



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

**Special Focus:  
Palestinian Internal Crisis**

**Bulletin #**

**June 2007**

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

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## NEC Monthly Bulletin

June 2007

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## I. Introduction

The recent fighting in the Gaza Strip between the main two Palestinian factions which consequently brought Hamas to total control of the Gaza Strip ushered yet another chapter in a seemingly unending chronicle for statehood.

These developments brought a serious challenge to the legitimacy of the PLO and the Fateh leadership while, at the same time, pushing Hamas and its leaders to a situation beckoned with a sense of anxiety, bewilderment, and anger. Anger targeted against Fateh more so than against Israel.

The demeaning retreat and defeat of Fateh in the Gaza Strip has, in the past few days, developed into an attempt by Fateh leaders to face-save the faction by solidifying its control over the West Bank. This control, which could be a natural reaction to an apparently uncalculated move by Hamas to strengthen its control over the Palestinian political structure, has forced the Executive Committee of the PLO to take substantive steps to curtail Hamas's ambitions. These steps were crowned by the dissolution of the National Unity Government, the dismissal of the Hamas Prime Minister, and the establishment of an Emergency Government. Developments that were unequivocally rejected by Hamas while, at the same time, endorsed by the other Palestinian political factions, as well as by the Arab countries and the international community.

The following pages will attempt to examine the reaction of the Palestinian public to these developments as well as their expectations about the future and about other political issues pertaining to the course the Palestinians should undertake in their path towards some level of political sensibility.

Thus, immediately after the declaration of a state of emergency by Mahmoud Abbas, Near East Consulting (NEC) surveyed 806 randomly selected Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem for their reactions to these and other developments in the Occupied Territories. The questions in this survey addressed themselves particularly to the internal Palestinian crisis. The following Bulletin summarizes and discusses the major findings of this poll.

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

This latest survey was conducted by telephone between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of June, 2007, and has a margin of error of +/- 3.4%, with a 95% confidence level. The results of this survey and the other earlier surveys, along with accompanying bulletins, are available online from the NEC's web site. Visit us at [www.neareastconsulting.com](http://www.neareastconsulting.com).



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

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

*“Turning data into information and knowledge into practice”*



## II. Main findings

- The internal power struggle is the major issue of concern among respondents from the two regions, followed by the absence of personal security and economic hardship of households;
- The highest level of concern is among those trusting Fateh (97%) and those trusting no faction (91%). The level of concern among Hamas supporters is 65%;
- 60% of the respondents feel that the recent crisis will separate the West Bank from the Gaza Strip and the majority of the Palestinians, especially Gaza respondents, believe that the crisis will spread to the West Bank;
- 72% of Fateh, as opposed to 40% of Hamas supporters, believe that a civil war is likely;
- More Westbankers blame Hamas than Fateh for the Gaza crisis while Gaza respondents blame Fateh more. Still, the majority in both areas blame both factions;
- Whereas 73% of West Bank respondents trust Abu Mazen compared to 27% for Hanieh, the results are split equally in the Gaza Strip;
- Ironically, the level of support for a peace agreement is higher among Gaza respondents than among West Bank respondents. Whereas 66% of the respondents in the Gaza Strip stated their support for a peace agreement with Israel, the percentage in the West Bank is 61%. Even 34% of Hamas supporters believe in a peace agreement with Israel;
- 30% of the Hamas supporters believe that the organization should also reconsider its position on the elimination of the state of Israel (an increase by 5% in the past three weeks);
- 43% of Fateh supporters believe that Iran has a hand in inflaming the crisis; The majority, nonetheless, blame Israel;
- The majority of respondents (54%) support the decision of President Abbas to declare a state of emergency. Even those who opposed the decision, the majority wanted either dissolution of the PA or the call for early elections. Only a minority mentioned the removal of security heads, or the resignation of President Abbas. As for factional trust, 88% of Fateh supporters agree with the decision, compared to 8% among Hamas supporters;
- The majority of the Palestinian people oppose any international presence in the Gaza Strip. Only 34% of the respondents support such a presence. Only 5%



among Hamas sympathizers support this position and 50% among supporters of Fateh;

- The majority of the Palestinians (76%) believe that the main beneficiary of this crisis is Israel;
- 75% of the respondents oppose Hamas's control over the Gaza Strip. This opposition is even shared by 27% of Hamas supporters;
- 69% of the Palestinians support early presidential and PLC elections (53% among Hamas supporters and 82% among Fateh supporters);
- 64% of the respondents expressed opposition to the resignation of President Abbas;
- Support for Fateh is almost doubles that for Hamas. While 33% said that they trust Fateh most, the proportion for Hamas is 17%. Even in the Gaza Strip, 32% of the respondents support Fateh as compared to 26% for Hamas;
- 22% would like to emigrate if they have the opportunity to do so. The highest percentage is among Fateh supporters (29%) and among Gaza Strip respondents (32%). Only 12% of Hamas supporters expressed their intention to emigrate;
- 67% of the Palestinians live under poverty, of which 35% live in extreme poverty. Poverty in Gaza exceeds 75% as compared to 59% in the West Bank. The level of poverty among Fateh supporters and Hamas supporters is almost the same (71% among Hamas supporters and 69% among Fateh supporters);
- 70% of the respondents believe that the Fateh strategy best serves the Palestinian national interest.



■

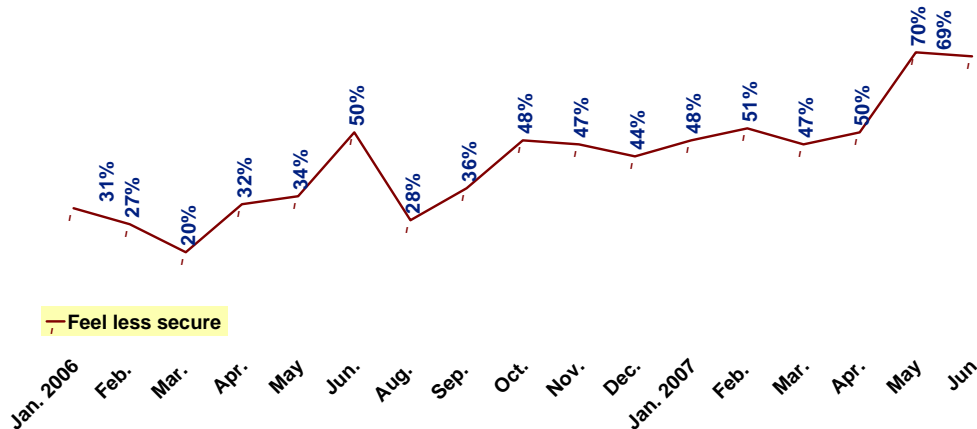
### III. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### A. *Unchanged levels of insecurity and concern*

##### 1. Feeling of security

The level of security remains high even after the demise of Fateh in the Gaza Strip. As pointed in figure 1, below, 69% of the respondents feel more insecure since the elections of January 2006.

Figure 1: Feeling of insecurity since the PLC election in January 2006



This feeling is spread in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. As indicated in table 1, the only respondents that feel relatively more secure are those respondents who trust Hamas most (35%). Even among the Hamas respondents, the majority (44%) feel less secure.

