

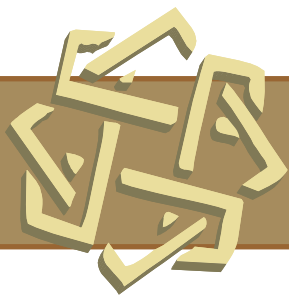


Near East Consulting



# The Agreement on Movement and Access and the impact on the humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip

Baseline Survey Report



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## I. Introduction

This report is the first in a series that will be presented to the Office of the Special Envoy for Disengagement in the coming months to track the Agreement on Movement and Access and the Rafah Agreement. The main terms of reference is to provide representative surveys and analysis of the perceptions and experiences of the population in the Gaza Strip with regard to the implementation and outcomes of the Agreement, and the expectations, experiences and perceptions of the public, and of economic and commercial actors.

The current report is based on a baseline survey that was carried out in the Gaza Strip. The main objective of this baseline survey and this report is to provide a basic overview of the general, socio-economic and political situation in the Gaza Strip at a time when the actual impact of the Agreement on Movement and Access and the Rafah Agreement is not yet clear. In addition, the baseline survey also aimed both to gauge the public's knowledge and expectations about the Agreements, and - already at this early stage – to grasp Palestinians' usage of the Rafah and Karni crossings and an evaluation based on their experiences at those crossings in terms of procedures, efficiency, and facilities.

The results and analysis of this initial baseline survey in the Gaza Strip will not only provide immediate information about the current situation, but will also be used to provide an accurate picture of the context in the upcoming sector-specific and on-the-spot surveys and reports.



## II. Methodology

The backbone of any survey research is the soundness of its methodology. In this section, the utilized methodology for the baseline survey will be briefly explained.

### A. Environment

The fieldwork of the baseline survey began on 30 December 2005 and ended on 2 January 2006. For future reference, it is important to shortly remember the events that were occurring at that period in time.

- ❖ The Rafah Crossing was opened on the 26 November 2005 with 5 average working hours per day in the 14 days period of 26 November 2005 – 09 December 2005.
- ❖ In the period of 24 December 2005 - 6 January 2006, Rafah crossing hours were on average 10 working hours per day. On 30 December 2005, the terminal was closed for 7 hours during which EU BAM relocated to Kerem Shalom. On that day, Rafah re-opened at 15:00 hours for only two hours. In the 24 December 2005 – 6 January 2006 period, daily an average of 606 people entered the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing, while a daily average of 720 people exited the Gaza Strip through Rafah. Also during the same period, three security incidents on the Palestinian side of the border were reported.
- ❖ Although on the Karni crossing during the period of 24 December 2005 – 6 January 2006, 13.5 working hours per day were scheduled, only 12.4 hours per day were actually worked. Daily, 67 trucks out of the scheduled 73 left the Gaza Strip through the Karni crossing, while a total of 311 trucks entered the Gaza Strip through Karni. Meanwhile, there was no report of security incidents on the Palestinian side of the crossing during this period.
- ❖ At the time of the fieldwork for the baseline survey, there were parts of the Agreement on Movement and Access that had not yet been implemented fully, although they were agreed upon by both parties. Indeed, it is worth pointing out that at the time of the fieldwork, the agreement that passages would operate continuously had not yet materialized as the Rafah crossing was operational for 10 hours per day as opposed to 24 hours a day. Also, although Israel agreed that “they will allow the passage of convoys to facilitate the movement of goods and persons” between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the establishment of a bus convoy that was due to become operational on the 15 December 2005 had not yet materialized at the time of the baseline survey.
- ❖ More generally, three days prior to going to the field for the baseline survey, on 27 December 2005, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ordered the construction of a buffer zone in the northern Gaza Strip on the border with Israel. From the

Palestinian side, the buffer zone is perceived as a partial re-occupation of the Gaza Strip after the Israeli withdrawal from that area only a few months earlier.

- ❖ On 28 December 2005, British citizens Kate Burton and her parents were kidnapped in Rafah. Their ordeal was put to an end on 31 December 2005 when they were handed over to British officials.

## **B. Sampling**

In total, 1,248 Palestinians over the age of 18 were interviewed in the Gaza Strip. Households were randomly selected from 25 population concentrations that contain at least 1,000 residents. Within the population concentrations, the fieldworkers were instructed to select households by starting from a specific point and by following a specified route. Within the households, the fieldworkers were instructed to interview the household member over the age of 18 whose birthday is coming up the first from the interview date.

Over 50 interviewers were involved in the survey. Each interviewer was not allowed to interview more than 25 respondents in order to avoid interviewer bias.

## **C. Weighting**

The data was weighted to reflect the actual distribution of the respondents according to districts and population concentrations. The gender variable was also weighted to allow for equal representation of males and females.



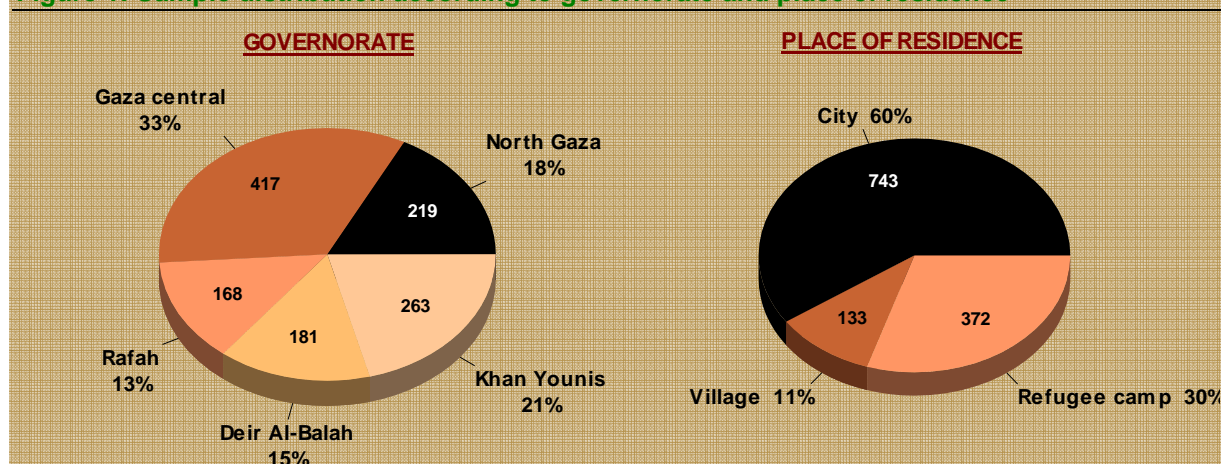
### III. Demographics

The sample of any survey contains demographic information about the entity in which the fieldwork was carried out. The information of this baseline survey provides information about the governorates in which the fieldwork took place, the place of residence of the respondents, their refugee status, their gender, their educational level, their poverty level, their age, and their marital status. In this section, the distribution according to these various variables will be overviewed. In addition, it is important to point out that these basic demographical variables will be used throughout the report in the analysis, whereby cross-tabulations between several questions that were included in the questionnaire and those variables will be highlighted and discussed.

#### A. Place of residence

As specified in figure 1, below, the fieldwork for the baseline survey was conducted in the five governorates of the Gaza Strip. More specifically, 33% of the interviews were conducted in central Gaza, 21% in Khan Younis, 18% in North Gaza, 15% in Deir al-Balah, and 13% in Rafah. In those governorates, 60% of the fieldwork was carried out in cities, 30% in refugee camps, and 11% in villages. According to place of residence, 60% of the interviewees reside in cities, 30% in refugee camps, and 11% in villages.

**Figure 1: Sample distribution according to governorate and place of residence**

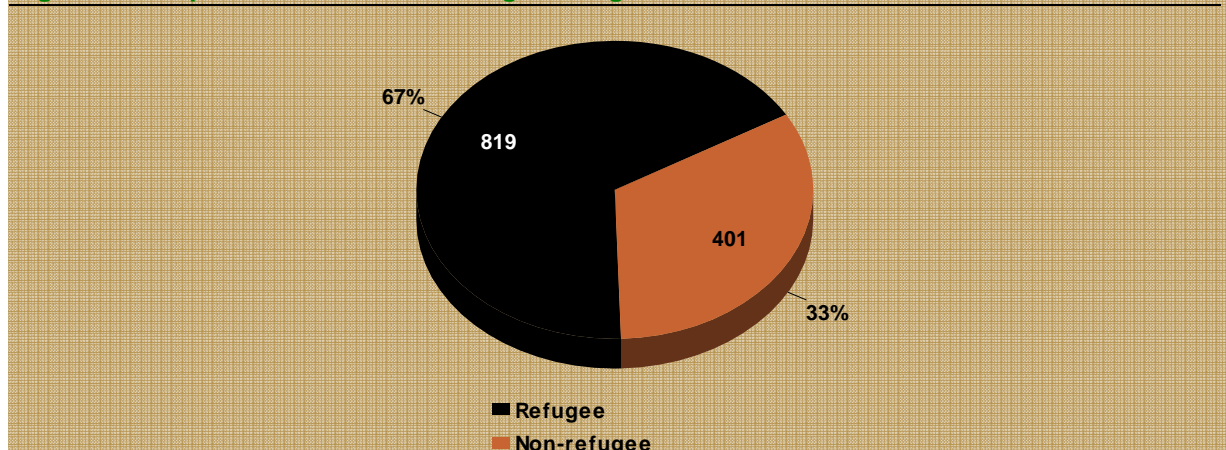




## B. Refugee status

As a large part of the Palestinians are refugees, especially in the Gaza Strip, it is important to have this reality reflected in the sample. As illustrated in figure 2, adjacent, the sample of interviewees for the baseline survey consists of 67% refugees and 33% non-refugees.

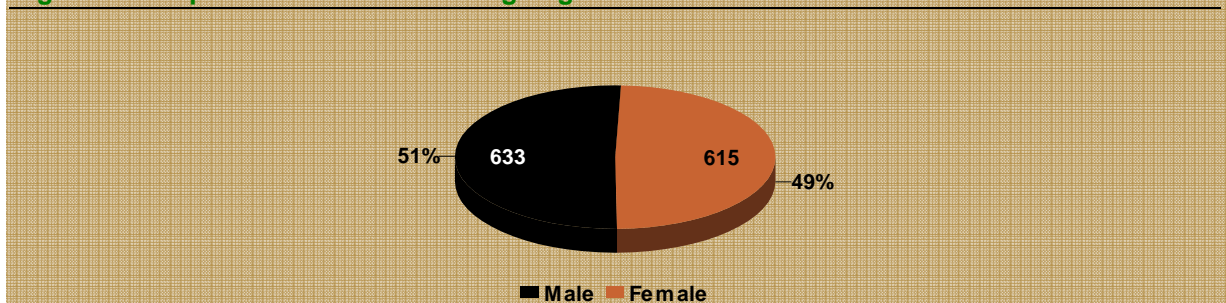
**Figure 2: Sample distribution according to refugee status**



## C. Gender

It is important in any sample to have a relatively even distribution between male and female respondents. As discussed in the methodology of this report, the data have been weighted for this purpose. As such, the sample includes 51% male interviewees and 49% female interviewees.

**Figure 3: Sample distribution according to gender**

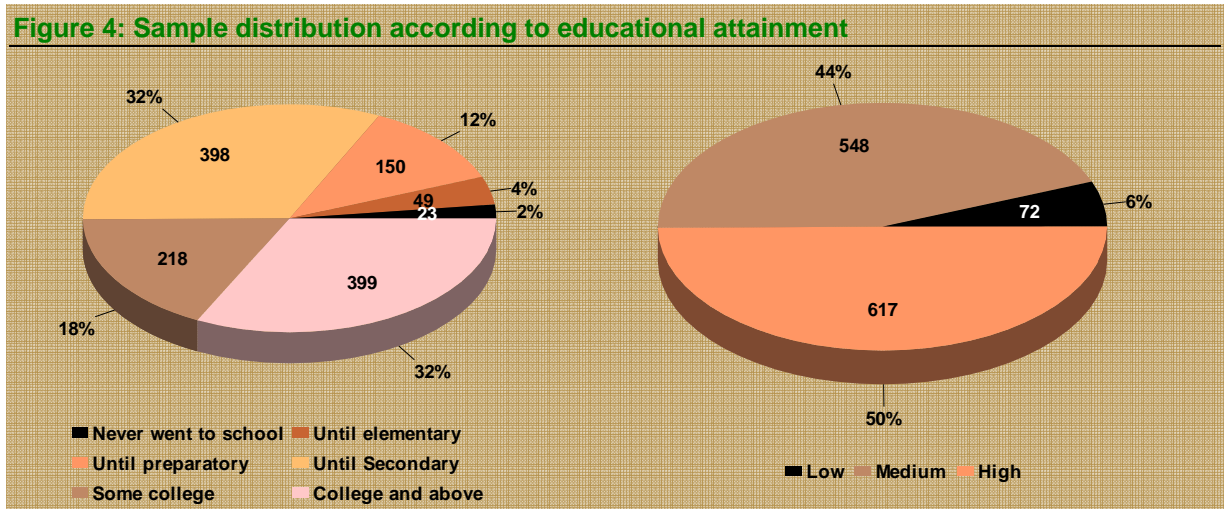


## D. Educational level

Respondents in the survey were asked about their educational attainment as the level of education could influence respondents' perceptions on a range of issues. As overviewed in figure 4, below, 2% of the respondents never went to school, 4% only went to elementary school, and 12% only went to preparatory school. About 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the respondents finished

secondary school (32%), while a relatively high percentage of the respondents either attained some level of college education (18%) or college and above (32%).

For the purpose of analysis, the six basic levels of education were grouped into three levels of education: low education (never went to school, until elementary), medium education (until preparatory, until secondary), and high education (some college, college and above). When re-grouped in this manner, 6% of the sample is low educated, 44% is medium educated, while 50% is highly educated.



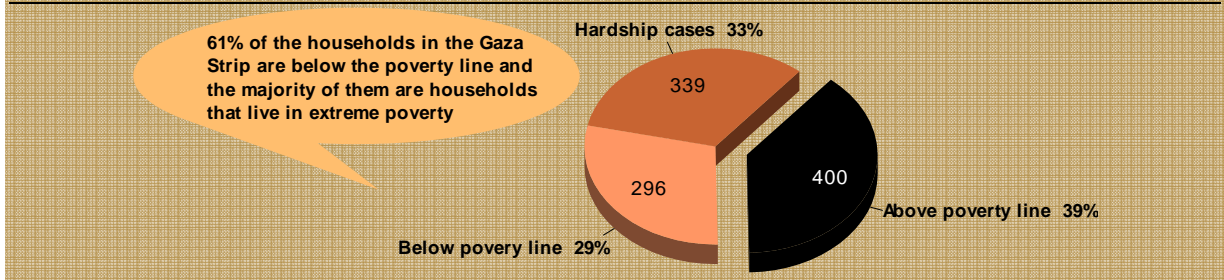
## E. Poverty level

In the context of the occupied Palestinian territories and, particularly since the outbreak of the second Intifada, the knowledge about the poverty level of the Palestinian population has gained importance as, during this period of time, the socio-economic conditions in the oPt considerably worsened, influencing Palestinians' outlook, priorities and perspectives. As such, the poverty level of respondents in the sample of the survey becomes a powerful tool of analysis.

For this report two types of poverty indicators were constructed. The first classification consists of three categories: the *hardship* cases, the households with a monthly income that falls *below the poverty line*, and the households with a living standard *above the poverty line*. The second poverty classification consists of merely two categories: the households with a monthly income *below the poverty line*, including those who live in hardship, and the households with a living standard *above the poverty line*.

