



SPECIAL ISSUE

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

**Including the evaluation of various issues of the Hamas
government, life since the elections, and public evaluation of
personalities**

Bulletin # 12

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

I. Introduction

*In the period 7-10 December, 2006, Near East Consulting (NEC) conducted a phone survey of over 1176 randomly selected Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem of which 794 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. 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. **This month as a special focus at the end of 2006, the survey also included a rating of the Hamas government performance since its election, personalities that are most capable to lead the Palestinian people, life under the governance of Hamas government and the issue of immigration (whether internal or abroad).***

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

II. Main findings

The Internal situation:

- 92% of Palestinians believe that Abu Mazen should act to end the internal crisis.
- Given the failure of the National Dialogue, 52% believe that Abu Mazen should call for early elections, while 30% think that he should dissolve the current government and establish an emergency government.
- Although 71% fear that the dissolution of the current government would intensify the conflict between Fateh and Hamas, 56% would support the President if he decides to do so and forms an emergency government.
- 56% of Palestinians blame both Fateh and Hamas equally for the failure to form a unity government.



Factions and leaders:

- 32% most trust Fateh, 27% most trust Hamas, while 35% do not trust any faction. While Fateh and Hamas enjoy about the same level of popular trust in the West Bank, Fateh has considerably more popular support than Hamas in the Gaza Strip (40% versus 29%).
- 49% most trust Abu Mazen; 51% most trust Ismael Hanieh.
- Palestinians do not see many personalities who are capable to lead the Palestinian people. Only 4 personalities are perceived as capable by a majority of Palestinians: Marwan Barghouti (78%), Abu Mazan (61%), Ismael Hanieh (61%), and Mustafa Barghouti (58%).

Security:

- 44% of Palestinians feel less secure since the January 2006 elections.
- 32% are concerned because of the economic hardship that their household is facing, 30% are concerned because of the general absence of security for their families, while 21% are concerned because of the internal power struggle.
- 59% do not think that a civil war is likely, of which 29% believe it is very unlikely.

The Hamas government:

- 54% believe Hamas has failed to deliver on its campaign promises because it did not get the opportunity, 14% think that Hamas did not utilize the opportunities at its disposal, 15% feel Hamas is incompetent, while 17% think that the Hamas government did not fail to deliver on its campaign promises.
- 62% believes that Hamas's strategy is one of resistance, while 38% think that it is a strategy of political settlement. 52% believe that Hamas will be able to achieve its strategy, while 48% feel that it will not be able to do so.
- The Hamas government performance was evaluated positively on one issue, two issues were borderline, while the remaining issues were negatively evaluated. The Hamas government's performance was only rated positively with respect to "human rights" (65%). An equal percentage rated the Hamas government's performance positively (50%) and negatively (50%) in terms of its "combating corruption" and in terms of its efforts in "reforming the administrative structure". The Hamas government's performance was evaluated negatively as follows in the following areas: 57% negatively evaluate the Hamas government's representation of all sectors of society, 58% negatively evaluate the Hamas government's performance in terms of maintaining law and order, 60% negatively evaluate the Hamas Government's performance in bringing Palestinians closer to independent statehood, while 65% negatively evaluate the Hamas government's performance in terms of upholding good, and was evaluated most negatively in its performance of "improving economic condition" as 76% of the respondents rated this performance negatively.
- Since the Hamas government came to power, all with the exception of one issue (social cohesion) was considered to have deteriorated. 56% believe that social cohesion improved since the Hamas government gained power, 70% believe that their personal security deteriorated, 71% say that the status of education and health services worsened, 74% affirmed that their household's economic condition declined, 76% described that their life in general went downhill, 79%



said that their psychological well-being decreased, while 85% felt that chances for peace.

The Peace Monitor:

- 77% support a peace settlement with Israel, and 85% support a cease-fire with Israel.
- 61% believe that Hamas should change its position towards the elimination of Israel.
- 60% oppose bomb attacks inside Israel, while 62% oppose the continuation of launching missiles from Gaza to Israel.
- 30% believe that there is a partner for peace in Israel, and 77% say that there is a Palestinian peace partner.

The Poverty Monitor:

- The poverty rate has more or less stabilized and stands at 66%, of which 33% are extremely poor. Only 34% of Palestinians nowadays have a living standard above the poverty line.

Immigration:

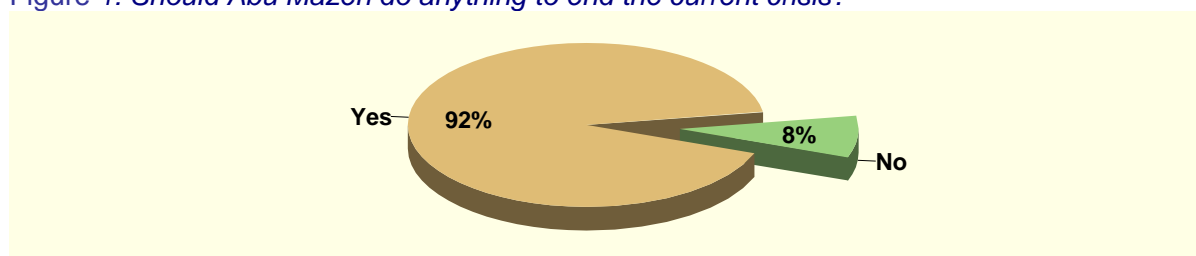
- 19% have household members that immigrated abroad in the past year, while 28% would like to immigrate abroad themselves.
- 40% of those immigrating abroad did so in search for employment, 28% in search of a better life, 13% in search for a safer environment, and 15% for the purpose of education.
- 14% have household members that moved to another area within the oPt. 51% of those who moved to another area migrated to Ramallah, and 11% moved to Gaza city.

III. Political Monitor

A. The current situation

An overwhelming proportion of Palestinians want Abu Mazen to act in order to solve the current crisis between Fateh and the Hamas government. As overviewed in figure 1 below, 92% of Palestinians indicated that Abu Mazen should do something to end the current stalemate.

Figure 1: Should Abu Mazen do anything to end the current crisis?





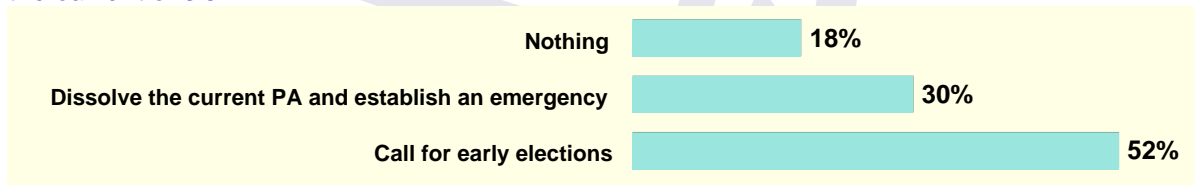
Even among respondents who most trust Hamas, 85% believe that Abu Mazen should act in order to bring a solution to the unrest between the two rival factions. Among Fateh supporters, 97% are of the belief that Abu Mazen should act towards ending the factional crisis.

Table 1: Should Abu Mazen do anything to end the current crisis?

Should Abu Mazen do anything to end the current crisis?	Factional trust.					
	Hamas	Fateh	PFLP	Islamic Jihad	Others	No faction
Yes	85%	97%	95%	100%	100%	91%
No	15%	3%	5%			9%

When respondents were asked what Abu Mazen should do given the failure of the National Dialogue, more than half of the respondents (53%) indicated that the President should call for early elections, while 30% believed that the best way to end the current crisis is to dissolve the current PA and establish an emergency government. As illustrated in figure 2 below, the remaining 18% said that Abu Mazen should not do anything to end the crisis and let the situation run its course.

Figure 2: Given the failure of the National Dialogue, what should Abu Mazen do to end the current crisis?



The prevalence for Abu Mazen to call for early elections is balanced between the West Bank (53%) and the Gaza Strip (51%). According to area of residence, the strongest support for elections is witnessed among refugee camp residents (62%). The results are detailed in table 2 below.

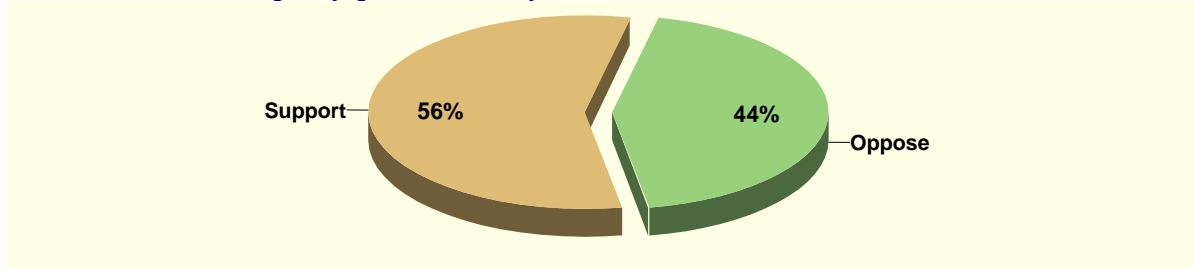
Table 2: Given the failure of the National Dialogue, what should Abu Mazen do to end the current crisis according to region and area of residence?

	Region of residence		Area of residence.		
	West Bank	Gaza Strip	City	Village	Refugee camp
Nothing	16%	20%	19%	17%	16%
Dissolve the current PA & establish an emergency gov't.	30%	29%	29%	34%	22%
Call for early elections	53%	51%	52%	50%	62%

Although the dissolution of the Hanieh's government and the formation of an emergency government by President Abbas is not the preferred option of the Palestinians, it is more popular than keeping the situation as is. Concretely, 56% support and 44% oppose the dissolution of the Hanieh's government and the formation of an emergency government.



Figure 3: Support or opposition to the dissolution of Hanieh's government and the formation of an emergency government by Abu Mazen



Yet again, the dissolution of the current government and the establishment of an emergency government is stronger among refugee camp residents (63%) than among village (59%) and city residents (52%).

Table 3: Support or opposition to the dissolution of the government and the formation of an emergency government by Abu Mazen

	Area of residence.		
	City	Village	Refugee camp
Support	52%	59%	63%
Oppose	48%	41%	38%

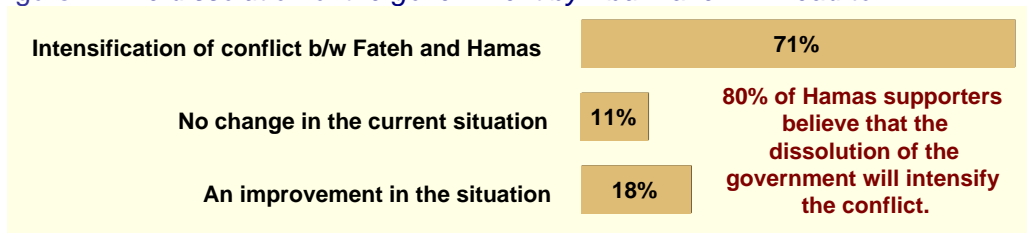
Not surprisingly, mainly Hamas supporters staunchly oppose such an option. As indicated in table 4 below, 82% of Hamas supporters compared to only 15% of Fateh supporters and 41% who do not trust any faction oppose the dissolution of Hanieh's government and the formation of an emergency government.

