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**Near East Consulting**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**A Palestinian Perceptions Update**

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## A Palestinian Perceptions Update

### Methodology

During the period of 6-8 April 2006, Near East Consulting (NEC) conducted a phone survey of over 1,250 randomly selected Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and Jerusalem of which 856 were successfully completed. The survey covered a variety of issues with the aim to provide an update on Palestinian perceptions. The issues include: factional trust (with a close-up of Palestinians who do not trust any faction), the system of government of their choice in Palestine, views on the international community's understanding of the Palestinian issues and the Palestinians, and perceptions of donors and the ability of Arab and Islamic countries to cover for the assistance that is expected to be cut to the Palestinian Authority.

The margin of error is +/- 3.35% with a 95% confidence level.

### Factional Trust

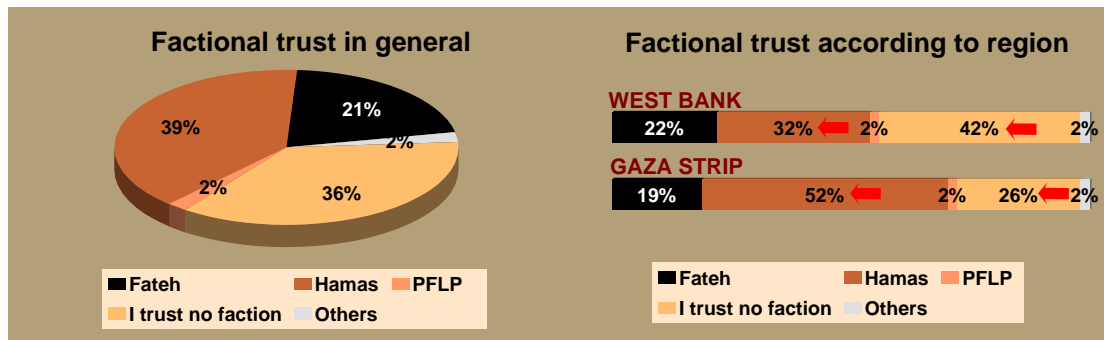
When asked which faction they trust most, 39% of those surveyed said Hamas, 21% said Fateh, while another 36% do not trust any faction.

Although not portrayed in the figure below, the period since the Palestinian PLC elections on 25 January 2006 has witnessed a sharp increase in the number of Palestinians who do not trust any faction (from 13% in January to 36% now) combined with a gradual decrease in the number of Palestinians who trust either Hamas or Fateh.<sup>1</sup> This trend warrants the need for further examination according to several independent (explanatory) variables in order to obtain a clearer picture of who are the people who tend to have more trust in Hamas or Fateh, or those who do not trust any faction.

Although the results on the issue of factional trust have been examined by the NEC team according to independent variables such as areas of residence (village, city, camp), refugee status (refugee versus non-refugee) and educational level of the respondents, a statistically significant relationship could only be established according to region of residence (West Bank versus Gaza Strip). As illustrated in the figure below, trust in Hamas is 20% higher in the Gaza Strip (52%) than in the West Bank (32%). The lower trust in Hamas in the West Bank than in the Gaza Strip does not translate in a significantly higher percentage of Palestinians most trusting Fateh in that region. Rather the results point to a considerably higher percent of Westbankers (42%) than Gazans (26%) not trusting any existing Palestinian political or religious faction.

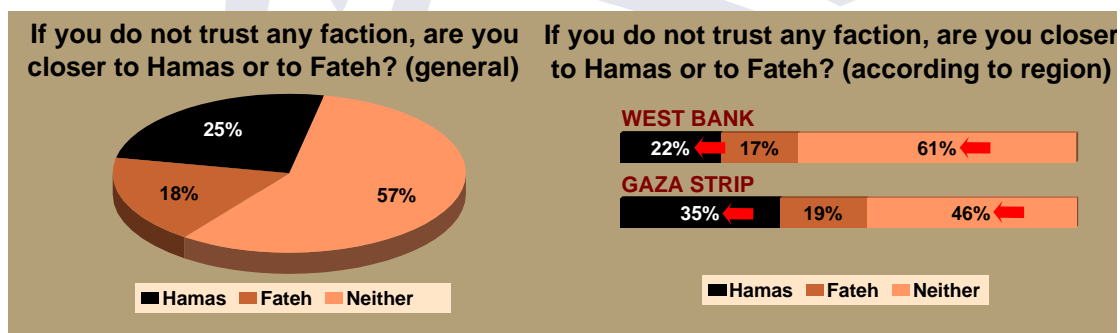
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<sup>1</sup> For more information, visit NEC's **Palestinian Political Pulse** (Poll1-3: standardized results) on: [www.neareastconsulting.com](http://www.neareastconsulting.com).



