



NEC's monthly monitor on the Gaza Strip

“Gaza Monitor”

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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INTRODUCTION

One month ago, Hamas and its Executive Force, in a matter of days, ousted Fateh from its symbolic landmarks and strongholds in the Gaza Strip, and effectively took power there. President Mahmoud Abbas responded by dismissing his Hamas Prime Minister, Ismael Hanieh, and declaring an emergency situation in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Since, an emergency government led by Prime Minister Salaam Fayyad has been established. The international community and Israel embraced the emergency government. The Israeli government released part of the tax revenues that it had withheld from the PA since a Hamas-led government had been in place, which allowed the emergency government to pay public employees in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank their first full salaries in months. However, public employees who were appointed during the tenure of the Hamas-led government and the short-lived national unity government were not to be paid.

Although the international community welcomed the emergency government, the Gaza Strip is kept on a short leash. With the exception of a few humanitarian cases, the borders of the Gaza Strip remain closed in both Rafah and Erez, and prevent Gazans to either exit or return. Humanitarian aid, food, fuel, medicine, and basics trickle in, but not at the same rate as prior to the Hamas take-over. This led UNRWA, the main provider of aid in the Gaza Strip, last week to suspend its interventions in construction as there are insufficient raw materials available to continue.

The current reality is not conducive to the attainment of the Palestinian ultimate aspiration of one viable Palestinian state, based on international law and UN resolutions. In addition to the years-old de facto separation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, since last month, both regions of the oPt seem increasingly removed from each other, as they face different obstacles and challenges, have different actors in actual control, and are dealt with differently by the international community, whether it concerns mere perceptions, diplomacy or actual interventions. Such conditions require regular monitoring of the situation on the ground that could give some insight on what the people in the Gaza Strip make of it all and what they need. This could help policy-makers and decision-makers to design strategies and policies that counter further deterioration of the situation in the Gaza Strip. Therefore, through "the Gaza Monitor" NEC will provide regular updates that specifically concentrate on issues related to the Gaza Strip. The first issue was based on a phone survey of 408 randomly selected Palestinians in the Gaza Strip who are over the age of 18. The survey was conducted between 10-12 July. The confidence level is 95% with a +/-4.8% margin of error.



MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings are summarized below. In addition, most results also reflect the differences in opinions depending on respondents' factional preferences of Hamas or Fateh. This has been done to illustrate the extent of polarization between supporters of these two main Palestinian factions in the Gaza Strip.

On the feeling of security and concern:

- Since the Hamas effective take-over of control in the Gaza Strip, 47% of Gazans feel more **secure**. (Hamas supporters, 91% vs. Fateh supporters, 15%)
- 49% of Gazans feel secure with respect to themselves, their family, and their property compared to 30% in June. (Hamas supporters, 86% vs. Fateh supporters, 20%)
- **Concern** about the current situation has become less acute in the past month. Still, 49% of Gazans remain extremely concerned (Hamas supporters, 15% vs. Fateh supporters, 71%), and 29% remain moderately concerned (Hamas supporters, 23% vs. Fateh supporters, 27%)
- The **main issue of concern** remains the internal power struggle (42%), which seems to be as much as concern for Hamas supporters as Fateh supporters.
- 56% of Gazans believe that since Hamas took power in the Gaza Strip, they are unable to **voice their opinion freely**. (Hamas supporters, 12% vs. Fateh supporters, 88%)
- 69% of Gazans said that the **Hamas take-over** of last month was **wrong** (Hamas supporters, 13% vs. Fateh supporters, 99%)

On factional trust and trust in leadership:

- **Factional trust** in the Gaza Strip: Fateh (41%), Hamas (23%), Islamic Jihad (3%), PFLP (2%), other factions (2%), no faction (30%).
- 64% of Gazans hold the view that the **Fateh strategy** is the best for maximizing Palestinian national interest. (Hamas supporters, 8% vs.



Fateh supporters, 98%) 32% believe that the **Hamas strategy** is the best. (Hamas supporters, 92% vs. Fateh supporters, 2%)

- 63% of Gazans most trust **Abu Mazen** vs. 37% who most trust Ismael **Hanieh** .
- 38% of Gazans most trust Ismael **Hanieh** vs. 62% who most trust Salaam **Fayyad** .
- 42% of Gazans have high **confidence in Salaam Fayyad** (Hamas supporters, 2% vs. Fateh supporters, 72%), 32% have moderate confidence in him (Hamas supporters, 27% vs. Fateh supporters, 26%), while 27% have low confidence in the prime minister (Hamas supporters, 71% vs. Fateh supporters, 2%).
- 56% of Gazans are of the opinion that the **emergency government** is proceeding on the right path (Hamas supporters, 10% vs. Fateh supporters, 91%)

On the economy:

- 68% of Gazans believe that the **economy has worsened** since Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip (Hamas supporters, 24% vs. Fateh supporters, 92%)
- 80% of the respondents reported that the level of **problems** in obtaining materials for business has **increased** since the Hamas take-over of the Gaza Strip.

On the employment situation:

- 66% of the **labor force** is fully employed (Hamas supporters, 76% vs. Fateh supporters, 62%), 6% is partially employed (Hamas supporters, 9% vs. Fateh supporters, 5%), and 28% is unemployed (Hamas supporters, 15% vs. Fateh supporters, 32%).
- 60% of the respondents have household members **employed in the Palestinian Authority** (Hamas supporters, 42% vs. Fateh supporters, 73%). In 63% of the cases, household members employed in the PA recently **received their full salary** (Hamas supporters, 66% vs. Fateh supporters, 66%).