Table 4: Level of support for the dissolution by Abu Mazen of Hanieh's government and the formation of an emergency government

	Factional trust.					
	Hamas	Fateh	PFLP	Islamic Jihad	Others	No faction
Support	18%	85%	68%	40%	55%	59%
Oppose	82%	15%	32%	60%	45%	41%

Despite the support for the dissolution of Hanieh's government, the majority (71%) fear that such a decision will lead to an intensification of tensions between Hamas and Fateh. AS indicated below, this perception is strongest (80%) among Hamas supporters.

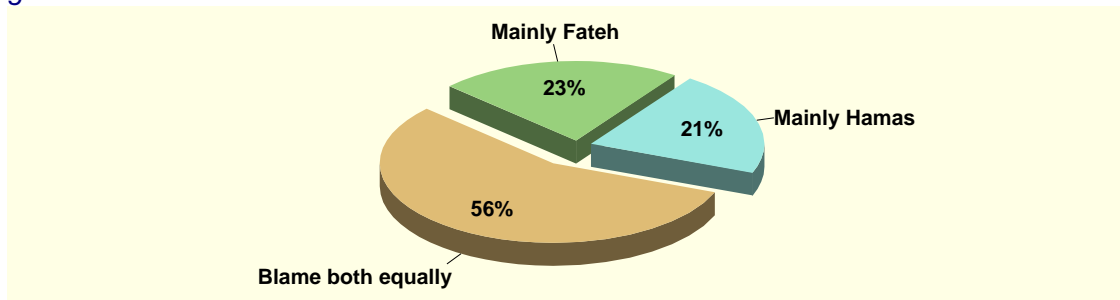
Figure 4: The dissolution of the government by Abu Mazen will lead to.....





Whilst support for change is widespread amongst Palestinians, this support is not necessarily a reflection on negative attitudes towards Hamas. On the contrary, and as illustrated in the figure, below, a slightly larger percentage of Palestinians blame Fateh (23%) rather than Hamas (21%) for the failure to form a unity government. The majority (56%) blame both factions equally for the failure to form a unity government.

Figure 5: Blame for the failure of negotiations between Fateh and Hamas to form a unity government



A higher percentage of Gazans than Westbankers blame either Hamas or Fateh respectively for the failure to form a unity government. As detailed in the table, below, Hamas is blamed most by refugee camp residents (33%) while Fateh by village (24%) and city residents (23%). City residents (59%) mostly blame both Fateh and Hamas equally for the failure to form a unity government.

Table 5: Blame for the failure of negotiations b/w Fateh and Hamas to form a National Unity Government

	Region of residence			Area of residence		
	West Bank	Gaza Strip	City	Village	Refugee camp	
Mainly Hamas	18%	26%	18%	22%	33%	
Mainly Fateh	21%	26%	23%	24%	19%	
I blame both equally	61%	49%	59%	54%	47%	

B. Political factions

For the fourth month in a row, trust in Fateh (32%) remains higher than trust in Hamas (27%). The largest proportion of Palestinians, however, continues not to trust any existing faction (35%).

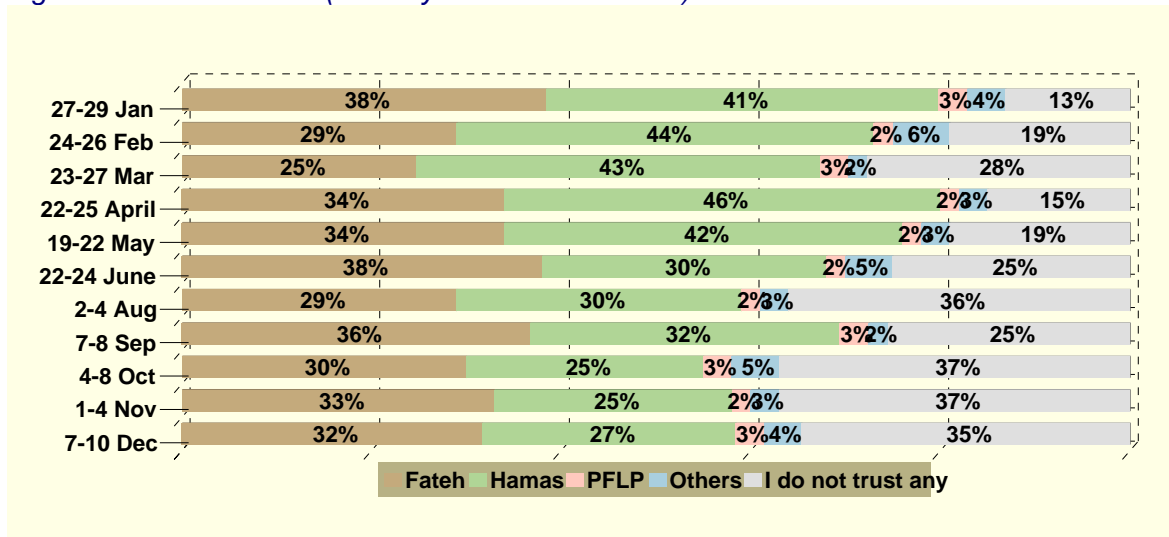
As this is the last bulletin of 2006, it is worth highlighting the significant change in opinions concerning factional trust since the beginning of the year; i.e. within a week of the January 2006 Legislative elections.

Trust in both Hamas and Fateh has dropped significantly over the past 11 months, but more sharply so vis-à-vis Hamas (-14%) than vis-à-vis Fateh (-6%). Meanwhile the percentage of Palestinians who do not trust any faction has increased by 22 points in the same period of time. These results seem to indicate that the inability of Hamas to perform in government has cost it more dearly than it has cost Fateh's inability of re-group as an opposition.



The results on the evolution in factional trust in NEC's past 11 surveys are overviewed in the figure below.

Figure 6: Factional Trust (January till December 2006)



Moreover, the clearest loss of trust that Hamas has suffered in the past month has been in the Gaza Strip where its support this month does not exceed 29%, while Fateh is currently trusted by 40% in the Gaza Strip. As indicated in the table below, the level of trust in either of these two main factions in the West Bank does not differ significantly.

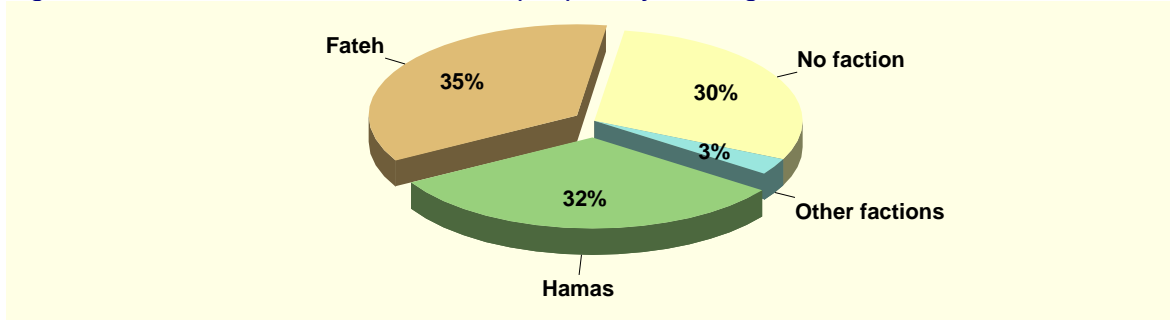
Table 6: Factional trust according to region of residence (December 2006)

Factional trust.		Region of residence		Total
		West Bank	Gaza Strip	
	Hamas	25%	29%	27%
	Fateh	27%	40%	32%
	PFLP	3%	3%	3%
	Islamic Jihad	3%	1%	2%
	Others	2%	0%	2%
	No faction	40%	26%	35%
Total		100%	100%	100%

In an attempt to further ascertain the level of support for the main parties, NEC has included a new question about the level of trust for the respective factions. Whereas the monthly question reflects on the level of trust for the parties by the respective respondents, the additional question asks the respondents who do they think people in their surrounding support more. As indicated in figure 8, below, 35% of the respondents said that the people around them supports Fateh more, compared to 32% who said Hamas more.



Figure 7: Perceived factional trust of the people in your neighborhood



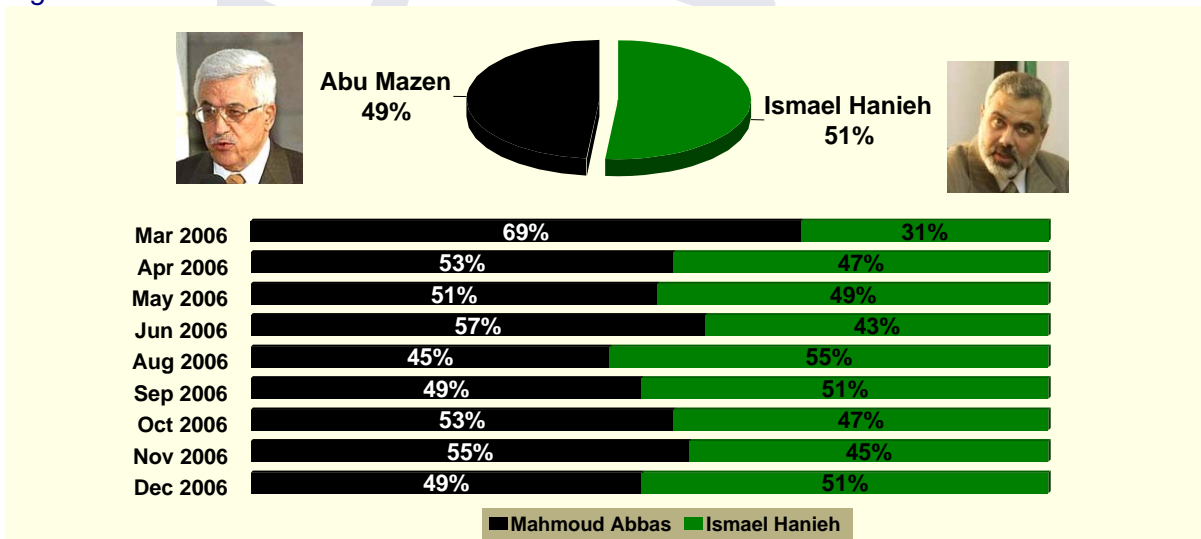
C. Leadership

1. Abbas vs. Hanieh

As indicated in figure 8, below, President Abbas has lost significant popular support in the past month (from 55% in November to 49% in December). This decline in support for Abu Mazen and increase in support for Hanieh could be a result of the pledge of millions of dollars by Iran to Prime Minister Hanieh, as this news broke when NEC's survey was on-going.

