**Analysis of the Results of the Opinion Leaders’ Survey:**

**Section One: Living Conditions: The majority describes the economic and security conditions as bad; yet, there is cautious optimism for the future**.

* The absolute majority of opinion leaders (90 percent) think that the economic situation in Palestine is either bad or very bad
* Seventy-four percent believe that Palestinian society is heading in the wrong direction while 22 percent believe the opposite.
* In regard to the current security chaos, 52 percent of respondents feel personal insecurity.
* Despite that, the percentage of pessimistic persons does not exceed a third of the sample (31.1 percent), which is equal to the percentage of those who have optimistic expectation about the future, while 38 percent of the respondents have swinging feelings between pessimistic and optimistic.

**Section Two: Final status issues, peace opportunities, and historical reconciliation:**

***I: Final status issues (refugees, Jerusalem, settlements, borders, water and other natural resources):***

This section analyzes the opinions of leaders regarding the proposed scenarios for solving critical issues, i.e. those identified as final status issues:

1- The Right to self-determination: A democratic Palestinian state for all citizens on historic Palestine is the preferred solution while a two-state solution is perceived to be the most realistic.

-    Among the various scenarios proposed for self-determination, *'one democratic state in historical Palestine for all its citizens without discrimination based on religion, race, ethnicity, color, or sex (to be determined by a constitution and upon international safeguards and guarantees)***'** is the preferred scenario among the respondents (68 percent). However, only 16 percent support such a scenario and believe that it is feasible; 52 percent support it regardless of its feasibility.

-    Almost an equal percentage support a two-state solution scenario (65 percent) where one is Palestinian and the other is Israeli (in reference to the 1988 Declaration of Independence and 242 UN Resolution. Indeed, it is the most realistic solution from the point of view of its supporters. Fifty-four percent of supporters believe that a two-state solution is feasible while 11 percent support this potential solution regardless of its feasibility.

-    Sixty-eight percent of the opinion leaders do not support a potential scenario to establish '*An Islamic State on all lands of historic Palestine (Jews and Christians to be treated as minorities of non-Muslim subjects enjoying the protection of Muslim state***.'** Likewise, sixty-two percent of respondents believe that such a solution is not feasible.

**2-** **Borders: The borders of the Palestinian state are 1967 borders. Any modification or alteration of borders should consider geographical congruity between the various Palestinian territories including the congruity between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip:**

-    Seventy-seven percent of the respondents prefer establishing an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders. Sixty-five percent believe that such a scenario is possible while 12 percent support it regardless of its feasibility.

-    Of the respondents, 63 percent think that any amendments or alterations of borders should take into consideration the necessity of geographical congruity between the Palestinian Territory (including the Gaza Strip and the West Bank). Forty-five percent accept minor border alterations (*i.e.,* land swaps of similar size and quality).

-    The majority (92 percent) reject alterations of borders to solve the issue of settlements on the basis of annexing the huge settlements to Israel. Moreover, 87 percent reject the idea of establishing a state with temporary borders pending the negotiation of permanent borders.

3- **Settlements: The majority prefer dismantling settlements or full withdrawal from all the settlements and for them to be handed over to the Palestinian Authority as the first scenario. The second preferred scenario is evacuating settlers and maintaining settlements for Palestinian refugees’ residential purposes.**

-    The majority of respondents (97 percent) prefer dismantling all settlements or full withdrawal from all settlements within the Palestinian Territories, and handover to Palestinian authorities. Sixty-eight percent of the sample who supports such a scenario thinks that it is feasible while 29 percent support it regardless of its feasibility.

-    Sixty-one percent of the sample prefer to **evacuate settlers and maintain settlements for Palestinian refugees’ residential purposes.** Only 39 percent think that such a scenario is applicable while 22 percent support it regardless of its feasibility.

-    The scenario that witnessed the highest percentage of rejection proposed conducting a resident-swap between settlers and Palestinians living inside Israel. Ninty-five percent of the sample reject this option. The second least preferred scenario is maintaining status quo for the larger settlements and consider their residents as Israeli citizens within the Palestinian State. On the other hand, only 17 percent of the sample approves dismantling or full withdrawal from the settlements, while conducting a handover of most settlements to the Palestinian authorities, and annexing the larger settlements to Israel according to a land-swap agreement between the two states.

