12 December 2005

Press Release

Local Councils Elections
Legislative Council Election

Public Opinion Poll # 23

The results of this poll are only representative of the residents of 11 localities listed in the sample distribution table. They are not necessarily representative of the whole West Bank and Gaza.

Dates of fieldwork: 5-7/12, 2005

Number of field researchers: 75

Margin of error: ± 5%

Sample size: 1293 Palestinians in 11 localities (Jenin, Maythaloon, Nablus, Deir Sharaf, Ramallah, Al Bireh, Deir-Jarir, Saffarin (West Bank) and Al-Fukhari, Al-Qararah, Um Al-Nasser (Gaza Strip).

Highlights:

- **Fateh is likely to win in the municipalities of Jenin, Al-Fukhari, Al-Qararah, Um Al-Nasser (Gaza).**

- **Hamas is likely to win in the municipalities of Nablus and Al-Bireh.**

- **PFLP is likely to win in the municipality of Maythaloun (Jenin), and in the municipality of Ramallah (but only with independents).**

- **Woman-led bloc is likely to gain the most votes in Ramallah municipality.**

- **Honesty, integrity and service to the community ranks well above other criteria when selecting a candidate in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections.**

- **Affiliation with an Islamic bloc, familial relations and wealth of a candidate are least important.**

- **Majority expects broader reform and participation, and improved living conditions after PLC elections.**

- **Majority does not expect that PLC elections will lead to an independent state.**

- **86% believe that PLC elections will be "fair" or "fair to an extent".**

- **37% would vote for Fatah, 20% for Hamas, and above 5% for "Independent Palestine" in the PLC elections.**

Analysis of Results

Part One: December 15, 2005 Municipal Elections

Please note the following:

- This poll was conducted in only 11 locations, eight of them in the West Bank and three in the Gaza Strip.

- Results are based on a representative sample of the municipalities under study, however, do not represent a comprehensive sample for all voters in the West Bank and Gaza. The margin of error is +/-5.

- A large percentage of voters had not yet decided for whom they would vote, and municipal election campaigns were ongoing at the time of polling, factors which will have a measurable impact on final results.

1. General Results:

- *Fatah* is likely to win the largest number of votes in Jenin (in coalition with PFLP), Al-Fukhari, Al-Qararah and Um-Al-Nasr in Gaza Strip.

- *Hamas* is likely to win the largest number of votes in Nablus (majority) and Al-Bireh.

- *Independent list*s are likely to win the largest of votes in Ramallah, Saffarin (Tulakrem) and Deir-Jarir (Ramallah).

- In Maythaloun (Jenin), a list affiliated with *PFLP* is likely to win the largest number of votes.

- *Hamas, Fatah and Independents* remain competitive in Deir Sharaf (Nablus).

Results According to Municipality

- **Nablus**

  Results indicate that the bloc of **Reform and Change** (Hamas) will sweep the elections with 55% of the votes. **Filastin Al-Ghad** (The Future Palestine) is polling at 15%. **Al-A'ahd Li-Nablus** (Promise to Nablus) has 7% of the vote (both Blocs support Fatah). **Al-Mustaqbal** (the Future) and **Al-Wafa' and Tanmiyeh** (Fidelity and Development) will each receive 3%. However, undecided votes were a significant 18 % of the electorate at the time of polling.

Table (1): Nablus Municipality	
1) Reform and Change	55.0
2) Palestine Tomorrow	14.4
3) Promise for Nablus	6.7
4) Future	2.8
5) Development and Fidelity	2.8
6) I have not decided yet	18.3

- **Jenin**

  The *Martyrs of Jenin* bloc (a coalition of FATAH & PFLP) is in the lead with 48% of the total seats. **Reform and Change** (Hamas) is likely to win 24%; the *Future Jenin* is polling at 9%; *Jenin for All* has 5% of the vote; *Fidelity and Reform* is at 4%; and the bloc of *Baladna* (our Home Town) is at 2%, leaving undecided votes in Jenin at 8%.