Table 1: Feeling of security since the elections in January 2006, by region of residence and factional trust

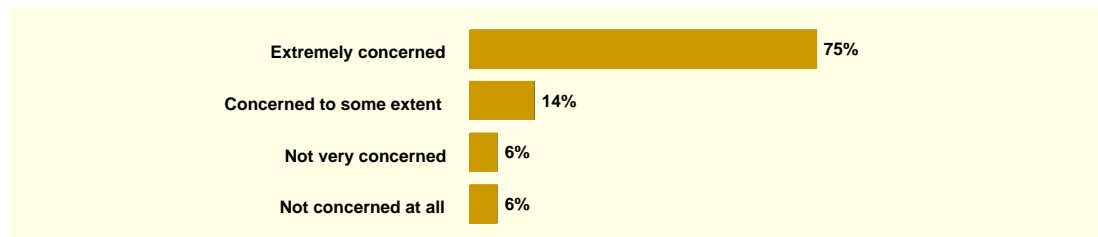
		I feel more secure	I feel less secure	My feeling of security remained the same
Region of residence	West Bank	5%	71%	24%
	Gaza Strip	18%	66%	16%
Factional Trust	Hamas	35%	44%	21%
	Fateh	8%	80%	13%
	Others	0%	78%	22%



## 2. Level of concern about the future

The June survey shows that the majority of the Palestinian public (89%) is concerned about the current situation. This feeling did not improve as a result of the control of Hamas over the Gaza Strip. As indicated in figure 2 and table 2, below, most Palestinians are concerned; including those in the Gaza Strip.

**Figure 2: level of concern about the current situation, June 2007**



**Table 2: level of concern about the current situation, by region of residence**

Region of residence		Extremely concerned	Concerned to some extent	Not very concerned	Not concerned at all
West Bank		79%	14%	3%	3%
Gaza Strip		69%	13%	9%	10%

Most remarkable, however, is the concern that Fateh and other non-Hamas respondents have. Whereas 35% of the respondents trusting Hamas said that they are not concerned about the future, the percentage is only 3% among those trusting Fateh and 9% among those trusting no faction. These results are overviewed in table 3, below.

**Table 3: level of concern about the current situation, by faction**

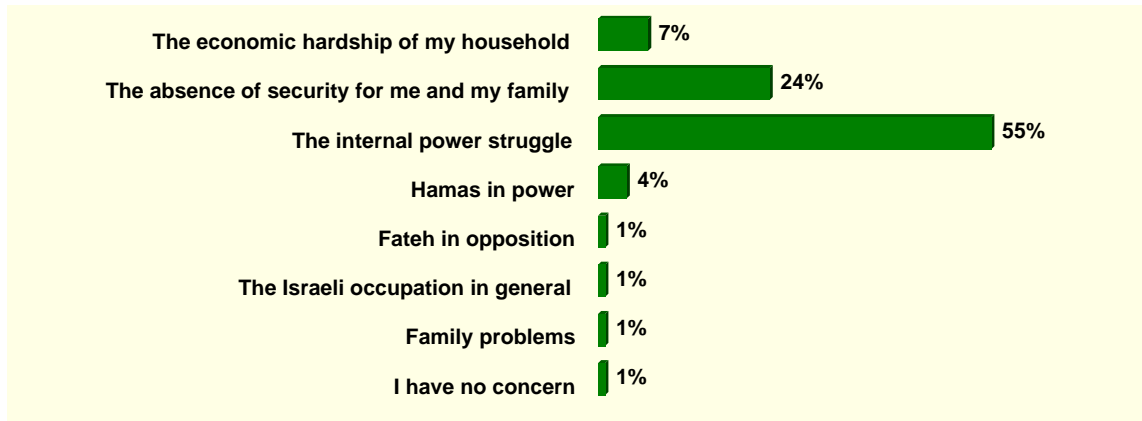
		How concerned are you about the current situation?			
		Extremely concerned	Concerned to some extent	Not very concerned	Not concerned at all
Factional Trust	Hamas	49%	16%	16%	19%
	Fateh	87%	11%	2%	1%
	PFLP	71%	29%	0%	0%
	Islamic Jihad	67%	22%	6%	6%
	Others	63%	21%	11%	5%
	I trust no faction	78%	13%	3%	6%

## 3. Reasons for concern

When examining the reason behind this concern, the internal security situation and the absence of security are the main reasons. As outlined in figure 3, below, 79% of those concerned attribute their anxiety to the lack of security and the internal power struggle.



Figure 3: Main reasons of concern



When the data is examined according to region of residence and to factional trust, it is noticed that the level of personal insecurity is higher among Fateh (27%) than among Hamas (19%) respondents. Furthermore, as indicated in table 4, below, the fear of internal power struggle is more evident in the West Bank (60%) than in the Gaza Strip (47%). However, the higher concern in the West Bank with respect to internal power struggle is explained more by factional trust than by region of residence since the proportion of Fateh supporters in the West Bank is higher than Hamas supporters.

Table 4: Main reasons of concern by region of residence and poverty level

		What is the main issue that makes you feel concerned?							
		The economic hardship	The absence of security	The internal power struggle	Hamas in power	Fateh in opposition	The Israeli occupation	Family problems	I have no concerns
Region	West Bank	4%	23%	60%	4%	1%	2%	1%	5%
	Gaza Strip	12%	25%	47%	4%	1%	1%	1%	10%
Faction	Hamas	11%	19%	39%	1%	4%	2%	0%	25%
	Fateh	7%	27%	54%	9%	0%	1%	0%	2%
	PFLP	6%	29%	59%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%
	Islamic Jihad	12%	18%	59%	0%	0%	0%	12%	0%
	Others	0%	26%	63%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%
	I trust no faction	7%	23%	62%	1%	0%	1%	1%	4%

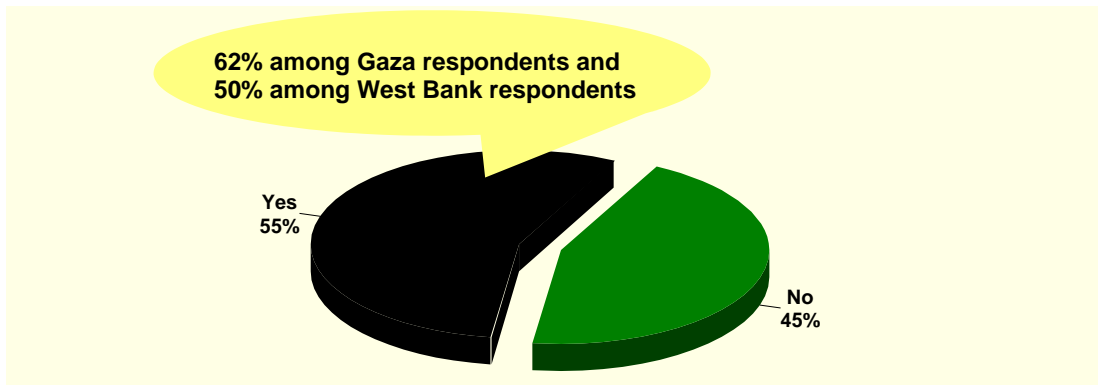


## **B. Hamas Control on Gaza Strip sparks fears on West Bank-Gaza separation**

### **1. Attitude towards the impact of the crisis on the West Bank**

The fear regarding the internal power struggles in the West Bank, particularly among Fateh and other non-Hamas supporters is also evident when respondents were asked about whether the crisis will spread to the West Bank as well. As illustrated in figure 4, below, 55% of the respondents think that it will indeed move to the West Bank. This fear is stronger in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank

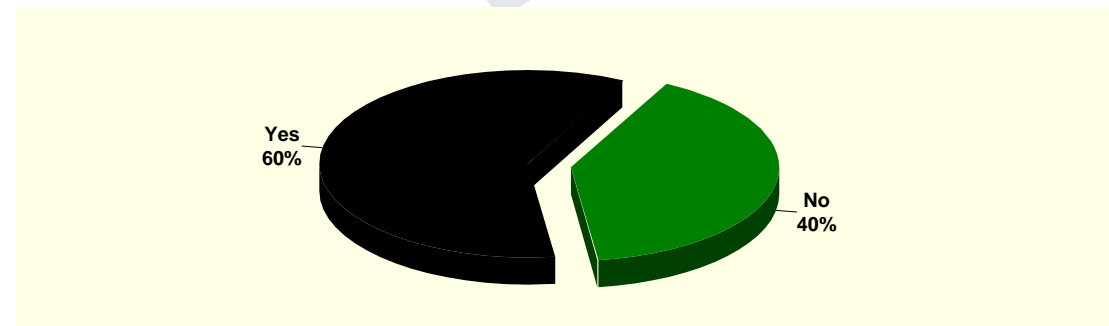
**Figure 4: Will the crisis spread to reach the West bank**



### **2. The future contiguity of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip**

The latest developments also brought among the people a sense of increased separation between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. As indicated in figure 5, below, 60% of the respondents feel that the recent crisis will separate the West Bank from the Gaza Strip.

**Figure 5: Will the crisis lead to separation between the West Bank and Gaza strip**





This feeling is slightly higher in the Gaza Strip (63%) than in the West Bank (58%) and among Fateh (63%) than among Hamas supporters (57%), as indicated in table 5, below.

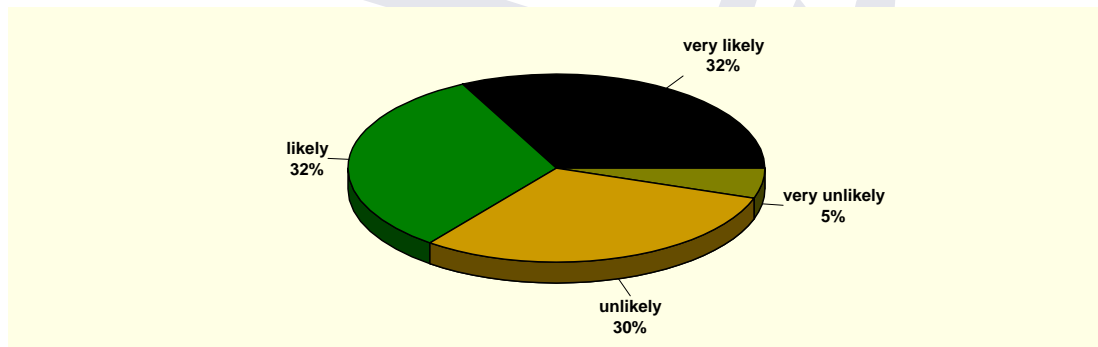
**Table 5: Will the crisis lead to West Bank-Gaza strip separation by region of residence, and factional trust**

		Yes	No
Factional Trust	Hamas	57%	43%
	Fateh	63%	37%
	Others	44%	56%
Region of residence	West Bank	58%	42%
	Gaza Strip	63%	37%

### 3. The likelihood of a civil war

In addition, as can be seen in figure 6 below, more than 64% of the respondents expressed worries that a Palestinian civil war is likely to happen.

**Figure 6: The likelihood of a civil war**



The feeling that a civil war is likely to happen is widely spread among Fateh supporters (72%) and among 84% of the respondents who do not have any faith in any of the existing factions. Table 6 shows that the West bank and Gaza Strip share the same level of concern (64% and 61% respectively) about the likelihood of a civil war.

**Table 6: The likelihood of a civil war, by region of residence and factional trust**

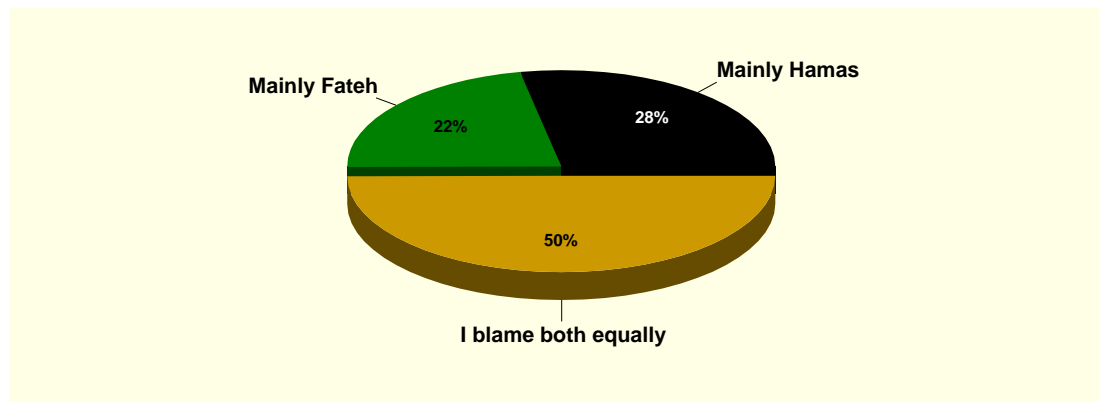
		Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely
Region of residence	West Bank	29%	38%	30%	3%
	Gaza Strip	37%	24%	31%	8%
Factional Trust	Hamas	16%	24%	45%	15%
	Fateh	40%	32%	27%	1%
	Others	67%	17%	17%	0%



**C. Change in Trust in main political parties**

The population of the West bank and Gaza Strip were somewhat equally divided on whom to blame for the latest crisis, and the majority put the blame on both factions. As indicated in figure 7, 50% of the respondents blamed both factions, 28% blamed Hamas and 22% blamed Fateh.

**Figure 7: Factions blamed for the recent clashes in the Gaza Strip**



Naturally, as overviewed in table 7, 66% of Hamas supporters blame Fateh, and 61% of Fateh Supporters blame Hamas. Also, while more West Bankers blame Hamas than Fateh, Gaza respondents were more likely to blame Fateh than Hamas.

**Table 7: Factions blamed for the recent clashes in the Gaza Strip, by factional trust**

		Who do you blame for the current crisis between Fateh and Hamas?		
		Mainly Hamas	Mainly Fateh	I blame both equally
Factional Trust	Hamas	4%	66%	31%
	Fateh	61%	9%	30%
	PFLP	24%	12%	65%
	Islamic Jihad	19%	19%	63%
	Others	20%	40%	40%
	I trust no faction	14%	15%	71%
Region of residence	West Bank	30%	15%	55%
	Gaza Strip	25%	33%	43%

