



Near East Consulting

POB 4, Ramallah, Palestine  
T. +970-2-296-1436  
info@neareastconsulting.com  
<http://www.neareastconsulting.com/>

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**The Palestinian National Dialogue and call for a Referendum  
28 May 2006**



**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

**NEC**

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

**Tel: 02-2961436**

**Fax: 02-2963114**

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

**<http://www.neareastconsulting.com>**



## PRESS RELEASE - 28 May 2006

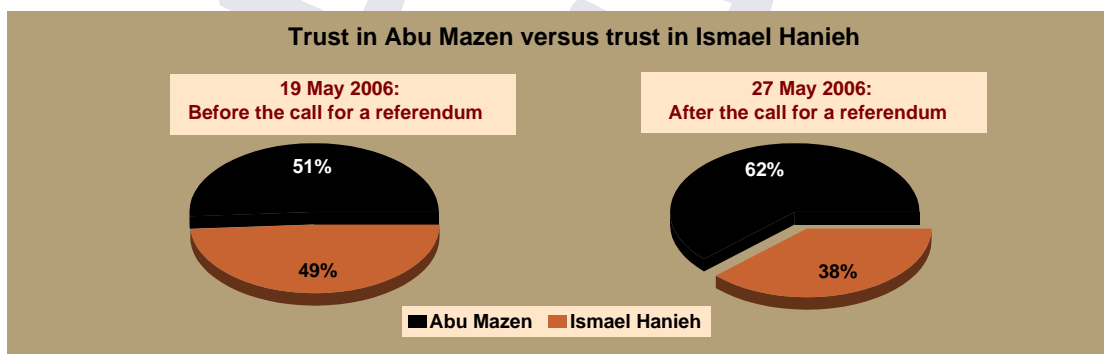
### The Palestinian National Dialogue and call for a Referendum

On 27 May 2006, Near East Consulting (NEC) conducted a short survey that aimed to gauge Palestinians' opinions about issues related to the on-going national dialogue, the Prisoner Agreement, Abu Mazen's call for a referendum if the national dialogue does not lead to a common platform among the factions, and the support or opposition to a two-state solution based on the 1967-borders.

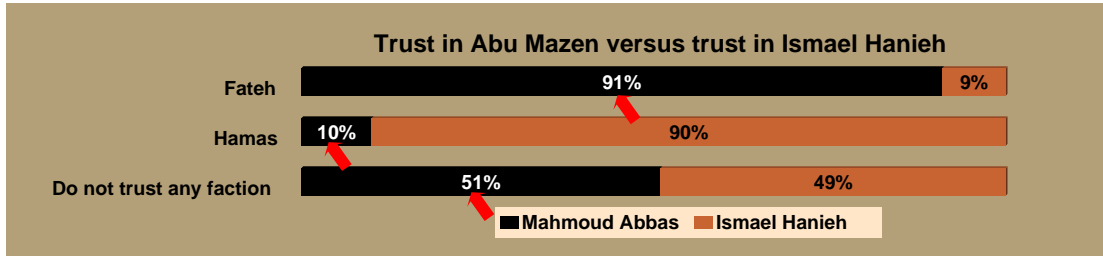
The results are based on a sample of 511 successful telephone interviews. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 4.3% and a 95% confidence level.

The NEC team would like to thank the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for its contribution to this survey.