Table (2): Jenin Municipality	
1) Jenin Martyrs	48.1
2) Islamic for reform and Change	23.7
3) jenin Tomorrow	8.9
4) Jenin For All	5.2
5) Our City	2.2
6) Reform and Promise	3.7
7) I have not decided yet	8.1

- **Ramallah**

  Woman-led **Ramallah for All** (bloc of independents, leftists PFLP and Mubadara) is carrying almost 38% of the vote, however, will have fierce competition from *Al-Watan* (The Homeland), affiliated with FATAH polling at 32%. **Reform and Change** has 22% of the votes, with the undecided vote around 8%.

Table (3): Ramallah Municipality	
1) Ramallah for All	37.9
2) Homeland	32.4
3) Reform and Change	21.4
4) I have not decided yet	8.3

- **Al-Bireh**

  Reform and Change (Hamas) has 44% of the votes in al-Bireh, whereas the *Fidelity Block for Al-Aqsa* (Fatah) carries 27%. **Al-Bireh for All** is not far behind with 22%, and undecided are at 8%.

Table (4): Al-Bireh Municipality	
1) Reform and Change	43.8
2) Fidelity for AlAqsa	26.4
3) Albireh for All	21.5
4) I have not decided yet	8.3

- **Deir-Jarir (Ramallah area)**

Filastin Al-Ghad (the Future Palestine, Fatah), the only factionally affiliated list in Deir-Jarir has 13% of the votes. Hamas does not have an official bloc in Deir-Jarir. Independent list **Baladna Al-Muwahda** (our United Hometown) carries 28%; **Deir-Jarir for All** has 19 %; the **Sons of the Town** is at 13 %; **Al-Quds** (Jerusalem) is tracking at 10 % and **Al-Mustaqbal** (the Future) is at 5%. The undecided vote is 12%. Distribution of the votes with no definitive majority makes it impossible to determine who will assume leadership of the municipality.

Table (5): Deir Jareer Municipality	
1) Our united town	28.4
2) Deir Jareer for All	18.9
3) Sons of the home land	12.6
4) Jerusalem	9.5
5) Future	5.3
6) Palestine tomorrow	12.6
7) I have not decided yet	12.6

- **Maythaloun (Jenin area)**

Sons of the Homeland (PFLP) is in the lead with 35% of the vote. **Reform and Development** (Hamas) has 20%, whereas "**Future Palestine**" (Fatah) is close at 17%. **Martyrs of Maythaloun** (Fatah) has 16%, for a combined Fatah total of 33%. **Maythaloun for All** has 11% of the votes.

Table (6): Maythaloon Municipality	
1) Sons of the home land	34.7
2) Maythaloon as One- reform and Development	20.4
3) Palestine tomorrow	17.3
4)) Maythaloon Martyrs	16.3
5) I have not decided yet	11.2

- **Deir-Sharaf (Nablus area)**

Future Palestine (Fatah) and *Reform and Change* (Hamas) are neck and neck at 27% each. *Al-Karamah* (Dignity) has 15 % of the vote; *Sons of the Homeland* are at 15%; *Future of Deir-Sharaf* 6%; *We Are the Change* has 5%, with undecided votes pegged at 5%.

Table (7): Deir Sharaf Municipality	
1) Palestine Tomorrow	27.0
2)) Reform and Change	27.0
3)) Sons of the home land	15.0
4) Dignity	15.0
5) Deir Sharaf Future	6.0
6) We and Change	5.0
7)) I have not decided yet	5.0

- **Saffarin (Tulkarem area)**

Saffarin for Change is an independent, family-based list with close ties to Hamas, currently polling at 55%. *Future Palestine* (Fatah) is trailing at 41% of the votes. Undecided voters in Saffarin measure only 4%.

Table (8): Safareen Municipality	
1) Sons of Safareen for Change	55.3
2) Palestine tomorrow	40.8
3) I have not decided yet	3.9

- **Al-Fukhari (Gaza area)**

Al-Aqsa (Fatah) has 18% of the votes. In addition, *Yaser Arafat bloc* (Fatah affiliated) has sewn up 33% of the votes, vying for first place with *Islamic Fukhari* (Hamas) at 31%. Independent lists *Sons of Al-Fukhari* and *Fidelity to the Land* are polling at 10% and 7%, respectively.

