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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **The Palestinian National Dialogue and call for a Referendum Survey #2 - 03 June 2006**



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## PRESS RELEASE – 02 June 2006

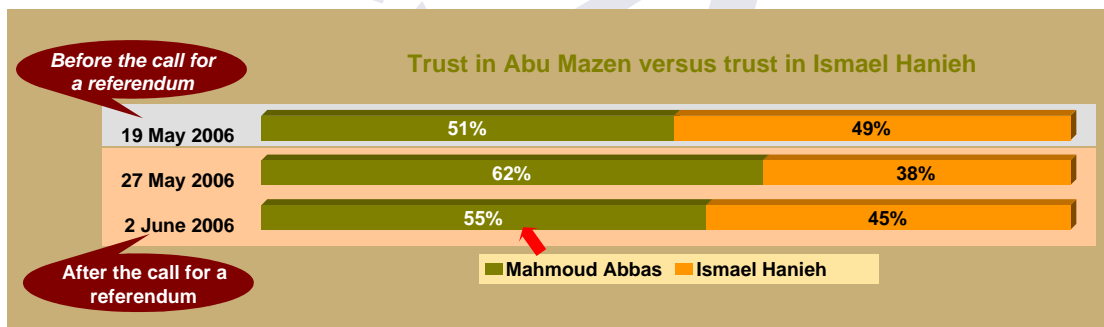
### The Palestinian National Dialogue and call for a Referendum

On 02 June 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. This was the second survey on the on-going Palestinian national dialogue and Abu Mazen's call for a referendum, and NEC plans to continue regularly monitoring these issues for the next 40 days.

The results are based on a sample of 767 successful telephone interviews. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.5% 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.

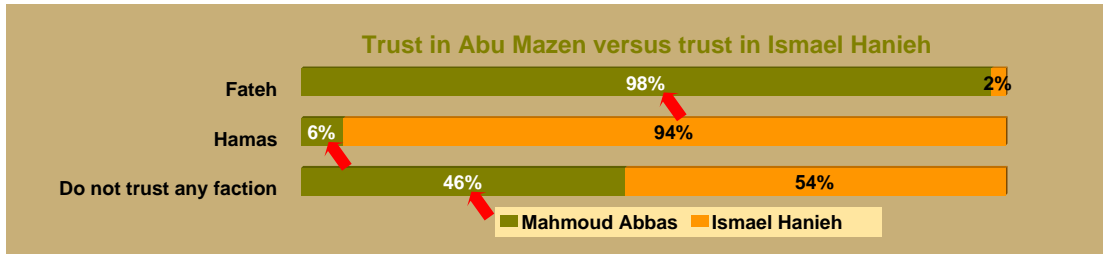
In the 19 May NEC survey, before Abu Mazen's call for a referendum on the Prisoners' Agreement in case the national dialogue fails, trust in Abu Mazen (51%) and Ismael Hanieh (49%) was quite evenly divided. By the 27 May NEC survey, popular trust in Abu Mazen was substantially boosted by his call for a referendum to 62%. In the 2 June NEC survey, Abu Mazen (55%) has again lost some of the popular trust to the benefit of Ismael Hanieh (45%).



