|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   |     |  |     |  |
|   | [Opinion Polls](http://home.birzeit.edu/dsp/opinionpolls/)**Poll No. 2****Survey # 2: The Palestinian Intifada and the Peace Process****[ Analysis of Results ] [** [**Detailed Results**](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll2/results.html) **] [** [**Sample Distribution**](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll2/sample.html) **]****[** [**In Arabic**](http://home.birzeit.edu/dsp/arabic/opinionpolls/poll2/) **]** Analysis of Results**1) Precautionary notes:** * It should be underlined once again that the poll was conducted in the heat of the Palestinian Intifada, as the confrontations were raging between Palestinians and Israelis. Thus, it is important to place the present results within their proper context and within the circumstances prevailing at the time. The exceptional nature of the period should always be kept in mind.
* As the results will show, radical shifts have taken place in Palestinian opinions, reflecting a high degree of frustration and despair and an insistence on achieving Palestinian demands. It is important to compare these results with those of other polls conducted under previous circumstances..
* In addition, and this is of utmost importance, the views presented here are of collective nature, that include both the educated and the non-educated, and all age groups and social groups. The sample (as a representative sample of social conditions) includes about 70% whose educational attainment does not go beyond the stage of preparatory education (9 years). Half of the sample is made up of women and most of them are housewives or are not part of the labour force (reflecting actual conditions, where female participation in the labour force does not exceed 14%). In the analysis, it will be noted that there is a major discrepancy between the views of the educated and the non-educated on the issues under discussion. There are also discrepancies between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on a number of issues.

**Part One: The Peace Process**The results indicate major disappointment in the peace process and a negative evaluation of all the parties that have participated in the agreements. This disappointment is indicated in the following results:1) The majority of the Palestinians (51%) believe that the peace process that started in 1993 will not lead to establishment of an independent Palestinian state, compared with 33% in February 1995. On the other hand, 33% believe that is possible. The belief in the possibility of attaining an independent state through the current peace process was very low among educated respondents. 16% of university graduates believe in the possibility of an independent state, compared to 42% among the illiterate (Table 2).

|  |
| --- |
| **Table (1) Belief in the possibility of establishing an independent Palestinian state as a result of the current peace process, according to level of educational attainment** |
|   | Illiterate | Elementary | Preparatory | Secondary | College | University |
| Yes | 42% | 39% | 36% | 24% | 28% | 16% |
| No | 38% | 43% | 50% | 65% | 58% | 73% |

2) At the same time, only a small percentage of Palestinians (14.3%) felt an improvement in their living conditions during the seven years that followed the Oslo Agreement, while the majority of Palestinians felt that their living conditions had deteriorated (45%), or had not changed (40.8%). The feeling that their living conditions had deteriorated was much higher among Palestinians of the Gaza Strip than among their brothers in the West Bank. In the Gaza Strip, 56.3% felt that their living conditions had deteriorated, compared with 38.3% who felt the same in the West Bank. 3) In addition, 54.9% felt that the Oslo Agreement and other peace agreements had not led to the positive changes that would benefit the Palestinians. This percentage was 61.3% in the Gaza Strip and 51.2% in the West Bank. 4) Despite this disillusionment, the majority of the Palestinians still adhere to the option of peace. 57.8% support the continuation of the peace process on the basis of the UN resolutions as their frame of reference, while 34.8% opposed it, and 7.4% were uncertain of their position. However, the continued support for the peace process was linked to a change in its frame of reference. Only 3.2% supported having the USA as the sponsor of these talks (most of them from the West Bank), while 38.9% supported having the UN as the sponsor, and 40% were not satisfied by either party. 18% were uncertain as to their position. 5) Support for the peace process was conditional on achieving Palestinian final status demands. For example, 92% declared that peace with Israel is not possible without East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state. A similar percentage declared that peace will not be achieved without Israeli recognition of the right of Palestinian refugees to return. However, 44% of the Palestinians expressed their fears that it may not be possible to implement the right of return in full, while another 44% believed that there is a real possibility for the return of all refugees from outside Palestine. A disproportionate number of the educated surveyed did not believe that all refugees would be allowed to return (as can be seen in Table 2).

|  |
| --- |
| **Table (2): Belief in the possibility of return of all refugees, according to level of educational attainment.** |
|   | Illiterate | Elementary | Preparatory | Secondary | College | University |
| Yes | 56% | 46% | 43% | 41% | 29% | 32% |
| No | 32% | 44% | 44% | 49% | 56% | 64% |

