



NEC's monthly bulletin on Palestinian perceptions towards their political, economic, and social conditions

“Palestinian Political Pulse”

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NEC's monthly bulletin on Palestinian perceptions towards their political, economic, and social conditions

1. Introduction

During the period 1-4 November, 2006, Near East Consulting (NEC) conducted a phone survey of over 1220 randomly selected Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem of which 780 were successfully completed. The survey covered a number of issues that fit into NEC's monthly "Palestinian Political Pulse", "Palestinian Peace Pulse", "Palestinian Security Monitor" and "Palestinian Social Monitor" with the aim of regularly monitoring Palestinian perceptions of their living conditions and the political situation over time. These include: factional trust and trust in political figures, Palestinians' feeling of security since the PLC elections, attitude towards the domestic political crisis, support for a peace agreement with Israel, support for a ceasefire, perceptions on whether or not there is a peace partner in Israel, perceptions on whether or not there is a Palestinian peace partner and opinions on whether or not Hamas should maintain its position on the elimination of Israel. The survey also covered the issue of depression in the oPt, which fits into NEC's newly established social monitor.

It is worth noting that the margin of error is +/- 3.43% with a 95% confidence level.

2. Main Findings

- 70% of the Palestinians over the age of 18 are 'depressed' and 21% are 'not depressed'. Depression levels among Gaza residents is higher than that among their brethren in the West Bank;
- 41% attribute their concern and 'depression' to **economic hardship**, a 5% increase since last month. The **absence of security** became the second reason for this feeling with a rate of 25% after the problem of **internal power struggle** dropped from 26% in October to 16% in November.
- **Economic hardship** is more of a problem to Fateh respondents and the respondents who do not trust any faction than to Hamas respondents.
- 68% of the respondents are below the poverty line, an increase of 1% over the last month. The percentage of households that live in extreme poverty stands at 37%. Extreme poverty is significantly higher in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank.
- Although 77% of the respondents stated that the income of their household remained the same over the past three months, only 1% said that it increased while 22% said that it decreased;
- 33% of the respondents said that the main breadwinner has not been paid in the past three months and 7% said that the breadwinner of the household had lost his/her job during that period. Only 1% said that the main breadwinner has acquired a new job. Additionally, 84% said that making ends meet has become more difficult



in the past three months. This might be attributed to the exhaustion of the coping strategies;

- 45% of the respondents said that the main income of their households is from salaries, 28% said it is from the family business. However, 5% said that their main source of income is from assistance. Selling property or other income sources do not seem to be very important to most of the households.
- It is unlikely that the economic condition will improve without improvement in the salary situation especially of government employees. As 45% of the Palestinians households depend on salaries for income and as most salaried employees are government employees who were not paid in recent months, attempts to resolve the alarming economic conditions in the oPt will have to be innovative and targeted towards these civil servants if they are to make a considerable **recovery**.
- 47% of the respondents said that they feel less secure since the January elections. This feeling of insecurity is higher in the Gaza Strip (54%) than in the West Bank (41%). Only 11% said that they feel more secure nowadays. Economic hardship is more a reason to feel insecure among Fateh respondents and among those who do not trust any faction than among Hamas respondents who are more concerned about the security situation;
- 67% of the respondents oppose an expansion of the Hamas-established “Executive Force” into the West Bank;
- More Palestinians trust Abu Mazen (55%) than Ismael Hanieh (45%). President Abbas seems to have strong support in the Gaza Strip where 60% stated their support to him. Support for the President in the West Bank is almost equal to that of Prime Minister Hanieh;
- In case of presidential elections Mahmoud Abbas seems to be the frontrunner as 34% mentioned him as their choice for president compared to 21% who mentioned Marwan Barghouti, and 18% who mentioned Ismael Hanieh. When asked whether Abbas should step down as a president, 70% said he should remain as president and only 30% said that he should step down.
- Support for Fateh has increased from 30% in October to 33% in November. Support for Hamas remained stable at 25%. The majority of the respondents (37%) said that they do not trust any faction. Still, more Palestinians find Hamas to be responsible as a government than they find Fateh as an opposition;
- Blame for the current crisis is equally put on Fateh and Hamas. This equal split is also reflected in the percentage of respondents who want the Hamas government to step down and those who want it to remain.
- The majority (61%) of Palestinians want Abbas to form a national unity government, while 20% want him to call for new elections. Only 9% would like to see a government composed of technocrats, indicating that respondents prefer the government to be composed of politicians rather than of technocrats;
- 79% of the respondents want the next government to be composed of all factions. Only a small percentage want an exclusively Fateh government (6%) or a Hamas government (2%). Only 9% want to see a government composed solely of a combination of Fateh and Hamas;
- Opinions about who should control the next government are equally split with 50% wanting it to be controlled by Fateh and 50% wanting it to be controlled by Hamas;
- When asked to evaluate the performance of Fateh and Hamas according to a scale from 0 to 10, 41% ranked Fateh positively and 40% ranked Hamas positively. The



PLC was ranked even lower as only 31% of the respondents evaluated it positively. **The low rating of both Fateh and Hamas leads to the conclusion that the presidency might be the way out of both the crisis and the inability of either faction to solve the impeding problems;**

- Support for a peace settlement remained at the same level as last month. However, support for a ceasefire with Israel slightly dropped from 87% in October to 83% now.
- The renewed Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip could be the reason behind the increase in support for the position of Hamas towards Israel. While in October 66% of the respondents said that Hamas should change its position towards the 'elimination' of Israel, the percentage dropped to 60% in November.
- 75% if the Palestinian public supports the Iranian nuclear program.

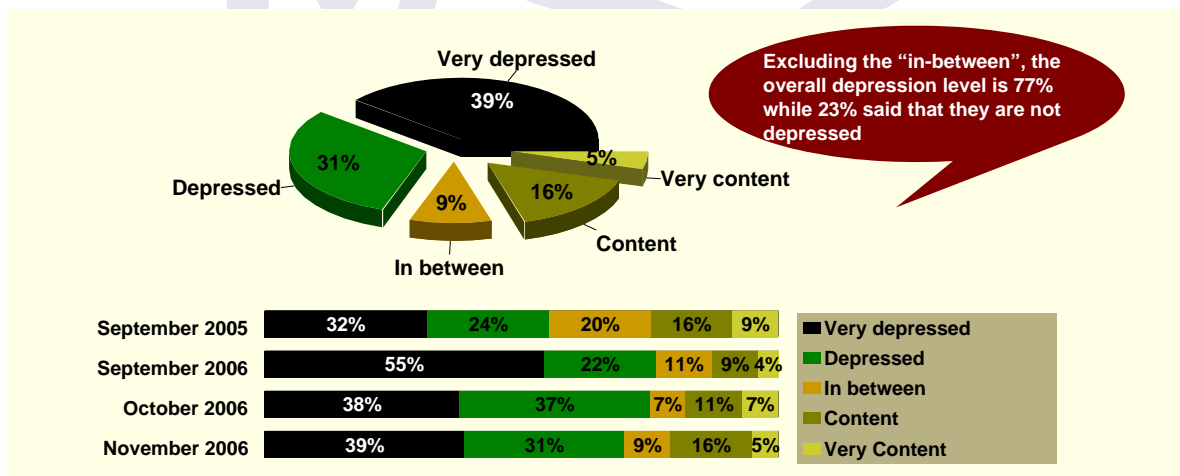
3. The social monitor¹

3.1. Depression levels

The 'depression' level among Palestinians is based on a set of questions that are asked to the respondents. The questions pertain to the feelings of being in good spirit, relaxed, energized, healthy, and if life was interesting to them. The answers are then computed to form the depression indicator that is used in this report.

In general, 70% of the respondents are either depressed or very depressed, 5% less than the October results. As will be explained later, this drop may be attributed to the reduced fears regarding the internal power struggle between Fateh and Hamas.

Figure 1: Level of Depression (Comparison between Sep 2005 and November 2006)

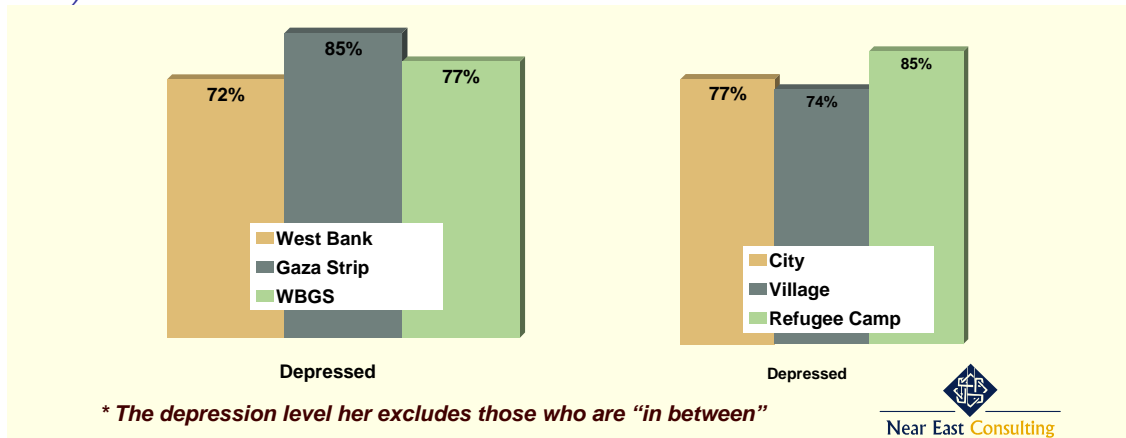


¹ Soon, NEC will start monitoring the issue of immigration, health services, and other social issues.



The level of depression is higher in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank. As indicated in figure 2, below, 85% of the Gaza respondents are 'depressed' compared to 72% of West Bank respondents².

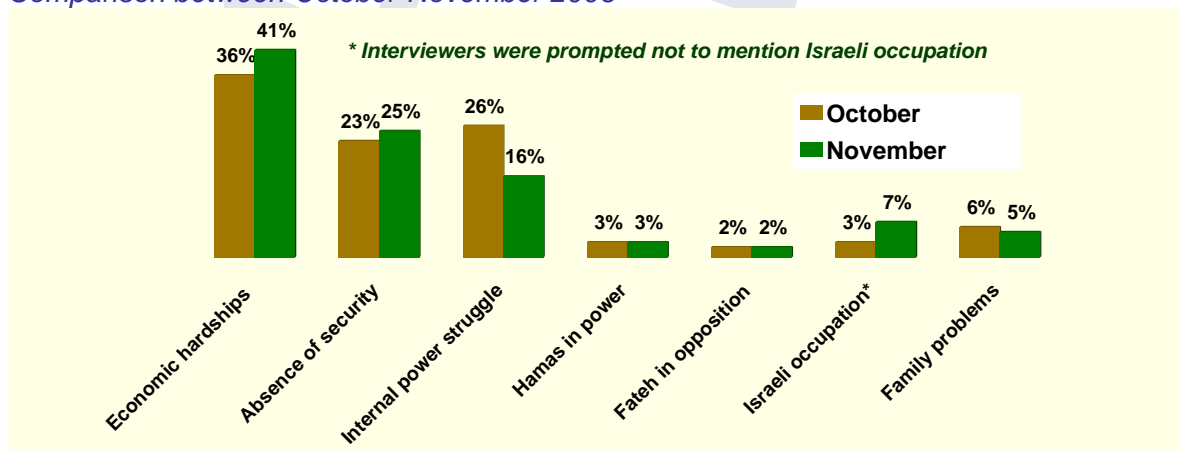
Figure 2: Level of depression according to region and area of residence (November 2006)



3.2. Reasons for the feeling of depression

When examining the reasons behind feeling 'concerned' or 'depressed', the results reveal that the economic hardship is the main reason why they feel down. As portrayed in figure 3, below, 41% attribute this to the economic hardship, 25% to the absence of security, and 16% to the internal power struggle (down by 10% since October).