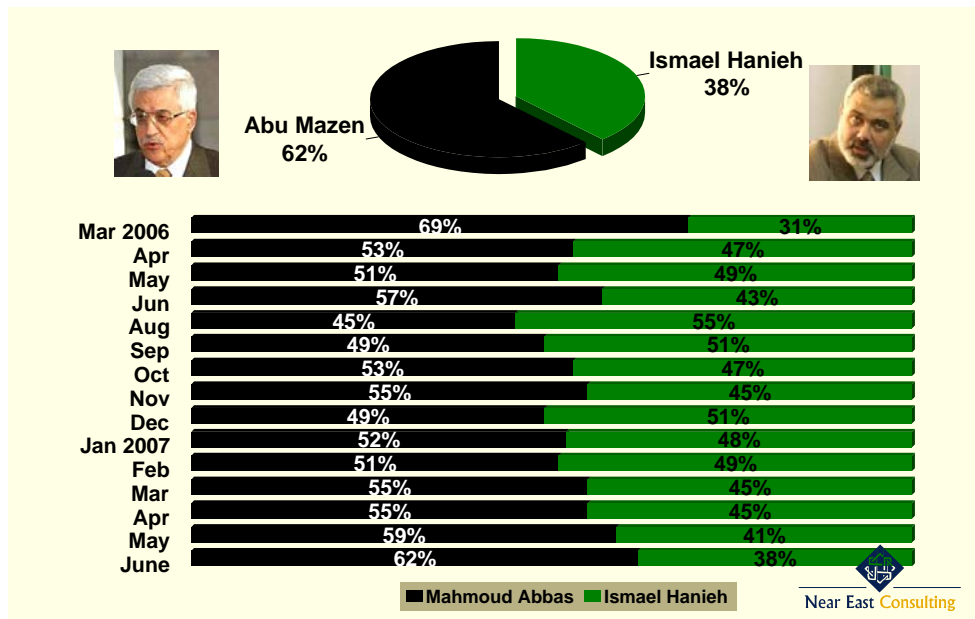
**D. Leadership trust**

The crisis in the Gaza Strip must have provided Abu Mazen with some boost in his popularity, as compared to Ismael Hanieh. As shown in figure 8, support for Abu Mazen has increased 3% since last month (59% in May to 62% in June).

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Figure 8: Leader Palestinians trust most



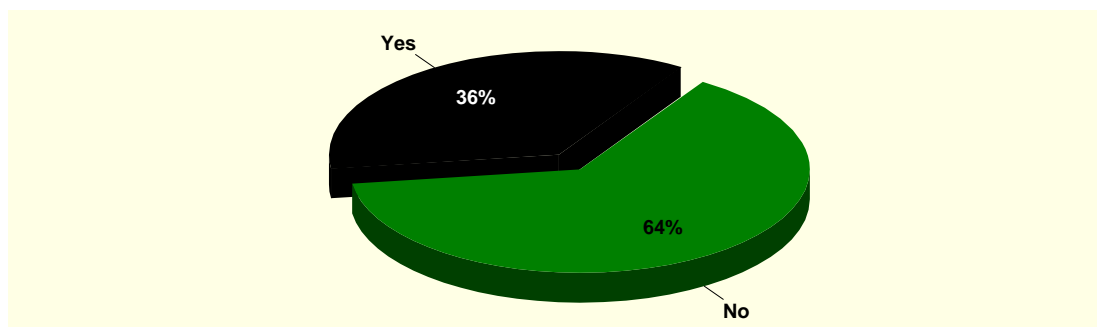
This trust is significantly more pronounced in the West Bank than in Gaza. Whereas 73% of West Bank respondents trust Abu Mazen compared to 27% for Hanieh, the results are split equally in the Gaza Strip, as indicated below in table 8.

Table 8: Leader Palestinians trust most, by region of residence and poverty level

		Abu Mazen	Ismael Hanieh
Region of residence	West Bank	73%	27%
	Gaza Strip	50%	50%
Poverty line	Below poverty	61%	39%
	Above poverty	67%	33%

The trust in Abu Mazen may very well be explained by public need for stability. As can be seen from figure 9, below, 64% of the respondents do not want Abu Mazen to resign.

Figure 9: Has the time come for Abu Mazen to resign?





As indicated in table 9, below, even one third of Hamas supporters do not want Abu Mazen to resign so do 60% of Gaza Strip respondents.

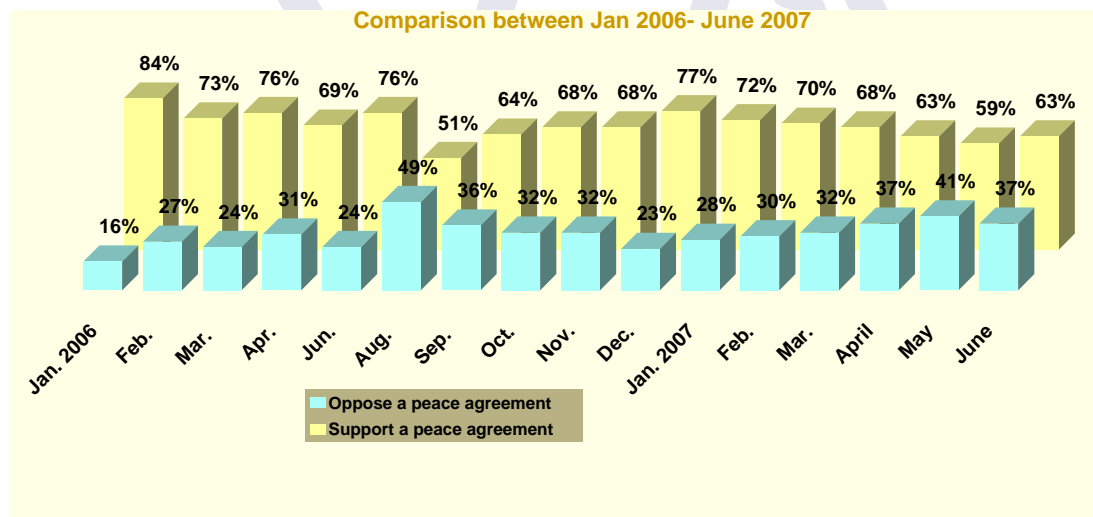
**Table 9: Has the time come for Abu Mazen to resign according to region of residence and factional trust**

		Yes	No
Region of residence	West Bank	33%	67%
	Gaza Strip	40%	60%
Factional Trust	Hamas	62%	38%
	Fateh	20%	80%
	None	36%	64%

**E. Level of support for a peace agreement with Israel**

The crisis in the Gaza Strip did not seem to have pushed people away from peace. On the contrary, as indicated in figure 10, support for peace increased to 63% in June, as compared to 59% in May 2007.

**Figure 10: Support for a peace agreement with Israel**



More surprisingly, the level of support for a peace agreement is higher among Gaza respondents than among West Bank respondents. Whereas 66% of the respondents in the Gaza Strip stated their support for a peace agreement with Israel, the percentage in the West Bank is 61%. As indicated in table, even 34% of Hamas supporters believe in a peace agreement with Israel.



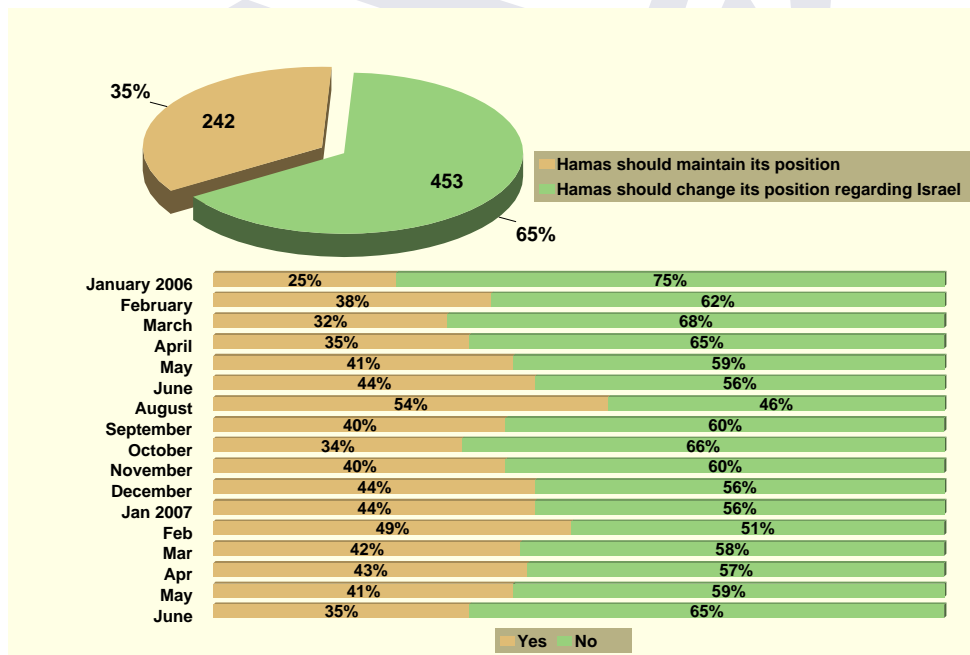
**Table 10: Level of support for the peace process by factional trust, and region of residence**