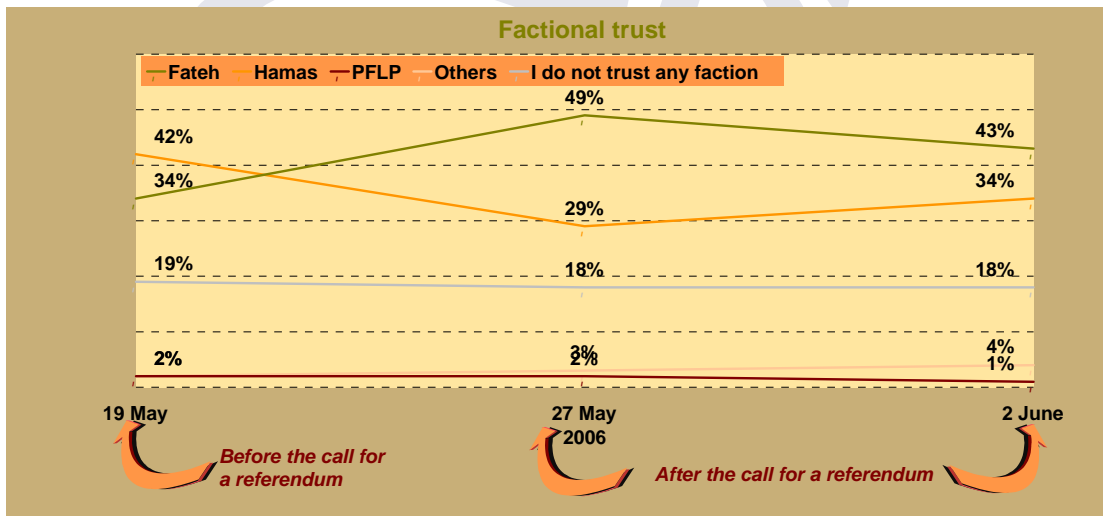
Trust in Abu Mazen versus Ismael Hanieh varies significantly according to Palestinians' factional trust. For example, whereas 6% of Hamas supporters most trust Abu Mazen, this is the case for 46% of those who do not trust any faction and for 98% of Fateh supporters. Conversely, whereas 94% of Hamas supporters most trust Ismael Hanieh,



this is the case for 54% of those who do not trust any faction and 2% of Fateh supporters.

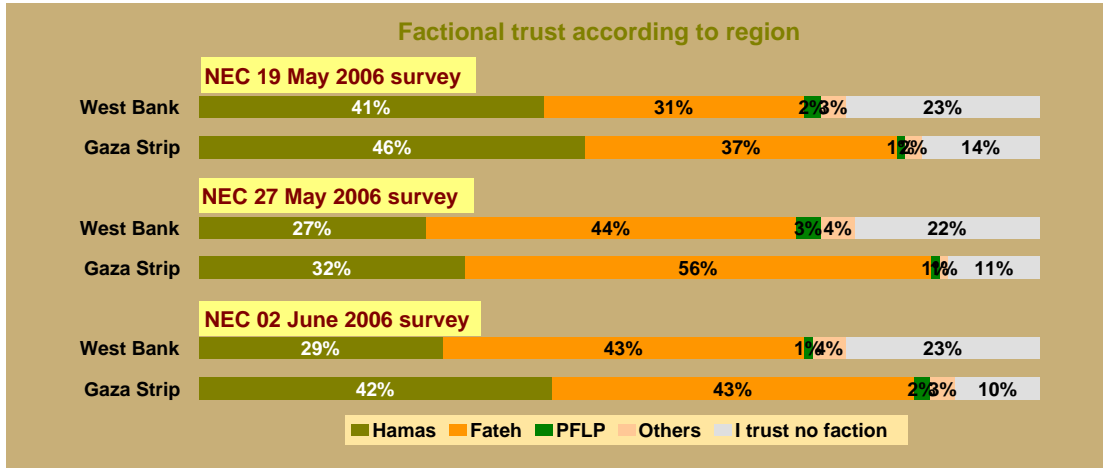


While in the NEC 19 May 2006 survey 42% most trusted Hamas, 34% most trusted Fateh, and 20% did not trust any faction, in the 27 May NEC survey 29% most trust Hamas, 49% most trust Fateh, while 18% do not trust any faction. In the current NEC survey, Hamas seems to be recovering from the blow it suffered in popular trust immediately after Abu Mazen's surprise call for a referendum in case the Palestinian factions do not reach a common platform in the still on-going national dialogue. As such, in the 2 June NEC survey, trust in Fateh decreased to 43% (-6%), trust in Hamas increased to 34% (+5%), while the percentage of those not trusting any faction remained stable at 18%.