6) At the same time, and while confrontations against the Israeli occupation and its practices against the Palestinian people continue, the survey indicated that only 21.1% of the Palestinians are ready to accept Israeli sovereignty over West Jerusalem, in the event East Jerusalem comes under Palestinian sovereignty. 74% opposed Israeli sovereignty over West Jerusalem - 82% in the Gaza Strip and 70 % in the West Bank. In September 1996, 53 percent supported Israeli sovereignty over West Jerusalem and Palestinian sovereignty over East Jerusalem. 7) On the possibility for co-existence between Palestinians and Israelis according to the frame of reference provided by UN Resolutions, about one-third of the respondents believed that such a possibility does exist, while 60% believed it does not exist. There were no discrepancies on this issue between the educated and non-educated respondents. This tone is also reflected by the results of the survey question: would you support building friendship ties between Palestinians and Israelis in the event peace agreements are concluded. 31% of the respondents said such relations are acceptable to them, while 65% said they do not find such relations acceptable. Bearers of college diplomas were the most supportive of such friendships; their percentage reached 39%. Younger age groups were more opposed to friendship between Palestinians and Israelis than older groups. Support among the 16-22 age group was 20% only, compared to 37% among older groups. It is certain that presenting such culturally and politically sensitive issues at such times is not fair to the respondents. It also means that such human relations should not be expected to happen on a wide scale, except under conditions of just political solutions. It should also be pointed out that the Palestinian position towards Israelis living inside the Green Line may differ from the position towards an Israeli settler residing inside Hebron, or any of the other settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Many Palestinians also distinguish between Israelis who do not believe in Palestinian rights and those Israelis who support these rights. 8) In the same context, Palestinians do not trust Ehud Barak as a partner for peace, as 85% of the respondents felt Barak was unqualified as a peace-making Prime Minister. Only 9% considered Barak to be qualified. 9) 71% supported the declaration of a Palestinian state, despite American and Israeli opposition, and 68.5% supported such a declaration, even if were to lead to military confrontations with Israel. Support for the declaration of a state decreased as education level increased. 78% of the illiterate declared support for a declaration even if the Americans and the Israelis opposed it, compared to 57% of university graduates (Table 3). Support for the declaration of a state is also higher among younger age groups compared with older age groups.

|  |
| --- |
| **Table (3): Support for the declaration of a state in spite of American and Israeli opposition, according to level of educational attainment** |
|   | Illiterate | Elementary | Preparatory | Second-ary | College | University |
| I support | 78% | 71% | 71% | 71% | 62% | 57% |
| I oppose | 16% | 23% | 25% | 26% | 34% | 38% |