- 48% support the **official government weekend** on Thursday and Friday (Hamas supporters, 87% vs. Fateh supporters, 21%), while 52% prefer a Friday and Saturday weekend (Hamas supporters, 13% vs. Fateh supporters 79%)

On poverty, coping mechanisms, and shortages:

- In the past month, perhaps positively affected by the government employees receiving their first full salaries in a long time, the income **poverty rate** has dropped spectacularly from 76% last month to 55%.
- 39% of households in the Gaza Strip have either exhausted the **coping mechanisms** at their disposal or never had them at their disposal in the first place. Another 16% have coping mechanisms available, and already heavily rely on them.
- 34% of Gazan households suffer from **food shortages**; 37% suffer from shortages in **medication**.
- 57% of Gazans report that the **availability of necessary commodities** for the household has become more difficult since Hamas took effective control of the Gaza Strip.
- 45% of Gazans reported a decrease in the availability of **fuel** in the past month; 62% reported a drop in the availability of **raw materials** since the Hamas take-over in the Gaza Strip.

On options for a resolution to the crisis:

- Out of a number of options as potential **steps to solve the crisis**, 55% of Gazans believe that a national government based on dialogue is the most viable (Hamas supporters, 80% vs. Fateh supporters, 31%), followed by 34% who would prefer early elections (Hamas supporters, 13% vs. Fateh supporters 53%).
- 64% would support a **dialogue** between Fateh and Hamas (Hamas supporters, 86% vs. Fateh supporters, 42%). For 46% this dialogue should take place without **conditions** from either side. 22% would start the dialogue after a return to the pre-14 June situation, 20% set the reform of the PLO to include Hamas as a condition for dialogues, while 12% believe that a dialogue is possible after an apology by Hamas to Fateh.



- 65% would support **early elections** (Hamas supporters, 31% vs. Fateh supporters, 90%).
- **If elections were held today**, 45% of Gazans would vote for Fateh, 22% would vote for Hamas, and 8% would vote for other Palestinian factions. 25% would not participate in these elections (Hamas supporters, 19% vs. Fateh supporters, 2%).
- 84% would support **Fateh** in future elections if it **reforms** itself. This is the case for 99% of Fateh supporters, and, strikingly, 60% of Hamas supporters.
- 54% of Gazans believe that the armed **military wings** of all factions should be dissolved (Hamas supporters, 35% vs. Fateh supporters, 63%), while 35% hold the view that these armed wings should be kept as they are (Hamas supporters, 56% vs. Fateh supporters, 20%). 8% say that the military wing of Hamas should be dissolved, while 2% believe that the Fateh military wing should be dissolved.
- 88% oppose the policy of **detaining** some **Hamas supporters** in the West Bank (Hamas supporters, 100% vs. Fateh supporters, 76%).
- 72% are opposed to the call for international peacekeepers in the Gaza Strip (Hamas supporters, 93% vs. Fateh supporters, 50%).
- 35% of Gazans are considering **leaving the Gaza Strip** (Hamas supporters, 13% vs. Fateh supporters, 48%).



FEELING OF SECURITY AND CONCERN

Probably one of the few more positive results this month concerns the feeling of security among Gazans since Hamas won the PLC elections. Until last month, 66% of the respondents felt less secure since the January 2006 elections, and a mere 18% felt more secure. This time, about half of the respondents (49%) said that they feel less secure since Hamas won the PLC elections, while 32% feel more secure, and 19% said that their feeling of security remained unchanged since the January 2006 PLC elections. While 73% of Hamas supporters feel *more* secure in the past 18 months, 73% of Fateh supporters feel *less* secure.

Feeling of security since Hamas won the PLC elections				
		I feel more secure	I feel less secure	My feeling of security remained the same
Factional trust	Hamas	73%	11%	16%
	Fateh	11%	73%	16%
	PFLP	13%	50%	38%
	Others	18%	41%	41%
	Do not trust any	33%	45%	22%
Total		32%	49%	19%

When Gazans are asked about the evolution in their feeling of security since the Hamas take over of the Gaza Strip last month, slightly less than half (47%) feel more secure, 35% feel less secure, while for 19% the feeling of security was not affected. An overwhelming 91% of Hamas supporters feel *more* secure since last month's dramatic showdown, while 64% of Fateh supporters feel *less* secure since that time.

Feeling of security since Hamas took over the Gaza Strip				
		I feel more secure	I feel less secure	My feeling of security remained the same
Factional trust	Hamas	91%	1%	8%
	Fateh	15%	64%	22%
	PFLP	38%	38%	25%
	Others	47%	29%	24%
	None	57%	21%	21%
Total		47%	35%	19%



When the question on feeling of security is linked with the formation of the emergency government, this development made 29% of Gazans feel more secure, 14% less secure, while it did not affect the feeling of security of 57%. Although there are detectable differences in opinion on this issue depending on Gazans' factional preferences, they are not as extreme as they were in the former questions. This might be an indication that people in the Gaza Strip are not really pre-occupied with the existence of the emergency government and its potential impact on their security. Although the emergency government contains some ministers from the Gaza Strip, they are removed from Gazans' daily lives as they are in the West Bank.