**4-** **Refugees: The most preferable and applicable scenario from the point of view of the respondents is the implementation of UN Resolution 194 (the Right of Return and/or Compensation).**

5- Seventy-five percent of respondents prefer the implementation of UN Resolution 194 (the Right of Return and/or Compensation), according to which refugees would return to their places of origin as Israeli citizens, and receive compensation payments for those who are unwilling to return. Thirty-three percent prefers this scenario and thinks that it is feasible while 42 percent prefers it regardless of its feasibility. However, 17 percent of the respondents think that this scenario is not feasible and they would not support it.

-    Of the respondents, 54 percent acceptsan Israeli recognition of Israel’s responsibility for this question as a first step, and then proceeding to discuss possible solutions. Half of those believe this scenario is feasible and would support it while the other half prefers it regardless of its feasibility.

-    The majority (89 percent) totally rejects a scenario of giving compensation to Palestinian refugees and settling them in their host countries of residence.

-    Twenty-five percent prefer a fair, comprehensive, and final “negotiated” solution for the issue of refugees (with no reference to the UN resolution) and believe that such a solution is feasible and realistic.

6- **Jerusalem**: Respondents prefer **East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian State over other potential scenarios.**

- Eighty-four percent of the respondents would declare East Jerusalem as the capital of an independent Palestinian state. Sixty-nine percent believe that such a solution is feasible and realistic while 15 percent support this option regardless of its perceived feasibility.

-    Eighty-four percent of the sample would not accept a potential scenario in which East Jerusalem was declared as the capital of the Palestinian State if it were re-divided to give Israel control over the Jewish quarter.  Although 40 percent believe that such a scenario is feasible, they do not prefer this option. Further, 44 percent reject the scenario and believe that it is not feasible.  Nevertheless, 16 percent voiced preference for this solution.

-    A unified East and West Jerusalem under international sovereigntyis the preferred scenario for 30 percent of the sample. Of the respondents, 26 percent support this option if the unified city is the capital of the two states.

-    Less acceptable scenarios would be to internationalize East Jerusalem or administratively divide East Jerusalem (with the Palestinian State undertaking the religious, police, and civil functions and Israel maintaining security powers) -no more than 5 percent of the sample supports either scenario.

**7-** **Water**: **The most preferred scenario is to preserve the water rights of both states with formulas and formats for cooperation in this area. A majority also prefer to have Palestine and Israel maintain full sovereign rights over their water as any other two independent states.**

-    Sixty-six percent of the sample prefer to preserve the water rights of both states with formulas and formats for cooperation in the area and believe that this scenario is feasible. However, 19 percent prefer such a scenario regardless of its feasibility.

-      Of the opinion leaders, 94 percent believe that the water rights of both states should be preserved with formulas and formats for cooperation in this area. They also believe that this scenario is feasible.

-     Sixty-three percent rejecta settlement agreement which incorporates specific items related to water-sharing in accordance to the needs of the two parties of the agreement.

**Section Three: Peace and Reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis:**

***Despite the halted efforts to achieve reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis, the majority of respondents believe in the possibility of achieving peace and reconciliation between the two peoples****:*

-    Thirty percent of participants believe in the opportunity of achieving historical reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis where normalizing relations between the two people would be the natural by-product of reconciliation. Thirty-nine percent agree with this to a certain extent, while 29 percent do not agree.

-    Of the respondents, 33 percent disagree with a potential scenario to establish two independent states with open borders, whereby 65 percent agree completely or to some extent.

-    Of the respondents, 67 percent express complete or partial support for establishing joint economic projects between Palestinians and Israelis, towards developing relations that might lead to a joint open market. (This scenario is possible if a comprehensive reconciliation is achieved between the two people.) However, 32 percent disagree with such a scenario.

-    In contrast to the support for strengthening economic relations, 68 percent of respondents do not think that there is a possibility to launch joint political institutions and reinforce cooperation between the two peoples on the political, economic, and security levels, achieving a confederation between the two states of Palestine and Israel.

-    However, a clear majority of respondents (85 percent) support economic and cultural relations with the surrounding Arab region.

**Section Foure: The relations between the Palestinian state and its neighbors*, especially Jordan, Egypt, and Israel: The Palestinian state should establish normal relations with its surrounding countries while opting out of regional and international coalitions and alliances***:

-    Ninety-four percent of the respondents prefer a Palestinian state that maintains normal relations with the surrounding countries; a majority, 86 percent, believe that such a solution is feasible.

-    A high percentage of the respondents reject the idea of a tri-lateral confederation with Jordan and Israel, or a confederation with Jordan. Eighty-three percent reject a tri-lateral confederation with both Egypt and Jordan. (Tri-lateral confederation is identified as: the Palestinian state would temporarily allow a Jordanian role in the West Bank and an Egyptian one in the Gaza Strip, where the security and economy are the main targeted sectors within such scenario). However, 91 percent and 90 percent, respectively, reject the idea of a bilaterally confederated state with Israel, or a trilateral confederation with Jordan and Israel.

