

## Press Release

## Public Opinion Poll No (90)

The **Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)** is an independent nonprofit institution and think tank of policy analysis and academic research. PSR was founded with the goal of advancing scholarship and knowledge on immediate issues of concern to Palestinians in three areas: domestic politics and government, strategic analysis and foreign policy, and public opinion polls and survey research. The center engages in several activities. It conducts academic and policy analysis studies. It organizes socio-political surveys and public opinion polls on current Palestinian political and social attitudes. It sponsors study groups and task forces on issues of critical importance to the Palestinians. Finally, it organizes conferences, public lectures, and briefings on current public policy issues. PSR is dedicated to promoting objective and nonpartisan research and analysis and to encouraging a better understanding of Palestinian domestic and international environment in an atmosphere of free debate and exchange of ideas.

This poll is part of PSR series of regular polls.

*This poll has been conducted in cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Ramallah*



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**Wide public support for Hamas' offensive on October the 7<sup>th</sup>, but the vast majority denies that Hamas has committed atrocities against Israeli civilians. The war increases Hamas' popularity and greatly weakens the standing of the PA and its leadership; nonetheless, the majority of the Palestinians remains unsupportive of Hamas. Support for armed struggle rises, particularly in the West Bank and in response to settlers' violence, but support for the two-state solution rises somewhat. The overwhelming majority condemns the positions taken by the US and the main European powers during the war and express the belief that they have lost their moral compass**

22 November–2 December 2023

These are the results of the latest poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip between 22 November and 2 December 2023. The period leading up to the poll witnessed the launch of Hamas' October the 7<sup>th</sup> offensive against Israeli towns and military bases bordering the Gaza Strip and the Israeli launch of the current ground invasion of the Gaza Strip. Video images circulating in the international and Israeli media show that some Hamas fighters have committed attacks against Israeli civilians, including women and children, and took many of them hostages. International and Palestinian reports reported that thousands of Palestinians, mostly women and children, were killed by Israeli arial and tank bombardment. Israeli attacks targeted Palestinian hospitals, public buildings, and most other civilian infrastructure including tens of thousands of homes, with many neighborhoods leveled completely to the ground. In the meanwhile, in the West Bank, the Israeli army blocked or restricted Palestinian access to main roads while settler attacks increased against vulnerable towns and villages in various parts of the B and C areas.

To ensure the safety of our field researchers in the Gaza Strip, interviews with the residents were conducted during the ceasefire, which saw Palestinian women and children released from Israeli prisons in exchange for women and children held by Hamas.

This poll covers all these issues, in addition to other issues such as the peace process and the alternatives options available to the Palestinians in light of the current stalemate in that process.

The sample size of this poll is 1231 adults, of whom 750 were interviewed face to face in the West Bank and 481 in the Gaza Strip in 121 randomly selected locations. The sample is representative of the residents of the two areas. Due to the war in the Gaza Strip, we conducted interviews in the central and southern regions inside the selected sample homes, with the exception of one displaced area, where residents were interviewed in the shelter area where they had taken refuge. As for the northern Gaza Strip, residents were interviewed in 24 shelter locations, of which 20 belonged to UNRWA and 4 to governmental institutions. A total of 250 interviews were conducted in these shelters, and another 21 were conducted in the homes of relatives and friends of displaced people from the north. Despite the large representative sample, the margin of error for this poll is +/-4. The increase in the margin of error is due to the lack of precision regarding the number of residents who stayed in their homes, or in shelters, in the northern parts of the Gaza Strip which we did not sample.

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### **Main Findings:**

Most of the questions asked in this last quarter of 2023 revolved around the October 7 offensive and the subsequent Israel-Hamas war and ground invasion of the Gaza Strip. It also covered the debate about the future of the Gaza Strip after the war and the Palestinian perception of the positions of the various relevant countries and actors. Findings indicate that a majority of the respondents believe that Hamas' decision to carry out the offensive is correct, and believe that the attack came in response to “settler attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque and West Bank residents, and for the release of Palestinian prisoners.” It is worth noting that there are significant differences between the attitudes of the residents of the West Bank compared to those of the Gaza Strip, in terms of the “correctness” of the Hamas' decision (and other matters), as the attitudes of Gazans tend to show a greater degree of skepticism about that decision. It is clear from the findings that believing in the “correctness” of Hamas' decision does not mean support for all acts that might have been committed by Hamas fighters on October 7. The overwhelming majority of respondents say that they have not seen videos from international or social media showing atrocities committed by Hamas members against Israeli civilians that day, such as the killing of women and children in their homes. Indeed, more than 90% believe that Hamas fighters did not commit the atrocities contained in these videos. When asked what is or is not allowed in war, under international humanitarian law, the findings indicate that the vast majority believes that attacking or killing civilians in their homes is not permissible. The majority (except in the Gaza Strip) also believe that taking civilians as hostages or prisoners of war is also not permissible.

The findings also indicate that the majority believes that Israel will not succeed in eradicating Hamas, or in causing a second Palestinian Nakba, or in expelling the residents of the Gaza Strip. Indeed, a large majority believes that Hamas will emerge victorious from this war. A majority also says Hamas will resume control over the Gaza Strip after the war. The findings also indicate significant opposition to the deployment of an Arab security force in the Gaza Strip, even if its

purpose is to provide support to the Palestinian Authority. The majority also opposes a role for Arab states in delivering services to the Gaza Strip, but this majority is far less than the majority that opposes an Arab security presence.

The findings indicate that the Palestinians are questioning the moral commitment of the US, and other West European countries, to the ethical values embodied in the international humanitarian law. They show widespread conviction that the positions of the United States and the major Western powers show total disregard to international humanitarian law and that their talk of a two-state solution is not serious. All or most Palestinians say they are dissatisfied with the positions of the United States, Germany, Britain, France, the United Nations, and even Russia in this war. Also, the overwhelming majority is dissatisfied with the performance of Arab or regional countries or parties such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Jordan, while the percentage of satisfaction with the performance of Turkey and Iran is somewhat high, and a majority says that it is satisfied with the performance of Yemen, Qatar and Hezbollah. Dissatisfaction with Palestinian actors increases significantly when asked about the PA prime minister, the PA president, the PA, and Fatah. A majority of the public is satisfied only with the performance of Hamas, Yahya Sinwar and Ismail Haniyyah.

Findings indicate that the ongoing war between Hamas and Israel in the Gaza Strip has had a significant impact on a range of internal Palestinian issues and on Palestinian-Israeli relations. The most important of these effects can be summarized in the following changes:

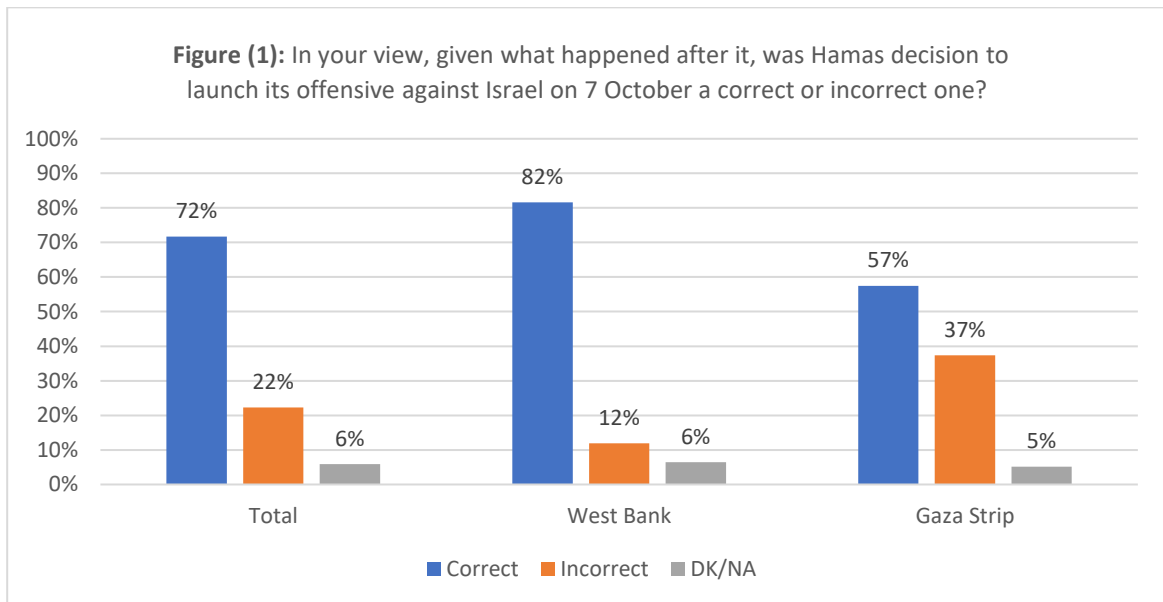
- ✓ Support for Hamas has more than tripled in the West Bank compared to three months ago. In the Gaza Strip, support for Hamas increased but not significantly. Despite the increase in its popularity, the majority in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip does not support Hamas. It is worth noting that support for Hamas usually rises temporarily during or immediately after a war and then returns to the previous level several months after the end of the war.
- ✓ Support for President Mahmoud Abbas and his Fateh party drops significantly. The same is true for the trust in the PA as a whole, as demand for its dissolution rises to nearly 60%, the highest percentage ever recorded in PSR polls. Demand for Abbas's resignation is rising to around 90 percent, and even higher in the West Bank. Despite the decline in support for Fatah and Abbas, the most popular Palestinian figure remains Marwan Barghouti, a Fatah leader. Barghouti is still able to beat Hamas' candidate Ismail Haniyeh or any other.
- ✓ Support for armed struggle rises ten percentage points compared to three months ago, with more than 60% saying it is the best means of ending the Israeli occupation; in the West Bank, the percentage rises further to close to 70%. Moreover, a majority in the West Bank believes that the formation of armed groups in communities subject to settler attacks is the most effective means of combating settler terrorism against towns and villages in the West Bank.
- ✓ Despite the above-mentioned reference to the lack of confidence in the seriousness of US and European talk about reviving the two-state solution and despite the increase in support for armed struggle, support for the two-state solution has not dropped in this poll. To the contrary, support for this solution has increased slightly in both the West Bank and the Gaza

