



## SPECIAL ISSUE

### **Palestinian perceptions on issues related to Abu Mazen's Presidential speech and the call for early Presidential and Legislative elections**

**17 December 2006**

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## Palestinian perceptions on issues related to Abu Mazen's Presidential speech and the call for early Presidential and Legislative elections

### I. Introduction

On 16-17 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 643 were successfully completed.

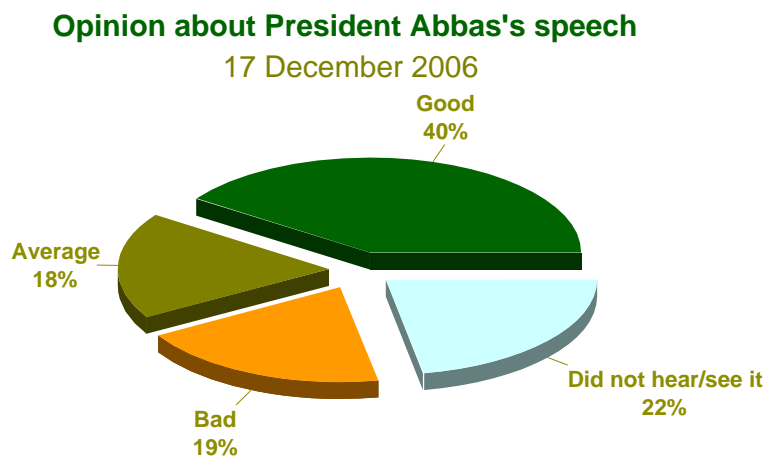
The survey was started within hours of Abu Mazen's Presidential speech in which he called for early Presidential and Legislative elections. The NEC team decided to conduct a short survey immediately in order to gauge Palestinian reactions to this speech, but also to set a base for future reference. NEC intends to monitor public opinion regularly and systematically during the period running up to the called for early Presidential and Legislative elections.

It is worth noting that the margin of error is +/- 3.8% with a 95% confidence level.

### II. Main findings

#### Opinions about President Abu Mazen's speech:

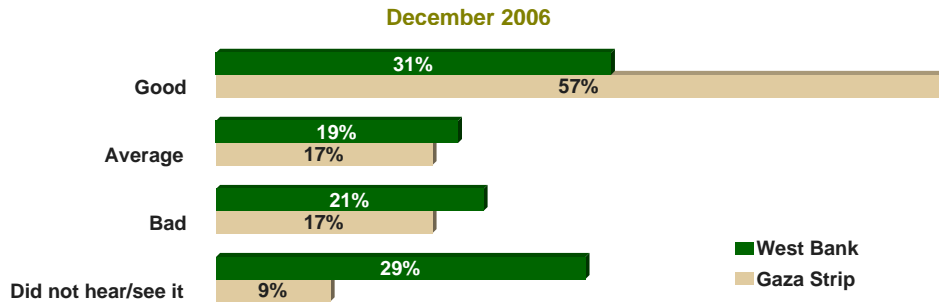
Overall, 22% did not hear or see Abu Mazen's speech and were, as such, unable to comment. For the remainder, 40% said that Abu Mazen's speech was good, 18% considered to be average, while 19% thought that the presidential speech was bad.