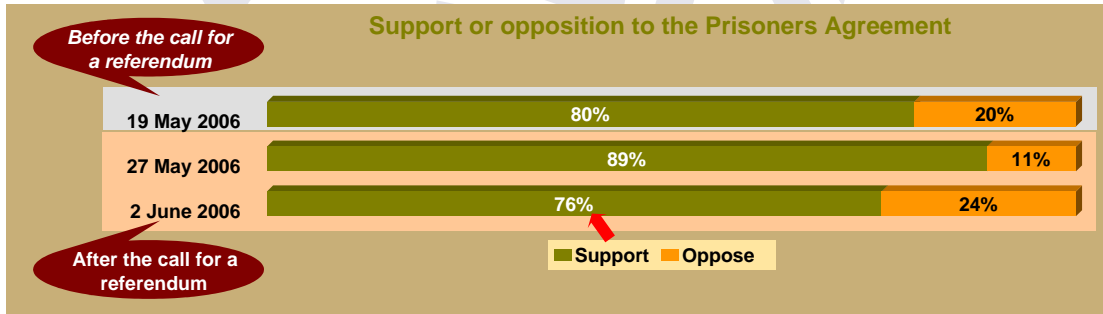


Currently 42% of Gazans and 29% of Westbankers most trust Hamas, while 43% of Gazans and 43% of Westbankers most trust Fateh. While 10% in the Gaza Strip do not trust any faction, this is the case for 23% of respondents in the West Bank.

A comparison of factional trust according to region over the past two weeks indicated that Westbankers more so than Gazans remained stable in their trust of the various factions. In the Gaza Strip, the percentages of trust in Hamas and trust of Fateh seem to be strongly fluctuating according to events.



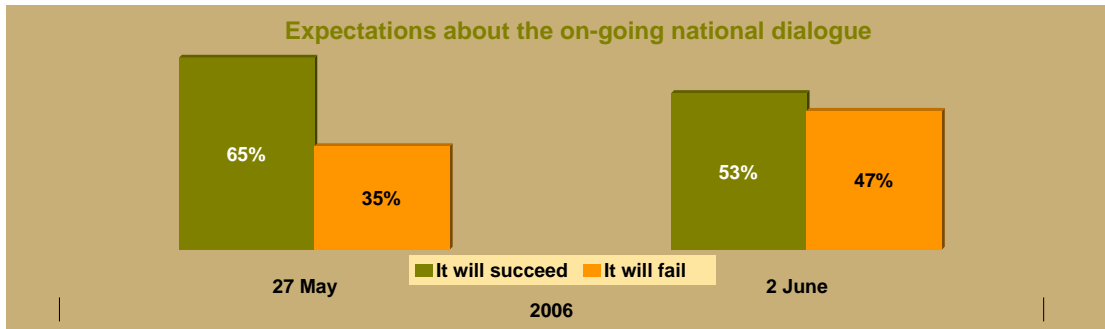
Whereas before Abu Mazen's call for a referendum, in the NEC 19 May survey 80% supported the Prisoners' Agreement, after Abu Mazen's statement to submit the Prisoners' Agreement to a referendum, the percentage of support for the Prisoners' Agreement increased to 89% in the 27 May NEC survey. In the latest 2 June NEC survey, support for the Prisoners' Agreement dropped to 76% and opposition to it increased to 24%.



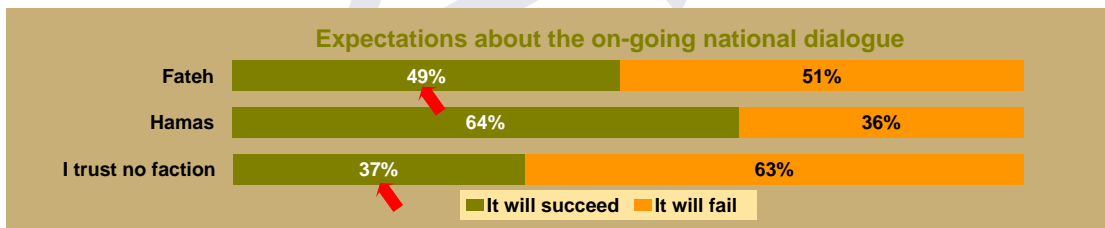
According to factional trust, whereas 60% of Hamas supporters and 57% of those who do not trust any faction support the Prisoners' Agreement, this is the case for 94% of Fateh supporters.