Table (9): Al-Fukhari Municipality	
1) Yaser Arafat	32.5
2) Islamic Fukhari	31.2
3) The Sons of Fukhari for Change	18.2
4) Fidelity for Land	10.4
5) Sons of Al-Fukhari for Development	6.5
6) I have not decided yet	1.3

- **Al-Qararah (Gaza area)**

Fidelity for Al-Aqsa (Fatah) has a strong 40% of the votes. *Martyrs of Al-Qararah* (Fatah affiliated) has 25 %, with Hamas' *Change and Islamic Reform* slightly up at 29 %. *Nationalist for Justice and Equality* (PPP/PFLP) is trailing at 5%, while the DFLP list, *Democratic Change* did not track.

Table (10): AlKarara Municipality	
1) Fidelity for AlAqsa	39.1
2) Islamic Reform and Change	29.3
3)) AlKarara Martyrs	25.0
4) The National for equity and equal	5.4
5) Democratic Change	0.0
6) I have not decided yet	1.1

- **Um-Al-Nasr (Gaza area)**

Martyr Yaser Arafat (Fatah) has 43% of the votes, along with 13% for Fatah affiliated *Fidelity to Al-Aqsa*. *Change and Reform* has 17 %, whereas Fatah-supportive Independents, *Promise* is at 11%. *Um-Al-Nasr* (independents tied to Hamas) is carrying 8% of the vote, while *United Sons of the Um-Al-Nasr Village* (PPP) trails at 6%.

Table (11): Um -AlNaser Municipality	
1) The Martyr Yaser Arafat	43.0
2) Reform and Change	16.5
3) Fidelity for AlAqsa	12.7
4) Independent Promise	11.4
5) Um-ANaser	7.6
6)The Union of Um-AlNaser Sons	6.3
7) I have not decided yet	2.5

Part Two: The Legislative Elections

Please note that the following results were obtained in 11 locations only, eight in the West Bank and three in the Gaza Strip. They do not necessarily represent the West Bank and Gaza Strip in their entirety.

1. Information about the PLC Elections

- 76% of respondents have been following news about the legislative elections.

- 44% of respondents get their information about the elections from local TV stations; 25 % from public meetings and forums; 13% from Palestinian Radio; and 8% each from newspapers and campaign literature.

- 25% think they've received adequate information about PLC elections, 37% adequate to a certain extent, but a majority 39 % feel that they've received inadequate information.

2. Voting Criteria in Selecting Candidates for PLC Elections

- **Character** is the most important determinant when selecting candidates, with voters scrutinizing their contributions to the community at large. ***Honesty, integrity and sincerity*** followed closely by candidates' ***service to the community*** rank well above other criteria tested. Candidates' ***education***, ***position on economic, social and political issues***, respectively followed. At seventh place was ***religiosity*** followed by ***role in the national struggle***, ***political party affiliation***, ***affiliation with an Islamic party*** (such as Hamas), ***family ties*** and the candidate's own ***financial position***.

Table (12): When voting, which of the following is most important in selecting your candidate? (% of respondents who said – important)	
Honesty	98%
Role in serving the local community	97%
Educational attainment	91%
Position concerning economic issues	90%
Position concerning political issues	88%
Religiosity	79%
Role in the struggle	78%
Political affiliation	74%
Position concerning social issues	37%
Family ties	27%
Affiliation with Islamic party such as Hamas	27%
Financial ability of candidate	21%

3. Expectations from the Elections

- Over 70% of respondents believe that the elections for the Legislative Council will lead to *strengthening the public's role in the political process*; *enhancing peoples' participation; reinforcing rule of law*; *reforming PA institutions*; *improving economic conditions, women's status* and *social conditions*.

- Approximately 2/3 believe that the elections will lead to an *end to internal lawlessness*; *representation for* marginalized groups such as *women and youth*; *promoting democracy*; *reforming the political system* and yet, though simultaneously, it will *consolidate the current political system*.

- Less than half believe that the elections will lead to the establishment of an *independent Palestinian State* or *imposition of political solution on Palestinians*.

