



Results of an Opinion Poll
Performance of Government
Fuel Crisis in Gaza
Taxes in West Bank and Gaza
Evaluation of Leaders
Reconciliation and New Government
Elections & Political Support

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Fieldwork: 5-12 March 2012

Sample Size: 1380 Palestinians in the West Bank & Gaza
Margin of error: ± 2.5 %

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Introduction

These are the results and analyses of the latest Arab World for Research & Development (AWRAD) public opinion poll, focusing on the performance of the Fayyad and Haniyeh governments, the tax system in both the West Bank and Gaza, and the fuel crisis in Gaza. In addition, the poll questioned Palestinians on their views of leaders; the reconciliation process and the Doha Agreement between Fatah and Hamas; and support for existing political parties and prospective future candidates.

The questionnaire was fielded March 5-12, 2012, a period longer than usual due to extreme weather conditions and confrontations in Gaza during the final phase of the field work. For this survey, 1380 Palestinians were interviewed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. All socioeconomic groups were represented in the poll (for more details on the sample, please refer to www.awrad.org). The margin of error in this poll is plus or minus 2.5 percent. The survey was carried out by AWRAD researchers under the supervision of Dr. Nader Said-Foqahaa, President of AWRAD.

Highlights:

- The overall approval rate of President Abbas is at 59 percent; 45 percent approves of Fayyad's overall performance and 34 percent approves of Haniyeh's performance.
- Dissatisfaction with government of Haniyeh in Gaza reaches a peak with the continuation of the fuel and electricity crises in the strip; Dissatisfaction with the government of Fayyad increases with the discussions over its proposed austerity plan.
- 46 percent of the overall West Bank & Gaza sample blames Israel the most for the ongoing fuel crisis in Gaza, followed by Hamas (27 percent).
- In contrast, 48 percent of Gazans blame Hamas the most for the ongoing fuel crisis, followed by Israel (21 percent).
- The majority of Palestinians (55 percent) believe that things are moving in the wrong direction.
- 36 percent of respondents had heard of the Fayyad government's austerity plan.
- 64 percent of West Bank respondents and 75 percent of Gazans state that their tax system is unfair.
- 62 percent judge the Haniyeh government unfavorably in the field of job creation, compared to 49 percent with an unfavorable view of the Fayyad government's performance in the same field.
- West Bank and Gaza respondents tend to be critical of their own governments with higher negative ratings of the Haniyeh government among Gazans.
- Two thirds support the Doha agreement that stipulates the appointment of M. Abbas as a prime minister for a unity interim government.
- Abbas and Fayyad are most trusted to lead the proposed unity interim government.

Analysis of Results

Overall Outlook:

The majority of Palestinians (55 percent) believe that things are moving in the wrong direction; an increase from 46 percent in October 2011. This negative evaluation is due to a number of factors including increasing dissatisfaction among Gazans with local conditions:

- The percentage of Gazans responding that things in Palestine were heading in the wrong direction was 65 percent, compared to 48 percent in the West Bank.
- 63 percent of Gazans say that their conditions have worsened since the appointment of the Haniyeh government, compared to 29 percent of West Bank respondents who feel the same way since the appointment of the Fayyad government.
- Gazans are also critical of Hamas concerning the ongoing fuel crisis in the Strip. 48 percent of Gazans chose the Hamas government first from a list when asked who was to blame for the crisis, followed by Israel by 21 percent, the PA at 12 percent, and the government of Egypt at 10 percent.
- Of note, Gazans interviewed by AWRAD after the recent eruption of violence in the Strip were more negative of the overall situation and the role of Hamas than those polled prior to the onset of recent conflict.
- Despite current attitudes, a majority of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza remain optimistic about the future.

Austerity Plan and Taxes: Majority believes that system is unfair

Overall, approximately 36 percent of respondents had heard of the Fayyad government's austerity plan, 50 percent of the West Bank and 13 percent of Gaza.

- Of those aware of the plan, 53 percent felt fully informed, 57 percent in the West Bank and 31 in Gaza.
- 66 percent of those familiar with the proposed measures said they had learned of them from traditional media (TV, radio, newspapers).
- 15 percent of those who had heard of the plan did so from New Media (Internet, Twitter, Facebook).