-    Finally, sixty-six percent of the sample rejects a potential confederation with Jordan.

-    A majority of the respondents believe that achieving the Palestinian priorities obligates the Palestinian Authority to stay out of regional coalitions and alliances while maintaining balanced relations with the international community.

      - A small percentage (15%) said that the Palestinian authority should align itself with moderate Arabic countries close to the USA, particularly Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. However, the percentage of respondents who believe that the best way to achieve the Palestinian priorities would be through affiliating with Iran-Syria-Hezbullah, does not exceed 3 percent.

**Section Fiver: Negotiations and Conflict Management Scenarios:**

1- **The Palestinian Liberation Organization is the most legitimate body (in capability and legitimacy) to manage the final status negotiations**: The respondents were asked to identify the most capable and legitimate authority to manage negotiations on the final status issues with Israel. The answers were divided nearly equally between three bodies:

-    Thirty-five percent believe that the mission of conducting final status negotiations should be given to a negotiating commission consisting of PLO and Islamic movements while 30 percent believe that the negotiations should be handled by a commission consisting of the PLO and the PNA

-    Thirty-three percent believe that the Palestinian Liberation Organization is the most legitimate body to be responsible for negotiations. Only 2 percent of respondents believe that the Islamic movements are the most capable and legitimate bodies to manage negotiations.

**2-** **Ratification of agreements: The majority believe that Palestinians in both the Palestinian Territory and the Diaspora have the most authority to ratify any substantial agreements with Israel (i.e., those which deal with final status issues):**

-    Sixty-six percent favor presenting the agreements for a general referendum by Palestinians all over the world whenever there is a need to ratify core agreements with Israel which tackle final status issues.

-    Of the respondents, 13 percent believe that the National Council should be authorized to ratify such agreements. However, 11 percent of the respondents would authorize a general referendum on the agreements within the Palestinian Territory, while 8 percent would authorize the combined votes of both the National and Legislative Councils. Finally, only 3 percent would approve ratification on the part of the PLC.

**Section Six: Coordination of the negotiation tracks*: In order to secure the realization of a permanent and comprehensive peace that observes the rights and interests of the countries in the region, the majority would support the organization of an*** ***international conference under the auspices of the UN including Arab parties directly concerned/involved in the conflict and the Arab League:***

-    Fifty-eight percent of the respondents would prefer to organize an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations that includes the Arab countries affected directly by the conflict and the Arab League, to guarantee achieving a durable, just and comprehensive peace that takes into consideration the interests of the regional countries.

-    Twenty-four percent believe that the best tool to establish a negotiation committee that encompasses all relevant parties would be under the auspices of the Arab League in order to push forward the Arab initiative as the basis to solve the conflict.

-    Potential scenarios connecting the Palestinian negotiations track with the Lebanese and Syrian, or conducting bilateral negotiations in coordination with these two countries, did not receive much support; neither proposition received more than 6 percent support.

-    No more than 8 percent of respondents support the continuation of bilateral negotiations with Israel without coordination or linkage to the other concerned parties[[SJ1]](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/elitepoll/analysis.html" \l "_msocom_1)

**Section Seven: Conflict and Reconciliation Perception*: There is a clear division in opinions among respondents in regard to conflict management, and whether to apply military resistance or popular peaceful resistance alongside negotiations. The majority of prefer the combination of negotiations and resistance:***

-    Forty-seven percent express the necessity to combine both popular peaceful resistance and negotiations.

-    Forty percent think that the best mechanism to manage the conflict is a combination between military resistance and negotiations.

-    Solving the conflict through negotiations alone did not receive support from more than 7 percent of respondents. Similarly, military resistance garnered only 6 percent support.

**Section Eight: Temporary and Permanent Solutions*: The majority of respondents do not think that there is potential to achieve a comprehensive peace reconciliation and peace treaty that includes solving all the conflicting issues and establishing an independent Palestinian state, within the coming five years.***

-         Of the respondents, 35 percent think that there is a potential to achieve reconciliation and a peace treaty that encompasses a comprehensive solution to all issues, including the establishment of a Palestinian state and the question of refugees, in the coming five years.

-         Twenty-three percent think that the most achievable option within the next five years is to establish of a viable Palestinian state while keeping issues such as refugees and settlements open to negotiation.