		I support a peace settlement with Israel.	I oppose a peace settlement with Israel
Region of residence	West Bank	61%	39%
	Gaza Strip	66%	34%
Factional Trust	Hamas	34%	66%
	Fateh	79%	21%
	None	64%	36%

**1. Attitude towards Hamas's position regarding the existence of Israel**

Support for a peaceful resolution with Israel in the aftermath of the Gaza crisis is also witnessed in people's attitudes towards the position of Hamas towards the existence of Israel. As illustrated in figure 11, below, more Palestinians in June want Hamas to change its position regarding Israel than in May, 2007. Whereas in May 59% of the respondents wanted Hamas to change its position, the percentage increased to 65% in June, an increase by 6%.

**Figure 11: Attitude towards Hamas's position on the existence of Israel**



What is interesting however is the percentage of people in the West Bank who said that Hamas should change its position vis-à-vis Israel's existence. As noted in table 11, only 29% of the respondents in the West Bank want Hamas to keep its position, compared to 43% in the Gaza Strip. Also noteworthy, is that 30% of the Hamas supporters believe that the organization should also reconsider its position on the elimination of the state of Israel.

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**Table 11: Attitude towards Hamas’s position on the existence of Israel by region and factional trust**

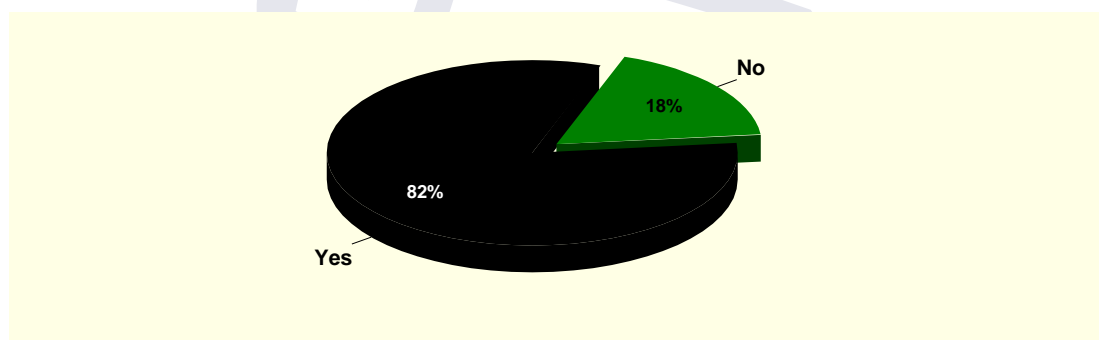
		Should Hamas maintain its position on the elimination of Israel?	
		Hamas should not change its position regarding Israel	.Hamas should change its position regarding Israel
Factional Trust	Hamas	70%	30%
	Fateh	21%	79%
	PFLP	40%	60%
	Islamic Jihad	47%	53%
	Others	26%	74%
Region of residence	I trust no	31%	69%
	West Bank	29%	71%
	Gaza Strip	43%	57%

#### IV. Special focus: the Gaza crisis

##### A. A. Strong belief that external parties help spread violence in the Gaza Strip

There is a strong feeling amongst the Palestinians that there are external powers that fueled the crisis in the Gaza Strip. When respondents were asked as to whether there are external powers involved in the internal strife in the Gaza Strip, 84% answered positively, as indicated in figure 12, below.

**Figure 12: Are external powers involved in the internal conflict?**

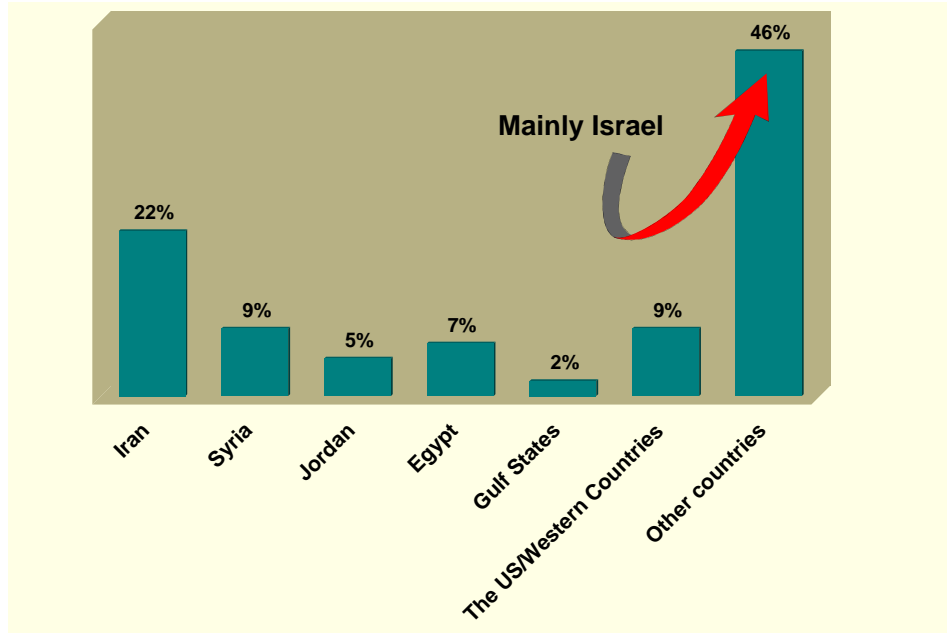


When those who believe that there is a role for external powers were probed as to who were those powers, the majority said Israel\*. As illustrated in figure 13, below, 22% also mentioned Iran.

\* The interviewers were instructed to avoid mentioning Israel.



Figure 13: Country believed to have a role in agitating the crisis



Surprisingly, 43% of Fateh supporters believe that Iran has a hand in inflaming the crisis while Hamas supporters blame Israel, as indicated in table 12.

Table 12: Country believed to have had a role in agitating the crisis, by factional trust

