



In the latest poll for Near East Consulting:

69% in favor a peace settlement with Israel
The popularity of Fatah has increased in comparison with the
popularity of Hamas

Ramallah - West Bank: A recent opinion poll conducted by Near East Consulting (NEC) shows that 69% of the Palestinians support reaching a peace agreement with Israel, compared with 31% who opposed it.

The survey was carried out between the fifth and seventh of December on a random sample of 850 Palestinians over the age of 18 from both sexes, in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, including East Jerusalem. The margin of errors is +/-3.4% and the confidence level is 95%.

The results show a high level of support for reaching a peace agreement with Israel. About 69% of the respondents indicated their support for a peace settlement with Israel compared to 68% in October and 59% in July 2010. In this context, 62% called on Hamas to change its position towards the elimination of Israel, compared to 38% that said that they prefer that Hamas maintains that position.

As for their political outlook, 54% of the respondents said that they prefer Fatah's strategy with respect to Palestinian national interest as opposed to a mere 6% that prefer Hamas's strategy. The remaining 40% said that they support neither strategy or they refused to give their opinion.

President Mahmoud Abbas kept his popularity in comparison with Ismael Hanieh (52% versus 7% respectively), while 41% said that they trust neither leader or they refused to give their opinion.

On the other hand, the results highlight the remarkable progress on the level of support for Dr. Salam Fayyad's government, when compared with that of Hanieh in Gaza, where 69% said that Fayyad's government is the legitimate government in the oPt, while 10% said Hanieh's. Still, 21% believe that neither government is legitimate. The findings highlight the increase in the popularity of the Fayyad government in comparison with that of October 2010. This result probably testifies to the effective impact the Fayyad Government had on the Palestinians' daily life.

In a question about how the Palestinians identify themselves, the results reveal that 57% identify themselves as "Muslims first", 21% as "Palestinians first", and 17% as "human being first", and 4% as "Arabs first". The recent results also show that 80% of the



surveyed population thinks that the Palestinians do not follow Islam properly, versus 20% who think the opposite.

As for factional trust, the popularity of Fateh has increased to 49% compared to 44% in July, 2010, while the popularity of Hamas has dropped from 7% to 5% during the same period. As for those who do not trust any faction, the percentage decreased from 45% in July 2010 to 43%. The percentage of those trusting other parties remained the same (3%).

Regarding the feeling of security of the Palestinians towards themselves, their families and their properties, 56% feel secure compared with 44% feel insecure. Feeling of insecurity is more pronounced in the Gaza Strip and among the supporters of Fateh.

The results show that 47% of the Palestinians live below the poverty level[♦]. As for the unemployment rate, 23% of the labor force is unemployed compared to 12% that are partially employed. According to the results, the unemployment and poverty rates were more intense in the Gaza Strip than the West Bank and in refugee camps and villages than in cities.

Still the proportion of anxiety is high for the majority of the Palestinians. About 86% feel concerned about the situation in general. The main source of concern remained to be the economic condition of the household (37%), followed by the internal dispute (28%), and the Israeli occupation (6%) - noting that this option is not mentioned to the respondents- 14% attributed their concern to the absence of security, and 3% to family problems.

It is worth mentioning that Near East Consulting monitors the Palestinian public perceptions on political, social and economic issues on a monthly basis in addition to its various political, social, and economic studies that are carried out on behalf of local and international organizations.

[♦] The poverty rate is based on calculating the reported income of a reference household (six members: 2 adults and 4 children below the age of 18) as well as the household structure (number of dependents as well as adults). The poverty line of this reference family is set at 2000 NIS per month.