



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

### Bulletin # II-2 – Main Findings

February 2007

*NEC's Bulletin and the surveys associated with it are independent and are not supported or funded by any local or international organization. They are funded entirely from the private resources of the company*

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact:

Jamil Rabah

Near East Consulting

HSBC Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

RAMALLAH

Tel: 02-2961436

Fax: 02-2963114

[info@neareastconsulting.com](mailto:info@neareastconsulting.com)

<http://www.neareastconsulting.com>



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

### I. Introduction

*In the period 12-15 February, 2007, Near East Consulting (NEC) conducted a phone survey of over 1200 randomly selected Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem of which 806 were successfully completed. The survey covered a number of issues that fit into NEC's monthly "Palestinian Political Pulse", "Palestinian Peace Pulse", and "Palestinian Security Monitor" with the aim of regularly monitoring Palestinian perceptions of their living conditions and the political situation. These include, inter-alia, factional trust and trust in political figures, Palestinians' feeling of security since the PLC elections, attitudes towards the domestic political crisis, and support for a peace agreement with Israel. In this bulletin, however, NEC has placed a special focus on the Palestinian perceptions on issues related to the recently signed Mecca agreement.*

*It is worth noting that the margin of error is +/- 3.4% with a 95% confidence level.*

### II. Main findings

#### A. Security and the internal situation:

- 51% of Palestinians feel less secure since the January 2006 elections, as compared to 48% last month, and 44% in December 2006.
- The majority of Palestinians (85%) of the Palestinians continue to be either extremely concerned (55%) or somewhat concerned (30%) about the current situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This constitutes a decrease of 6% since NEC's January 2007 survey.
- 19% are concerned because of the economic hardship that their household is facing (+1% since January), 31% are concerned because of the general absence of security for their families (+5% since January), while 29% remain concerned because of the internal power struggle (-13% since January).
- Despite the recent Mecca agreement, 75% continue to feel insecure with respect to themselves, their family, and their property (+1% since NEC's January 2007 survey).
- 82% of the Palestinians believe that the Executive Force should be integrated within the other security forces (+3% since January).
- While in NEC's January 2007 survey, 43% of Palestinians believed that a civil war was likely, since the Mecca agreement 77% think that this likelihood has decreased, 8% believe that the likelihood of a civil war since the Mecca agreement has increased, and 15% feel that it remained the same.



**B. The Mecca agreement and the future developments:**

- The overwhelming majority of Palestinians (94%) support the Mecca agreement.
- 79% believe that the Mecca agreement will hold.
- Equally, 79% believe that the envisaged Unity government in the Mecca agreement will succeed.
- 63% believe that the embargo against the PA will be lifted as a result of the Mecca agreement.
- 20% believe that Fateh most benefited from the Mecca agreement, 19% feel that Hamas most benefited from the Mecca agreement, while 38% believe that both benefited equally. Although originally not an option to answer in the survey, 23% of the respondents insisted that the Palestinian people most benefited from the Mecca agreement.
- Despite the optimism surrounding the potential of the Mecca agreement, an exact equal percentage of Palestinians as last month (76%) believe that the crisis between Fateh and Hamas will end. In other words, the Mecca agreement did not further influence Palestinian perceptions on this issue.

**C. Factions and leaders:**

- Between trust in Abu Mazen and trust in Ismael Hanieh, 51% most trust the former, while 49% most trust the latter. However, when – more generally – Palestinians are queried about their trust in Palestinian personalities, 22% most trust Ismael Hannieh, while 19% most trust Abu Mazen. Some of the other personalities who receive trust from a proportion of the Palestinian people include: Marwan Barghouti (16%), Khaled Masha'al (9%), Mustafa Barghouti (8%), and Mohammad Dahlan (6%). Although his name was not included in the list of Palestinian personalities, 9% of the respondents still insisted that they most trust the late President Yasser Arafat.
- Very similar to NEC's January 2007 results, 43% believe that the people in their neighbourhood mainly trust Fateh, 33% believe that they mainly trust Hamas, while 21% believe that the people in their neighbourhood do not trust any faction.
- Personally, 34% of the respondents place their trust in Fateh (a drop of 6% in comparison with NEC's January results), 28% most trust Hamas (compared to 26% in January), while 33% do not trust any faction (an increase of 6% since last month). In other words, last month's high level of trust in Fateh has receded as an increasing percentage of respondents again opt not to trust any of the existing factions. The table below outlines factional trust according to region of residence.

	Region of residence		Total
	West Bank	Gaza Strip	WBGS
Hamis	27.0%	28.9%	27.7%
Fateh	30.0%	39.6%	33.7%
PFLP	2.1%	2.6%	2.3%
Islamic Jihad	1.8%	.7%	1.4%
Others	2.8%	1.5%	2.3%
I trust no faction	36.4%	26.7%	32.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



**D. The Palestinian-Israeli context:**

- 70% support a peace settlement with Israel, compared to 72% in January 2007 and 77% in December 2006.
- 51% believe that Hamas should change its position towards the elimination of Israel (a drop of 5% since January 2007, and a 10% drop since December 2006).
- 63% of Palestinians believe that Hamas should use all its efforts to reach a peace agreement with Israel.
- 85% of Palestinians believe that there is a Palestinian peace partner. This indicates an increase of 8% since December 2006, and is the most positive answer since NEC began asking this question in its May 2006 survey.
- Meanwhile, 26% believe that Palestinians have a peace partner in Israel. This indicates a downward trend as in December 2006 still 30% believed that there was a peace partner in Israel, while this was the case for 36% of Palestinians in November 2006. The current results consist of the least pronounced belief that there is a peace partner for Palestinians in Israel since August 2006 (at the height of Israel's war against Hezbollah).
- 62% of Palestinians support the planned meeting on 19 February between Abu Mazen, Ehud Olmert, and Condoleezza Rice.
- While principally 75% of Palestinians do not think that Israel has the right to exist, 70% support a one-state solution in historic Palestine where Muslims, Christians and Jews live together with equal rights and responsibilities.

**E. Poverty conditions**

- The percentage of Palestinians who live under the poverty line is lower than previous months and it stands now at 64% (32% are hardship cases and 32% are below the poverty line).
- Supporters of Fateh seem to be less privileged than other respondents. While the national rate for those below the poverty line is 64%, the percentage is 67% for Fateh supporters and 62% for Hamas supporters. This tendency has been rather consistent every month since March 2006.
- Poverty level is higher in the Gaza Strip (72%) than in the West Bank (59%), as indicated in the table below.

**Poverty according to region of residence**

		Region of residence		Total
		West Bank	Gaza Strip	WBGS
Poverty level	Below the poverty line	59%	72%	64%
	Above the poverty line	41%	28%	36%
Total		100%	100%	100%