Feeling of security after the formation of the emergency government				
		I feel more secure	I feel less secure	My feeling of security remained the same
Factional trust	Hamas	24%	14%	62%
	Fateh	38%	11%	52%
	PFLP	25%	0%	75%
	Others	35%	12%	53%
	None	21%	21%	58%
Total		29%	14%	57%

Gazans evaluation of the capability of Minister of Interior Abdul Razzaq Al Yahia to control the security illustrates the skepticism that a member of the emergency government could really make a difference in the Gaza Strip. Overall, 38% of Gazans believe that Abdul Razzaq Al Yahia will be able to control the security situation. This belief is stronger among Fateh supporters (52%) and Gazans who do not trust any faction (41%) than among Hamas supporters (15%).

Capability of Minister of Interior Abdul Razzaq Al Yahia to control the security situation			
		Yes	No
Factional trust	Hamas	15%	85%
	Fateh	52%	48%
	PFLP	14%	86%
	Others	40%	60%
	None	41%	59%
Total		38%	62%



The return of some sense of normality to the streets of the Gaza Strip with a relative quiet month in terms of factional infighting has positively influenced Gazans' feeling of security whether it concerns themselves, their family or their property. While last month a mere 30% felt secure about themselves, their family and their property, the sense of security has since somewhat recovered as in this most recent survey 49% feel secure in this respect. As can be seen in the table below, the feeling of security is particularly strong among Hamas supporters (86%) when compared to the feeling of security among Gazans with differing factional preferences.

Feeling of security with respect to yourself, family and property			
		I feel secure	I do not feel secure
Factional trust	Hamas	86%	14%
	Fateh	20%	80%
	PFLP	50%	50%
	Others	53%	47%
	None	58%	42%
Total		49%	51%

A substantial percentage of Gazans continue to be concerned about the current situation. However, their concern has become less acute as 49% remain extremely concerned compared to 69% last month, and 29% are now moderately concerned compared to 13% in June. Although some Hamas supporters are concerned about the current situation, they are the minority when compared to Gazans who do not support Hamas.

		Level of concern about the current situation			
		Extremely concerned	Concerned to some extent	Not very concerned	Not concerned at all
Factional trust	Hamas	15%	23%	36%	26%
	Fateh	71%	27%	1%	1%
	PFLP	75%	25%	0%	0%
	Others	53%	29%	12%	6%
	None	42%	38%	4%	16%
Total		49%	29%	11%	11%

The internal power struggle remains the main reason behind Gazans' concern (42%), followed in a shared second place by "the absence of security" (25%) and "the economic hardship of the household" (25%). Noticeable in the table below, is that the lowest percentage of concern about "economic hardship for the household" and "the absence of security for the family" can be found among Hamas supporters. Conversely, 14% of Hamas supporters have no concerns.



The main issue that makes you feel concerned							
		The economic hardship of my household	The absence of security for me and my family	The internal power struggle	Israeli occupation	Family problems	None
Factional trust	Hamas	17%	14%	45%	9%	2%	14%
	Fateh	21%	34%	42%	1%	0%	3%
	PFLP	25%	25%	50%	0%	0%	0%
	Others	24%	24%	35%	12%	6%	0%
	None	36%	17%	40%	2%	1%	4%
Total		25%	25%	42%	3%	1%	5%

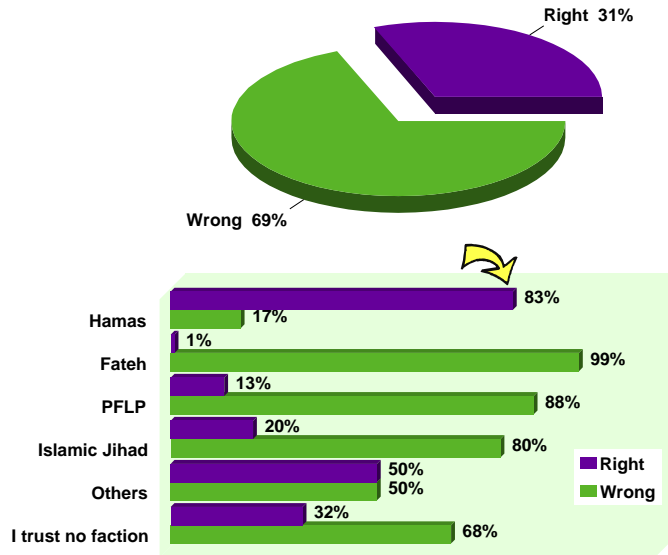
The lack of ability among Gazans to voice their opinions freely might become another issue for concern in the future. In general, a majority of 56% of Gazans currently feel unable to voice their opinion freely. This seems to particularly affect people with affiliations to Fateh (88%), but also those with other factional affiliations. A mere 12% of Hamas supporters say that they are unable to voice their opinion freely.

Ability to voice your opinion since Hamas took power in Gaza			
		Able	Unable
Factional trust	Hamas	88%	12%
	Fateh	12%	88%
	PFLP	38%	63%
	Others	38%	63%
	None	55%	45%
Total		44%	56%

Still, perhaps partly as a result of the anonymity associated with randomly selected phone interviews, people in the Gaza Strip quite categorically expressed their dismay with the Hamas take-over of power last month. As overviewed in the figure below, a majority of 69% believe that the take-over by Hamas was wrong. Expectedly, a near absolute majority of Fateh supporters (99%) stated that the Hamas takeover in the Gaza Strip was wrong, while – to the opposite – 83% of Hamas supporters said that this take-over of power was right.