The poverty variable was based on the reported income of the household and the household size. Based on the poverty line of PCBS (NIS 1,950 per month for a household of 2 adults and 4 children), the income and the household size were considered to generate the poverty level. The hardship cases were based on any household – irrespective of the size – that has an income of less than NIS 500 per month. In addition, large size households were considered hardship cases when the poverty formula rendered their income to become less than NIS 500.

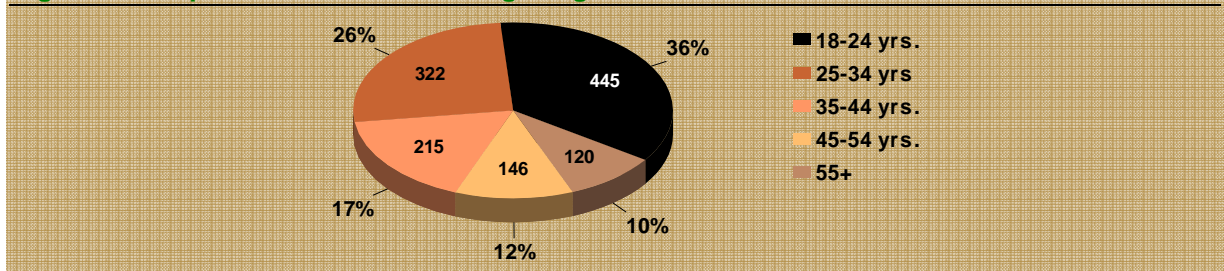
**Figure 5: Sample distribution according to poverty level**



## F. Age

The 1,248 respondents in the baseline survey were asked for their age. For the purpose of analysis, the ages of the respondents were divided into 5 categories. As detailed in the adjacent figure, 36% of the respondents are between 18 to 24 years old, 26% are between 25 to 34 years old, 17% are between 35 to 44 years old, 12% are between 45 to 54 years old, and the remaining 10% are at least 55 years old or older.

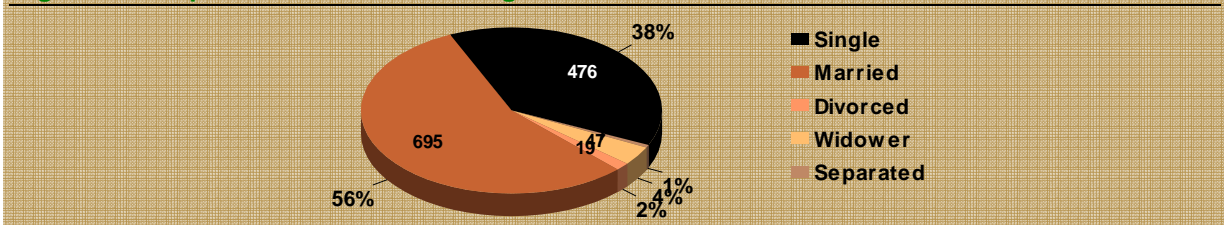
**Figure 6: Sample distribution according to age**



## G. Marital status

Concerning the marital status of the respondents, 38% of the sample are single, 56% are married, 2% are divorced, 4% are widowed, while 1% is separated.

**Figure 7: Sample distribution according to marital status**





## IV. The General Situation

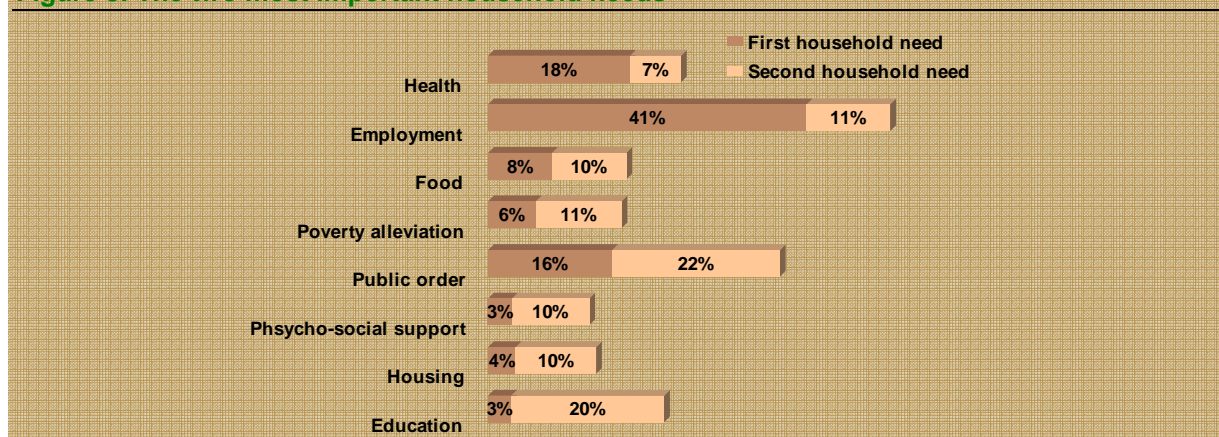
### A. Most important needs of the household

From a policy-oriented perspective, when describing the general situation in the Gaza Strip, it is important to first find out what it is that households are really in need of through asking the people directly. In the survey conducted for this report, respondents were asked from a predetermined list to specify their household's two most important needs.

When the *two most important needs* are examined *together* – as is the case in figure 8, below, employment is by far the most frequently cited household need (52%), followed by the need for public order (38%). From the results, one can deduct that people in the Gaza Strip are least concerned about the need for psycho-social support (13%), which is a need that might be very necessary in the Gaza Strip, but is not so much on the priority list of respondents as such support does not help the household along "immediately". Perhaps more surprising, is the relatively small percentage of respondents who pointed out that food (18%) is most important to their household. Still, such a result and the move away from the traditionally largest percentage of people specifying that food is their most important household need might indicate that food is no longer such a priority or is already quite well catered for through assistance received from various local and international organizations.

When the *first most important household need* is considered separately, employment (41%) remains the most important household need, with health (18%) in a distant second place, closely followed by – again – the need for public order (16%).

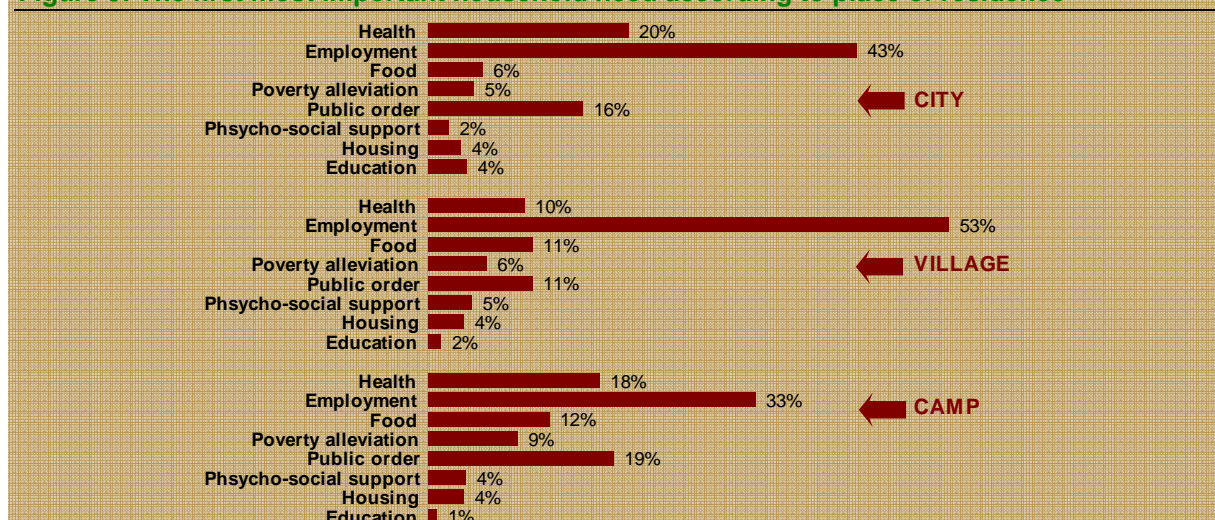
**Figure 8: The two most important household needs**



When taking the analysis a step further by cross-tabulating the first most important household need according to the place of residence of the respondents, the results indicate

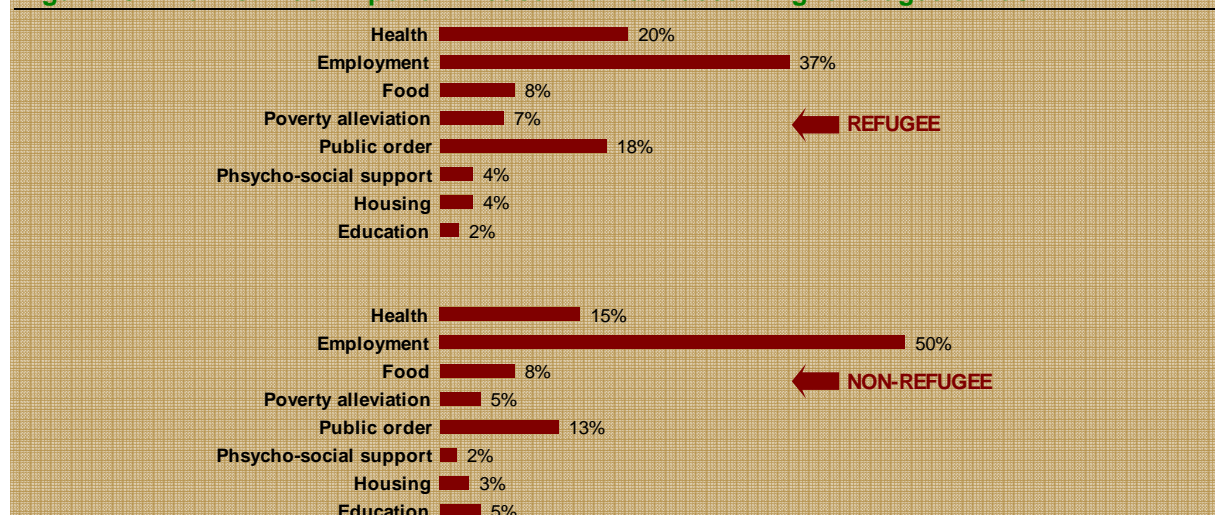
that employment is more of a first important need in villages (53%) than in cities (43%) or in camps (33%). Conversely, public order is more often a first most important household need among camp dwellers (19%) than among city residents (16%) and villagers (11%). These findings are overviewed in figure 9, below.

**Figure 9: The first most important household need according to place of residence**



In line with the findings on the first important household need according to place of residence, the analysis on this issue according to refugee status indicates that employment is less important as a household need among refugees (37%) than among non-refugees (50%), while public order is more important as a first household need among refugees (18%) than among non-refugees (13%).

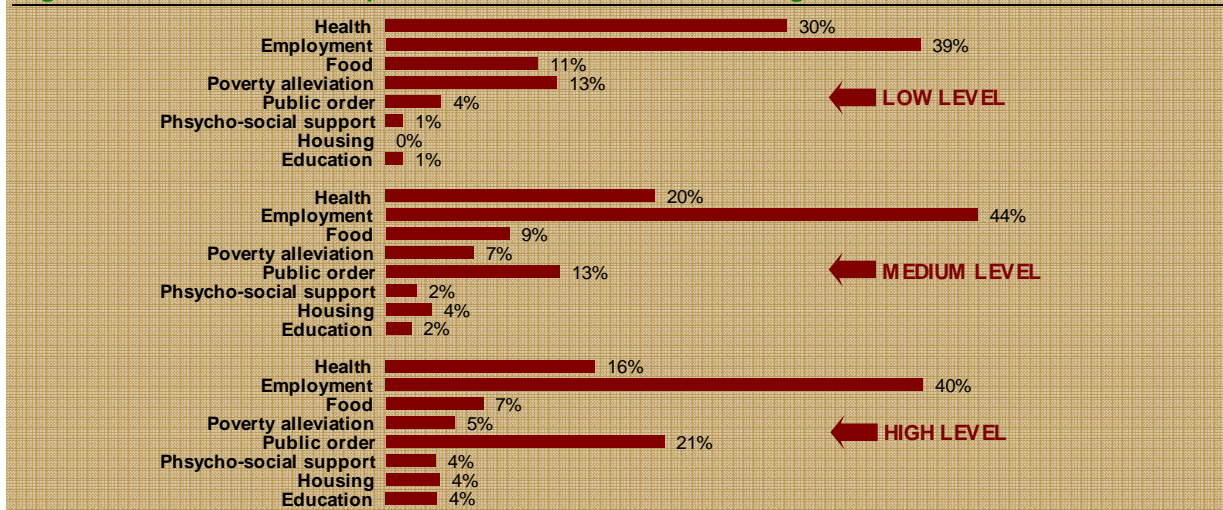
**Figure 10: The first most important household need according to refugee status**



According to educational level, a higher percentage of medium educated respondents (44%) than low (39%) and highly (40%) educated respondents perceive employment to be their main household need. Meanwhile, the importance attached to public order as a first

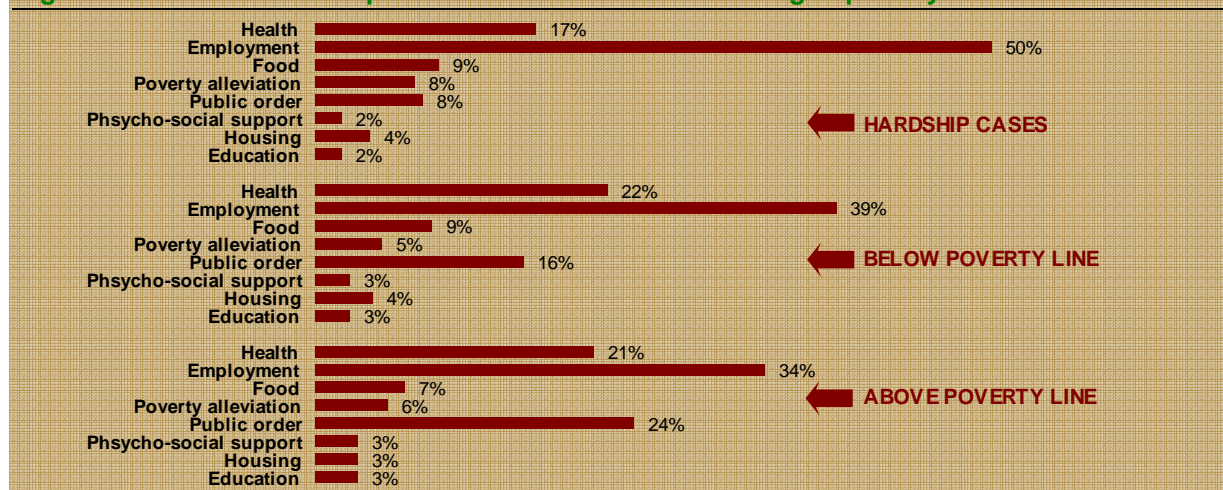
household need increases with increased levels of education as only 4% of the low educated consider public order to be the first most important household need compared to 13% of the medium educated and 21% of the highly educated who share this opinion. The results portrayed in figure 11, below, also indicate that health far more is a first household need among the low educated (30%) than among the medium (20%) and highly educated respondents (16%).

**Figure 11: The first most important household need according to educational level**



Perhaps predictably, the importance of employment as a first household need swells with increased levels of poverty among respondents, while, to the contrary, the importance of public order as a first household decreases with increased levels of poverty. Concretely, employment is the most important need among 50% of the respondents living in hardship compared to only 39% of respondents with a living standard below the poverty line and 34% of the above poverty line respondents. Furthermore, while 24% of the respondents with a monthly household income above the poverty line feel that public order is the most important household need, this is the case for 16% of the below the poverty line respondents and for only 8% of hardship cases. These findings are overviewed in figure 12, below.