Regarding the prevailing tax systems in both the West Bank and Gaza, the majority of respondents (56 percent) believe that they are unfair. In addition, 44 percent of Gazans believe that tax revenues in the Strip are not used for the public good. This compares to 39 percent in the West Bank who shares a similar view. Other regional differences are apparent:

- 64 percent of West Bank respondents say their tax system is unfair. Dissatisfaction with the tax system in Gaza is even higher with 75 percent of Gazans stating that their tax system is unfair.
- 45 percent of West Bank residents believe that tax revenues are not used for the public good. The percentage with a similar view is higher in Gaza at 55 percent. While Gazans are more likely to be critical of their own government, they tend to hold favorable views of the West Bank government. The same trend, to a lesser extent, applies to West Bank respondents who tend to be more critical of their own government but more

favorable of the Gaza government. For example, while 64 percent of West Bank respondents believe that their tax system is unfair, only 42 percent of Gazans share the same view of the tax system in the West Bank. Similarly, while 75 percent of Gazans view their local tax system as unfair, only 45 percent of West Bank respondents see the system in Gaza as unfair.

Government Performance: Less positive evaluations of Gaza government and leadership

- **On a range of issues, evaluation of the Haniyeh government is less positive than that of the Fayyad government:**
 - **Job creation:** 62 percent judged the Haniyeh government unfavorably in this category, compared to 49 percent with an unfavorable view of the Fayyad government's performance.
 - **Electricity and water services:** 61 percent had a negative view of the performance of the Haniyeh government in this area compared with half this number giving the Fayyad government a negative evaluation.
 - **Health and education:** 46 percent of respondents judged the performance of the Haniyeh government negatively in providing health and education services, compared to 28 percent with a similar view of the performance of the Fayyad government.
 - **Transparency:** 49 percent of respondents had a negative view of financial transparency in the Haniyeh government. 42 percent had a similar opinion of transparency in the Fayyad government. Positive evaluations for the Haniyeh and Fayyad governments were 17 and 19 percent, respectively. The remainder of respondents fell into the neutral or "don't know" categories,
 - **Security:** 49 percent of respondents had a negative view of individual security under the Haniyeh government, compared to 37 percent under the Fayyad government. 21 percent gave the Fayyad government a positive evaluation in the field of security and 28 percent said that it was fair. The Haniyeh government received a positive evaluation from 20 percent and 19 percent felt that it was fair.

- **West Bank and Gaza respondents tend to be critical of their own governments with higher negative ratings of the Haniyeh government among Gazans:**
 - **Job creation:** 65 percent of West Bank residents negatively evaluate the performance of the Fayyad government in the field of job creation, whereas 70 percent of Gazans negatively evaluate the performance of the Haniyeh government in the same field.
 - **Electricity and water services:** 38 percent of West Bank residents negatively evaluate the performance of the Fayyad government in providing electricity and water services. Among Gazans, 78 percent have a negative view of the performance of the Haniyeh government in the same field.
 - **Health and education services:** While 34 percent of West Bank residents negatively evaluate the performance of the Fayyad government in providing health and education services, 47 percent of Gazans negatively evaluate the performance of the Haniyeh government in the same area.

- **Transparency:** 50 percent of West Bank residents negatively evaluate the performance of the Fayyad government in achieving financial transparency, whereas the number of Gazans with a negative opinion of the Haniyeh government in this area is 59 percent.
- **Security:** Both governments receive a similar evaluation from their respective constituencies in the field of providing security to the community with 44 percent having a negative view.

Unity and Reconciliation: Palestinians are still hopeful

The majority of respondents (56 percent) express optimism about the ability of Fatah and Hamas to reach a genuine reconciliation agreement that will be implemented on the ground. In contrast, 40 percent are pessimistic.

Optimism about an implementable reconciliation agreement is higher in Gaza (61 percent) than in the West Bank (53 percent). Respondents are more trusting of the intentions of Fatah on this issue than they are of Hamas. A majority of 58 percent say that Fatah is serious about ending the division, compared to 41 percent who feel the same way about Hamas. As much as 50 percent do not believe that Hamas is serious and 35 percent feel the same way about Fatah.

Mistrust of Hamas intentions is more prevalent in Gaza (59 percent) than in the West Bank (44 percent). The same trend applies to Fatah, with 41 percent of Gazans and 31 percent of the West Bank with the belief that the movement is not serious.

Almost two thirds of the respondents support the Doha agreement that stipulates the appointment of M. Abbas as a prime minister for a unity interim government. In contrast, 23 percent oppose. Support in Gaza (73 percent) is higher than in the West Bank (62 percent).