Figure 3: Reasons for feeling depressed (or concerned for those who are not depressed): Comparison between October-November 2006

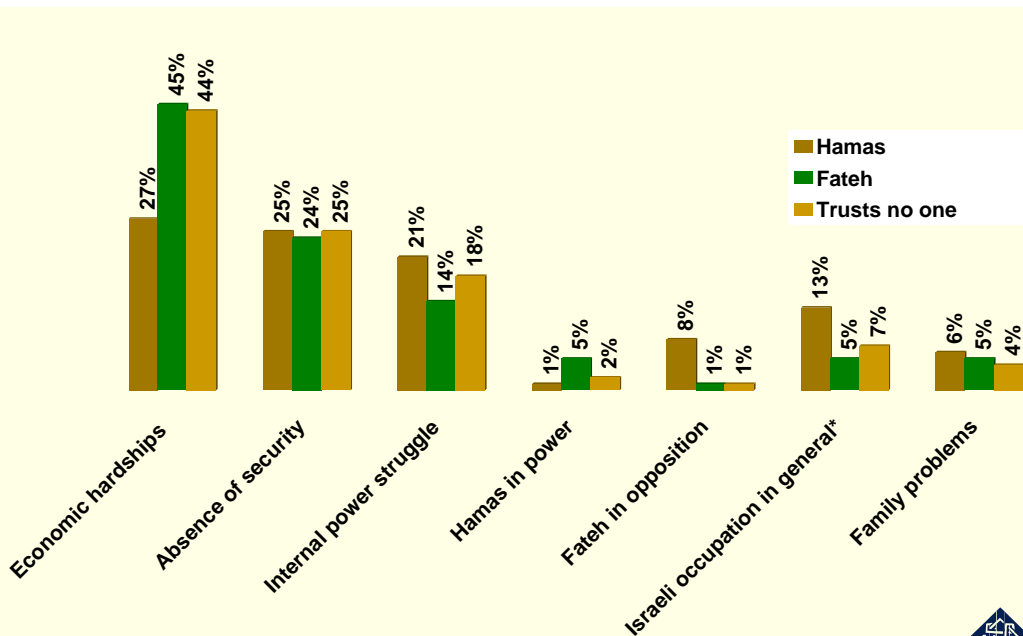


² Excluding the 'in-between' category



When the data were crosschecked with a number of explaining variables, significant differences appeared on the basis of factional trust. While the respondents trusting Fateh attribute their feeling of depression or concern primarily to the economic hardship, respondents trusting Hamas attribute their concern to the internal power struggle. Again, the respondents who do not trust any faction are closer to the views of the Fateh supporters than to the Hamas supporters.

Figure 4: Reasons for concern/depression according to factional trust: November 2006



* Interviewers were prompted not to mention Israeli occupation



4. Economic monitor

This section deals primarily with the poverty conditions and the coping mechanisms of the Palestinian households. In the future, NEC is hoping to expand the analysis on the economic situation in the oPt in terms of examining and constructing other economic and developmental indicators. .

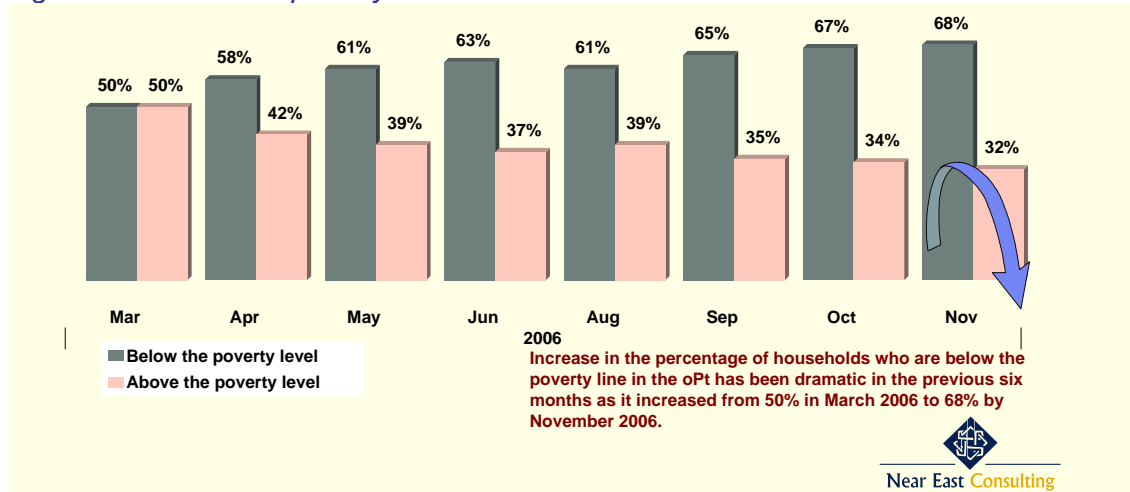
The poverty rate in this monitor is based on the income of the Palestinian households. The rate is determined in accordance with the poverty line set by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics which is NIS 2000 for a household of two adults and four children. The extreme poverty is based on a household income that is below 1US\$ per person per household.



4.1. Poverty conditions³

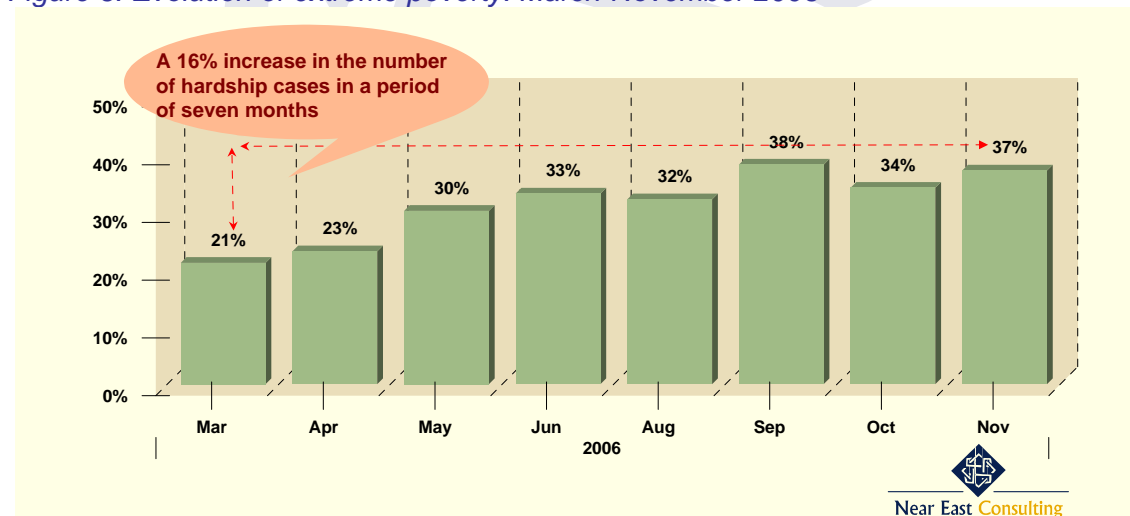
Once again, the level of poverty in the oPt has increased to reach unprecedented levels. As illustrated below, 68% of the Palestinian households fall below the poverty line, an increase of 18% since March 2006.

Figure 5: Evolution in poverty levels: March-November 2006



The increase was also evident in the number of households that are living in extreme poverty. As illustrated in figure 6, below, the percentage of people living in hardship has increased from 21% in March to 37% in November 2006.

Figure 6: Evolution of extreme poverty: March-November 2006



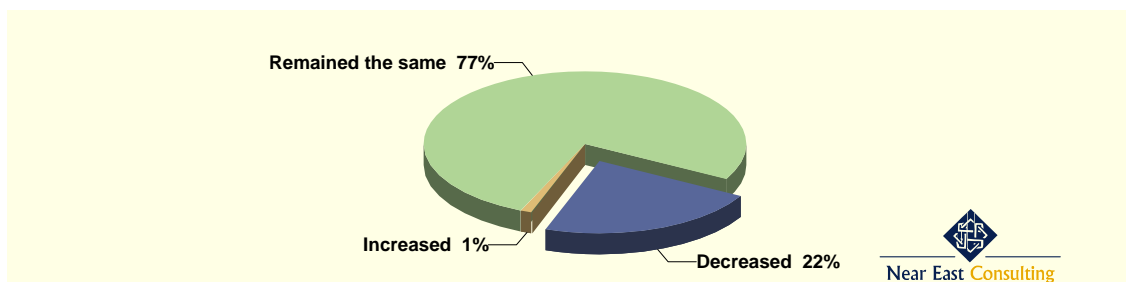
³ For further information on poverty conditions, refer to NEC's Poverty Monitor www.neareastconsulting.com



4.2. Making ends meet

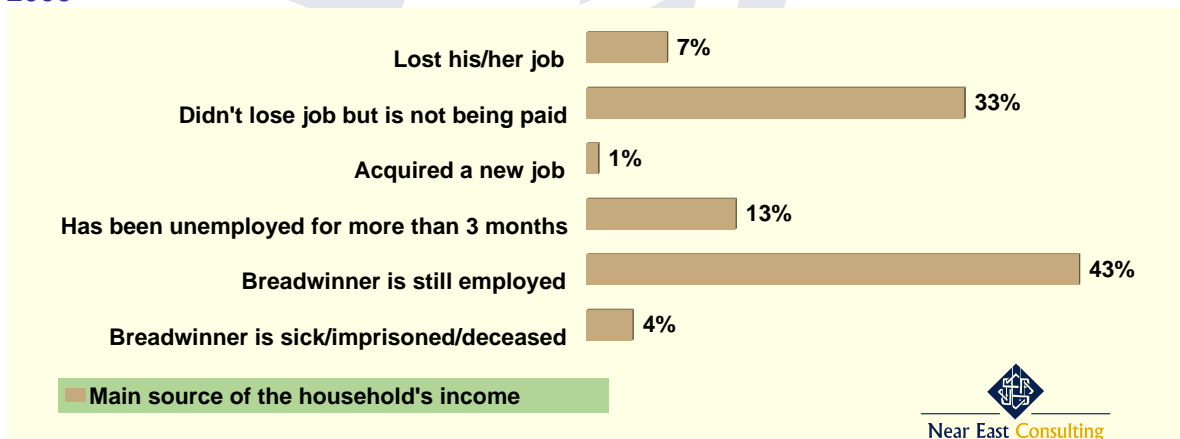
The data reveal that while 77% of the respondents say that the income of the household remained the same, only 1% said that it has increased, while 22% said that it has decreased. This implies that there is still a downward trend in households' income. Further analysis of the results shows that mainly government employees and those in the private sector are faced with a decline in household income.

Figure 7: Change in the income of households in the past three months (November 2006)



When asked about the employment status of the main breadwinner of the household, the results indicate that about 7% of breadwinners lost their jobs in the past three months, while in only 1% of the cases the breadwinner gained new employment. More significantly, a large percentage (33%) of respondents said that although the main breadwinner is employed, he/she was not paid in past three months (76% are government employees and 24% are employed in the private sector). As portrayed below, 43% of the breadwinners in the interviewed households are still employed.

Figure 8: Employment status of the breadwinner in the past three months: November 2006

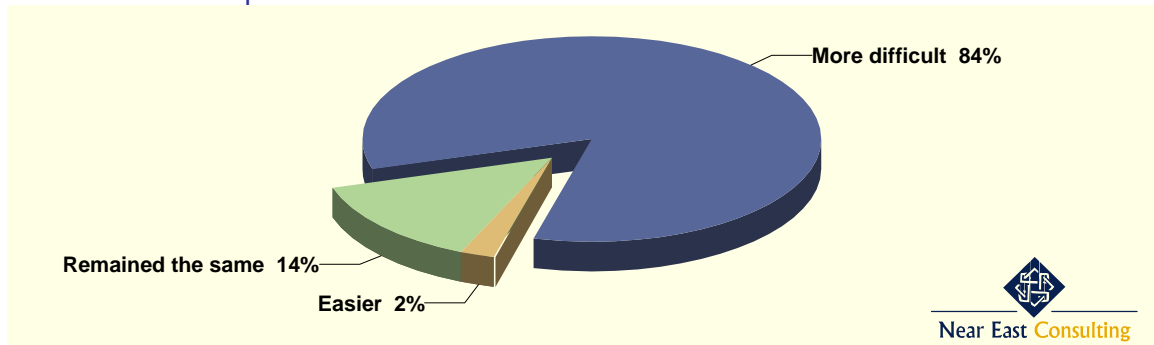


As for the ability to meet the needs of the household, 84% of the respondents said that making ends meet has become even more difficult in the past three months and only 2%



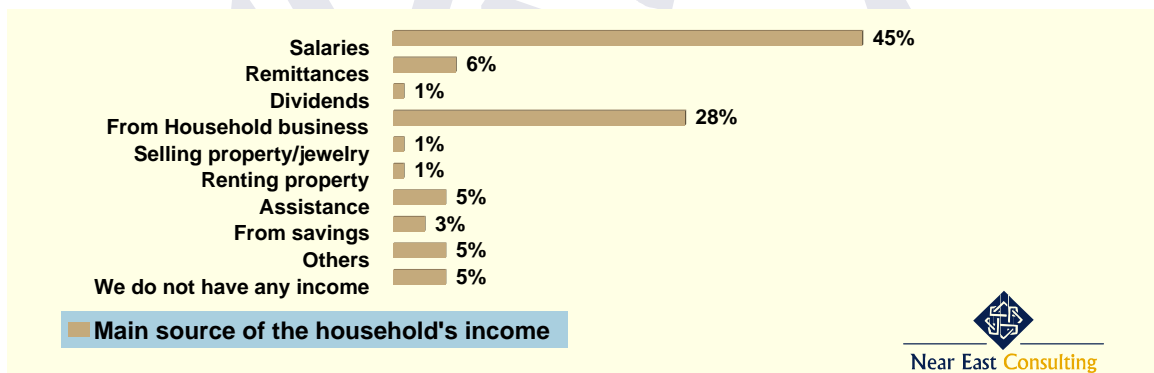
said that it has become easier. About 95% of those who work in the government sector find it more difficult to make ends meet. This is the case for 66% of those who work in the private sector.