In order to acquire a better idea about the increasingly large section of the Palestinian population who do not trust any existing political or religious faction, those respondents who stated that they do not trust any faction were asked if they feel closer to Hamas or Fateh. As the results below indicate, 25% of those who do not trust any faction feel closer to Hamas, while 18% of those who do not trust any faction feel closer to Fateh. However, although the respondents were not provided with this option, 57% of those who do not trust any faction insisted that they do not feel close to Hamas or to Fateh.

As also illustrated in the figure below, the results on this question are again statistically significant according to the respondents' region of residence. A higher percentage of Gazans who do not trust any existing faction (35%) than Westbankers who do not trust any faction (22%) feel closer to Hamas than to Fateh. The percentage of those who do not trust any faction who feel closer to Fateh than to Hamas is about the same in the West Bank (17%) as in the Gaza Strip (19%). However, a considerably higher percentage of those who do not trust any existing faction in the West Bank (61%) than their colleagues in the Gaza Strip (46%) specified that they do feel neither close to Fateh nor to Hamas.



## System of Government Palestinians Prefer

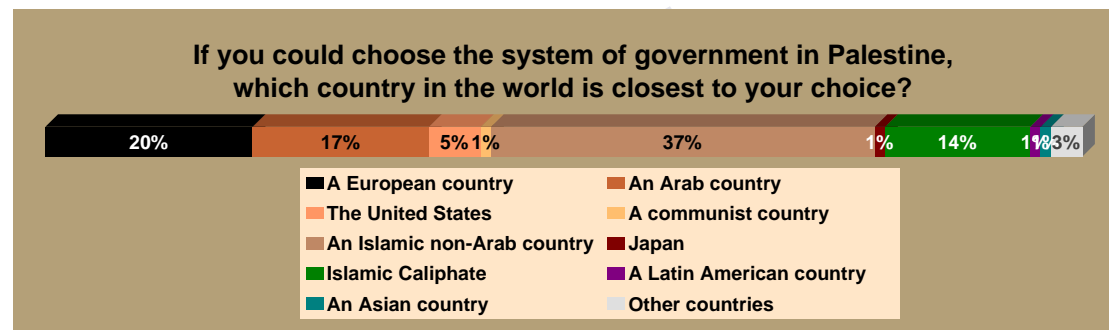
Respondents were also asked to choose from a list of countries which system of government they would prefer in Palestine. Before discussing the results, it should be noted that the option of "Islamic caliphate" was not included in the list of countries. However, it is included in the analysis as quite a number of respondents insisted that this is the system of government they would like to see in Palestine if they were given the opportunity to choose.

As overviewed in the figure below, 37% of the respondents would like to see a system of government emerge in Palestine as in Islamic non-Arab countries, 20%

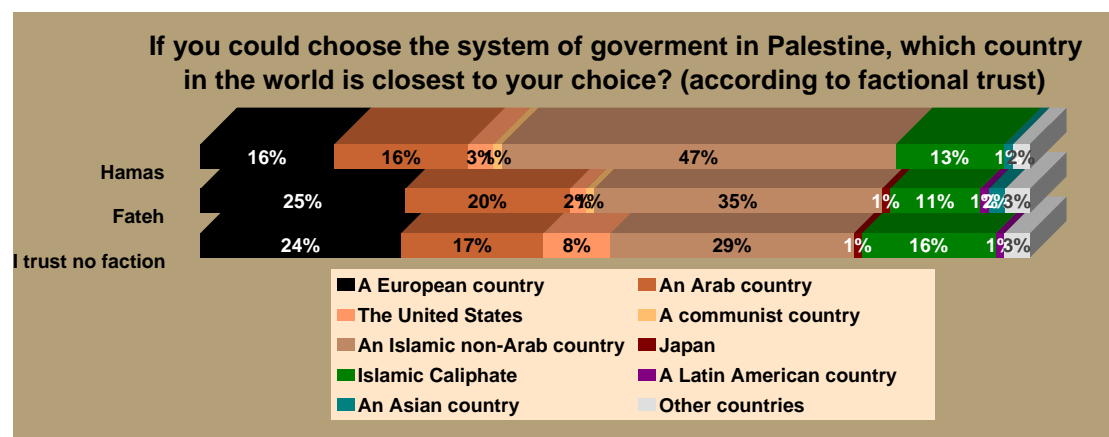


would like a system of government similar to existing systems in European countries, while 17% would like a system of government like in the Arab countries. Although respondents were not presented with the choice of an Islamic Caliphate, 14% specified that this is the system of government they hope for in Palestine. A mere 5% would like the system of government in Palestine to emulate the one of the United States, while the percentages of respondents wanting Palestine to have a system of government like in communist countries (1%), Japan (1%), Latin American countries (1%) or Asian countries (1%) is minimal. Finally, another 3% of the respondents stated that they would like to see a system of government appear in Palestine as the one in other countries (such as Canada, Australia, or Switzerland).