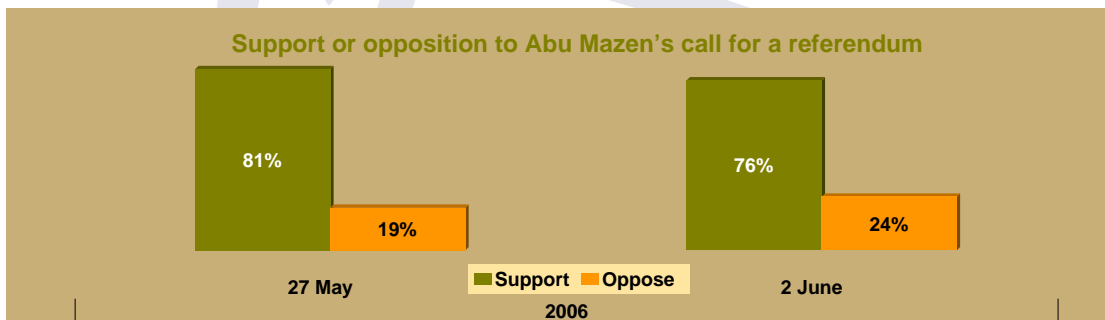
In general, expectations that the still on-going national dialogue will succeed are fading. While in NEC's 27 May survey 66% of the respondents believed that the national dialogue will succeed, this is the case for 53% in the NEC 2 June survey.



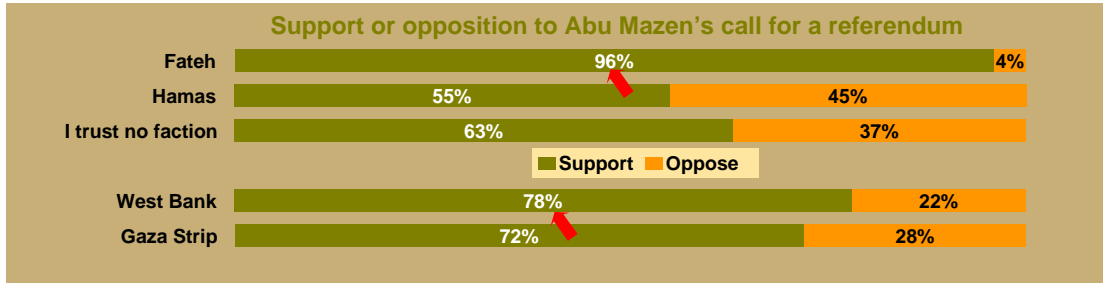
The expectations about the outcome of the national dialogue vary considerably according to factional trust. More specifically, whereas 64% of Hamas supporters continue to believe that the national dialogue will succeed, 49% of Fateh supporters and 37% of those who do not trust any faction share this belief.



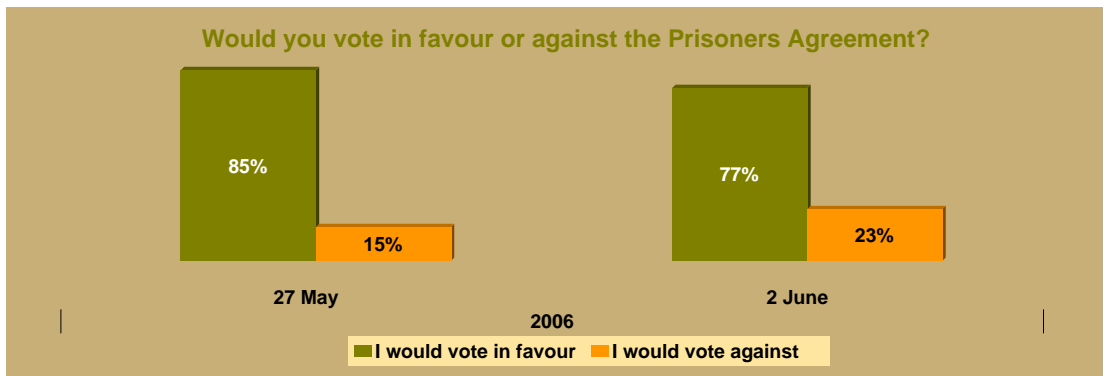
Since last week, the support for Abu Mazen's call for a referendum has also slightly decreased. As overviewed below, whereas support for Abu Mazen's call for a referendum was 81% in NEC's 27 May survey, it now stands at 76%.