Figure 9: The extent to which households were able to meet the needs of the households in the past three months: November 2006



From the preceding, it is unlikely that the economic condition will improve without improvement in the salary situation especially of government employees. As 45% of the Palestinians households depend on salaries for income and as most salaried employees are government employees who were not paid in recent months, attempts to resolve the alarming economic conditions in the oPt will have to be innovative and targeted towards these civil servants if they are to make a considerable **recovery**.

Figure 10: Main source of income of the household in the past three months



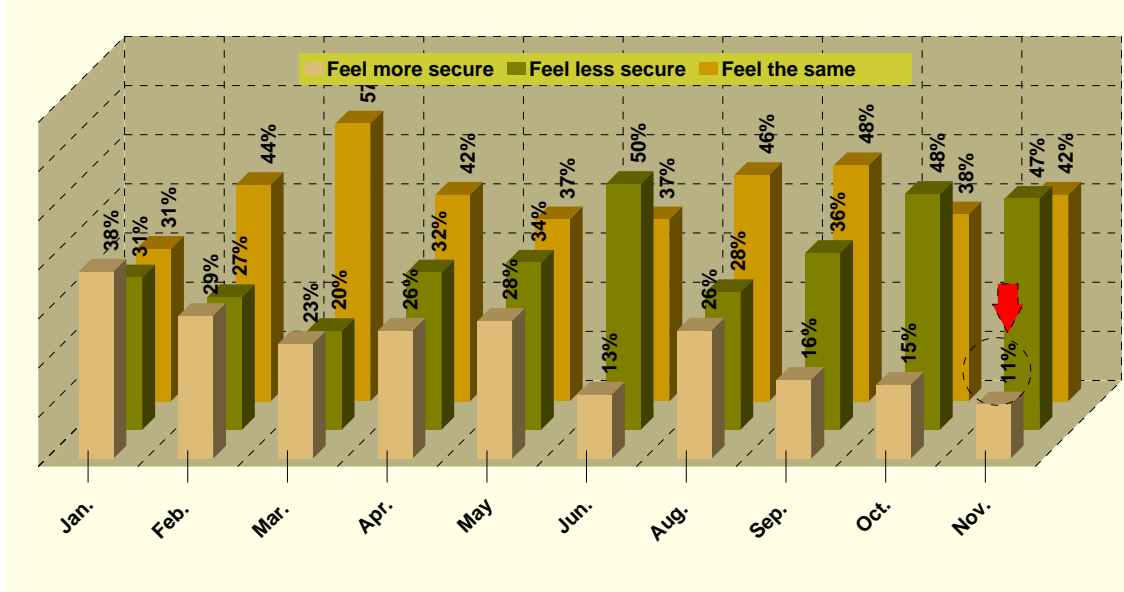
5. The security monitor

5.1. Feeling of security in general since the elections

In comparison to the results of last month, there is a small decrease in the percentage of Palestinians who feel less secure (-1%). The slight decrease in Palestinians' feeling of insecurity could be attributed to the reduced tension between Fateh and Hamas and the recent initiative that aims to end the deadlock over the new government.

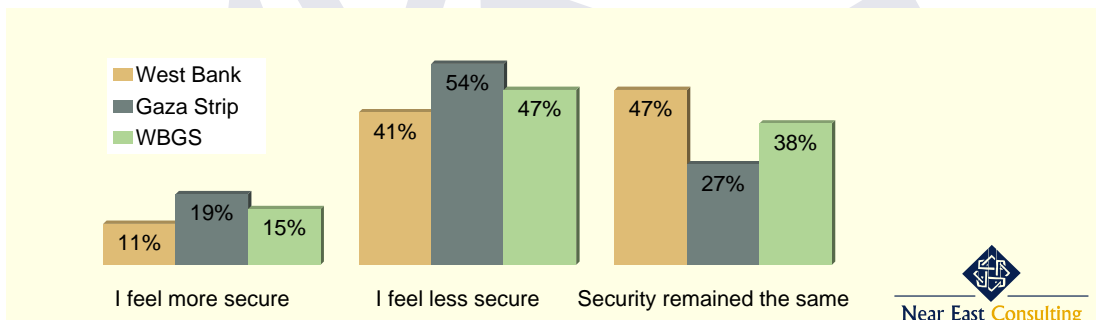


Figure 11: Feeling of security since the elections: January - November 2006



Palestinians' feeling of security, however, varies considerably depending on the region they reside in. As shown in figure 12, below, 54% of Gaza respondents said that they feel less secure compared to 41% of West Bank respondents.

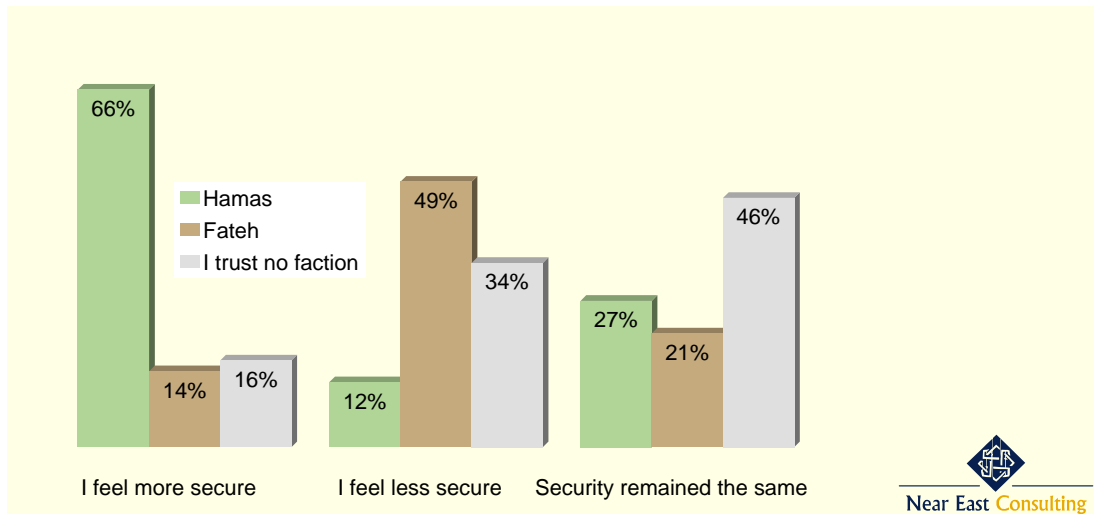
Figure 12: Feeling of security according to region: November 2006



The feeling of insecurity is more pronounced among those trusting Fateh than among those trusting Hamas. Whereas only 12% of the Palestinians trusting Hamas feel less secure since the elections, the percentage among those trusting Fateh and among those not trusting any factions (34%) is considerably higher. This significant difference clearly shows that the feeling of insecurity is related more to the internal situation than it is to the Israeli occupation. This is more evident in the Gaza Strip as 71% of Hamas supporters there say that they feel more secure while only 12% of the Fateh supporters there feel this way.



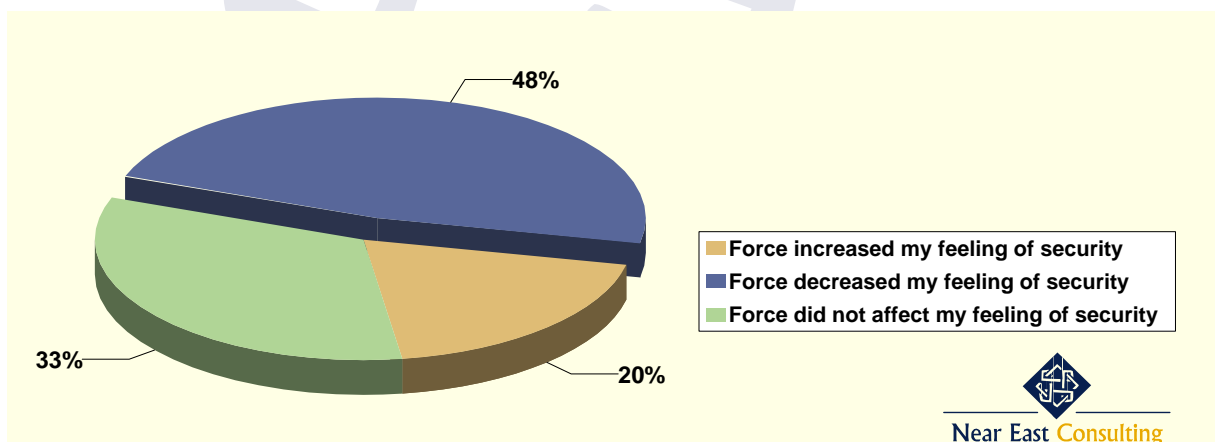
Figure 13: Feeling of security according to factional trust: November 2006



5.2. The Executive Force of Hamas

To many, the new Executive Force is a force that is legitimate, to others it is perceived as a tool in the hands of Hamas. According to 48% of the Palestinian public, this force is perceived as having a negative effect on their feelings of security. As illustrated below in figure 14, only 20% of the respondents believe that the Executive Force has contributed to their security.

Figure 14: Opinion about the Hamas established "Executive Force"

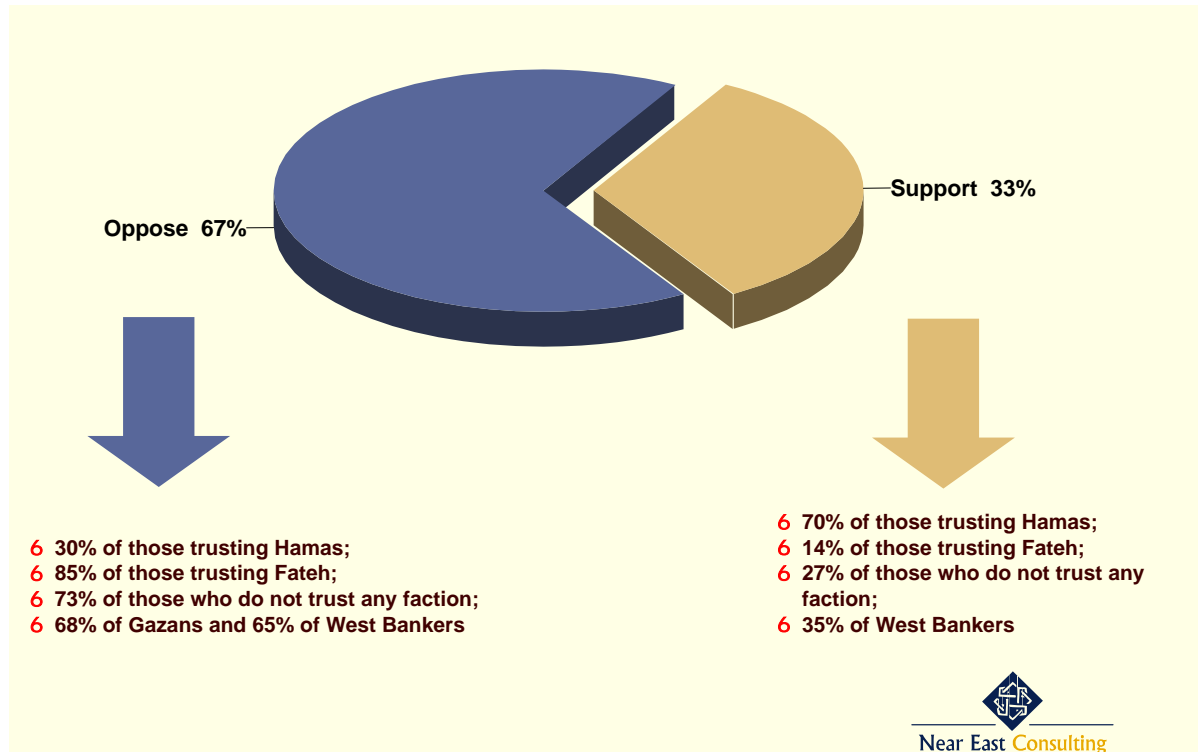


The negative attitude of people towards the Executive Force has also been reflected on the level of public support towards its deployment in the West Bank. As indicated in



figure 15, 67% of the respondents oppose this deployment. In fact, 30% of those trusting Hamas also oppose the deployment of the 'Executive Force' in the West Bank. This is the case for 85% of Fateh supporters and 73% of those not trusting any faction.

