do not know	34.0	29.0	41.0

5. If separate elections for a Vice President of the Palestinian Authority were held today, and the following names were nominated as candidates, whom would you choose?

1) Ahmad Qurai' (Abu Ala')	6.3	6.4	6.1
2) Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazin)	4.3	4.2	4.5
3) Farouq Kaddomi (Abu Lutuf)	6.5	6.6	6.3
4) Nabil Sha'ath	2.8	2.1	3.9
5) Sa'eb Erikat	7.8	8.1	7.3
6) Hanan Ashrawi	6.2	7.1	4.7
7) Faisal Husseini	7.0	7.9	5.5
8) Haidar Abdul Shafi	14.2	9.3	22.3

9) Other (Specify_____)	0.3	0.4	0.2
10) No one	25.7	27.6	22.5
11) I will not participate in the elections	16.4	17.3	14.8
12) No Opinion /Don't Know	2.7	3.1	2.0

6. If separate elections for a Vice President of the Palestinian Authority were held today, and the following names were nominated as candidates, whom would you choose?

1) Sa'eb Erikat	23.1	25.5	19.7
2) Faisal Hussein	22.0	26.2	16.0
3) Haidar Abdul Shafi	38.0	30.8	48.3
4) Other (Specify_____)	2.2	1.3	3.4
5) No one	9.0	10.1	7.5
6) I will not participate in the elections	4.5	4.8	4.1
7) No Opinion /Don't Know	1.2	1.3	0.9

7. If separate elections for a Vice President of the Palestinian Authority were held today, and the following names were nominated as candidates, whom would you choose?

1) Sa'eb Erikat	33.8	35.2	32.0
2) Faisal Hussein	38.8	40.4	36.7
3) Other (Specify_____)	7.2	1.9	14.7
4) No one	12.6	15.7	8.3
5) I will not participate in the elections	6.0	5.2	7.0
6) No Opinion /Don't Know	1.5	1.7	1.3

8. If separate elections for a Vice President of the Palestinian Authority were held today, and the following names were nominated as candidates, whom would you choose?

1) Sa'eb Erikat	35.7	40.7	28.6
2) Haidar Abdul Shafi	48.2	40.9	58.5
3) Other (Specify_____)	3.2	2.4	4.4
4) No one	8.4	11.5	4.1

5) I will not participate in the elections	2.8	2.2	3.7
6) No Opinion /Don't Know	1.7	2.4	0.7

9. If separate elections for a Vice President of the Palestinian Authority were held today, and the following names were nominated as candidates, whom would you choose?

1) Faisal Husseini	33.4	40.1	24.0
2) Haidar Abdul Shafi	50.7	43.0	61.5
3) Other (Specify_____)	2.8	1.7	4.4
4) No one	8.6	11.5	4.4
5) I will not participate in the elections	3.4	2.6	4.4
6) No Opinion /Don't Know	1.1	1.0	1.4

10. In May 1999, the mandate of the PLC expires with the end of the transitional period of the peace process. Some see a need to hold new legislative elections immediately after the end of the transitional period, while others support the extension of the mandate of the current PLC. What do you think?

1) I support extending the mandate of the current PLC	23.5	25.7	19.8
2) I support holding new elections	53.5	50.2	58.9
3) I support neither extension nor the holding of new elections	13.8	13.7	14.0
4) Others (Specify_____)	1.9	2.0	1.8
5) No Opinion /Don't know	7.3	8.4	5.5

11. In the past few months, Jordan witnessed important political developments. In your view, how will these developments affect Palestinian-Jordanian relations?

1) Positively	45.6	41.5	52.5
2) Negatively	35.3	37.9	30.8
3) Will have no impact	6.6	7.6	4.9
4) No Opinion/Don't Know	12.5	13.0	11.8

12. Do you think that there is corruption in PA institutions?

1) Yes	70.6	67.6	75.5
2) No	13.1	14.4	10.9
3) Not Sure	16.3	18.0	13.6

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

1) Increase	54.1	52.4	56.6
2) Remain as it is	6.7	5.2	9.0
3) Decrease	26.8	28.7	24.1
4) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	12.3	13.6	10.3

14. In your opinion, in which of the following PA institutions does corruption exist?

14-1 Ministries and governmental offices

1) Yes	75.6	74.8	76.8
2) No	11.4	10.9	12.1
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	13.0	14.3	11.1

14-2 Security forces and police

1) Yes	77.3	78.9	74.9
2) No	12.9	11.1	15.6
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	9.8	10.0	9.5

14-3 Presidency Office

1) Yes	39.7	37.9	42.2
2) No	26.1	23.6	29.8
3) No Opinion /Don't Know	34.2	38.5	28.0

14-4 PLC

1) Yes	49.2	51.4	46.0
2) No	27.9	23.8	33.9

3) No Opinion/Don't Know	22.9	24.9	20.1
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15. In your opinion, can people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip criticize the Palestinian Authority without fear?