Strip. This increase seems to come especially from those who believe that the US and European talk about the two-state solution is indeed serious.

## (1) October the 7<sup>th</sup> and the War in Gaza:

### 1. Hamas' decision to launch the October the 7<sup>th</sup> offensive:

- We asked respondents to speculate about Hamas' reasons for waging its October the 7th offensive: a response to attacks on al Aqsa and to release prisoners as Hamas claimed or an Iranian plot to thwart Arab normalization with Israel. The overwhelming majority (81%; 89% in the West Bank and 69% in the Gaza Strip) said it was a "response to settler attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque and on Palestinian citizens and for the release of prisoners from Israeli prisons;" while only 14% (5% in the West Bank and 27% in the Gaza Strip) thought it was an Iranian plot.
- We asked the respondents what they thought of Hamas' decision to launch the October the 7th offensive given its outcome so far, a vast majority (72%; 82% in the West Bank and 57% in the Gaza Strip) said it was a correct decision and 22% (12% in the West Bank and 37% in the Gaza Strip) said it was incorrect.



### 2. The Israeli objectives in the Gaza war:

- Asked about its assessment of Israel's objectives in the current war, the majority (53%) says it is to destroy the Gaza Strip and kill or expel its population; 42% (50% in the Gaza Strip and 37% in the West Bank) think the goal is to exact revenge against Hamas and the resistance and destroy them completely.
- When asked if Israel will succeed in causing a second Nakba for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, as some Israeli minister called for, 73% (83% in the West Bank and 59% in the Gaza Strip) said it will not and 24% (14% in the West Bank and 40% in the Gaza Strip) said it will succeed.
- But the vast majority (70%) thinks Israel will fail in achieving its goal in eradicating Hamas and the resistance while only 8% think it will succeed, and 21% think it will only weaken Hamas and the resistance. West Bankers are more certain than Gazans that Israel will fail,

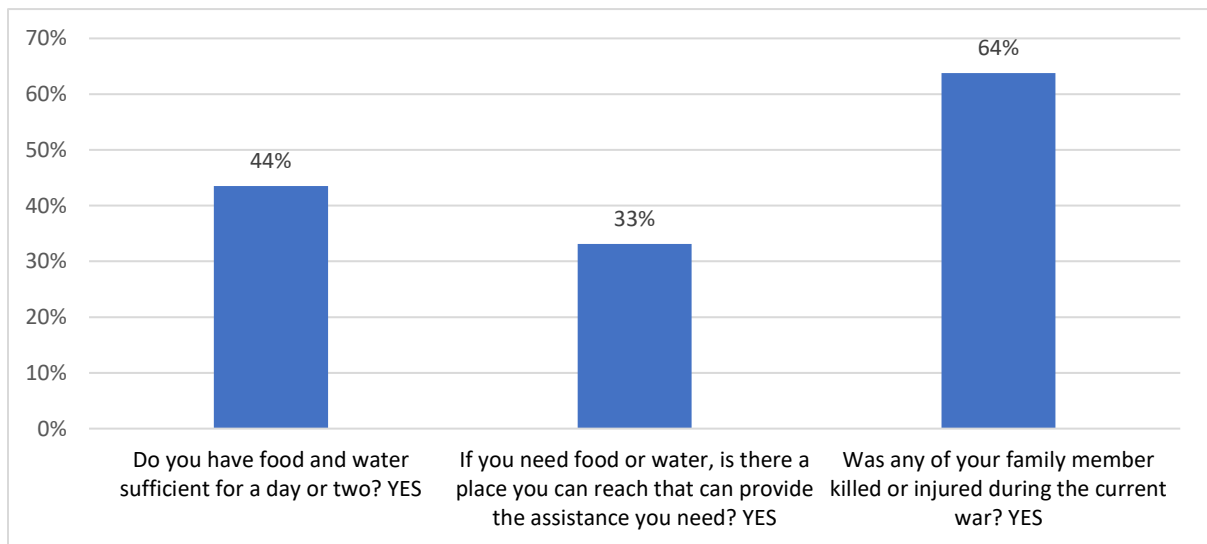
87% and 44% respectively. Moreover, only 1% of West Bankers think Israeli will succeed in eradicating Hamas compared to 17% in the Gaza Strip.

- Similarly, the overwhelming majority (85%; 96% in the West Bank and 70% in the Gaza Strip) thinks that Israel will not succeed in expelling Gazans out of the Strip; Only 13% (3% in the West Bank and 29% in the Gaza Strip) think it will succeed.

### 3. Humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip:

- Only 44% of Gazans say they have enough food and water for a day or two and 56% say they do not.
- When they need food or water, only one third of Gazans say they can reach a place where they can have access to assistance while two thirds say they cannot.
- Almost two thirds (64%) of Gazan respondents say a member of their family have been killed or injured during the current war in Gaza; 36% say none of their family members have been killed or injured.