Figure 15: Support or opposition to expanding the Executive Force to the West Bank: November 2006



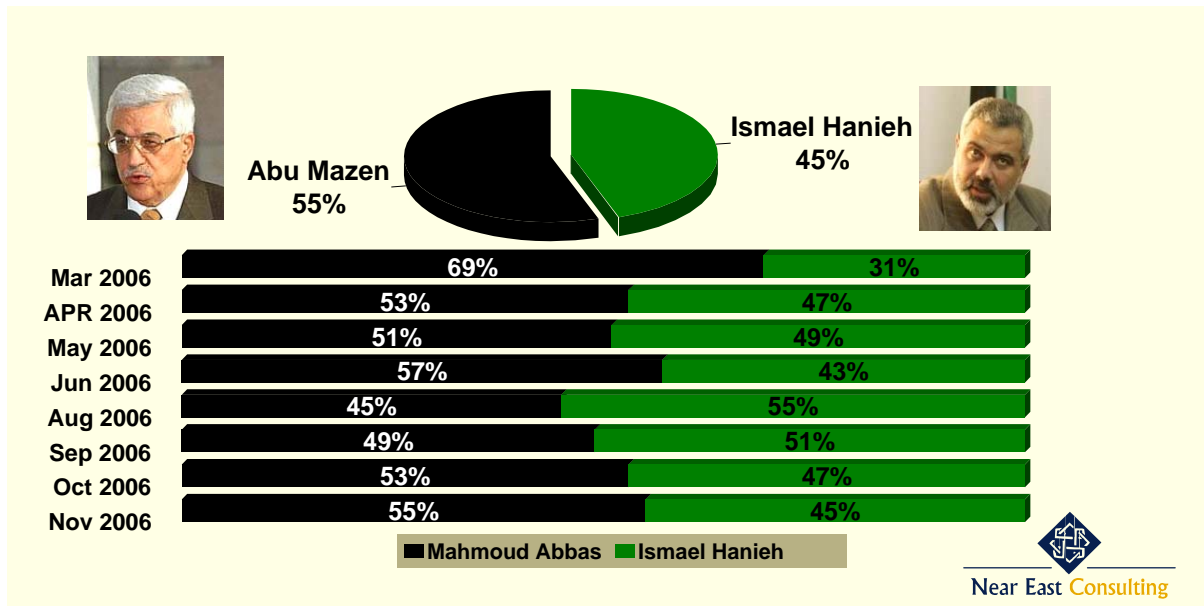
6. The Palestinian political pulse

6.1. Leadership

The current political and economic situation seems to have given Abu Mazen a slight boost over Ismael Hanieh. Since August, President Abbas has been gaining more support at the expense of Prime Minister Hanieh. The results of November show that Abbas stands five percent higher than the Prime Minister who was 5% higher than the President in August. As indicated in figure 16, below, the President has been gaining a few percentage points every month, whereas Prime Minister Hanieh has been losing gradually.

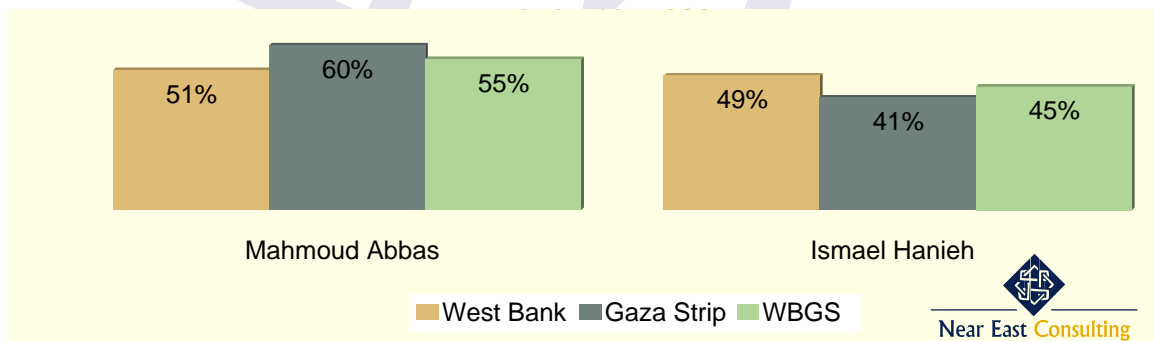


Figure 16: The leader Palestinians trust most: March-November 2006



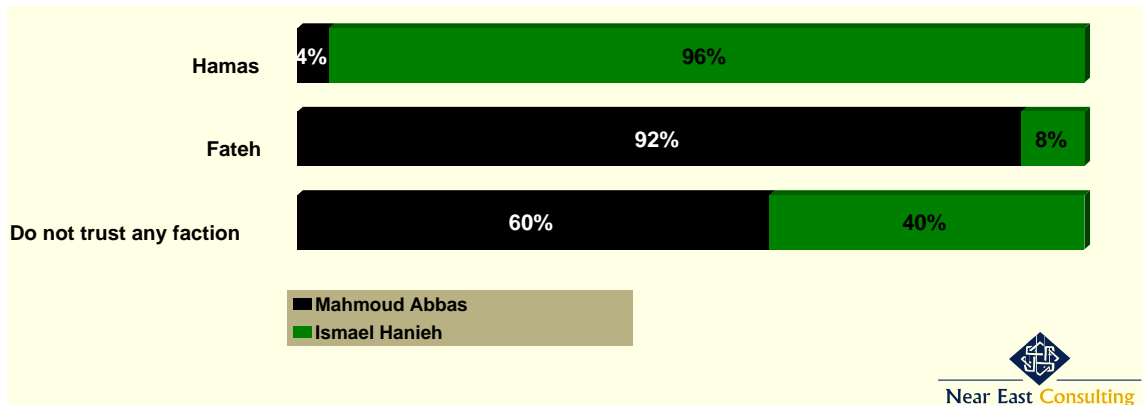
As indicated in figure 17, below, trust in Mahmoud Abbas is becoming more pronounced in the Gaza Strip where it was 49% in October and is 60% in November, Although the President enjoys more support in the West Bank than Ismael Hanieh, his standing in the West Bank has decreased by 4 percentage points in the period of one month (from 55% in October to 51% now).

Figure 17: Trust in Abu Mazen and Ismael Hanieh according to region: November 2006



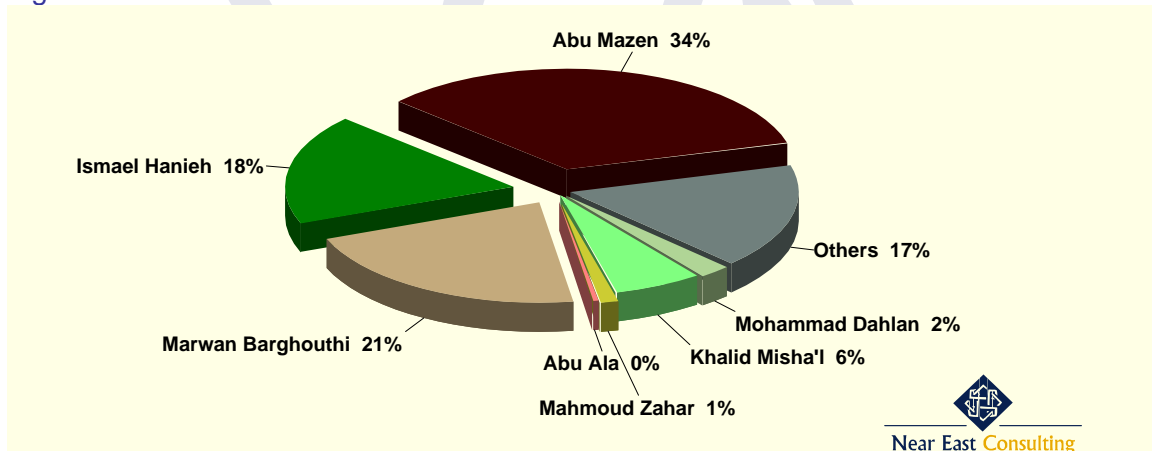
The leader Palestinians trust most is very much influenced by their factional preferences as 96 % of those trusting Hamas also trust Ismael Hanieh and 92% of those trusting Fateh trust Mahmoud Abbas. Trust among the 'non-partisans' towards either leader is directed more to the President (60%) than to the Prime Minister (40%).

Figure 18: Leader Palestinians trust most according to Factional Trust: November 2006



Another indication to the increasing popular support for President Mahmoud Abbas is reflected in the potential voting behavior in case Presidential elections are held. As illustrated in figure 19, below, 34% of the respondents said that they will vote for Abu Mazen. Only 18% mentioned Hanieh and 6% mentioned Khaled Mashal. The imprisoned Fateh leader, Marwan Barghouthi received 21% of the points. Potential voted for Mohammad Dahlan⁴ (2%), Mahmoud Zahhar (1%), or Abu Ala'a in case of presidential elections are negligible at this time.

Figure 19: President Palestinians would vote for in case of elections: November 2006



6.2. Factions

Trust in factions is used by NEC to gauge the feelings of the Palestinian public towards the existing political and religious parties. Although this is a good way to see where the

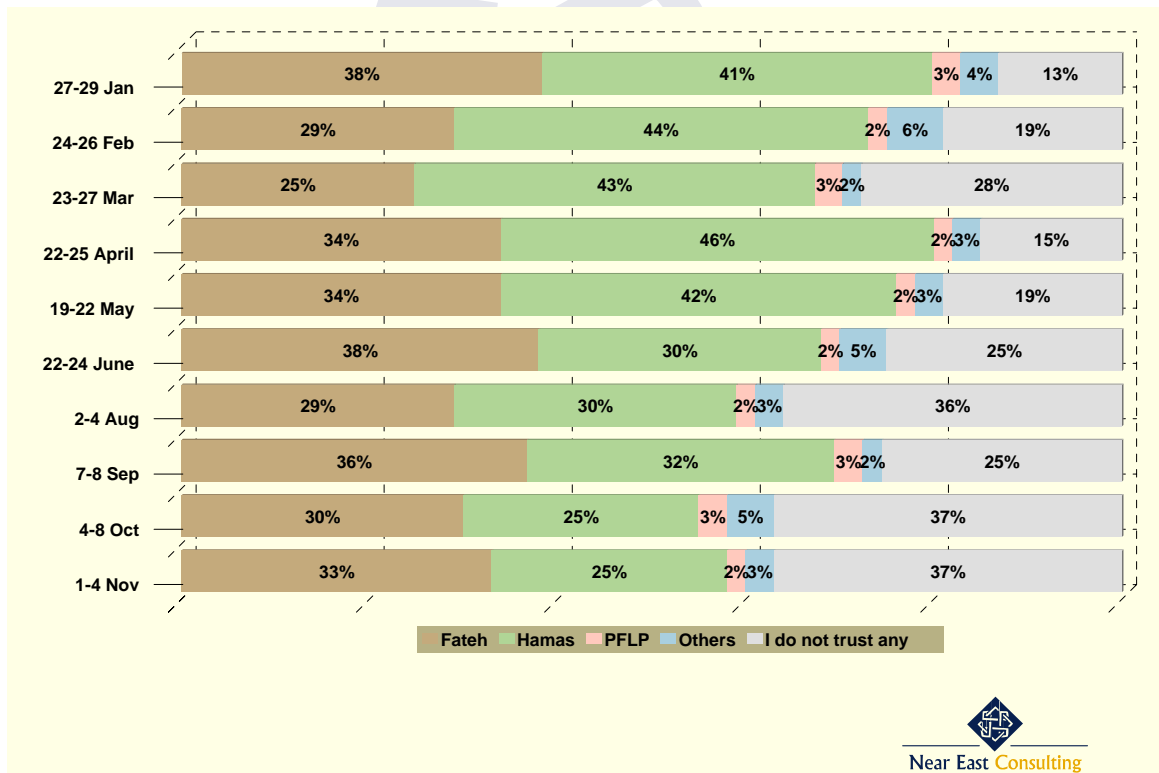
⁴ Mohammad Dahlan was not part of the list read to the respondents but was mentioned specifically by some respondents.



loyalties of people lie, the results do not necessarily reflect their behavior towards that party or movement, despite their emotional attachment to it. Thus, while more people may trust Fateh than Hamas, this trust may not be reflected in an election, for example, especially if the leaders who represent Fateh in that election do not have strong standing among the public. As will be discussed later, when people were asked to evaluate Fateh and Hamas, the performance of both parties is perceived to be far from optimal.

