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|   | [Opinion Polls](http://home.birzeit.edu/dsp/opinionpolls/)**Poll No. 8****Palestinian Elections, Palestinian Women and Elections, Reforming Palestinian Institutions, Attitudes toward U.S. Assistance,Priorities for Funding Negotiations****[**[**Work Team**](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll8/workteam.html)**] [**[**Sample Distribution**](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll8/context.html)**] [**[**Field Work Conditions**](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll8/conditions.html)**] [**[**Analysis of Results**](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll8/analysis.html)**] [**[**Results of Survey #8**](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll8/english_tables.html)**]**[[**باللغة العربية**](http://home.birzeit.edu/dsp/arabic/opinionpolls/poll8)]

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| Summary of Results         **54% support presidential and legislative elections, 37% oppose.**        **70% supports conducting local council elections.**         **76% will participate in the elections; however, if the opposition calls for a boycott, only 59% intend to vote.**        **If elections were to take place today, the majority (55%) would vote for Mr. Yasser Arafat; 31% would not vote for him. Over 60% of Palestinians planning to participate will give their vote for Mr. Arafat. In contrast, 26% of those intending to vote said that they would not for him.**        **A majority (over 60%) will not re-elect their current representatives either at the legislative or local council level.**        **37% believe that elections will lead to significant changes in leadership.**        **The young are the most opposed to women's participation in elections, and they are also the most inclined to support Islamist political tendencies**        **42% support a “democratic – pluralistic” political system; an equal percentage (42%) supports an Islamic one.**        **60% of the most educated prefer a “democratic – pluralistic” system; 31% of them prefer an Islamic one.**        **The most important characteristic of any president for Palestine is his/her ability to “confront Israel” (74% said that was very important); the second most important characteristic is “commitment to Islamic values” (70%).**        **81% of Palestinians do not know the names of the new ministers in the newly formed - cabinet.**        **84% of respondents are not aware of the “100-day reform plan” prepared by the new cabinet and submitted to international donors.**        **26% feel that genuine reform is being implemented; the rest feel that reform is being imposed by Israel and the United Sates.**        **91% feel that the United States is not serious about reform in Palestine; instead it is furthering its own political agenda.**        **A majority (62%) feels that donor countries are using funding to pressure the PNA to make further political concessions.**        **61% support a boycott of American governmental funding, while 39% support a boycott of American non-governmental funding.**        **62% said that they are boycotting Israeli products, while 63% said that they are boycotting American products.**        **The top three most important development – related priorities are education (31%), distribution of assistance o the poor (26%), and health (13%).**        **55% support political negotiations with Israel (a decline in support from 63% in May 2002 and 70% in February 2002).**        **43% support security negotiations and 51% oppose them.**        **50% of Palestinian respondents are “optimistic” about the future; 29% are “pessimistic”.** Analysis of Results[[1]](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll8/analysis.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn1%22%20%5Co%20%22)**1)**                  **Unequivocal Support for Local Council Elections; Less Support for Legislative and Presidential Elections** Regarding proposed Palestinian elections for the presidency and the legislative council, tentatively scheduled for January 2003, the majority of those polled (54%) supports these elections, with higher support in Gaza (59%) than in the West Bank (51%). Still about (37%) are opposed to these elections with (35%) in Gaza and (39%) in the West Bank.There was a greater degree of support for the proposed local-council elections at (70%) with higher support in Gaza (73%) than in the West Bank (68%). A minority of respondents (21%) is opposed to local-council elections (20% of Gaza and 22% of the West Bank).There seems to be unanimous support for local elections among all social strata of society. However, for legislative and presidential elections, there is less support. Support for presidential and legislative elections is the lowest among the most influential groups in society (leaders of public opinion): the most educated, the professionals, the men, NGOs employees, and the young. The following findings show the gap between various social categories in regards to elections (see table 1).        48% of men support presidential and legislative elections, compared with 60% among women. Support for municipal elections is at 70% among both men and women.        49% of the age group 18-22 support presidential and legislative elections, compared to 68% among the age group 38-42. Support for municipal election ranges between 65% and 70% among members of all age groups.        Only 31% of the professionals support presidential and legislative elections, compared to 61% among housewives and 65% among farmers. Again, support for municipal elections is widespread among all professions.        Only 30% of those working in NGOs are supportive of presidential and legislative elections; this is compared to 51% among government employees and 45% among private sector employees.        37% of holders of college degrees are supportive, compared to 56% of  illiterates.