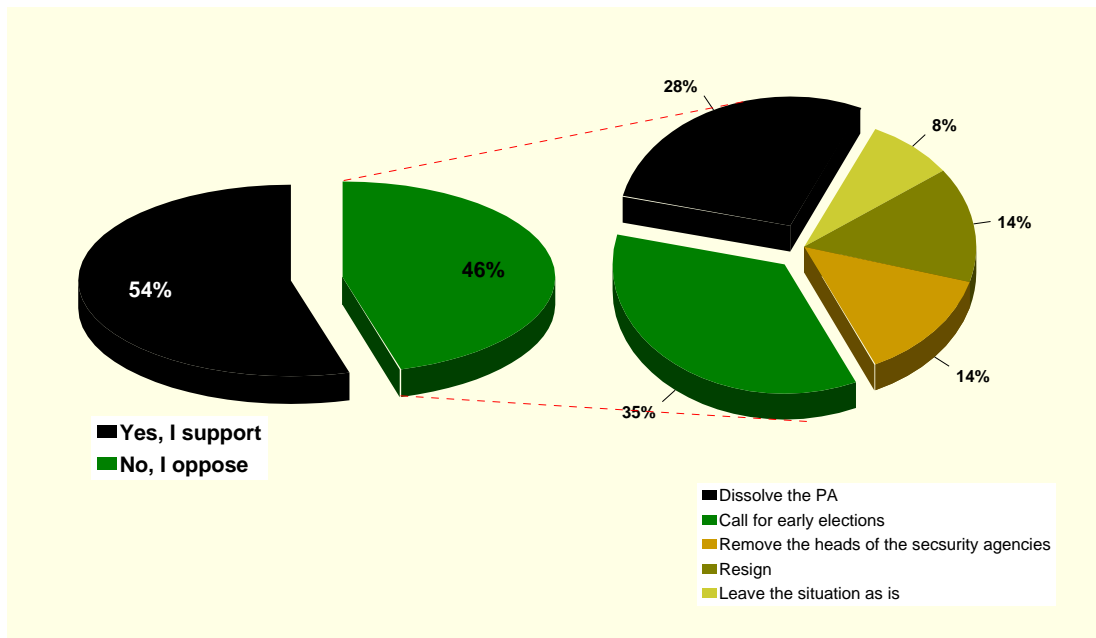
		Iran	Syria	Jordan	Egypt	Gulf states	The US or Western countries	Other countries
Factional Trust	Hamas	2%	6%	3%	10%	1%	13%	64%
	Fateh	43%	16%	1%	4%	3%	7%	26%
	None	20%	8%	7%	8%	0%	9%	48%

**B. Majority supports Abu Mazen’s decision to declare a state of emergency**

The majority of respondents (54%) support the decision of President Abbas to declare a state of emergency. As illustrated in figure 14, below, even those who opposed the decision, the majority wanted either dissolution of the PA or the call for early elections. Very few mentioned the removal of security heads.



Figure 14: Support for declaring a state of emergency in the Gaza Strip



As noted in table 13, below, the attitudes vary significantly between Fateh and Hamas supporters. Whereas 88% of the former approve of this decision, only 8% support it among the later.

Table 13: Attitude towards Abu Mazen’s call for an emergency government

		Do you support the decision of president Abbas to declare a state of emergency and to dissolve the government?	
		I support the decision	I oppose the decision
Factional Trust	Hamas	8%	92%
	Fateh	88%	12%
	PFLP	56%	44%
	Islamic Jihad	33%	67%
	Others	37%	63%
	I trust no faction	51%	49%
Region of residence	West Bank	59%	41%
	Gaza Strip	49%	51%

As detailed in table 14, most of the respondents who opposed the decision of an emergency government preferred early elections instead or dissolve the Palestinian Authority. Only Hamas supporters were more likely to favor the resignation of Abu Mazen or the removal of some heads of security.

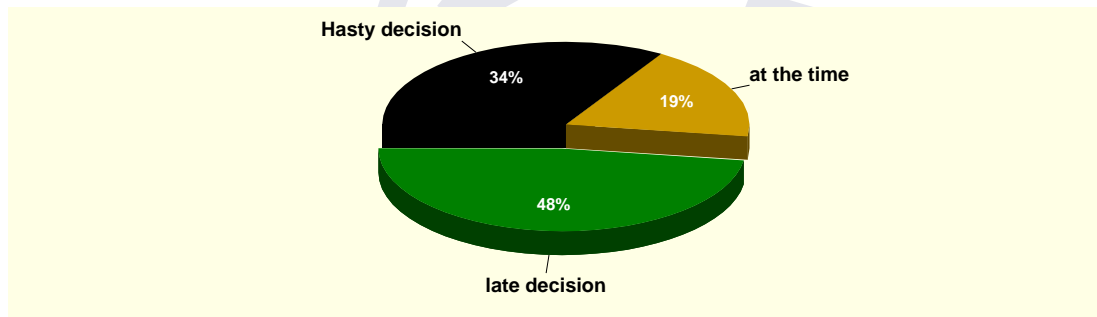


**Table 14: If you oppose the decision, what should Abu Mazen have done to solve the crisis, by factional trust and region of residence?**

		Dissolve the PA	Call for early elections	Remove the heads of the security agencies	Resign	Leave the situation as is
Region	West Bank	31%	42%	12%	10%	5%
	Gaza Strip	25%	24%	18%	21%	13%
Factional Trust	Hamas	9%	23%	24%	31%	13%
	Fateh	51%	34%	3%	7%	5%
	Others	12%	35%	24%	18%	12%

In fact, a significant proportion of the Palestinian society thought the decision should have been taken earlier. As noted in figure 15, 48% of the respondents said that the decision was overdue. Only 34% said that it was a hasty decision.

**Figure 15: Feeling about Abu Mazen's decision**



As pointed out in table 16, 52% of Gaza residents believed that the decision was overdue. Nonetheless, West Bankers seem to be more in favor of it than are Gazans. Only Hamas respondents are not very much supportive of it despite the fact that 23% of them do feel that it is a needed decision.

**Figure 16: Feeling about Abu Mazen's decision by factional trust and region of residence**

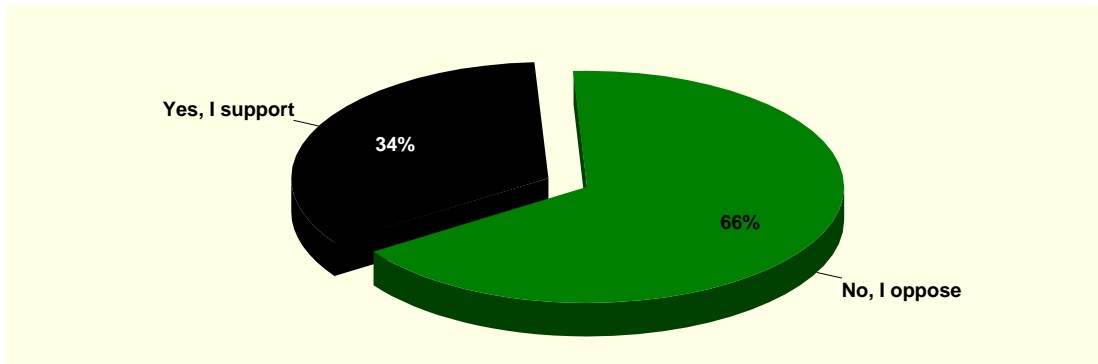
		A hasty decision	Should have been taken earlier	It was carried out in the right moment
Region of residence	West Bank	30%	45%	25%
	Gaza Strip	38%	52%	10%
Factional Trust	Hamas	77%	17%	6%
	Fateh	7%	70%	23%
	None	35%	45%	20%



**C. Majority reject international presence**

As illustrated in figure 17, below, the majority of the Palestinian people oppose any international presence in the Gaza Strip. Only 34% of the respondents support such a presence.

**Figure 17: Support for an international presence in Gaza to stop the violence from spreading**



Support for international presence is more pronounced in the West Bank and among Fateh respondents. As noted in table 15, below, very few of the supporters of Hamas support international presence (5%) compared to 50% among Fateh supporters and 42% among the respondents who do not trust any faction.