All in all, despite some fluctuations in the past 9 months, trust in Abu Mazen has dropped significantly to the benefit of Ismael Hanieh. In March 2006, 69% of Palestinians still most trusted the President, while at that time a minority of 31% most trusted his Prime Minister.

Figure 8: Leader Palestinians trust most





Again, the support for either leader is very much based on factional support with 88% of Fateh supporters most trusting President Abbas, and 94% of Hamas supporters most trusting Hanieh. Those who do not trust any faction slightly trust Abu Mazen (52%) more than Ismael Hanieh (48%)

Table 7: Trust in Abu Mazen vs. Ismael Hanieh according to factional trust

	Factional trust.					
	Hamas	Fateh	PFLP	Islamic Jihad	Others	No faction
Abu Mazen	6%	88%	40%	18%	43%	52%
Ismael Hanieh	94%	12%	60%	82%	57%	48%

2. Ranking of leaders

Ever since the passing of former President Arafat, there has been a debate among Palestinians of which personality could in the future emerge as the most capable to lead the Palestinian people. Although this debate had quieted down after the election of Mahmoud Abbas as the new President of the Palestinian Authority, as a result of the internal tensions and the inter-factional tension since Hamas won the elections in January 2006, many began to wonder again who might be the most capable to lead the Palestinian towards their aspirations. For this reason, NEC has embarked on assessing and monitoring what Palestinians think of the ability of a selected number of Palestinian leaders to lead them. To this end, respondents were asked to rate (on a scale from 0 to 10 with 0 being very capable and 10 being totally incapable) a number of leaders from various factions.

As illustrated in the figure below, only 4 out of the 10 listed personalities are popularly perceived as capable to lead the Palestinian people. Marwan Barghouti is perceived as the most capable (78%) followed by Abu Mazen (61%) and Ismael Hanieh (61%) in second place, and finally Mustapha Barghouti (58%).

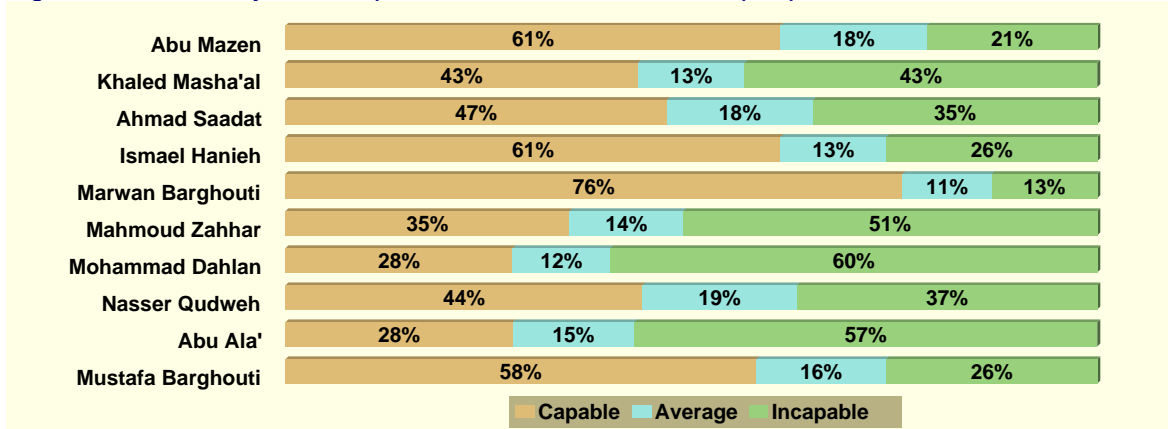
When adding the percentages of those who considered personalities “capable” with those who considered personalities as “average” in terms of their capability to lead the Palestinian people, three more Palestinian political figures from the list are perceived as potential capable leaders by the respondents. In descending order they are : Ahmad Sasdat, Naser Qudweh, and Khaled Masha’al.

The remaining three listed personalities, Abu Ala’ (57%), Mahmoud Zahhar (51%), and Mohammad Dahlan (60%) are all considered incapable by the Palestinian public as potential leaders.

The figure below provides an overview of the perceptions the respondents have about the capabilities of various leaders after the rank given by the respondents to each leader were modified so that rank 0 to 4 were treated as “incapable”, rank 5 as “average” and ranks 6 to 10 as “capable”. As can be noticed, Marwan Barghouti was ranked as the most capable, followed by President Abbas, then Prime Minister Hanieh.



Figure 9: Personality most capable to lead the Palestinian people

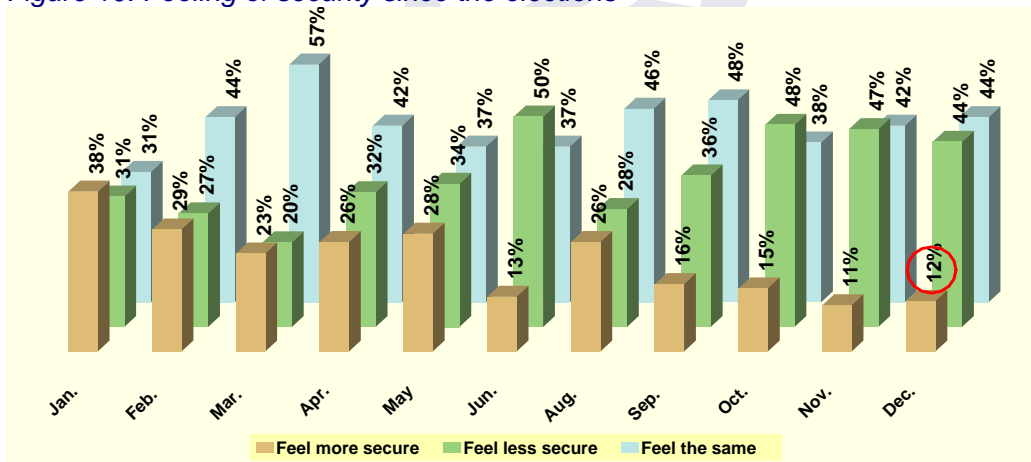


IV. Security Monitor

A. Feeling of security

Palestinian feeling of security does not improve as the months progress. In this month's survey, a mere 12% of Palestinians continue to feel more secure since the January PLC elections, while respectively 44% feel either less secure or say that their feeling of security has remained the same. Since the beginning of the year, Palestinians' feeling of security has been decreasing, and more sharply so since May. While it is true that in comparison to NEC's January survey results, the percentage of Palestinians who feel the same in terms of security has increased by 13%, the percentage of those who feel less secure since the elections has equally increased by 13%, while the percentage of those who felt more secure since the elections has dropped by 26% in the same period of time. The monthly survey results to this question are detailed in the figure below.

Figure 10: Feeling of security since the elections





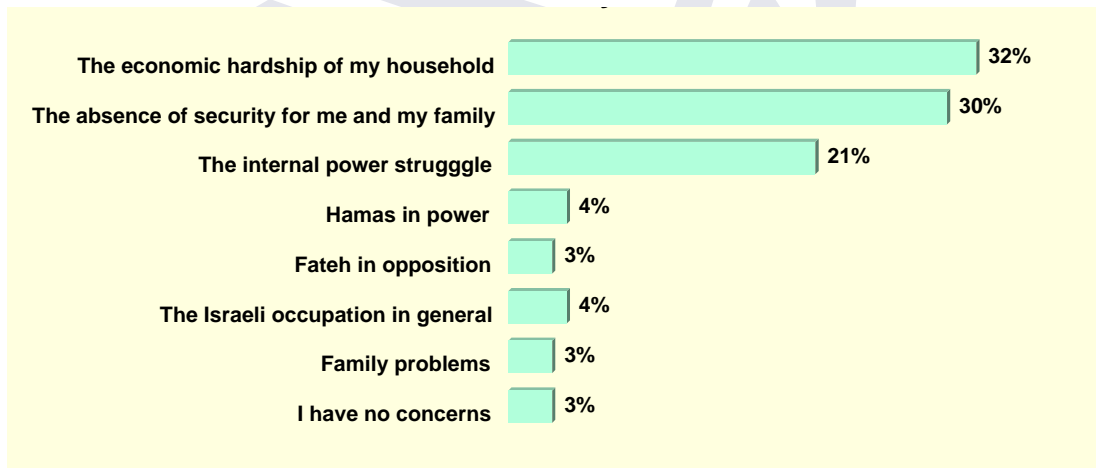
B. Reasons behind feeling concerned

A mere 3% of the Palestinians have no concerns. Those who do feel concerned are merely concerned about issues pertaining to security, whether it is economic security, personal security or insecurity as a result of the internal factional tensions in the oPt.

As overviewed in the figure below, 32% are concerned because of the economic hardship that their household is facing, 30% are concerned because of the general absence of security for their families, while 21% are concerned because of internal power struggle.

The results show that the internal Palestinian problems and the rise of poverty has to such an extent permeated through Palestinians' daily lives that it has temporarily made the 40-year old concerns of the Israeli occupation a negligible concern (4%) in comparison.

Figure 11: Main issue that makes you feel concerned



Among West Bankers (37%), the economic hardship of respondent's households is the main reason for their concern, whereas the absence of security for the family (30%) is the main reason for concern among Gaza Strip residents. Furthermore, the internal power struggle causes far more concern in the Gaza Strip (26%) than in the West Bank (17%). Moreover, city residents (33%) more than villagers (25%) and camp residents (25%) say that the absence of security for their families is the main issue for concern. Camp dwellers (29%) more so than those residing in cities (19%) and villages (19%) are mainly concerned about the internal power struggle.



Table 8: The main issue that makes you feel concerned?

