

**Survey Research Unit
Results of Poll # 8**

**WHILE SUPPORT FOR ABU MAZIN DROPS, SUPPORT FOR A
CEASEFIRE INCREASES WITH A MAJORITY SUPPORTING
ENDING THE ARMED INTIFADA AND AGREEING TO A MUTUAL
RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL AS THE STATE OF THE JEWISH
PEOPLE AND PALESTINE AS THE STATE OF THE PALESTINIAN
PEOPLE**

19-22 June 2003

These are the results of opinion poll # 8, conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) between 19-22 June 2003. The poll deals with the popularity of Abu Mazin and his government, support for the roadmap and for the recognition of Israel as the state for the Jewish people, support for the ceasefire and ending the armed intifada, and finally evaluation of performance of Palestinian authorities, Arafat's popularity and political affiliation. The total sample size of this poll is 1318 from Palestinians 18 years and older, interviewed face-to-face, in the West Bank (834) and the Gaza Strip (484) in 120 locations. The margin of error is 3%.

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One of the main findings of this poll is the decline in the level of support for Abu Mazin and his government. The decline may be attributed to the prime minister's speech in the Aqaba summit and to the fact that little or no change on the ground has been seen by public since the appointment of Abu Mazin. Most of the decline has taken place in the Gaza Strip, where the majority is refugees, indicating the extent to which the Aqaba speech, where Abu Mazin neglected to restate the Palestinian position on the right of return, may have contributed to that decline.

Yet the decline in Abu Mazin's popularity does not indicate a drop in public support for the policies advocated by the prime minister, especially regarding the ceasefire and ending the armed intifada. To the contrary, the findings show an increased readiness to accept a mutual cessation of violence and a majority support for ending the armed intifada. Moreover, the results show a majority supporting a mutual recognition of Israel as the state for the Jewish people and Palestine as the state for the Palestinian people. This support was unexpected in light of the strong opposition voiced by the Palestinian leadership to such recognition during the preparation for the Aqaba summit. The recognition is even more astonishing in light of the fact that the majority of the Palestinians does not believe that a majority of Israelis support such mutual recognition.

Support for the ceasefire, however, seems dependent on the position of Hamas and the policies of Israel. An opposition by Hamas to the ceasefire can greatly reduce the level of support for the "Hudna." The poll shows that Hamas' support has witnessed a big increase during the last three months making it the most popular group in the Gaza Strip, ahead of Fateh. In particular, the popularity of Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi, one of the main leaders of Hamas, has suddenly increased. In addition to Hamas' position, continued Israeli assassinations, house demolitions and incursions could easily destroy the widespread public support for ending the armed intifada.

MAIN RESULTS:

(1) The popularity of Abu Mazin and his government drops

- **Support for the appointment of Abu Mazin as a prime minister drops from 61% in April to 52% in this poll**
- **Trust in Abu Mazin's government reaches 41% with 52% refusing to grant it confidence**
- **Drop in the level of confidence in the ability of Abu Mazin's government to carry out political reform from 43% last April to 38% in this poll, to fight corruption from 44% to 41%, to control the security situation from 39% to 35%. But confidence in its ability to return to negotiations with Israel remains the same (69%). Confidence in the government's ability to improve economic conditions increases from 50% to 56% during the same period.**
- **36% believe that Arafat is more able than Abu Mazin to reach a political agreement with Israel while 21% believe that Abu Mazin is more able, and 37% believe the two have the same ability.**

Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazin) failed during the first three months of his appointment to office to win the support of more Palestinians. To the contrary, the results show that he had lost the support of about 10% of the public during those months dropping from 61% last April to 52% in this poll. Even though the poll was conducted during the period of negotiations between the PA and Hamas, i.e., before reaching a ceasefire agreement, the loss of confidence in Abu Mazin and his government goes beyond their inability to control the security situation. More people today doubt the ability of Abu Mazin and his government to carry out political reforms or fight corruption with 43% and 44% respectively believing that the government has the ability to do so last April compared to 39% and 35% in this poll. Confidence in the ability of the government to go back to negotiations remains unchanged at 69%. But the poll shows that a larger percentage of Palestinians believe that Arafat is more able than Abu Mazin to reach a political agreement with Israel, while only 21% believe that Abu Mazin is more able, with 37% believing that the two have the same ability.

Support for Abu Mazin as prime minister increases in the West Bank (55%) compared to the Gaza Strip (46%). It is worth noting that last April, support for Abu Mazin in the Gaza Strip stood at 64%. Support for the prime minister increases also in towns and villages (57%) compared to refugee camps (44%), among the oldest (63%) compared to the youngest (49%), among the illiterates and those with elementary education (58% and 62%) compared to holders of BA degree (53%), among the retired (70%) compared to students (45%), and among supporters of Fateh (68%) compared to supporters of Hamas (34%). Those who believe that Yasir Arafat is more able than Abu Mazin to reach a political agreement with Israel tend to be male, with a BA degree, from Fateh, from among farmers, merchants, professionals, and specialists, and come more from the Gaza strip.