The November survey showed a slight increase in the trust in Fateh (+3%), while trust in Hamas has remained stable at 25%. The percentage of respondents not trusting any faction also remained at 37% of the Palestinians. As indicated in figure 20, below, the points that Fateh has gained in November was at the expense of other factions that are predominantly liberal and secular.

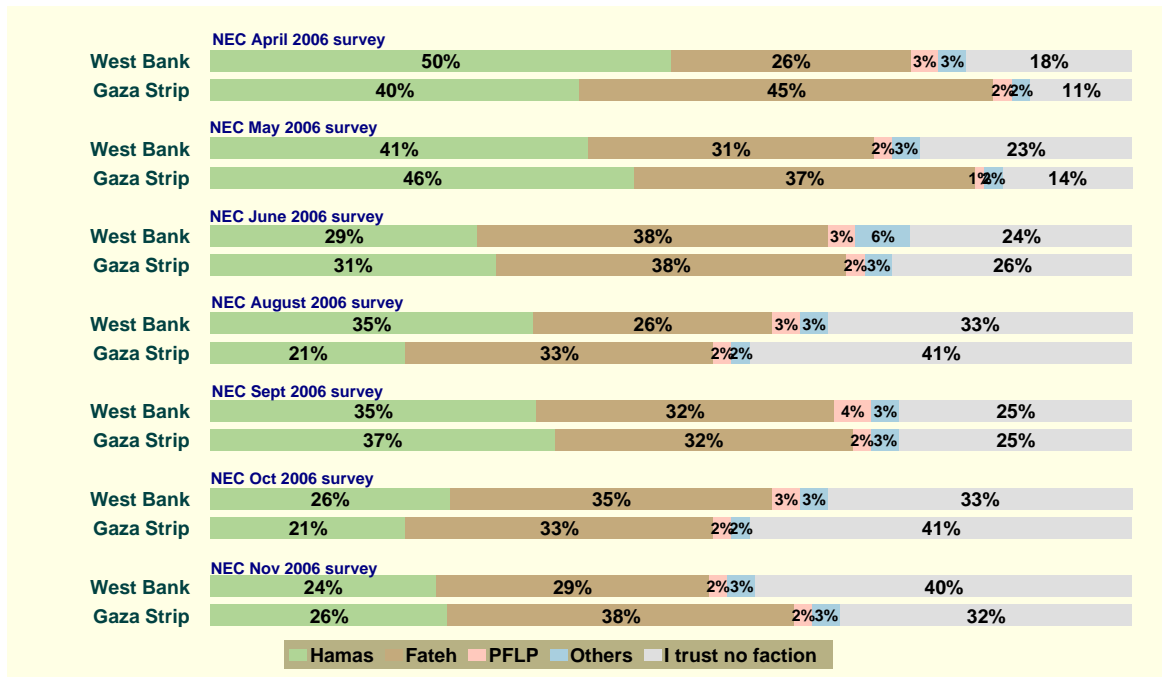
Figure 20: Factional Trust: January - November 2006



As can be seen in figure 21, below, trust in Fateh seems to increase in the Gaza Strip where 38% of the respondents said that they trust Fateh compared to 29% who said that they trust Hamas. While it is obvious that Hamas has strong showing in the Gaza Strip, the increase in poverty level, continuation of Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, and the deterioration in all facets of life in the area, including the feeling of security may explain this tendency among the Gaza respondents.



Figure 21: Factional Trust according to region: April - November 2006

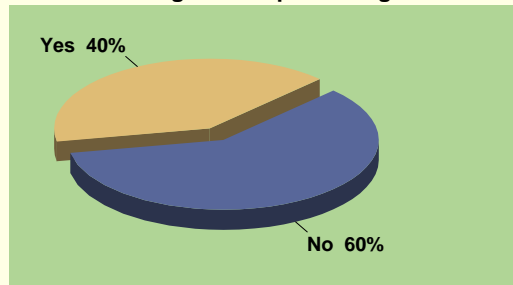


6.3. Government and opposition

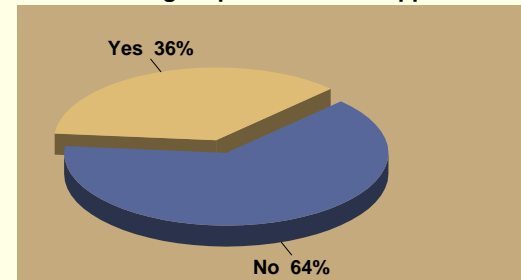
As suggested earlier, trust in factions may reflect the people's feelings towards this party or the other, but this is not necessarily indicative of the behavior of people towards these parties or factions, While Fateh seems to be more trusted, Hamas is perceived slightly more positive as a government than is Fateh as an opposition. As indicated in figure 22, below, while 40% believe Hamas to be acting responsibly as a government, the rate given to Fateh as an opposition is only 36%.

Figure 22: Perceptions about how responsible are Hamas as government and Fateh, as opposition: November 2006

Is Hamas acting as a responsible government?



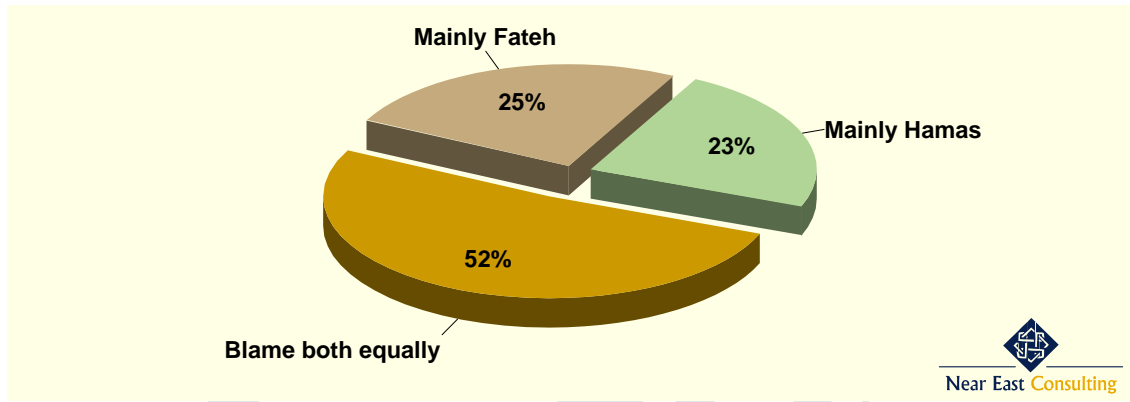
Is Fateh acting responsible as an opposition?





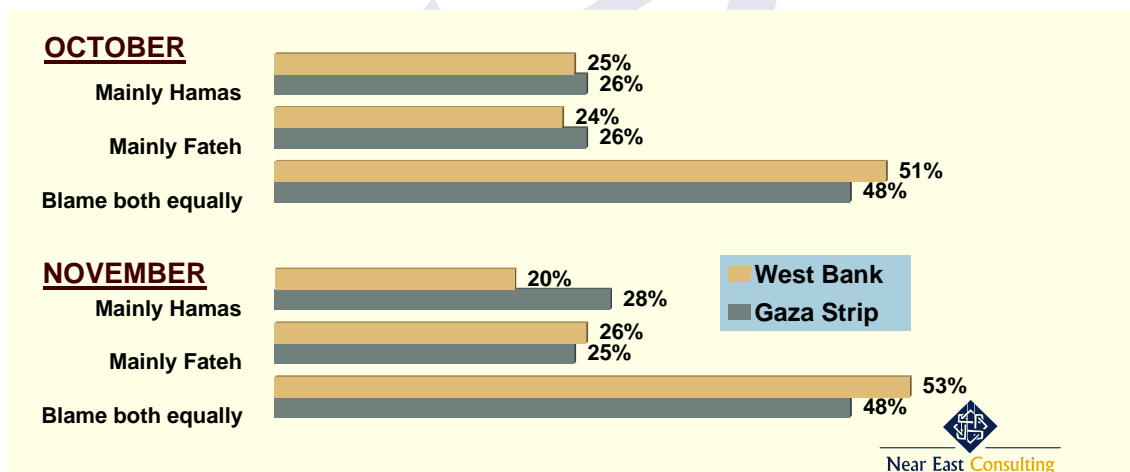
The low rating given to both factions could be explained by people's perceptions about the role and responsibility of the two main parties in the current tension and deterioration in the economic and political environment. Half of the Palestinian population blames Fateh and Hamas equally for the current crisis between the two rival factions. As indicated in figure 23, below, 25% of the population blames mainly Fateh for the current crisis, whereas the other quarter mainly blames Hamas.

Figure 23: Who do Palestinians blame for the current crisis between Fateh and Hamas: November 2006



The increased trust in Fateh in the Gaza Strip could be attributed to the blame Gazans put on Hamas for the current state of affairs. As can be discerned from figure 24, a slightly higher percentage of Gaza respondents mainly blame Hamas now (28%) than in October (26%), as compared to 25% who blame mainly Fateh.

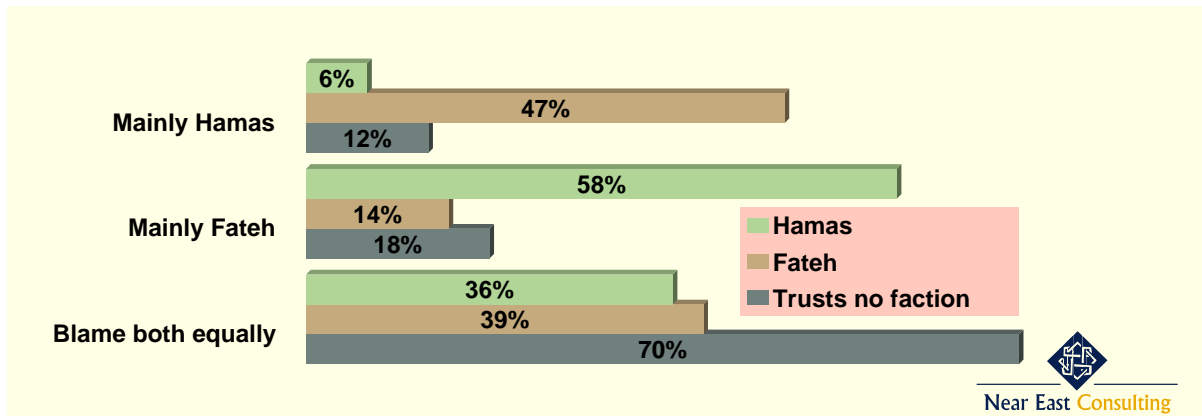
Figure 24: Who do Palestinians blame for the current crisis between Fateh and Hamas according to region: Comparison between October-November 2006





It is worth noting that while only 6% of the respondents trusting Hamas mainly blame Hamas for the recent inter-factional problems, 14% of respondents trusting Fateh blame Fateh for these problems. These findings further contribute to the previous view which distinguishes between trust and actual support. The higher self-criticism of Fateh 'supporters' could be attributed to the lack of trust in the leadership of Fateh rather than lack of trust in the ideology of Fateh. This could also be the reason why the respondents who do not trust any faction put more blame on Fateh than on Hamas for the inter-factional crisis, although their profile generally is in tandem with Fateh than with Hamas.