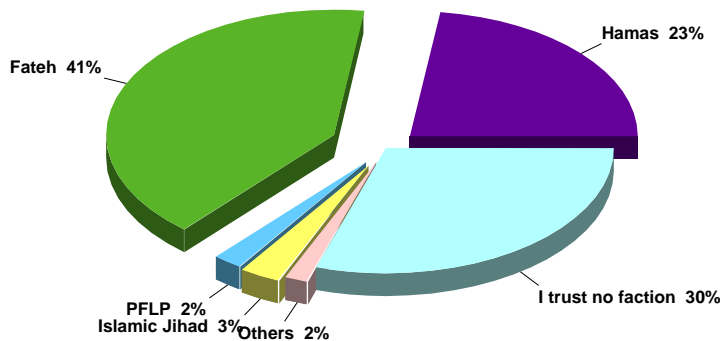
Is the Hamas takeover of Gaza last month right or wrong?



FACTIONAL TRUST AND TRUST IN LEADERSHIP

Fateh has gained substantial support in the Gaza Strip in comparison to last month. In NEC's June survey that was conducted immediately after Hamas through street fighting took over power in the Gaza Strip, 32% most trusted Fateh, 26% most trusted Hamas, while 36% did not trust any faction. Now one month after the violent showdown, Hamas did not lose a lot of support (23%), but a portion of the people who in June did not trust any faction are now clearly showing their colors by placing their trust back into Fateh (41%).

Factional trust





The majority of Gazans (64%) also continue to believe that the Fateh strategy remains better than the Hamas strategy to maximize Palestinian national interest. In the NEC June survey, 61% of Gazans shared this opinion. Independent of their political preferences, a majority of Gazans prefer the Fateh strategy over the Hamas one, except for Hamas supporters (8%).

The best strategy for maximizing Palestinian national interest		
	Fateh Strategy	Hamas Strategy
Factional trust		
Hamas	8%	92%
Fateh	98%	2%
PFLP	80%	20%
Others	75%	25%
None	53%	47%
Total	64%	36%

The trust in President Mahmoud Abbas versus the trust in the dismissed Prime Minister Ismael Hanieh has also remained stable over the past month. Currently, 63% of Gazans most trust Abu Mazen, while 37% most trust Ismael Hanieh. All Fateh supporters (100%) most trust Abu Mazen, while nearly all Hamas supporters (95%) most trust Ismael Hanieh.

For the first time this month, NEC also asks about people's trust in ex- Prime Minister Ismael Hanieh versus current Prime Minister Salaam Fayyad. Even in the Gaza Strip, Salaam Fayyad enjoys a higher level of trust (62%) than Ismael Hanieh (38%). With the exception of Hamas supporters, the majority of Gazans, independent of their political affiliation, trust Salaam Fayyad over Ismael Hanieh.

		Trust in Abu Mazen vs. Ismael Hanieh		Trust in Ismael Hanieh vs. Salaam Fayyad	
		Abu Mazen	Ismael Hanieh	Ismael Hanieh	Salaam Fayyad
Factional trust	Hamas	5%	95%	92%	8%
	Fateh	100%	0%	2%	98%
	PFLP	100%	0%	0%	100%
	Others	62%	38%	46%	54%
	None	55%	45%	47%	53%
	Total	63%	37%	38%	62%

When Palestinians are asked about their level of confidence in Salaam Fayyad without having to compare him with other political leaders, 42% of Gazans have high confidence in him, 32% have moderate confidence in the Prime Minister, while 27% have low confidence. Although Salaam Fayyad can only



count on the high confidence of 2% of Hamas supporters, he enjoys moderate confidence among 27% of them.

		Level of confidence in Salaam Fayyad		
		High	Middle	Low
Factional trust	Hamas	2%	27%	71%
	Fateh	72%	26%	2%
	PFLP	25%	50%	25%
	Others	29%	53%	18%
	None	32%	39%	29%
Total		42%	32%	27%

As for the newly established emergency government, 56% of Gazans believe that it is moving on the right path. Expectedly, the lowest percentage of Gazans who believe that the emergency government is proceeding correctly can be found among Hamas supporters (10%).

		Is the emergency government proceeding on the right path?	
		Yes	No
Factional trust	Hamas	10%	90%
	Fateh	91%	9%
	PFLP	38%	63%
	Others	63%	38%
	None	46%	54%
Total		56%	44%

ECONOMY

Given the near total seal-off with only limited goods entering the Strip and virtually no Gazans allowed to exit or enter, a viable economy remains a distant possibility. In the Gaza Strip, the population seems to notice it all but too well. Overall, 68% of Gazans say that the economic situation in the Gaza Strip has worsened since Hamas took control, 27% believe that it remained the same, while 6% say that the economy improved in the past month. The view that the economic situation has remained the same (63%) or even improved (13%) since the Hamas take-over is most widely held among Hamas supporters. With the exception of Hamas supporters, the majority of Gazans, independent of their political affiliation, hold the view that the economy has taken a down-turn in the past month.



Has the economy improved, worsened or remained the same since Hamas took control in Gaza?				
		Improved	Worsened	Remained the same
Factional trust	Hamas	13%	24%	63%
	Fateh	2%	92%	6%
	PFLP	0%	88%	13%
	Others	0%	65%	35%
	None	6%	67%	27%
Total		6%	68%	27%

The worsening economic environment in the Gaza Strip can be exemplified by the high number of Gazans involved in business that face increasing problems in obtaining goods and materials necessary to run their business. A majority of 80% face more problems since the Hamas take-over. Even 66% of Hamas supporters accept this reality. A mere 10% say that their difficulty in obtaining goods and materials to run their business has remained the same, while the last 10% believe that they now face less problems in obtaining goods than before Hamas took over power in the Gaza Strip.