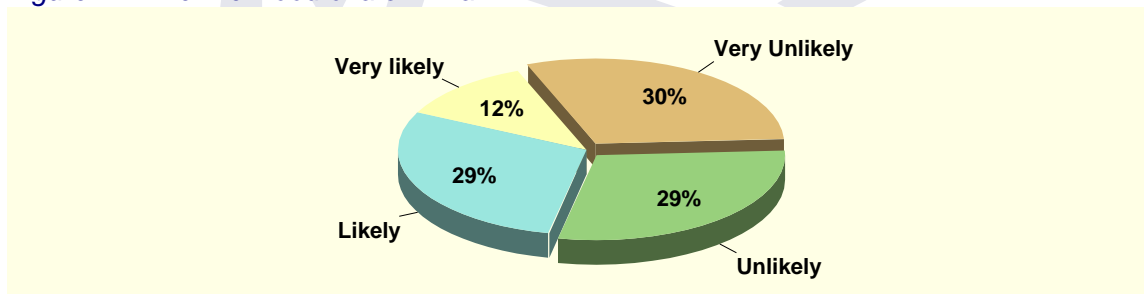
The main issue that makes you feel concerned	Region of residence		Area of residence.		
	West Bank	Gaza Strip	City	Village	Refugee camp
The economic hardship of my household	37%	27%	32%	36%	31%
The absence of security for me and my family	29%	30%	33%	25%	25%
The internal power struggle	17%	26%	19%	19%	29%
Hamis in power	4%	6%	3%	6%	6%
Fateh in opposition	2%	3%	3%	2%	1%
The Israeli occupation in general	5%	3%	3%	6%	4%
Family problems	3%	3%	2%	4%	2%
I have no concerns	3%	1%	3%	2%	1%

C. Likelihood of a Civil War

At time the survey for this bulletin was conducted inter-factional tensions were expected to increase as Abu Mazen in a PLO Executive Committee meeting announced that he was considering calling for early Presidential and Legislative elections if no progress was made soon in the formation of a national unity government.

The results on the likelihood of a civil war were thus gathered before the sudden increase in tensions that erupted in the past few days between Fateh and Hamas. At the time of the survey, the majority of Palestinians (59%) did not believe in the likelihood of a civil war, of which 30% believed a civil war was highly unlikely. Only 12% considered the outbreak of a civil war highly likely.

Figure 12: The likelihood of a civil war



V. The Hamas Government

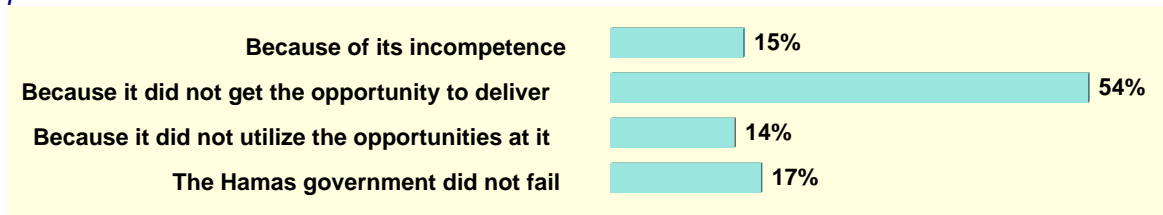
A. Perceptions towards Hamas government

Only 17% of Palestinians do not think that the Hamas government has failed to deliver on its campaign promises. Although the huge majority of Palestinians believe that the Hamas government has failed to deliver, they disagree on the reasons behind this



failure. As illustrated in the figure below, the largest proportion of Palestinians believe that the Hamas government failed to deliver on its campaign promises because it did not get the opportunity to deliver (54%), while 15% believe that it was caused by incompetence, and 14% believe that the failure was caused because the Hamas government did not utilize the opportunities at its disposal.

Figure 13: Reasons behind the belief that Hamas failed to deliver on its campaign promises



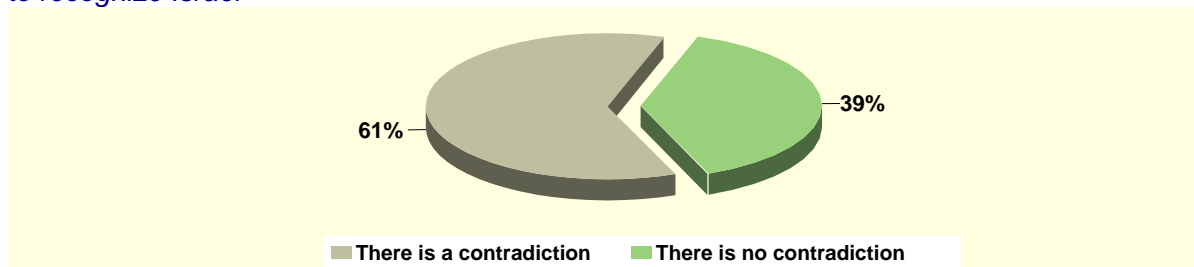
Interestingly, according to factional trust, a higher percentage of Islamic Jihad supporters (79%) than Hamas supporters (56%) believe that the Hamas government failed to deliver on its promises because it did not get the opportunity to deliver. Not surprisingly, the highest percentage who believes that the Hamas government did not fail to deliver can be found among Hamas supporters (37%).

Table 9: Reason behind the belief that Hamas failed to deliver on its campaign promises according to factional trust

	Factional trust.					
	Hamas	Fateh	PFLP	Islamic Jihad	Others	No faction
Because of its incompetence	4%	31%		7%	20%	13%
Because it did not get the opportunity to deliver	56%	41%	56%	79%	70%	60%
Because it did not utilize the opportunities at its disposal	3%	24%	31%		10%	15%
The Hamas government did not fail	37%	4%	13%	14%		12%

Hamas's position to participate in the elections while at the same time refusing to recognize Israel is deemed as a contradiction by a majority of 61% of Palestinians.

Figure 14: Perceptions on Hamas's position to participate in the elections while refusing to recognize Israel

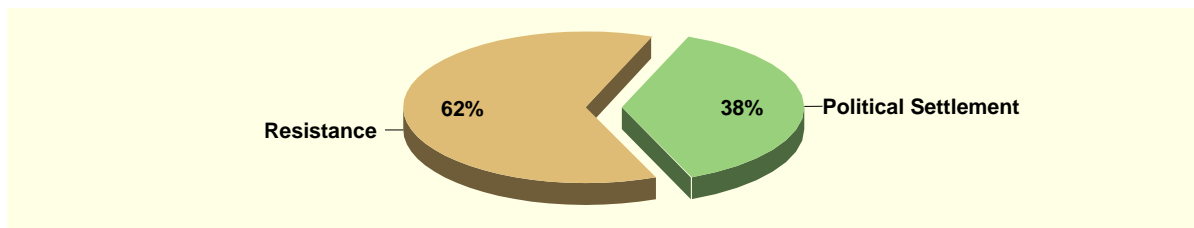




B. Hamas Strategy

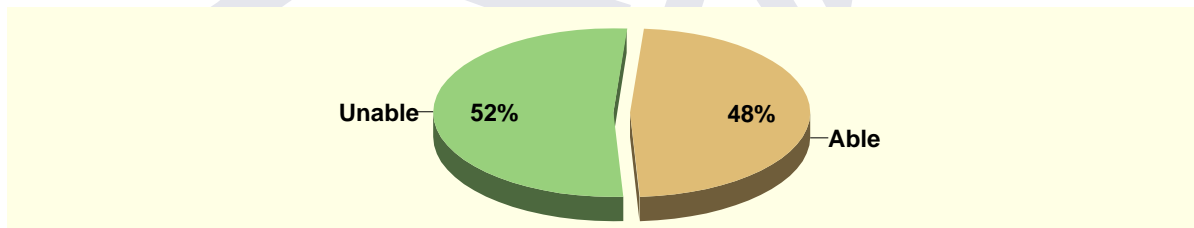
Interviewers were asked about their perceptions about Hamas's strategy. As illustrated in the pie, below, 62% believe Hamas's strategy is one of resistance, while the remaining 38% believe that Hamas's strategy is one of political settlement.

Figure 15: Hamas's strategy: Resistance or political settlement?



As for Hamas's ability to achieve its strategy, opinions are quite equally divided: 52% believe that Hamas will not be able to achieve its strategy, while 48% believe Hamas will be able to do so.

Figure 16: Ability of Hamas to achieve its strategy



C. Evaluation of performance

NEC undertook an in-depth analysis of the performance of the Hamas government since the elections by adding a series of questions to this months' survey which asked respondents to evaluate the Hamas government performance on several issues by rating them from 0 to 10 (with 0 being very negative and 10 being very positive).

Out of the eight areas that respondents were asked to evaluate, the Hamas government performance on, only was evaluated positively, two were borderline, while the remaining were negatively evaluated.

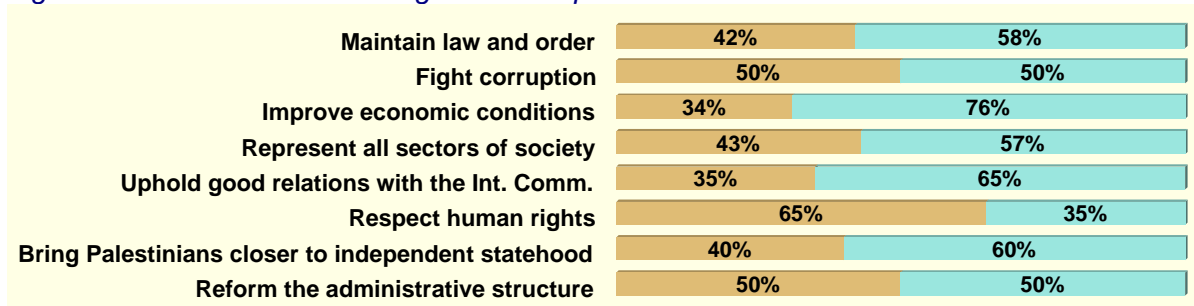
As overviewed in the figure below, the Hamas government's performance was only rated positively with respect to "human rights" (65%). An equal percentage rated the Hamas government's performance positively (50%) and negatively (50%) in terms of its "combating corruption" and it terms of its efforts in "reforming the administrative structure". The Hams government's performance was evaluated negatively as follows in the following areas: 57% negatively evaluate the Hamas government's representation of



all sectors of society, 58% negatively evaluate the Hamas government's performance in terms of maintaining law and order, 60% negatively evaluate the Hamas Government's performance in bringing Palestinians closer to independent statehood, while 65% negatively evaluate the Hamas government's performance in terms of upholding good

Finally, the Hamas government was evaluated most negatively in its performance of "improving economic condition" as 76% rated this performance negatively.

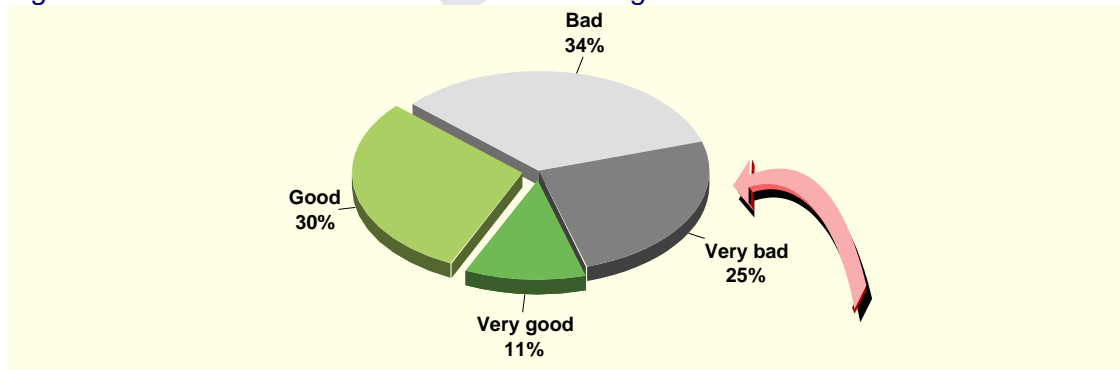
Figure 17: Evaluation of Hamas government performance since the elections



In order to obtain in-depth analysis of the performance of the Hamas government, NEC constructed a "performance barometer". The performance barometer is based on the combination of the eight listed questions that were discussed above in which respondents were asked to evaluate the Hamas government performance on a scale from 0 to 10. The questions relate to law and order, the economy, anti-corruption measures, human rights, independence, diplomacy, reforming the administrative structure, and the representation of all sectors of society. NEC must note that it is to its knowledge the first organization in Palestine to develop such a barometer.