4. Fairness of the PLC Elections

- 56% believe that the forthcoming elections will be *fair*, whereas 30% feel it will be *fair to a certain extent*. In contrast, only 13 % think that they will *not be fair*.

5. Women's Participation

- 78% would vote for a Palestinian woman running for legislative council.

6. Popularity of the blocks running in the PLC Elections

Distribution of Votes by Party/Bloc

- *Fatah* won 37 % of the votes, whereas *Hamas* won 20%. *Independent Palestine* headed by Dr. Mustafa Al-Barghouthi won 4.5% of the votes. In fourth place, an independent block headed by Hanan Ashrawi won 2.6% of the votes. PFLP took 2% and *Badil* (Alternative, Leftist coalition) won 1% of the votes. More than 1/3 of those surveyed are undecided. The outcome of the PLC elections will be largely decided by those who have yet to decide.

BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY

Development Studies Programme

Annex 1

Results of Opinion Poll # 23

Local Councils Elections
Legislative Council Election

Date of Publication: 12/12/2005
Field Research: 5-7/12/2005

Number of field researchers: 75
Sample size: 1293 Palestinians in 11 localities
Margin of error: + 5%

Living Conditions	
	Total %
1. At the present time, how do you evaluate your family's economic conditions?	
1) Very good	8.2
2) Good	23.7
3) Fair	42.8
4) Bad	17.8
5) Very bad	7.5
2. At present, do you feel secure about yourself, your family, and your property?	
1) Yes	35.7
2) To an extent	29.1
3) No	35.2
3. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future?	
1) Optimistic	51.4
2) In between	26.0
3) Pessimistic	22.6

Palestinian Legislative Councils Elections

4. Do you follow news about the upcoming PLC elections?	
1) Yes	76.5
2) No	23.5
5. What is the best way to publicize news about the PLC elections?	
1) Palestinian TV	43.6
2) Public Newspapers	8.3
3) Palestinian Radio	12.5
4) Leaflets and pamphlets distributed by various institutions	7.5
5) Meetings, symposia and fora with the public	25.1
6) Others	3.1
6. Do you think that your knowledge and information about the legislative elections system is	
1) adequate ?	24.9
2) adequate to certain extent?	36.5
3) inadequate?	38.6
7. When voting, which of the following is most important in selecting your candidate?	
Honesty	
1) important	98.2
2) somewhat important	0.9
3) not important	0.9

	Total %
Community Service	
1) important	97.3
2) somewhat important	2.0
3) not important	0.7
Educational attainment	
1) important	91.4
2) somewhat important	5.0
3) not important	3.5
4)) no opinion	0.1
Position on Economic Issues	
1) important	90.1
2) somewhat important	5.4
3) not important	4.1
4)) no opinion	0.4
Position on Social Issues	
1) important	88.0
2) somewhat important	7.4
3) not important	4.3
4)) no opinion	0.3
Position on Political Issues	
1) important	79.3
2) somewhat important	10.3
3) not important	9.2
4) no opinion	1.2
Religiosity	
1) important	77.7
2) somewhat important	11.4
3) not important	10.8
4) no opinion	0.2
Role in the struggle	
1) important	73.8
2) somewhat important	14.3
3) not important	11.1
4)) no opinion	0.8
Political Party membership	
1) important	37.2
2) somewhat important	12.4
3) not important	49.2
4)) no opinion	1.2

	Total %
Affiliation with Islamic party (such as Hamas)	
1) important	26.9
2) somewhat important	12.5
3) not important	59.9
4) no opinion	0.8
Family ties	
1) important	26.6
2) somewhat important	10.5
3) not important	62.7
4)) no opinion	0.2
Personal Finances of Candidate	
1) important	21.1
2) somewhat important	12.9
3) not important	65.7
4) no opinion	0.2
8. Which of the following is most important to you when voting for a candidate (PLC Elections)?	
1) Honesty	48.6
2) Role in serving the local community	16.5
3) Religiosity	13.7
4) Educational attainment	6.8
5) Position on economic issues	3.0
6) Role in the struggle	2.7
7) Position on social issues	2.2
8) Political affiliation	2.0
9) Family ties	1.9
10) Position on political issues	1.9
11) Affiliation with Islamic party (such as Hamas)	0.7
9. Will the upcoming <u>PLC elections</u> lead to the following?	
Make voters feel part of the process	
1) Yes	73.9
2) No	20.9
3) No opinion	5.2
Revitalize community participation	
1) Yes	72.6
2) No	21.4
3) No opinion	6.0