Figure 25: Who do Palestinians blame for the current crisis between Fateh and Hamas according to Factional trust: November 2006



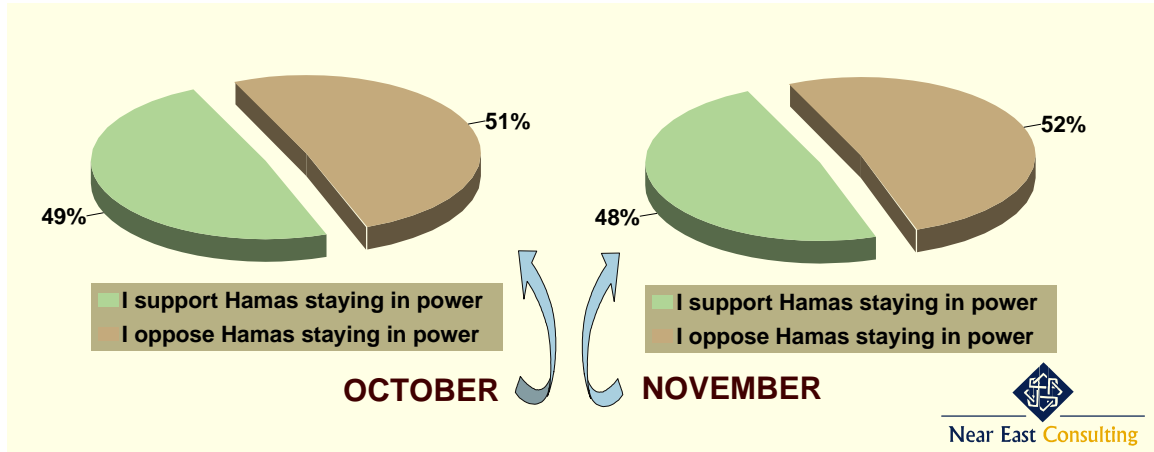
7. The next government?

The preceding analysis indicates that while a higher percentage of Palestinians trust Fateh than Hamas, the Palestinian public does seem ambivalent as to whether Fateh is the right choice for them, especially as Fateh was unable to provide a new vision and new leadership to the Palestinian people.

People's doubt about Fateh also extend to Hamas, even if many Palestinians believe that the Hamas government never had the chance to prove itself given the restrictions that are exerted on it. The fact that half the Palestinian public want the Hamas government to remain (as portrayed in figure 26, below) despite the deterioration in the political, economic, and security conditions leads to the conclusion that Hamas continues to be popularly strong. While the feelings of insecurity and poverty have increased in the past month, the percentage of respondents supporting Hamas to stay in power remained almost unchanged. Again, such a position by the public may be due to the failure of Fateh to act 'responsibly' more so than to the ideological support of people for Hamas.

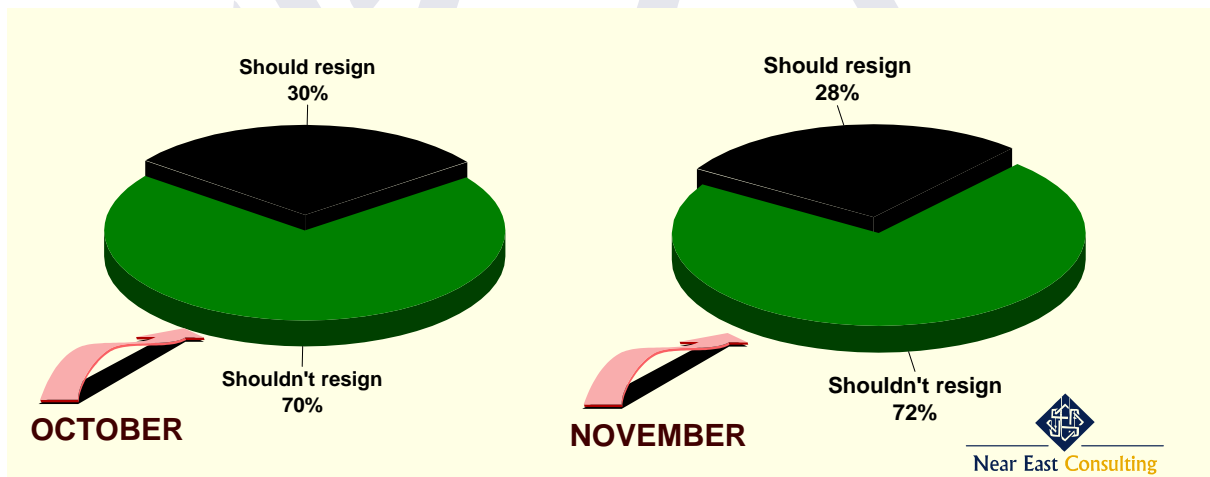


Figure 26: Attitude about whether Hamas should stay in power: October - November 2006



The results in Figure 27, below, substantiate the above analysis. As shown below, 72% of the Palestinian public wants President Abbas to remain in power. If Hamas would enjoy such ideologically strong support, a considerably higher percentage of Palestinians could be expected to wish to see Fateh leader and President Abu Mazen resign.

Figure 27: Perception about Abu Mazen's resignation: October - November 2006

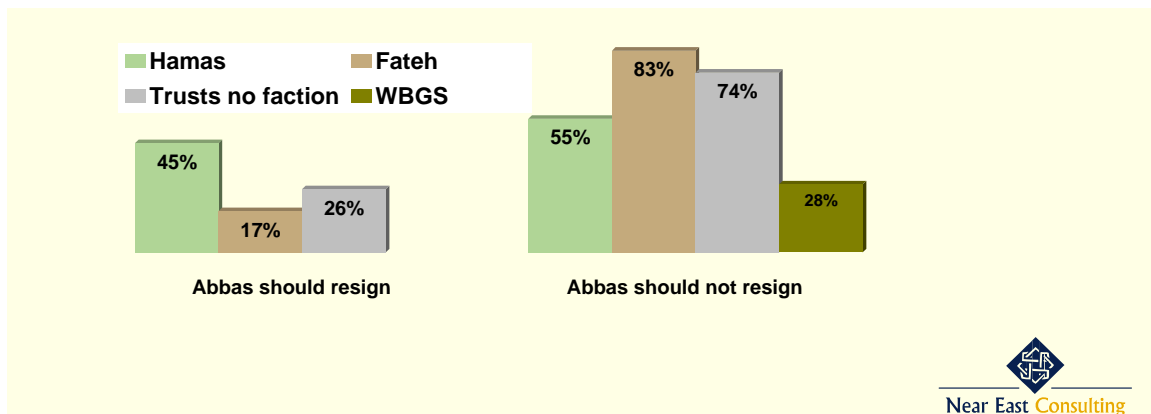


The trust in the Presidency might further be explained by the failure of both main parties to deliver to their respective constituencies. As illustrated in figure 28, below, 54% of the respondents trusting Hamas do not want Abu Mazen's resignation, so do 74% of those who do not trust any faction. Such results and the low rating respondents have given to both Fateh and Hamas may lead to a conclusion that the presidency might be the way



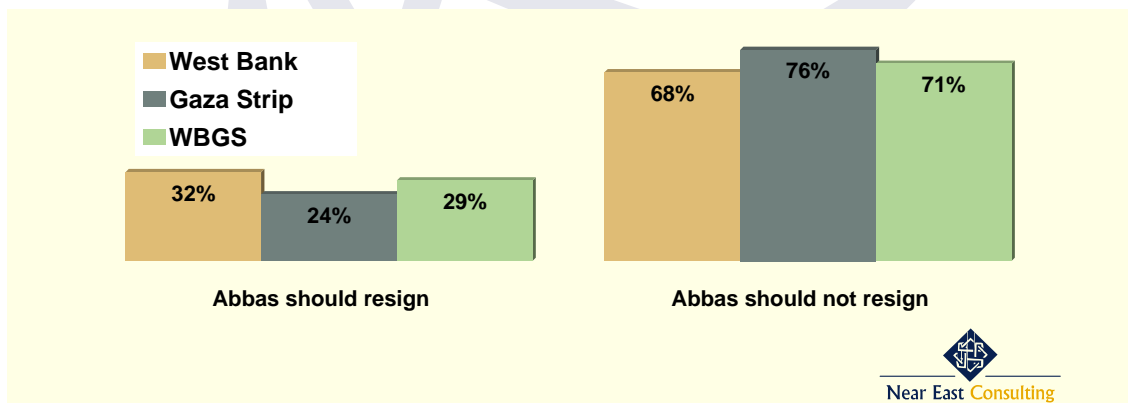
out of both the crisis and the inability of either faction to solve the increasing problems and challenges facing Palestinian society today.

Figure 28: Perception about Abu Mazen's resignation (according to faction): November 2006



A higher percentage of Gaza respondents (76%) than West Bank respondents (71%) want Abu Mazen to stay in power. The challenges facing the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip (more poverty, more Israeli attacks, and more internal tension) probably explain this tendency and confirm that the Presidency is perceived more and more as a possible solution to the current predicament facing the Palestinian society.

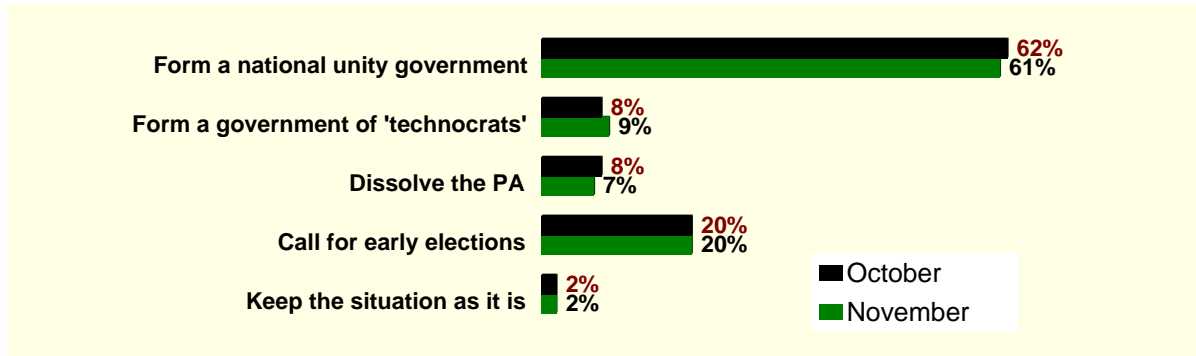
Figure 29: Perception about Abu Mazen's resignation according to region: November 2006



The negative evaluation of the two main factions combined with a considerable majority of Palestinians wishing Abu Mazen to stay on as their President might help explain why the majority of them want Abu Mazen to form a national unity government. As indicated in figure 30, below, 61% of the respondents want the President to form a national unity government. Very few want early elections (20%), or to keep the government running as is (2%), or to dissolve the Palestinian Authority (7%).

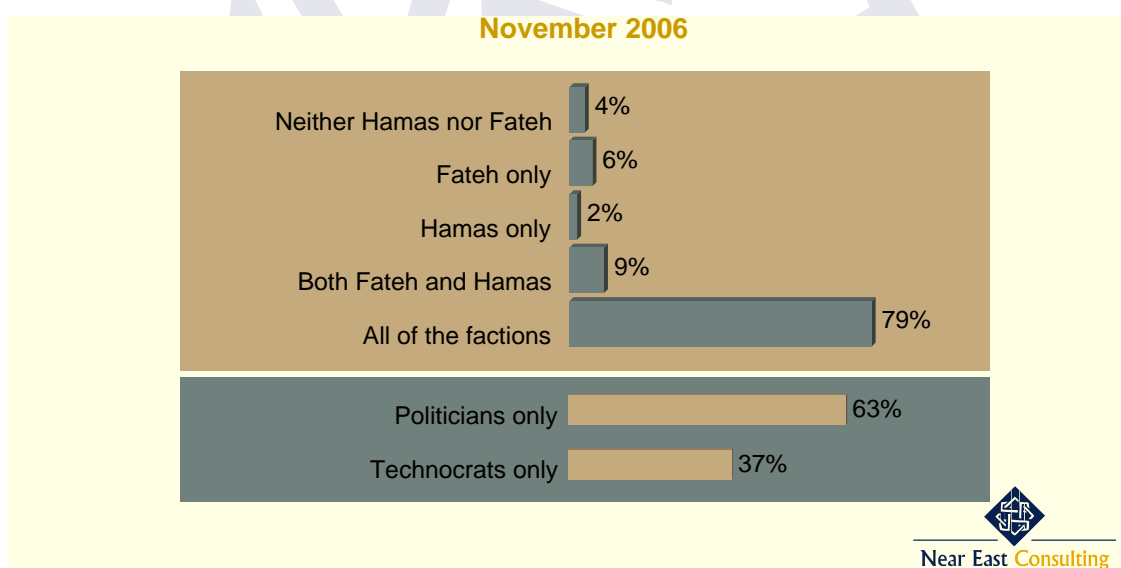


Figure 30: Attitude about the steps that Abu Mazen should take to end the crisis: October - November 2006



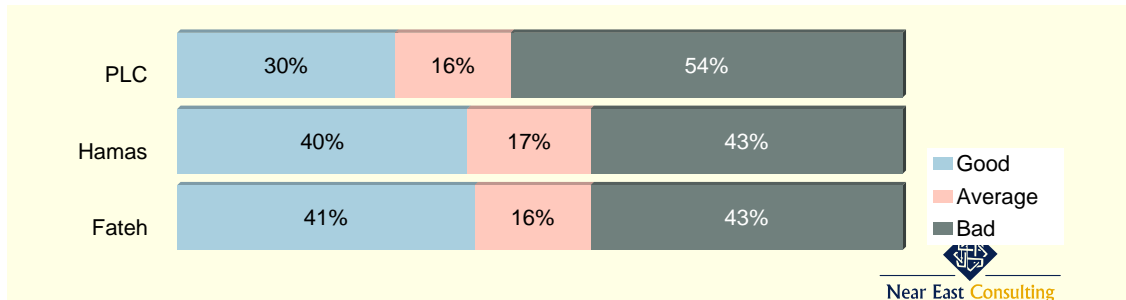
The people's support for a national unity government goes far beyond merely preferring a government composed of Fateh and Hamas only. In fact, when respondents were asked about what the next government should look like, only 9% said they want a government composed of the two main parties, while 79% want a government composed of all factions. The preference for factions is also clear because the majority is not looking for a government composed of technocrats. As also indicated in figure 32, below, 63% of the Palestinian public wants to see a government that is composed of politicians, as opposed to 37% who want a government of technocrats.