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| ***Table (1): % of Support for Presidential and local elections*** |
|   | Presidential/legislative | Local |
| Professionals | 31% | 64% |
| Housewives | 61% | 70% |
| BA+ | 37% | 69% |
| Illiterate | 58% | 71% |
| NGOs | 30% | 54% |
| Government | 51% | 65% |
| 16-18 Yrs. Old | 60% | 64% |
| 52+ Yrs. Old | 53% | 70% |

2) Perceptions of elections: Doubts about the Objectives        **38% believe that elections will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian State**There were mixed reactions regarding the perception that these elections may speed up the process of establishing a Palestinian state. 38% believe the elections will speed up the process, with a higher percentage of (42%) in Gaza than in the West Bank (36%). In contrast, 34% do not believe that these elections will speed up the process of establishing a Palestinian state, with a higher degree of disbelief in the West Bank (36%) than in Gaza (31%).         **37% believe that elections will lead to significant changes in leadership**With reference to the question of whether the proposed elections will lead to significant changes in the current Palestinian leadership, 37% say they would lead to changes (42% in Gaza compared to 36% in the West Bank). Similarly, about 34% said the elections would not lead to changes in the Palestinian leadership (35% in Gaza and 33% in the West Bank).         **45% believe that elections will lead to reform of PNA institutions**As to the expectation that the proposed elections would lead to reforms in the institutions of the Palestinian Authority, 45% say they will (50% in Gaza and 42% in the West Bank). A smaller percentage, 27% say they will not (25% in Gaza and 29% in the West Bank).         **43% believe that elections will lead to improvement in economic conditions**43% of the respondents believe that elections will lead to an improvement in economic conditions (48% in Gaza and 40% in the West Bank). In contrast, 27% of those polled do not expect any economic improvement as a result of elections (24% in Gaza and 29% in the West Bank).         **47% believe that elections will not be fair**47% did not believe elections will be free and fair (46% in Gaza and 48% in the West Bank). In contrast 39% believe that elections will be free (44% in Gaza and 37% in the West Bank). It is not clear from the poll whether these doubts are due to perceptions of internal or external factors.3) Voter Tendencies        **Majority of Palestinians will not vote for their present representatives**Asked if they would re-elect the same candidates once elections for the Palestinian legislative council are held, 60% of the total sample say that they will not vote for the same candidate again. Divided by region, the breakdown was 62% in Gaza and 59% in the West Bank. A small minority of respondents (15%) will vote for the same candidate (17% in Gaza and 14% in the West Bank).Similar results were found with regard to the re-election of the present members of local councils (almost all of them were appointed by the Ministry Of Local Government). 61% say that they will not vote for the present appointed members.         **In general, “religious values” is the single most important criteria in voting for a candidate. However, at the presidential level, ability to confront Israel is deemed the most important criteria.** Respondents were asked to indicate what they consider as the most important factor in the personal profile of candidates. 34% say the religious values of the candidate (40% in Gaza and 31% in the West Bank). The second most important factor, at 26%, is the candidate’s level of education (24% in Gaza and 27% in the West Bank). The third most important factor is the role played by the candidate in the national struggle at 25%, with similar percentages recorded in both Gaza and the West Bank. Interestingly, the candidate’s party membership and his/her family ties are deemed important by less than 2% of the total sample and in each region.In this regard, the following is to be noted (see table 2):        Women are more interested in candidate’s religious values than men (37% of women compared with 31% of the men). Men are equally interested in educational attainment with 30% of them selecting this factor to be most important when deciding to vote, compared with 23% of women.        39% of youth (16-18) chose religious values as the most important criteria in voting for a candidate, compared with 31% among those 28-32 and 28% among those 38-42, the latter are more interested in education and participation in the national struggle.        Education of the respondent is a decisive factor in these findings. Choosing religious values as a criterion decreased with education. The educated groups choose education as most important criteria for voting for a candidate (37% state that they will vote based on education, compared with 21% of the illiterate population). In contrast, 43% of the illiterate choose religious values as the most important criteria, while 24% of the most educated feel the same way.