1) Yes	38.8	37.4	41.2
2) No	55.6	56.1	54.8
3) Do not know	5.6	6.5	4.1

16. If you want to evaluate the status of democracy and human centers under the Palestinian Authority, you would say it is:

1) Very Good	5.3	5.3	5.5
2) Good	20.6	23.0	16.6
3) Fair	34.0	34.0	33.9
4) Bad	18.2	16.2	21.5
5) Very Bad	15.2	13.3	18.3
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	6.7	8.2	4.3

	Total %	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %
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17. And what about the status of democracy and human centers in other countries:

17-1 America

1) Very Good	30.0	28.6	32.1
2) Good	23.5	23.0	24.2
3) Fair	9.1	8.3	10.5
4) Bad	8.5	8.3	8.7
5) Very Bad	3.0	2.9	3.2
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	25.9	28.8	21.2

17-2 Israel

1) Very Good	36.0	33.7	39.8
2) Good	30.3	30.7	29.5
3) Fair	8.2	8.3	7.9

4) Bad	6.6	5.9	7.9
5) Very Bad	2.6	2.6	2.6
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	16.4	18.8	12.3

17-3 Jordan

1) Very Good	6.6	5.5	8.5
2) Good	23.2	21.3	26.3
3) Fair	27.9	26.4	30.3
4) Bad	17.1	19.7	12.9
5) Very Bad	5.8	6.6	4.4
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	19.4	20.4	17.6

17-4 Egypt

1) Very Good	5.6	3.1	9.7
2) Good	18.8	16.4	22.6
3) Fair	23.1	20.0	28.3
4) Bad	19.4	20.2	18.0
5) Very Bad	6.7	6.2	7.5
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	26.5	34.1	13.9

17-5 France

1) Very Good	20.1	16.8	25.5
2) Good	24.9	24.3	26.1
3) Fair	4.6	4.2	5.3
4) Bad	3.6	3.4	3.8
5) Very Bad	0.6	0.6	0.6
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	46.2	50.7	38.8

18. Generally, how do you evaluate the performance of :

18-1 the Palestinian Legislative Council?

1) Very Good	9.1	9.3	8.7
2) Good	34.3	35.8	31.7
3) Fair	27.9	27.4	28.7
4) Bad	11.1	8.9	14.7
5) Very Bad	5.4	3.8	8.1
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	12.3	14.8	8.1

18-2 Palestinian Government (The Cabinet)

1) Very Good	8.4	9.3	6.9
2) Good	38.9	39.4	38.0
3) Fair	25.6	24.1	28.1
4) Bad	11.0	9.2	13.9
5) Very Bad	3.7	2.9	4.8
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	12.5	15.1	8.3

18-3 Judicial Authority and Palestinian Courts

1) Very Good	8.9	8.4	9.7
2) Good	32.7	33.0	32.3
3) Fair	21.8	19.7	25.3
4) Bad	15.4	15.6	14.9
5) Very Bad	6.7	5.0	9.5
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	14.5	18.2	8.3

18-4 Police and Security forces

1) Very Good	10.3	9.2	12.1
2) Good	41.2	40.3	42.6
3) Fair	21.4	19.6	24.4
4) Bad	13.6	14.6	12.1

5) Very Bad	4.7	4.9	4.4
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	8.8	11.5	4.2

18-5 Institution of Presidency

1) Very Good	13.9	12.7	15.8
2) Good	39.2	37.7	41.6
3) Fair	14.6	13.0	17.4
4) Bad	7.3	6.5	8.7
5) Very Bad	2.4	2.3	2.6
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	22.6	27.8	13.9

18-6 Opposition groups and factions

1) Very Good	6.2	5.5	7.3
2) Good	26.7	26.2	27.5
3) Fair	25.3	23.0	29.1
4) Bad	16.6	17.0	16.0
5) Very Bad	4.4	3.4	6.1
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	20.7	24.8	14.1

18-7 Your district representatives at the PLC

1) Very Good	9.0	9.0	8.9
2) Good	34.1	37.2	29.1
3) Fair	20.0	17.4	24.2
4) Bad	13.1	11.2	16.2
5) Very Bad	5.9	3.5	9.9
6) Don' t Know/ No Opinion	17.9	21.6	11.7

19. If separate elections for the president of the Palestinian Authority were held today, whom would you choose?

1) Haydar Abdul Shafi	10.4	10.0	10.9
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2) Yasser Arafat	45.9	42.5	51.4
3) Ahmad Yasin	11.4	10.9	12.1
4) No one	18.6	20.3	15.8
5) Others	1.4	1.7	1.0
6) I will not participate	10.7	12.2	8.1
7) No Opinion / Don't Know	1.7	2.3	0.6

20. Concerning armed attacks against Israeli targets, I...

1) Support	44.6	44.0	45.5
2) Oppose	48.4	48.4	48.4
3) No Opinion /Don' t Know	7.0	7.6	6.1

21. Which of the following political parties do you support?

1) PPP	0.8	0.9	0.6
2) PFLP	2.7	2.2	3.4
3) Fateh	39.3	38.4	40.8
4) Hamas	12.2	11.7	12.9
5) DFLP	0.6	1.0	0.0
6) Islamic Jihad	3.7	3.9	3.4
7) Fida	0.2	0.1	0.2
8) Independent Islamists	3.1	3.3	2.8
9) Independent Nationalists	2.7	2.4	3.0
10) None of the above	33.1	34.8	30.3
11) Others	1.7	1.2	2.4