As to the three national priorities that were stipulated in the Doha agreement reached between Abbas and Meshaal, respondents ranked them in the following order:

- Achieving political and social unity between the West Bank and Gaza (58 percent).
- Reconstruction of Gaza (20 percent).
- Preparation for a general election (19 percent).

Respondents were questioned about their priorities at the personal level. The economy and job creation ranked as number one:

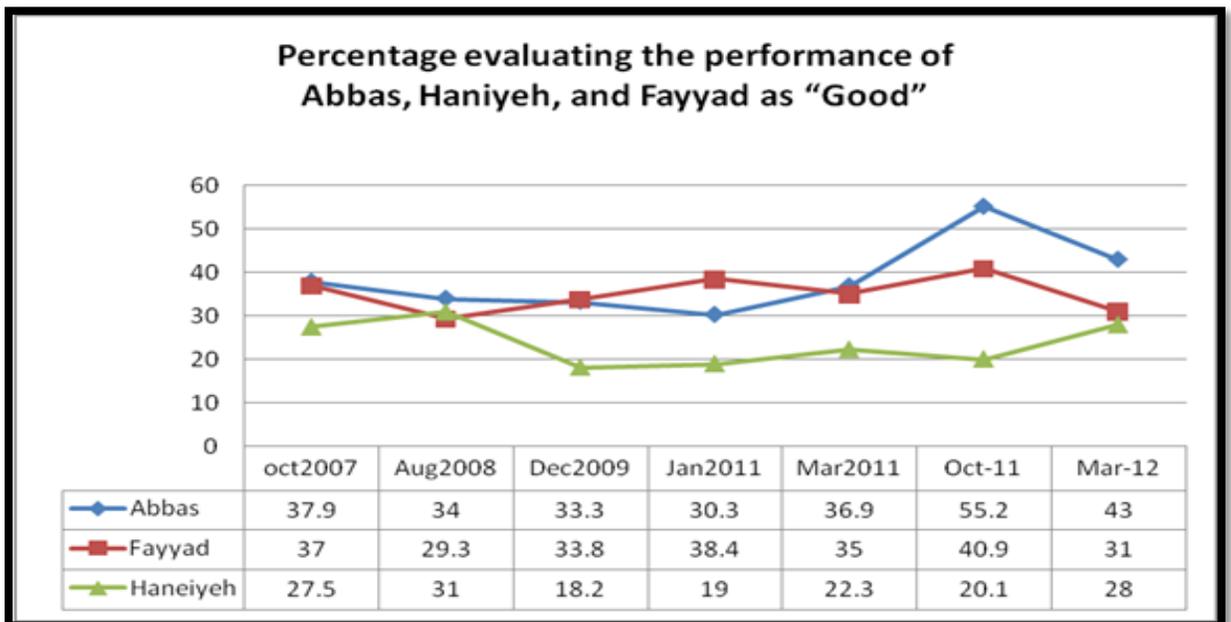
- Supporting the economy and job creation (60 percent).
- Providing security (14 percent).
- Delivering social services (13 percent).
- Combating corruption (13 percent).

Evaluation of Leaders: Unfavorable views of the current situation reflected in evaluations of leadership

While the positive evaluation of President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad is higher than that of Prime Minister Haniyeh, Abbas and Fayyad each witnessed a decrease in popularity this polling period when compared with AWRAD’s October/2011 survey. While the positive evaluation of Haniyeh increased by 8 point from October 2011, his negative evaluation continues to be higher than any of the other two leaders.

- President Abbas received a 43 percent positive evaluation (declining from 55 percent in October 2011). 29 percent gave him a "fair" evaluation and 26 percent a negative evaluation (increasing from 14 percent).
- PM Fayyad received a 31 percent positive evaluation (declining from 41percent in October 2011). 36 percent gave him a "fair" evaluation and 34 percent a negative evaluation (increasing from 20 percent).
- PM Haniyeh received a 28 percent positive evaluation (increasing from 20 percent in October 2011). 38 percent gave him a "fair" evaluation and 41 percent a negative evaluation (increasing from 35 percent).