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| *Table (2): Most Important Characteristic in a Candidate when Voting*  |
| Educational attainment of respondent | Illiterate | Less than 6 yrs. | Between 6-9 yrs. | Between 10-12 yrs. | 2-year diploma | BA + |
| Religious values | 43% | 35% | 34% | 27% | 33% | 24% |
| Education | 21% | 28% | 28% | 24% | 24% | 37% |
| Participation in the national struggle | 19% | 24% | 27% | 36% | 19% | 23% |

 4) Presidential Candidate Profile Over 90% of the respondents believe that the following qualities are “very important” or “important” in a future president: ability to confront Israel, commitment to religious values, ability to resolve social and economic problems, commitment to democracy, and level of education. When expressing the results in terms of percentage of those who believe that these qualities were “very important”, the results show that (75%) of the total sample considered the president’s ability to confront Israel as very important, with slightly higher percentage in Gaza. The president’s commitment to Islamic values is considered as very important by (71%) of the total sample, with (85%) in Gaza compared to (61%) in the West Bank.59% consider the president’s capability to resolve the social crisis as very important (67% in Gaza compared to 54% in the West Bank). The president’s historical record in the national struggle is considered as very important by 43% of the total sample (50% in Gaza compared to 39% in the West Bank). The president’s military background was considered as very important by (47%) on the total sample (56% in Gaza compared to 42% in the West Bank).The presidents’ level of education is deemed to be very important by 55% of the sample (64% in Gaza compared to 49% in the West Bank). The president’s ability to achieve democracy is very important to 52% of the sample (65% in Gaza compared to 44% in the West Bank). As for the president’s skills in international diplomatic relations, 54% believe it is very important (62% in Gaza compared to 50% in the West Bank). And finally, the president’s openness to the world was considered as very important by 51% of the total sample (60% in Gaza compared to 45% in the West Bank). The following table shows that there is a broad consensus on the ability of a future president to be able to confront Israel as the most important criteria. The consensus breaks down when it comes to democracy and Islamic values.

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| ***Table (3): Evaluation of various characteristics of a president among select social groups (% that said “very important”)*** |
|   | Characteristics of a president |
|   | Committed to Islamic values | Able to promote democracy | Able to face up to Israel |
| Professionals | 48% | 76% | 86% |
| Housewives | 74% | 49% | 73% |
| BA+ | 59% | 65% | 78% |
| Illiterate | 70% | 48% | 61% |
| NGOs | 50% | 72% | 79% |
| Government | 66% | 60% | 78% |
| 16-18 Yrs. Old | 70% | 36% | 76% |
| 52+ Yrs. old | 71% | 56% | 70% |

 **5) Participation in elections: Majority willing to participate; decline in willingness if opposition calls for a boycott**If presidential and legislative-council elections are held in January, 76% say that they would participate, with a relatively higher level of participation in Gaza (82%) compared to the West Bank (72%). If Palestinian opposition groups called for a boycott of the elections, only 27% would participate in the boycott. 59% would not boycott the elections (62%in Gaza and 57% in the West Bank).6) Majority (55%) of the respondents will vote for Mr. Arafat, 31% will not vote for him, and 14% are undecided. Over 61% of those intending to vote will vote for Mr. Arafat. The results of the poll revealed that a majority of respondents would vote for Mr. Arafat if elections were held today. Of all the respondents, over 61% will vote for him in Gaza and 50% in the West Bank. Of those who intend to vote, over 60% will vote for Mr. Arafat, 26% will not vote for him, and 14% are undecided. The results will stay the same even if the opposition called for a boycott of elections.7) Women candidates: Better odds for women in legislative than in presidential and local electionsAsked if a Palestinian woman were to run in the presidential elections, 54% of the total sample said that they would be willing to vote for her (52% in Gaza and 55% in the West Bank). In contrast, 43% of the total sample would not vote for a woman presidential candidate (45% in Gaza and 42% in the West Bank).Comparatively, there is majority support for women candidates for the Palestinian legislative council with 71% of the total sample saying that they would vote for a woman candidate (68% in Gaza and 72% in the West Bank). In contrast, 27% of the total sample say that they would not vote for a woman candidate (30% in Gaza and 25% in the West Bank).There is also support for woman candidates for the local council elections with 57% saying that they would vote for a woman candidate (55% in Gaza and 59% in the West Bank). However, 40% of the total sample say that they would not vote for a woman candidate for the local council (43%in Gaza and 38% in the West Bank).Willingness to vote for a woman candidate increases with age; the young are the least willing to vote for women (see table 4).

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| ***Table (4): % Willing to vote for women candidates by various social categories*** |
|   | Legislative elections | Local elections |
| Professionals | 83% | 73% |
| Housewives | 71% | 58% |
| BA+ | 82% | 68% |
| Illiterate | 70% | 57% |
| NGOs | 80% | 55% |
| Government | 75% | 65% |
| 16-18 Yrs. Old | 55% | 49% |
| 52+ Yrs. Old | 79% | 65% |

 8) Future State Regime: More than 60% of the educated choose a democratic – pluralistic system, with 43% of the illiterate population opting for an Islamic system with one party rule.Palestinians were asked about their preferred political regime after the establishment of a Palestinian state. The sample is split equally between those who favor a democratic regime and those who favor an Islamic regime. 42% of the total sample, equally distributed between the regions, choose a democratic regime with participation of the various political parties. At the same time, 42% choose an Islamic regime ruled by one party, with greater support in the West Bank (43%) than in Gaza (40%). A minority of respondents (14%) is in favor of a presidential regime similar to various Arab regimes (16% in Gaza and 13% in the West Bank). Table (5) shows the relationship between educational attainment and preference for a political system.