-         Ten percent believe that the next five years might witness a comprehensive truce but with a return to pre-Al Aqsa Intifada conditions.

-         Nine percent believe that the long- term truce suggested by Hamas is achievable.

-         Only 8 percent believe that the status quo will remain for the next five years, while only 6 percent think that it is possible to achieve a long-term interim peace agreement. Finally, 5 percent think that the next five years will witness the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with temporary borders.

**Section Nine: If all efforts to solve the conflict fail, the dissolution of the Palestinian Authority is the most probable solution to manage the Palestinian affairs:**

-         Forty-four percent of the respondents think that Palestinians and the Palestinian leadership should dissolve the PNA and make the international community responsible for the emerging legal vacuum.

-         Twenty-eight percent think that the only solution (in case no progress is achieved within the peace process) is to maintain the situation as is since there is no possibility to dissolve PNA, however, there is a need to develop new mechanisms to manage the conflict.

-         Of the respondents, 42 percent think that if reconciliation efforts reach a roadblock, the only solution would be the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state and escalation of resistance within the framework of nationally agreed resistance strategies and methods.

**Section Ten: International presence in the Palestinian Territories:**

The majority of respondents are in complete or partial agreement to establish  a presence of international forces in the Palestinian territories for an interim period during which the occupation army would withdraw and internationally managed areas  would be handed over to the UN successively according to progress in negotiations with Israel. Twenty-five percent reject this option completely.

**Section Eleven: Internal Palestinian Circumstances:**

The political, economic, and social structure of the Palestinian state and the regulating constitutional texts:

**1- Political System: The most acceptable option is a Parliamentary system within a democratic government similar to the European regimes:**

-         Fifty-three percent support a parliamentary regime in the Palestinian state.

-         Of the respondents, 35 percent prefer a mixed regime (presidential and parliamentary) while support for a presidential regime does not exceed 10 percent.

-         Seventy-two percent prefer a democratic government based on European and Israeli models. Eight percent prefer a national government based on the model of governments in other Arab countries. An Islamic government similar to the Iranian model receives the support of no more than 3 percent.

**2- Economic System**: **Division about the economic system of the proposed Palestinian state:**

-         Of the respondents, 32 percent prefer a liberal system based on open market policies as economic system in the Palestinian state.

-         Thirty percent support a welfare state system, in which the state interferes on the level of welfare services.

-         Twenty-three percent prefer adopting an Islamic economic system.

-         Ten percent prefer a socialist system of economy in Palestine.

-         Regarding potential constitutional amendments, 64 percent reject inserting an article within the basic law stating that Palestine is a demilitarized state, with the exception of internal security functions. Thirty percent support such an option.

**3- Secularism of the Palestinian State: Almost half of the respondents approve a basic law that identifies Palestine as a secular state:**

-         Fifty-one percent of the sample approve of identifying Palestine as a secular state within the articles of the basic law, while 8 percent were undecided. Forty-one percent rejected this proposal.

**4-** **Equality for Women:** **An absolute majority accept complete equality for women (rights and duties) within the constitution:**

-         Eighty-eight percent accept equality for women within the law while 9 percent reject this position.

**5- Palestinian Priorities (for a period of one to three years):**

The answers demonstrated that the ten listed options are of top priorities to respondents.

   Ending internal chaos and vigilantism;

   Laying the foundations for national unity and maintaining the cohesiveness of the Palestinian society;

   Enhancing economic conditions and reducing unemployment and poverty rates;

   Ending occupation and establishing an independent Palestinian state; and

   Fighting corruption within the Palestinian political system.

The following were secondary priorities among the respondents:

   Realizing democracy and enhancing of public and personal freedoms;

   Enhancing Palestinian diplomatic relations and securing financial support resources;

   Promoting the status of Palestinian women and marginalized social groups;

   Achieving progress in the negotiations and ultimately reaching a comprehensive peace agreement; and

   Preserving social norms and traditions as well as the religious values.

**6- Despite the severe polarization between Fatah and Hamas before the signing of the Mecca agreement, a majority of the sample think that there is high possibility to achieve an agreement to end the confrontations between the various political factions:**

-         Of the respondents, 67 percent think that the most viable option is to reach a political agreement among the factions, particularly between Fatah and Hamas, to settle the differences without resorting to violence.

-         Fourteen percent think that the crises and limited confrontations will continue. Twelve percent believe that the political, security, and economical crises might escalate and lead to collapse of the PNA.

-         Only four percent think that the situation is moving towards a quasi civil war.