Level of problems faced by household members since the Hamas take-over in obtaining materials for their business				
		More problems	Less problems	The same problems
Factional trust	Hamas	66%	17%	17%
	Fateh	84%	9%	7%
	PFLP	75%	25%	0%
	Others	92%	0%	8%
	None	81%	8%	10%
Total		80%	10%	10%

EMPLOYMENT

At first sight, employment of the labor force seems to have remained stable as 65% were employed last month, and 66% are currently employed in the Gaza Strip. However, a significant shift has taken place over the past month with respect to partial employment and unemployment. Whereas 14% of the labor force was still partially employed in June 2007, this percentage has dropped by 8 points now. Similarly, unemployment in the labor force has increased by 7% from 21% last June to 28% in the current survey.

The portion of fully employed Hamas supporters in the labor force has increased from 67% last June to 76% now, unemployed Hamas supporters have increased by 3%, while the portion of partially employed Hamas supporters has dropped from 21% last June to 9% currently. For Fateh



supporters, full employment has increased by 3% in the past month, partial employment has decreased by 9%, while unemployment has risen by 5% to 27% in the same time-span. As can be seen from the results in the table below, twice the percentage of Fateh supporters than Hamas supporters in the labour force are unemployed. This was already the case last month prior to the Hamas take-over. However, since last month, a large portion of the partially employed Hamas supporters seem to have become fully employed, while a large portion of partially employed Fateh supporters seem to have become unemployed.

		Labor force		
		Employed	Partly employed	Unemployed
Factional trust	Hamas	76%	9%	15%
	Fateh	62%	5%	32%
	PFLP	20%	20%	60%
	Others	55%	9%	36%
	None	72%	4%	24%
Total		66%	6%	28%

In the survey sample, 60% of the respondents reported that their household includes persons that are employed by the Palestinian Authority. This is the case among a significantly higher percentage of Fateh supporting respondents (73%) than among Hamas supporting respondents (42%).

As the emergency government recently for the first time in many months was able to pay its employees their first full monthly salary, respondents with household members employed in the PA were asked if these persons had also received their full salary. In 63% of the cases, household members employed in the PA had, indeed, recently received their full salary. As the emergency government had specified that public employees who support Hamas would not receive their salaries, it is interesting to point out in the table below, that the same percentage of household members of respondents who are Fateh affiliated and those who are Hamas affiliated (66%) said that their household members employed in the PA had recently received their full salary.

		Are any household members employed in the PA?		Did the household member(s) employed in the PA receive their salary?	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Factional trust	Hamas	42%	58%	66%	34%
	Fateh	73%	27%	66%	34%
	PFLP	63%	38%	20%	80%
	Others	41%	59%	75%	25%
	None	59%	41%	57%	43%
Total		60%	40%	63%	37%



The Hamas-led unity government had changed the official weekend for public employees from Friday and Saturday to Thursday and Friday. However, the emergency government changed the weekend back to Friday and Saturday. In the Gaza Strip, the change of the weekend did not go smoothly, with public employees wanting to go to work on Thursdays being prevented from doing so.

When respondents in the survey were asked about their preferences for their weekly days off, opinions were quite evenly split: 52% favor Friday and Saturday as their weekends, and 48% prefer Thursday and Friday off work. Remarkably and again, the preference for weekends is also influenced by the respondents' factional affiliation: 87% of Hamas supporters want the weekend to be on Thursday and Friday, and 79% of Fateh supporters favor a weekend on Friday and Saturday.

Support official government holiday on Thursday/Friday or Friday /Saturday			
		Thursday/Friday	Friday/Saturday
Factional trust	Hamas	87%	13%
	Fateh	21%	79%
	PFLP	33%	67%
	Others	50%	50%
	None	57%	43%
Total		48%	52%

POVERTY, COPING MECHANISMS, AND SHORTAGES

With an increase of the unemployment rate witnessed in the Gaza Strip over the past month, similar dramatic income-based poverty rates¹ as in the past months would be expected. However, in comparison to the previous months the poverty rate this month has dropped. In June, 76% of Gazans had a household income that fell below the poverty line². In the past month, the poverty rate has dropped spectacularly to 55%. It has been since August 2006 that the poverty rate in the Gaza Strip fell below 70%, and the last time the poverty rate was within the 50% range dates back to March 2006. The inability of the PA to pay the salaries of its employees occurred at that time, leading the income poverty rate to skyrocket in the following months.

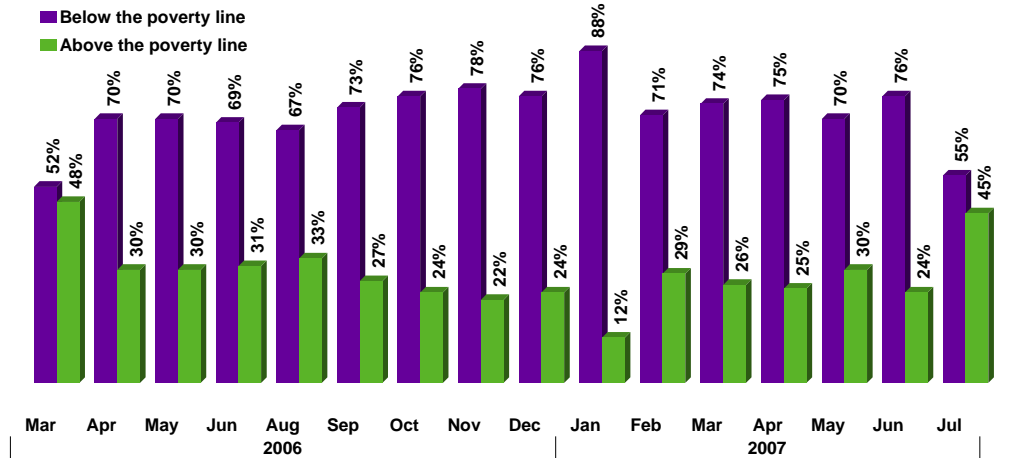
¹ The poverty analysis is based on income, not on consumption. The poverty level is constructed on the basis of the reported household income and the household size, whereby the poverty line established by Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) is used to establish which households are poor and which ones are not.