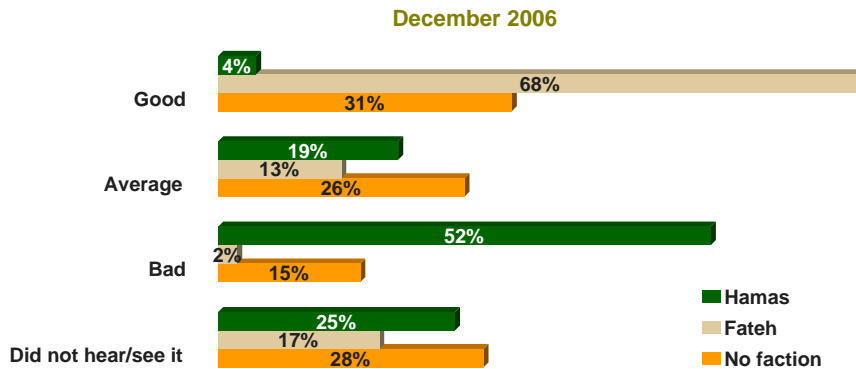
The Presidential speech was clearly more watched or listed to in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank as only 9% in the Gaza Strip did not hear or see the speech, while 29% in the West Bank did not hear or see it. In addition, a far larger percentage of Gazans (57%) than Westbankers (31%) described the speech as good.

### Opinion about President Abbas's speech according to region of residence



According to factional trust, Hamas supporters evaluated the presidential speech much more negatively than Fateh supporters and those who do not trust any existing Palestinian faction. Whereas only 4% of Hamas supporters said that Abbas's speech was good, this was the case for 68% of Fateh supporters and 31% of those who do not trust any faction. Also, whereas a mere 2% of Fateh supporters evaluated the speech as bad, this opinion was shared by 52% of Hamas supporters and 15% of those who do not trust any faction.

### Opinion about President Abbas's speech according to factional trust



### Support or opposition to President Abu Mazen's call for early Presidential and Legislative elections:

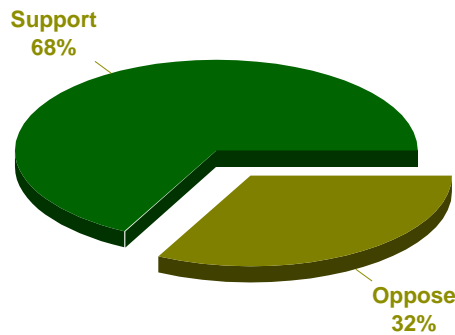
A majority of 68% welcomes and supports the call by Abu Mazen for Presidential and Legislative elections, while 32% opposes it. The results reveal that support for the call for early Presidential and Legislative elections is stronger in the West Bank (71%) than in the Gaza Strip (62%). However, support for this call for early Presidential and Legislative elections is very balanced according to factional trust. More specifically, 69%



of Fateh supporters, 67% of Hamas supporters, and 69% of those who do not trust any faction support the call for early Presidential and Legislative elections.

### Support or opposition to President Abbas's call for early presidential and legislative elections

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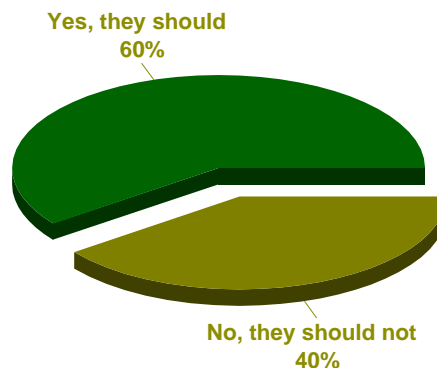


### Perceptions on whether or not Hamas should participate in the early Presidential and Legislative elections:

A majority of 60% of Palestinians believe that Hamas should participate in the early Presidential and Legislative elections. This view is shared in varying degrees by Palestinians in the West Bank (57%) and people in the Gaza Strip (67%). In addition, according to factional trust, 91% of Fateh supporters and 57% of those who do not trust any faction believe that Hamas should take part in the early Presidential and Legislative elections, while a mere 16% of Hamas supporters share this view.

