



## NEC's monthly bulletin on Palestinian perceptions towards politics and economics

**Special Focus:  
Donor Assistance**

**Bulletin # II-4**

**April 2007**

*NEC's Bulletin and the surveys associated with it are conducted independently with the private resources of the NEC company, and are not supported or funded by any local or international organization.*

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## NEC Monthly Bulletin

April 2007

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The second month of the Palestinian Authority's new unity government was marked by the re-launching of an Arab League peace initiative with Israel, and an escalation of Israeli military operations in the Occupied Territories. Near East Consulting (NEC) surveyed 834 randomly selected Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem for their reactions to these and other developments in the Occupied Territories, as well as their general political and economic circumstances, with a special focus on donor assistance to the Palestinians. The following Bulletin summarizes and discusses the major findings of this poll.

The poll is part of a running series of General Perception Surveys conducted monthly by the NEC since January 2006. These surveys seek to document and analyze Palestinian perceptions of the political, economic, social, and security-related issues that frame daily life in the West Bank and Gaza. Results from the NEC's General Perception Survey are provided freely to the general public, complementing our on-going research and assessment work in Palestine and the wider region.

This latest survey was conducted by telephone over the period 21-24 April, 2007 and has a margin of error of +/- 3.39%, with a 95% confidence level. The results of this survey and the other earlier surveys, along with accompanying bulletins, are available online from the NEC's web site. Visit us at [www.neareastconsulting.com](http://www.neareastconsulting.com).

### **About Near East Consulting (NEC)**

NEC is a survey and research firm based in Ramallah, Palestine. Drawing on extensive, inter-disciplinary experience in the Near East region and beyond, we work in a range of fields, including but not limited to such areas as democracy and democratization, food security, health and education, women and children, poverty and the labor market, peace and conflict resolution, arms control and disarmament, electoral processes, Palestinian refugees, demography, legal and judicial systems, and the impact of aid and assistance.



## II. SUMMARY

The NEC's General Perception Survey for April 2007 records deepening pessimism among Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, characterized by sharply rising concerns about the toll exacted by Israeli occupation; fading hopes for internal political stabilization and the lifting of sanctions on the PA, which had been buoyed by the formation of a new PA unity government earlier this spring; and record levels of general political disaffection. These feelings translate into general pessimism about the prospects of Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy. Concomitantly, overall support for a peace settlement with Israel evinced another slight decline on the previous month, continuing a recent trend. Underlying political attitudes remained more or less unchanged, however.

The period preceding this month's poll was marked by the collapse of a cesspit reservoir in the northern Gaza Strip that killed 5 people and left over one thousand people homeless. The breach was blamed in the Palestinian media on Israeli restrictions and donor politics. In the West Bank, and to a lesser extent also Gaza, Israel escalated military operations, resulting in the killing of nine Palestinians over a 24-hour period coinciding with the first days of survey polling. Against this backdrop, the number of respondents who feel extremely concerned about their current situation increased 17% on the previous month; largely driven by a five-fold increase in concerns about the Israeli occupation in general, as well as rising concerns about general lack of security.

Relatively speaking, economic hardships and the internal power struggle between Hamas and Fateh have accordingly receded as sources of major concern. However, responses suggest Palestinians have actually become more pessimistic on both of these fronts. Only 20% now believe that the crisis between Fateh and Hamas will lessen, down 10% on the previous month. 53% meanwhile have lost hope that international sanction on the PA will be lifted, up from 32% in the immediate wake of the new government's inauguration.

This pessimism translates into deteriorating psychosocial indicators, with 77% of respondents professing to be depressed to some extent or another, as well as levels of insecurity not seen since the bloody Gaza summer of 2006. As then, 60% of respondents now said they feel less secure since Hamas' coming to power. Most strikingly, general political disaffection has also reached a new record; a full 41% of respondents now say they trust no political party. Though Hamas has suffered more than Fateh from this general erosion of trust, the latter has also seen slight decline. While PA President Mahmoud Abbas leads Hamas PM Ismael Hanieh by 10% in a head-to-head confidence poll, Abbas' standing has not improved on the previous month.

According to most respondents, the mandate for Abbas' and Hanieh government is also unchanged. A combined 73% feel that restoring security or enforcing the law should be the government's priority. As in March, making peace with Israel remains a very low priority. Israel's rebuttal of a comprehensive peace plan re-launched by the Arab-League during the intervening period, did not little to boost this sentiment; nor did Abbas' failure to emerge with any results from his latest, April 15 meeting with Israeli PM



Ehud Olmert. 75% of Palestinians subsequently polled believe that Israel is not a partner for peace, and a similar percentage feel that meetings between Palestinian and Israeli leaders do not serve to advance the prospects of peace.

Concomitantly, there has been a 5% erosion in support of extending the cease-fire with Israel, and a similar decline in support for a peace settlement. However, overall support on either of these counts still holds at 87% and 63%, respectively. Underlying political attitudes, with reference to Hamas' political program, have also changed little. Notably, a majority of both refugees and non-refugees believe that Hamas should explicitly recognize Israel's right to exist.

With special reference to donor assistance to the Palestinians, which remains subject to restrictions despite the formation of a new PA unity government, it can be noted that a very small, 13% share of sampled households say that they have benefited from assistance over the past six months; 64% of those have received mainly food aid. Even if accounting for considerable underreporting of aid receipts, this figure is starkly out of line with overall needs assessments. Among the major providers of aid, UNRWA enjoys the vastly greatest reach, covering 50% of respondents. Notably, however, UNRWA was also the single most common aid source for non-refugees, 7% more so than the PA. In this respect, it was interesting to note that Fateh supporters are three times more likely than their Hamas counterparts to be receiving aid from the PA. Overall, however, Hamas supporters are more satisfied than any other sub-category of respondents with the assistance they have received. This may be testimony to ability of Hamas' welfare network to meet the needs of its constituents, though responses suggested that independent religious charities or local NGO's are the main providers of assistance to only 4% of households.

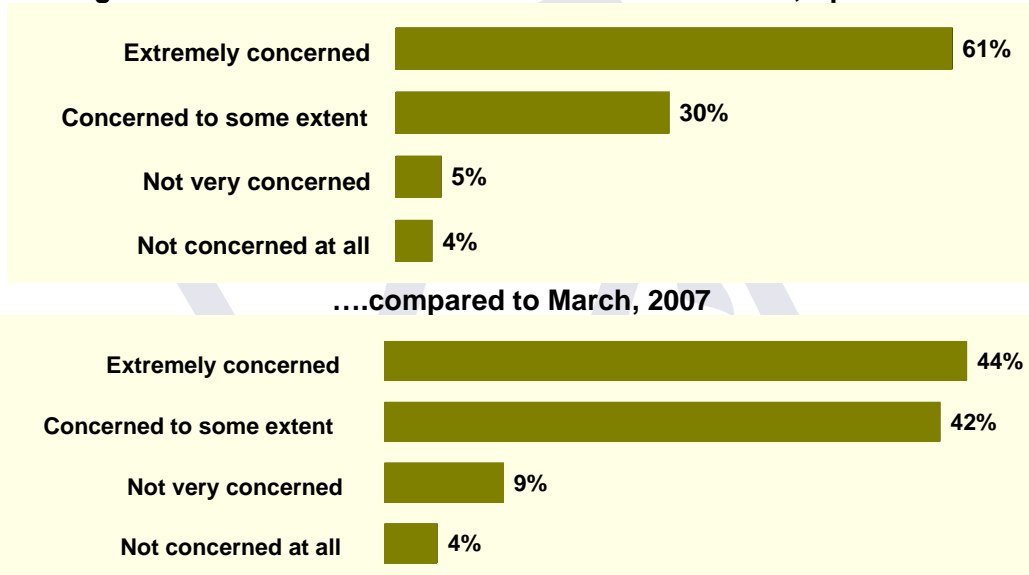


### III. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### A. *Surging toll of occupation erodes optimism after unity accords*

A General Perception Survey conducted by the NEC in March 2007, registered new, if guarded optimism among respondents, following the formation of a new Palestinian Authority (PA) unity government, and the February 2007 conclusion of a power-sharing agreement between Hamas and Fateh. It was hoped that these initiatives would end several months of bloody, internecine conflict within the Occupied Territories, and avert a full-blown civil war between the two largest political parties. Since then, however, respondents have grown notably more anxious about their situation, with the number of respondents professing extreme concern rising by a full 17 percentage points.