The Hamas government performance since it gained power on the issues outlined above is viewed negatively by 59% of the Palestinian population. As portrayed in the figure, below, 25% view the Hamas government performance as "very bad", 34% view it as "bad", 30% rate it as "good" while 11% perceive it as "very good".

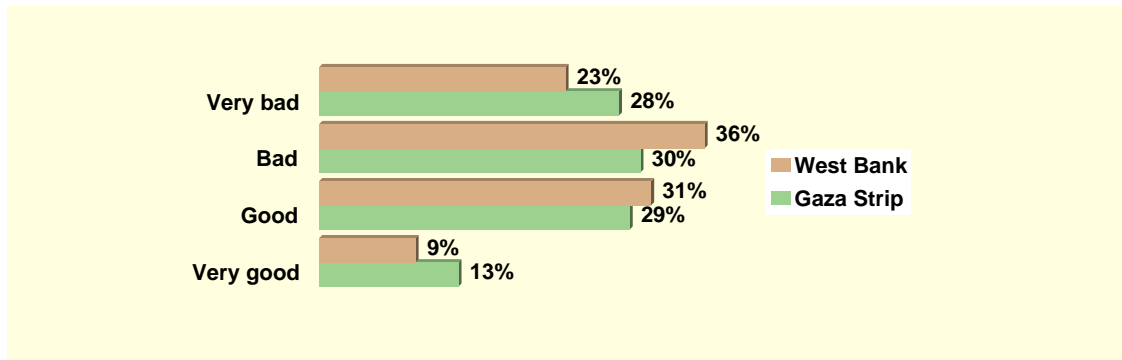
Figure 18: Performance barometer of the Hamas government





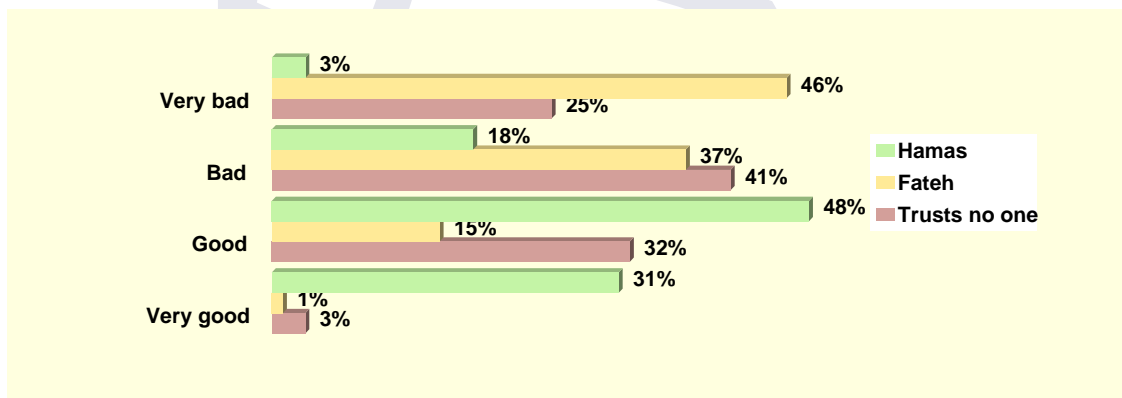
According to region of residence, the results show that a higher percentage of Gazans than Westbankers rate the performance of the Hams government in those eight areas as "very bad" since it gained power. However, at the same time, a higher percentage of Gazans than Westbankers view the performance of Hams government in those areas as "very good". More generally, the performance of the Hamas government is evaluated negatively in both regions of the oPt.

Figure 19: Performance barometer of the Hamas government according to region



The performance barometer of the Hamas government clearly shows differences according to factional trust. As overviewed in the figure, below, 83% of Fateh supporters compared to 21% of Hamas supporters and 66% of respondents who do not trust any faction rate the Hamas government performance as very bad or bad since it gained power.

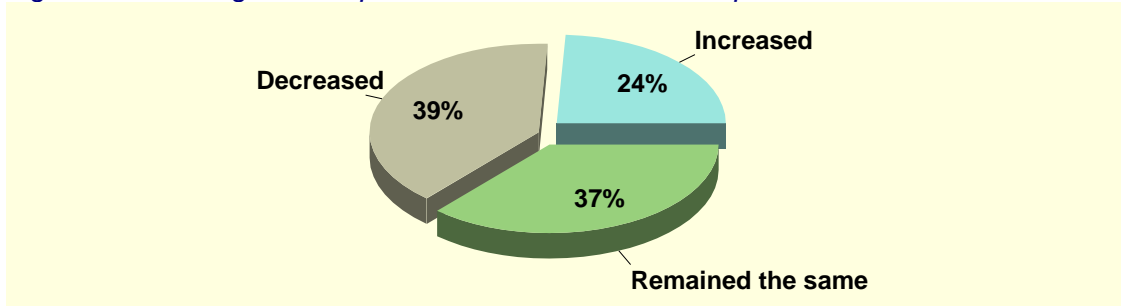
Figure 20: Performance barometer of the Hamas government according to factional trust



Lastly, Palestinians seemingly are convinced that the degree of nepotism since Hamas came to power has either decreased (39%) or remained the same (37%) compared to before Hamas's existence in power. Only 24% of respondents believe that nepotism has increased.



Figure 21: The degree of nepotism since Hamas came to power



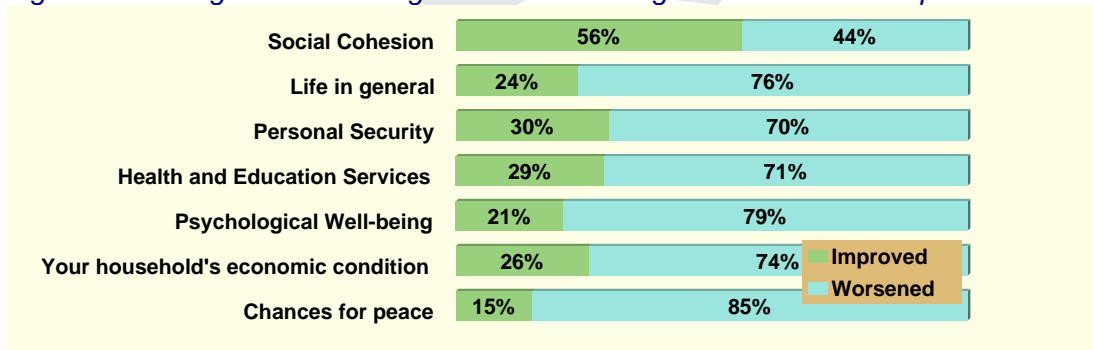
D. Quality of life under the Hamas government

Respondents were also asked to rate the following issues: social cohesion, life in general, personal security, health and education services, psychological well-being, the household's economic condition and chances for peace since the Hamas government came to power on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being worsened a lot and 10 being improved a lot.

Of the seven aspects of life that respondents were asked to rate since the Hamas government came to power, all with the exception of one was considered to have deteriorated.

More concretely, 56% believe that social cohesion improved since the Hamas government gained power. However, 70% believe that their personal security deteriorated, 71% say that the status of education and health services worsened, 74% affirmed that their household's economic condition declined, while 76% described that their life in general went downhill. As also detailed in the figure below, 79% said that their psychological well-being decreased since the Hamas government came to power, while 85% felt that chances for peace deteriorated since Hamas was elected into government.

Figure 22: Rating of the following since the Hamas government came to power:

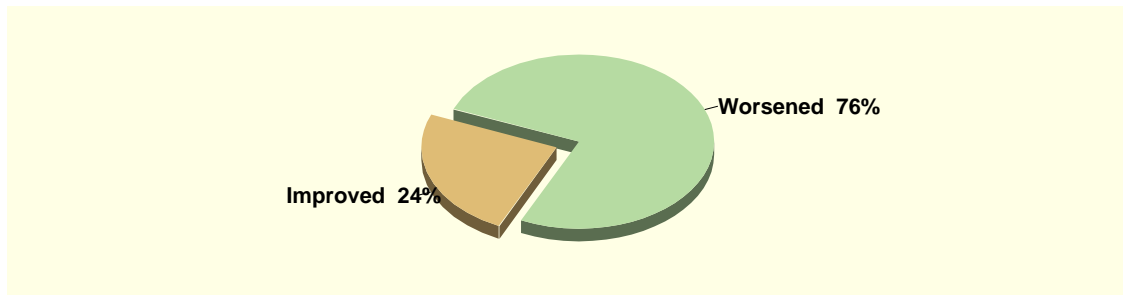




In order to obtain in-depth analysis of the quality of life under the Hamas government, NEC constructed a "quality of life barometer". The barometer is based on the combination of the seven listed questions that were discussed above in which respondents were asked to rate the level of change in each of them on a scale from 0 to 10 with 0 being worsened and 10 improved

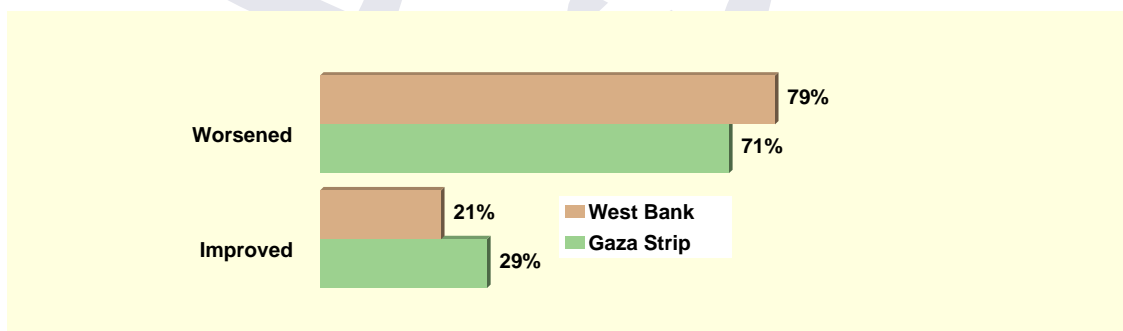
As described in the figure below, the quality of life of Palestinians since the election has worsened according to 76% of Palestinians. Only 24% of Palestinians believe that their quality of life has improved since the Hamas government came to power.