Figure 31: Palestinian attitude towards the next government: November. 2006



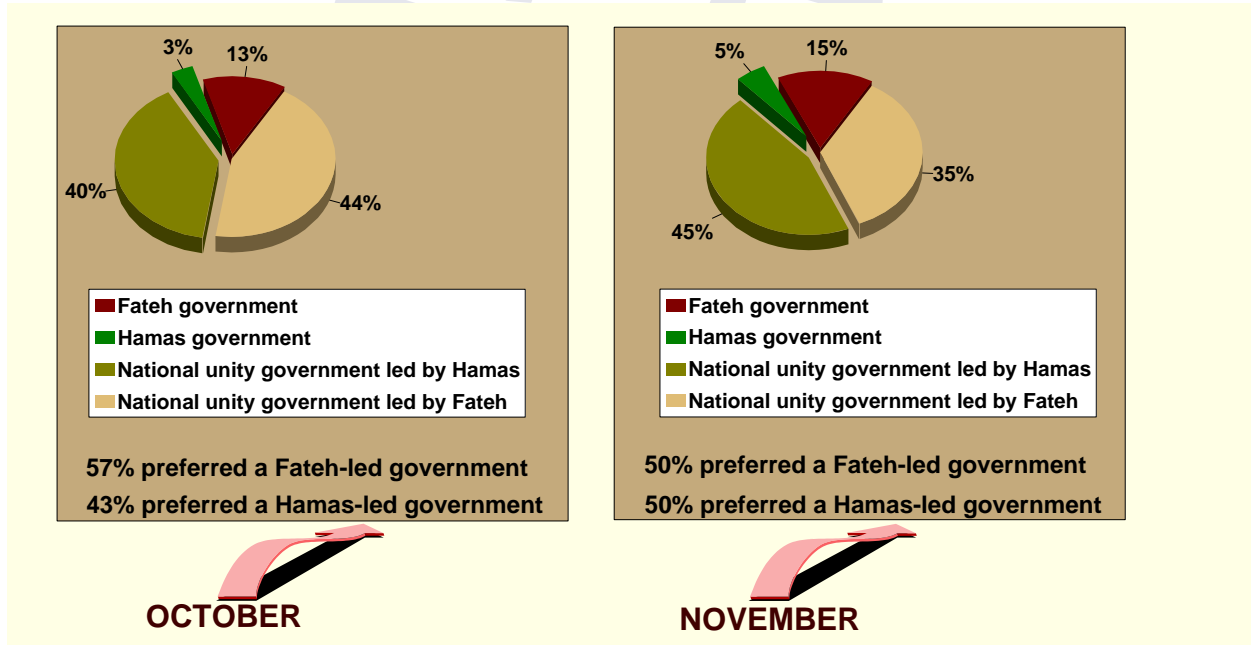
To conclude, the public is not satisfied with either Fateh or Hamas. As portrayed below, 30% ranked the Palestinian Legislative Council positively, 40% ranked Hamas positively, and only 41% ranked Fateh positively.

Figure 32: Public evaluation of the PLC, Hamas, and Fateh: November 2006



Also, the public is split between Fateh and Hamas and their preference is for a national unity government where all the Palestinian factions are represented. As substantiated by figure 34, the Palestinian public does not want to see a government composed solely of either Fateh or Hamas.

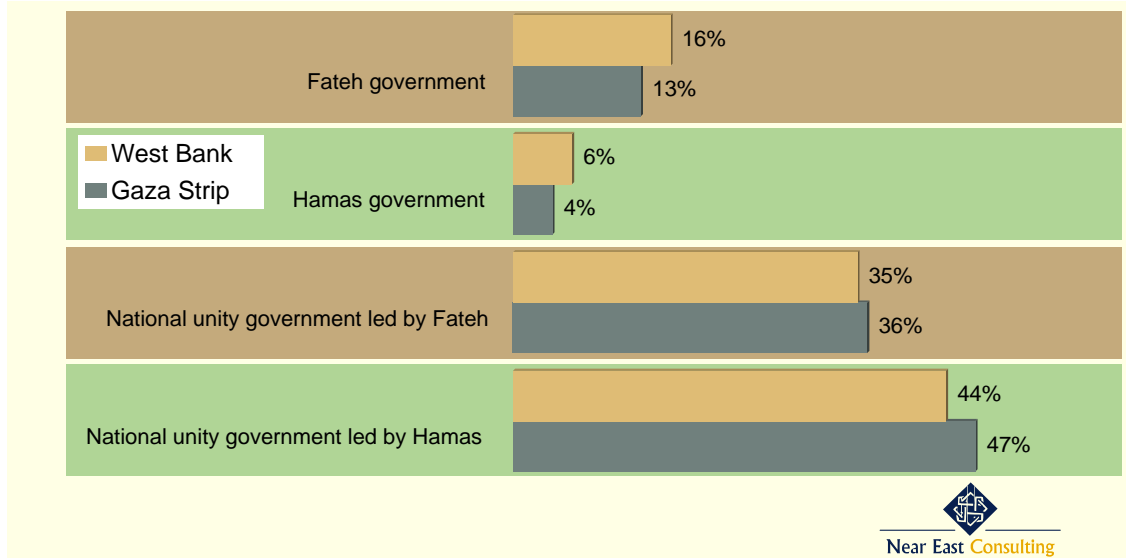
Figure 33: The successor in case Hamas is no longer in power: October - November 2006



This attitude towards the next government to be a national unity government is strong both in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. While a higher percentage of respondents in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank prefer a national unity government led by Hamas than by Fateh, also a higher percentage of respondents in the two regions prefer an exclusive Fateh government than an exclusive Hamas government.



Figure 34: The successor in case Hamas is no longer in power according to region: November 2006

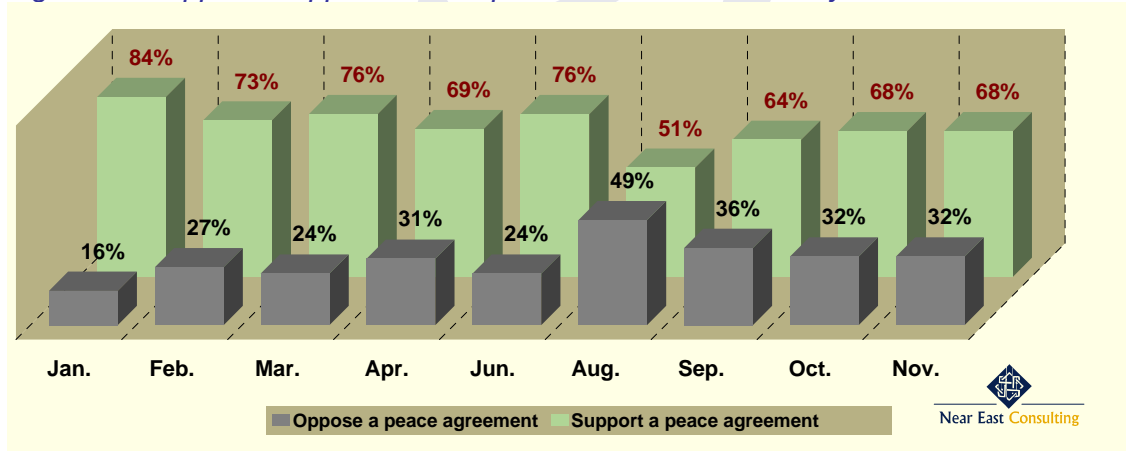


8. The Peace Pulse

8.1. Support for a peace settlement

Despite the resumed Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip at the time the survey was conducted, the level of support for a peace settlement with Israel had remained stable since last month at 68%. However, due to the high number of casualties among Palestinian citizens in the past few days, support for a peace settlement can be expected to drop as was the case in the survey conducted in the beginning of August when Israel had its military divided between Lebanon and the Gaza Strip.

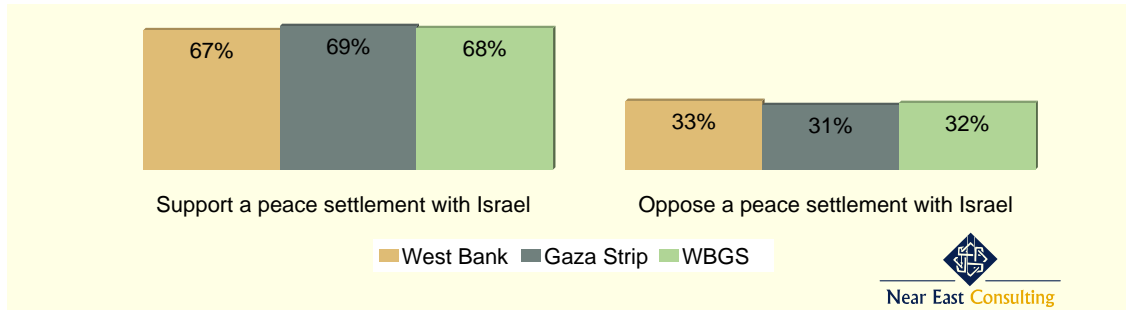
Figure 35: Support or opposition to a peace settlement: January - November 2006





The level of support for a peace agreement with Israel is about the same in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. As can be seen in figure 37, below, 67% of the respondents in the West Bank and 69% of the respondents in the Gaza Strip support a peace settlement with Israel.

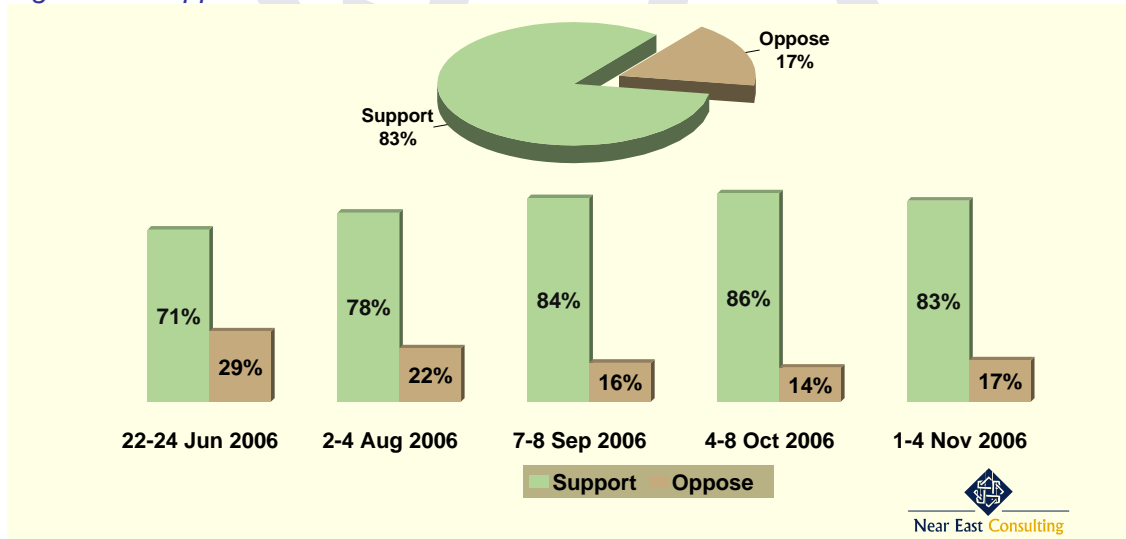
Figure 36: Support for a peace settlement with Israel according to region: November 2006



8.2. Support for a ceasefire agreement with Israel

As for the support for a ceasefire with Israel, the results this month show a slight decrease (-3%) since last month (87%). Opinions about a ceasefire agreement with Israel are the same in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.