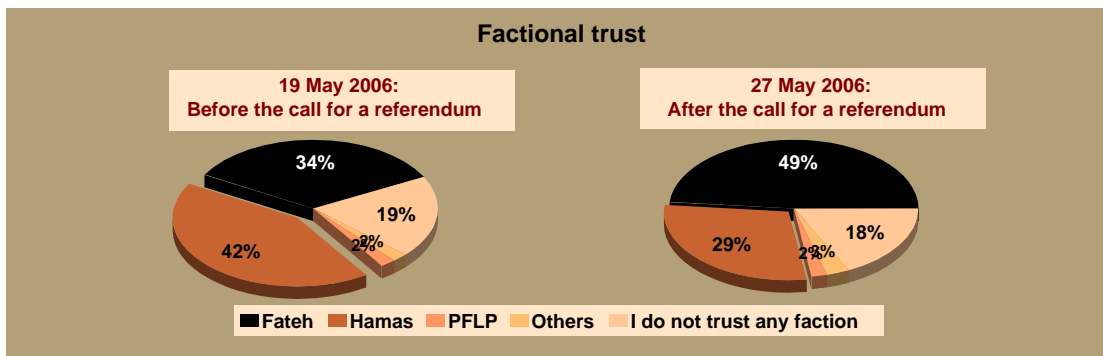
Since President Abu Mazen's call for a referendum, he has regained trust of the Palestinian public. While in an NEC survey conducted on 19 May 2006, 51% most trusted Abu Mazen and 49% most trusted Ismael Hanieh, these percentages in the 27 May NEC survey changed to 62% most trusting Abu Mazen and 38% most trusting Ismael Hanieh.



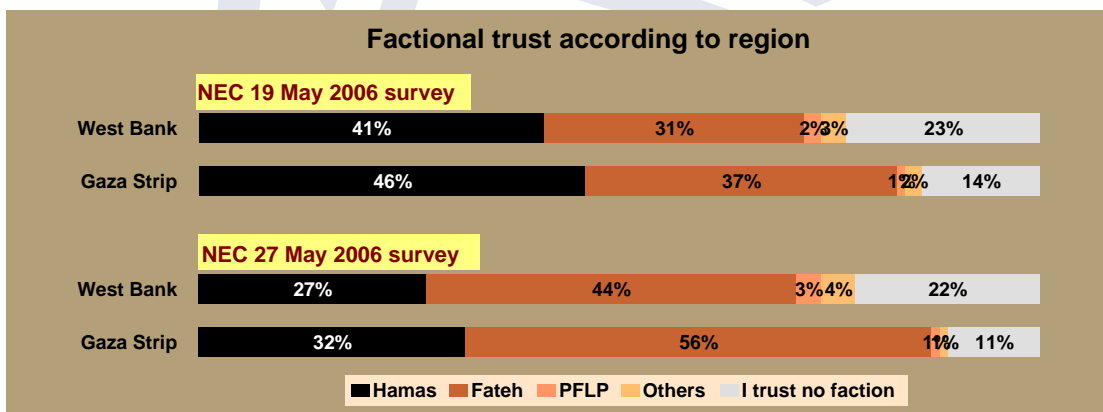
Trust in Abu Mazen versus Ismael Hanieh varies significantly according to Palestinians' factional trust. For example, whereas 10% of Hamas supporters most trust Abu Mazen, this is the case for 51% of those who do not trust any faction and for 91% of Fateh supporters. Conversely, whereas 90% of Hamas supporters most trust Ismael Hanieh, this is the case for 49% of those who do not trust any faction and 9% of Fateh supporters.



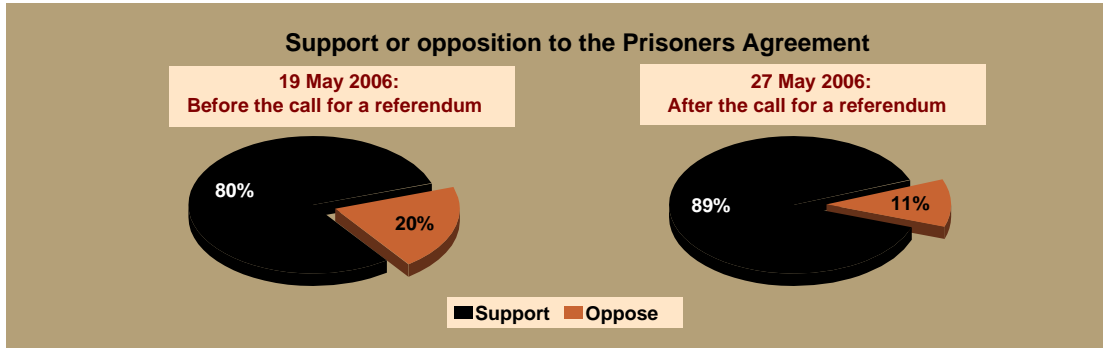
While in the NEC 19 May 2006 survey 42% most trusted Hamas, 34% most trusted Fateh, and 20% did not trust any faction, in the 27 May NEC survey 29% most trust Hamas, 49% most trust Fateh, while 18% do not trust any faction.