(2) A majority support for the Roadmap and for recognition of Israel as the state of the Jewish people and Palestine as the state of the Palestinian people

- **Support for the Roadmap reaches 56%, almost the same as last April when it stood at 55%.**
- **But support for the different elements of the plan varies: 70% support consolidation of the security services into three organizations; 56% for ending incitement against Israel, 41% for restoring pre-intifada Arab links with Israel, 36% for arresting individuals conducting violent attacks on Israelis, 30% for the**

establishment of a state with provisional borders before settling the refugees and Jerusalem issues, and 25% for cutting off funding for groups engaged in terror and violence against Israelis

- **Nonetheless, a majority of 57% believe that Abu Mazin will stand by Palestinian commitments as specified in the Roadmap, even though only 34% are convinced that he will overcome opposition to the Roadmap from Hamas and others**
- **A small minority of 15% believes that Sharon will stand by Israel's commitments in the Roadmap, but 30% believe he will overcome opposition to the Roadmap from the settlers and the extreme right**
- **48% believe that the US president is determined to move the peace process forward and to implement the roadmap, but only 40% believe that the Roadmap will lead to a political settlement with Israel**
- **48% believe that democratic reforms facilitate the peace process, 21% believe they inhibit it, and 23% believe they do not facilitate or inhibit it**
- **A majority of 52% agree and 46% disagree with the proposal calling for mutual recognition of Israel as the state of the Jewish people and Palestine as the state of the Palestinian people after the establishment of a Palestinian state and the settlement of all issues of the conflict**
- **But only 40% believe, and 53% does not believe, that a majority of Palestinians support such recognition, while 37% believe that a majority of Israelis supports that recognition**
- **A majority of 71% supports reconciliation between the two peoples after reaching a peace agreement and the establishment of a Palestinian state recognized by Israel**

Support for the roadmap (56%) remains unchanged compared to last April. But while support for the Palestinian obligations to consolidate the security services and for stopping incitement against Israel remains high (70% and 56% respectively), it drops when it comes to other obligations such as making arrests (36%), cutting funding to groups that support or commit violence and terror (25%). Moreover, support for a state with provisional borders before solving the issues of refugees and Jerusalem did not receive more than 30% support. It is possible that the questionnaire's use of specific terms, such as "terrorism" and "groups participating in terrorism" (taken from the articles of the roadmap) may have angered respondents leading to the negative responses. The lack of reference in the question to the two-year duration for the state with provisional borders (a time limit envisaged in the roadmap) may have reduced the level of support for that item in the roadmap as well.

The poll shows also that a majority (57%) believes that Abu Mazin will stand by Palestinian commitments in the roadmap, but only a minority of 34% has confidence in his ability to overcome the opposition of Hamas and other groups. The Palestinian public however does not have much confidence in the intentions of Sharon with only 15% believing that he would stand by Israel's commitments. Trust in president Bush on the other hand is much higher with 48% believing that he is determined to move the peace process forward and to implement the roadmap. Despite that, only 40% believe the roadmap will lead to a political settlement between Israel and the Palestinians.

The findings show that a majority of Palestinians (52%) supports (and 46% oppose) a mutual recognition of Israel as the state of the Jewish people and Palestine as the state of the Palestinian people after the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and the settlement of all issues of the conflict. But the lack of trust in the other side is evident here as well, with only 37%

believing that a majority of Israelis accepts such mutual recognition. Despite this lack of confidence in the intentions of the Israelis, a large majority (71%) supports reconciliation between the two peoples after reaching a peace agreement and the establishment of a Palestinian state recognized by Israel.

Support for mutual recognition for a state of the Jewish people and a state of the Palestinian people increases among the oldest (63%) compared to the youngest (38%), among the illiterates and those with elementary education (69% and 61% respectively) compared to holders of BA degree (46%), among the retired (75%) compared to students (36%), among those with the lowest income (45%) compared to those with the highest income (41%), and among supporters of Fateh (63%) compared to supporters of Hamas (45%).

