



Key results from an opinion poll in the West Bank (February) and Gaza Strip (May) 2010

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Income from PA most important income source in Gaza; self-employment in the West Bank

The economic circumstances in the Palestinian territories are difficult, particularly in the Gaza Strip, where unemployment and poverty rates are high due to closure policies of the state of Israel. More than half the households in both areas say that their economic situation is similar to that a year ago while nearly 40% think it has deteriorated.

The poll asked all households about their most important income source. Not surprisingly, the picture is very different in the two areas, with private-sector employment being crucial for a majority of West Bank households and public sector employment and various forms of assistance playing a larger role in Gaza. These are the most common forms of important income:

West Bank

- Self-employment, 32%
- Salaries from the Palestinian Authority, 19%
- Private sector income, 18%
- Employment in Israel, 14%

Gaza Strip

- Salaries from the Palestinian Authority, 27%
- Salaries from the Gaza authorities, 8%
- Income from the private sector, 14%
- Support from UNRWA, 13%
- Self-employment, 12%

While altogether 28% of all households in Gaza claim that their primary income is some sort of assistance, only a quarter as many (7%) do the same in the West Bank.

Assistance a common feature in the household economy

In addition to those for which assistance is the main sources of income, many other Palestinian households benefit from various kinds of support. The poll asked about four different sources of such support, and found the following:

- UNRWA: 34% (West Bank 25%, Gaza 50%)
- Other International: 9% (West Bank 8%, Gaza 11%)
- Islamic charity: 6% of all households (West Bank 4%, Gaza 11%)
- Other Palestinian NGO: 5% (West Bank 3.5%, Gaza 7%)

Tunnels play an important role but are seen as extremely risky

A solid majority of the respondents agree that the smuggling tunnels between Egypt and Gaza are of key importance to the overall economy in Gaza, to employment, to the access to various goods, and essential for resistance. Interestingly, a higher number of West Bankers than people in Gaza consistently view the tunnels as important. For example, 80% in the West Bank strongly agree or agree that tunnels are crucial for resistance, whereas 65% in the Gaza Strip responded likewise.

Despite the fact that a majority considers the smuggling tunnels as important, a majority also thinks the benefits of the tunnels are too small to warrant the risks of running them. Furthermore, only four percent of the respondents in Gaza admit they would have allowed their sons to work in the tunnels.

Only a quarter of Gaza dwellings reconstructed one year after the war

During the 2009 war in Gaza, approximately one-half of all dwellings were affected, suffering from minor damages to complete destruction. For all dwellings that were damaged, the poll enquired about the degree of reconstruction implemented by early 2010. These are the results:

- Nothing or very little, 50%
- 25% of damage, 14%
- 50% of damage, 6%
- 75% of damage, 4%
- All or nearly all, 26%

When asked about the largest source of help to renovation or re-construction, 62% of all households with damaged dwellings have received no assistance at all, 25% have received support from UNRWA, 8% got help from relatives and friends, 2% from the government in Gaza and 2% received assistance from an international NGO.

Bedwetting, sleeping and concentration problems not rare in Gaza children

For all children aged 5-14 in the selected households in the Gaza Strip, we enquired whether they had problems with bedwetting, and if they suffered from sleeping and concentration problems. The results:

- Bedwetting is a problem for 31% of children aged 5-9 and 12% of children aged 10-14
- Sleeping problems are reported for 25% of children aged 5-9 and 20% of the older children
- Concentration problems are found in 20% of children aged 5-9 and 33% of children aged 10-14

The poll identifies no significant variation by gender. For a majority the problems commenced with the Gaza war. The prevalence of bedwetting and sleeping and concentration difficulties seem to be somewhat less common in households that did not experience damage to their dwellings during the war and thus, on average, conceivably experienced more 'distance' between themselves and the brutalities of war.

The poll results are not significantly different from those we found in the post-war Gaza assessment survey of March 2009 some two months after the war in Gaza¹, except that the prevalence of sleeping problems seem to have *risen*.

Six in ten: Palestinian factions should halt firing rockets against Israel

- 61% of the respondents held the opinion that all Palestinian factions should stop launching rockets against targets in Israel

This is up from the 53% recorded by Fafo's poll in March 2009² (about two months after the Gaza war). This trend is visible for both the West Bank and Gaza. Twice as many Fatah supporters (72%) were in favour of ceasing the attacks on Israel as the followers of Hamas (35%).³ Compared to people residing elsewhere, camp dwellers in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip were somewhat more often against halting the rocket attacks on Israel.

A majority in favour of civil, non-violent resistance

Lately, Palestinians have been debating the use of non-violent resistance against Israeli occupation policies. A campaign urging people to boycott products made in the Israeli settlements in the West Bank is now a policy of the Palestinian Authority and, judged by media reports, seem to be gaining support.