### Should Hamas participate in the presidential and legislative elections?

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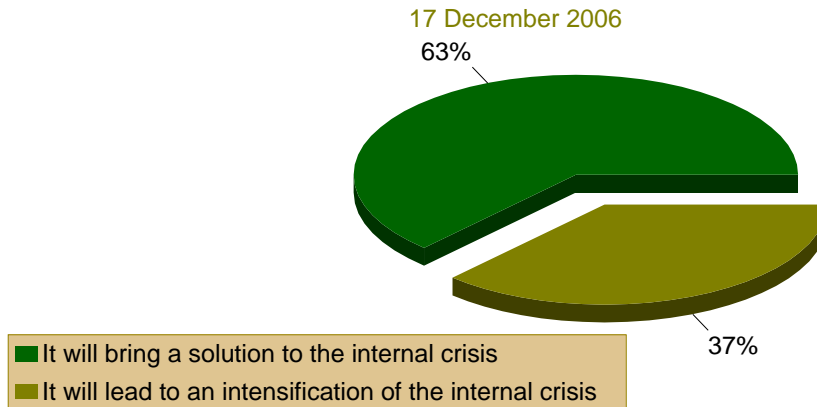


Perceptions on whether the call for early elections might bring a solution to the internal crisis or whether it might contribute to an intensification of the internal crisis:



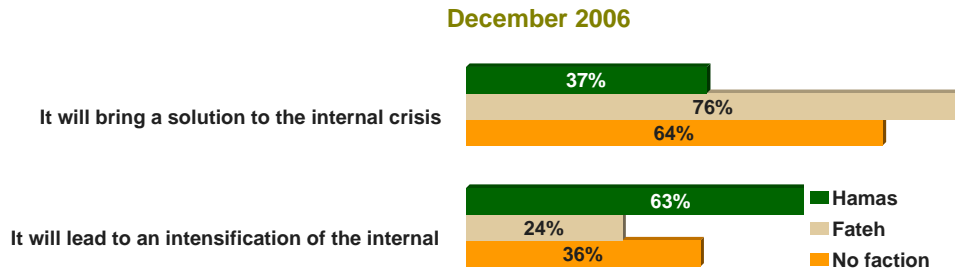
The majority of Palestinians seem optimistic that Abu Mazen's call for early elections will help to solve the internal crisis. As overviewed below, 63% believe that the call for early elections will bring a solution to the internal crisis, while 37% feel that it might contribute to an intensification of the crisis.

### Potential ramifications of the call for early elections.



The perception that the call for early elections might lead to a solution of the internal crisis is more pronounced in the Gaza Strip (69%) than in the West Bank (60%), and is also more the view among Fateh supporters (76%) and those who do trust any faction (64%) than among Hamas supporters (37%).

### Potential ramifications of the call for early elections according to factional trust



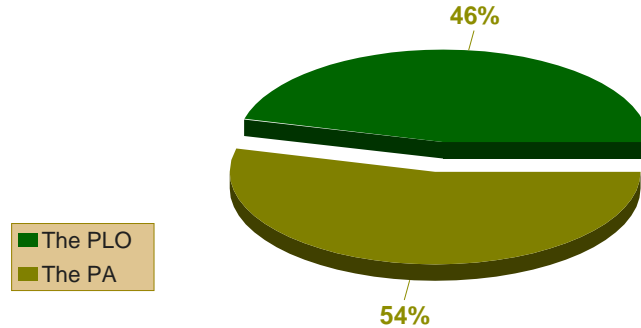
**The PLO represents the Palestinian people versus the PA represents the Palestinian people:**

Even Palestinians themselves are not clear anymore of which institution represents them. The results show that a slight majority of Palestinians believe that the PA represents them (54%). This view is much more widespread among Hamas supporters (88%) and those who do not trust any faction (64%) than among Fateh supporters (26%). According to region, a higher percentage of Gazans (51%) than Westbankers (44%) think that the PLO represents the Palestinian people.



### Who represents the Palestinian people?

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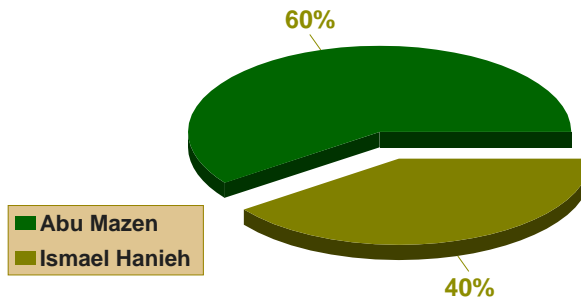


### Trust in Abu Mazen versus trust in Ismael Hanieh:

Only in a recent NEC survey that was conducted in the period between 7 to 10 December 2006, the results showed that President Abbas had lost significant popular support (49%) in favour of his Prime Minister Ismael Hanieh (51%). Now, in the aftermath of President Abbas's speech, trust in the President has again sharply increased. As illustrated in the figure below, 60% most trust Abu Mazen, while 40% most trust Ismael Hanieh.

### Trust in Abbas vs. trust in Hanieh

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As can be expected, especially Fateh supporters most trust Abu Mazen (96%), while Hamas supporters are more inclined to most trust Ismael Hanieh (96%). According to region, 57% of Westbankers most trust Abu Mazen and 43% of them most trust Ismael Hanieh. As for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, 65% most trust Abu Mazen, while 35% most trust Ismael Hanieh.



**Trust in Abbas vs. trust in Hanieh**  
 December 2006



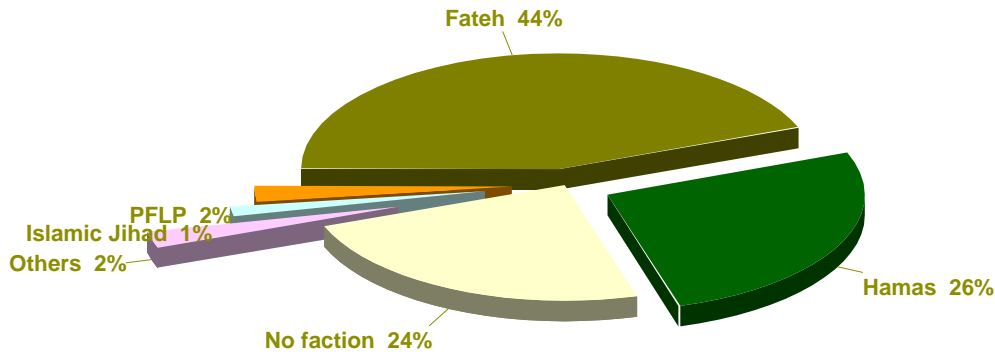
**Factional trust:**

As for factional trust, in NEC's most recent survey (7-10 December 2006), 32% of Palestinians most trusted Fateh, 27% most trusted Hamas, while 35% did not trust any faction.

Since Abu Mazen's speech, however, it seems that quite a portion of Palestinians who did not trust any faction, decided to put their trust back into Fateh. As overviewed below, today, 44% most trust Fateh, 26% most trust Hamas, while a sharply decreased 24% of Palestinians do not trust any faction. For the first time since August 2006, the Palestinians who do not trust any faction are no longer the largest segment of society.

**Factional trust**

17 December 2006



Perhaps against common perception, a higher percentage of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip most trust Fateh (47%) than Hamas (25%). Whereas in NEC recent survey of 7-10 December 2006 factional support in the West Bank was quite evenly divided with 27% most trusting Fateh, 25% most trusting Hamas, and 40% not trusting any faction, today 45% of Westbankers support Fateh, 25% support Hamas, and 23% do not trust any faction.

		Region of residence		Total
		West Bank	Gaza Strip	
Factional trust.	<b>Hamas</b>	26%	25%	27%
	<b>Fateh</b>	45%	47%	32%
	<b>PFLP</b>	2%	3%	3%



	<b>Islamic Jihad</b>	2%	1%	2%
	<b>Others</b>	3%	2%	2%
	<b>No faction</b>	23%	23%	35%
Total		100%	100%	100%

\*\*\*\*\*