**Figure 12: The first most important household need according to poverty level**

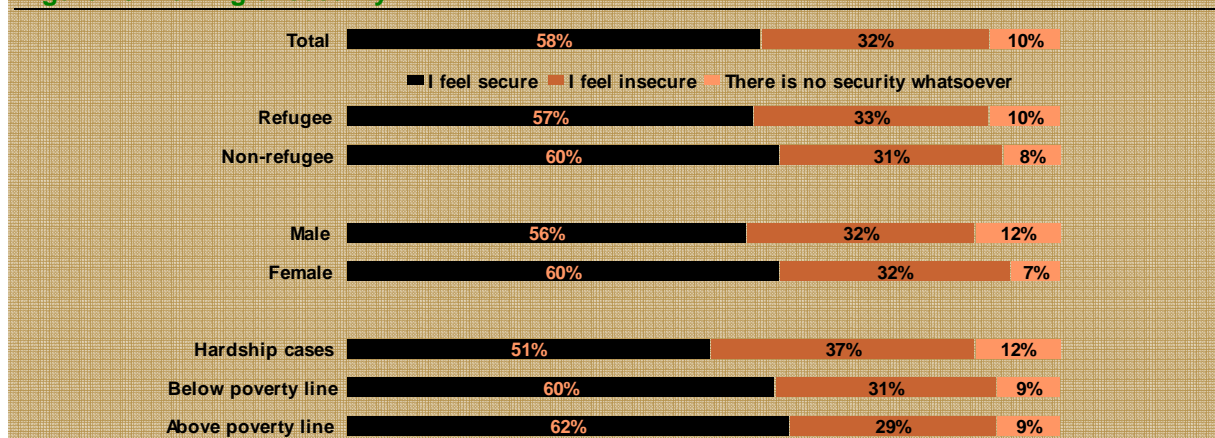


## B. Feeling of security

As public order is such a high need on the priority list of the population in the Gaza Strip, it is pertinent to concretely find out the proportion of the population that feels insecure in the Gaza Strip and the reasons behind this feeling of insecurity.

In general, when interviewees were asked whether or not they feel secure, 58% of the respondents feel secure, 32% feel insecure, while only 10% feel there is no security at all. As overviewed in figure 13, below, the highest feeling of insecurity can be found among refugees, among male respondents, and among the extremely poor segments of society.

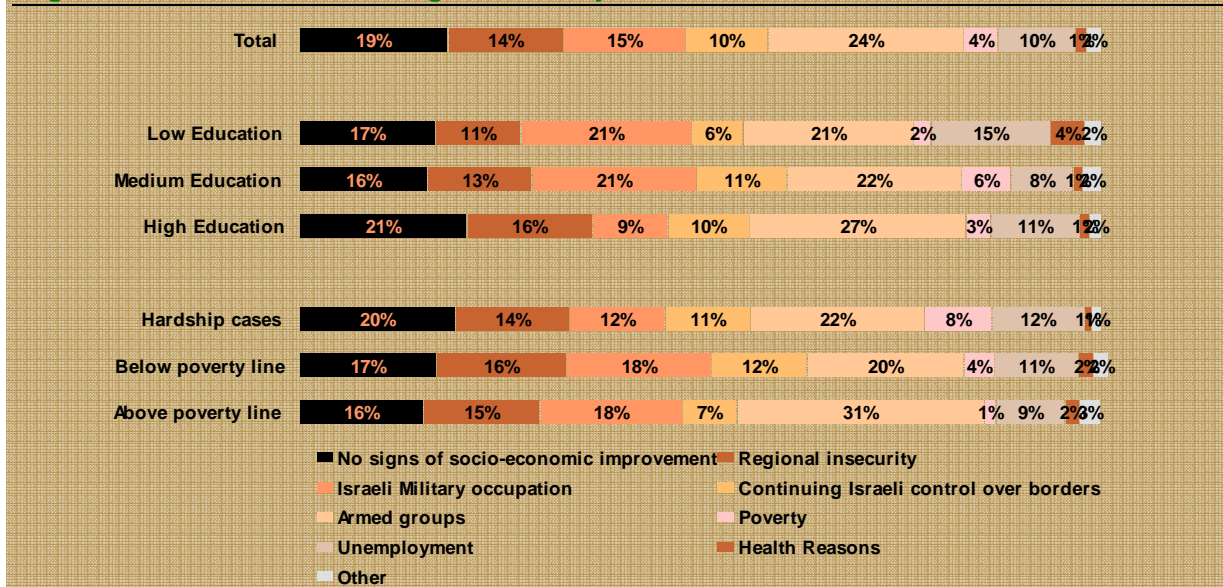
**Figure 13: Feeling of security**



In general, the two most frequently cited reasons behind the feeling of insecurity among respondents are: (1) the armed groups (24%) and (2) the lack of socio-economic improvement. However, the intensity of these reasons behind the feeling of insecurity varies considerably according to the educational and poverty status of the respondents. As illustrated in figure 14, below, the high level educated (27%) and the relatively economically better-off (31%) more so than the medium (22%) and low level (21%) educated and the below poverty line (20%) and hardship cases (22%) blame the armed groups for their feeling of insecurity. As for the lack of socio-economic improvement, it is a reason for feeling insecure for a higher percentage of highly educated (21%) than medium (16%) and low (17%) level educated, and also for a higher percentage of respondents facing hardship (20%) than their compatriots below (17%) and above the poverty line (16%).



**Figure 14: Reason behind feeling of insecurity**

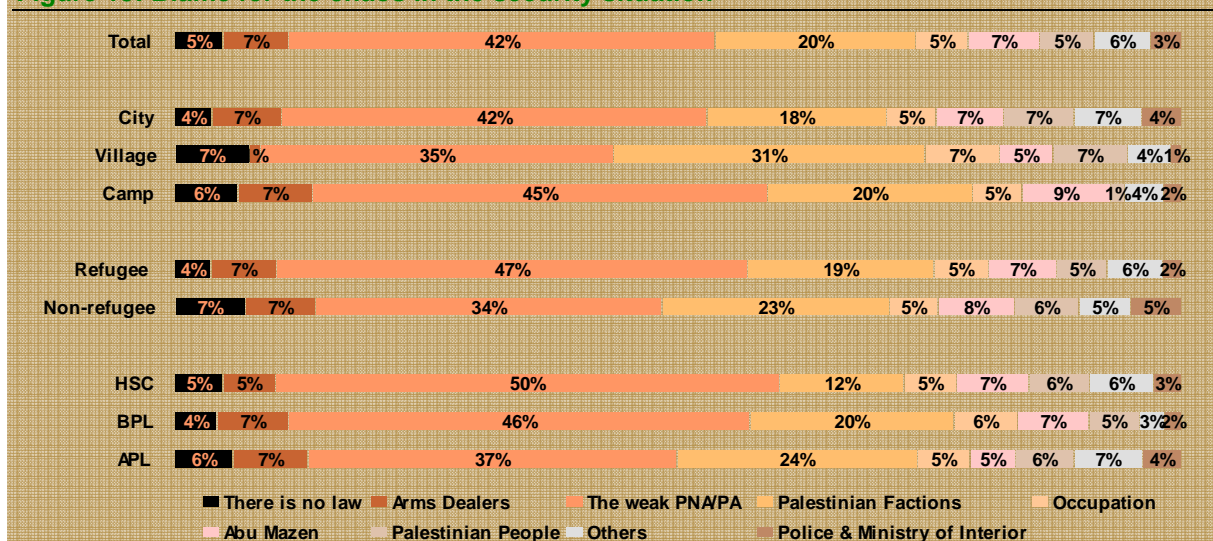


Related to the feeling of insecurity and given the increasing reports on security related incidents in the months following the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, interviewees in the survey were asked who they mainly blame for the chaos in the security situation.

The results clearly indicate that Palestinians in the Gaza Strip put the main blame on a weak Palestinian Authority (42%) and – albeit to a lesser extent – on the Palestinian factions (20%). The prominence of the blame on these two parties for the chaos in the security situation varies significantly according to the place of residence of the respondents, their refugee status and their economic status. As overviewed in figure 15, below, the blame for the chaos in the security situation on a weak PA is strongest in refugee camps (45%), among refugees (47%) and among those from households below the poverty line (46%) and facing hardship (50%). Conversely, those who put least blame on the weak PA for the lack of security, i.e. the villagers, the non-refugees, and the relatively financially better-off, placed more blame on the Palestinian factions for the chaos in the security situation in the Gaza Strip. Lastly, it is worth pointing out that a considerable percentage of respondents across the various demographic segments of society blamed Abu Mazen in person for the chaos in the Gaza Strip, while a remarkably low percentage blamed the police or the Ministry of Interior, who - in principle - should be expected to be responsible for public order.

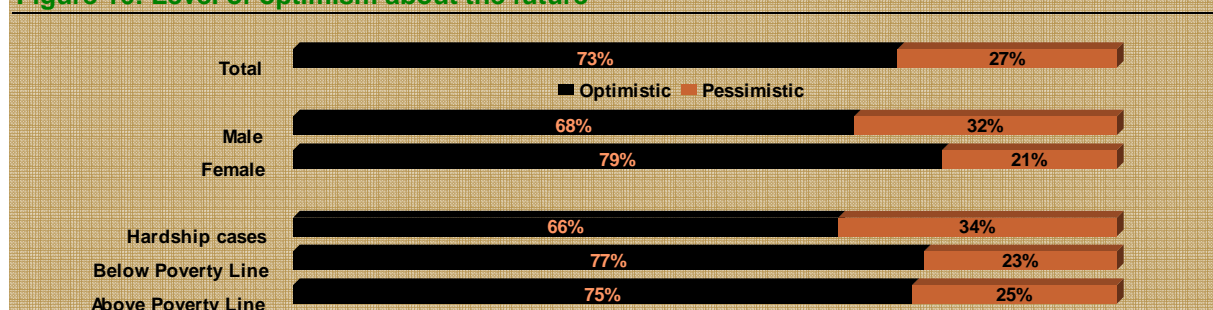


**Figure 15: Blame for the chaos in the security situation**



Despite both the relatively high percentage of Palestinians who feel insecure and the apparent lack of order in the Gaza Strip, a majority of 73% of Palestinians remain optimistic about the future. This level of optimism is more prevalent among women (79%) than among men (68%), while the level of pessimism about the future is highest among the households living in extreme poverty (34%). These results are overviewed in figure 16, below.

**Figure 16: Level of optimism about the future**



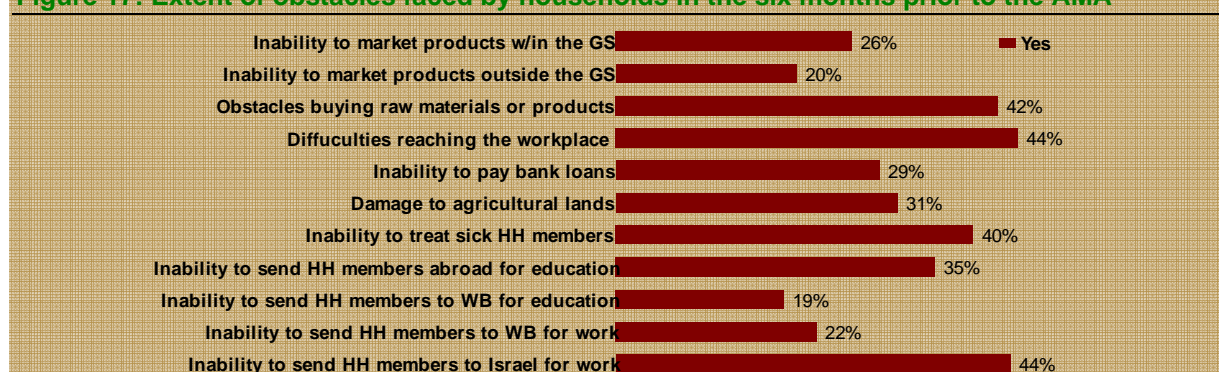
### C. Socio-economic life before the Agreement on Movement and Access

As one of the objectives of the baseline survey conducted for this report was to paint a general picture of life in the Gaza Strip before the Agreement on Movement and Access took effect, the interviewees were asked several questions related to their environment before the AMA, and more specifically about the extent of restrictions or obstacles they used to face as a result of residing in a fenced-off territorial area.

The results in figure 17, below, illustrate that Palestinians in the Gaza Strip before the signing of the AMA faced considerable obstacles in several aspects of their lives whether it concerns their work, education, health, physical environment or financial status. The five most cited obstacles are (1) the inability to send household members to Israel for work (44%), (2) difficulties in reaching the workplace (44%), (3) obstacles in buying raw materials

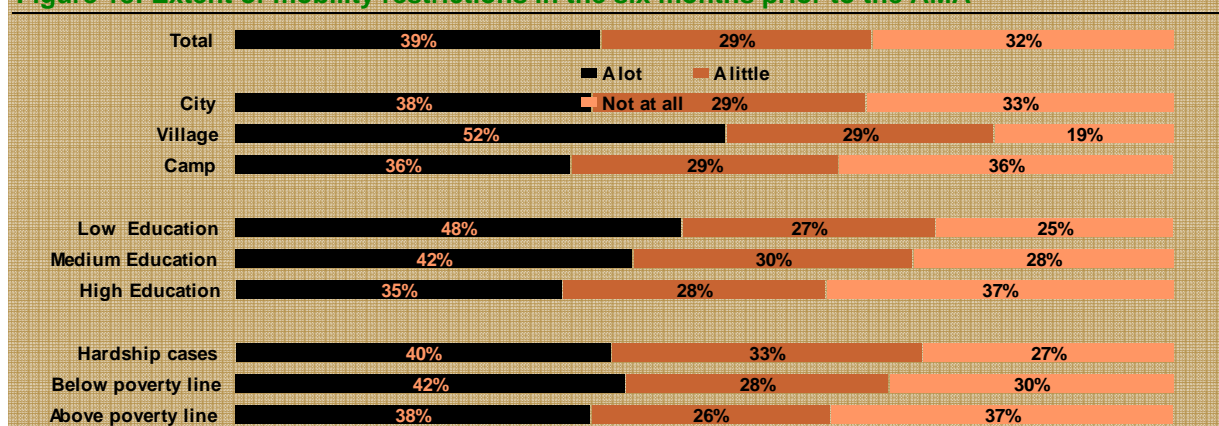
or products (42%), (4) the inability to treat sick household members (40%), and (5) the inability to send household members abroad for education (35%). The remaining six obstacles that were faced before the signing of the AMA are detailed below.

**Figure 17: Extent of obstacles faced by households in the six months prior to the AMA**



Less specifically, when interviewees were asked about the extent of the mobility restrictions faced by them or their household members in the six months *prior to the signing of the AMA*, only 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the sample pointed out that they had not posed them any problems at all, while 29% specified that mobility restrictions had caused them slight problems and 39% affirmed that mobility had caused them a lot of problems. Furthermore, the results detailed in figure 18, below, detail that mobility problems were felt most extremely in the six months prior to the signing of the AMA in refugee camps, among refugees and among the most poor segments of Gazan society.