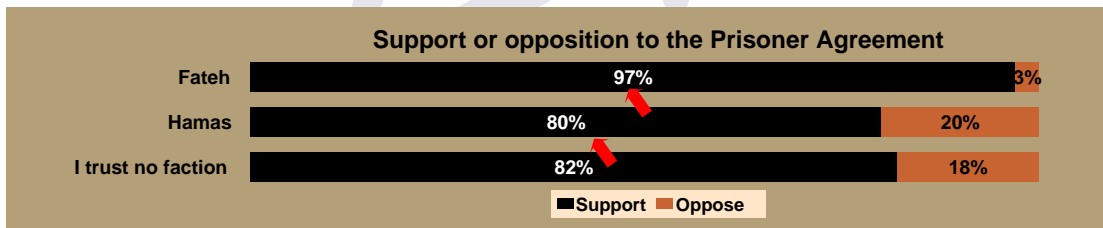
Currently 32% of Gazans and 27% of Westbankers most trust Hamas, while 56% of Gazans and 44% of Westbankers most trust Fateh. Lastly, while 11% in the Gaza Strip do not trust any faction, this is the case for 22% of respondents in the West Bank.



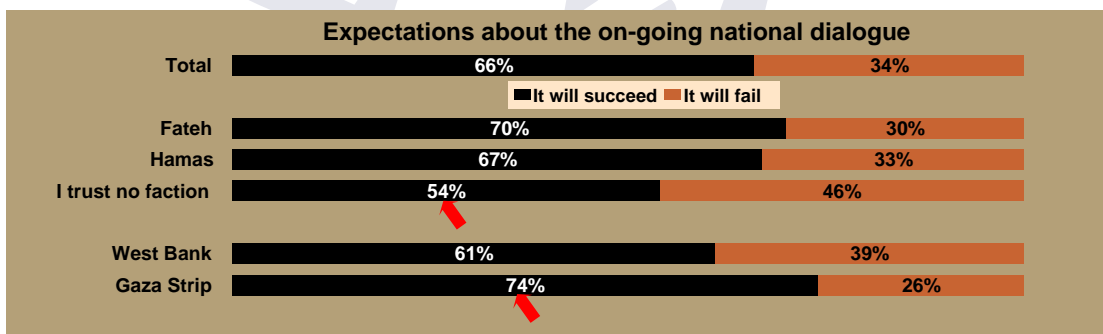
Whereas before Abu Mazen's call for a referendum, in the NEC 19 May survey 80% supported the Prisoner Agreement, after Abu Mazen's statement to submit the Prisoner Agreement to a referendum, the percentage of support for the Prisoners Agreement increased to 89% in the 27 May NEC survey.



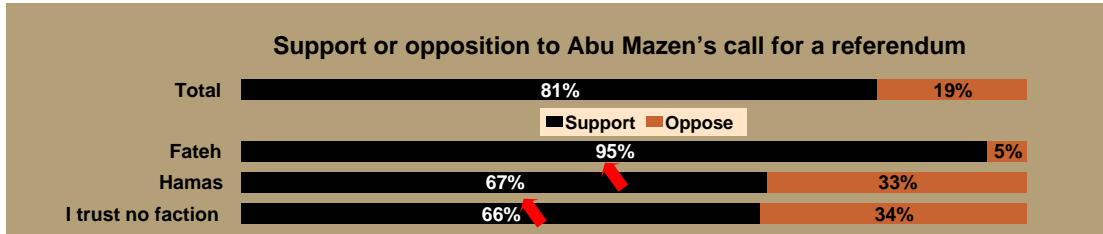
About the same percentage of Gazans (90%) and Westbankers (88%) support the Prisoners Agreement. According to factional trust, whereas 80% of Hamas supporters and 82% of those who do not trust any faction support the Prisoners Agreement, this is the case for 97% of Fateh supporters.