Figure 23: Barometer of the quality of life of Palestinians since the elections



West Bank residents and Gazans are in agreement when it comes to rating the quality of life since the Hamas government came to power as worsened a lot. The quality of life for West Bankers has worsened more than for Gaza Strip residents. Whereas 79% of Westbankers are perceived to believe that they quality of their life has deteriorated, the percentage in the Gaza Strip is 71%, as illustrated in the figure, below.

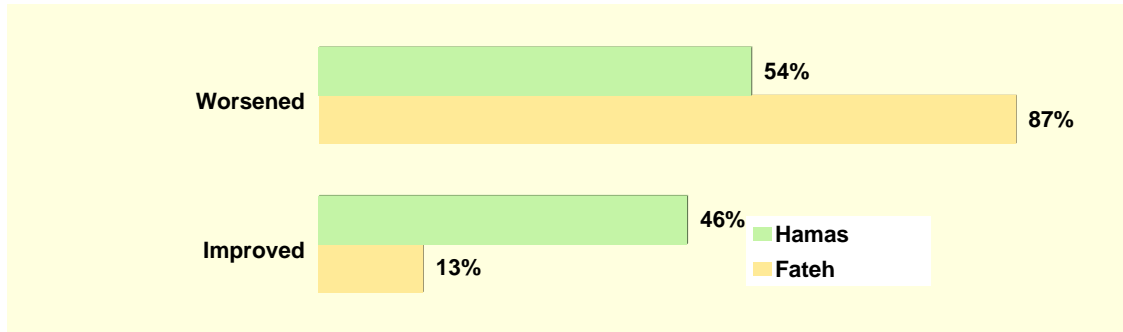
Figure 24: Barometer of the quality of life of Palestinians since the elections according to region



As illustrated in the figure below, even the majority of those trusting Hamas (54%) come out as saying that the quality of life has worsened since Hamas came to power while 87% of Fateh supporters feel that.

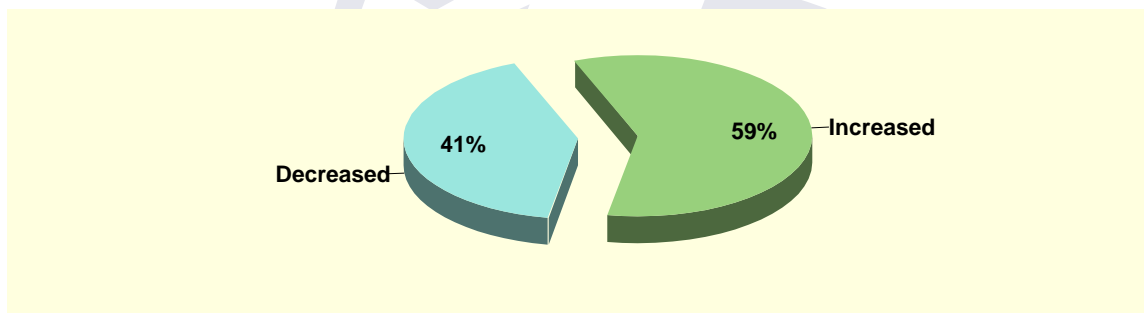


Figure 25: Barometer of the quality of life of Palestinians since the elections according to factional trust



Interviewers were also asked to rate the evolution in crime since the Hamas government came to power. As illustrated in the figure, below, 59% of Palestinians believe that crime increased since Hamas was elected while the remaining 41% said that crime decreased in this period of time.

Figure 26: Rating of crime since the Hamas government came to power

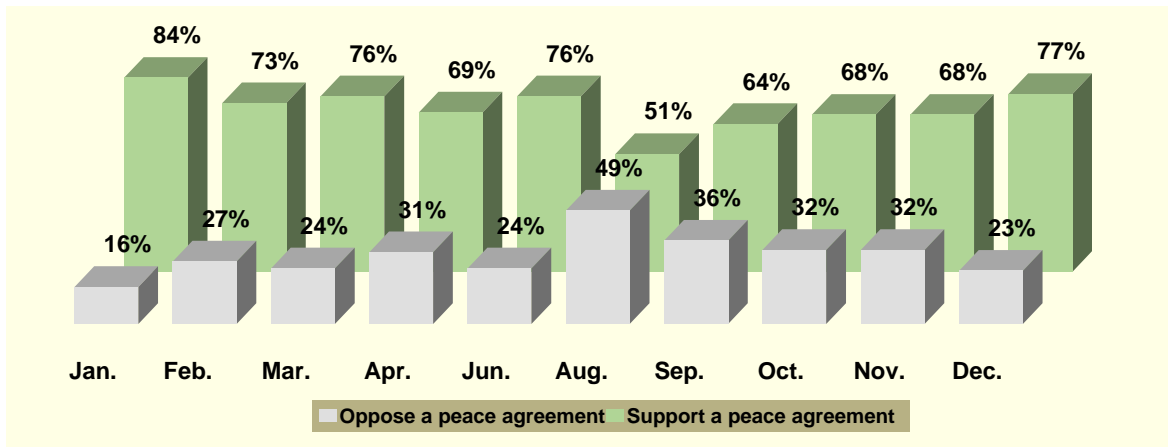


VI. Peace Monitor

A. A peace settlement with Israel

Level of support for a peace settlement with Israel has increased this month (77%) by (+9%) since last month. In the most recent NEC survey, only 23% of respondents oppose a peace settlement with Israel. The significant increase in support for peace settlement with Israel in just a month's time could possibly be a result of the cease- fire agreement that came into effect in this period. Overall, despite several prolonged Israeli military operations into the Gaza Strip and an even more restrictive regime imposed on the Palestinian people since Hamas gained power, support for a peace settlement with Israel has not declined a lot since January 2006. As overviewed in the figure below, support for a peace settlement with Israel only decreased by 7% in a period of eleven months.

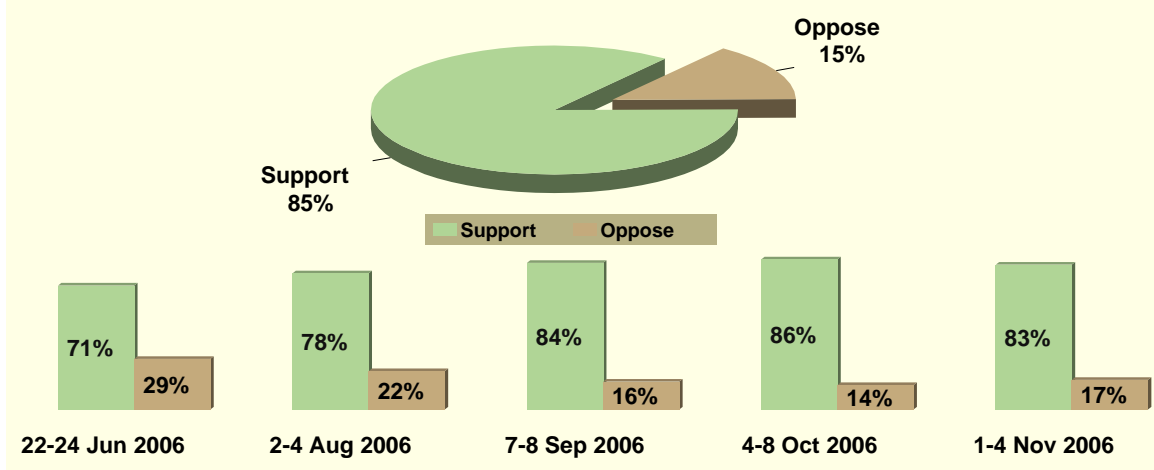
Figure 27: Support or opposition to a peace settlement



B. Cease Fire

Support for a cease-fire is even higher than support for a peace settlement with Israel. As illustrated in the figure below, nowadays the large majority of 85% of Palestinians support a cease-fire with Israel.

Figure 28: Support or opposition to a cease fire



C. Perceptions towards the cessation of attacks against Israel

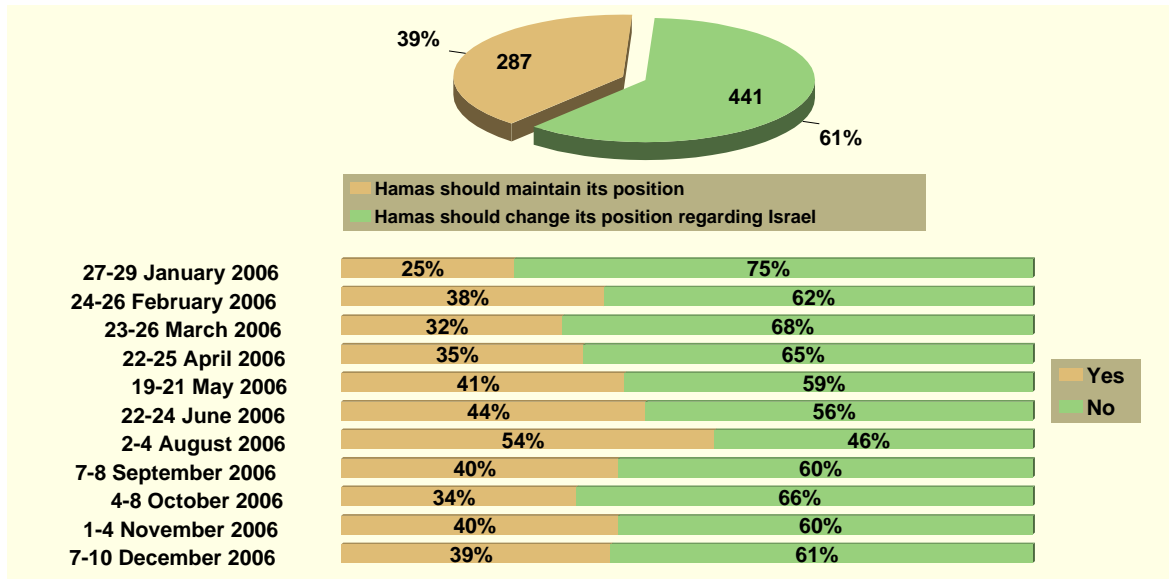
Palestinians' belief that Hamas should change its position regarding the elimination of Israel (61%) remains well above the one that Hamas should maintain its position on Israel (39%).