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| *Table (5): Preferred Political System (% support)* |
| Educational attainment | Illiterate | Less than 6 yrs. | Between 6-9 yrs. | Between 10-12 yrs. | 2-year diploma | BA + |
| Democratic – Pluralistic | 39%  | 36% | 38% | 48% | 66% | 61% |
| Islamic – One party | 43% | 44% | 46% | 38% | 27% | 31% |

In this regard, the following findings are revealing:        Over 60% of NGOs and governmental employees support a democratic – pluralistic system, compared with 42% of private sector employees (a group that includes merchants, laborers, farmers, and craftsmen).        56% of professionals support a democratic – pluralist system, and 41% of them support an Islamic system. In addition, 60% of white-collar employees support a democratic system, while 41% of them support an Islamic one. In contrast, 33% of farmers, and 34% of the housewives[[2]](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll8/analysis.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn2%22%20%5Co%20%22) support a democratic system, while 54% and 44% respectively support an Islamic system.        Support for a democratic system increases with age. For example, 30% of the age group 18-22 support such a system, compared with 48% among the age group 38-42 and 46% among the age group 52+. In contrast, support for an Islamic regime is more widespread among the youth. 55% of the age group 18-22 are supportive of an Islamic system, while 30% of the age group 38-42 and 33% of the age group 28-32 share the same view. **9) Reform: Doubts about the Israeli – American role**65% believe that the current reforms undertaken by the Palestinian Authority are conducted according to American and Israeli dictates. Only 25% believe that these reforms are conducted mainly for the benefit of the Palestinian people. 91% of the sample believe that the United States is demanding reforms in the Palestinian institutions for its own political interests. Doubt is more widespread among the educated, the young, the professionals, and the employees of NGOs. **10) A Majority say they boycott Israeli & American products**62% of the total sample say that they boycott Israeli products (66% in Gaza and 59% in the West Bank). Furthermore, 63% say that they boycott American products (68% in Gaza compared to 60% in the West Bank). **11) International funding seen as driven by political agenda of donors**61% believe that Palestinian institutions should boycott U.S. government funding. There is greater support for boycotting such funds in the West Bank (64%) than in Gaza (57%). With reference to boycotting the American non-governmental funding institutions, only 39% of the sample were supportive (40% in the West Bank compared to 37% in Gaza). In contrast, 54% say that Palestinians should not boycott American non-governmental funding, with more support in Gaza (57%) than in the West Bank (52%).74% believe that donor countries determine the funding priorities according to their own political interests and not according to the needs of the Palestinian people. The percentages with this view are higher in the West Bank (78%) than in Gaza (71%). Moreover, 62% believe that the donor countries use their funding in order to attain further concessions from the Palestinian people on national issues.**12) Education, poverty, and health are most important priorities**Palestinians were asked to select the most important area in which to channel funding from the donor countries. Education tops the list (31%), followed by immediate financial support to families in need (26%), health care (13%), democracy and human rights (8%), water (6%), building the institutions of the Palestinian Authority (5%) and police (2%). At the end of the list (1%) were domains such as sewage, roads, agriculture, and the improvement of the status of women.**13) An optimistic constituency in spite of feelings of insecurity**50% of the respondents are optimistic about the future, while 29% remain pessimistic. In addition, 75% have no sense of security for their families and property. **14) Decline in support for negotiations with Israel**The results show that 50% object to meetings on security coordination between Palestinians and the Israelis, while 43% support such meetings.Nevertheless, 55% support a resumption of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, while 42% are against (Support for political negotiations was 64% in May, and 70% in February 2002). [[1]](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll8/analysis.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref1%22%20%5Co%20%22) Please refer to annex 2 for more information on the sample distribution, where the data show that 40% of the sample are housewives, and that about 15% have more than 12 years of education.[[2]](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll8/analysis.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftnref2%22%20%5Co%20%22) “Housewives” is the largest single category in the sample comprising 40%. If housewives were excluded form the analysis, the results would be very different with more support for democracy and less support for religious expressions. |
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