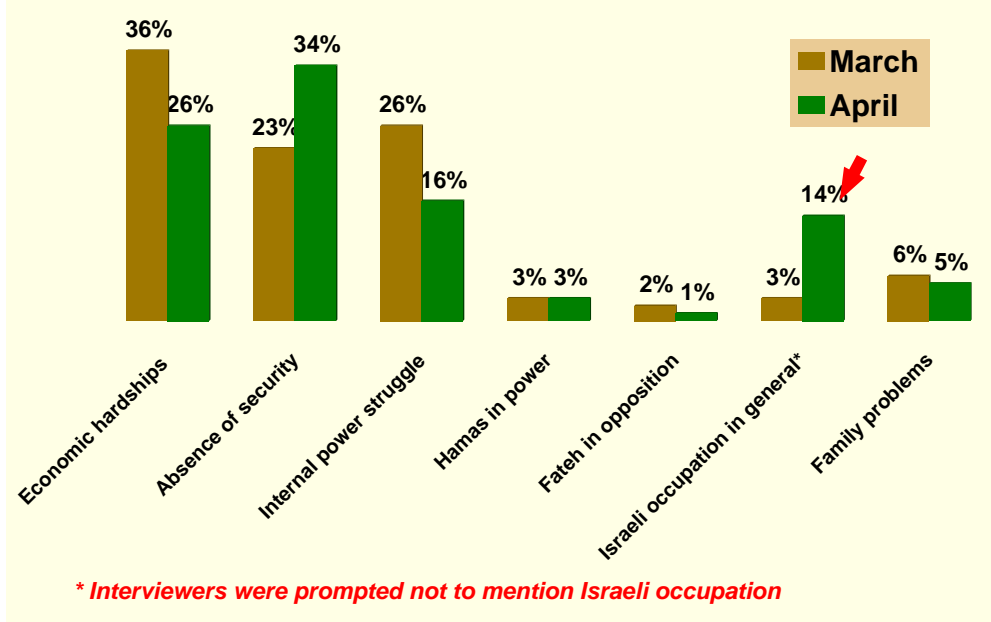
**Figure 1: Level of concern about the current situation, April 2007...**



As shown below, the main sources of this resurgent anxiety were rising concern about the Israeli occupation, and a growing feeling of physical insecurity, both of which concerns may have been related to some degree. It is particularly notable that such a large number of respondents opted to signal their worry about the occupation - an 11% increase on the previous month - because they were specifically asked by interviewers to note concerns *other* than this one. When parsing the responses, as detailed in Table 1 below, it was noted that resurgent worries about the occupation were voiced most extensively, if not exclusively, by West Bank respondents, who, at 17%, were twice as likely to cite this problem, compared to only 8% of Gazans. In Gaza meanwhile, a full 51% of respondents were worried about the general absence of security, a figure more than twice as high as that sampled among West Bankers.



**Figure 2: Reasons for concern: Comparison between March and April 2007**



The likely context for these worries was a relative escalation of Israeli military operations in the Occupied Territories between March 17 and April 21, particularly in the West Bank. The killing of nine Palestinians over a 24-hour period, coinciding with the first days of polling may have been particularly vivid to respondents. Following these casualties, the military wing of Hamas proclaimed an end to a longstanding unilateral ceasefire with Israel. Massive flooding resulting from the collapse of a cesspit reservoir in the northern Gaza Strip on March 27, which killed 5 people and left thousands homeless, may also have further stoked a general sense of insecurity in Gaza. The flooding was largely blamed on an Israeli refusal to allow repairs to the reservoir embankments, or permit the piping of overflow discharge into the sea.

**Table 1: Main reasons behind concerns, by poverty level, factional trust, and region of residence**

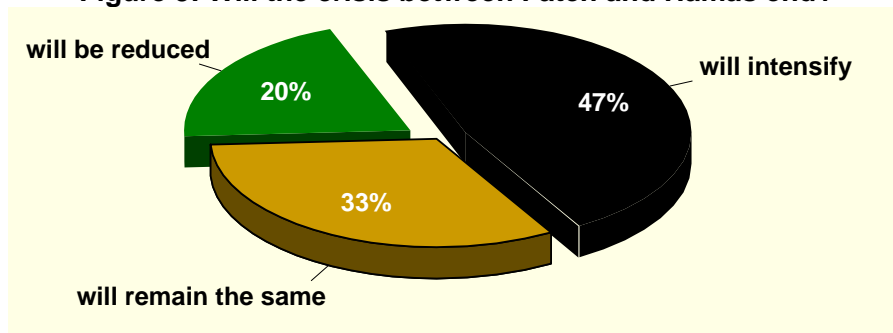
		Economic hardship	Absence of security	Power struggle	Hamas in power	Fateh in oppos.	Israeli occup.	Family problems
Poverty level	Below poverty	27%	35%	15%	3%	1%	14%	4%
	Above poverty	26%	33%	18%	3%	1%	11%	7%
Factional trust	Hamas	19%	32%	26%	1%	3%	12%	7%
	Fateh	30%	31%	16%	6%	0%	15%	2%
	No faction	27%	37%	15%	2%	1%	13%	6%
Region	West Bank	32%	25%	17%	2%	1%	17%	6%
	Gaza Strip	16%	51%	16%	4%	1%	8%	3%



**B. Lowered expectations for internal stabilization, economic relief**

With reference to Figures and 1 and 2 in the previous section, it can be noted that widening and deepening concern about the current situation was partly mitigated by a notable decline in concerns about economic hardship, and the internal power struggle between Hamas and Fateh. The likely reason, however, is that other, aforementioned concerns have come to overshadow these problems, because as shown below, Palestinians have not become more optimistic about their prospects of resolving either their long-brewing internal political crisis, or their economic woes.

**Figure 3: Will the crisis between Fateh and Hamas end?**



When asked about the crisis between Fateh and Hamas, only 20% of respondents believed in April that it would de-escalate, compared to 31% who expressed similar hopes in March. It was notable that these perceptions did not vary significantly on the basis of region of residence, or factional trust.

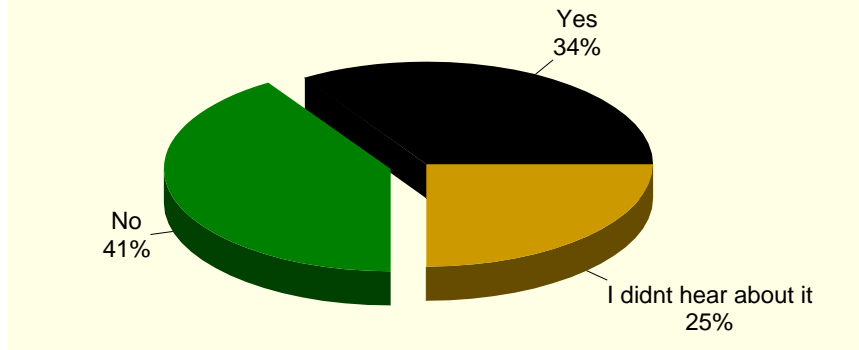
**Table 2: Will the crisis between Fateh and Hamas end?, by region of residence and factional trust**

		Will intensify	Will be reduced	Will remain the same
Region of residence	West Bank	50%	21%	29%
	Gaza Strip	44%	18%	38%
Factional trust	Hamas	55%	18%	27%
	Fateh	49%	23%	29%

In a similar vein, only 34% of respondents believed that new plan by the new Palestinian Authority (PA) unity government to restore security and rule of law would succeed. A significant, one quarter of respondents had not even heard of such plans.

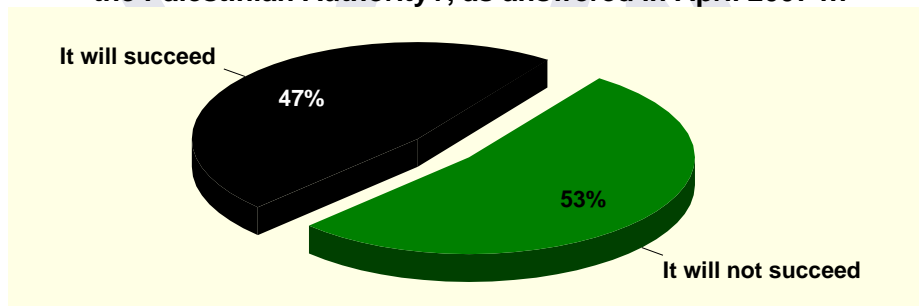


**Figure 4: Will the Interior Minister's plan to restore security succeed?**

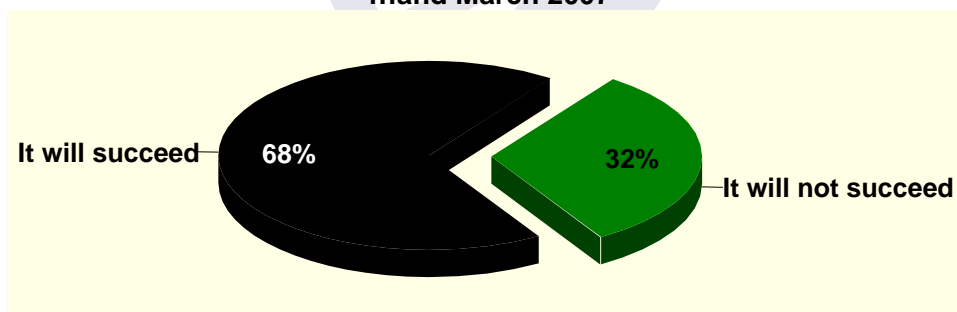


Respondents have also become less optimistic about the prospects of international restrictions on financial assistance to the PA being lifted following the formation of a new multi-party unity government earlier this spring; these restrictions were imposed after Hamas was installed in power following the January 2006 PLC elections. As of April 2007, only a minority of respondents were optimistic on this account, marking a reversal of the largely hopeful expectations recorded just one month earlier. It may be noted that at least 10% more poor and unemployed respondents nevertheless remained optimistic, compared to other respective sub-groups.