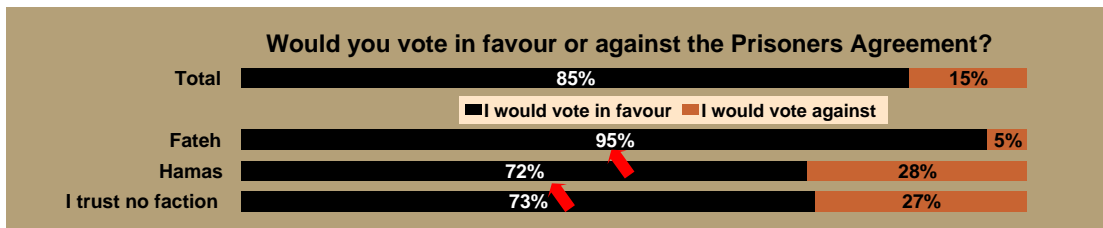
In general, 66% believe that the national dialogue will succeed. This belief, however, is far more pronounced in the Gaza Strip (74%) than in the West Bank (61%). According to factional trust, 70% of Fateh supporters and 67% of Hamas supporters think that the national dialogue will succeed, while only 54% of those who do not trust any faction are of this opinion.



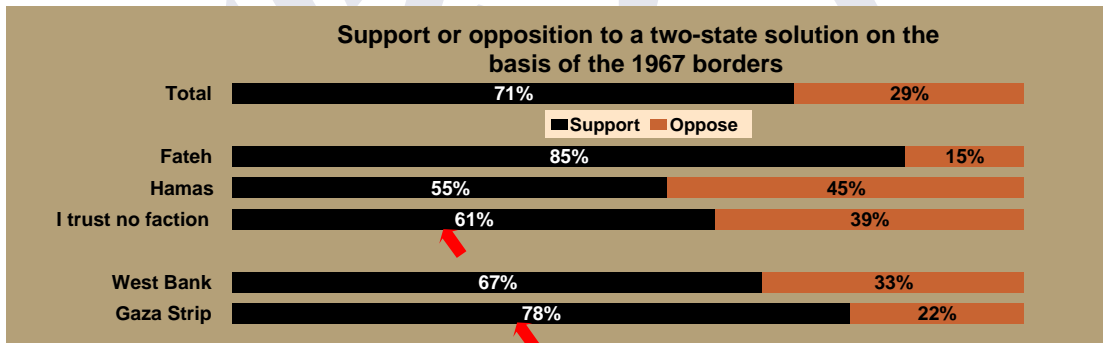
In general, 81% of the Palestinian public supports Abu Mazen’s call for a referendum in case the national dialogue fails. While 95% of Fateh supporters support Abu Mazen’s call for a referendum, this is the case for 67% of Hamas supporters and 66% of those who do not trust any faction.



If a referendum is held, 85% of Palestinians would vote in favour of the Prisoners Agreement. While 72% of Hamas supporters and 73% of those who do not trust any faction would vote in favour of the Prisoners Agreement in a referendum, 95% of Fateh supporters would do so.



In general, 71% of Palestinians support a two-state solution on the basis of the 1967 borders. In the Gaza Strip, 78% support this solution, while 66% support it in the West Bank. In addition, while 85% of Fateh supporters favour a two-state solution, this is the case for 61% of those who do not trust any faction and 55% of Hamas supporters.



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