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|   | [Opinion Polls](http://home.birzeit.edu/dsp/opinionpolls/)Poll No. 16Public Opinion Poll on Palestinian Living Conditions, the Peace Process, Rafah Operation and Sharon's Proposed Disengagement Plan**[ Information & General Background ] [** [**Analysis of Results**](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll16/analysis.html) **] [** [**Detailed Results**](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll16/results.html) **] [** [**Sample Distribution**](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll16/sample.html) **] [** [**PDF Format**](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll16/poll16.pdf) **] [** [**In Arabic**](http://home.birzeit.edu/dsp/arabic/opinionpolls/poll16/) **]** Information and General BackgroundDate of fieldwork: 4-6/6/2004 Sample size: 1197 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip Number of sample locations: 75 Number of field workers: 85 male and female researchers Percentage of error: + or -3% Publication Date: 21/6/2004 - For questions or inquiries, please contact Dr. Nader Said or Ayman Abdulmajeed at the listed numbers. - DSP opinion polls are supervised by an independent Palestinian team of academic experts (see our website). - All results represent the opinions of the respondents and do not represent the viewpoint of Birzeit University or the Development Studies Programme or any other related body. - For details on our methodology, refer to our web page. - Many thanks go to the field researchers, and to the International Republican Institute (IRI) for their support. **General conditions in the Palestinian Territories and background to the poll (March - May 2004)** The Palestinian territories have witnessed many high profile events since March 2003, including the following: - * The Israeli government continued the construction of the Separation Wall, confiscating in the process thousands of dunums and isolating many populated areas and agricultural lands. 250 Palestinians have been killed in the period from March to May and hundreds have been wounded. Hundreds more have been detained by the Israeli Occupation Forces.
* On 22nd March, 2004, Israel assassinated Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the founder and spiritual leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Gaza Strip. A few weeks later, Israel assassinated Yassin's elected successor, Dr. Abdel Aziz Rantisi. Israel also carried out a failed attempt in May to assassinate Mohammad Al-Hindi, a prominent leader in the Islamic Jihad movement.
* In the meantime, militant attacks against Israeli targets continued. One of the most deadly of such attacks took place on 11th May 2004 at Gaza's Al-Zaytoun neighborhood during an Israeli incursion to that area and which resulted in the killing of 10 Israeli soldiers. This followed another militant operation which took place at the Ashdod port in Tel Aviv in March, resulting in the deaths of 8 Israelis.
* On 18th May 2004, Israel carried out a major military operation against Rafah city during which tens of Palestinian citizens were killed, and hundreds of homes demolished. Thousands more became homeless as a result of the operation.
* On 20th April 2004, the UN Security Council issued a resolution condemning Israel's actions and demanded that it immediately stop the demolition of Palestinian homes in Rafah. 14 countries voted in favor of the resolution whereas the United States abstained.
* On 21st and 22nd June, The Arab League held its summit in Tunisia amid arguments and debates among the Arab leaders regarding reform and democracy issues, as well as the Palestinian and Iraqi situation.
* Sharon's Disengagement Plan from the Palestinians started to take center stage, both at regional and international levels. Although the plan was welcomed as a good starting point by most of the international community, it was rejected by Mr Sharon's own Likud Party. However, it was eventually voted through by the Israeli government. It is thought that Israel's complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip will be completed by September 2004.
* Meanwhile, The Egyptian government has suggested an initiative aimed at preparing the environment for the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. It has held several high level meetings in the end of last May with the Israeli and Palestinian sides. All parties seem to be in agreement on the way forward.

  [Top of this page](http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll16/background.html#top)    |    [DSP Home](http://home.birzeit.edu/dsp/)  |   |
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