**Figure 5: Will the National Unity Government succeed in lifting the sanctions on the Palestinian Authority?, as answered in April 2007 ...**



...and March 2007





**Table 3: Will the National Unity Government succeed in lifting the sanctions on the Palestinian Authority?, by poverty level and labor force**

		It will succeed	It will fail
Poverty level	Below poverty line	50%	50%
	Above poverty line	39%	61%
Labor force	Employed	36%	64%
	Partially employed	35%	65%
	Unemployed	49%	51%

**C. Growing depression, record levels of comparative insecurity**

Growing feelings of insecurity among respondents, as well as a widening and deepening prevalence of depression are among the likely outcomes of the rise in fear and disillusionment recorded in the previous sections. NEC General Perception Surveys regularly ask respondents whether they feel more or less secure since Hamas' coming to power in January 2006, and at 60%, the share of those who felt less secure in April 2007 was not only considerably higher than that recorded the previous month, and in November 2006, but also equaled the previous record for the entire survey series, recorded in the summer of 2006. Notably, this previous time was also marked by a surge in Israeli military operations, and consequent Palestinian casualties.

**Figure 6: Feeling of security: Comparison between Nov 2006 – April 2007**

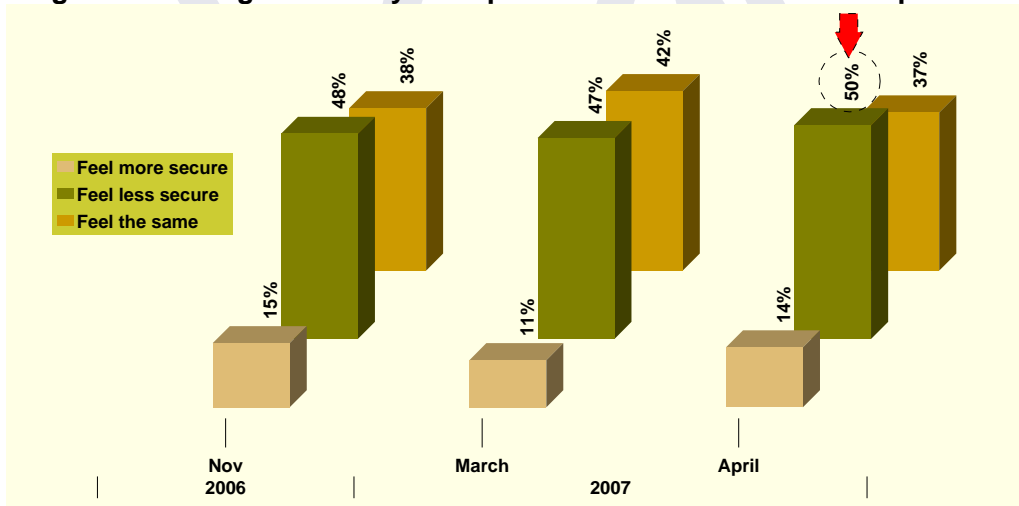
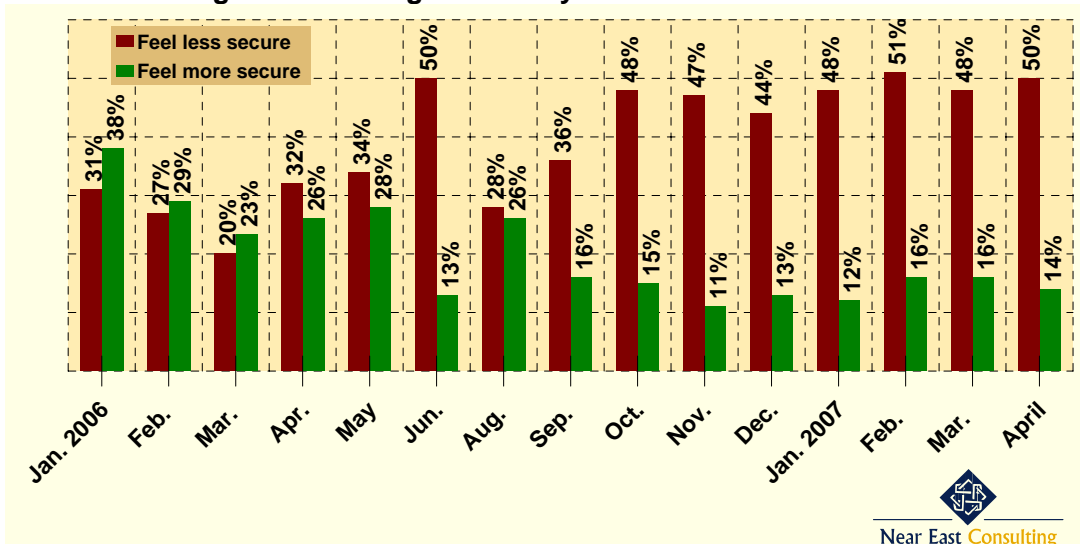


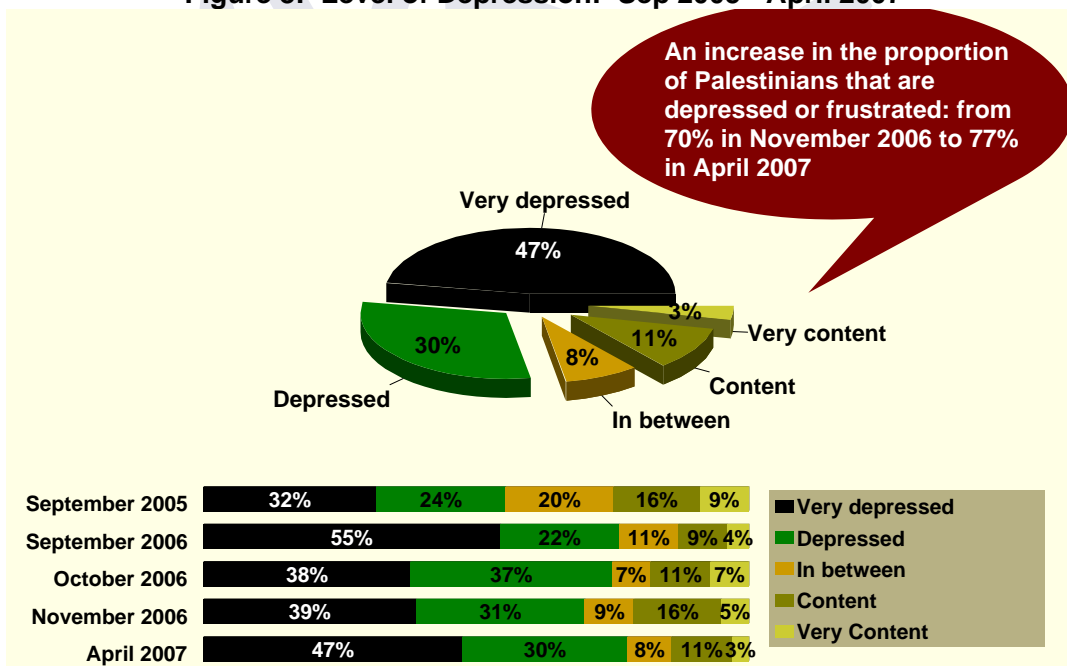


Figure 7: Feeling of security since the 2006 elections



Similarly, the prevalence of depression, which is assessed on the basis of a composite series of questions, was very high in April; 77% of respondents indicated that they were depressed to some extent. Though this is not to be equated with a strict diagnosis of clinically defined depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, or their likes, more in-depth psychosocial surveys conducted in the Occupied Territories regularly cite a high overall prevalence of such problems in the general population. A comparison of responses over time provides further indication of deepening emotional difficulties.