In any case, these results clearly indicate that for about half of the population the choice of system of government in Palestine would ideally be associated with the Islamic countries and the Islamic religion.

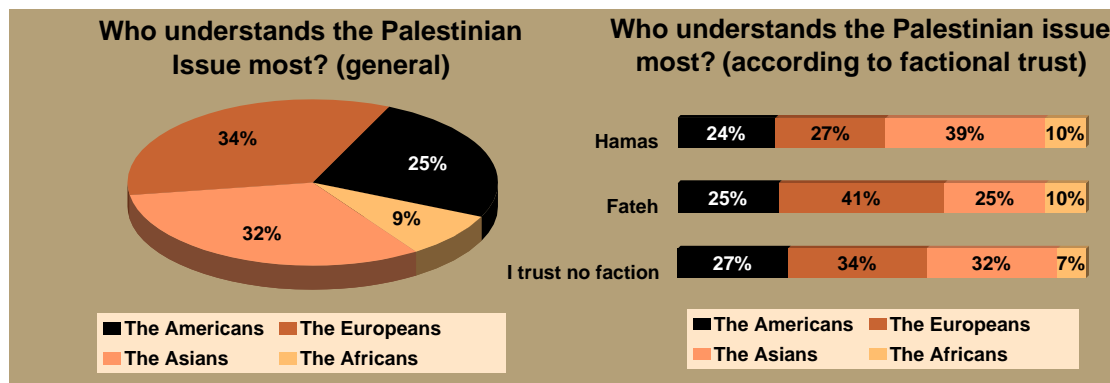


When examining the question of the preferred system of government in Palestine according to factional trust, clear differences in preferences appear. For example, the wish for a Palestinian system of government to emulate the system of government in Islamic non-Arab countries is far more pronounced among Hamas supporters (47%) than among Fateh supporters (35%) or those who do not support any faction (29%). The preferred choice of a system of government in Palestine as in one of the European countries is more favored by Fateh supporters (25%) and those who do not trust any faction (24%) than by Hamas supporters (16%). Perhaps contradictorily, the choice of a system of government in Palestine both as in the United States (8%) and as an Islamic caliphate (16%) is the highest among the subgroup of Palestinians who do not trust any of the existing Palestinian factions. The results according to factional trust are detailed in the figure below.



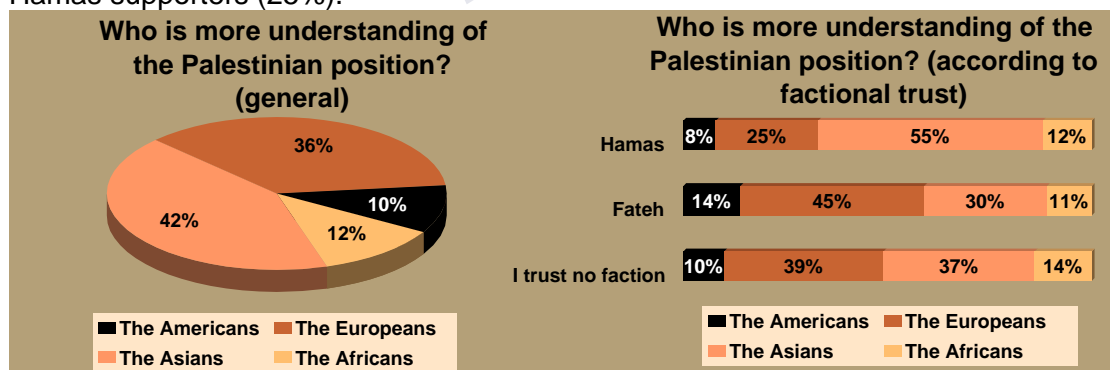
## Understanding of the Palestinian Issue

When asked about the international community's<sup>2</sup> understanding of the Palestinian issue, 34% of the respondents said that the Europeans understand the Palestinian issue most, 32% specified the Asians, 25% the Americans, and 9% the Africans. The belief that the Europeans understand the Palestinian issue most is more widespread among Fateh supporters (41%) and those who do not trust any Palestinian faction (34%) than among Hamas supporters (27%). As overviewed in the figure below, a larger percentage of Hamas supporters (39%) than Fateh supporters (25%) and those who do not trust any faction (32%) believe that the Asians understand the Palestinian issue most.