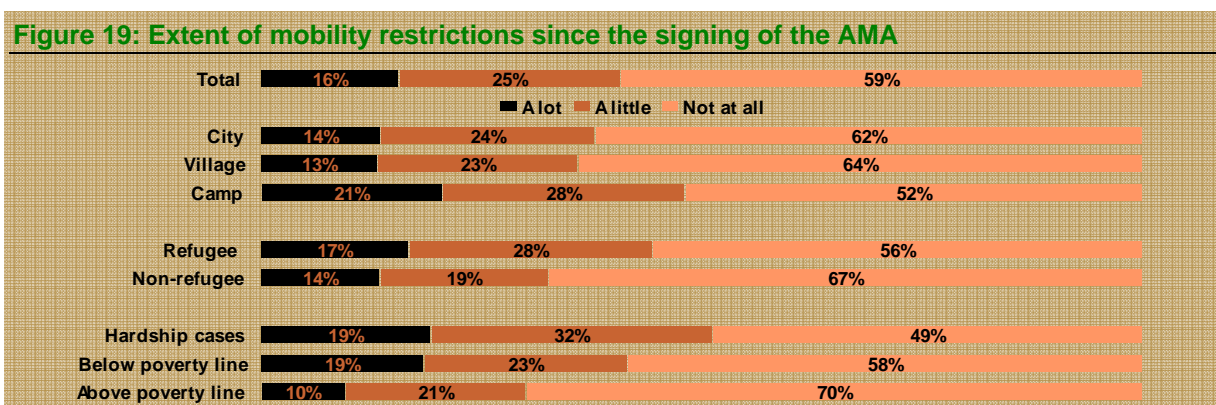
**Figure 18: Extent of mobility restrictions in the six months prior to the AMA**



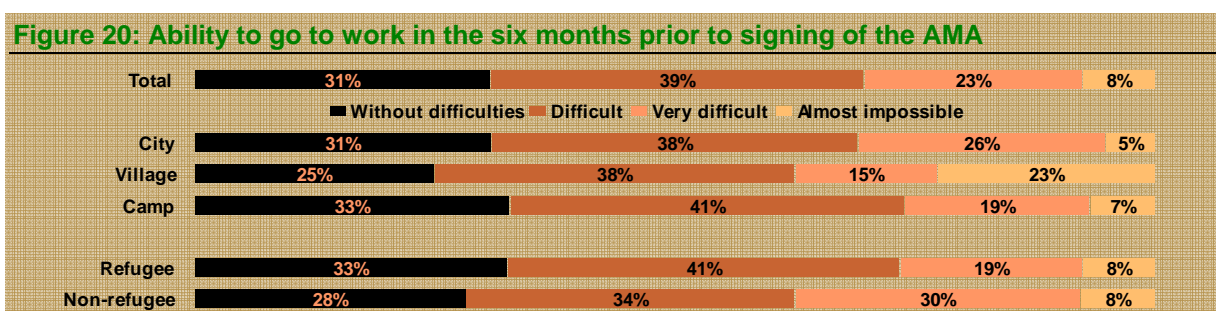
For the purpose of comparison and in order to be able to measure the impact of the AMA as perceived by the population in the Gaza Strip, interviewees were also asked to clarify to what extent they or their household members faced mobility restrictions *since the signing of the AMA*.

The results clearly indicate that since the signing of the AMA, the population in the Gaza Strip perceive mobility restrictions as much less of a problem as a majority of 59% of the sample explained that their households had not been confronted with any mobility restrictions at all since the signing of the AMA. In other words, this points to a perceived

improvement in terms of mobility restrictions of 27% in comparison with the situation before the AMA. Similarly, as was the case with the responses concerning mobility restrictions in the six months prior to the signing of the AMA, camp dwellers, refugees, and the respondents facing hardship continue to perceive mobility restrictions to be most problematic. These results can be seen in figure 19, below.

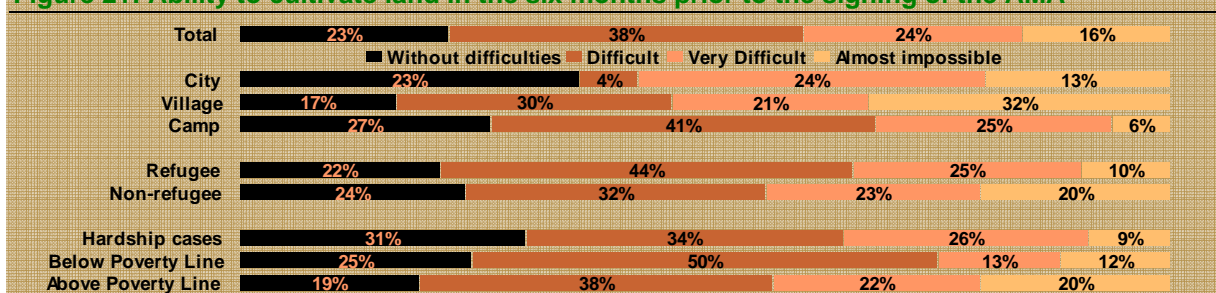


As for the ability to go to work in the six months prior to the signing of the AMA, 39% of the respondents felt that it was difficult to do so, 23% of respondents considered it to be very difficult, and 8% believed that it was almost impossible to go to work in that period of time. The remaining minority of 31% of the respondents specified that they were able to go to work without difficulties. These results are totally in line with the results on mobility restrictions in the six months prior to the AMA, when 32% of the respondents did not feel that mobility restrictions caused them problems. However, concerning the ability to go to work in the six months prior to the signing of the AMA, not the camp dwellers and the refugees, but rather the villagers and the non-refugees appear to have experienced most difficulties in reaching work.



Lastly, concerning the ability to cultivate land in the six months prior to the signing of the AMA, only 23% of the respondents said that they were able to do so without any difficulties. This result implies that cultivating land without difficulties in the six months prior to the agreement was rarer than being able to go to work without difficulty. Again, the results in figure 21, below, illustrate that difficulties in cultivating land in the six months prior to the signing of the AMA was felt most strongly among villagers, non-refugees, and in households with a living standard above the poverty line.

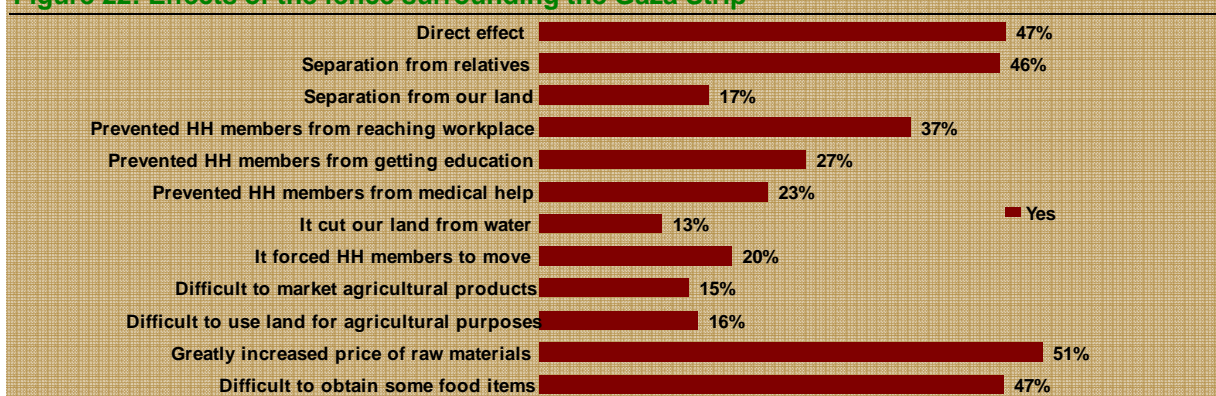
**Figure 21: Ability to cultivate land in the six months prior to the signing of the AMA**



With attention often focused on the construction of the Separation Wall in the West Bank, the fence surrounding the Gaza Strip and its negative impact on the lives of its residents is often overlooked. Nevertheless, the findings of the baseline survey indicate that it is hard to overestimate the adverse socio-economic implications of the fence surrounding the Gaza Strip.

When selecting the five most frequently cited negative effects of the fence out of the 12 potential negative implications that were presented to the respondents in a predetermined list, one can observe that (1) 51% of the respondents believe that the fence greatly increased the price of raw materials, (2) 47% felt the direct impact of the fence, (3) 47% felt that it was more difficult to obtain certain food items as a result of the fence, (4) 46% were separated from their relatives as a result of the fence, while (5) 37% stated that household members were prevented from reaching the place of work as a result of the fence surrounding the Gaza Strip. The remainder of the negative effects of the fence surrounding the Gaza Strip are listed in figure 22, below. These findings not only highlight the negative impact of the fence surrounding the Gaza Strip, but also underline the potential positive implications on the socio-economic and humanitarian conditions in that territorial fenced-off entity through the signing of the AMA and its essential proper implementation, if these adverse effects are to be cushioned.

**Figure 22: Effects of the fence surrounding the Gaza Strip**





## V. The Socio-Economic Situation

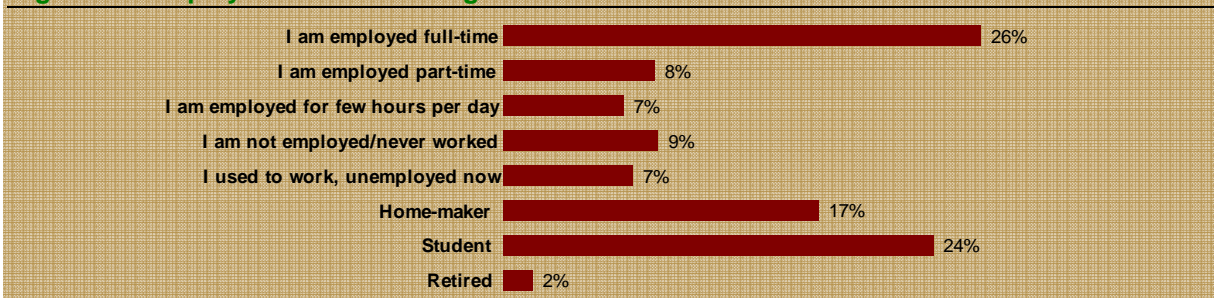
This section will mainly be concerned with the employment situation and the status of the household income in the Gaza Strip.

### A. The employment situation

The employment situation will be looked at in two basic ways: (1) by including the whole sample, and (2) by concentrating on the labour force.

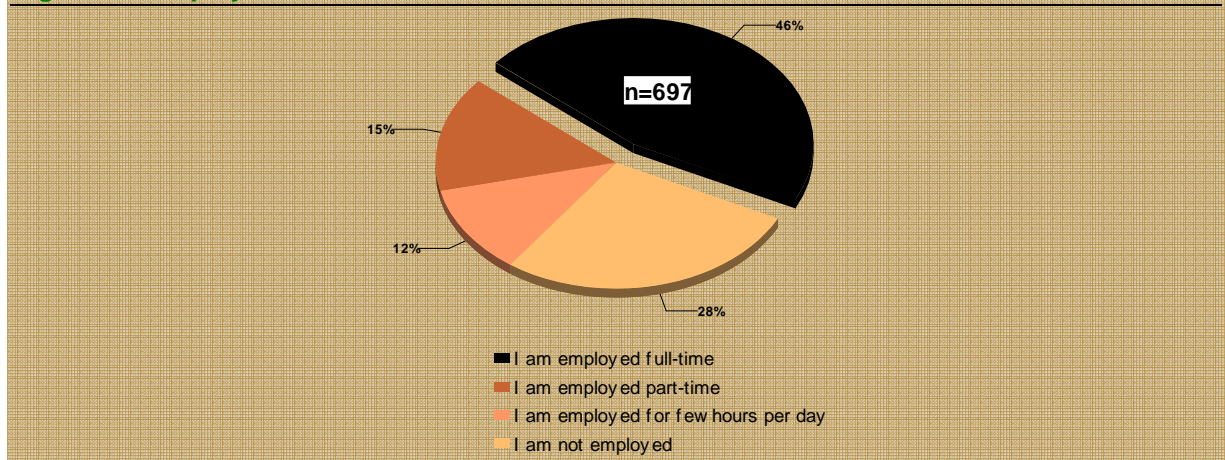
As overviewed in figure 23, below, 34% of the sample is employed at least part-time, with 26% in full-time employment and 8% in part-time employment. Another 7% of the respondents explained that they were only employed for a few hours a day. As for the unemployed, 9% have never worked, while 7% used to work, but are unemployed nowadays. The remainder of the respondents consists of 17% homemakers, 24% students, and 2% retired.

**Figure 23: Employment situation in general**



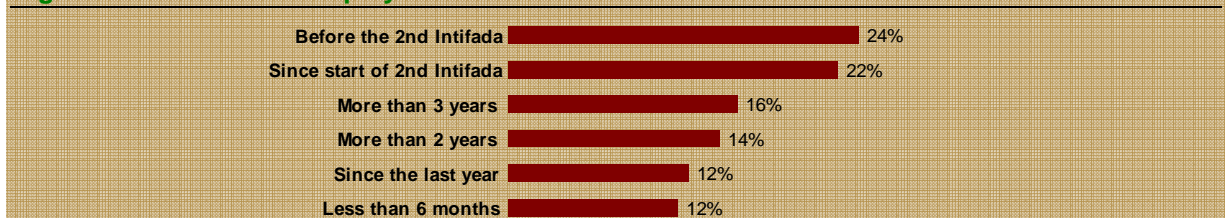
By excluding the homemakers, the students and the retired from the analysis, it is possible to see the dimensions of employment and unemployment of those in the sample of the survey who are part of the labour force. As illustrated in figure 24, below, at the time of the baseline survey, 46% of the respondents were employed full-time, 15% were employed part-time, 12% were employed for a few hours per day, while 28% were unemployed.

**Figure 24: Employment situation of the labour force**



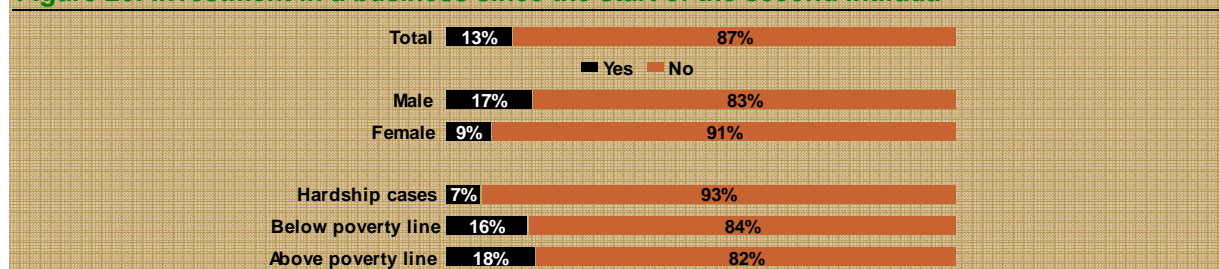
The respondents who stated that they were unemployed, were asked to specify the longitude of their unemployment. The results in figure 25, below, indicate that a considerable percentage of the unemployed have been in this situation for quite a long time as 24% were without a job since before the second Intifada, 22% were unemployed since the start of the second Intifada, 16% were jobless for over three years, and 14% were out of a job for at least two years. Only 12% of the respondents were unemployed since last year and another 12% became unemployed only six months ago.

**Figure 25: Period of unemployment**



Given the adverse environment that was characterized by conflict, instability and increasing poverty, one cannot expect a high percentage of Palestinians who would be inclined to invest in business, especially since the outbreak of the second Intifada. Still, in general, 13% of the respondents confirmed that they had invested in a business since the second Intifada started. As detailed in figure 26, below, a larger percentage of male (17%) than female (9%) respondents invested in a business since the second Intifada, while – expectedly – the smallest percentage of respondents who invested in a business are those facing extreme poverty (7%).