Figure 8: Level of Depression: Sep 2005 - April 2007





Parsing the results by sub-group, it is not surprising to find that respondents from the Gaza Strip, which is more depressed economically, is typically subject to more Israeli military operations, and has over the past six months suffered greater from internal instability and in-fighting among armed groups affiliated with the Fateh or Hamas parties, tend to be significantly more down-cast. 87% of people from this region said they were either very depressed or depressed in April 2007, compared to 72% of West Bankers. It can also be noted that refugee camp dwellers, which compose a majority of the Strip's population, and in the West Bank generally also suffer poor economic circumstances, as well as the most frequent Israeli incursions, are considerably more likely to be depressed than other respective sub-groups, particularly villagers.

**Table 4: Level of depression according to poverty level, region and area of residence, factional trust, and age**

		Very depressed	Depressed	In between	Not concerned	Not concerned at all
Poverty level	Below poverty line	50%	30%	7%	9%	4%
	Above poverty line	42%	32%	11%	12%	3%
Region	West Bank	39%	33%	10%	14%	4%
	Gaza Strip	62%	25%	5%	5%	2%
Place of residence	City	50%	29%	9%	10%	3%
	Village	39%	34%	8%	14%	5%
	Refugee camp	67%	21%	8%	5%	0%

**D. Record numbers loose faith in all political parties**

With respect to the internal Palestinian political scene, the April 2007 survey recorded a record level of popular disaffection with all the major political parties in the Occupied Territories. At 41%, the number of respondents who profess not to trust any party is over three times higher than that sampled in January 2006, which period coincided with the PLC elections that brought Hamas to power. Over the same period, overall trust in Hamas has eroded from 41% to just 22%, suggesting that the majority of those who have been disillusioned were otherwise inclined to the support the Islamists, at least as a means of signaling their dissatisfaction with political status quo.

The fact that Fateh has not gained comparably as a result of Hamas' fall in popularity supports this interpretation; at 31%, trust in Fateh is slightly lower in April than the 38% high recorded during election time, though still higher than the 26% low recorded by the party two months after the elections. It is notable that Fateh leads Hamas, both among poor respondents, and those living above the poverty line. In addition to evidencing the continuation of Fateh's traditionally strong rural support, responses also indicate that refugee camp residents are presently nearly three times as likely to trust in Fateh than in Hamas.



Figure 9: Factional trust: January 2006-April 2007

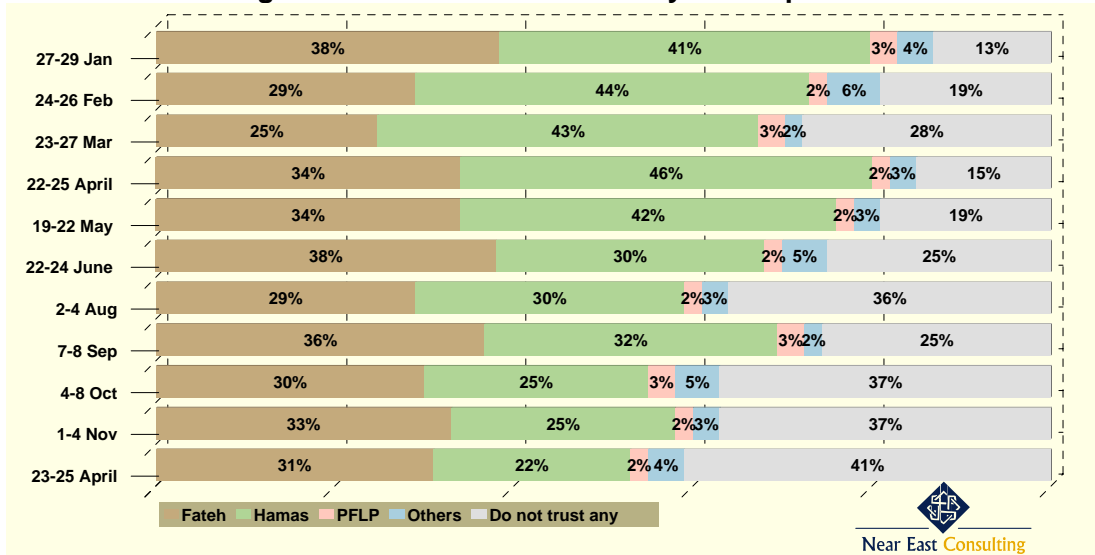
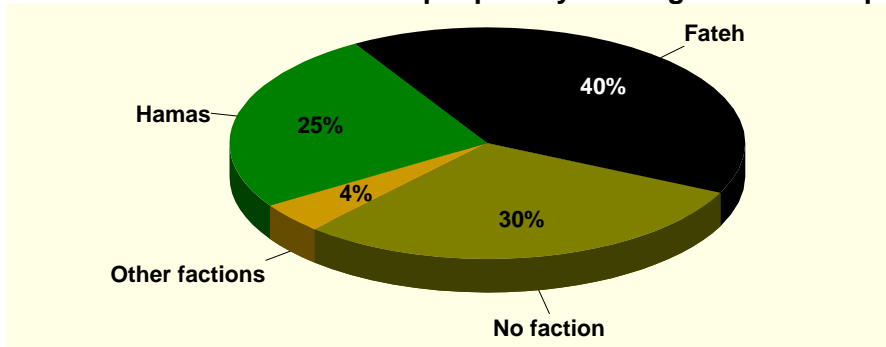


Table 5: Factional trust, by poverty level and place of residence

		Hamas	Fateh	PFLP	Islamic Jihad	Other factions	No faction
Poverty	Below poverty line	22%	34%	2%	3%	0%	39%
	Above poverty line	21%	29%	2%	4%	3%	41%
Place of residence	City	23%	27%	2%	4%	1%	42%
	Village	21%	36%	2%	2%	2%	37%
	Refugee camp	15%	42%	0%	0%	0%	42%

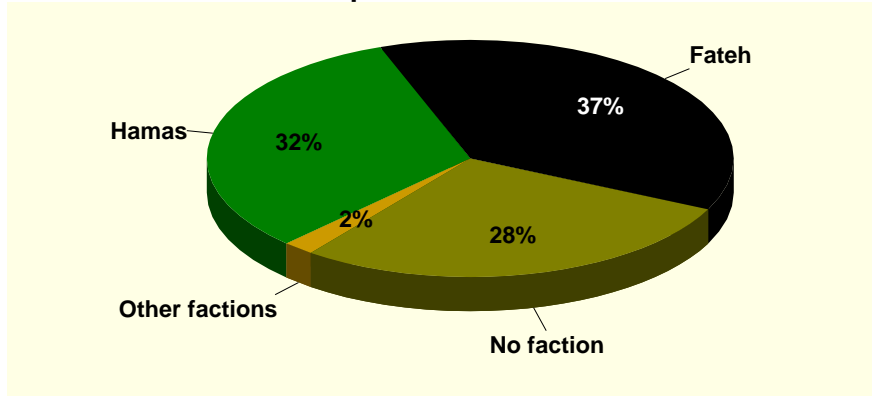
It is interesting to observe the degree to which the above responses align with respondents' perceptions of how others in their immediate environment relate to the main political parties. In general, these perceptions fairly well reflect the arena in which trust has eroded, noting Hamas' fall in the poll ratings, though overstating the magnitude of that erosion.

Figure 10: Perceived factional trust of people in your neighborhood? April 2007...