² Households of 2 adults and four children with a monthly household income of approximately NIS 2,000 (US\$501.2) or less fall below the poverty line.



Now that the PA has finally last week paid its employees their full salaries, it has positively affected the income poverty rate.

Poverty levels in the Gaza Strip since March 2006

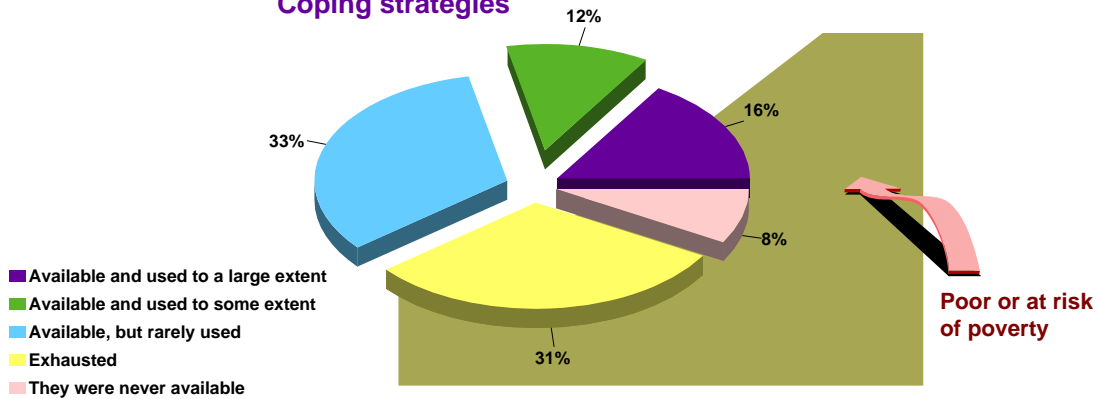


Persistent high income poverty rates since the first trimester of 2006 have forced many households to draw on a variety of other resources than the main household income. However, a significant number of households never had such resources or coping mechanisms to rely on or over time have exhausted these mechanisms. This applies to 39% of the households in the Gaza Strip. About 16% of the Gazan households still have coping mechanisms at their disposal, and already heavily rely on them. Another 12% use the coping mechanisms at their disposal to some extent. Another third of Gazan households rarely rely on their available coping mechanisms.

Although the picture in terms of availability and reliance in the Gaza Strip is bleak, if the income poverty rate begins to drop, as was the case this month, the reliance on these coping mechanisms could subside substantially. However, the households that no longer have coping mechanisms available will remain vulnerable to loss of income and poverty as they have no means other than income to protect themselves against hardship.

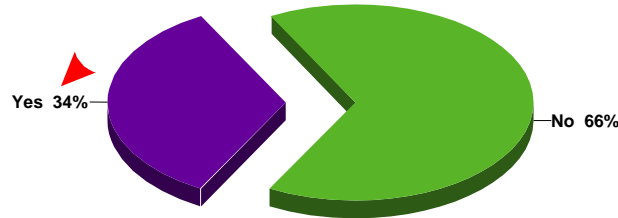


Coping strategies

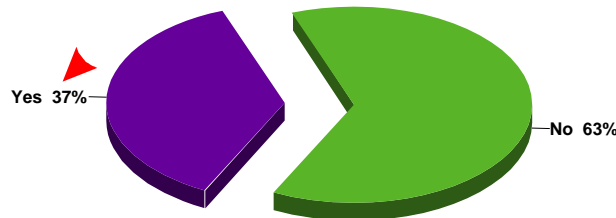


The Gaza Strip is not only faced with high unemployment rates, dropped but still impressive poverty rates, and a significant portion of the population that have no coping mechanisms left, but is now also confronted with an near total closure of its borders. Humanitarian assistance, such as food and medicine, is again entering the Gaza Strip, but not at the rates prior to the 14 June Hamas take-over of power. This seems to be already negatively affecting over one third of the Gazan households. As illustrated in the figure below, 34% of households suffer from food shortages, and 37% suffer from shortages in medication.

Does your household suffer from food shortages?



Does your household suffer from shortages in medication?

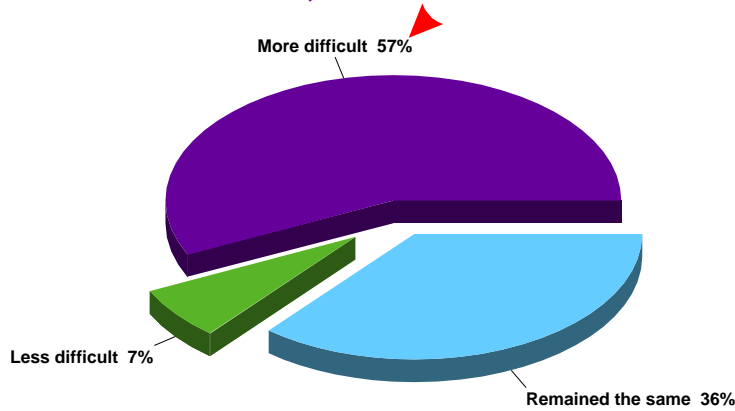


Put in a more general fashion, 57% of households in the Gaza Strip affirm that it has become more difficult to obtain necessary commodities since Hamas took control. For 36% of households getting hold of necessary