**Figure (2):** Gaza Strip only- respondents who said “yes”

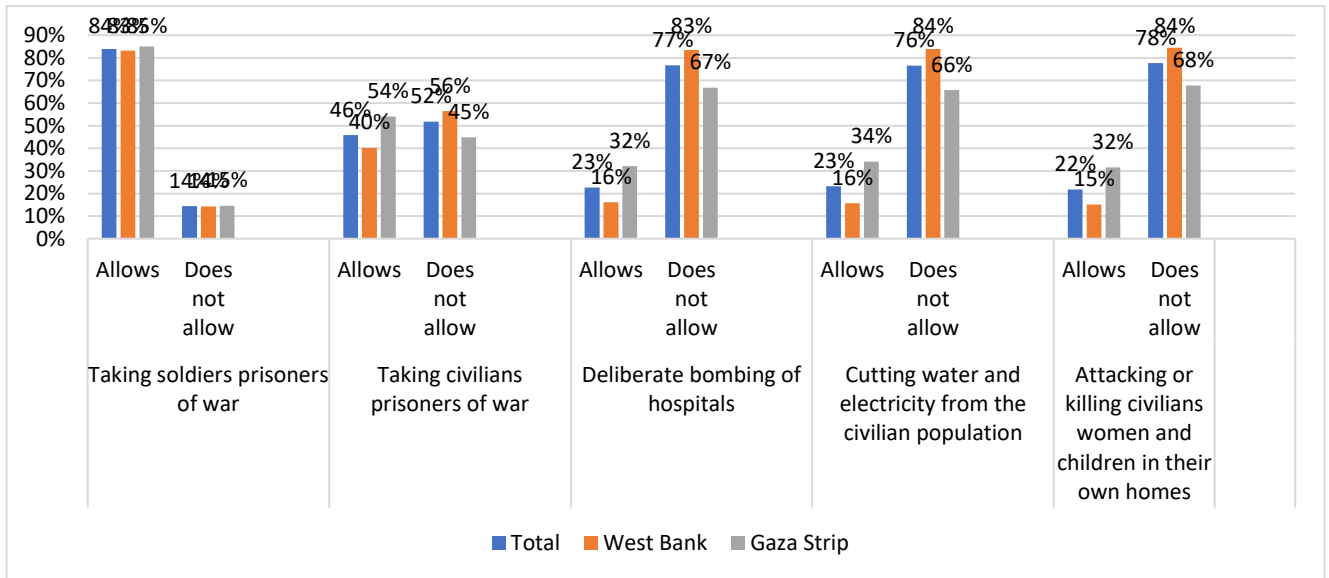


- A majority (52%) blames Israel for the current suffering of Gazans in the current war while 26% place the blame on the US; only 11% (6% in the West Bank and 19% in the Gaza Strip) place the blame on Hamas; and 9% blame the PA.
- We asked the respondents whether they support or oppose the release, now before the end of the war, of the detained Israeli women and children among the civilians in the hands of the resistance groups, in return for the release of Palestinian women and children in the Israeli prisons. The overwhelming majority (85%; 92% in the West Bank and 75% in the Gaza Strip) supported the exchange while only 13% (7% in the West Bank and 22% in the Gaza Strip) opposed it.
- A majority of 71% of the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip believe Gazans who left their homes during the war to safer areas will be able to return to these homes once the war stops. West Bankers are much more optimistic than Gazans, 83% and 53% respectively.

#### 4. War crimes and atrocities:

- We offered the public a list of acts or measures and asked respondents whether they are permitted under international law. The majority (84%) said it allows taking soldiers prisoners. But the vast majority (78%) said it does not allow attacks on or the killing of civilians women and children in their homes; 77% said it does not allow the bombing of hospitals; 76% said it does not allow cutting electricity and water from the civilian population; and 52% said it does not allow taking civilians as prisoners of war.

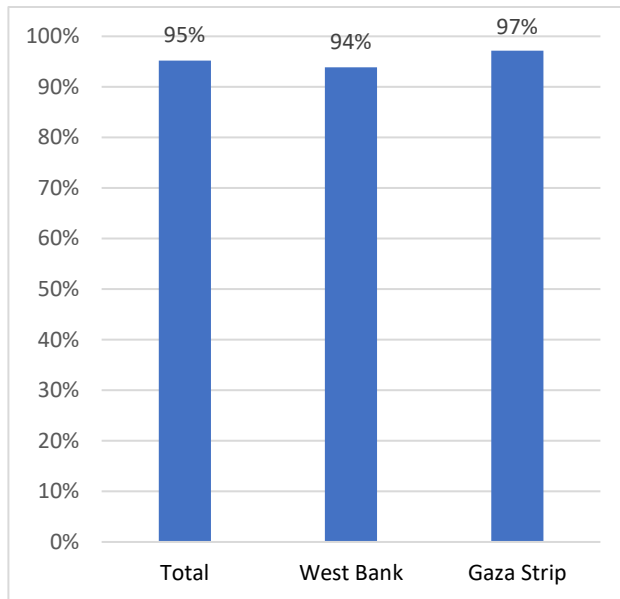
**Figure (3):** Based on what you have heard or seen, do you think international law allows or does not allow the following measures during war?



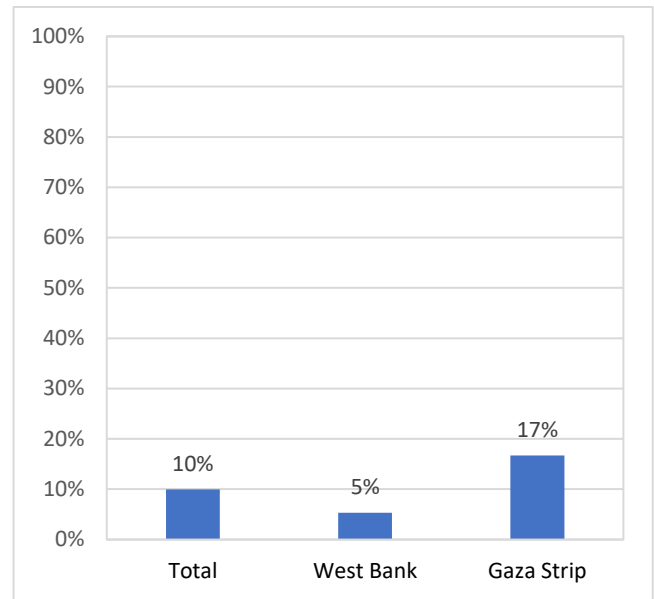
- While 95% think Israel has committed war crimes during the current war, only 10% think Hamas also committed such crimes; 4% think Israel has not committed such crimes and 89% think Hamas did not commit war crimes during the current war.
- 85% say they did not see videos, shown by international news outlets, showing acts committed by Hamas against Israeli civilians, such as the killing of women and children in their homes; only 14% (7% in the West Bank and 25% in the Gaza Strip) saw these videos.
- When asked if Hamas did commit these atrocities, the overwhelming majority said no, it did not and only 7% (1% in the West Bank and 16% in the Gaza Strip) said it did.

**Figure (4): war crimes committed by Israel and Hamas**

**In the current war against Gaza, did Israel in your view commit war crimes? "YES"**



**And did Hamas commit war crimes in the current war? "YES"**



## 5. When will the war stop and who will win?

- Half of the public (45% in the West Bank and 54% in the Gaza Strip) expect to see a ceasefire in Gaza in the upcoming weeks while a quarter (21% in the West Bank and 32% in the Gaza Strip) expect the war to continue for weeks and months. One fifth (28% in the West Bank and 9% in the Gaza Strip) expect Israel to “unilaterally end the war and begin to withdraw under the pressure from the resistance.” Only 2% expect that “Hamas and other resistance forces in Gaza will stop the fighting and withdraw to safer areas in the Gaza Strip.”
- While the vast majority of West Bankers (70%) thinks Hamas will emerge victorious in this war, only half of Gazans think the same. Similarly, while only 1% in the West Bank think Israel will emerge victorious, almost one third of Gazans (31%) think that; 14% (12% in the West Bank and 18% in the Gaza Strip) think neither one will emerge victorious.

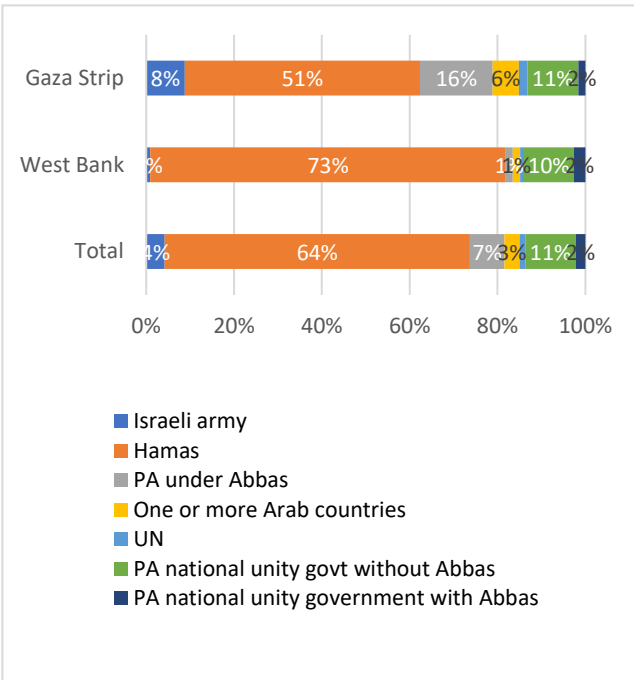
## 6. Who will rule Gaza after the war?

- Almost two-thirds (64%) are opposed to the participation of the PA in meetings with the US, with the involvement of Arab countries such as Jordan and Egypt, in order to discuss the future of the Gaza Strip after the war stops. Only 33% (28% in the West Bank and 40% in the Gaza Strip) support PA participation in such meetings.
- We asked the respondents to speculate about the party that will be in control of the Gaza Strip in the day after the end of the current war. Almost two thirds (64%; 73% in the West Bank and 51% in the Gaza Strip) said it will be Hamas; 11% selected a PA national unity government but without President Abbas; 7% selected the PA with Abbas; 4% selected Israel; 3% selected one or more Arab country; 2% selected a national unity government under Abbas leadership; and 1% selected the UN.

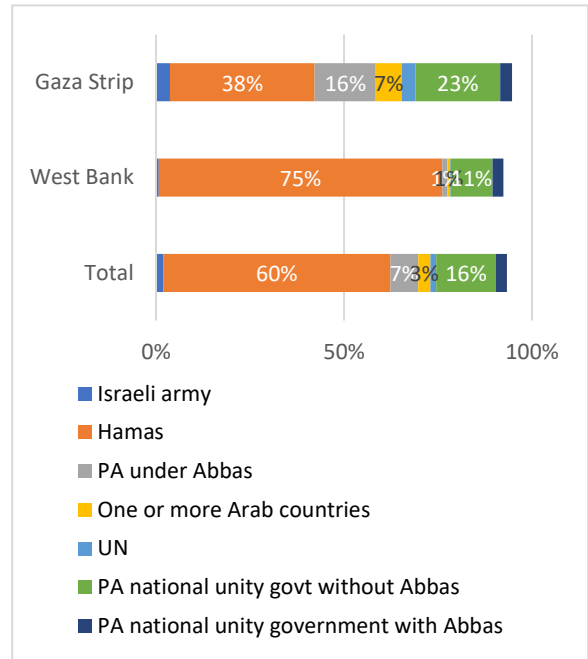
- When asked about their own preferences for the party that should be in control in the Gaza Strip after the war, 60% (75% in the West Bank but only 38% in the Gaza Strip) selected Hamas; 16% selected a PA national unity government without President Abbas; 7% selected the PA with Abbas; 3% selected one or more Arab countries; 3% selected a national unity government under Abbas, and 2% selected the Israeli army.

**Figure (5):** who will govern the Gaza Strip: expectations and preferences

**Months after the end of the current war, who in your assessment will be governing the Gaza Strip?**



**If it is up to you, which of those you prefer to see in control of the Gaza Strip?**



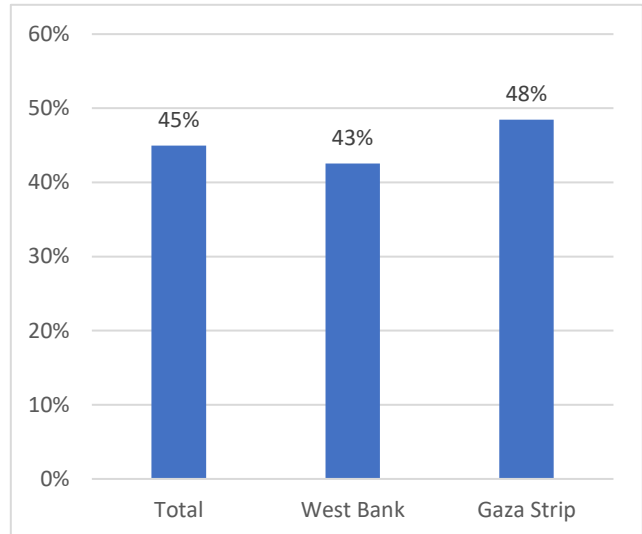
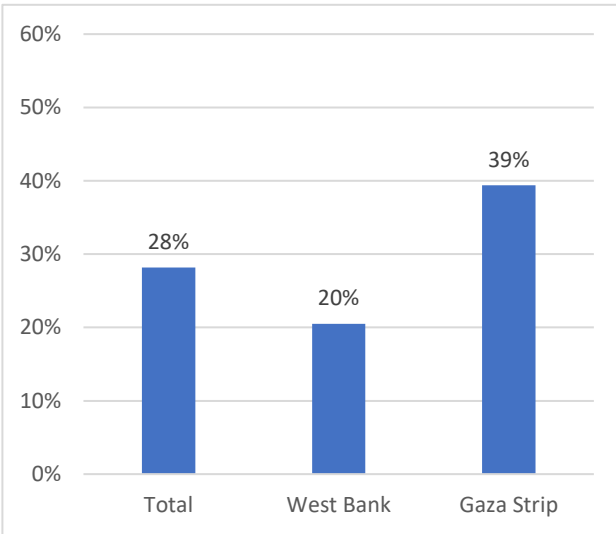
- 72% (80% in the West Bank and 61% in the Gaza Strip) think Hamas will succeed in returning to rule over the Gaza Strip after the war despite Israel’s declared objective of eradicating that organization; 23% (15% in the West Bank and 36% in the Gaza Strip) do not think Hamas will succeed in resuming control over the Gaza Strip.
- After the end of the war, and in the event that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are unified under the control of the Palestinian Authority, only 28% (20% in the West Bank and 39% in the Gaza Strip) would support and 70% (77% in the West Bank and 60% in the Gaza Strip) would oppose the deployment of an Arab security contingent, from countries like Egypt or Jordan, in order to provide support for the PA and help it to maintain security.
- But in the event that this Arab presence, after the end of the war, is to provide basic, administrative, and health services to the Palestinian residents in support of the PA, support would increase to 45% (43% in the West Bank and 48% in the Gaza Strip) but 53% (54% in the West Bank and 51% in the Gaza Strip) would still oppose that presence.



**Figure (6):** Role of Arab countries in the Gaza Strip after the war ends

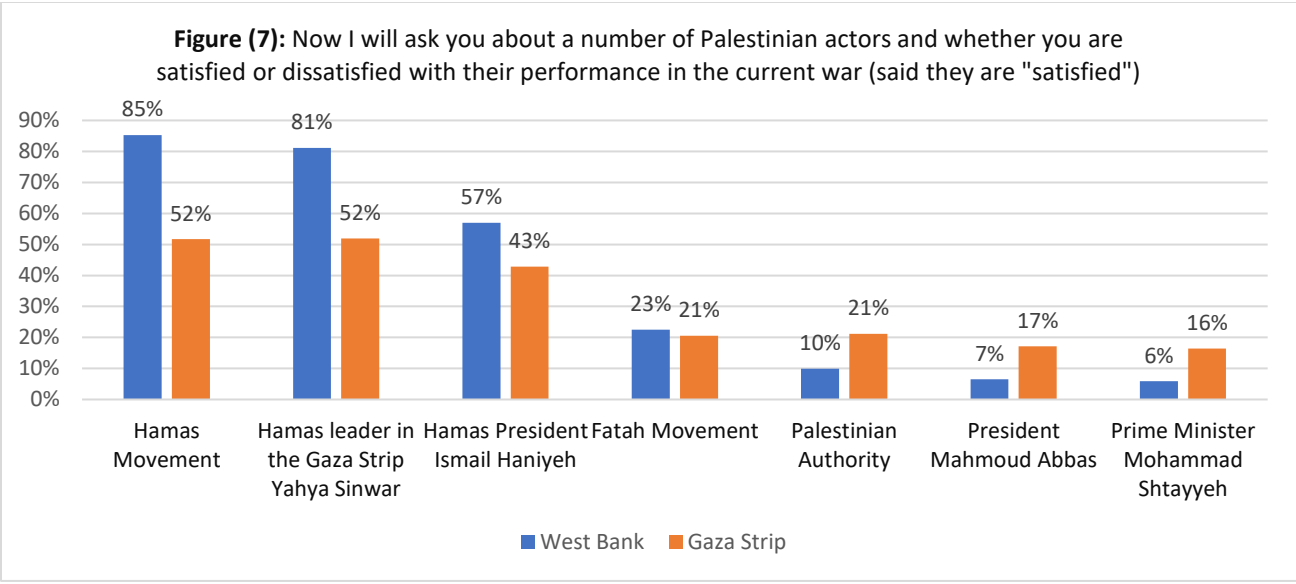
**After the end of the war, and in the event that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are unified under the control of the Palestinian Authority, would you support or oppose the deployment of an Arab security contingent, from countries like Egypt or Jordan, in order to provide support for the PA and help it to maintain security?**

**And what would you say if the Arab presence after the end of the war, from places like Egypt and Jordan, is to provide basic, administrative, and health services to the Palestinian residents?**

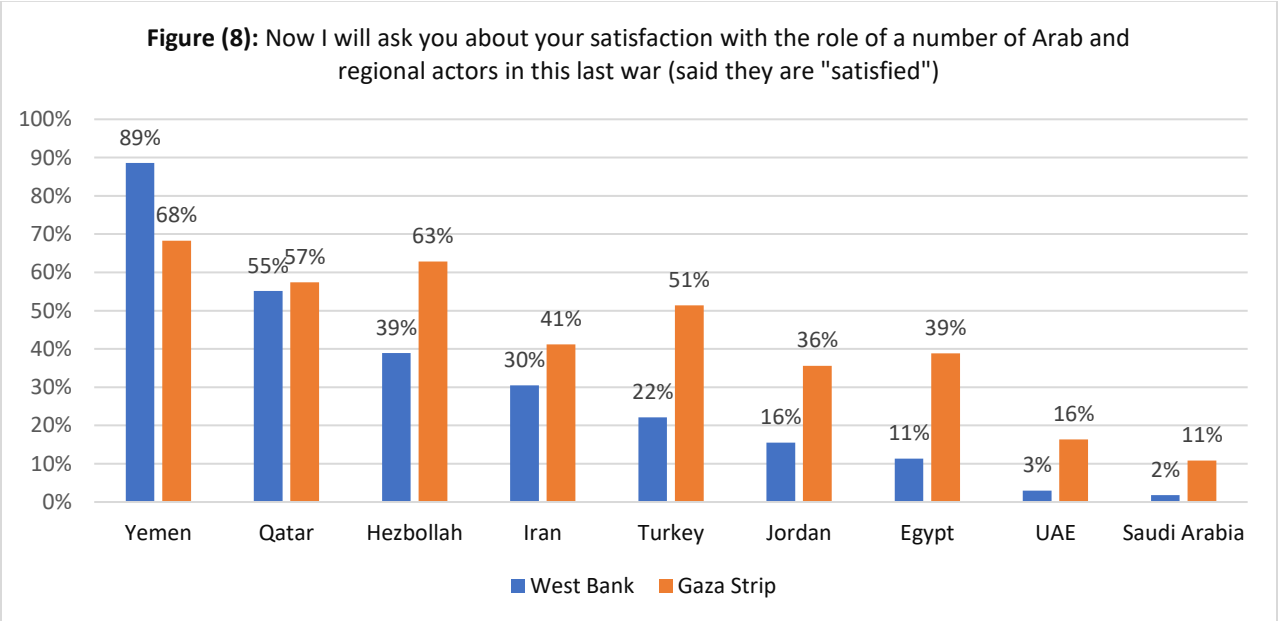


## 7. Satisfaction with relevant actors:

- The overwhelming majority of the Palestinians (87%) thinks that the response of the US and other major Western powers, such as the UK, France, and Germany, to the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip indicates show disregard to international humanitarian law; only 10% (4% in the West Bank and 19% in the Gaza Strip) say the response indicates they are committed to that law.
- The vast majority (70%) thinks the recent talk about two-state solution in the US and other Western countries is not serious; 27% think it is.
- We asked about public satisfaction with the role played during the war by various Palestinian, Arab/regional, and international actors:
  - i. On the Palestinian side, satisfaction with the role of Hamas (72%; 85% in the West Bank and 52% in the Gaza Strip) was the highest followed by the role played by Yehia Sinwar (69%; 81% in the West Bank and 52% in the Gaza Strip), Ismail Haniyyeh (51%; 57% in the West Bank and 43% in the Gaza Strip), Fatah (22%; 23% in the West Bank and 21% in the Gaza Strip), the PA (14%; 10% in the West Bank and 21% in the Gaza Strip), Mahmoud Abbas (11%; 7% in the West Bank and 17% in the Gaza Strip), and Mohammad Shtayyeh (10%; 6% in the West Bank and 16% in the Gaza Strip).

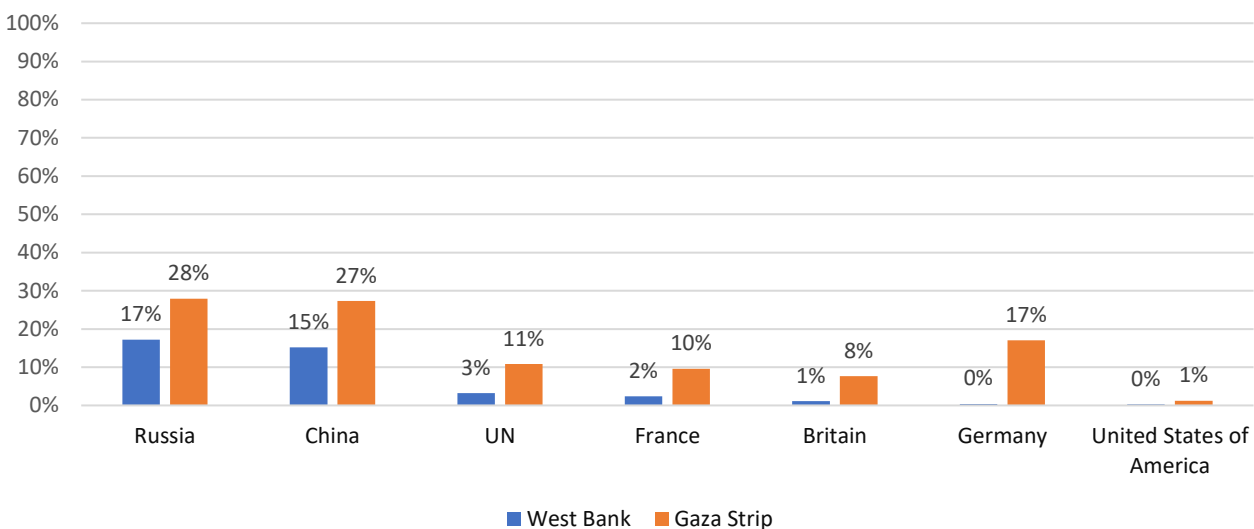


ii. For the Arab/regional actors, the highest level of satisfaction went to Yemen (80%; 89% in the West Bank and 68% in the Gaza Strip), followed by Qatar (56%), Hizballah (49%), Iran (35%), Turkey (34%), Jordan (24%), Egypt (23%), UAE (8), and finally Saudi Arabia (5%). The following figure shows the distribution of satisfaction over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.



iii. For the non-regional international actors, the highest level of satisfaction went to Russia (22%, 17% in the West Bank and 28% in the Gaza Strip), followed by China (20%), Germany (7%), UN (6%), France (5%), UK (4%), and the US (1%). The following figure shows the distribution of satisfaction over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

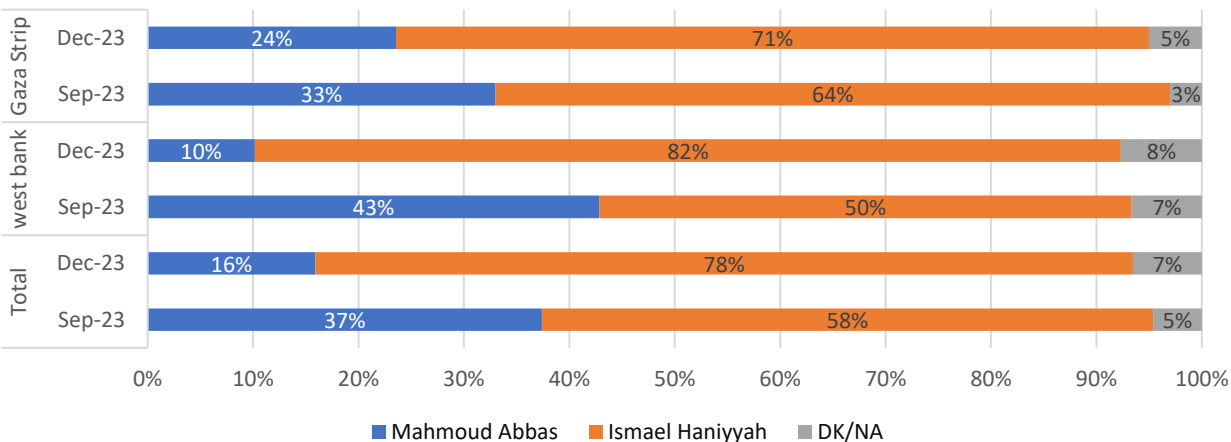
**Figure (9):** Now I will ask you about your satisfaction with the role of a number of international actors in this last war (said they are "satisfied")



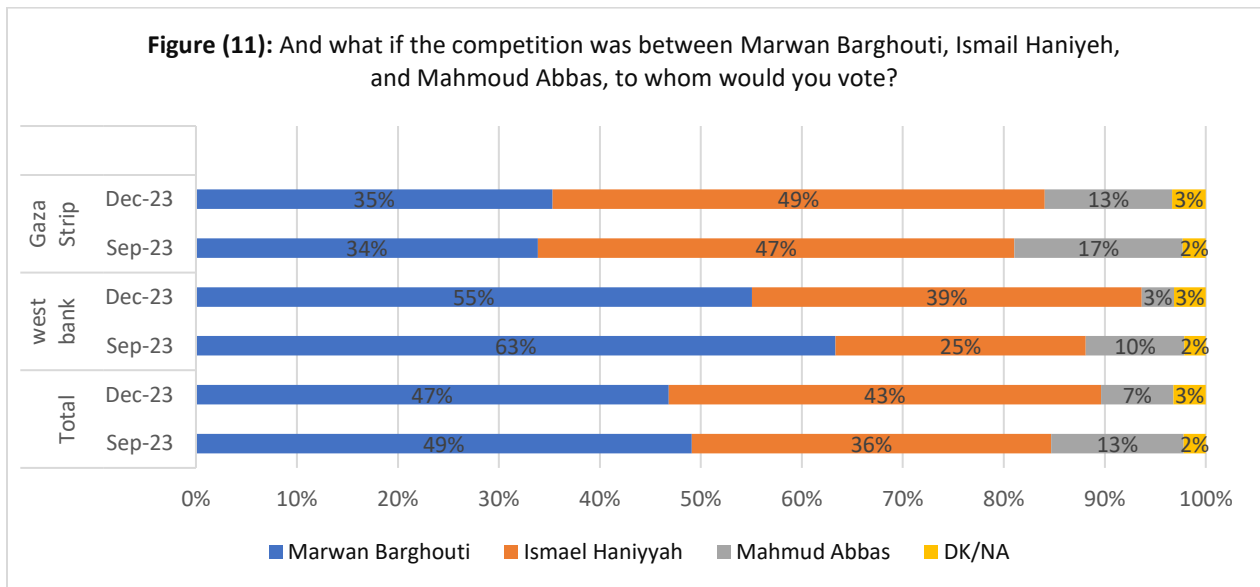
## (2) Legislative and presidential elections:

- If new presidential elections were held today and only two candidates, Mahmoud Abbas and Ismail Haniyeh, the voter turnout would be only 53%, and among those who would participate, Abbas would receive 16% of the vote and Haniyeh 78% (compared to 58% for Haniyeh and 37% for Abbas three months ago). In the Gaza Strip, the vote for Abbas stands at 24% and for Haniyeh at 71%, while in the West Bank Abbas receives 10% and Haniyeh 82%.

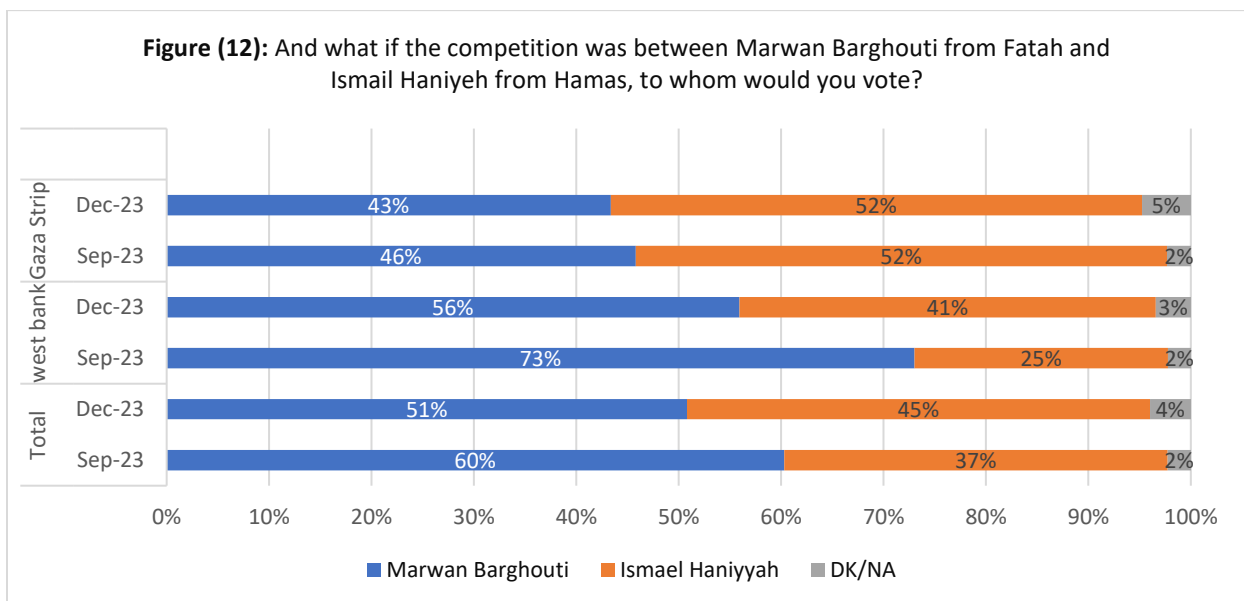
**Figure (10):** If new presidential elections are to take place today, and Mahmud Abbas was nominated by Fateh and Ismail Haniyeh was nominated by Hamas, whom would you vote for?



- If the presidential competition is between three, Marwan Barghouti, Abbas, and Haniyeh, participation would rise to 71% and among those voting, Barghouti receives 47%, Haniyeh 43%, and Abbas 7%. Three months ago, support for Barghouti stood at 49% and Haniyeh at 36%, and Abbas at 13%.

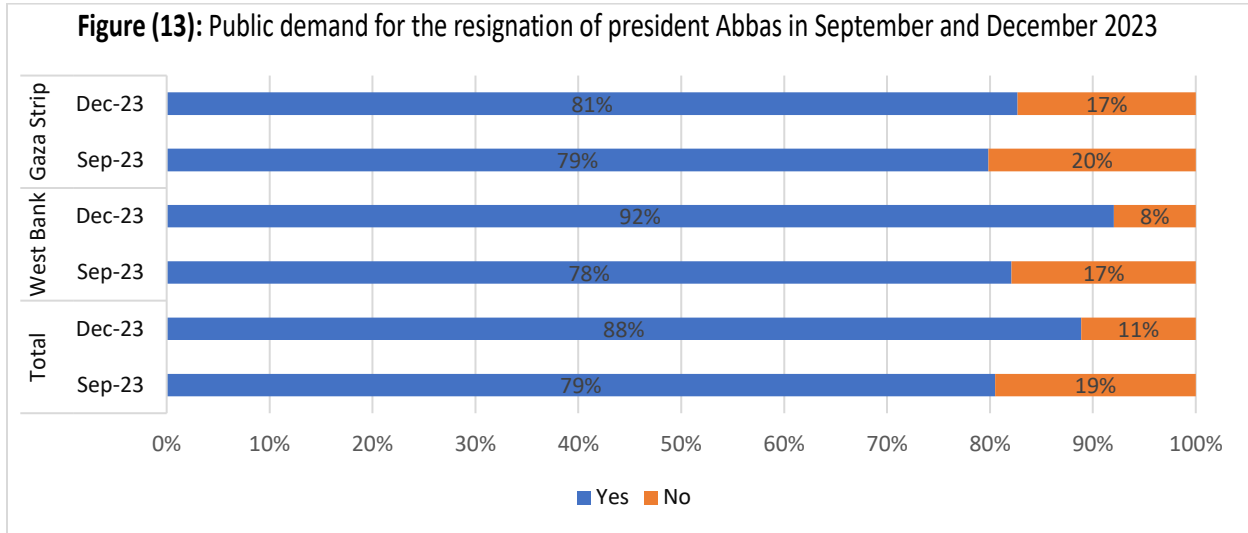


- If the presidential competition is between two, Marwan Barghouti and Haniyeh, participation would rise to 69% and among those voting, Barghouti receives 51% and Haniyeh 45%. Three months ago, support for Barghouti stood at 60% and Haniyeh at 37%.

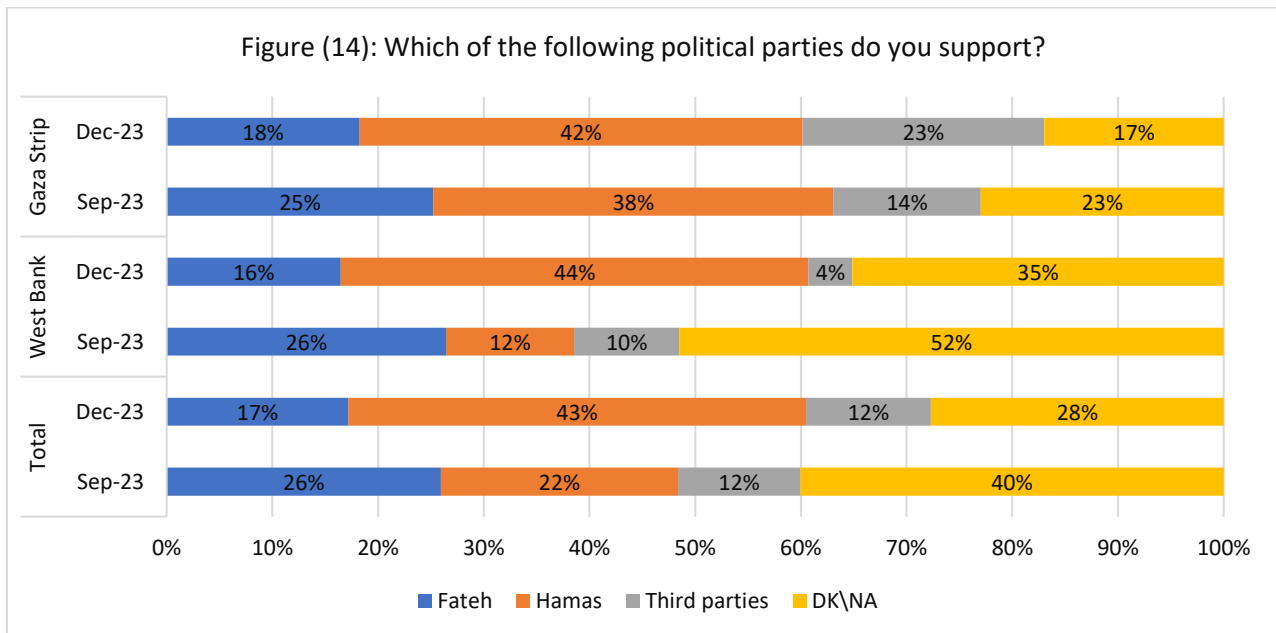


- In a closed question, we asked the public to select the person they prefer to see as President Abbas's successor. The largest percentage (36%) said they prefer Marwan Barghouti; 19% preferred Ismail Haniyeh; 16% chose Yahya al Sinwar; 4% preferred Mohammed Dahlan, 3% preferred Khaled Meshaal, 2% chose Muhammad Shtayyeh, and 1% chose Hussein al-Sheikh; 18% said they did not know or chose someone else.

- Level of satisfaction with the performance of president Abbas stands at 14% and dissatisfaction at 85%. Satisfaction with Abbas stands at 10% in the West Bank and 19% in the Gaza Strip. Three months ago, satisfaction with Abbas stood at 22% and dissatisfaction at 76%.
- 88% want Abbas to resign while 12% want him to remain in office. Three months ago, 78% said they want Abbas to resign. Demand for Abbas' resignation stands at 92% in the West Bank and 81% in the Gaza Strip.



- When asked which political party or political trend they support, the largest percentage selected Hamas (43%), followed by Fatah (17%), while 12% selected other or third-party groups, and 28% said none of them or did not know. Three months ago, support for Hamas stood at 22% and Fatah at 26%. In the West Bank, support for Hamas today stands at 44% (compared to 12% three months ago), and for Fatah at 16% (compared to 26% three months ago). In the Gaza Strip, support for Hamas today stands at 42% (compared to 38% three months ago) and support for Fatah at 18% (compared to 25% three months ago).



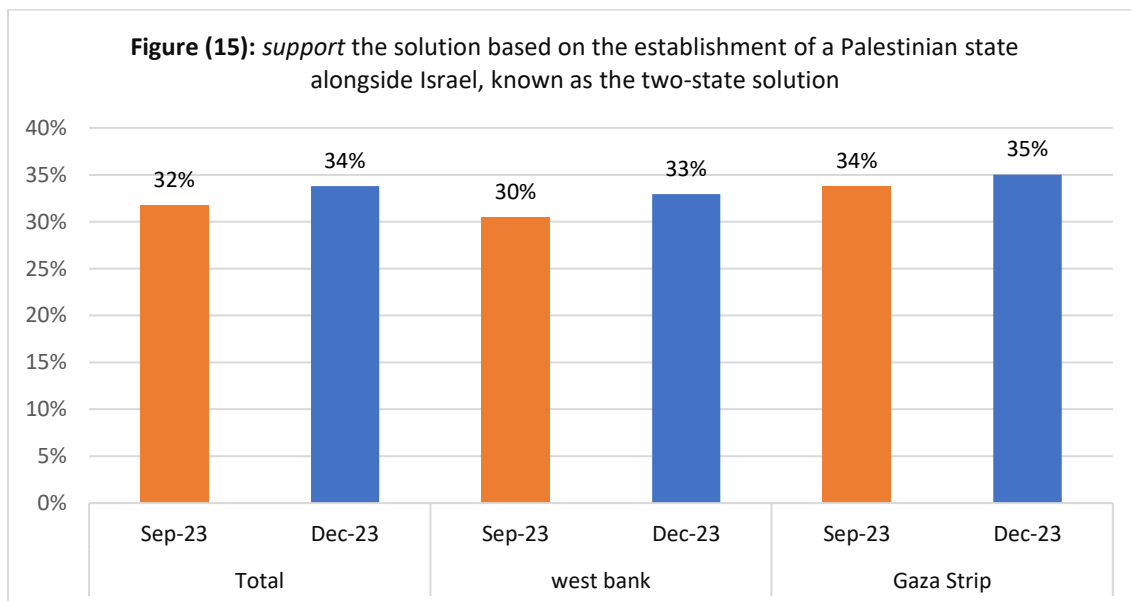
- However, if new parliamentary elections were held today with the participation of all political forces that participated in the 2006 elections, only 69% say they would participate in them, and among these participants, Fateh receives 19%, Hamas' Change and Reform 51%, all other lists combined 4%, and 25% say they have not yet decided whom they will vote for. Three months ago, vote for Hamas stood at 34% and Fatah at 36%. Vote for Hamas in the Gaza Strip stands today at 52% (compared to 44% three months ago) and for Fateh at 21% (compared to 32% three months ago). In the West Bank, vote for Hamas stands at 50% (compared to 24% three months ago) and Fatah at 18% (compared to 40% three months ago).
- 54% believe that Hamas is the most deserving of representing and leading the Palestinian people today while 13% believe that Fateh under the leadership of Abbas is more deserving; 26% believe both are unworthy of representation and leadership. Three months ago, 27% said Hamas is the most deserving, 24% said Fateh led by Abbas is the most deserving, and 44% said both are unworthy of representation and leadership.

### (3) Domestic conditions:

- The question about personal safety and security was asked in the West Bank only. The findings show that only 14% feel safe and secure while 86% feel unsafe and unsecure. Three months ago, the perception of safety stood at 48%.
- A majority of 68% believes that the PA has become a burden on the Palestinian people and only 28% believe it is an asset for the Palestinian people. Three months ago, 62% said the PA is a burden and 35% said it was an achievement.

### (4) Palestinian-Israeli Relations and the Peace process:

- 34% support and 64% oppose the idea of a two-state solution, which was presented to the public without providing details of the solution. Three months ago, support for this solution in a similar question stood at 32%.

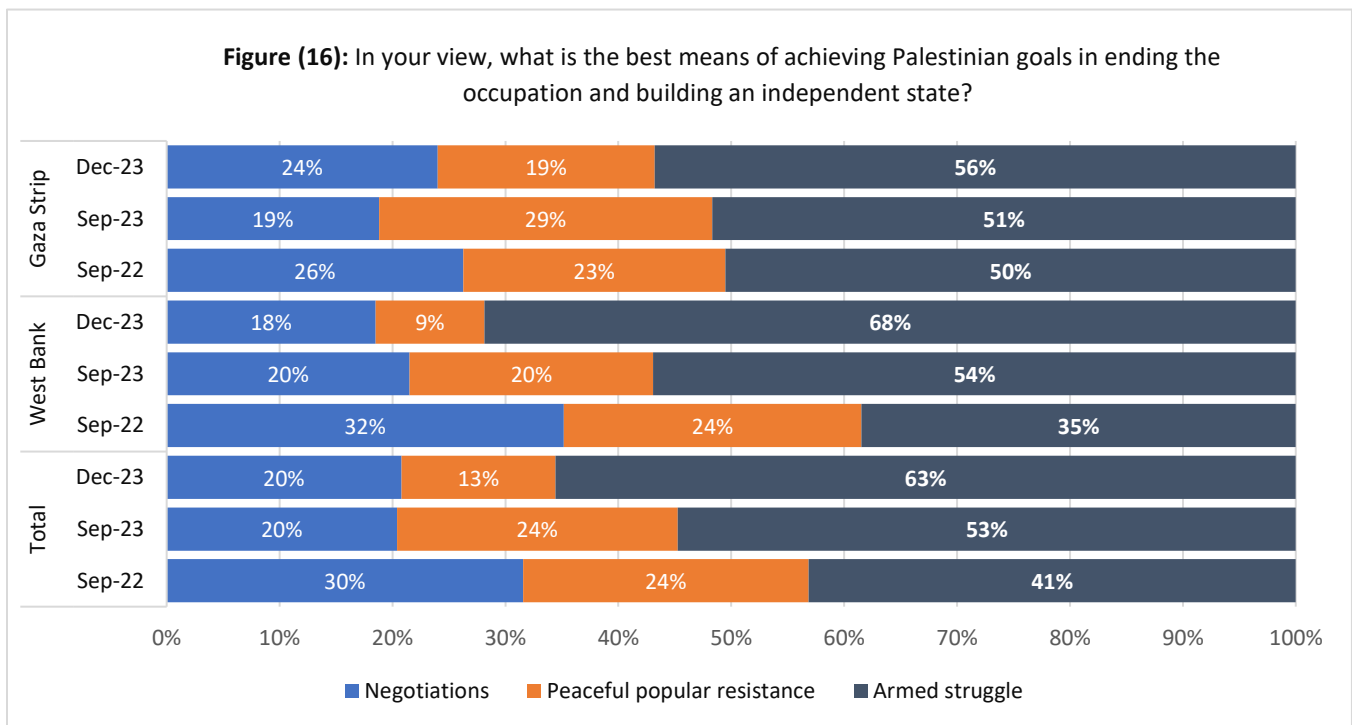


- Support for the two-state solution is linked to public assessment of the feasibility of such a solution and the chances for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Today, 65% believe the two-state solution is no longer practical due to settlement expansion but 32% believe it is still

practical. Moreover, 66% believe that the chances for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel in the next five years are slim or nonexistent, and 32% believe the chances are medium or high. Three months ago, 71% said that the two-state solution is no longer practical due to settlement expansion.

- When asked about public support and opposition to specific policy measures to break the stalemate: 55% supported joining more international organizations; 39% supported resort to unarmed popular resistance; 69% supported a return to confrontations and armed intifada; 58% supported dissolving the PA; and 29% supported abandoning the two-state solution and demanding one state for Palestinians and Israelis. Three months ago, 58% supported a return to confrontations and armed intifada; 53% supported resort to unarmed popular resistance; 52% supported the dissolution of the PA; and 27% supported abandoning the two-state solution in favor of one state.

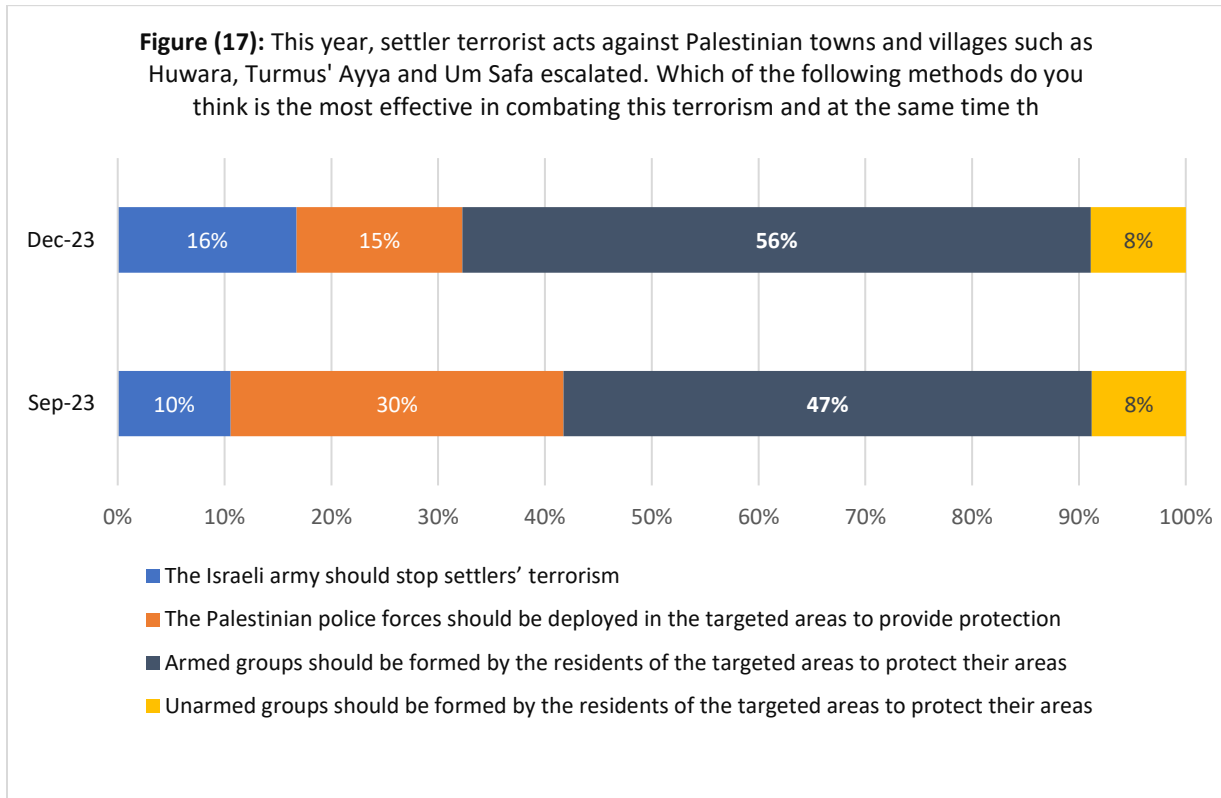
When asked about the best way to end occupation and establish an independent state, the public was divided into three groups: a majority of 63% (68% in the West Bank and 56% in the Gaza Strip) said it was armed struggle; 20% said it was negotiations; and 13% said it was popular non-violent resistance. Three months ago, 53% said armed struggle was the best way, 24% said popular non-violent resistance, and 20% said negotiation was the best way. As shown in figure (X) below, West Bankers' support for resort to arms increased 19 percentage points since the formation of the current far right Israel government and increased another 14 points during the past three months.



- In light of the increase in settler terrorist attacks against Palestinian towns and villages, we again asked West Bankers what means are most effective in combating this terrorism that are also the most feasible. The majority (56%, compared to 47% three months ago) chose the formation of armed groups by residents of the targeted areas in order to protect their areas; 15% (compared to 30% three months ago) chose to deploy Palestinian police forces in the targeted areas; 16% (compared to 10% three months ago) chose the demand that the Israeli

army take measures to prevent settler terrorism; and only 8% (compared to 8% three months ago) chose to form unarmed groups of residents of the targeted areas to protect their areas.

Figure (7) below, show the extent of the public distrust in the West Bank in the role of the Israeli army in protecting the vulnerable communities and that the trust of the public in the Palestinian police is much less than the trust it places in the armed groups and that trust in the PA police has declined in three months by half to reach the current 15%. It also show that a majority now supports the formation of armed groups as the most effective means of combating settler terror.



### (5) Most vital Palestinian goals and the most pressing problems confronting Palestinians today:

- 43% believe that the first most vital Palestinian goal should be to end Israeli occupation in the areas occupied in 1967 and build a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital. By contrast, 36% believe the first most vital goal should be to obtain the right of return of refugees to their 1948 towns and villages, 11% believe that the first and most vital goal should be to build a pious or moral individual and a religious society, one that applies all Islamic teachings and 7% believes it should be to establish a democratic political system that respects freedoms and rights of Palestinians.
- When asked about the most pressing problem confronting the Palestinians today, the largest percentage (51%, 42% in the West Bank and 64% in the Gaza Strip) said it is the continued war in the Gaza Strip; (32%) said it is the Israeli occupation, while 7% said it is the split between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, 5% said it is unemployment, and 4% said it is corruption.