Still, in comparison to Palestinian perceptions on this issue in January 2006, 14% more Palestinian nowadays believe that Hamas should maintain its position on the elimination



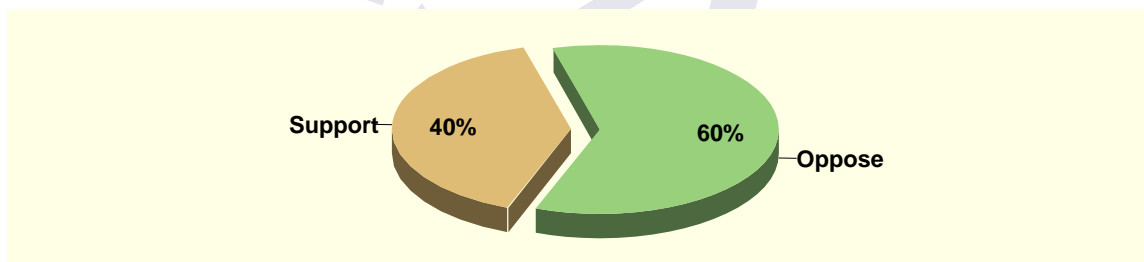
of Israel. The results of the 11 monthly surveys on this issue since the beginning of the year are detailed in the figure below.

Figure 29: Palestinian perceptions about whether Hamas should maintain its position on the elimination of Israel



Interviewees were also queried more specifically about their support or opposition to attacks against Israel such as bomb attacks or launching missiles from Gaza to Israel. As illustrated in the figure below, 60% of the Palestinians indicated their opposition to bomb attacks.

Figure 30: Support or oppose bomb attacks inside Israel



As detailed in the table below, the support for bomb attacks in Israel is higher among Gazans (53%) than it is among West Bankers (32%). Furthermore, refugee camp residents (48%) support bomb attacks in Israel more than city (40%) and village residents (38%).



Table 10: Level of support for bomb attacks in Israel according to region and area of residence

	Region of residence		Area of residence.		
	West Bank	Gaza Strip	City	Village	Refugee camp
Support	32%	53%	40%	38%	48%
Oppose	68%	47%	60%	62%	52%

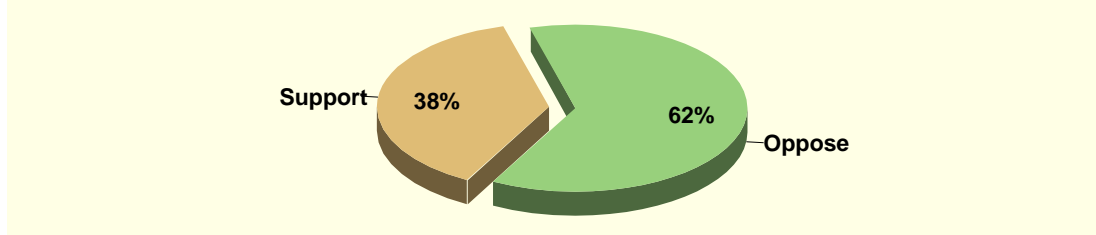
As illustrated in the table below, a higher percentage of Hamas supporters (58%) than Fateh supporters (34%) and those who do not trust any faction (32%) support bomb attacks in Israel.

Table 11: Support or opposition to bomb attacks inside Israel according to Factional Trust

	Factional trust					
	Hamas	Fateh	PFLP	Islamic Jihad	Others	No faction
Support	58%	34%	48%	47%	18%	32%
Oppose	42%	66%	52%	53%	82%	68%

There is a strong opposition to the continuation of launching missiles from Gaza to Israel. As indicated in the figure, below, 62% of Palestinians are opposed to continuation of launching missiles from Gaza to Israel.

Figure 31: Support or oppose the continuation of launching missiles from Gaza to Israel



The strongest level of support for the continuation of launching missiles into Israel is witnessed among Hamas supporters (59%). Support for the continuation is lower among those who do not trust any faction (32%) and among those trusting Fateh (28%).

Table 12: Level of support for the continuation of launching missiles from Gaza to Israel according to factional trust

	Factional trust.					
	Hamas	Fateh	PFLP	Islamic Jihad	Others	No faction
Support	59%	28%	33%	40%	25%	32%
Oppose	41%	72%	67%	60%	75%	68%

D. Is there a Peace Partner in Israel?

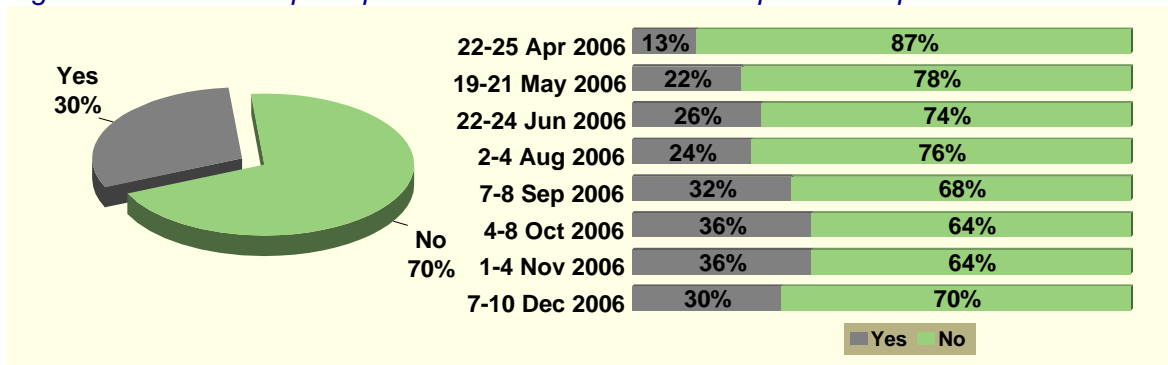
In comparison to NEC’s November survey results, the percentage of Palestinians believing that there is a partner for peace in Israel has dropped by 6% to 30%.



Still in comparison with Palestinian public perceptions on this issue in April 2006, the belief among Palestinians that there is a partner for peace in Israel has increased by 17 points.

The evolution in Palestinian perceptions about the existence of a partner for peace in Israel over the past eight months is overviewed in the figure below.

Figure 32: Palestinian perceptions about the existence of a partner for peace in Israel

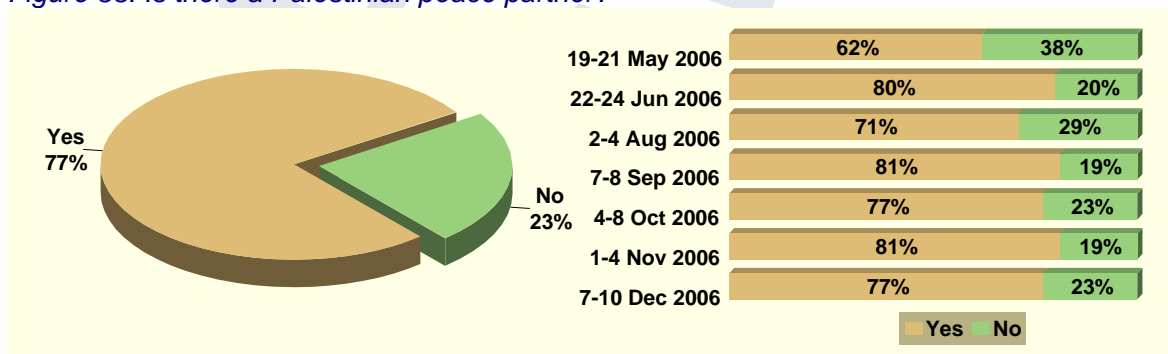


E. Is there a Palestinian peace partner?

In comparison to NEC’s November survey, the perceptions that there is a Palestinian peace partner has also slightly dropped by 4 points and reaches 77%.

In comparison with public opinion on this issue in May 2006, the perceptions that there is a Palestinian peace partner has gained strength by 15%.

Figure 33: Is there a Palestinian peace partner?



VII. System of government Palestinians prefer

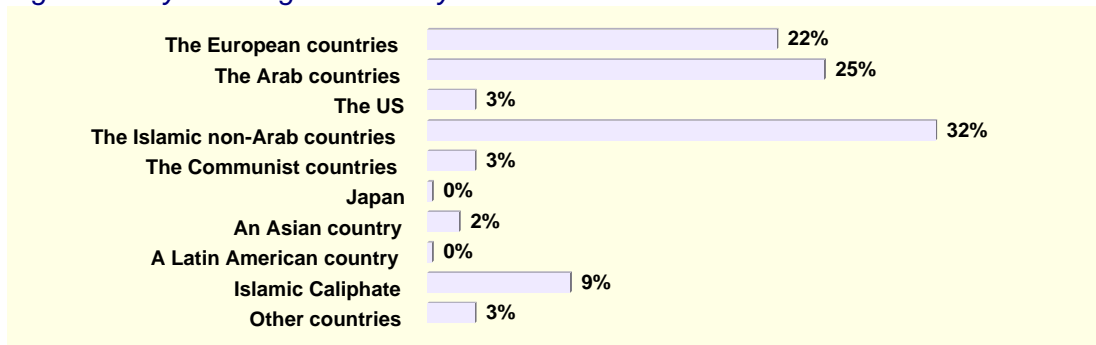
Palestinians generally (32%) prefer to have a system of government in Palestine that is modeled after the Islamic non-Arab countries such as Turkey, Indonesia, etc. The Arab



countries come in second (25%) as the system of government that Palestinians would like Palestine to be modeled after, followed by 22% who believe Palestine should be modeled after the European countries.

Only 3% want the system of government to be modeled after the US, while 9% would like the system of government in Palestine to emulate the Islamic caliphate.

Figure 34: System of government you would like Palestine to be modeled after



According to area of residence, whereas 25% of city residents and 20% of village residents prefer a system of government in Palestine that resembles that of the European countries, only 15% of refugee camp residents agree with this notion. However, the opposite is the case when it comes to a system of government that resembles that of the Arab countries whereby 36% of refugee camp residents opted for this system compared to 22% of village and 25% of city residents who share this view. City, Village and refugee camp residents only differ slightly when it comes to their preference for a system of government in Palestine that is modeled after the Islamic non-Arab countries.