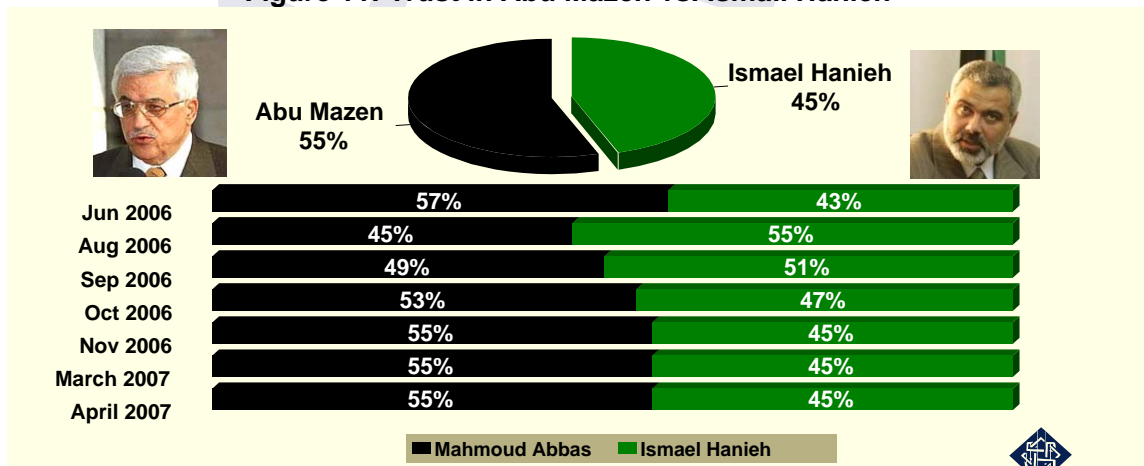
...compared to March 2007



However, whereas individual responses suggest that Fateh has also lost slightly in popularity, a sampling of neighborhood perceptions suggest the opposite; a slight Fateh gain of 3% on the previous month. In both months, responses based on perceptions of how *others* felt politically tended to underestimate the share of people who profess to no trust parties, and to overestimate the number that say they trust either of them, if slightly more so for Fateh. Inter alia, these results suggest that a) Palestinian who are either politically disaffected or supportive of Hamas are less likely to be open about their preferences in a community setting, or, similarly, b) Palestinians tending towards Hamas are less inclined to truthfully report this preferences when asked by pollsters about their own political feelings, preferring to say that they trust no one.

The inference that respondents who have generally become disenchanted with Hamas do not easily transfer their trust to the main, competing Fateh party, is further reinforced by responses to the question of who respondents trust the most: Fateh leader Mahmoud Abbas, aka Abu Mazen, or Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Hanieh?

Figure 11: Trust in Abu Mazen vs. Ismail Hanieh



Despite Hamas' apparent loss in standing among respondents since the time of the NEC's previous poll, the position of the respective leaders remains the same. As in



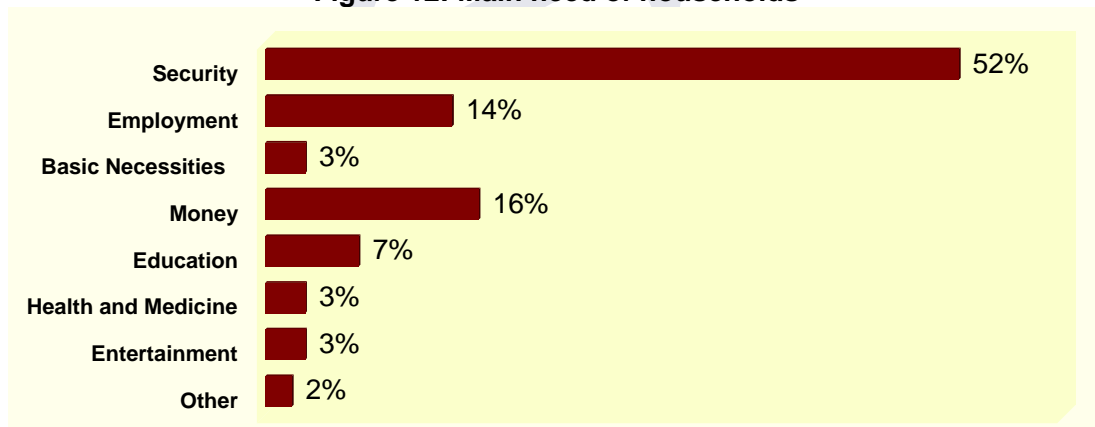
March 2007, Abu Mazen continues to lead Hanieh by a slim, but nevertheless significant 10% margin. Relatively speaking, Hanieh polls better among poor respondents and those living in the Gaza Strip, but only manages to tie Abu Mazen among the second category.

**Table 6: Trust in Abu Mazen vs. Ismail Hanieh, by poverty and region of residence**

		Abu Mazen	Ismail Hanieh
Poverty level	Below poverty line	54%	46%
	Above poverty line	60%	40%
Region of residence	West Bank	59%	41%
	Gaza Strip	50%	50%

**E. Security concerns guide priorities for government**

**Figure 12: Main need of households**



Amidst the general sense of insecurity and political disaffection recorded earlier, a majority of sampled households agreed that security is their main need – a feeling which likely reflects concerns both with internal Palestinian violence and lawlessness, as well as Israeli military operations and the general impositions of occupation. Employment and money came second, at a combined 30%. Notably, however, security was also by far the main perceived need of households living below the poverty line, as well as those suffering unemployment, in roughly equal proportion to their combined need for employment, financial assistance and basic necessities.



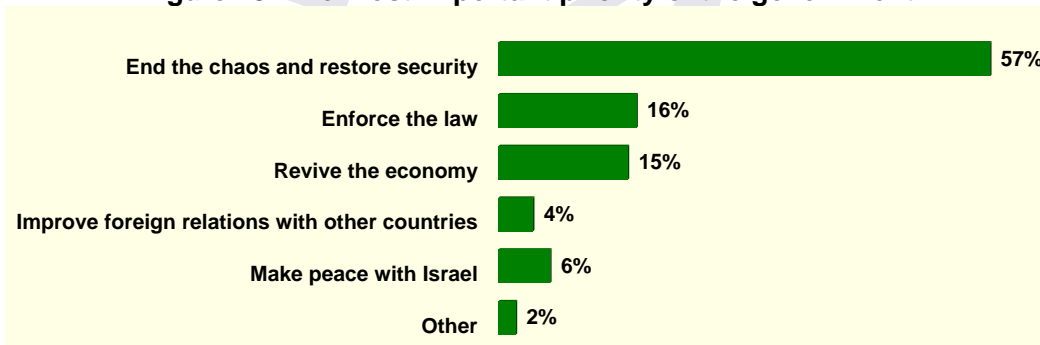
**Table 7: Main need of households, by poverty level, region and labor force**

		Security	Employment	Basic necessities	Financial assist.	Education	Health assist.	Leisure	Other
Poverty	Below poverty	49%	17%	3%	20%	5%	2%	2%	1%
	Above poverty	57%	9%	3%	11%	9%	4%	5%	2%
Region	West Bank	47%	13%	3%	17%	8%	4%	4%	2%
	Gaza Strip	61%	16%	2%	14%	4%	0%	2%	0%
Labor force	Employed	60%	10%	4%	16%	4%	1%	3%	1%
	Part- employed	47%	25%	9%	9%	1%	1%	4%	3%
	Unemployed	47%	20%	3%	17%	4%	5%	3%	1%

These needs are closely reflected in the demands placed by respondents on the new PA unity government. If anything, law and order emerges as an even greater priority in this respect; as many as 73% of respondents feel that ending chaos and restoring security, along with enforcing the law should be the most important task of their government. These responses very closely mirror those sampled in March, and are remarkably similar across all sub-groups.

It is also notable that making peace with Israel remains the priority of a very small share of respondents, and that this share has in fact shrunk by one percentage point since the last NEC poll, a period during which concern with the occupation has otherwise become more dominant. Likely, these responses reflect a seasoned appreciation of enduring Palestinian-Israeli differences on the terms of a peace settlement, but may also suggests that in the short term at least, military pressure has a counter-productive effect on respondents. Interestingly, Hamas and Fateh supporters were in complete agreement on the relative (non)importance of this last priority.

**Figure 13: The most important priority of the government**





**Table 8: Most important government priority, by poverty level, region and factional trust**

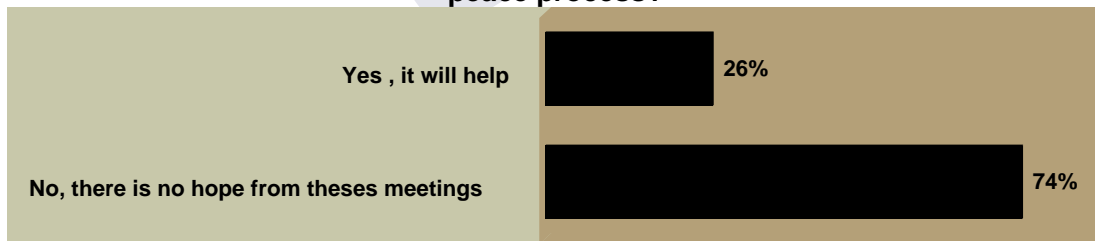
		Restore security	Enforce the law	Revive the economy	Improve foreign relations	Peace with Israel	Other
Poverty all	Below poverty line	57%	14%	17%	4%	7%	2%
	Above poverty line	56%	17%	14%	6%	5%	3%
Region	West Bank	57%	13%	15%	5%	7%	2%
	Gaza Strip	57%	20%	14%	2%	5%	2%
	Hamas	59%	13%	14%	6%	7%	1%
Factional trust	Fateh	56%	14%	17%	4%	7%	2%
	No faction	56%	18%	15%	3%	4%	3%

**F. Pessimism on diplomacy, but continued support for cease-fire**

On the diplomatic front, the most notable development since the last NEC poll was the Arab-League’s re-endorsement of a comprehensive peace plan with Israel, which would offer complete cessation of hostilities and normalization of all relations in return for Israeli agreement to meet Palestinian demands for statehood, sovereignty over East Jerusalem, and the right of return of Palestinian refugees exiled during the wars of 1948 and 1967. Israel signaled strong reservations regarding this offer, particularly on the subject of the right of return. Concomitantly, Ehud Olmert and Mahmoud Abbas both publicized their willingness to hold face-to-face meetings, though the subject and extent of any discussions was not specified, with most informed comments suggesting they would only address short-term security and humanitarian issues. Abbas’ last meeting with Olmert on April 15 did not yield any agreements on any issue.