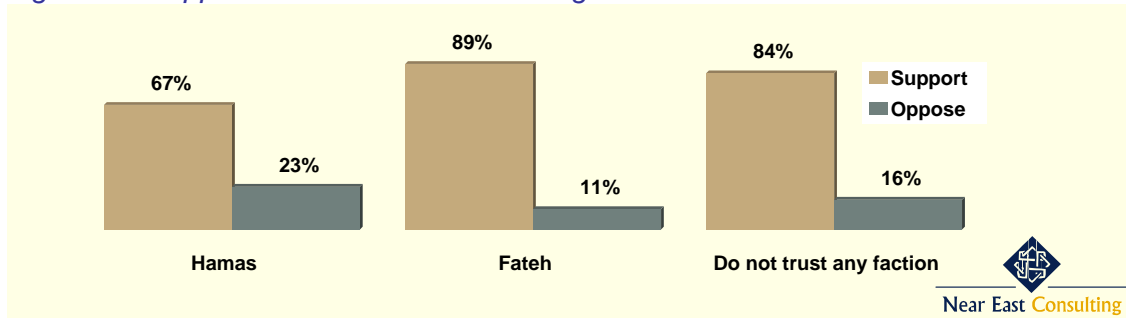
Figure 37: Support for a cease fire with Israel: June-November 2006



According to factional trust, support for a ceasefire is higher among Fateh supporters (89%) and those not trusting any faction (84%) than among Hamas supporters (67%). Support for a ceasefire with Israel among Hamas supporters dropped by 6% since NEC's survey in October.



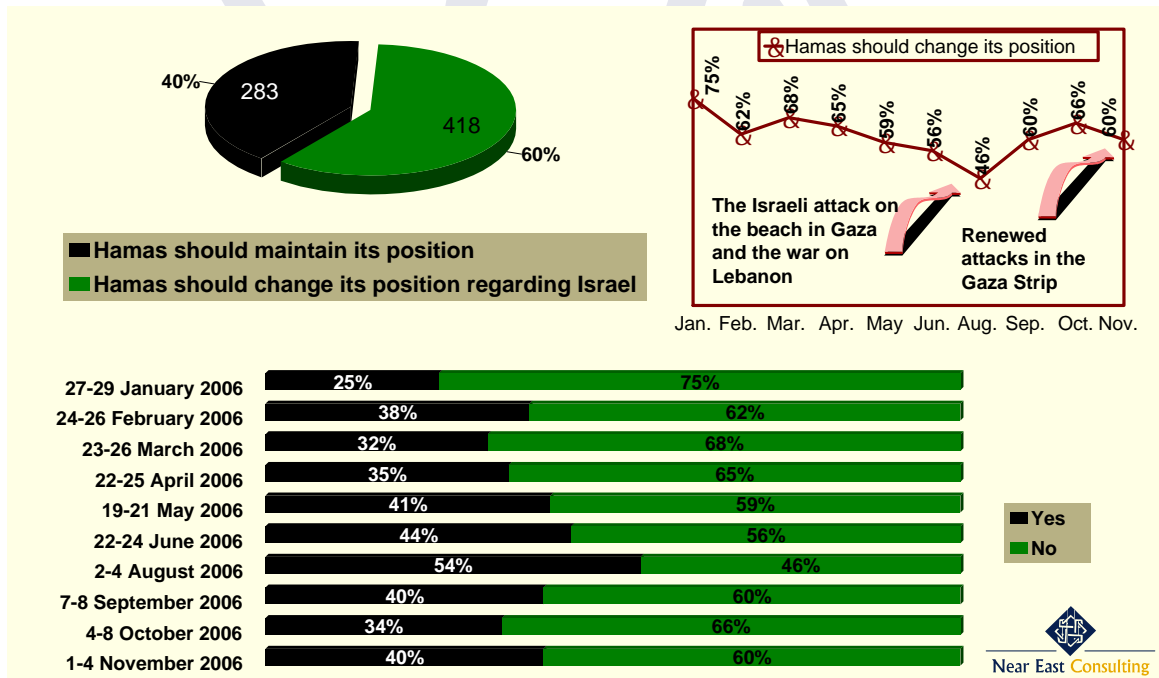
Figure 38: Support for a cease fire according to factional trust: November 2006



8.3. Hamas and the 'elimination' of the state of Israel

When examining Palestinians' opinions with regard to the Hamas position on the elimination of Israel, less Palestinians (60%) believe in November that Hamas should change its position on the elimination of Israel, than in October where it stood at 66%. The decrease in the number of Palestinians wanting Hamas to change its position could also be attributed to the commencement of Israeli military attacks in the Gaza Strip.

Figure 39: Palestinian perceptions about whether Hamas should maintain its position on the elimination of Israel: January - November 2006

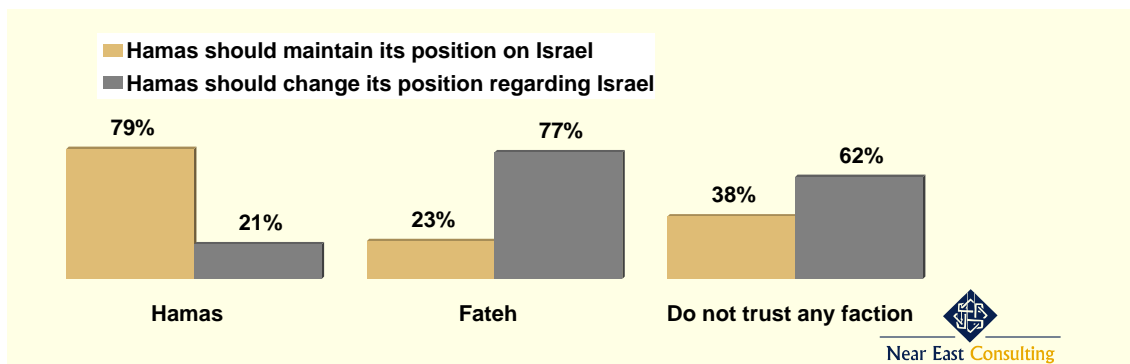


When examining whether or not Hamas should maintain its position on the elimination of Israel according to factional trust, the results show that the support for changing the position of Hamas has dwindled, as portrayed in figure 40, below. While 83% of



Palestinians trusting Fateh said in October that Hamas should change its position towards Israel, the percentage dropped in November to 77%. The same is evident among those trusting no faction. While in November 72% said that Hamas should change its position, the percentage now in 62%, a drop of 10%. As for Hamas 'supporters', while 38% of them wanted Hamas to change its position towards the elimination of Israel, the number dropped in November to 21%, a decrease by 17%. Again, this is most probably due to the Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip which left a large number of civilian casualties.

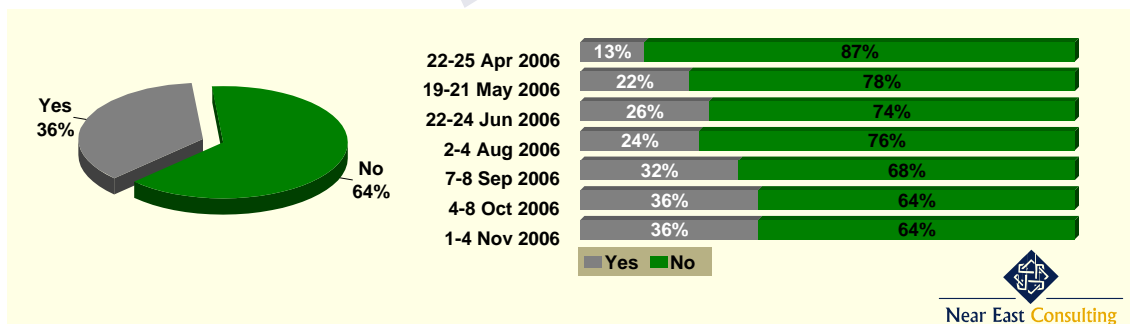
Figure 40: Should Hamas maintain its position on the elimination of Israel according to factional trust: November 2006



8.4. The existence of a peace partner for the Palestinians in Israel

Undoubtedly, Palestinians perceive Israel as a state that does not want reconciliation with the Palestinian people. Still, the percentage of people who believe that there is a peace partner for the Palestinians in Israel has increased from 13% in April to 36% in November, while 64% of the Palestinian population continues to believe otherwise, as indicated below in figure 41.

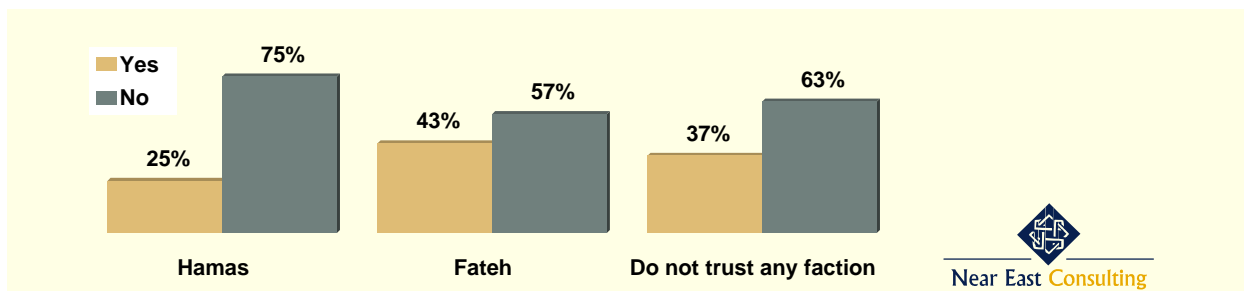
Figure 41: Perceptions as to whether Palestinians have a partner for peace in Israel: November 2006





The perception that there is no peace partner in Israel is spread along all respondents, independent of their factional trust. As portrayed in figure 42, below, 63% of the Palestinians who do not trust any faction and who are often considered to be peace supporters, do not believe that there is a peace partner for the Palestinians in Israel.

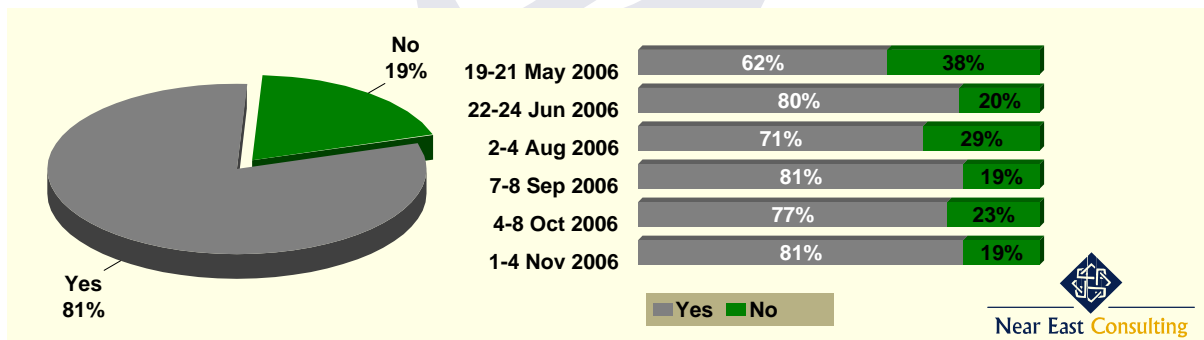
Figure 42: Perceptions as to whether Palestinians have a partner for peace in Israel according to factional trust: November 2006



8.5. The existence of a peace partner for Israel in Palestine

While the majority of Palestinians do not believe in a peace partner in Israel, an even higher majority (81%) does believe in the existence of a Palestinian peace partner. As overviewed in the figure, below, this percentage has increased by 4% since NEC's October survey.

Figure 43: Perceptions as to whether Israel has a Palestinian peace partner: May-November 2006





Even among those trusting Hamas, 73% believe that there is a peace partner for Israel among the Palestinians. This percentage is even higher among Fateh supporters (81%) and among the respondents who do not trust any faction (83%)

Figure 44: Perceptions about whether Israel has a Palestinian peace partner according to factional trust: November 2006