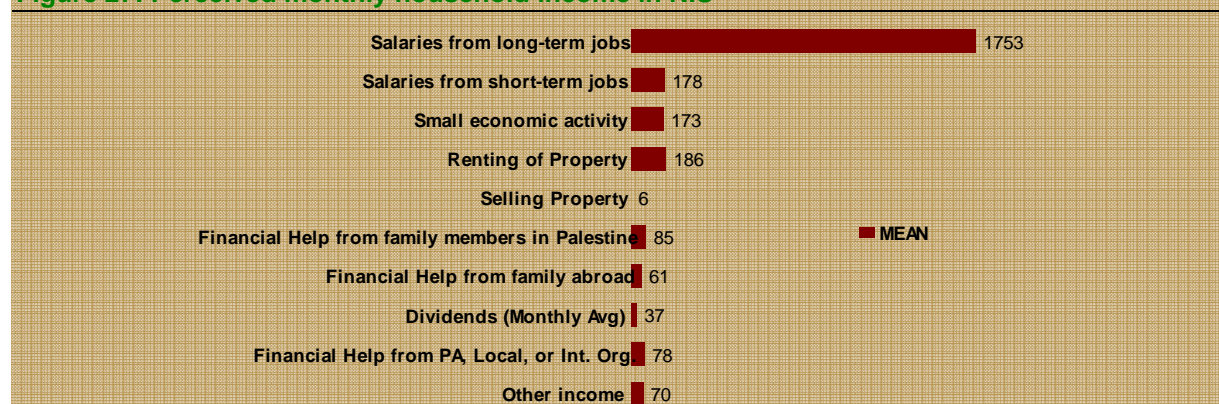
**Figure 26: Investment in a business since the start of the second Intifada**



## B. The household income

As was already established in the section on demographics in this report, 39% of the interviewees in the baseline survey enjoy a living standard above the poverty line, while 61% belong to households where the average monthly income falls below the poverty line. In addition, of those below the poverty line, 33% are extremely poor. Also, when interviewees were asked to construct their household income in New Israeli Shekels (NIS) according to different items, the average household income based on what was reported by the respondents reached NIS 2,627. As overviewed in figure 27, below, the bulk of the household income is gathered from salaries earned in long-term jobs.

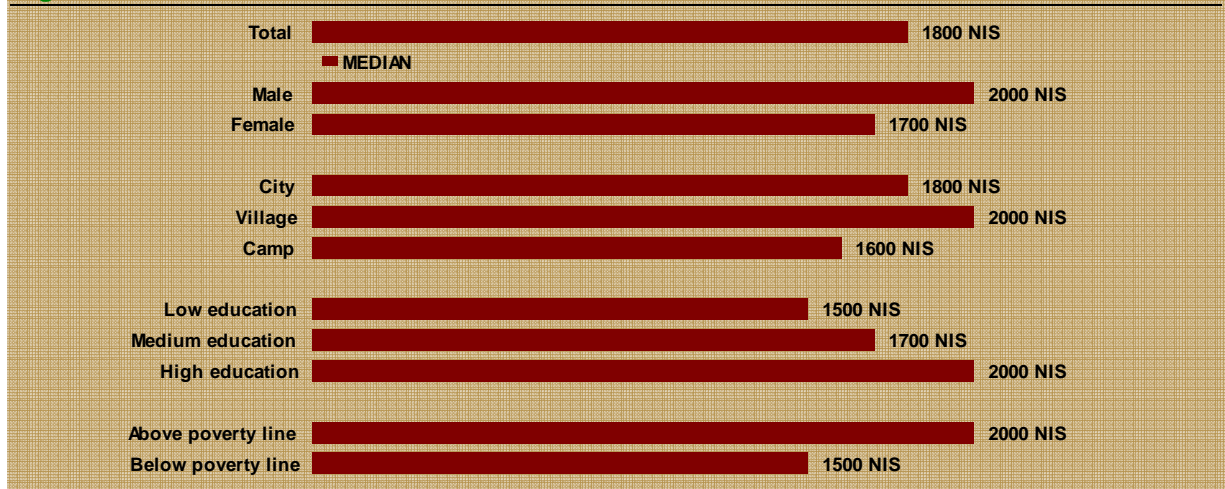
**Figure 27: Perceived monthly household income in NIS**



Given the obvious reality of poverty in the Gaza Strip, interviewees were queried on how much money in NIS they personally believe their households need to be able to meet basic life necessities. As illustrated in figure 28, below, in general, respondents feel that their household needs NIS 1,800 to meet basic necessities. When analyzing this issue according various independent variables, it is clear that the perceived income needed in households to make ends meet is higher among male (NIS 2,000) than female respondents (NIS 1,700), higher in villages (NIS 2,000) than in cities (NIS 1,800) and camps (NIS 1,600), higher among the high level educated (NIS 2,000) than among the medium (NIS 1,700) and low level (NIS 1,500) educated, and higher among those with a living standard above the poverty line (NIS 2,000) than among those that fall below the poverty line (NIS 1,500).



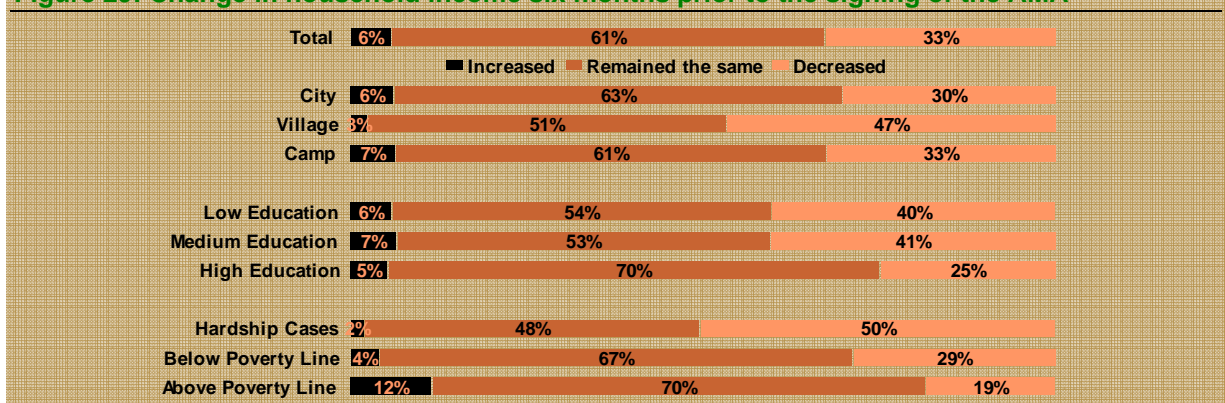
**Figure 28: Perceived household income needed to meet basic life necessities**



In an attempt to view a very basic trend in household income and, indirectly in poverty in the Gaza Strip, interviewees were asked about their household's positive or negative income evolution in the six months prior to the signing of the AMA.

In general, a majority of 61% of the respondents declared that their household income had remained the same in the six months prior to the signing of the AMA, 33% reported a decrease in household income, while a mere 6% reported an increase in the household income during that period of time. However, in the six months prior to the signing of the AMA, household income decreased more among certain subgroups of the population than among others. As detailed in figure 29, below, the highest percentages of a reported decrease in household income can be found in villages (47%), among the low (40%) and medium (41%) level educated, and among those facing hardship (50%).

**Figure 29: Change in household income six months prior to the signing of the AMA**

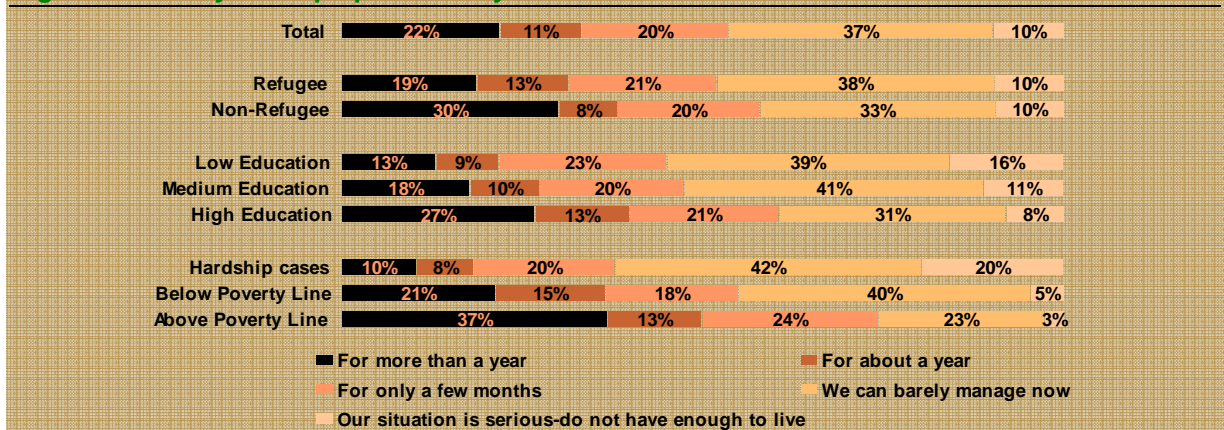


Moving away from the past in terms of household income evolution to the future, a question was included to gauge the households' ability to keep up financially in the future. In general, the results paint a rather bleak picture as the large majority of respondents admit that they cannot even keep up financially for one year. More specifically, 10% of the respondents do already not have enough to live on, while 37% can barely manage now. In addition, 20% can only keep up financially for another few months, while 11% that they could do so for about



one year. A mere 22% of the respondents confirmed that they could financially keep up for more than one year. Naturally, some subgroups of society are financially more vulnerable than others. As portrayed in figure 30, below, these financially most vulnerable groups in the Gaza Strip are the refugees, the low level educated, and the already extremely poor.

**Figure 30: Ability to keep up financially in the future**





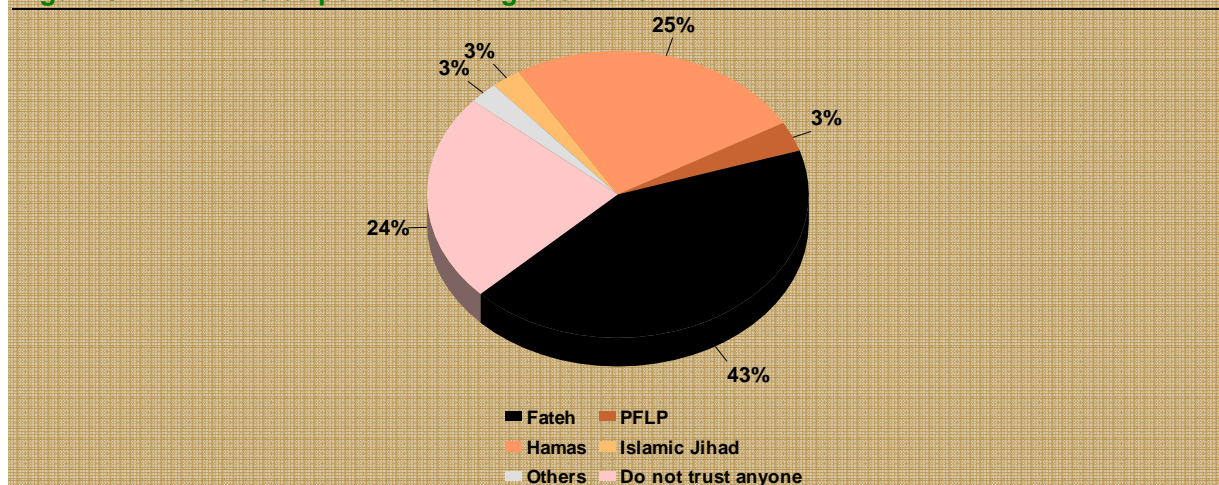
## VI. The Political Situation

When providing a baseline report on the Gaza Strip, it is hard to imagine not touching on the political mood as the current setting in the Gaza Strip emanates from politics, while the future outlook of the Gaza Strip will in a large part be determined by its political environment. As such, various aspects of the political environment will be briefly discussed in this section.

### A. Factional trust

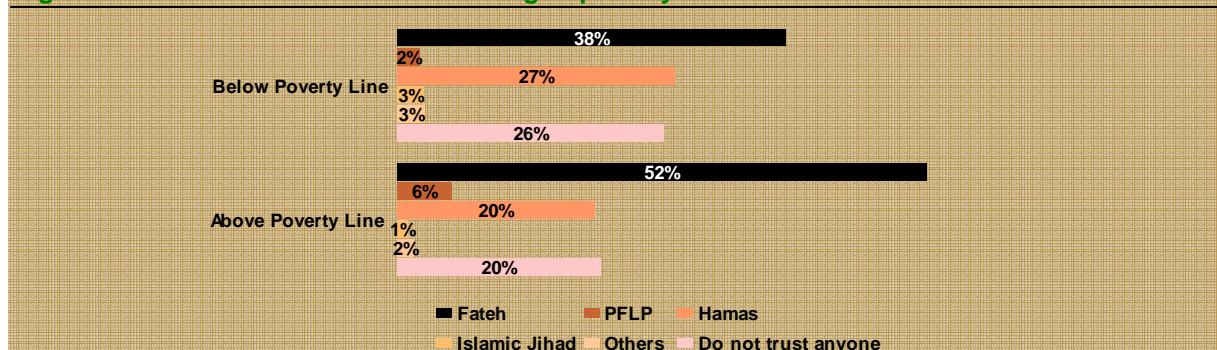
At the time of the fieldwork for the baseline survey, Fateh remained the most trusted faction (43%). However, and as was shown by many opinion polls conducted by various polling institutions in the oPt, Hamas is becoming a growing force with 25% of the respondents trusting this faction. A rather large part of the population, 24%, is clearly disillusioned with all the existing factions and simply do not trust any of them. Of the general sample, respectively 3% trust PFLP, Islamic Jihad, and other factions.

**Figure 31: Most trusted political or religious faction**



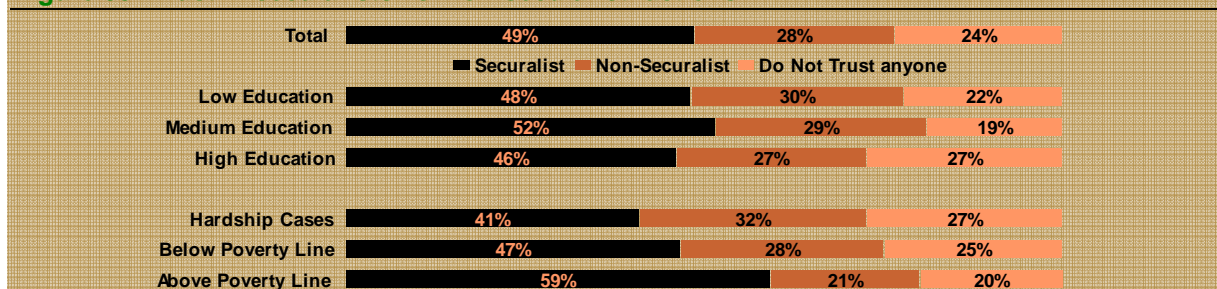
Factional trust varies significantly according to poverty level. As detailed in figure 32, below, trust in Fateh is far stronger among respondents with a living standard above the poverty line (52%) than among those below the poverty line. This is also the case for trust in the PFLP. To the contrary, however, trust in Hamas is more outspoken among respondents with a monthly household income below the poverty line (27%) than among those who are financially better off (20%). Similarly, the lack of trust in any of the factions is most pronounced among respondents with a living standard below the poverty line.

**Figure 32: Most trusted faction according to poverty level**



When simplifying the pie of factional trust along the lines of secularists versus non-secularists, 49% of the respondents trust secularist factions, 28% trust non-secularist factions, while 24% do not trust anyone. Those who do not trust any faction can be found most among the highly educated (27%) and the extremely poor (27%). Support for non-secularist factions is highest among the low (30%) and medium (29%) level educated, and among the extremely poor. Lastly, support for secularist factions is highest among the medium educated (52%) and those who are financially better off (59%). These findings are overviewed in figure 33, below.