**7- The majority of respondents (72 percent) think that PLO (once reformed and restructured), would be the most capable body to manage the Palestinian situation effectively given the internal, regional and international challenges:**

-         Very minor percentages believe that Fatah or Hamas are capable of managing Palestinian affairs separately (not exceeding 3 percent for each).

-         Sixteen percent think that a new democratic stream (including democratic and leftist powers as well as civil powers) would be capable of managing the Palestinian challenges if there is a majority of the population that supports forming such a political faction.

**8- Unity Government: Relatively high expectations in regards to the capability of the Unity Government in achieving progress in domains that are related to the interests of Palestinians:**

-         Of the respondents, 86 percentagree that that a national unity government would be capable of lifting the political and economic siege imposed on Palestinians (22% think yes, while 64% yes to some extent). Fourteen percent disagree.

-         The same percentage (86 percent) thinks that such a government would eliminate security chaos and reinforce rule of law (32 percent agreed completely, while 56 percent agreed to some extent).

-         Of the respondents, 84 percent think that a unity government would be capable of improving the economic and living circumstances of Palestinians (21 percent agrees completely, 63 percent agrees to some degree) while 16 percent does not agree.

-         Seventy-four percent of the respondents think that the unity government would reinforce democracy and public freedoms (24 percent agrees completely while 50 percent agrees to some degree).

-         Eighty-four percent of the opinion leaders believe that the unity government would make progress in reforming the Palestinian institutions and eliminating corruption (21 percent agree completely while 63 percent agree to some degree).

-         Finally, 61 percent of the respondents think that the unity government is capable of achieving progress in negotiations with Israel (13 percent completely agrees and 54 percent agrees to some degree) while 39 percent disagrees.

**9- Call for Early Presidential and Parliamentary elections:**

-         Of the respondents, 28 percent agree with President Abbas' call for early presidential and parliamentary elections, while 44 percent would support the initiative on the condition that the President’s call for elections is subject to the consensus of all political forces, including Hamas. Twenty-nine percent completely disagree.

**10- Electoral System for the Legislative Council: A majority of the respondents support amending the electoral law** towards a proportional representation system for all council seats based on one electoral district for Palestine**.**

-         Of the respondents, 57 percent would prefer a fully proportional electoral system, i.e., all council seats would be based on one electoral district for Palestine.

-         Twenty-four percent would prefer the current electoral system be based on dividing council seats equally between the proportionate and majority systems, based on electoral districts. However, 17 percent would prefer to return to the previous system (the majority system), based on the system of electoral districts for all council seats.

-         Of the respondents, 68 percent expressed their intent to participate in the presidential and parliamentary elections if they were conducted once again. However, 16 percent would abstain from the elections and another 16 percent remain undecided.

**11- Assessment of Current Government: The current government receives a negative performance evaluation on all levels:**

-         Under the current government, 92 percent think that the economic situation has deteriorated.

-         Of the respondents, 78 percent think thatthe current government is not assuming responsibility for the siege imposed against it.

-         Over 96 percent of the respondents believe that the security circumstances deteriorated under the power of the current government.

-         Eighty percent believe that the current government represents its **partisan audiences more than the Palestinian society.**

-         Sixty-three percent believe that the current government contributed in diminishing freedoms especially individual freedoms, freedom of opinion and women rights.

-         Half of the sample (50 percent) believes that Hamas will not be able to implement its program even if the siege imposed on it were lifted.

-         Sixty-three percent of the respondents think that the current government is not responsible for the siege imposed on it.

**12-** **Societal and Political forces:** **A majority of the respondents believe it is important to activate the role of the various political and civil society forces to achieve balance in the Palestinian society:**

-         Of the respondents, 92 percent think that Palestinian NGOs are not capable of having an effective impact on the current crises.

-         Seventy-seven percent think that, in view of the severe polarization between Hamas and Fatah, there is a need to establish a third political way that brings together all the Palestinian democratic forces.

-         Of the respondents, 66 percent agree that it is better to shift all basic services to the Palestinian civil society to avoid a situation where these services are affected by the political situation (40 percent agree completely; 26 percent agree to some degree).

-         Nearly 95 percent of the respondents think that enhancing the role of the civil society and the public sector would contribute to the alleviation of the current state of political standoff within the Palestinian society.

-         Over half (52 percent) think that there is a policy of exclusion practiced against the majority of social sectors who are not affiliated with Fatah or Hamas.  However, about 35 percent agree there is a policy of exclusion to some degree.

Of the respondents, 97 percent think that the state of severe polarization, political confusion, and vigilantism will persist in the absence of a clear national reference point or authority with acknowledged resistance and democratic legitimacy.