	Total %
Reform PA institutions	
1) Yes	70.6
2) No	21.3
3) No opinion	8.1
Improve economic situation	
1) Yes	70.0
2) No	23.9
3) No opinion	6.1
Reinforce rule of law	
1) Yes	72.5
2) No	22.2
3) No opinion	5.3
Improve Social Conditions	
1) Yes	70.4
2) No	23.5
3) No opinion	6.1
Improve women's status	
1) Yes	70.3
2) No	23.8
3) No opinion	5.9
End internal lawlessness	
1) Yes	69.9
2) No	26.3
3) No opinion	3.7
Ensure representation of marginalized groups	
1) Yes	67.5
2) No	25.2
3) No opinion	7.4
Promote democracy	
1) Yes	65.3
2) No	27.7
3) No opinion	7.0
Reinforce the status quo (the current PNA)	
1) Yes	63.0
2) No	27.8
3) No opinion	9.2
Reform political systems	
1) Yes	62.5
2) No	29.5
3) No opinion	8.0

	Total %
Create a meaningful change in current leadership	
1) Yes	52.6
2) No	34.7
3) No opinion	12.7
Impose a political solution on the Palestinians	
1) Yes	47.8
2) No	40.6
3) No opinion	11.7
Speed up the establishment of an independent Palestinian state	
1) Yes	47.3
2) No	43.0
3) No opinion	9.8
10. **Do you think that these PLC elections will be fair?**	
1) Yes	55.8
2) To an extent	29.7
3) No	13.0
4) No opinion	1.5
11. **If a Palestinian woman ran for the <u>PLC elections</u>, would you consider voting for her?**	
1) Yes	78.4
2) No	18.6
3) No opinion	2.9
12. If the following blocs ran for PLC elections, which one would you vote for?	
1) Fateh bloc	36.7
2) Hamas bloc	20.2
3) Independent bloc (headed by **Mustafa Barghouthi**)	4.5
4) Independent bloc (headed by **Hanan Ashrawi**)	2.6
5) PFLP (headed by **Ahmad Sa'dat**)	1.7
6) DFLP, PPP & FIDA bloc	1.0
7) I will participate, but I have not decided yet	33.4

Annex 2: Sample distribution

Region	%	Marital status	%	Refugee Status	%
West Bank	79.8	Single	18.6	Refugee	34.2
Gaza Strip	20.2	Married	78.0	Non-refugee	65.8
Location of Sample	**# of sample in each location**	Other	3.7	**Education**	**%**
Nablus	200	**Gender**	**%**	Illiterate	9.0
Deir Sharaf	100	Male	48.4	Preparatory	16.1
Jenin	150	Female	51.6	Elementary	22.4
Maythaloon	100			Secondary	29.4
Saffarin	80	**Age**	**%**	Diploma	9.6
Ramallah	150	18-22	12.7	B.A. or more	13.5
Al Bireh	153	23-27	11.7	**Place of Residence prior to 1994**	**%**
Deir Jerir	100	28-32	12.8		
Um El Nasser	80	33-37	14.1		
Al Fukhari	80	38-42	14.6	West Bank & Gaza	90.1
Al Qararah	100	43-47	7.8	Abroad	9.9
Reasons for unemployment	**%**	48-52	7.5	**Income (NIS)***	**%**
		> 52	18.8	No Income	1.1
Housewives	60.8	**Statue of work**	**%**	Less than 700	21.6
Students	11.2	Working	31.7	701-1000	15.1
Retired	5.9	Not working	68.3	1001-1700	17.3
Seeking to work	21.2			1701-2500	20.3
Others	0.9			2501-3000	9.1
				701-1000	15.4
1 $ = 4.69 NIS					