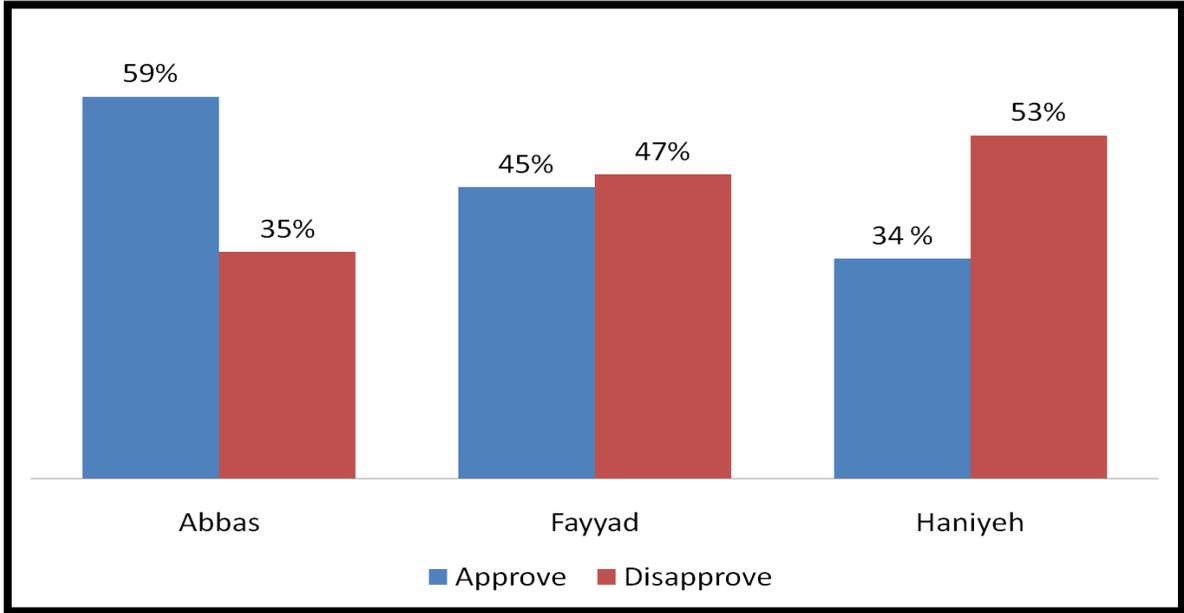
Graph (1):



When asked if they approve or disapprove of the performance of each leader, the respondents gave the following answers:

- A majority of 59 percent approves of Abbas' performance and 35 percent disapproves.
- 45 percent approves of Fayyad's performance and 47 percent disapproves.
- 34 percent approves of Haniyeh's performance and 53 percent disapproves.

Graph (2): Approval Rates of Leaders



Prime Minister of the Unity Government: Abbas and Fayyad are most popular choices

When asked about the best person to head the proposed unity government, respondents were given two scenarios:

- One with nine leaders including M. Abbas
- One with eight leaders (excluding Abbas)

Under the first scenario, the following results emerge:

- Abbas is selected by 38 percent of the respondents, followed by Haniyeh with 16 percent.
- Mustafa Barghouthi is the third choice with 10 percent, while Fayyad ranks at fourth with 8 percent.
- All other candidates (M. Masri, N. Shaath, H. Ashrawi, J. Khudari and M. Mustafa) receive 2 percent or less each.

Under the second scenario (excluding Abbas), the ranking changes as follows:

- Fayyad is the most favorable candidate with 26 percent, followed by Haniyeh with 18 percent.
- Mustafa Barghouthi is in third with 15 percent and M. Masri is number four with 5 percent.
- All other candidates receive less than 3 percent each.

Parliamentary Elections: Fatah on top, but 28 percent are undecided or will not vote

The political parties listed in the poll enjoy the following popularity rates:

- Fatah at 44 percent, with equal support in both West Bank and Gaza,
- Hamas at 16 percent, with 14 percent in the West Bank and 20 percent in Gaza,
- The Palestinian National Initiative (Mubadara) enjoys 5 percent support with 60 percent in the West Bank and 4 percent in Gaza,
- PFLP and Islamic Jihad enjoy 2 percent support,
- The rest of the listed groups receive less than 1 percent support,
- 12 percents say that they are undecided and 13 percent say that they will not vote.

Presidential Elections: Abbas is most popular

In a presidential race involving 16 candidates, five from Fatah, four from Hamas, three leftists, three independents and one Islamic Jihad, the following results emerge:

- Abbas receives 38 percent of the vote, followed by Haniyeh with 12 percent.
- Marwan Barghouthi receives 11 percent and Mustafa Barghouthi 7 percent.
- Fayyad comes in at number five with 5 percent.
- The rest of the candidates receive 2 percent of less each.

In total, