

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



For further information, please contact

Dr. Khalil Shikaki or Walid Ladadweh
at the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research

Ramallah, Palestine
Telephone 02 296 4933
Fax 02 296 4934

e-mail: pcpsr@pcpsr.org
<http://www.pcpsr.org>

Press Release

Public Opinion Poll No (83)

The public favors a neutral stand in the Russian war against Ukraine even as slightly more people blame Russia for starting the war; closer to home, Israel-PA “confidence building measures” are increasingly viewed favorably even as two-thirds share the view that Israel is an apartheid state; and domestically, ten months after the Israel-Hamas War, Fatah’s popularity returns to its pre-May 2021 level despite the fact that almost three quarters continue to demand the resignation of president Abbas

16-20 March 2022

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 16 and 20 March 2022. The period before the conduct of the poll witnessed several domestic developments including the launching of a second round of the local election campaigns in the West Bank and the holding of a special session for the PLO Central Council in which important decisions relevant to Palestinian-Israeli relations and the filling of several senior positions in the organization’s leadership. It also witnessed increased settlers’ attacks in areas labeled B and C of the West Bank and increased tension in the Shaikh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem. Amnesty International issued a report in which it characterized Israel as an apartheid state. Finally, after weeks of anticipation, war erupted between Russia and Ukraine. This press release addresses these issues and covers other matters such as the general conditions in the Palestinian territories, the peace process and future possible directions for Palestinians in the absence of a viable peace process. Total size of the sample is 1200 adults interviewed face to face in 120 randomly selected locations. Margin of error is +/-3%.

For further details, contact PSR director, Dr. Khalil Shikaki, or Walid Ladadweh at tel. 02-296 4933 or email pcpsr@pcpsr.org.

Main Findings:

The results of the first quarter of 2022 indicate a return to the internal balance of power between Fatah and Hamas, as the case was before the May 2021 Israel-Hamas war. In other words, ten months after the war, Fatah's popularity returns to outperform Hamas’. It is noticeable that Fatah's popularity is rising equally in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In other words, the rise is unlikely to be associated with the launch of the West Bank’s local election campaigns. The local elections, scheduled to take place on 26 March, will take place only in the West Bank. However, the rise might be linked to two things:

(1) the success of the so-called "confidence-building steps" between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel, and (2) Hamas's inability to translate the gains it made in the May war with Israel to positive change on the ground in the Gaza Strip or East Jerusalem.

However, President Abbas' popularity has not risen. Indeed, Hamas' leader, Ismail Haniyeh is still able to win presidential elections in which only the two compete. Fatah's competitiveness is also clearly diminished when its name is associated with President Abbas', as Hamas continues to outperform Fatah when the latter is listed as "Fatah under the leadership of President Abbas." For example, when asked about the party most deserving of representing the Palestinian people, Hamas or "Fatah under President Abbas' leadership," Hamas still beats Fatah, even if just by a little.

The results also indicate that a large majority of the Palestinian public wants the PA to take a neutral stand in the Russian-Ukrainian war, although more people blame Russia for starting that war. The results show a small majority indicating concern about the prospect of war expansion and the entry of other countries in it. Moreover, a large majority says it expects prices to rise sharply in Palestine because of that war. When asked to compare the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to that of the Ukraine and Russia, the majority asserts that the war has demonstrated a western double standards as the US and Europe show no willingness to impose any sanctions on Israel, while showing a great enthusiasm to impose crushing sanctions on Russia. Moreover, more than three quarters of the public believe that the war has also shown European discrimination in the treatment of refugees from Ukraine as opposed to refugees from the Middle Eastern wars.

We also asked the public about the PLO's Central Council meeting in Ramallah at the beginning of February and the resolutions it made. The findings show that a majority, albeit small, believes that the current PLO remains the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. However, a larger majority believes that this particular meeting of the Central Council was illegitimate, although a majority, of more than sixty percent, supports the decisions it took. Perhaps the main reason for delegitimizing this meeting relates to the rejection of the results of the elections that were held during its sessions, with only a quarter or less accepting these election results, and the absence of Hamas and Islamic Jihad from the meeting. Two-thirds of the public say that Hamas' and Islamic Jihad's entry into the PLO will make it more representative of the Palestinian people.

On Palestinian-Israeli relations, poll findings show that support for a two-state solution remains almost the same as it was three months ago while support for a one-state solution, with equal rights for Jews and Palestinians, rises to about a third during the same period. Despite the increased level of approval for the one-state solution, two thirds of the public support the description of Israel is an apartheid state. Indeed, the public sees the publication of the report of Amnesty International on the subject as an indication of the beginning of a shift in Western public opinion in favor of the Palestinians, as previously happened in the case of South Africa.

The results also show an increase in support for confrontations and an armed uprising and a decrease in the belief in the effectiveness of negotiations. Finally, in this survey, we asked, for the first time, about the belief in a Qur'anic prophecy about the demise of Israel. We found that a vast majority actually believes that such prophesy does indeed exist in the Qur'an. However, the poll found that most of the public does not believe the assessment that 2022 is the precise year of Israel's demise. Even among religious people and the believers of the existence of this prophecy in the Qur'an, only a minority believes the assessment regarding a specific year.

(1) The war between Russia and Ukraine:

- The largest percentage of the public (43%) blames Russia for starting the war with Ukraine while 40% blame Ukraine.
- An overwhelming majority (71%) wants the PA to stay neutral in the conflict in the Ukraine while 14% believe the PA should stand with Russia and 10% think it should stand with Ukraine.
- A majority of 54% says it is worried that the Russian-Ukraine war might expand to include other counties; 42% are not worried.
- The overwhelming majority thinks Palestine will be impacted by the war in the Ukraine while only 5% think the war will have no impact on Palestine. 63% think it will lead to a sharp rise in prices, 26% think Israel will exploit it to expand settlements and annex Palestinian territories, and 1% think it could lead to expansion of armed confrontations between Palestinians and Israelis.
- A majority of 57% says the war show the double standard of US and Europe when the conflict is about the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories compared to that of Russia-Ukraine conflict; 28% think the two conflicts are different, and 10% think the Western countries stand against the Israeli occupation just as they stand against the Russian occupation of Ukraine.
- An overwhelming majority of 76% thinks there is a difference in the manner in which Europe treats refugees from Ukraine compared to its treatment of refugees from the Middle East; refugees from Arab and Islamic countries are treated badly and in a discriminatory manner.

(2) PLO Central Council's meeting and decisions:

- More than 60% support the decisions made by the PLO Central Council in its latest meeting in February 2022: 67% support the suspension of the PLO recognition of Israel and 61% support the decision to end the implementation of agreements with Israel including security coordination.
- Despite the fact that a majority of 62% support the Central Council's decision to defer to the PLO Executive Committee on the setting of a mechanism to implement the Council's decisions, a majority of 59% thinks the Executive Committee will not implement these decisions while only 31% think it will implement them.
- Indeed, 56% share the belief expressed by those who boycotted the Council's meeting in viewing the session as illegitimate; only 29% think the session was legitimate.
- The largest percentage is not in favor of the election of the various members of the Central Council to senior positions in the PLO: only 24% support the election of Rouhi Fattouh as the Speaker of the PLO's National Council; 26% support the election of Hussein al Shaikh to the Executive Committee; and only 22% support the election of Mohammad Mustafa or Ramzi Rihan to that committee.
- However, a majority of 51% views the current PLO as its own sole legitimate representative and 53% say the PLO is viewed by the Palestinian people as their sole legitimate representative.
- If the PLO is reformed and Hamas and Islamic Jihad become members in that organization, 65% think it would in this case become more representative of the Palestinian people while 12% think that, in this case, it will become less representative of the Palestinian people.

(3) Legislative and presidential elections:

- 72% say they support the holding of presidential and legislative elections in the Palestinian territories in the near future while 26% say they do not support that. Demand for elections stands at 75% in the Gaza Strip and 69% in the West Bank. However, a majority of 52% (57% in the Gaza Strip and 48% in the West Bank) believe no legislative or legislative and presidential elections will take place soon.
- If new presidential elections were held today and only two were nominated, Mahmoud Abbas and Ismail Haniyeh, only 51% would participate and from among those, Abbas would receive 38% and Haniyeh 54% of the votes (compared to 58% for Haniyeh and 35% for Abbas three months ago). In the Gaza Strip, Abbas receives 35% of the votes and Haniyeh receives 62%. In the West Bank, Abbas receives 41% and Haniyeh 47%. If the competition was between Marwan Barghouti and Ismail Haniyeh, participation would increase to 64% and from among those, Barghouti receives 59% and Haniyeh 37%. If the competition is between Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh and Haniyyeh, participation rate would decrease to 50% and from among those, the former receives 33% and the latter 60%.
- If Abbas does not run for elections, the public would vote for the following: 37% say they want Marwan Barghouti, 20% say Ismail Haniyyeh, 6% say Dahlan and 4% say Yahia Sinwar, Khalid Mishaal 3%, and Mustafa Barghouti and Salam Fayyad 2% each.
- Level of satisfaction with the performance of president Abbas stands at 27% and dissatisfaction at 70%. Level of satisfaction with Abbas stands at 29% in the West Bank and 25% in the Gaza Strip. Satisfaction with the performance of Abbas three months ago stood at 26% and dissatisfaction at 71%. Moreover, 73% of the public want president Abbas to resign while only 23% want him to remain in office. Three months ago, 74% said they want Abbas to resign. Demand for Abbas' resignation stands at 71% in the West Bank and 76% in the Gaza Strip.
- If new legislative elections were held today with the participation of all factions that participated in the 2006 elections, 64% say they would participate. Of those who would participate, 36% say they will vote for Hamas and 42% say they will vote for Fatah, 8% will vote for all other third parties combined, and 14% are undecided. Three months ago, vote for Hamas stood at 38% and Fatah at 35%. Vote for Hamas in the Gaza Strip stands today at 47% (compared to 47% three months ago) and for Fatah at 37% (compared to 29% three months ago). In the West Bank, vote for Hamas stands at 27% (compared to 30% three months ago) and Fatah at 47% (compared to 40% three months ago).
- The largest percentage (31%) says Hamas is most deserving of representing and leading the Palestinian people while 29% think Fatah under president Abbas is the most deserving of representing and leading the Palestinians; 33% think neither side deserves such a role. Three months ago, 34% selected Hamas, 23% Fatah under Abbas, and 36% said neither side deserves such a role.
- In the areas in which the second stage of local elections are set to take place soon, 55% say they will participate in these elections and 38% say they will not participate.
- When asked about the most important consideration that will influence their vote in the upcoming local elections, the largest percentage (42%) select the ability to deliver services to their area of residence; 14% select the political party of the list, another 14% select the closeness of the list to family and friends, and another 14% sat their vote will be influenced by the ability of the list to combat corruption. 9% say that their vote will depend on the extent to which the members of the list are religious, and 7% say it depends on the level of education among the list members.

(4) Domestic conditions and satisfaction with the Shtayyeh government:

- A majority of 54% say that the current rise in the cost of living affects them significantly or very significantly, while 45% say it affects them moderately or slightly.
- The vast majority (79%) says the Palestinian government is not doing enough to reduce prices, while 19% say it is doing so.
- Positive evaluation of conditions in the Gaza Strip stands at 7% and positive evaluation of conditions in the West Bank stands at 25%.
- Nonetheless, perception of safety and security in the Gaza Strip stands at 73% and in the West Bank at 57%.
- 27% of the public say they want to emigrate due to political, security, and economic conditions. The percentage in the Gaza Strip stands at 37% and in the West Bank at 20%. Three months ago, 23% of West Bankers expressed a desire to emigrate and 31% of Gazans expressed the same desire.
- Perception of corruption in PA institutions stands at 84%. When asked about institutions controlled by Hamas in the Gaza Strip, 69% indicated that there is corruption in these institutions. Three months ago, 84% said there is corruption in PA institutions and 69% said there is corruption in public institutions controlled by Hamas.
- 35% of West Bankers think people in the West Bank can criticize the PA without fear while 60% think they cannot. In the Gaza Strip, 42% think people in the Strip can criticize Hamas' authorities without fear and 56% think they cannot.
- In its assessment of the PA, a majority of the Palestinians (55%) views it as a burden on the Palestinian people while 39% view it as an asset for the Palestinian people. Three months ago, 56% viewed the PA as a burden and 39% viewed it as an asset.
- 28% are optimistic and 69% are pessimistic about the success of reconciliation. Three months ago, optimism stood at 39%.
- After more than two years since the formation of the Shtayyeh government, findings indicate persistent pessimism. Responding to a question about expectations regarding the ability of the Shtayyeh government to make progress in reconciliation and reunification, 74% expect failure; only 20% expect success. When asked about the ability of the government to organize legislative or legislative and presidential elections in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, 28% of the public expect success and 67% expect failure. In another question about the ability of the new government to improve economic conditions, a majority of 71% expects failure and 25% expects success.
- The vast majority (70%) says that domestic violence in which individual killings turn into family and clan confrontations for revenge reflects primarily the society's weak confidence in the justice and law enforcement system, while 27% say it reflects the traditional and tribal nature of Palestinian society.
- To stop these incidents of internal violence, the vast majority (72%) says law enforcement services should be strengthened, while 24% say tribal reform committees should be strengthened.
- We asked the public about its viewership habits in the last three months. Findings indicate that al Jazeera TV has the highest viewership, standing at 28%, followed by al Aqsa TV (12%), Palestine TV and Maan (11% each), Palestine Today (9%), al Arabiya (5%), and al Mayadeen (4%).

(5) The Coronavirus and PA performance during the pandemic:

- 53% are satisfied with the measures taken by the PA to contain the spread of the coronavirus while 46% are dissatisfied. Three months ago, 57% expressed satisfaction.
- The majority is satisfied with the performance of the various actors involved in the management of the Coronavirus crisis: 65% express satisfaction with the performance of

the security services deployed in their areas and 67% are satisfied with the performance of the ministry of health. However, satisfaction with the performance of the prime minister in the management of the coronavirus crisis stands at 46%. Three months ago, satisfaction with the prime minister's performance in the coronavirus crisis stood at 46%.

(6) Palestinian-Israeli Relations and the Peace process:

- Support for the concept of the two-state solution stands at 40% and opposition stands at 58%. No description or details were provided for the concept. Three months ago, support for the concept stood at 39%.
- Reflecting on the latest UN speech of president Abbas in which he described the situation on the ground in the West Bank as “apartheid” and that the Palestinian people will demand equal rights in one state for two peoples, only 32% say that they are in favor of such one state solution while 63% expressed opposition.
- When asked about support for specific policy choices to break the current deadlock, 60% supported joining more international organizations; 52% supported resort to non-violent resistance; 52% supported return to armed confrontations and intifada; 49% supported dissolving the PA; and 32% supported abandoning the two-state solution and embracing a one state solution for Palestinians and Israelis. Three months ago, 50% supported a return to armed confrontations and intifada; 48% supported dissolving the PA; and 24% supported abandoning the two-state solution in favor of a one-state solution.
- We asked the public about its views regarding Palestinian-Israeli confidence building measures that would improve living conditions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, such as approval of family unification permits or making available to the PA additional financial resources. A majority of 63% said it looks positively, while 30% said it looks negatively, at such measures. Three months ago, 61% of the public said it viewed these measures positively.
- A majority of 60% believes that the two-state solution is no longer practical or feasible due to the expansion of Israeli settlements while 36% believe that the solution remains practical. Moreover, 68% believe that the chances for the creation of a Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel in the next five years are slim or nonexistence while 30% believe the chances to be medium or high.
- When asked about the most effective means of ending the Israeli occupation and building an independent state, the public split into three groups: 44% chose armed struggle, 25% negotiations, and 24% popular resistance. Three months ago, 42% chose armed struggle and 31% chose negotiations.
- Under current conditions, a majority of 70% opposes and 22% support an unconditional resumption of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. However, when asked about a resumption of negotiations in a multilateral forum, support for a return to Palestinian-Israeli negotiations under the leadership of the international Quartet increase to 38%; 57% are opposed.
- 64% are opposed, and 30% are supportive, of a return to dialogue with the new US administration under president Joe Biden.
- The vast majority (73%) believes the Qur'an contains a prophecy on the demise of the State of Israel, while 22% say it does not. However, the majority (57%) does not believe the assessment, stated by few Qur'anic scholars, that verses in the Qur'an predict the exact year of the demise of Israel and that it is the year 2022; 32% say they believe it.
- Against the backdrop of the assassination of three members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in Nablus, a majority of 64% says it is the duty of the Palestinian security forces

to confront the Israeli armed forces when they enter areas under the control of the PA: 32% say they do not agree.

- The main reason for the failure of the Israeli army to stop settlers' terrorism in the eyes of a majority of 54% is that the settlers are a tool in the hands of the army and it uses them to fight the Palestinian residents in order to expel them from their land; 20% say the reason is that settlers are the decision makers in the Israeli government; 12% say that settlers hide and wear masks, and 10% say that the army does not have the jurisdiction to arrest settlers.
- When asked why the Palestinian police and national security forces could not protect the residents from settlers' terrorism in Area B, the largest percentage (34%) says it is because the Palestinian leadership and government prefer to maintain security coordination with the Israeli army than to provide protection to the Palestinian population; 29% say it is because the Palestinian police and national security forces do not want to engage in armed conflict with the Israeli army; 20% say it is because the Palestinian police does not have jurisdiction to protect the residents of area B; and 12% say terrorist attacks take place at night when Palestinian security services are not present.
- Two-thirds of the public (65%) approve and 27% disapprove of the assessment that Israel is an apartheid state. Moreover, 48% agree and 40% disagree that Amnesty International's report on Israel's racism is an indication of a shift in Western public opinion in favor of Palestinians and against Israel, as it has previously did regarding apartheid in South Africa.

(7) Most vital Palestinian goals and the main problems confronting Palestinians today:

- 38% 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, 33% believe the first most vital goal should be to obtain the right of return of refugees to their 1948 towns and villages, 14% 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 13% believes it should be to establish a democratic political system that respects freedoms and rights of Palestinians.
- In a question about the two main problems confronting the Palestinians today, the largest (25%; 17% in the Gaz Strip and 30% in the West Bank) said it is corruption in the PA; 24% said it is the unemployment and poverty, 19% said it is the continued siege and blockade of the Gaza Strip; 15% said it is the continuation of the occupation and settlement construction; 12% said it is the split between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; and 4% said it is the weakness of the judiciary and the absence of liberties, accountability and democracy.
- When asked about the most pressing problem confronting the Palestinians today, the largest percentage (33%) said it is the Israeli occupation, while 28% said it is corruption, 14% said it is unemployment, 14% said it is the split or division, and 8% said it is the internal violence.