**Table 15: Support for an international presence in Gaza to stop the violence from spreading, by region of residence and factional trust**

		Yes, I support	No, I oppose
Region of residence	West Bank	36%	64%
	Gaza Strip	30%	70%
Factional Trust	Hamas	5%	95%
	Fateh	50%	50%
	Others	42%	58%

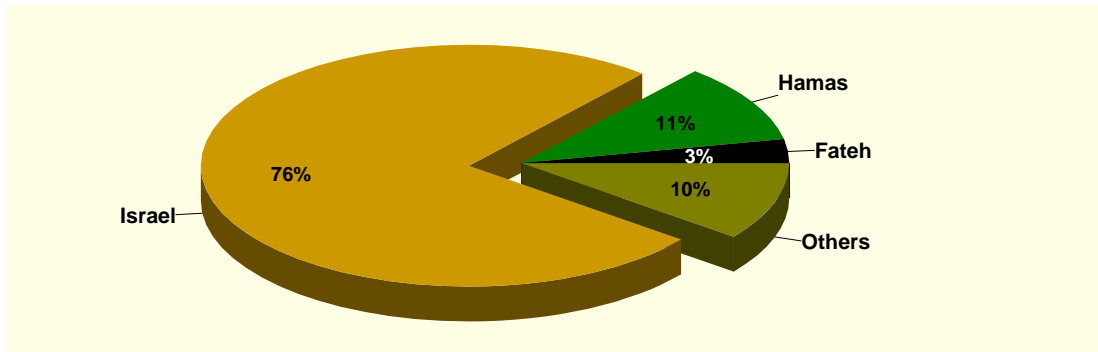
**D. Attitude about who is the major beneficiary from the latest crisis**

**1. The frontrunner in the aftermath of the crisis**

Most Palestinians believe that the latest crisis in the Gaza Strip does not benefit Hamas, or Fateh. On the contrary, the majority believe that the main beneficiary from this crisis is Israel. As shown in figure 18, below, 76% of the respondents think that the main frontrunner is Israel,



**Figure 18: What party benefits from the internal conflict in the Gaza Strip?**



This attitude is strong among all sectors of Palestinian society irrespective of their region of residence or their political affiliation. As detailed in table 16, below, even 53% of Hamas supporters think that the winner is Israel.

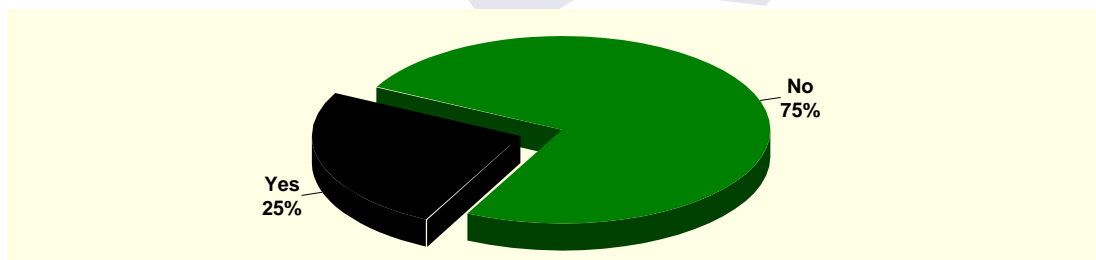
**Table 16: What party benefits from the internal conflict in the Gaza Strip, by region of residence and factional trust**

		Fateh	Hamas	Israel	Others
Factional Trust	Hamas	6%	19%	53%	22%
	Fateh	6%	12%	75%	8%
	Others	1%	7%	84%	8%
Region of residence	West Bank	3%	7%	84%	6%
	Gaza Strip	3%	17%	65%	16%

**2. Level of support for the control of Hamas in the Gaza Strip**

The vast majority of the Palestinian public does not agree with the takeover by Hamas of the Gaza Strip. As indicated in figure 19, 3 out of every 4 Palestinians oppose this control.

**Figure 19: Do you support Hamas taking full control of the Gaza Strip**



As detailed in table 17, 27% of the Hamas supporters oppose this control. Even when examined according to the region of residence, the results reveal that 62% of Gaza respondents oppose the takeover of Hamas to the West bank.



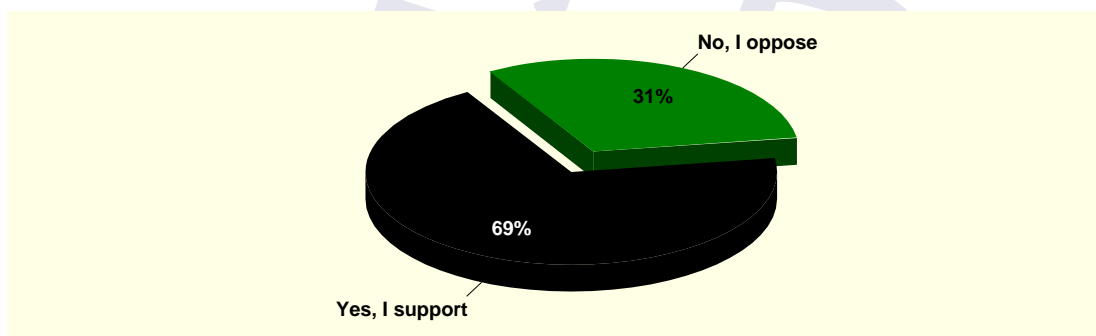
**Table 17: Level of support for the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip according to region of residence and factional trust**

		Yes	No
Region of residence	West Bank	16%	84%
	Gaza Strip	38%	62%
Factional Trust	Hamas	73%	27%
	Fateh	8%	92%
	None	21%	79%

**E. Early elections**

The predicament which the Palestinians have fallen into could probably explain why 69% of the respondents want early Presidential and legislative election although such elections were vehemently opposed by Hamas in the past months.

**Figure 20: Level of support for early presidential and PLC elections**



As suggested in table 18, below, support for early elections is spread in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as well as among the various respondents affiliated to the different political groups. Even among those respondents that do not trust any of the factions, 73% support early presidential and PLC elections.

**Table 18: Level of support for early presidential and PLC elections by region and factional trust**

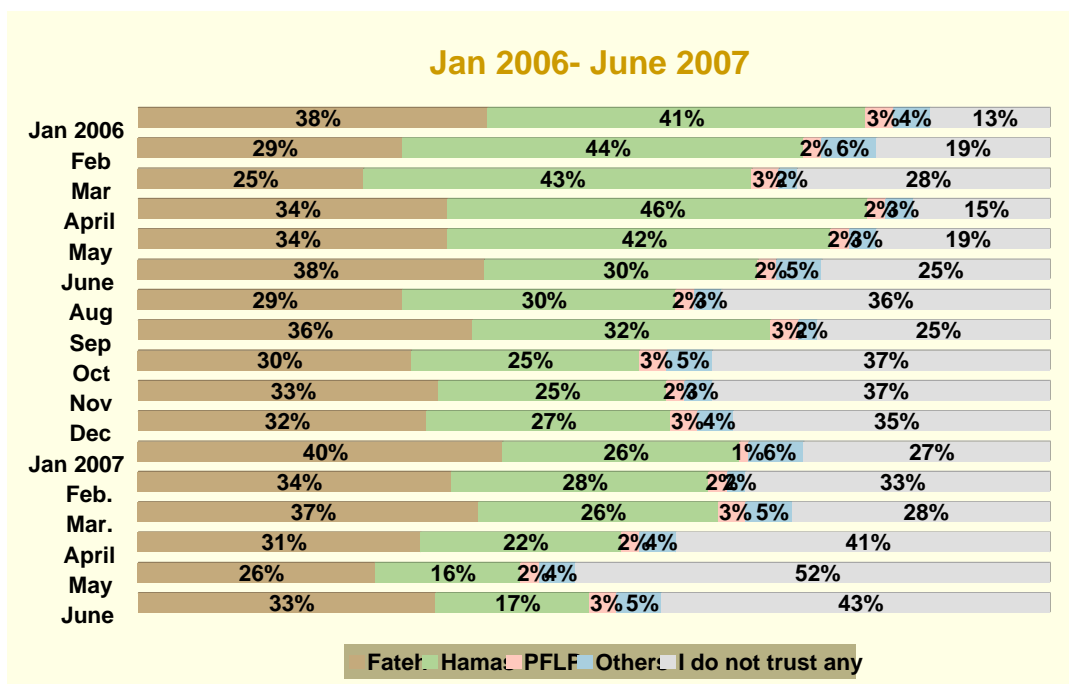
		Do you support conducting new Presidential and PLC elections early?	
		Yes	No
Region	West Bank	74%	26%
	Gaza Strip	69%	31%
Faction	Hamas	53%	47%
	Fateh	82%	18%
	I trust no faction	73%	27%