- Seven in ten respondents, both in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, agree to the statement 'Palestinians should put more emphasis on civil, non-violent resistance'

A majority wants negotiations with Israel

- 73% strongly agreed or agreed that 'Palestinians should return to peace negotiations with Israel'. This is at the same level as in the Fafo poll a year ago
- Nine in ten strongly agreed or agreed that a freeze of Israeli settlement construction should be a pre-condition for peace talks

As in the 2009 poll, answers reveal some variation across background characteristics:

- Women tend to be supportive of negotiations slightly more often than men, but age does not seem to account for differences in people's opinions

¹ See <http://www.faf.no/ais/middeast/opt/gazasrv09/index.htm>.

² See <http://www.faf.no/ais/middeast/opt/opinionpolls/poll2009.html>.

³ Those who are labeled 'supporters' or 'followers' of a party, are those that declared they would vote for that party if elections were held 'today'. The result on party preference is presented below.

- The propensity to support negotiations with Israel over a peace deal drops with increased education: While nearly 80% of the respondents with no or only elementary education were in favour of such talks, 67% of those with post-secondary education were in favour
- Those who report that they are better off economically are more inclined to disagree with the statement on a return to peace negotiations with Israel
- Followers of Fatah were more prone to support peace negotiations than those who support Hamas (87 *versus* 48%)

Increased support for a two-state solution

The poll asked about people’s hopes for a future political solution to the conflict with Israel. It asked the question differently in the two areas. The question used in the West Bank was identical to that used by Fafo in 2009. The result of the two polls is presented in Table 1, and suggests that the two-state solution to the conflict with Israel has gained support during the past year (in the West Bank).

Table 1 Hopes for a future political solution to the conflict with Israel. In percent

	One state with equal rights for all	One Islamic state	Two states	Three states	Don't know
2010 (Feb)	23	25	43	1	9
2009 (Mar)	22	32	34	3	8

Support for the two-state solution in the West Bank was lower among women than men (43 *versus* 50%), in urban areas than in rural areas and refugee camps (43 *versus* 48 and 51%, respectively), and among Hamas supporters than Fatah supporters (14 *versus* 55%).

The Gaza poll posed the question concerning the future outcome of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in a different manner. Here, the poll first asked the respondents to identify the outcome as one, two or three states, and next asked about the character of the state.

Results for Gaza:

- One state with equal rights for all, 28%
- Two states, 65%
- Three states, 1%
- Don't know, 7%

Excluding the undecided, the percentages become:

- One state with equal rights for all, 30% (Fatah 26%, Hamas 34%)
- Two states, 69% (Fatah 73%, Hamas 64%)
- Three states, 1%

As seen, Hamas-supporters were slightly more often in favour of one state and less often in favour of two states as compared with Fatah-supporters. The difference across party preference is more visible with regard to the type of state one foresees for the Palestinians:

- A secular state, 27% (Fatah 45%, Hamas 0%)
- An Islamic state, 73% (Fatah 55%, Hamas 100%)

What a 'secular' *versus* an 'Islamic' state actually entails for the individual respondent, we are not in a position to tell.

Palestinians are split over unilateral proclamation of a Palestinian state

Forty-six percent say they are in favour of unilateral proclamation of a Palestinian state. The support for such a move increases somewhat with economic standing; it is higher among Fatah supporters than those affiliated with Hamas (50 *versus* 41%); and West Bankers and more positive to the idea than the inhabitants in the Gaza Strip (56 *versus* 29%).

People more confident in Fayyad, less confident in Haniyyeh than a year ago

The poll asked people about their trust or confidence in a good number of institutions. Below are the results. The percentage represents those who said they had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the institution in question. When we have comparable results from the 2009 poll, they are included in parenthesis:

- The Presidential office (M. Abbas), 41%
- West Bank/Fayyad government, 43% (28%)
- Gaza/Haniyyeh government, 24% (38%)
- The legislative council, 29% (34%)
- The security services in the West Bank, 39% (33%)
- The security services in Gaza, 25% (27%)
- Islamic charities, 43%
- Other Palestinian NGOs, 34%⁴
- UNRWA, 55% (66%)
- (Other) International NGOs, 37% (40%)

With regard to confidence in UNRWA and international NGOs, there are significant variations in opinion across the two major Palestinian areas:

- 77% in Gaza and 42% in the West Bank express a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in UNRWA

⁴ In 2009, the poll asked about all Palestinian NGOs taken together and the result was 34%.

- 53% in Gaza and 26% in the West Bank express a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in other international aid organizations

As could be expected, the disparity in opinion across political affiliation is substantial:

- 73% of Fatah *versus* 7% of Hamas followers had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the President's office (M. Abbas)
- 75% of Fatah *versus* 7% of Hamas followers had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in Fayyad and his government
- 86% of Hamas' sympathizers (down from 92% a year ago) *versus* 5% of those supporting Fatah gave the Hamas government a great deal or quite a lot of confidence

Fatah leadership preferred over Hamas

In accordance with the data on confidence and trust, answers to questions on national reconciliation and leadership, Fatah comes out better than Hamas.