**Part Two: The Palestinian Intifada**There were no significant differences between demographic groups, as to their support for the Intifada. However, there were some differences in regards to the mechanisms and processes of the uprising. 1) 75% of the Palestinians supported the continuation of the Intifada, while 21% opposed its continuation. No discrepancies appeared between differing educational levels as to the continuation of the Intifada. It appears that support was given for several reasons, including the belief of the majority (68%) that the main objective of the current Intifada is liberation and establishment of an independent Palestinian state. 10% felt the main objective of the Intifada was to improve the position of Palestinian negotiators. 16% considered the objective to be unclear from their perspective, and 5.3% declared they were not sure. 77% believe that the current Intifada will contribute positively to the achievement of Palestinian national goals, including the establishment of an independent state according to UN Resolutions. 14% said the Intifada will not contribute positively to the achievement of national goals.2) As for expectations as to the continuation of the Intifada, the position was ambiguous or uncertain for 38% of the respondents. 8% believed that the Intifada would be over within days. 30% believed the Intifada will continue for months and 24.4% thought the conflict will continue for years. In the event the confrontations are kept up and escalated over a long period of time, the majority (55%) believed Palestinian society is ready for such a confrontation, while 38% believed Palestinian society was not prepared for it.3) Positions differed as to the best ways and methods to be used in the Intifada, and 24.2% considered peaceful means (such as peaceful demonstrations and boycott of Israeli products) to be the best means, while 32.2% considered military means to be the best means. At the same time, 39% believed a combination of both peaceful and military means is the best way for the continued Intifada.4) The great majority of Palestinians (74.1%) opposed the participation of children (under 18 years of age) in the confrontations taking place at the barricades, while 23.5% supported such participation. Support for this position in the Gaza Strip was (28%), and was (20.8%) in the West Bank. Percentage of support for the participation of children was higher among non-educated groups (where it reached 27% among the illiterate) compared with university educated respondents (where the percentage of support was 19%). **Part Three: Effects of the Israeli siege on living conditions**The great majority of Palestinians considered the Israeli siege to have affected their living conditions negatively. Most felt it had obstructed them from reaching their places of work or visiting their families. Most believe that the conflict has had negative psychological effects on children. 69% said a member of their family had lost their jobs as a result of the ongoing Israeli siege on Palestinian territories, and 86% said their living conditions had deteriorated as a result. **Part Four: Military operations**1) Support for military operations reached its maximum during this period, as a result of the daily confrontations between the Palestinians and Israeli soldiers and settlers. Throughout these confrontations the Israeli side has employed many different types of weapons, such as gunships, tanks, live ammunition. Israel special forces have also assassinated members of the Palestinian leadership. The majority of Palestinians considered the use of arms to be a necessity dictated by current conditions, and not a matter of choice. Within this context, support for military (suicide) operations reached 80%, compared with the lowest level of such support in 1995 (less than 33%), after which support for such actions began to increase. The percentage of those who opposed military (suicide) operations in this poll was only 15%, whereas such opposition had reached 60% during different periods in recent years. There were no major differences between the educated and non-educated respondents on this issue, with the highest level of support for military operations among secondary school graduates, reaching 86%.2) As for the objectives of such operations, 41.5% supported that these operations target all objectives (be they military targets, settlers or civilian targets inside the Green Line). On the other hand, 38.2% supported restricting these attacks to military or settler targets. The percentage of those who supported restricting such operations only against targets inside Israel was negligible (less than half a percent). As for the rest (20%), they did not support such operations or were uncertain of their position. There were no major differences between the different educational groupings, though the illiterate were the least supportive of suicide attacks inside Israel.3) In the Gaza Strip, support for attacks against all Israeli targets reached 50%, compared to 36% in the West Bank. However, support for attacks against settlers and military targets was larger in the West Bank, where it reached 43 %. Compared with 30 % in Gaza. 4) As for suicide attacks against US interests in the Middle East, support was at a high 73%, while those who opposed such attacks made up 22% of the respondents. It is worth noting that support for operations against American targets among respondents of university level education reached 77%, compared with 70% among the illiterate. **Part Five: Evaluation of the Arab summit and the performance of Palestinian institutions**The evaluation of all institutions was influenced by current conditions, as we find a certain degree of dissatisfaction with institutions that are directly linked to the peace process, specially those within the institutions of the PNA, and a more positive evaluation of civil institutions, political forces and the Palestinian press. The evaluation was as follows:**1) The Arab Summit:** 67.5% of the respondents gave a negative evaluation of the results of the Arab summit, while only 4.3% gave the summit a positive evaluation. 23% considered the results to be "in-between". Dissatisfaction was higher in the Gaza Strip (71%) than in the West Bank (65.5%). As for the Arab peoples, their role was evaluated positively by 57.2%, while 18% gave a negative evaluation, and 23% evaluated it as medium.**2) PNA institutions:** As for PNA institutions and their management of the political process during the last period, their role was given a positive evaluation by 31.2%, a negative evaluation by 27%, and 36% considered their role to be "in-between". Negative evaluation of PNA performance increased among the more educated respondents, reaching 45% among university graduates, compared with 21% among the illiterate (Table 5). Positive evaluation increases with age, youth groups are the most negative in their attitude towards the PNA, as only 28% of the 16-22 year age group regarded its performance positively, compared with 36% among those over 52 years of age.

|  |
| --- |
| **Table (5): Evaluation of the role of the PNA in running the political process during the Intifada, according to level of educational attainment** |
|   | Illiterate | Elementary | Preparatory | Secondary | College | University |
| Positive | 39% | 36% | 31% | 28% | 19% | 18% |
| Negative | 21% | 22% | 25% | 34% | 33% | 45% |