Table 13: System of government you would like Palestine to be modeled after according to area of residence

	City	Village	Refugee camp
The European countries	25%	20%	15%
The Arab countries	25%	22%	36%
The US	4%	3%	3%
The Islamic non-Arab countries	31%	34%	30%
The Communist countries	2%	4%	3%
Japan	0%	0%	
An Asian country	1%	4%	4%
A Latin American country	0%	0%	
Islamic Caliphate	9%	11%	4%
Other Countries	3%	1%	6%

VIII. Poverty conditions

Since September 2006, the poverty rate in the OPT has somewhat stabilized and reaches 66% in NEC's current survey. As illustrated in the figure below, in March 2006 –

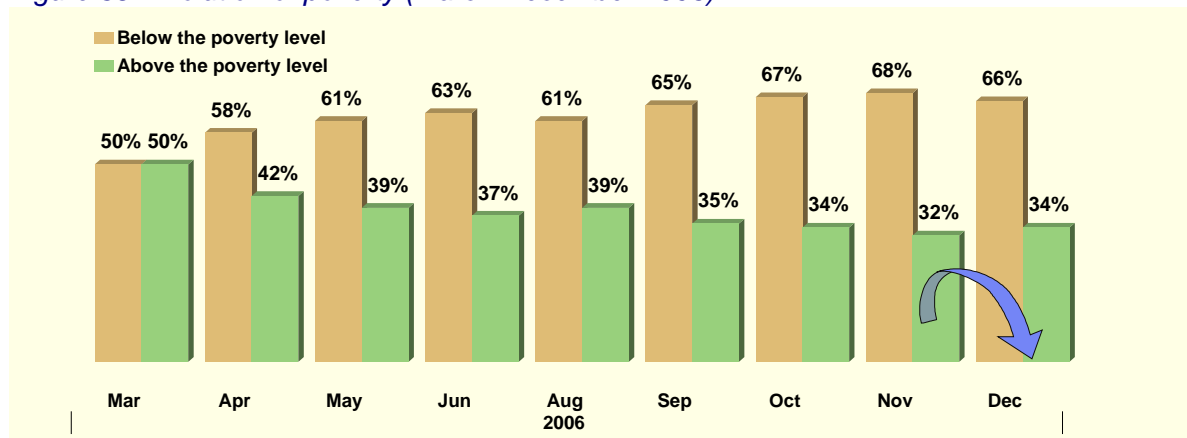


the time when the Hamas government was sworn in – 50% of Palestinian households had a monthly income that falls below the poverty line.

In other words, the poverty rate in five month period between March and September 2006 increased with a staggering 15%.

A. Evolution of Poverty

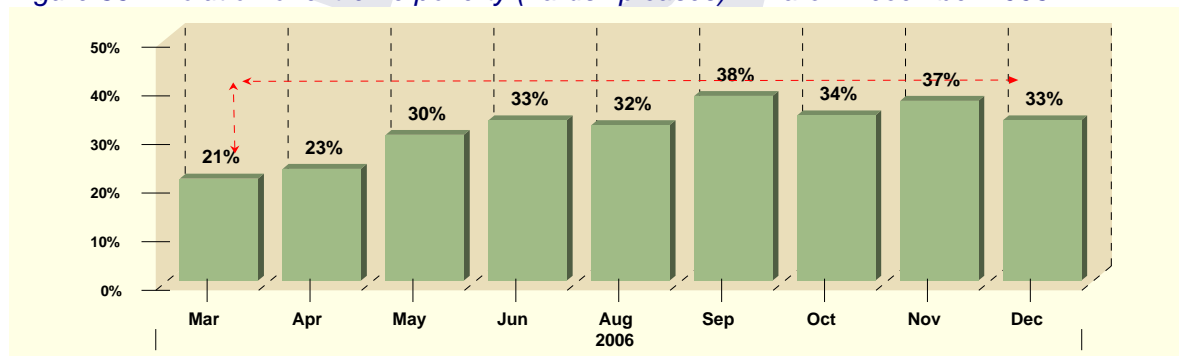
Figure 35: Evolution of poverty (March-December 2006)



B. Extreme Poverty

Not only has the poverty rate drastically risen since March 2006, the extreme poverty rate has followed suite since March 2006, extreme poverty has grown by 12% to reach 33% in NEC's current survey.

Figure 36: Evolution of extreme poverty (hardship cases) – March-December 2006





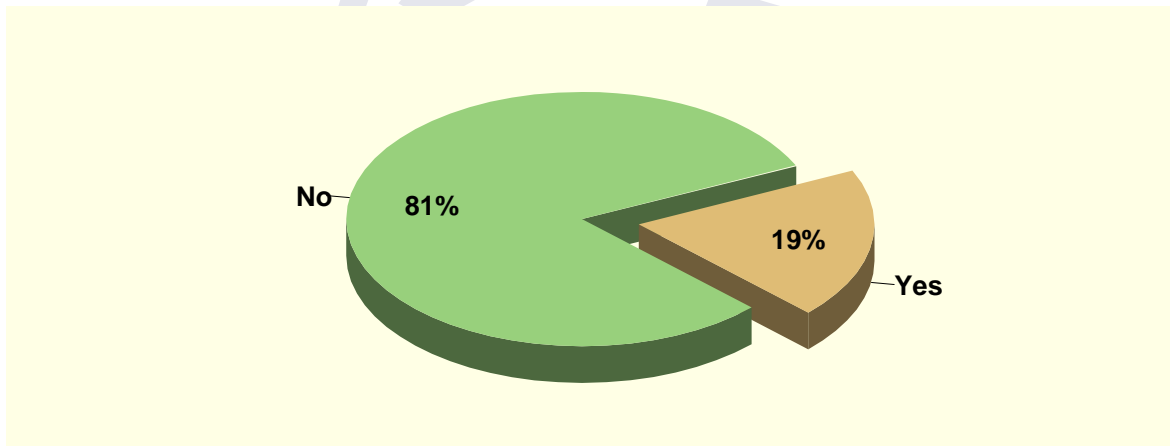
IX. Immigration

Given the increasing poverty and unemployment rates in the OPT coupled with the lack of any foreseeable positive movement in Palestinian- Israeli relations, and the deteriorating internal Palestinian crisis and insecurity , the NEC team believed it useful to gauge Palestinian's views and motives for immigration (whether abroad or internally).

A. Immigration Abroad

When asked if any household member had immigrated abroad in the past year, 19% of the respondents answered that this was the case. In an attempt to make the percentage more concrete: assuming that the population in the OPT is about 3.5 million and an average household size includes seven members, 19% immigrating abroad in the past year amounts to about 95,000 Palestinians. This estimate could reach even much higher as many Palestinians do not immigrate alone, but travel with their family members.

Figure 37: Has any household member immigrated abroad in the past year?

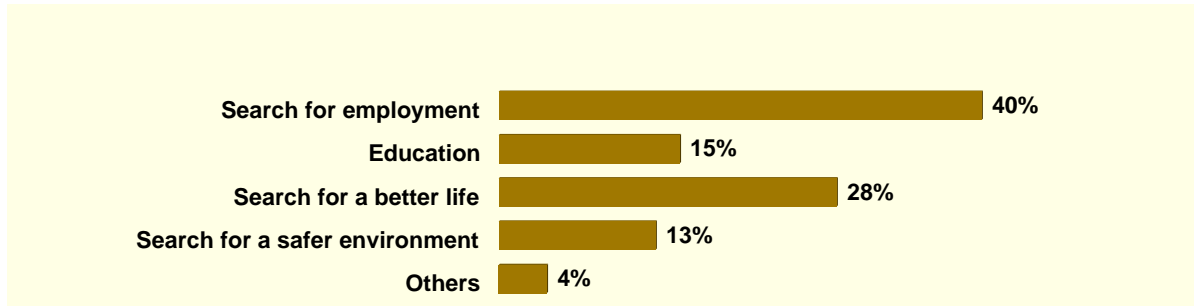


B. Reasons for Immigration

As for the reasons for immigrating abroad, the largest proportion of 40% cited search for employment as the main reason behind leaving the OPT. In addition, 28% said that household members immigrated abroad in search for a better life, 15% for education, and 13 % in search for a safe environment



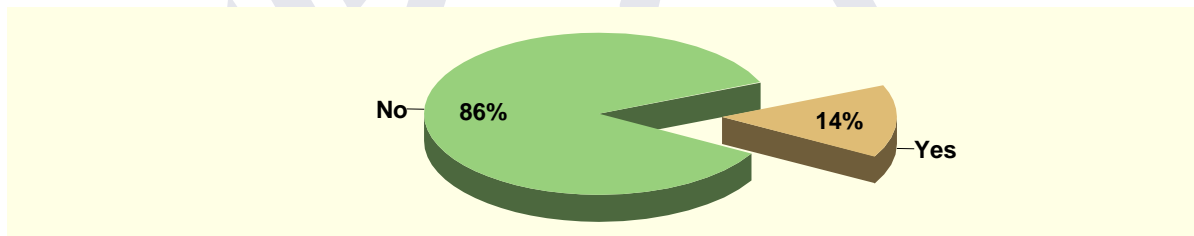
Figure 38: Main reason for immigration abroad



C. Internal Immigration

Beside immigration abroad, for some time now, there is a trend to move within the OPT in search for a better life or employment opportunities. This phenomenon not only undermines the economic viability and prospects of areas Palestinians are moving away from, but also strains the capacity of the areas and cities Palestinians are moving to. When asked if any household member in the past year had moved to another area within the OPT, 14% of the interviewers confirmed that this was the case.

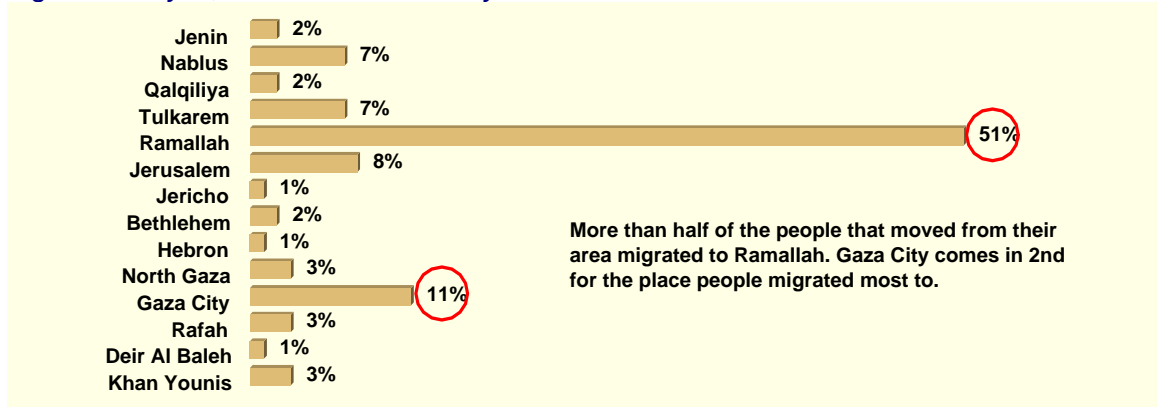
Figure 39: Has any household member moved to another area inside the oPt



As detailed in the figure below, 51% of the Palestinians that moved to another area within the OPT migrated to Ramallah, while 11% moved to Gaza city.



Figure 40: If yes, which area have they moved to?



When interviewers were asked if they would personally consider immigrating abroad, 27% answered positively. These high percentages of household members immigrating abroad and respondents personally also wishing to immigrate are further indicator of the extent to which the socio- economic and political conditions have worsened as an increased number of Palestinians are leaving or have the intention wish to do so.

Figure 41: Feelings towards immigrating abroad