Moving towards the international community's understanding of the Palestinian position, 42% believe that the Asians are more understanding of the Palestinian position, 36% believe that the Europeans are more understanding, while 12% point to the Americans as more understanding of the Palestinian position and 10% point to the Africans.

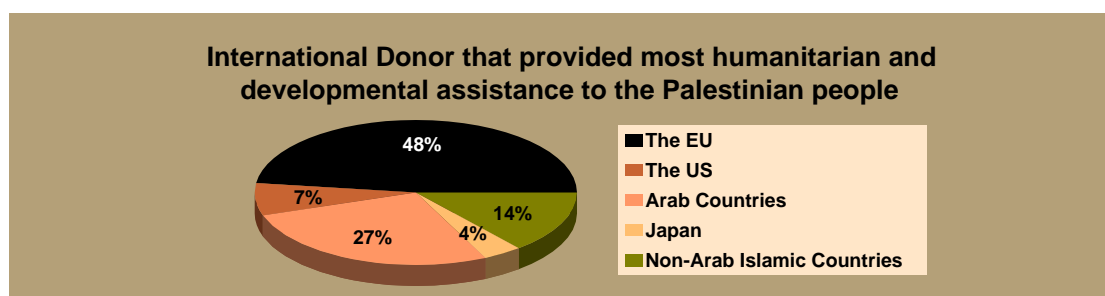
Again, according to factional trust clear differences in opinions appear. The belief that the Asians are more understanding of the Palestinian position lives stronger among Hamas supporters (55%) than among Fateh supporters (30%) and those who do not trust any Palestinian faction (37%). To the opposite, the view that the Europeans are more understanding of the Palestinian position is more pronounced among Fateh supporters (45%) and those who do not trust any faction (39%) than it is among Hamas supporters (25%).



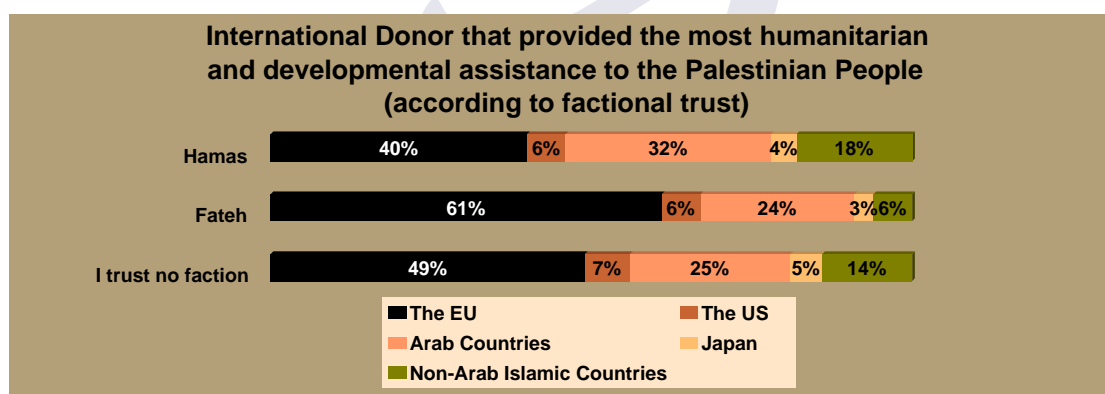
<sup>2</sup> For more information on Palestinian perceptions towards the international community (28 March 2006), visit NEC's website ([www.neareastconsulting.com](http://www.neareastconsulting.com)).

## Humanitarian Assistance

The survey also tried to gauge whether Palestinians have knowledge about the international donor that provided most humanitarian and developmental assistance to the Palestinian people. As overviewed in the pie below, nearly half (48%) of the respondents believe the EU is the international donor that provided most humanitarian and developmental aid to the Palestinian people, followed by the Arab countries (27%), the non-Arab Islamic countries (14%), the US (7%) and Japan (4%). The fact that only 7% of respondents mentioned the US as a main international donor that provides humanitarian and developmental assistance implies that the attitude towards the US is unlikely to change to the more positive as long as the US is perceived as being biased towards Israel.



