

## **Palestinians support the cease-fire but actions against Israel still seen as legitimate as long as occupation prevails**

*An in-depth survey conducted by Fafo before the violence in Gaza of the past week shows that there is wide legitimacy for violent actions against Israel. Nevertheless, at present people support the cease fire and do not agree to attacks from the Gaza Strip against Israel. A majority wants the Intifada to stop. People consider that the Israeli pullout of Gaza has improved the living conditions there, but people in the West Bank have not had the same experience. An overwhelming majority think elections should go ahead as planned in January 2006.*

Fafo conducted a face-to face survey with 1849 respondents aged 18 years and above in the West bank and Gaza Strip in the period of 21 November to 10 December to monitor Palestinian views on the situation after the Israeli pullout of Gaza, the internal political situation, the coming parliament elections and municipal service delivery.

Among the results are:

### Peace and Conflict

- 83 percent think it is in the Palestinian people's interest to keep the cease fire (Thadiala) with Israel, but only 26 percent support the use of force by Palestinian security services against those who break the calm.
- Release of prisoners and further withdrawal of Israeli forces from the West Bank are seen as the two most important issues to address to get the peace process back on track.
- Gaza's population continues to be optimistic regarding their future after the Israeli withdrawal. 86 percent feel more secure and 74 percent feel their personal economic situation has improved. The West Bankers see it differently as only 35 percent feel more secure and 42 percent consider that their economic situation has improved.
- 69 percent of Palestinians see violent action as a legitimate means in the current political situation (occupation), and half of them believe that suicide attacks are necessary to force Israel to make political concessions.
- However, 57 percent believe that the Intifada should stop and as many as 74 percent think that attacks from Gaza should cease.
- Support for Al Qaeda actions in the world includes 65 percent support to Al Qaeda actions in the USA and Europe, 32 percent support for Al Qaeda actions in Iraq and 13 percent support for Al Qaeda actions in Jordan.

### Politics and Governance

- The satisfaction with the PA is higher in the West Bank than in Gaza. 70 percent believe President Abbas is doing a good job and 58 percent are satisfied with the PA's performance, but 34 percent in Gaza are *very* unsatisfied.

- 64 percent think the authorities are unsuccessful in fighting corruption and only 21 percent believe that anyone will be prosecuted on corruption charges.
- Only 4 and 6 percent respectively have a great deal of confidence in the government and the parliament, while an additional 23 and 24 percent have quite a lot of confidence in these institutions. This is just about 10 percent more than people's trust in Western media (CNN and BCC), which is at the bottom of the list. UNRWA has highest support in the population and as many as 67 percent trust this organization. Also the Palestinian press enjoys people's trust as 50 percent say they have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in this group.
- People considered the release of prisoners as the most important political issue to address. While 40 percent of the population thought this was the most important issue, a further 21 percent say it is the second most important issue. Job creation opportunities and the economic situation are other issues that people put high on the agenda and put as the most important issue for 19 and 16 percent respectively and as a second most important issue for 22 and 17 percent.

#### Service delivery

- The majority of the people are in general satisfied with municipal services like electricity and water supply (76 and 67 %), but with regard to sewage and sanitation, only 44 percent are satisfied and 28 percent unsatisfied while 28 percent do not have such service. The situation is worse in the West Bank than in Gaza. Hospital services also enjoy low satisfaction, only 47 percent are satisfied and 43 percent are not, while 11 percent lack hospital care.

#### Elections

- 93 percent believe elections should be held as planned in January.
- 81 percent intend to vote.
- 38 percent will vote for Fatah, 17 percent for Hamas and 17 percent have not decided yet.
- Most important factor for deciding whom to vote for is good moral and reputation of candidate and his/her absence of corruption (71%). \*
- Second most important factor is religion (31%).\*
- Factors like political affiliation and personal relations much less important (19 and 3%).\*
- 94 percent support the creation of a National coalition government.
- 74 percent think election outcomes will improve living conditions (83 % in Gaza and 69 % in WB).

\* Respondents were allowed to give two answers.