**Figure 33: Trust in secularists vs. non-secularist factions**



## B. Trust in leadership

When queried about trust in leadership, Mohammad Dahlan is the most trusted leader in the Gaza Strip with 13%. Furthermore, both Mahmoud Al-Zahhar (6%) and Marwan Barghouti (6%) are slightly more trusted than Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas (5%). Ismail Hannieh enjoys the same level of trust as Mahmoud Abbas. The results in the table, below, indicate that, again, a large part of the respondents, 22%, do not trust any political or religious leader. Finally, although Yasser Arafat died over a year ago, a number of people continued to refer to him as the most trusted leader

**Table 1: Trust in political or religious leaders**

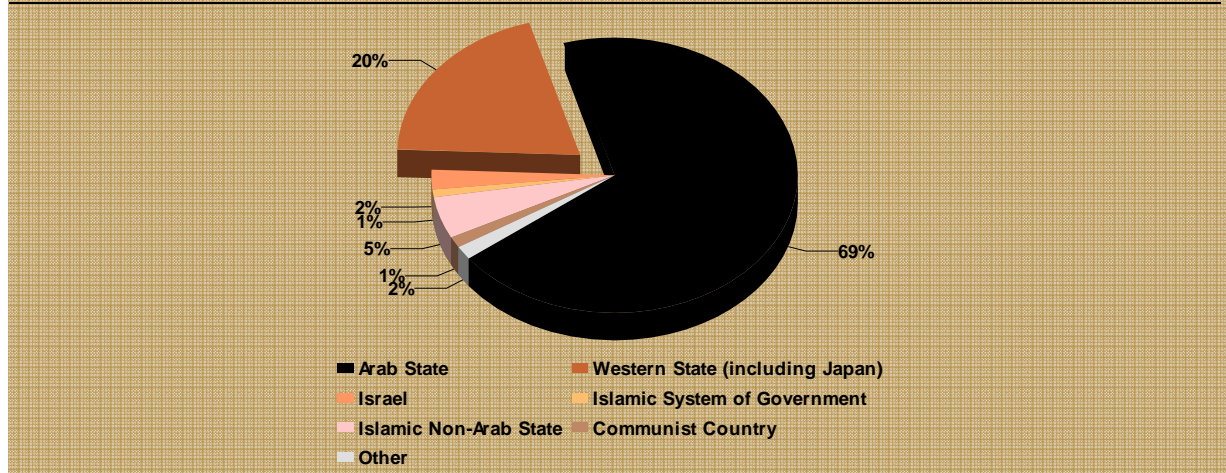
Trust in political or religious leaders		
	Frequency	Percent
Mahmoud Abbas	61	5%
Mahmoud Al-Zahhar	71	6%
Marwan Barghouti	71	6%
Ismail Hannieh	59	5%
Mohammad Dahlan	163	13%
Yasser Arafat	20	2%
Ahmad Saadat	14	1%
Mustapha Barghouti	17	1%
Nizar Rayyan	15	1%
Khaled Mashaal	19	2%
Ghassan Shakaa	25	2%
Other leaders	436	35%
Do not trust any leader	276	22%
Total	1248	100%

### C. Palestinian expectations about their future political system

In order to be able to form a clearer idea of what type of political system Palestinians aspire once an independent Palestinian state is established, interviewees were asked what country they would like the future Palestinian state to be modelled after. The long lists of states that resulted from the respondents' answers were then classified into seven categories: (1) Arab states, (2) Western states, (3) Israel, (4) Islamic system of government, (5) Islamic non-Arab state, (6) communist countries, and (7) others.

The results in figure 34, below, show that a majority of 69% of the respondents would like a future Palestinian state to be modelled after an Arab state, while 1/5<sup>th</sup> would like to see Palestine emerging as a Western state. A mere 5% of the respondents would like their future political system to be like Islamic non-Arab states, while only 1% would like a future Palestine to emulate an Islamic system of government. To some extent, these results suggest that the Palestinian population up-to-date does not have such extreme views on their future political system as put forward by some, despite an increase in trust in religious factions such as Hamas.

**Figure 34: Country you would like the future Palestinian state to be modeled after**

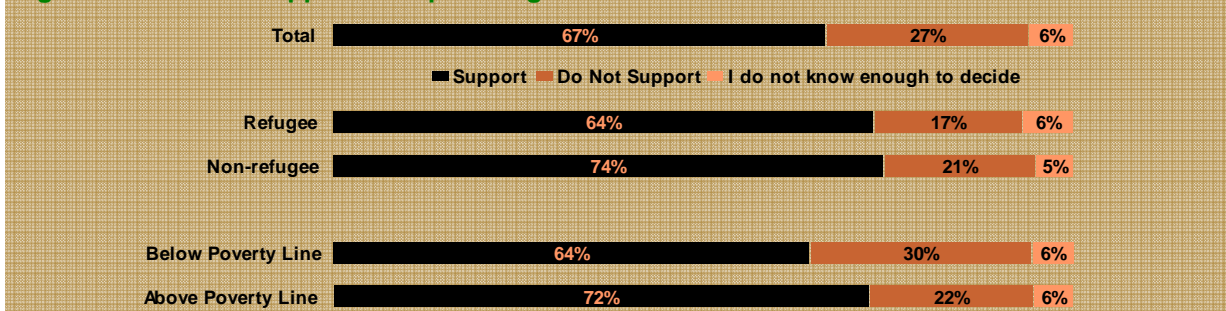


#### D. Support for peace agreement

Equally important in terms of being able to create a clearer picture of what the future has in store, is the knowledge of the extent to which Palestinians support a peace agreement with Israel.

In general, a majority of 67% of the respondents support a peace agreement with Israel, 27% oppose it, while 6% do not know enough about it to decide. As shown in figure 33, below, support for a peace agreement is clearly higher among non-refugees (74%) and those who are financially better off (72%) than among refugees (64%) and those who have a living standard below the poverty line (64%).

**Figure 35: Level of support for a peace agreement with Israel**



Not surprisingly, support for a peace agreement with Israel varies significantly according to the political or religious faction Palestinians trust most. As indicated in table 2, below, support for a peace agreement with Israel is the highest among those who trust Fateh (83%), while it is the lowest among those who trust Hamas the most (48%).

**Table 2: Level of support for a peace agreement according to most trusted faction**

Level of support for a peace agreement according to the most trusted faction					
	Fateh	PFLP	Hamas	Islamic Jihad	Don't trust anyone
Support peace agreement	83%	67%	48%	56%	64%
Oppose peace agreement	14%	33%	47%	44%	27%
Do not know enough to decide	4%	0%	5%	0%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

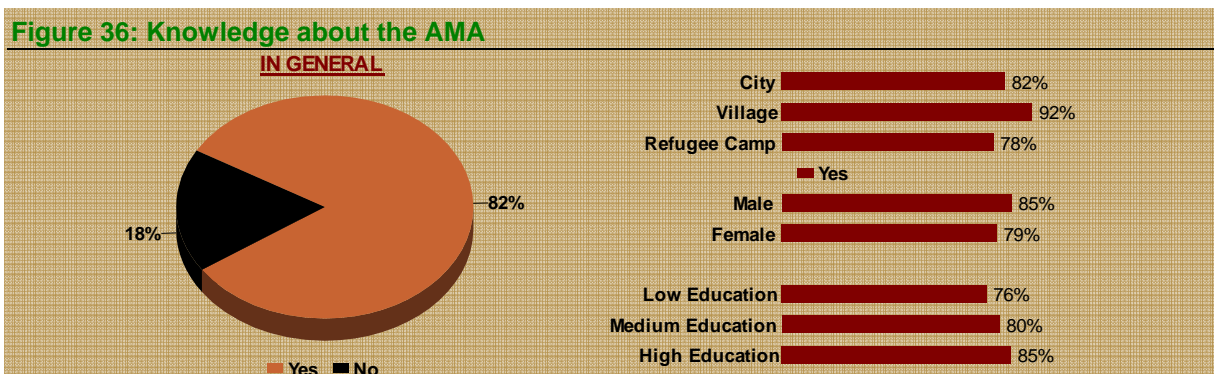


## VII. The Agreement on Movement & Access

Having described and analysed the general conditions in the Gaza Strip in their various facets that are relevant in terms of the Agreement on Movement and Access at a time when some of its aspects are becoming operational, this section will specifically focus on the AMA itself in terms of people's knowledge about the AMA and people's expectations from it.

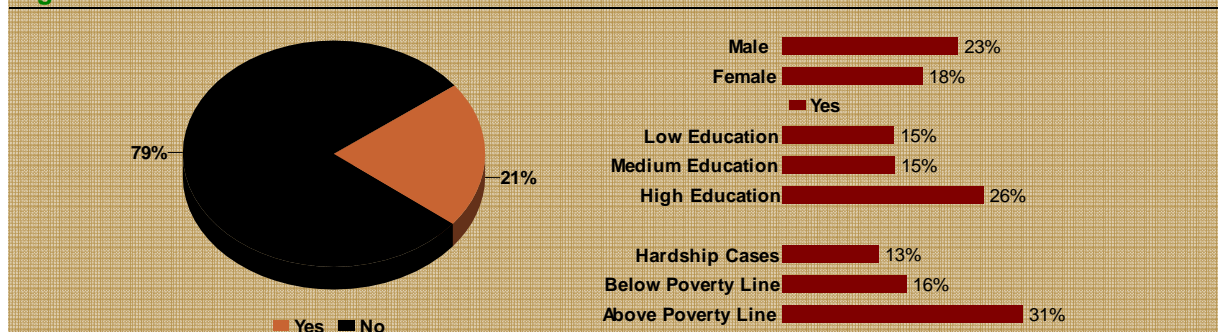
### A. Knowledge about the Agreement

In general, a large majority of 82% of respondents know about the AMA. The knowledge about the AMA varies significantly according to various independent variables at hand. More specifically, the results indicate that a higher percentage of males (85%) than females (79%) have heard about the agreement. Moreover, a higher percentage of the highly educated (85%) than the medium (80%) and low (76%) level educated know about the existence of the AMA. These results are portrayed in figure 36, below.



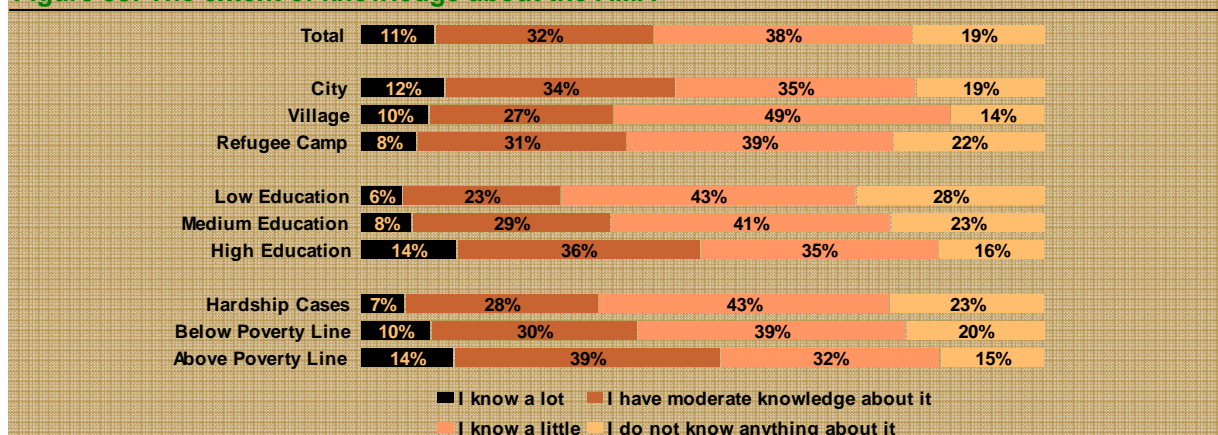
In order to find out if people's knowledge about the AMA goes beyond them having heard about its existence, interviewees were asked whether or not they read the AMA. A rather high percentage of 79% of the respondents confirmed that they read the AMA. Once again there are clear differences in the results on this question according to gender, the educational level of the respondents, and their poverty level. As overviewed in figure 37, below, the highest percentages of respondents who actually read the AMA can be found among men (23%), the highly educated (26%), and those with a living standard above the poverty line (31%).

**Figure 37: Read the AMA**



As for the extent of knowledge people say they have about the AMA, 11% of the respondents specified that they know a lot about it, 32% have moderate knowledge of the agreement, 38% know a little about it and 19% do not know anything at all about the AMA. As detailed in figure 38, below, those who possess least knowledge about the agreement can be found in refugee camps, among the low level educated, and the extremely poor.

**Figure 38: The extent of knowledge about the AMA**

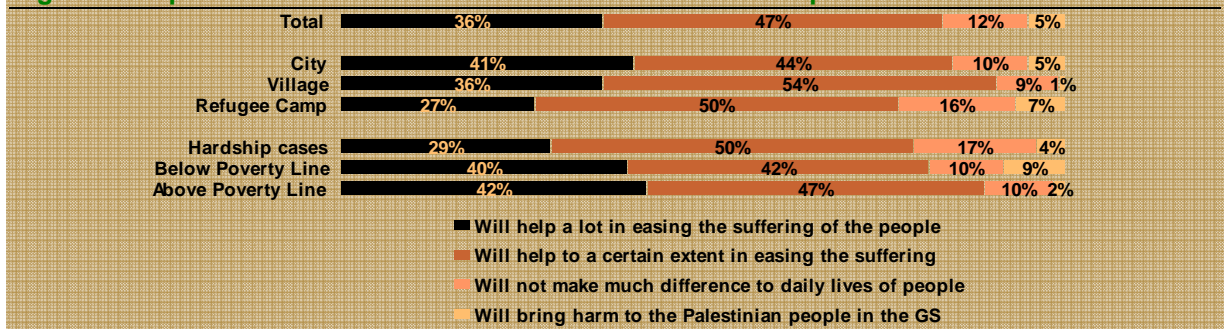


## B. Expectations about the Agreement

Generally, a majority of the respondents believe that the AMA will help to ease the suffering of the people either a lot (36%) or to a certain extent (47%). About 12% of the sample does not think that the AMA will make much difference to the daily lives of people, while 5% believe that the AMA will harm the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. As overviewed in figure 39, below, scepticism about the AMA helping to ease the suffering of the people is highest in refugee camps and among the extremely poor.

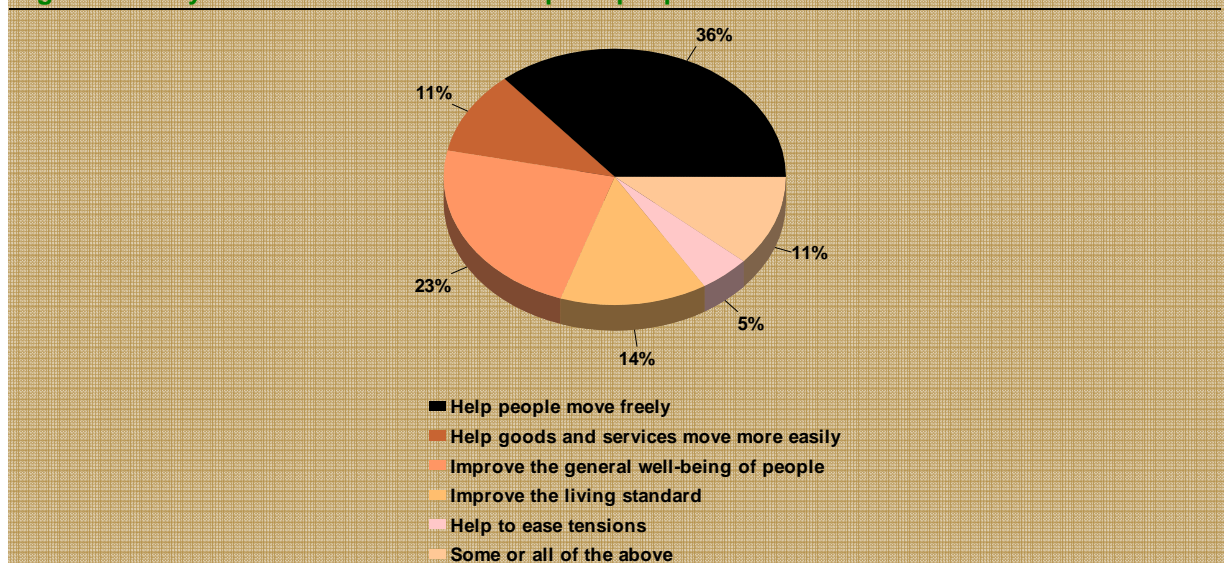


**Figure 39: Opinions about the extent to which the AMA can help**



When interviewees were asked from a predetermined list to specify what would be the most important way in which the AMA could help, 36% of respondents said that it will help people move more freely, 23% believe the Agreement will improve the general well-being of people, 14% of respondents think that it will improve the living standard, 11% believe it will help goods and services move more easily, while 5% believe that it will help ease tensions. The remaining 11% of the respondents feel that the Agreement might help with some or all the listed ways that are part of the pie, below.

**Figure 40: Ways in which the AMA will help the people**

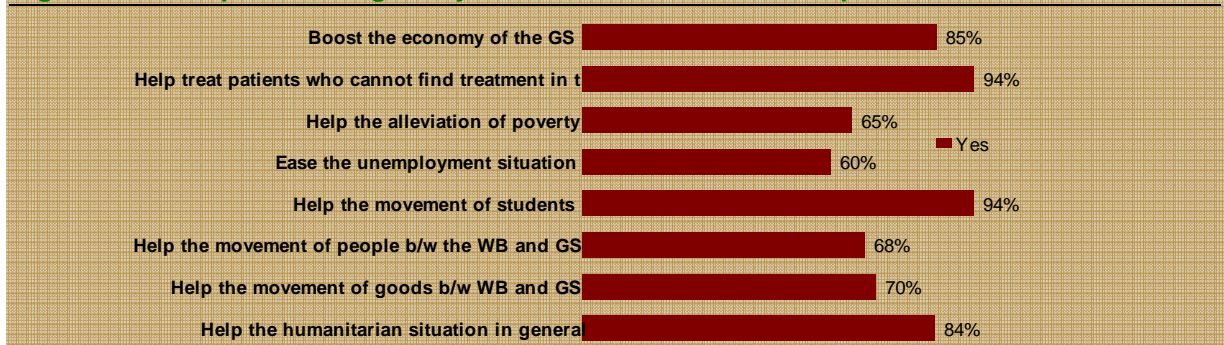


When interviewees were further asked about a list of eight ways in which the AMA could help people, the replies of the respondents were very positive, implying that their expectations of what the AMA could bring that are very high.

As listed in figure 41, below, respectively 94% said that they expect the AMA to help treat patients that cannot be treated in the Gaza Strip and that the AMA will help in the movement of students. Furthermore, 85% believe that they AMA will boost the economy of the Gaza Strip, 84% said that it will help the humanitarian situation in general, while 70% believe that the AMA will the movement of goods between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Respondents were slightly less positive about the movement of people between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip improving (68%) as a result of the AMA. In addition, a slightly lower

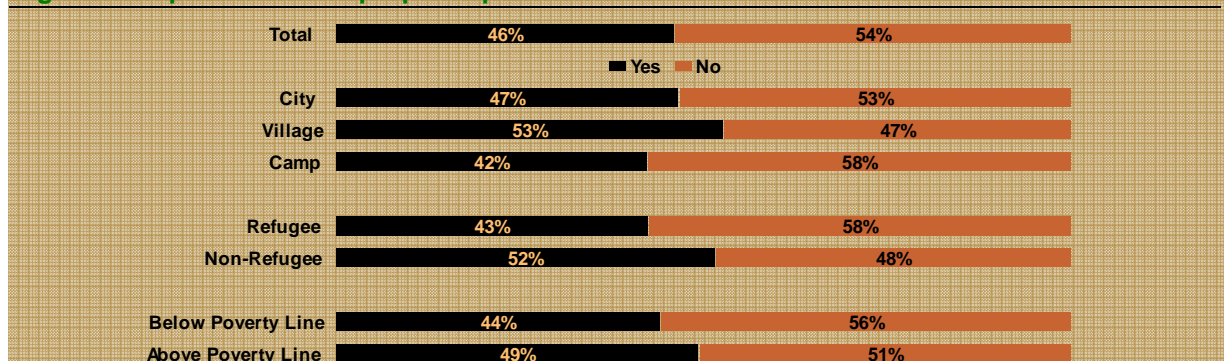
percentage of respondents believe that the AMA will help in alleviating poverty (65%) or that it will ease the unemployment situation (60%) in the Gaza Strip.

**Figure 41: Perceptions on eight ways in which the AMA could help**



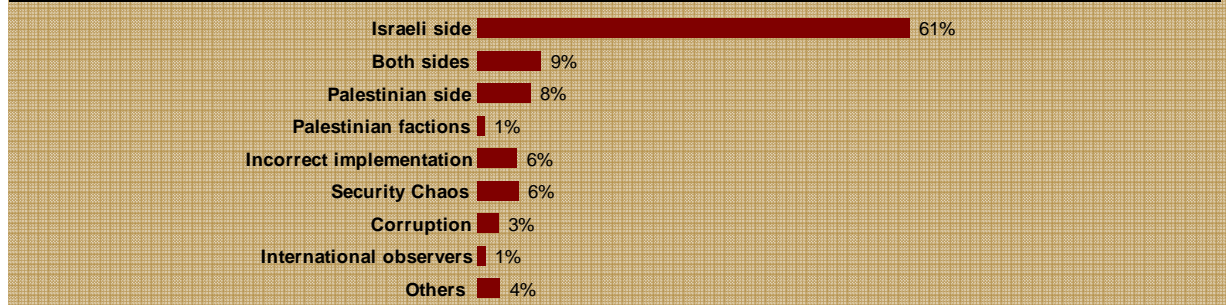
Despite the high expectations about the ways in which the AMA could help, there is also a considerable amount of doubt that the AMA will be implemented properly. In general, less than half of the respondents (46%) believe that the AMA will be implemented properly. These negative expectations are most pronounced in refugee camps (42%), among refugees (43%), and among respondents with a monthly household income that is below the poverty line (44%). These findings are overviewed in figure 42, below.

**Figure 42: Opinions on the proper implementation of the AMA**



Those who declared that they do not believe that the AMA will be implemented properly were asked to specify why they held such a belief. As shown in figure 43, below, a large majority of 61% of the respondents believe that the AMA will not be implemented properly as a result of the Israeli side. In a far second place, are 9% of the respondents who feel that the AMA will not be implemented properly as a result of both the Palestinian and Israeli sides. while 8% fear an improper implementation as a result of the Palestinian side.

**Figure 43: Reasons behind the belief of improper implementation of the AMA**





## VIII. The Rafah Crossing

The intention of this section is to gauge people's initial opinions about the first month of operations at the Rafah crossing. Naturally, the tracking period is very short and the number of Palestinians having used the crossing either to travel to Egypt or to enter the Gaza Strip is still small. However, the results of the baseline provide an initial picture and evaluation of some facets of the Rafah crossing.

Before discussing the findings of the baseline survey on people's perceptions on the Rafah crossing, it was thought useful to briefly provide an overview in the table below, about the actual working hours per day, the number of days that the crossing was opened, the numbers of travellers in and out of Rafah, and the number of security incidents that occurred during that initial period. In short, the table illustrates that in the first six weeks of the opening of the border crossing, operations seem to have ran smoothly, with a gradual increase in opening times of the crossing, no days on which the crossing was closed, a gradual increase in travellers both in and out of Rafah, and three security incidents.

**Table 3: Facts on the Rafah crossing, 26 November 2005 – 6 January 2006**

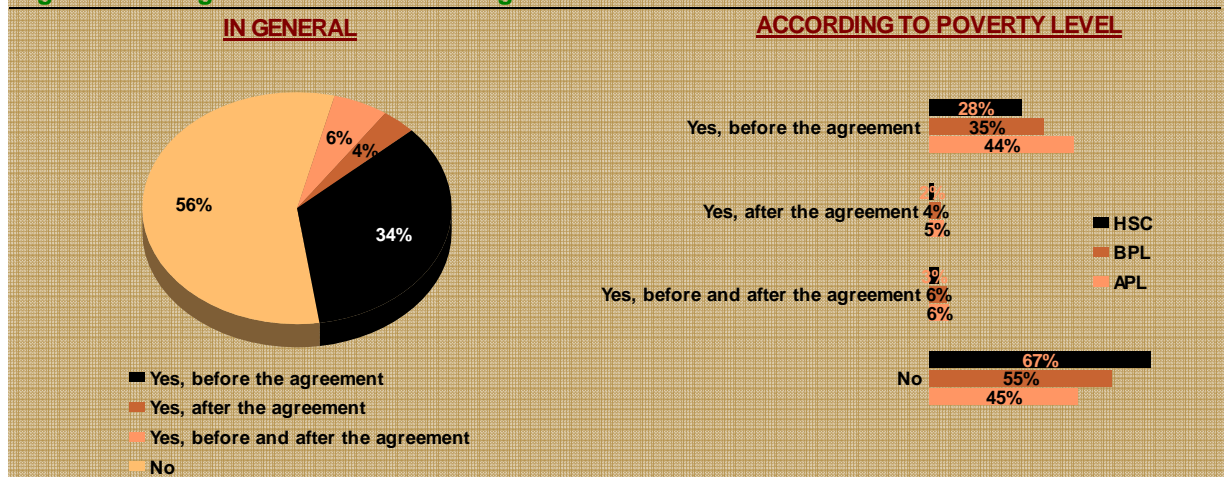
		The Rafah Crossing		
		26Nov.'05 – 9Dec.'05	10Dec.'05– 3Dec.'05	24Dec.'05-6Jan.'06
		<i>WORKING HOURS PER DAY</i>		
❖ Actual		5	7	10
❖ Scheduled		5	7	10
		<i>DAYS OPENED</i>		
❖ Actual		14	14	14
❖ Scheduled		14	14	14
		<i>AVERAGE OF NUMBER OF TRAVELLERS DAILY</i>		
❖ Into Rafah		446	586	606
❖ Out of Rafah		609	640	720
		<i>SECURITY INCIDENTS</i>		
		0	0	3

### A. Past usage of the crossing

In order to be able to gather some useful perceptions about the Rafah crossing and about travellers' experiences on the crossing, it is necessary to first establish how many respondents in the sample have used the Rafah crossing. As the results in the figure, below, show, 56% of the total sample never used the Rafah crossing, 34% have used the Rafah crossing only before the agreement, while 6% have used the crossing both before and after the agreement, and 4% have used it after the agreement. The results of the survey on the usage of the Rafah crossing further indicate that whether before or after the agreement, a

higher percentage of the relatively better off than those below the poverty line and the hardship cases have used the crossing.

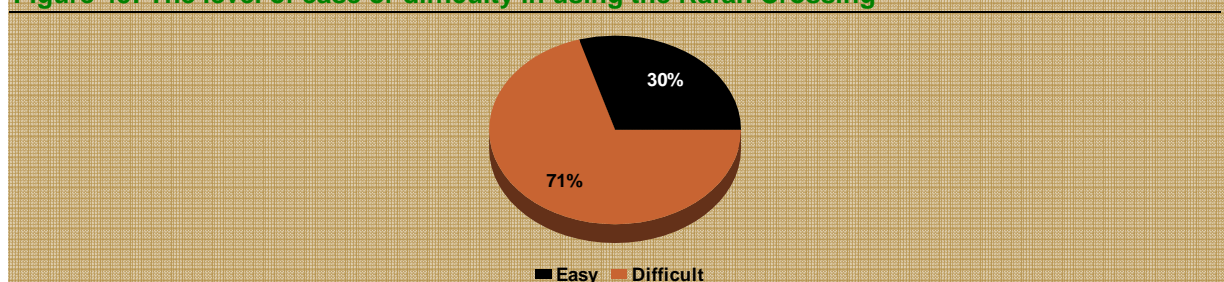
**Figure 44: Usage of the Rafah Crossing**



Those who in the past had used the Rafah crossing were asked to specify the level of ease or difficulty in using the crossing. As the results in the adjacent figure indicate, the vast majority of about 70% described the crossing through Rafah as being difficult.

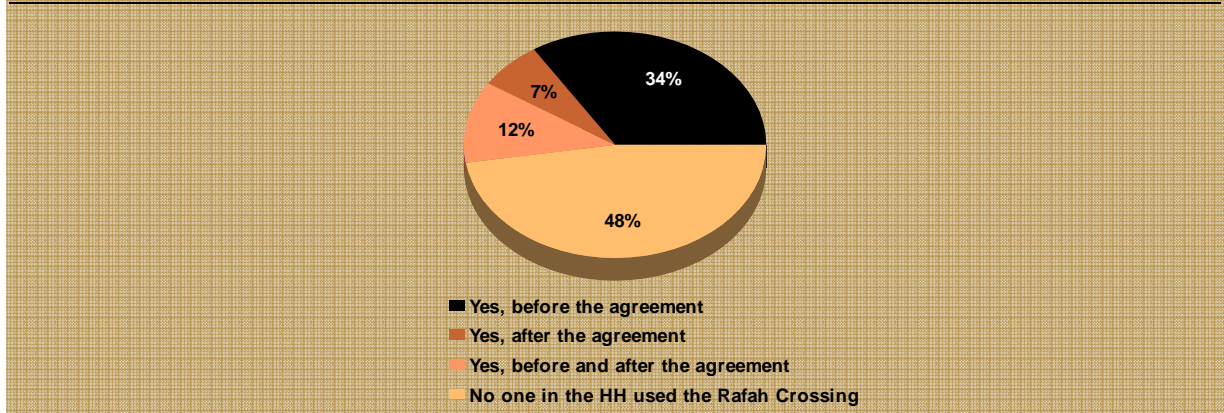
For the purpose of clarity, it is worth pointing out here that this question was answered both by respondents who used the Rafah crossing before the agreement and those who used it since the agreement. As the survey was conducted less than five weeks after the opening of the Rafah crossing, a too small percentage of the sample have used the crossing since that opening to be able to draw any definite conclusions. It is clear, however, that this issue will be further explored through the regular on-the-spot surveys that will be carried out regularly on the Rafah crossing over the next few months.

**Figure 45: The level of ease or difficulty in using the Rafah Crossing**



In order to reach a larger percentage of respondents who report on the usage of the Rafah crossing, they were asked if anybody in the household had used the Rafah crossing. Predictably, a smaller percentage of the respondents reported that nobody in the household had ever used the Rafah crossing, while not only the percentage of the usage of the crossing after the agreement increased slightly, but the percentage of usage of the crossing both before and after the agreement doubled.

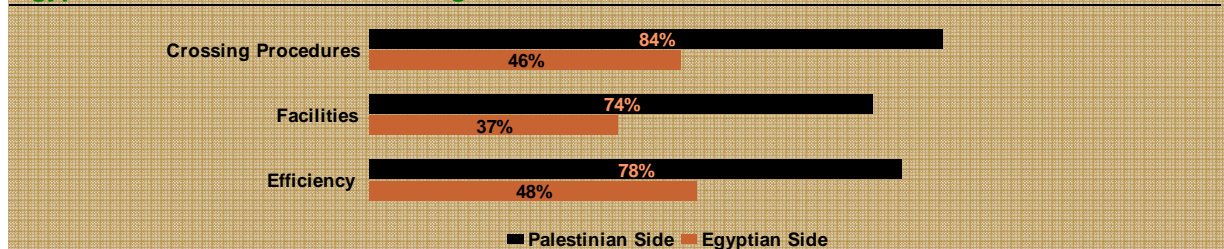
**Figure 46: Usage of the Rafah crossing by household members**



## B. Evaluation

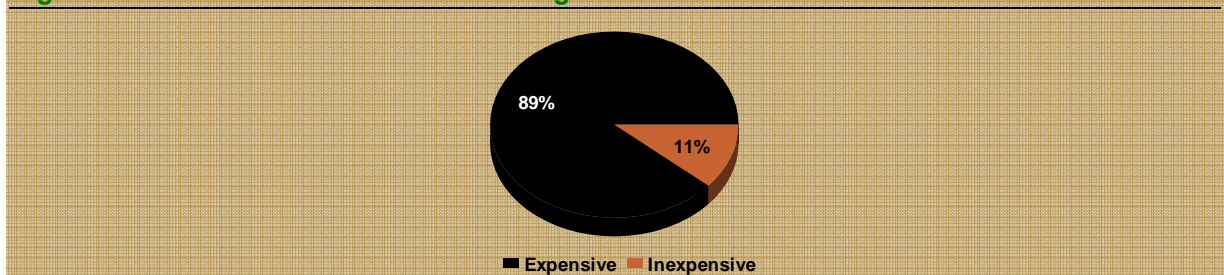
Respondents who used the Rafah crossing, whether before or since the agreement, were asked to evaluate the crossing procedures, the facilities, and the efficiency at the crossing both on the Palestinian and Egyptian side. The results in figure 47, below, indicate a positive evaluation on the Palestinian side of the crossing in terms of the crossing procedures (84%), the facilities (74%) and the efficiency (78%), but a far more negative evaluation in terms of these three aspects on the Egyptian side of the crossing.

**Figure 47: Evaluation of Crossing Procedures, facilities, and efficiency on the Palestinian and Egyptian side of the Rafah crossing**



It is clear that the large majority of users of the Rafah crossing consider it to be an expensive procedure. As illustrated in the figure, below, 89% of respondents feel it to be expensive. The cost factor might help to explain why in figure 44, above in this section the poorer respondents less often than the financially more well to do used the Rafah crossing.

**Figure 48: Cost factor of the Rafah crossing**

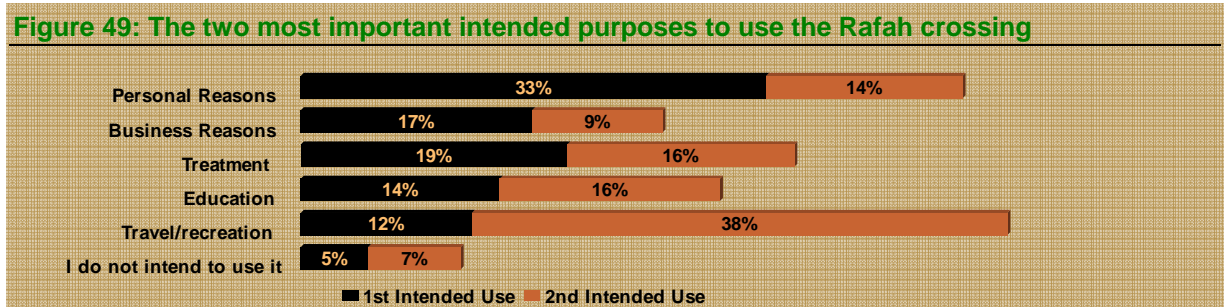


### C. Future use of the crossing

Those interviewees who intend to use the Rafah crossing were asked about their two most important purposes to use the crossing. When analysing the *first intended use* of the Rafah crossing *separately*, by far the highest percentage of respondents explained that personal reasons (33%) would drive them to use the crossing, followed by 19% who would use it to receive treatment abroad, 17% who would travel through the crossing for business reasons, 14% to study abroad, and 12% for travel and recreational purposes.

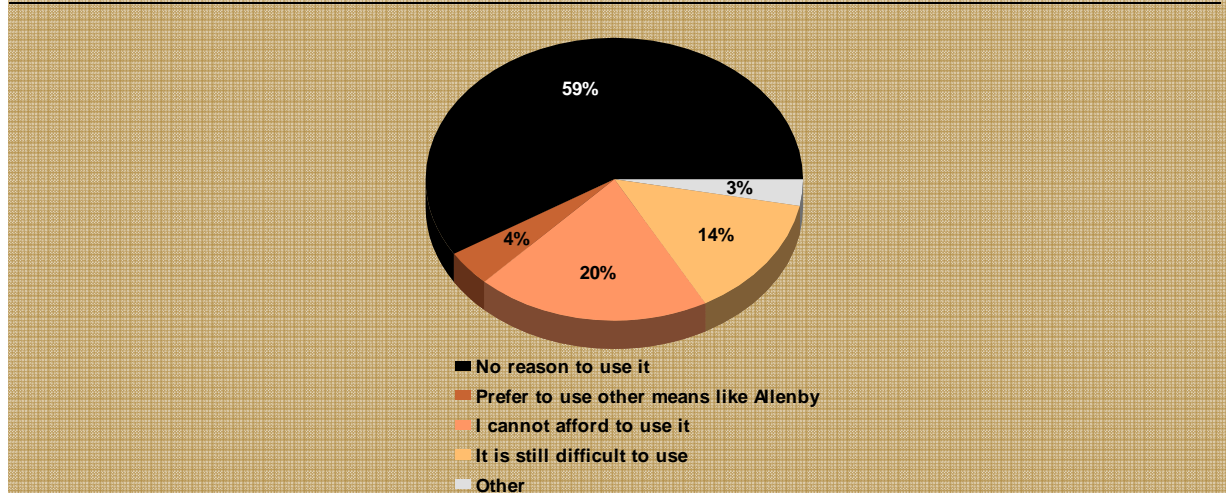
When only concentrating on the *second most important reason* to use the Rafah crossing, a rather large percentage of respondents said that they would use the crossing for travel and recreational purposes (38%), while respectively 16% said they would use the crossing either to receive treatment outside the Gaza Strip or to study abroad. Only 9% of the respondents mentioned business reasons as a second purpose to travel through the Rafah crossing. In fact, when one looks at the two intended purposes to use the Rafah crossing *combined*, as detailed in figure 49, below, business reasons to travel through Rafah only comes in fifth place of importance, which might suggest that Palestinians in the Gaza Strip do not so much consider the Rafah crossing as a way to expand their business beyond the Gaza Strip. Indeed, when combining the two intended purposes to use the Rafah crossing, travel and recreation (50%) and personal reasons (47%) take the first and second place in order of importance.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the analysis of this question does not bring any relevant and significant statistical relationships with any of the independent variables at hand, including the poverty level variable.



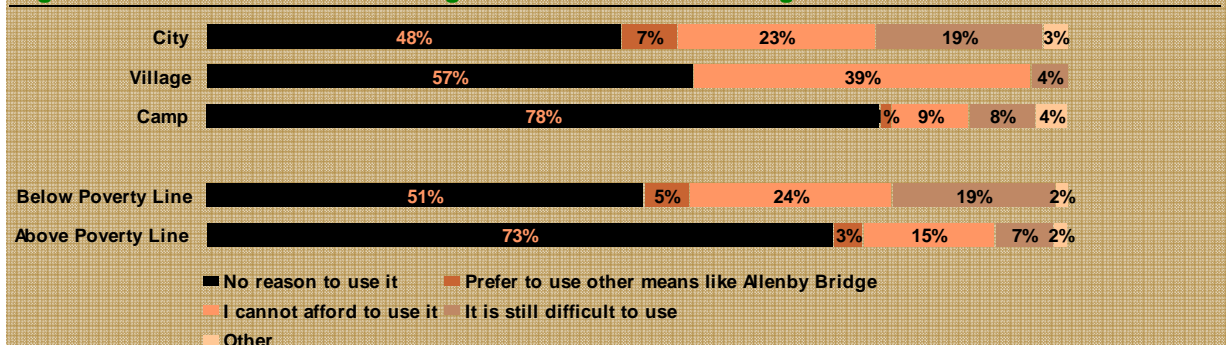
Those who reported that they have no intention to use the Rafah crossing were asked about the reason behind this decision. Perhaps surprisingly, a majority of 59% of the respondents simply answered that they have no reason to use it, while 20% specified that they could not afford to use it. Of the remainder, 14% of the respondents do not want to use the Rafah crossing because it is too difficult to use, and 4% prefer to use other means to travel such as the Allenby Bridge. These results seem to suggest that even though about 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the respondents do not want to use the Rafah crossing because of financial constraints, the mere opening of the Rafah crossing is more important psychologically in people's minds. In other words, it might be important for people to know that Rafah is open and that the Gaza Strip is no longer a totally closed entity, but this does not necessarily translate into them wanting to use the crossing as they do not have any particular or immediate reason to do so.

**Figure 50: Reasons for not wanting to use crossing**



When looking at the question of reasons for not wanting to use the Rafah crossing more deeply according to the place of residence of the respondents and their poverty level, clear differences in opinion appear. More specifically, the highest percentage of respondents stating that they do not wish to use the Rafah crossing because they have no reason to do so can be found among camp dwellers (78%) and respondents with a living standard above the poverty line (73%), while those categories of people had the lowest percentages of respondents who do not want to use the crossing because of financial reasons. As illustrated in figure 51, below, financial constraints were most important to the respondent villagers as a reason for not wanting to use the Rafah crossing.

**Figure 51: Reasons for not wanting to use the Rafah crossing**







## IX. The Karni Crossing

Similarly to the section of this report on the Rafah crossing, this section will try to provide some information on the Karni crossing. However, as the Karni crossing is used for the movement of goods and not of people, there are fewer people in the sample of the baseline survey who have actually used the Karni crossing. As such, real in-depth information about this issue will not be obtained through this report, but will be mainly gathered through the scheduled sector-specific surveys and the regular on-the-spot surveys that will be carried out on the Karni crossing.

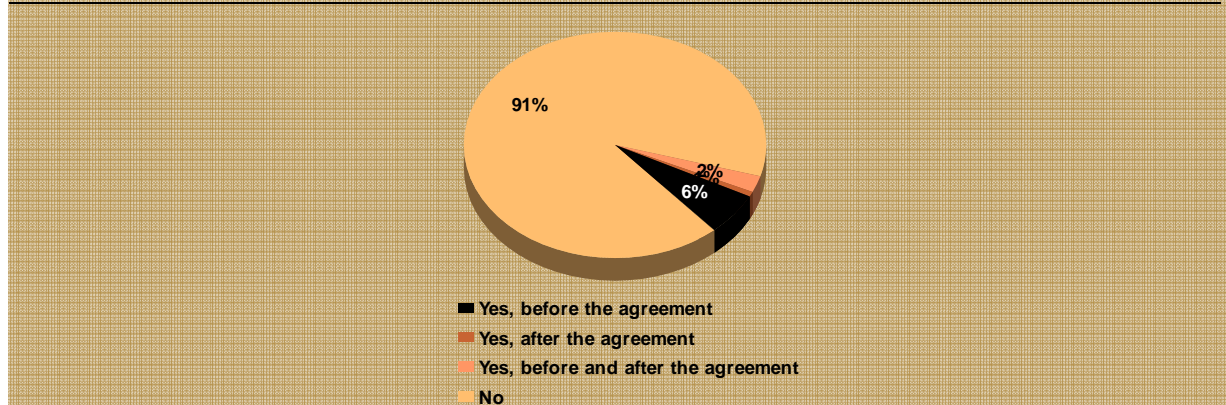
Before discussing the findings of the baseline survey on people's perceptions on the Karni crossing, again, a short overview will be provided in the table below, about the actual working hours per day, the number of days that the crossing was opened, the average numbers of trucks in and out of Karni per day, and the number of security incidents. It is worth noting that although the Karni crossing was functioning before the opening of the Rafah crossing, the information in the table will only cover the period since the opening of Rafah on 26 November 2005. As such, the table illustrates that in the six weeks under review, operations at the Karni crossing seem to have ran smoothly, whereby the scheduled opening hours of the crossing were upheld. In the six week period, the Karni crossing was closed one day because of heavy fog and 3 security incidents occurred. Meanwhile, it is clear that the number of trucks out of the Gaza Strip is far lower than the number of trucks coming into the Gaza Strip. Even so, in the past month the number of trucks that daily leave the Gaza Strip seems to have increased by 1/3<sup>rd</sup> a day. Still, the actual number of trucks exiting the Gaza Strip on a daily basis does not reach the number of trucks that were scheduled to leave the Karni crossing on a daily basis.

**Table 4: Facts on the Karni crossing, 26 November 2005 – 6 January 2006**

		The Rafah Crossing		
		26Nov.'05 – 9Dec.'05	10Dec.'05– 3Dec.'05	24Dec.'05-6Jan.'06
<i>WORKING HOURS PER DAY</i>				
❖ Actual		13.5	13.5	12.4
❖ Scheduled		13.5	13.5	13.5
<i>DAYS OPENED</i>				
❖ Actual		12	12	11
❖ Scheduled		12	12	12
<i>AVERAGE NUMBER OF TRUCKS OUT OF THE GAZA STRIP DAILY</i>				
❖ Actual		41	66	67
❖ Scheduled		56	74	73
<i>AVERAGE NUMBER OF TRUCKS INTO THE GAZA STRIP DAILY</i>				
❖ Actual		345	378	311
❖ Scheduled		Not available	Not available	Not available
<i>SECURITY INCIDENTS</i>				
		2	1	0

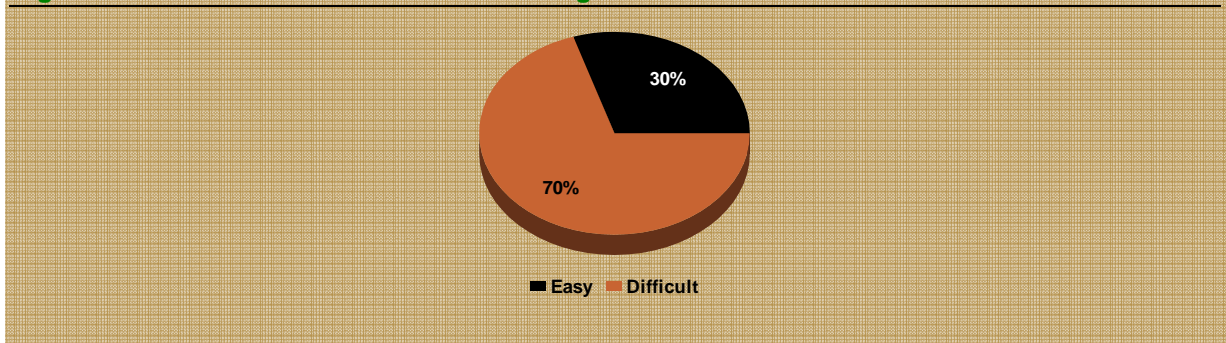
Moving back to the data collected in the baseline survey, interviewees were asked whether or not they ever used the Karni crossing. As overviewed in figure 52, below, a large majority of 91% of the respondents have never used the Karni crossing. Of the remainder of the sample, 6% used the Karni crossing before the AMA, 1% used it after the AMA, while 2% of the respondents used the Karni crossing both before and after the signing of the AMA.

**Figure 52: Usage of the Karni crossing**



It is clear that a majority of those who have used the Karni crossing believe that it is difficult. As shown in figure 53, below, 70% of the respondents feel it is difficult to use the Karni crossing, while 30% find it easy to use. Partly due to the small number of cases that have used the Karni crossing, no statistically significant relationships could be established between this question and any of the independent variables at hand.

**Figure 53: Easiness to use the Karni crossing**





## X. Main Findings