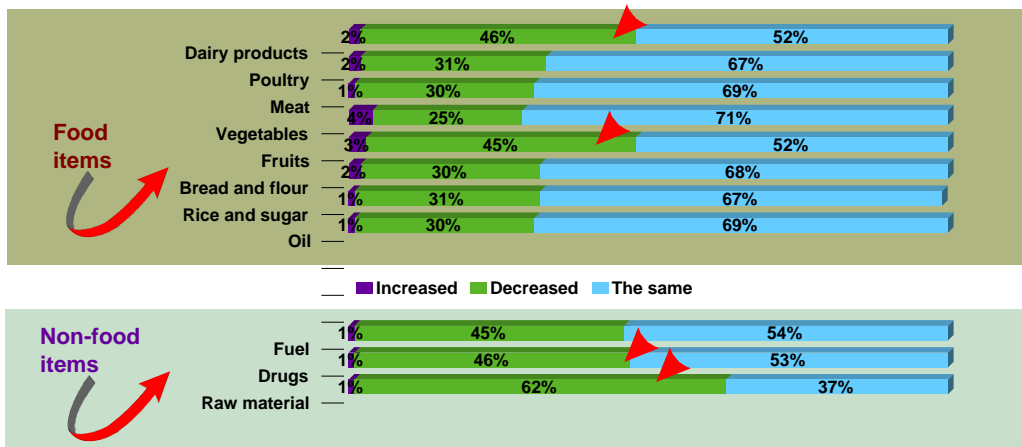
commodities did not become more difficult after 14 June, while for 7% it even became less difficult.

Since Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip, has the availability of commodities necessary for your household become more difficult, less difficult, or remained the same?



Respondents in the survey were also asked about the availability of various food items and non-food items since Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip last month. As illustrated below, the majority of households do not seem to have experienced much change in the availability of these various commodities in the past month. Among the food items, however, especially the availability of dairy products (46%) and vegetables (45%) seems to have decreased. Among the non-food items, 45% reported a decrease in the availability of fuel, 46% in the availability of medicine, and 62% in the availability of raw materials.

Since Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip, has the availability of the following increased, decreased, or remained the same?





OPTIONS FOR A RESOLUTION TO THE CRISIS

The results discussed in this bulletin point to dire and complex circumstances, not only politically, but also socio-economically. The violent showdown of last month in the Gaza Strip between Hamas and Fateh has led to a situation that could have far-reaching consequences if not addressed fast and delicately. In order to shed some light on what the population in the Gaza Strip thinks and could envisage as potential options to resolve the crisis, NEC has included some questions in its survey that tackle these issues.

Out of a number of options as potential steps to solve the crisis, overviewed in the table below, 55% of Gazans believe that a national government based on dialogue is the most viable, followed by 34% who would prefer early elections. While Fateh supporters opt more for the latter (53%), Hamas supporters tend to go more for the former (80%). The results also clearly show that a separation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is not even considered as an option out of the crisis, irrespective of the political affiliation of the respondents.

		Preferred step to solve the current crisis				
		Early elections	National government based on dialogue	Dissolve the military wings	Push the peace process	Separation between GS and WB
Factional trust	Hamas	13%	80%	2%	5%	0%
	Fateh	53%	31%	8%	7%	1%
	PFLP	50%	38%	0%	13%	0%
	Others	29%	47%	0%	18%	6%
	Do not trust any	22%	71%	4%	4%	0%
Total		34%	55%	5%	6%	1%

When asked specifically about support or opposition to a dialogue between Fateh and Hamas, 64% of Gazans would support such a dialogue. However, support for this inter-factional dialogue is far more pronounced among Hamas supporters (86%) than among Fateh supporters (42%).

		Support or opposition to dialogue between Fateh and Hamas	
		Support	Oppose
Factional trust	Hamas	86%	14%
	Fateh	42%	58%
	PFLP	63%	38%
	Others	76%	24%
	None	74%	26%
Total		64%	36%



As for the potential conditions that could be set to kick-start a dialogue between Fateh and Hamas, 46% of Gazans believe that there should be no conditions put from either party, 22% believe that the return to the pre-14 June in the Gaza Strip is necessary before a dialogue can begin, while 20% hold the view that the PLO should first be reformed to include Hamas. The remaining 12% are of the opinion that an apology by Hamas to Fateh would qualify as a condition to start the inter-factional dialogue.

The view that the inter-factional dialogue should start without conditions from either side or should, alternatively, start on the condition that the PLO is reformed to include Hamas is most commonly held among Hamas supporters. The options of a return to the situation in the Gaza Strip prior to 14 June and an apology by Hamas to Fateh are mostly seen as potential conditions to start a dialogue among Fateh supporters.

Potential conditions to start the dialogue					
		Without conditions from either side	The return to pre 14th June	Reformation of the PLO to include Hamas	The apology by Hamas to Fateh
Factional trust	Hamas	68%	7%	20%	5%
	Fateh	24%	44%	10%	23%
	PFLP	80%	0%	20%	0%
	Others	38%	31%	23%	8%
	Do not trust any	47%	16%	28%	9%
Total		46%	22%	20%	12%

When solely asked about support or opposition to early elections, 65% would support such elections. As such, support for inter-factional dialogue (as discussed above) and support for early elections is similar, if they are not asked as two options from which to choose, but seen separately. However, whereas inter-factional dialogue was preferred by more Hamas supporters than Fateh supporters, the option of early elections is preferred by more Fateh supporters (90%) than Hamas supporters (31%).