As for the performance of PNA ministries in general, 27.4% evaluated it positively, 28.6% evaluated it as medium, and 30.5% evaluated it negatively. Among PNA institutions, security organs were given the best evaluation. Their role was evaluated positively by 46.8%, as medium by 26%, and negatively by 20%. **4) The Palestinian leadership:** 45.8% evaluated the performance of President Yasser Arafat during the Intifada positively, and 33% evaluated it as medium, while 17.8% evaluated his role negatively. Positive evaluation of the performance of President Yasser Arafat decreased greatly among the educated respondents, reaching 29% compared to 53% among the illiterate. Positive evaluation of the performance of the President also decreases among the younger age groups compared to the older age groups, as positive evaluation reached about 37% among the 23-27 year age group, compared to 50% among the age group of those over 52 years of age. As for the ability of the current leadership of Palestinian society (with all its various institutions) to lead Palestinian society to conditions better than those currently prevailing, 56.9% considered it was capable of doing so, while 30% considered it to be incapable. 14% were uncertain as to their position on the issue. In response to a question on how far the Palestinian leadership respects the opinions of the public, 52% said it does respect the opinions of the public, while about 37% said it does not. 28.5 % believe the Palestinian leadership informs the public of political developments, while 59% said the leadership does not inform the public.**5) Institutions of civil society and the media:** Palestinian media received the most positive evaluation of all institutions. 80% evaluated the media during the Intifada positively, and only 6% evaluated it negatively. The role of political parties and forces was given a positive evaluation by about 59% and a negative evaluation by 10.5%. NGOs received 42% positive evaluation and 22.3% negative evaluation. **Part Six: The future**1) Palestinians do not feel the future is secure for children and coming generations. 22.2% felt secure about the future of the children, while 58% felt insecure. Palestinians were also divided between optimism and pessimism. 39.5% described themselves as optimistic and 32.3% as pessimistic. However, about 78% are convinced that an independent Palestinian state will ultimately be established in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.2) As to the kind of political system they aspire to, a very large percentage believe in the importance of striving to have a state based on equality among all citizens (men and women, Christians and Muslims). The also believe in the importance of a state established on the rule of law and a respect for freedom of expression and press. **Part Seven: Political orientations**1) Near consensus emerged from the polls on the importance of setting up a "government of national unity", bringing together all political trends, as 93.3% supported this suggestion. 55.6% supported the holding of new presidential and legislative elections, while 34% opposed the suggestion. Support for new elections substantially increased with educational level, as 67% of university graduates supported such elections, compared to 54% among the illiterate.2) In the event that presidential elections were held under current conditions, 30% would vote for President Yasser Arafat, 12% for Shaikh Ahmad Yassin and 10% for Haidar Abdul-Shafi. (only 52 % responded to this question). Readiness to vote for President Arafat was higher in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank. On the other hand, 34.1% said they would not elect any of the above-mentioned personalities, and the rest said they had not decided or that they would not take part in the elections. Support for all the political factions was limited, as 45% declared that they do not support any of the factions or political orientations named in the questionnaire. Of those who did support an individual party, Fatah received the highest support (about 30%), slightly lower (by about 3%) than in the last polls conducted at the end of August 2000. Hamas received 17% (an increase of about 4% over the last poll). The popularity of Hamas increased substantially in the Gaza Strip, where it received 21% support (compared to 14.5% in the last poll). None of the other political orientations received any substantial support, with the exception of Islamic Jihad that received 4.3% support in the West Bank, and the Popular Front that received 4.5% support in the Gaza Strip. **Part Eight: Effect of political affiliation on positions**1) There were degrees of discrepancy between supporters of various political orientations on almost all issues, except for the importance of continuing the Intifada. Because of the small size of the sample for many of the factions, we will only compare between positions of Fatah and Hamas supporters, and those who do not support any particular political faction. It came as no surprise that the supporters of Fatah expressed a more positive evaluation of the performance of the PNA and of President Yasser Arafat during the Intifada than did Hamas supporters. However, negative evaluation of the performance of the PNA and of the President also appeared among Fatah supporters, as 20% of Fatah supporters evaluated the performance of the PNA negatively, compared to 33% of Hamas supporters who did the same. A positive view of President Arafat performance reached 63% among Fatah supporters, compared to 35% among Hamas supporters. As for those who do not support any of the current political forces, 40% of them evaluated the performance of the President positively.2) It is worth noting that 30% of Hamas supporters believed in the possibility of co-existence between Palestinians and Israelis in the event an independent Palestinian state is established in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, compared to 39% of Fatah supporters, and 28% of those who do not support any of the political factions. It is also worth noting that one quarter of all Hamas supporters accept friendship ties between Israeli and Palestinian individuals in the event a Palestinian state is established, compared to 37% among Fatah supporters.3) Even though the majority of all political orientations support the continuation of the current Intifada, the percentage was slightly higher among Fatah supporters (80%), compared to 76% among Hamas supporters, and 65% among those who do not support any of the political factions. 31% of Hamas supporters believed children should participate in the demonstrations, compared to 21% of Fatah supporters and 18% of those who did not support any of the factions. 90% of Hamas supporters approved of armed operations against Israeli targets. 78% of Fatah supporters felt similarly, as did 70% of those who do not support any of the factions.    [Top of this page](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll2/analysis.html#top)    |    [DSP Home](http://home.birzeit.edu/dsp/)  |   |
|   |     |  |     |  |