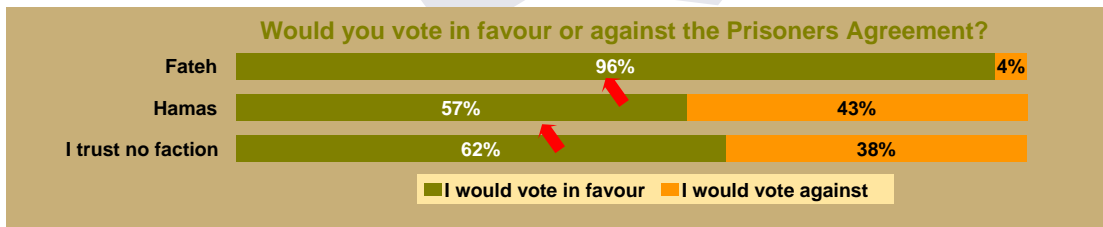
Support for Abu Mazen's call for a referendum in case the national dialogue fails varies significantly according to the respondents' factional trust and region of residence. While 96% of Fateh supporters support Abu Mazen's call for a referendum, this is the case for 55% of Hamas supporters and 63% of those who do not trust any faction. Also, whereas 78% of Westbankers support the call for a referendum, 72% of Gazans expressed such support.



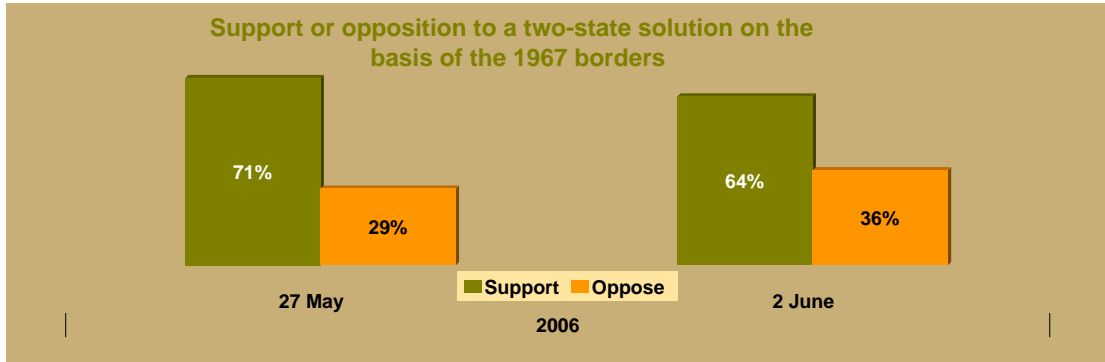
While in the 27 May NEC survey, 85% said that in the event of a referendum they would vote in favour of the Prisoners' Agreement, this percentage dropped to 77% by 2 June.



The drop in the percentage of Palestinians intending to vote in favour of the Prisoners' Agreement can be explained by the smaller percentage of Hamas supporters and those who do not trust any faction that intend to vote in favour of this agreement. While in the 27 May NEC survey, 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, their percentages dropped to respectively 57% and 62% in the 2 June NEC survey. The percentage of Fateh supporters stating that in the event of a referendum they would vote in favour of the Prisoners' Agreement remained stable in this period of time.



Popular support for a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders has also decreased. Whereas in the 27 May NEC survey, 71% of the Palestinian public supported such a solution, the percentage stands at 64% on 2 June.



Support for a two-state solution on the basis of the 1967 borders dropped especially among Hamas supporters and those who do not trust any faction. Whereas in the 27 May NEC survey, 61% of those who do not trust any faction and 55% of Hamas supporters supported such a solution, the percentages in the 2 June survey dropped to respectively 55% and 45%. Lastly, support for a two-state solution on the basis of 1967 survey differs significantly between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Whereas 70% of Westbankers support such a two-state solution, 54% of Gazans support it.