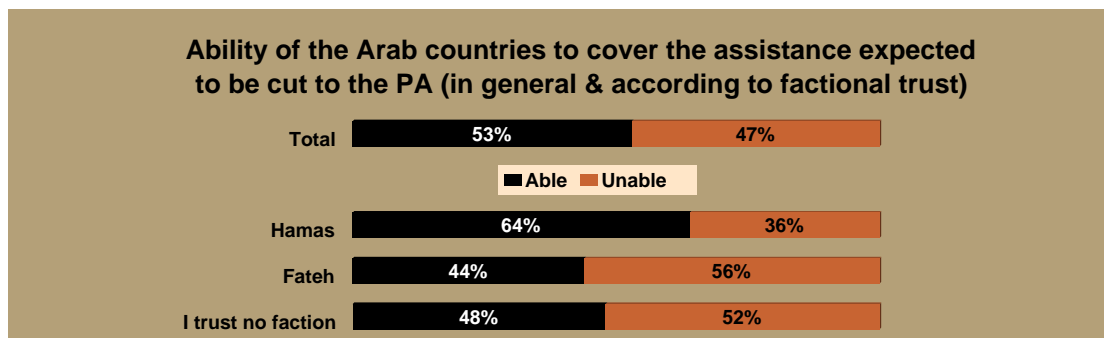
The views about which international donor provided the most humanitarian and developmental assistance to the Palestinian people vary, again, considerably according to their factional trust. For example, the belief that the Arab countries or the non-Arab Islamic countries are the donors that provided most humanitarian and developmental assistance to the Palestinian people is most widespread among Hamas supporters. Also, more Fateh supporters (61%) than those who do not trust any faction (49%) and Hamas supporters (40%) are of the opinion that the EU is the international donor that provided most humanitarian and developmental assistance to the Palestinian people.



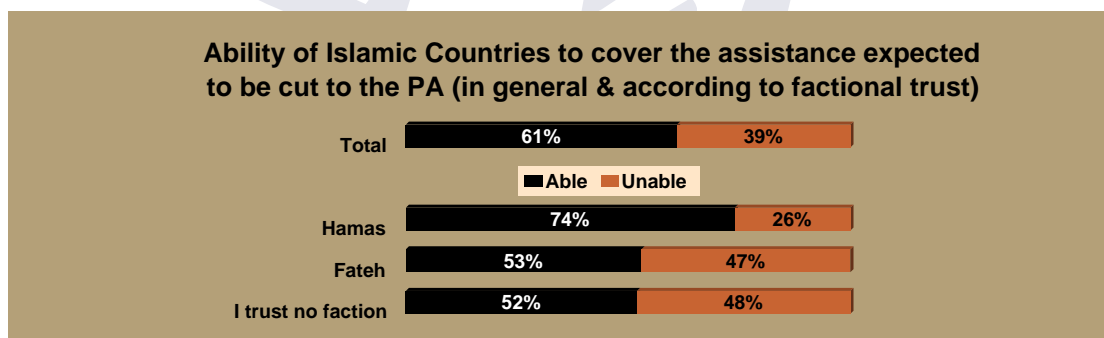
Given the recent decision of the EU and the US not to provide assistance to a Hamas-led Palestinian Authority, the NEC team added two questions that aim to see the extent to which the Palestinian public believes that Arab countries or Islamic countries would be able to cover for the assistance that is expected to be cut to the PA. NEC had already back in February 2006 asked in a survey whether or not respondents believed that a Hamas-led government would be able to compensate for

lost assistance from the EU and the US with assistance from countries like Iran. At that time, 69% were of the opinion that a Hamas-led government would be able to do so.<sup>3</sup>

Concerning the belief in the ability of Arab countries to cover for the assistance that is expected to be cut to the PA, in general, a small majority of 53% believe that the Arab countries will be able to cover for the cut in assistance. However, the belief that Arab countries will be able to cover for the cut in assistance to the PA from donors such as the EU and the US is more widespread among Hamas supporters (64%) than among those who do not trust any Palestinian faction (48%) and Fateh supporters (44%).



In general, a higher percentage of respondents believe that the Islamic countries (such as Iran and Indonesia) rather than the Arab countries will be able to cover for the assistance that is expected to be cut to the PA. As overviewed in the figure below, 61% of the respondents believe that this is the case. Again, a higher percentage of Hamas supporters (74%) than Fateh supporters (53%) and those who do not trust any faction believe that Islamic countries will be able to cover for the assistance that is expected to be cut from the PA by the EU and the US.



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<sup>3</sup> For more information, visit NEC's **Palestinian Political Pulse** (Poll2: 26 February 2006) on: [www.neareastconsulting.com](http://www.neareastconsulting.com).