Is Fatah or Hamas most interested in national reconciliation?

- Fatah, 38%
- Hamas, 13%
- Both, 17%
- Neither, 31%

Is Fatah or Hamas best qualified to lead the Palestinian people?

- Fatah, 39%
- Hamas, 15%
- Both, 19%
- Neither, 27%

On both questions, Hamas scored slightly better in Gaza than in the West Bank, while the proportion of respondents in the 'neither' category was slightly lower.

People's answers are indicative of party preferences, which we return to below. Note that three in ten voice dissatisfaction with both parties. Moreover, 4% refused to answer these two questions and 10% answered "don't know".

People want PLC elections this year, but not in the West Bank only

- 89% in favour of holding elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in 2010
 - West Bank 92%; Gaza 84%
 - Fatah 94%; Hamas 82%
 - Rural area 94%, urban area 86%, refugee camp 80%
- 18% in favour of holding PLC elections in the West Bank only if lack on agreement on elections in the entire Palestinian area
 - West Bank 23%; Gaza 9%
 - Fatah 30%; Hamas 8%
- 84% think Hamas should participate if PLC elections in the West Bank and Gaza
 - Fatah 77%; Hamas 96%

Fatah leads in electoral support; Hamas has lost ground

The poll asked the respondents who they would vote for if general elections were held 'today'. There are numerous ways of presenting the results. For example, one could include or exclude those who refused to answer, those who say they would not participate, and those who say they intend to participate in the elections but do not know how to cast their votes. The way the results are produced impacts the actual percentages reported but does not alter significantly the parties' relative strength. If we include all respondents, but exclude the 7% who refused to answer the question (10% in the West Bank; 2.5% in Gaza), this is the result:

- 29% of the respondents would not have participated
- 37% would have voted for Fatah
- 14% would have voted for Hamas
- 5% would have voted for various other parties
- 15% did not know which party to vote for

Excluding, in addition, those who said they did not intend to participate in the elections yields the following outcome:

- Fatah 52% (West Bank 53%, Gaza 52%)
- Hamas 20% (West Bank 16%, Gaza 25%)
- Other parties 7% (West Bank 6%, Gaza 8%)
- Do not know 21% (West Bank 25%, Gaza 15%)

While the voting intentions of women and men in Gaza are not that different, in the West Bank women seem much more inclined than men to vote for Hamas.

Comparing the results of Fafo's polls for the years 2008, 2009 and 2010 suggests that Hamas received a boost in support after the Israeli attack and ensuing war in early 2009, but that the movement has lost backing since (Table 2). In fact, the latest poll indicates that the support of Hamas in Gaza is at a lower

level than in early 2008. In contrast, Fatah, which lost 'voters' in 2009 as compared with the year before, has regained its former strength and is back at the same level today as two years ago.

Table 2 Party preference if elections 'today'. Percent of all respondents apart from refusals. Comparison between three latest Fafo polls

	West Bank					Gaza Strip				
	Fatah	Hamas	Other party/ independent	Don't know	Not participate	Fatah	Hamas	Other party/ independent	Don't know	Not participate
2008 (Feb/Mar)	36	11	11	10	32	37	23	10	2	28
2009 (Mar)	27	19	6	14	34	29	26	7	10	28
2010 (Feb & May)	37	11	4	18	30	38	19	6	11	27

We urge caution when interpreting these results because the share of presumptive voters declining to answer the question, or stating their non-intention to participate in legislative elections, or saying they are uncertain how to cast their votes is very high.

The poll and its sample

Fafo implemented the opinion poll in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) on 9 to 15 February and in the Gaza Strip 8 to 12 May 2010. We carried out interviews at 66 fieldwork points in both areas.

990 households were randomly sampled in each area, and in each household one household member aged 18 years or older was randomly selected to answer our questions. This step of the sampling process relied on a so-called Kish table.⁵ Thirty persons in the West Bank (3% of the original sample) and 57 persons in the Gaza Strip (nearly 6% of the sample) chose not to participate in the poll or the fieldwork team was unable to interview the selected person for a variety of reason (they were often men commuting to work). Substitution was not allowed.

The poll interviewed altogether 1,015 women and 878 men of all ages. The gender and age distribution is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Gender and age of the randomly selected individuals (aged 18+)

	West Bank			Gaza Strip		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
18-19 yrs	25	31	56	40	44	84
20-29 yrs	131	138	269	127	156	283
30-39 yrs	107	140	247	121	135	256
40-49 yrs	79	85	164	79	71	150
50-59 yrs	45	62	107	31	37	68
60-69 yrs	27	35	62	22	33	55
70+ yrs	28	27	55	16	21	37
Total	442	518	960	436	497	933

⁵ Leslie Kish 1965, *Survey sampling*. New York: Wiley, page 399.

Fafo contact information

Detailed results and additional information about the poll is available at

<http://www.fafo.no/ais/middeast/opt/opinionpolls/poll2010.html>.

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