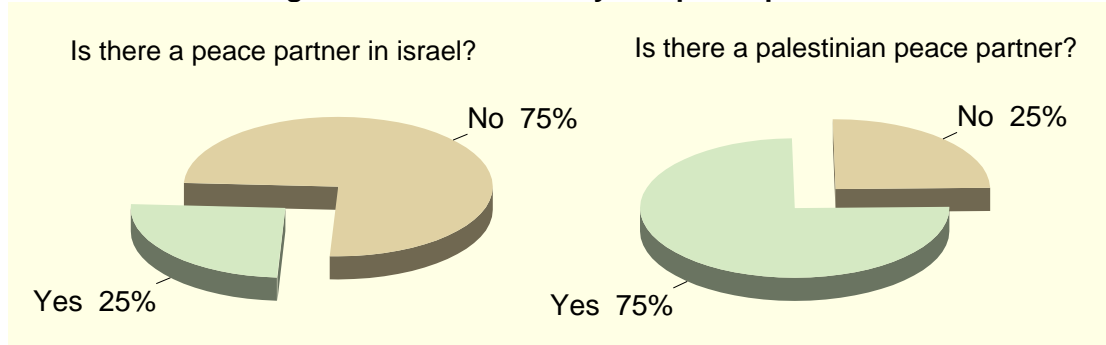
Not surprisingly, respondents were overwhelmingly pessimistic that such meetings would significantly further the peace process. Nearly three quarters felt otherwise. A very similar share of respondents believed that Israel was not a partner for peace, while believing that Israel did have such a partner in the Palestinians.

**Figure 14: Will the meetings between Israeli and Palestinian leaders help the peace process?**



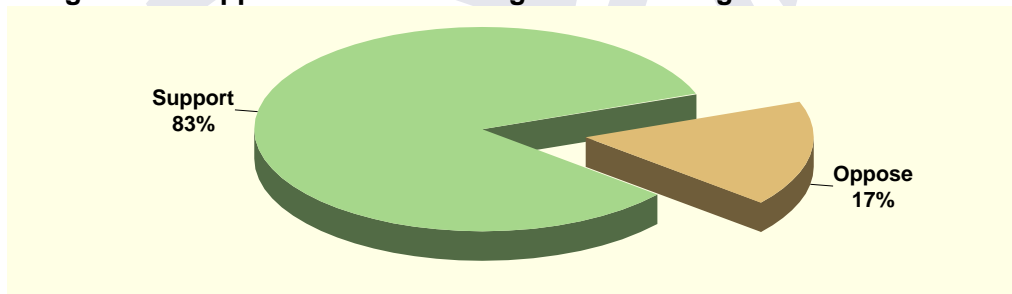


**Figure 15: The availability of a peace partner**



As expected, support for the extension of a unilateral ceasefire declined by a slight 5% from previous month, likely owing to growing Palestinian casualties in the intervening period. Nevertheless, overall support for an extended truce remained very strong, at 83%. As noted earlier in this report, the armed wing of Hamas publicly declared the end of the ceasefire following the killing of nine Palestinians during the first days of the polling period, an announcement accompanied by the firing of improvised rockets into Israel. However, the group did not announce the resumption of other, deadlier kinds of attacks inside Israel, most notably suicide bombings.

**Figure 16: Support for a broadening of ceasefire agreement with Israel**



**G. Slight fall in overall support for peace settlement**

General support for a peace settlement also evinced a slight 5% dip. In the recent past, responses to this question have been sensitive to escalations in the conflict, with the lowest figure having been recorded in 2006 following a particularly bloody mid-summer period. Overall, it may be noted that although support for a peace settlement remains relatively strong, at 63%, it has declined significantly since its 83% high point in January 2006. It may also be noted that Hamas enjoyed its lowest level of public trust during this time, though Hamas supporters, at 41%, are considerably less likely to voice support for peace than are their Fateh counterparts, at 76%. Lastly, it can be noted that refugees and non-refugees were very nearly matched on this issue, and that refugees are in fact likely to be slightly more supportive of a peace settlement than are non-refugees.



Figure 17: Support for a peace settlement

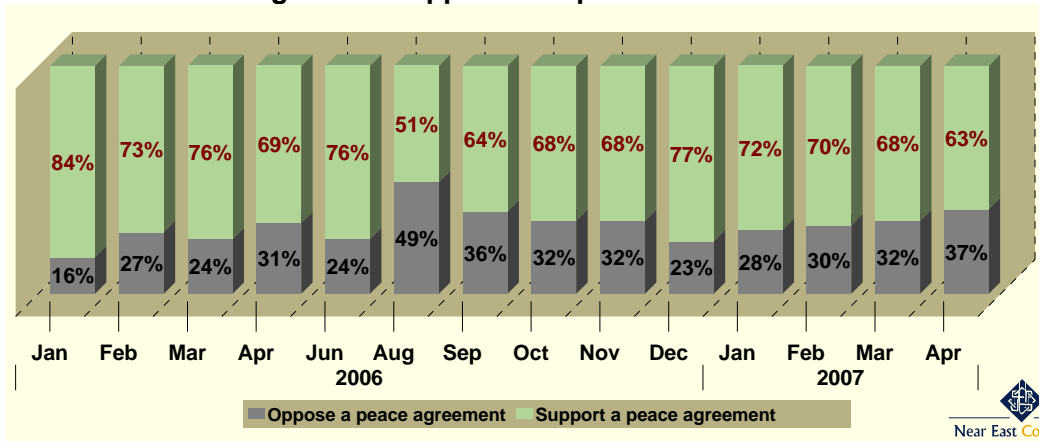


Table 9: Support for a peace settlement, by factional trust, refugee status

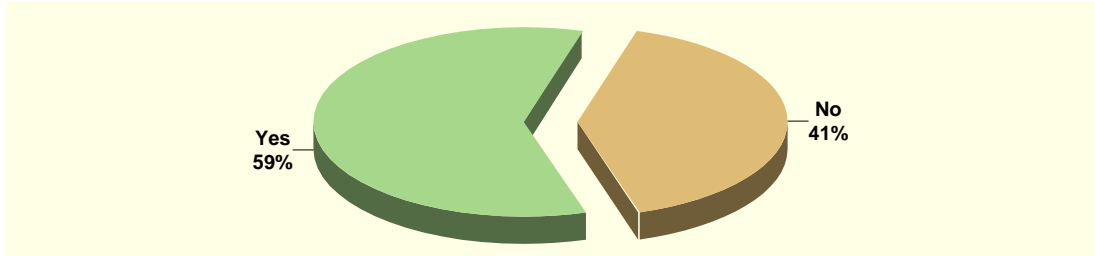
		Support	Oppose
Factional trust	Hamas	41%	59%
	Fateh	76%	24%
	No faction	66%	34%
Refugee status	Refugee	61%	39%
	Non-refugee	66%	34%

**H. Underlying political attitudes largely unchanged**

As for what Palestinians should do in support for peace, respondents were somewhat more guarded. When asked whether Hamas should take all measures possible to reach a peace agreement with Israel – though it should be noted that Hamas is not a member of the PLO and that a majority of Palestinians, as per earlier NEC polls, continue to believe that the PLO represents them in peace negotiations - a slight majority answered yes. This figure was virtually unchanged on the previous month. Curiously, Hamas supporters were in fact more likely to answer yes to this question than they be in favor of a peace settlement with Israel, perhaps suggesting that they draw a distinction between such a settlement, and peace construed in other terms, e.g. a long-term ceasefire, or other form of political accommodation.