**F. Factional trust**

Support for factions has often been influenced by internal conflict, especially between Fateh and Hamas. Whenever fighting broke between Fateh and Hamas, popular trust in these two factions have fallen. However, since the control of Hamas of the Gaza Strip and Fateh's apparent control over the West Bank, the level of support, especially for Fateh in the West Bank has been rather significant. As elaborated in figure 21, below, support for Fateh in the oPt is almost double the level of support for Hamas. While 33% of the respondents said that they trust Fateh most, the level is only 17% for Hamas.

**Figure 21: Factional trust**



Further examination of the data reveals that Fateh gained a lot in the West Bank at the expense of Hamas whose level of trust is only 10%. As overviewed in table 19, support for Fateh in the Gaza Strip is slightly higher than Hamas. Whereas 26% of the Gaza respondents trust Hamas, trust in Fateh there reached 32%.

**Table 19: Factional trust by region**

		Factional trust					
Region		Hamas	Fateh	PFLP	Jihad	Others	None
West Bank		10%	33%	3%	2%	4%	48%
	Gaza Strip	26%	32%	1%	3%	2%	36%

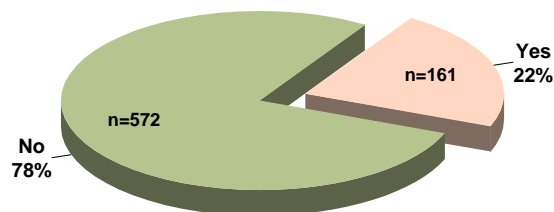


## V. Social and economic conditions of respondents

### A. Emigration

The latest developments in Gaza have further aggravated the social and economic conditions of an already burdened society. As can be seen in figure 22, below, 22% of the respondents said that they would emigrate if they have the opportunity to do so.

Figure 22: Intention to emigrate



Surprisingly, the majority of those wanting to emigrate are from the Gaza Strip and among those trusting Hamas. As indicated in table 20, below, 29% of Fateh respondents would like to emigrate, as opposed to 12% of Hamas respondents. As for the region of residence, twice as many Gazans want to emigrate than West Bankers. Whereas 32% of the former will emigrate if they have the opportunity, the percentage is 15% among the later.

Table 20: Intention to emigrate by region and factional trust

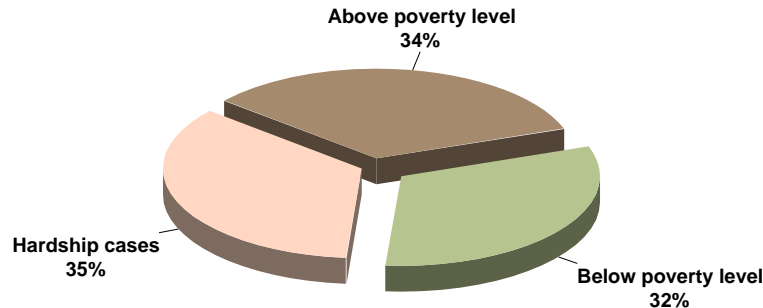
		Intention to emigrate	
		Yes	No
Region	West Bank	15%	85%
	Gaza Strip	32%	68%
Faction	Hamas	12%	88%
	Fateh	29%	71%
	None	21%	79%

### B. Poverty

Wanting to emigrate is to a large extent a result of the difficult situation that the Palestinians are living under. In addition to occupation and internal fighting, the economic condition of the households has also a negative impact on the people and on their future. As noted in figure 23, 67% of the Palestinians live in poverty, of which 35% live under extreme poverty conditions.



Figure 23: Poverty level



The harsh economic conditions are critical in the Gaza Strip where more than 75% live in poverty. Increase in the encirclement of Gaza and the intensification of the grip over international assistance will further aggravate the situation to a level that will produce more social violent, resorting to crime and further escalation in domestic violence. Abandonment of the Gaza Strip at this period of time will produce a collapse of the social safety net, and an increase in the causes that are associated with the intensification of aggressive behavior. These conditions do not remedy political extremism, rather they nourish them.

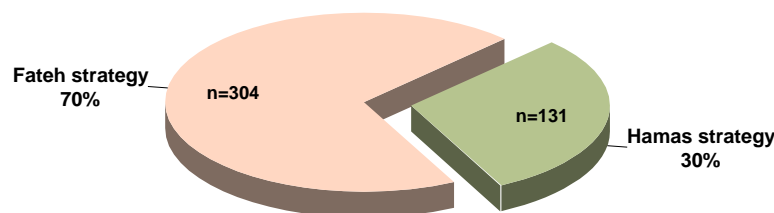
Table 21: Poverty according to region and factional trust

		Poverty level		
		Hardship cases	Below the poverty level	Above the poverty level
Region	West Bank	31%	28%	41%
	Gaza Strip	39%	36%	24%
Faction	Hamas	38%	33%	29%
	Fateh	39%	30%	31%
	None	33%	32%	35%

## VI. What's next

The support that Fateh is enjoying now may possibly be explained by the belief that the course and strategy that Fateh is using is more practical than that of Hamas. As can be observed in figure 24, below, 70% of the respondents believe that the Fateh strategy is more practical and can better achieve Palestinian national interest.

Figure 24: Attitude about the strategy that best serves the Palestinian national interest



*“Turning data into information and knowledge into practice”*



Even among Gaza respondents, 61% favor the Fateh strategy over Hamas's. What is interesting to note is that 75% of the respondents who do not trust any faction favor the strategy adopted by Fateh. This is very significant given that 43% of the respondents identify themselves as non-partisan.

**Table 22: Attitude about the strategy that best serves the Palestinian national interest**

		Strategy that best serves the national interest	
		Fateh strategy	Hamas strategy
Region	<b>West Bank</b>	78%	22%
	<b>Gaza Strip</b>	61%	39%
Faction	<b>Hamas</b>	4%	96%
	<b>Fateh</b>	98%	2%
	<b>None</b>	75%	25%

The support for the strategy of Fateh among the Palestinian public and the relative increase in support for a peaceful agreement begs the question of what is next for the Palestinian people and the Palestinian leadership. What is clear is that the strategy of violent conflict is not one that is supported by the Palestinian public. The Palestinians want their leaders to adopt a course of action that is essentially non-violent. However the public wants these leaders to work on this course without compromising their rights and their aspirations. They want leaders that put Palestinian national interest first and who go after this objective sincerely, honestly, and conscientiously. Palestinians do not want Palestinians to fight one another, nor do they want radical leadership or radical ideologies to take control of their lives and their future. They want their leaders to bring them hope. Hope with substance that changes facts on the grounds. Empty promises have been the biggest enemy for the Palestinians and for their traditional leadership, so were the association with powers whose role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been fundamentally perceived as unfavorable to the Palestinian rights.

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