Support or opposition to new early elections			
		Support	Oppose
Factional trust	Hamas	31%	69%
	Fateh	90%	10%
	PFLP	63%	38%
	Others	59%	41%
	None	59%	41%
Total		65%	35%



If early elections would be held today, Fateh would come out as a winner in the Gazan ballot boxes as 45% said that they would vote for it, 22% would vote for Hamas, and 8% would vote for other Palestinian factions. One quarter of the potential electorate in the Gaza Strip, however, would not participate in any new elections. Expectedly, an overwhelming majority of Fateh supporters (92%) would vote for Fateh candidates, and 78% of Hamas supporters would vote for Hamas candidates. Interestingly, whereas only 2% of Fateh supporters said that they would not vote in early elections, this is the case for 19% of Hamas supporters. Also, if elections were held today, Fateh more so than Hamas would be able to count on votes from Gazans who really do not trust any faction, but would still vote.

		Faction you will vote for if elections were held today			
		Fateh	Hamas	Others	None/I will not participate
Factional trust	Hamas	1%	78%	2%	19%
	Fateh	92%	1%	5%	2%
	PFLP	25%	0%	13%	63%
	Others	29%	12%	18%	41%
	None	17%	12%	15%	57%
Total		45%	22%	8%	25%

The results in the table below, suggest that Fateh would be even more on a winning track if it restructures itself. An overwhelming 84% of Gazans would support Fateh in future elections if it reforms itself. Strikingly, 60% of Hamas supporters would also support Fateh in future elections if it reforms itself. These results seem to underpin the argument that was made when Fateh lost the January 2006 elections in that a considerable number of voters at that time voted for Hamas out of protest against Fateh rather than out of ideological conviction with Hamas' ideology.

Will you support Fateh in future elections if it reforms itself?			
		Yes	No
Factional trust	Hamas	60%	40%
	Fateh	99%	1%
	PFLP	63%	38%
	Others	94%	6%
	None	80%	20%
Total		84%	16%

Another often talked about option to resolve the crisis is to dissolve the armed military wings of the Palestinian factions. In recent weeks, President



Mahmoud Abbas has called on these groups to disarm, but his call was received by mixed reactions as many argue that they want to stay armed in order to be able to resist Israel.

A majority of 54% of the respondents in the Gaza Strip believe that the armed military wings of all Palestinian factions should be dissolved, 8% believe that the armed wing of Hamas should be dissolved, 2% are of the opinion that the armed wing of Fateh should be dissolved, while 35% hold the view that the armed wings of factions should be kept as they are.

The lowest support for the dissolution of the armed military wings of all factions can be found among Hamas supporters (35%), while the highest support for keeping the armed groups as they are is also among Hamas supporters (56%). The opposite is the case for Fateh supporters: 63% of them want all military wings dissolved, while 20% prefer to keep them as they are.

What should be done about the armed military wings of the Palestinian factions?					
		Dissolve all	Dissolve the Hamas wing	Dissolve the Fateh military wing	Keep them as is
Factional trust	Hamas	35%	1%	8%	56%
	Fateh	63%	17%	1%	20%
	PFLP	63%	13%	0%	25%
	Others	41%	12%	6%	41%
	Do not trust any	59%	2%	0%	39%
Total		54%	8%	2%	35%

After the June Hamas take-over of power in the Gaza Strip, there were reports that some Hamas supporters in the West Bank were being detained. The majority of 88% of Gazans are opposed to this policy and do not consider it as conducive to solving the Palestinian internal crisis. Whereas all Hamas supporters (100%) are opposed to this policy, 76% of Fateh supporters are also opposed to it.

Support or opposition to the policy of detaining some Hamas supporters in the West Bank			
		Support	Oppose
Factional trust	Hamas	0%	100%
	Fateh	24%	76%
	PFLP	0%	100%
	Others	6%	94%
	None	7%	93%
Total		12%	88%



In the aftermath of the violent Fateh-Hamas showdown in the Gaza Strip last month, President Mahmoud Abbas has called upon the international community to send international peacekeepers to the Gaza Strip. However, 72% of Gazans are opposed to such a call for international peacekeepers in the Gaza Strip as an option to resolve the internal conflict. Fateh supporters are equally divided in their opinions on this matter, while 93% of Hamas supporters are opposed to the call for international peacekeepers in the Gaza Strip.

Support or opposition to the call for international peacekeepers in the Gaza Strip			
		Support	Oppose
Factional trust	Hamas	7%	93%
	Fateh	50%	50%
	PFLP	38%	63%
	Others	24%	76%
	None	14%	86%
Total		28%	72%

For a considerable number of Gazans, the possible options to resolve the internal Palestinian crisis do not seem to be credible or workable enough. Over 1/3rd of the respondents, 35%, admit that they and/or their household members are considering leaving the Gaza Strip. The thoughts of immigrating from the Gaza Strip are least frequent among Hamas supporters (13%), but, for example 48% of Fateh supporters, 59% of those who trust other factions, and 31% of those who not trust any faction are part of households where the idea of immigration is on the table.

		Are you or any household members thinking about leaving the Gaza Strip?	
		Yes	No
Factional trust	Hamas	13%	87%
	Fateh	48%	52%
	PFLP	50%	50%
	Others	59%	41%
	None	31%	69%
Total		35%	65%