**Figure 18: Should Hamas take all measures possible to reach a peace agreement with Israel?**



**Table 10: Should Hamas take all measures possible to reach a peace agreement with Israel?, by region, factional trust and refugee status**

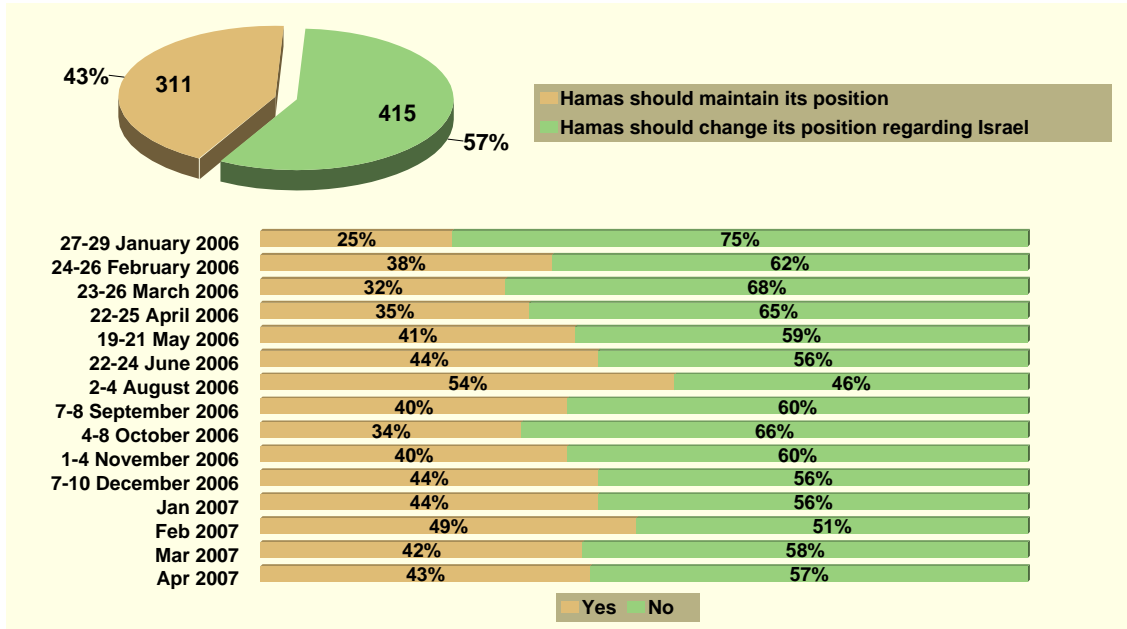
		Yes	No
Region of residence	West Bank	59%	41%
	Gaza Strip	58%	42%
Factional trust.	Hamas	45%	55%
	Fateh	69%	31%
	No faction	59%	41%
Refugee status	Refugee	52%	48%
	Non-refugee	65%	35%

In so far as the phrase ‘all measures possible’ may be construed to entail a transgression on Hamas’ traditional political red-lines, including the right of return of refugees, it was also interesting to note that refugees were significantly less inclined than non-refugees to answer yes to this question.

The right of the return is not the only part of Hama’s historical platform, however. Over the course of the Intifada, Hamas spokespeople have uttered public statements to the effect that the movement would implicitly recognize Israel as a partner in a long-term cease fire, should it agree to basic PLO negotiating positions. The Hamas government installed in 2006 has reiterated this position to the international community. When asked whether the movement should maintain its older position on the elimination of Israel, a slim majority of respondents answered yes, evincing little change from the previous month. It may again be noted that there was little difference in this respect between refugees and non-refugees, with a majority of both sub-groups being in favor of Hamas affirming Israel’s right to exist.



**Figure 19: Should Hamas maintain its position on the elimination of Israel, Jan 2006 - Apr 2007**



**Table 11: Should Hamas maintain its position on the elimination of Israel?, by poverty level, factional trust, and refugee status**

		Maintain its position	Change its position
Poverty level	Below poverty line	45%	55%
	Above poverty line	38%	62%
Factional trust	Hamas	70%	30%
	Fateh	30%	70%
	No faction	40%	60%
Refugee status	Refugee	44%	56%
	Non-refugee	40%	60%

#### IV. SPECIAL FOCUS: DONOR ASSISTANCE

As part of its General Perception Survey, the NEC regularly asks respondents to answer a number of questions focused on a topical subject area. This month the focus was on donor assistance to the Occupied Territories, which remains subject to extensive restrictions despite the formation of a new, multi-party PA government earlier this spring. The aim of the following section is to provide a brief overview of the extent and nature of the assistance currently being provided, and to gauge local perceptions of aid delivery.

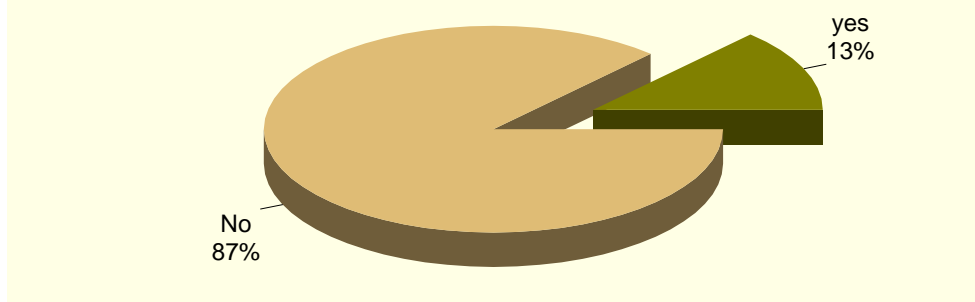


**A. Few households receive assistance, mostly as food-aid**

As shown below, only about one in nine households reported receiving some kind of assistance over the past six months. It is sometimes observed that respondents tend to understate such information, for a variety of reasons. Nevertheless, this figure is starkly out of line with estimates suggesting that as much as 60% of the population in the Occupied Territories currently lives below the poverty line.

As expected, however, poor respondent did received twice as much assistance as those who did not. In light of the fact that refugees were also nearly twice as likely as non-refugees to be recipients of assistance, it is not surprising that 17% of households in the Gaza Strip benefited from some aid, compared to only 10% of West Bank families. Of greater note, unemployed respondents were actually less likely that partially employed ones to have received some aid, a phenomenon that requires some explaining. One reason may be the prevalence of work-for-food schemes among aid disbursing organizations.

**Figure 20: Has any HH member received assistance in the past six months?**



**Table 12: Has any HH member received assistance in the past six months?, by poverty level, region, labor force and refugee status**

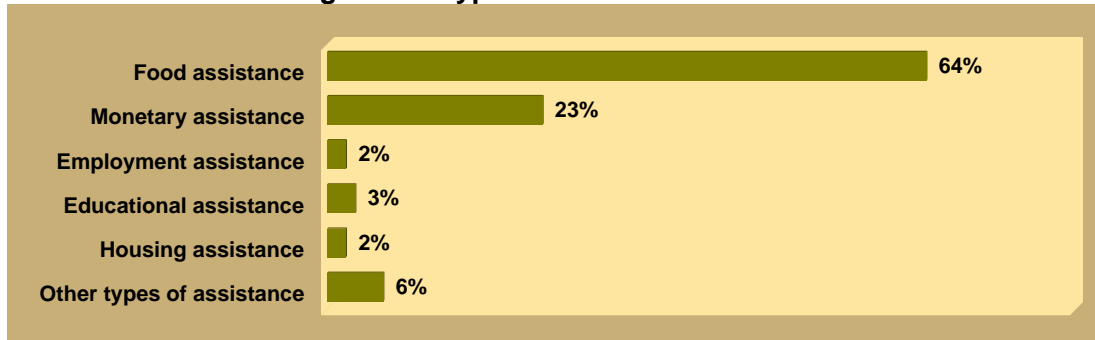
		The household received assistance	The household did not receive assistance
Poverty level	Below poverty line	16%	84%
	Above poverty line	8%	92%
Region	West Bank	10%	90%
	Gaza Strip	17%	83%
Labor force	Employed	8%	92%
	Partially employed	21%	79%
	Unemployed	16%	84%
Refugee status	Refugee	17%	83%
	Non-refugee	9%	91%

As further illustrated below, nearly two thirds of all assistance obtained was in the form of food aid, the next largest category being monetary assistance, at 23%. Looking at the composition of aid for the neediest, poor households, it was particularly notable that only 19% of such families received financial aid, which is presumed to be more advantageous



qualitatively speaking. Among households with no political affiliation only 12% obtain financial aid. In line with the previous section, it may also be observed that poor households received a higher relative proportion of food aid than better-off ones, and that the situation was reversed in the case of financial assistance. Partially employed respondents received the highest proportional share of food-aid among all categories.