(3) A majority support for cease-fire (Hudna) and for ending the armed Intifada

- **A majority of 73% supports a “Hudna” with Israel for one year during which no arms would be used against the Israelis while Israel would stop using arms against the Palestinians. But a higher percentage (80%) supports a mutual cessation of violence (that is not limited in time). Last April, only 71% supported a mutual cessation of violence.**
- **If a mutual cessation of violence is arrived at, 50% support and 47% oppose taking measures by the Palestinian Authority to stop armed attacks against Israelis, and 76% believe that continued armed attacks in such a case would impede return to the peace process**
- **A majority of 52% believes that now that the PA has accepted the Roadmap, armed intifada and all military activities from both sides must stop. But only 18% expect that armed confrontations would stop and a return to negotiations would take place. On the other hand 56% expect return to negotiations while some armed confrontations would continue.**
- **65% believe that armed confrontations have so far helped achieve Palestinian national rights in ways that negotiations could not**
- **58% support Hamas’ refusal to accept a ceasefire (asked before Hamas announced that it accepts the ceasefire), but 67% are concerned that such a position by Hamas and other opposition groups could lead to internal Palestinian conflict**

The poll shows an increase in the level of support for mutual cessation of violence from 71% last April to 80% in this poll. Moreover, a majority of 73% supports a “Hudna” for one year. With mutual cessation of violence in place, a majority would support taking measures by the PA to prevent armed attacks against Israelis while 47% would oppose that. More than three quarters realize that if, in that case, violence continued, it could impede the return to the peace process. A majority of 52% supports stopping the armed intifada in light of the Palestinian acceptance of the roadmap. But only 18% expect complete cessation of armed confrontations.

Public support for the “Hudna” and the mutual cessation of violence is dependent on the position of Hamas and other opposition groups, with 58% supporting the positions of these groups if they choose to oppose the ceasefire. The public however is concerned that such opposition by Hamas could lead to internal Palestinian conflict.

Support for stopping the armed intifada increases among the illiterates (62%) compared to holders of BA degree (50%), among the retired (70%) compared to

specialists (34%), and among supporters of Fateh (63%) compared to supporters of Hamas (38%).

(4) Evaluation of performance, Arafat's popularity, support for a vice president, and political affiliation

- **Highest level of positive evaluation of performance goes to the opposition groups (68%) followed by president Yasir Arafat (66%), while only 37% positively evaluate Abu Mazin's performance. Positive evaluation of the PLC stands at 29% and the new government of Abu Mazin at 27%.**
- **A large majority of 84% believes that corruption exists in PA institutions and two-thirds of those believe that corruption will increase or remain the same in the future**
- **Arafat's popularity, as a president for the PA, remains unchanged at 35% while support for Ahmad Yasin (for the same office) increases from 15% last April to 18% in this poll**
- **In an open question (without giving any names to respondents) on selecting a vice president, Sa'eb Erikat comes on top with 8%, followed by Abu Mazin with 7%, Marwan Barghouti (5%), Haidar Abdul Shafi (4%), Abdul Aziz Rantisi and Mohammad Dahlan (3% each), and Ahmad Yasin, Farouq Qaddoumi and Hanan Ashrawi (2% each)**
- **But in a closed question (with a list of 8 names) Marwan Barghouti comes on top with 21%, followed by Sa'eb Erikat with 12%, Haidar Abdul Shafi and Ahmad Yasin (8% each), Hanan Ashrawi and Farouq Qaddoumi (5% each), Abu Mazin (3%), and Abu Ala' (1%)**
- **The popularity of Hamas increases from 17% last April to 22% in this poll, while support for Fateh remains unchanged at 26%.**

Findings show that the public views positively the performance of the opposition groups and Yasir Arafat (68% and 66% respectively), while the positive evaluation of the performance of the Palestinian government, the Palestinian Legislative Council and Abu Mazin is much less (27%, 29%, and 37% respectively). Despite the positive evaluation of Arafat's performance, his popularity rating did not change compared to where it was last April (35%).

The poll examined the popularity of several candidates for the office of vice president by asking two questions, one open (without a list of candidates) and another closed (with a list of 8 names presented to respondents). The results varied. The open question shows Abu Mazin's popularity much higher than in the closed question (7% compared to 3%). On the other hand, the popularity of the following persons increased in the closed question compared to the open one: Marwan Barghouti from 5% to 21%, Sa'eb Erikat from 8% to 12%, Haidar Abdul Shafi from 4% to 8%, and Ahmad Yasin, Farouq Qaddoumi, and Hanan Ashrawi from 2% each to 8%, 5%, and 5% respectively. The open question revealed the popularity of two more persons: Abdul Aziz Rantisi and Mohammad Dahlan (3% each). The open question is asked once a year. The inconsistency in the results indicate a lack commitment on the part of the public to any particular candidate allowing name recognition, rather than serious considerations, to determine one's choice of candidates in the open question.

Finally, the poll shows a big increase in the level of support for Hamas from 17% last April to 22% in this poll. Support for Fateh remained unchanged at 26%. The level of support for all Islamists combined stands at 31%, compared to 29% last April. The percentage of the nonaffiliated stood at 37% in this poll compared to 41% last April.