

Center for Palestine Research & Studies (CPRS)

Public Opinion Poll NO (26)

Abu Ghneim, Armed Attacks, Permanent Settlement, Peace Process, and Local Elections March 1997

These are the results of opinion poll #26, conducted by the Center for Palestine Research & Studies, between 6-9 March 1997. The poll deals with Israeli settlement activities in Abu Ghneim, armed attacks, a permanent settlement plan, support for the peace process, and refugees' participation in local elections. The total sample size of this poll is 1549 (18 years or older), of which 1031 from the West Bank and 518 from the Gaza Strip. Two hundred questionnaires were added as an additional sample for refugee camps, falling inside and outside municipal boundaries of Palestinian cities in the West Bank, in order to better understand the attitudes of refugees living in these camps regarding participation in local municipal elections. The data was then weighted to reduce the effect of the increased weight of refugees in the original sample. The weighted sample size is 1542, of which 984 from the West Bank and 558 in the Gaza Strip.

The margin of error is $\pm 3\%$, and the non-response rate is 2%.

(1) Israeli Building in Abu Ghneim (Har Homa):

Only 9% think that carrying armed attacks against Israeli targets is the best means to express opposition to Israeli decision to build in Abu Ghneim. A majority of 56% believe that negotiations with Israel is the best means to deal with the issue; while almost 30% support nonviolent confrontations and a return to Intifada.

Despite the low level of support for armed attacks in this case, a high level of 38% continues to generally support armed attacks against Israeli targets. The general level for armed attacks stood at 40% last December. A year ago, only 21% supported the suicide attacks of February 1996. (see [poll # 22](#)).

(2) Permanent Settlement Plan:

About 20% of the Palestinians support, and 77% oppose, the permanent settlement plan which was revealed by Israeli sources several months ago calling for: {1} the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state in most of the West Bank and Gaza; {2} the annexation to Israel of some settlements blocs; {3} some Israeli settlers to live under Palestinian sovereignty; {4} return of refugees to Palestinian state only; {5} security arrangements allowing Israeli military patrols along the Jordan river; and {6} Jerusalem to remain united and capital of Israel while the Palestinian capital is established in adjacent villages outside the municipal boundaries of the city in such areas as Abu Dis and al- Ayzariya, and al-Haram al-Sharif is placed under Palestinian sovereignty.

Opposition is stronger to items 1,2,5, and 6, and softer to items 3 and 4.

(3) Support for the Peace Process and the Hebron Agreement:

Despite the tense situation today, a majority of 65% of the Palestinians are optimistic about the future. In September 1996, the level of optimism stood at 53%. Support for the current peace process is relatively high (73% compared to 79% in December 1996); while 50% think that the peace process will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state. This is similar to results obtained in September 1996, when 51% thought that the peace process will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state. Surprisingly however, only 41% (compared to 44% in June 1996) think that the permanent status negotiations will lead to solutions acceptable to the two sides.

Despite that, however, 91% of the Palestinians do not trust the intentions of the current Israeli government. It is worth mentioning that in July 1995, 81% of Palestinians said that they did not trust Israel's intentions. Nonetheless, the Hebron agreement receives 61% support and only 21% opposition. The opposition to the agreement is strongest in Hebron itself where 44% are opposed and 45% are supportive (the weighted sample of Hebron is 165).

(4) Economic Situation and the Peace Process:

Despite the widespread support for the peace process, a majority of Palestinians believe that the peace process has negatively affected general Palestinian economic situation and their own personal situation. Only 13% say that their personal economic situation has become better, while 52% say it has become worse since the beginning of the peace process. The poll found that the unemployment rate in March 1997 is 35% of which 31% in the West Bank and 43% in the Gaza Strip. The rates for December 1996 were 31% of which 25% were in the West Bank and 44% were in the Gaza Strip.

(5) Refugee Camps and Local Elections:

About 64% of Palestinians support the participation of residents of refugee camps, located within existing municipal boundaries of cities, in the local elections for these city municipalities, while only 25% support holding independent elections to select separate local councils for these camps.

On the other hand, only 40% support the inclusion of refugee camps located outside the existing municipal boundaries of cities into these city municipalities; while 44% support the formation of independent local councils for these camps.

Appendix

	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%
Unemployment	35.0	31.0	43.0
1. Do you support or oppose the current peace process between Palestinians and Israelis?			
1) Support	73.3	68.6	81.4
2) Oppose	22.2	26.0	15.4
3) No Opinion	4.6	5.3	3.2
2. Do you trust the intensions of the current Israeli government towards the peace process with Palestinians?			
1) Yes	4.8	5.1	4.3
2) No	90.5	89.3	92.7
3) No Opinion	4.6	5.6	3.0
3. Do you expect the current peace process to lead to the establishment of a Palestinain State in West bank and Gaza strip in the coming years?			
1)Yes	50.0	46.3	56.5
2) No	35.3	38.9	28.8
3) Not Sure	14.7	14.7	14.7
4. Following the peace process and the implementation of autonomy, your economic situation and standard of living has become :			
1) Better	12.6	13.3	11.3
2) Worse	51.9	49.3	56.5
3) Stayed the same	34.0	35.6	31.2
4) Don't Know	1.5	1.8	1.0
5. In your opinion, how has the peace process affected the Palestinian economy?			
1) More positively	1.5	1.4	1.6
2) Positively	16.3	18.0	13.3
3) Not positively, not negatively	20.8	17.2	27.1
4) Negatively	34.8	36.0	32.8
5) More negatively	22.3	21.7	23.5
6) No opinion/Don't know	4.2	5.7	1.7
6. In your opinion, the first most important issue facing the Palestinians today is:			
1) The peace process, a political settlement with Israel, and ending occupation.	46.1	47.0	44.7
2) Improving economic situation and living conditions, and solving the unemployment problem	30.0	26.4	36.3
3) Protecting democracy and human rights	21.4	23.3	17.9
4) Others.	2.5	3.3	1.1
7. In your opinion, the second most important issue facing the Palestinians today is :			
1) The peace process, a political settlement with Israel, and ending occupation.	30.1	27.9	33.9

2) Improving economic situation and living conditions, and solving the unemployment problem	43.7	44.2	43.0
3) Protecting democracy and Human rights	24.1	25.1	22.5
4) Others.	2.0	2.8	0.7

8. With regard to the Hebron agreement signed in January 1997, I...

1) Support it	61.2	57.9	67.0
2) Do not support or oppose it	15.1	13.5	17.9
3) Oppose it	21.4	26.0	13.2
4) No opinion	2.4	2.6	1.9

9. Regarding the permanent status negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides over Jerusalem, refugees, borders, and settlements, I believe

1) There is a possibility to reach a solution acceptable to the two parties.	40.8	35.7	49.7
2) There is no possibility to reach a solution acceptable to the two parties.	52.1	55.7	45.7
3) No Opinion	7.1	8.5	4.6

10. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the f?

1) Optimistic	64.5	60.7	71.2
2) Pessimistic	29.7	32.8	24.2
3) Don't know (not sure)	5.8	6.5	4.6

11. With regard to armed attacks against Israeli targets, I...

1) Support	38.1	39.2	36.1
2) Oppose	54.3	52.9	56.8
3) No opinion	7.6	7.9	7.1

12. Israel decided to establish a new settlement in Abu-Ghnaim mountain, while the Palestinian side strongly oppose that, what, in your opinion, is the best means (select one only) to express opposition?

1) Negotiations with Israel	55.8	53.5	59.9
2) Armed attacks against Israeli targets	9.0	10.0	7.3
3) Demonstrations and unarmed confrontations	15.6	14.3	17.8
4) Back to Intifada	13.7	15.1	11.1
5) Others	5.9	7.1	3.9

13. when discussing the upcoming local elections, the issue of the refugee camps located within the municipal boundaries of Palestinian cities is raised. Some suggest that refugees in these camps should participate in the municipal elections of these cities; others oppose that and suggest that independent elections be held for these camps. What do you think?

1) I support participation of camps residents in municipal elections of cities	63.9	58.8	72.7
2) I support holding separate elections to select local councils for these camps	24.9	26.7	21.8
3) Do not support participation of refugee camps in local elections	6.1	8.1	2.5

4) Other opinion	0.5	0.4	0.6
5) No opinion/Don't know	4.7	6.0	2.4

14. When discussing the new proposed local government law, the issue of refugee camps located outside the existing municipal boundaries of Palestinian cities is raised. Some suggest the inclusion of these camps into existing municipal boundaries; other oppose that and suggest the formation of independent local councils for these camps. What do you think?

1) I support the inclusion of camps located outside the municipal boundaries into existing municipalities.	40.1	41.9	36.9
2) I Support the formation of independent local councils for these camps.	44.0	39.5	51.8
3) I do not support any change in the current status of camps.	8.8	9.8	6.9
4) Other opinion	1.0	0.9	1.0
5) No opinion/Don't know	6.2	7.8	3.4

15. Which political party do you support?

1) PPP	1.1	0.9	1.5
2) PFLP	2.3	2.3	2.3
3) Fateh	45.8	42.1	52.3
4) Hamas	8.6	9.4	7.2
5) DFLP	1.3	1.5	0.8
6) Islamic Jihad	1.3	1.3	1.4
7) Fida	0.3	0.4	0.0
8) Independent Isalmists	2.4	3.0	1.3
9) Independent Nationalist	4.0	4.8	2.5
10) Non of the above	29.3	29.7	28.7
11) Others	3.6	4.5	2.1

16) In recent months, newspapers published news stories regarding different plans for a Palestinian-Israeli settlement. The following six items constituted one such plan:

- 1. the establishment of a sovereign but demilitarized Palestinian state in most of the West Bank and Gaza.**
- 2. the Palestinians agree to Israeli annexation of settlement blocs containing most settlements in the West Bank. In return, Israel gives the Palestinians an Israeli territory similar in size.**
- 3. those Israeli settlers remaining inside the Palestinian state would live in peace and security under Palestinian sovereignty and law.**
- 4. Palestinian refugees have the right to return to the Palestinian state, but would not have the right to return to Israel proper. They would be compensated for property lost in 1948.**
- 5. security arrangements would be designed to allow the Israeli army to have patrols in the West Bank and to have warning stations in West Bank mountain tops.**
- 6. Jerusalem would remain united and capital of Israel, and the capital of the Palestinian state would be located in villages outside the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem such as Abu Dabab, al-Azariya and al-Haram al-Sharif (al-Aqsa Mosque) would come under Palestinian control.**

If this plan as a whole was offered as permanent settlement, would you support or oppose it?

1) Strongly support	1.1	1.0	1.2
2) Support	19.0	16.5	23.4
3) Oppose	45.4	49.2	39.0
4) Strongly Oppose	31.1	29.6	33.8
5) No opinion	3.3	3.8	2.5

17. How would you view these items of the plan?

17-1 Item No.(1) (*Palestinian state*)

1) Strongly support	2.5	2.6	2.1
2) Support	13.6	12.8	15.1
3) Oppose	42.5	43.3	41.2
4) Strongly oppose	40.1	39.6	41.0
5) No opinion	1.3	1.7	0.5

17-2 Item No.(2) (*annexation of settlement blocs*)

1) Support strongly	1.9	2.1	1.6
2) Support	16.5	17.2	15.3
3) Oppose	46.1	47.9	42.9
4) Strongly oppose	32.7	29.4	38.4
5) No opinion	2.8	3.4	1.8

17-3 Item No.(3) (*remaining settlers*)

1) Strongly support	5.6	5.9	5.0
2) Support	42.4	45.7	36.6
3) Oppose	28.5	26.0	33.1
4) Strongly oppose	20.6	19.0	23.6
5) No opinion	2.9	3.5	1.8

17-4 Item No.(4) (*Refugees and right of return*)

1) Strongly Support	7.2	6.6	8.2
2) Support	36.9	35.6	39.1
3) Oppose	29.5	31.3	26.5
4) Strongly oppose	22.4	21.6	23.9
5) No opinion	4.0	4.9	2.3

17-5 Item No.(5) (*Security arrangements*)

1) Strongly Support	0.8	1.3	0.0
2) Support	7.3	7.8	6.3
3) Oppose	51.5	50.9	52.6
4) Strongly oppose	35.9	35.0	37.5
5) No opinion	4.4	4.9	3.6

17-6 Item No.(6) (*Jerusalem and alternative capital*)

1) Strongly Support	1.1	1.4	0.6
2) Support	7.4	6.2	9.6
3) Oppose	33.9	34.4	33.0
4) Strongly oppose	55.5	55.5	55.7
5) No opinion	2.0	2.6	1.1