**Figure 21: Type of assistance received**



Only 38% of respondents inclined towards support of Hamas received food aid, compared to 62% of Fateh affiliated ones, and 75% of those enjoying no inclination towards any political party. By comparison, Hamas respondents were somewhat more likely to receive monetary assistance, as well a range of other forms of in-kind aid, including educational assistance - at more than three times the rate of other sub-groups 0 and employment assistance. It may be speculated that such assistance is provided through Hamas-linked charities, or political networks, though it should be noted, as per the following section, that such organizations account for only 4% of overall assistance.

**Table 13: Type of assistance received, by poverty level, region, labor force, factional trust and refugee status**

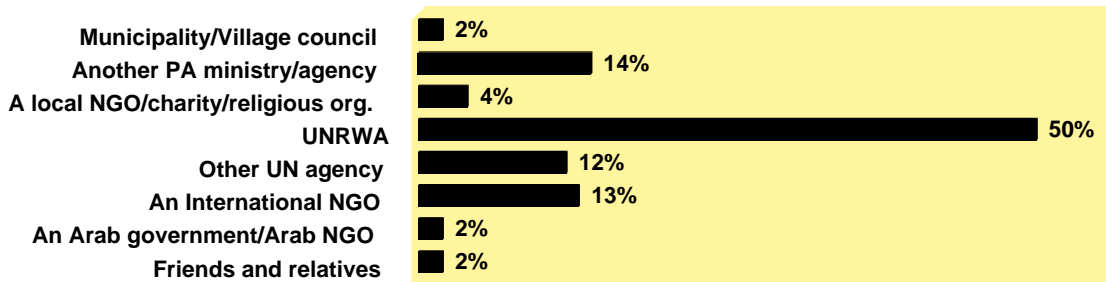
		Food assist.	Financial assist.	Employment assist.	Health care assist.	Education assist.	Housing assist.	Other types of assist.
Poverty level	Below poverty	65%	19%	3%	0%	4%	1%	8%
	Above poverty	56%	39%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%
Region	West Bank	73%	21%	2%	0%	4%	0%	0%
	Gaza Strip	52%	25%	2%	0%	2%	5%	14%
Labor force	Employed	53%	32%	5%	0%	0%	5%	5%
	Part-employed	80%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%
	Unemployed	64%	36%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Faction	Hamas	38%	33%	5%	0%	10%	5%	10%
	Fateh	62%	29%	0%	0%	0%	3%	6%
	No faction	76%	12%	3%	0%	3%	0%	6%
Refugee status	Refugee	58%	27%	2%	0%	3%	3%	7%
	Non-refugee	73%	16%	3%	0%	3%	0%	5%



**B. UNRWA assistance has widest reach, also for non-refugees**

The fact that refugees are disproportionately likely to receive aid meshes with the observation that UNRWA has the widest reach of any aid agency in the Occupied Territories, helping 50% of those respondents who did receive some assistance. The reach of the PA is considerably narrower and is comparable to that of other UN agencies and international NGO’s as a category of providers.

**Figure 22: Provider of the assistance**



When parsing these results by sub-groups, a number of additional variances were also noted, as detailed in Table 14, below. Respondents who are partially employed are more than three times as likely to be receiving UNRWA assistance; one explanation may again be food-for-work programs, though it is also possible that aid is disbursed on wider criteria than poverty alone. Indeed, 10% more households above the poverty line than to those below it benefit from UNRWA assistance.

Given that UNRWA’s mandate is to care for Palestinian refugees, it is not surprising that a vast majority of its recipients are indeed of this category. It is perhaps more surprising that a significant, 21% of share of non-refugees are also reliant on UNRWA. This number is as high as that recorded for any other donor organization category, and 6% higher than the PA. Notably, UNRWA has faced a chronic funding shortage for a number of years.

While Hamas and Fateh supporters are roughly equally likely to receive assistance from other UN agencies and international NGO’s, a full 53% of Hamas supporters receive aid from UNRWA, compared to 38% of Fateh supporters. One explanation may be that Hamas draws more of its support from refugees and poor respondents, as noted earlier, though it was also observed that Fateh presently seems to enjoy three times more support among refugee camp residents than does Hamas. These explanations are hard to reconcile.



**Table 14: Main assistance provider, by poverty level, region, labor force, factional trust, and refugee status**

		Municipal council	A PA agency	A local NGO/charity	UNRWA	Other UN agency	An Intern. NGO	An Arab govt. /Arab NGO	Friends & Family
Poverty	Below poverty	3%	15%	5%	48%	13%	13%	3%	0%
	Above poverty	0%	12%	0%	59%	6%	12%	0%	12%
Region	West Bank	4%	18%	8%	38%	14%	12%	4%	2%
	Gaza Strip	0%	10%	0%	64%	10%	14%	0%	2%
Labor force	Employed	0%	22%	6%	44%	6%	11%	0%	11%
	Part-employed	0%	13%	0%	67%	7%	13%	0%	0%
	Unemployed	10%	10%	10%	20%	20%	30%	0%	0%
Faction	Hamas	0%	5%	5%	53%	16%	16%	5%	0%
	Fateh	0%	18%	3%	38%	15%	18%	3%	6%
	No faction	3%	9%	6%	64%	9%	9%	0%	0%
Refugee status	Refugee	2%	14%	0%	67%	7%	9%	2%	0%
	Non-refugee	3%	15%	12%	21%	21%	21%	3%	6%

On the other hand, Fateh supporters are three times more likely than respondents inclined towards Hamas to be receiving aid from the PA. One complaint leveled against Fateh in the run-up to the general elections was that it had disproportionately staffed its ministries with party loyalists. In general, it was also noted that employed respondents were about two times as likely to receive assistance from the PA than were respondents who were only partially employed, or unemployed.

Lastly, although only 2% all respondents received assistance from friends and family, this number rose to 11% for those who were either living above the poverty line, or enjoyed full employment. One reason may be that such respondents are better able to raise loans through informal means, because they are known to have some assets, or a source of income, which can serve as collateral. In part, this finding may speak to the limitations of social networks, which are widely held to be an important coping mechanism for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

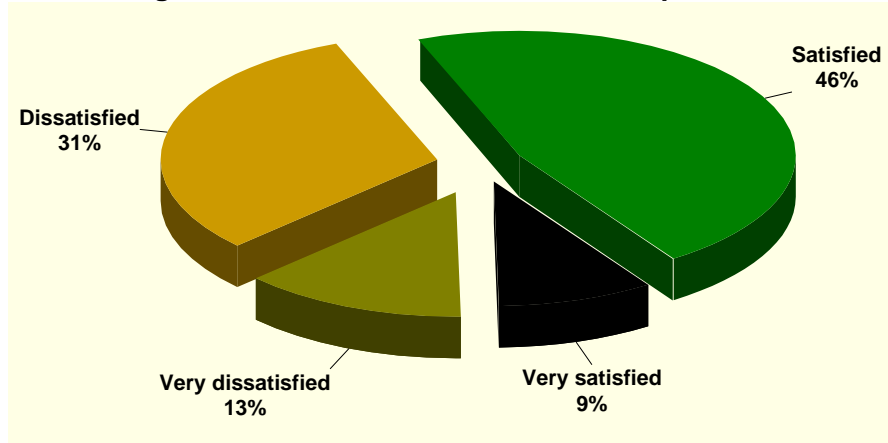
**C. Satisfaction with assistance highest among Hamas supporters**

A 55% majority of respondents who had received some assistance said that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with this aid. A relatively small, 13% share reported that they were very dissatisfied. Generally, it was noted that political affiliation was the strongest determinant of these answers, as detailed in Table 15 below. A full 75% of respondents who lean towards Hamas were satisfied to some extent, compared to 55% of those with no factional affiliation, and 57% of those linked to Fateh. This may be an indication of the ability of Hamas' welfare network to meet the needs of its constituents. Hamas supporters and respondents above the poverty line were the two most satisfied categories of respondents, and with reference to the previous section, it can be noted



that these sub-groups were also most likely to be receiving assistance in other forms but food, most notably as financial help, but also other types of in-kind assistance.

**Figure 23: Satisfaction with assistance provided**



**Table 15: Satisfaction with assistance, by poverty level, region, labor force, and factional trust**

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Poverty	Below poverty	9%	45%	33%	13%
	Above poverty	11%	56%	22%	11%
Region	West Bank	8%	48%	23%	21%
	Gaza Strip	11%	44%	40%	4%
Labor force	Employed	0%	33%	50%	17%
	Partially employed	13%	33%	27%	27%
	Unemployed	17%	33%	42%	8%
Faction	Hamas	15%	60%	25%	0%
	Fateh	9%	48%	30%	12%
	No faction	9%	46%	31%	14%



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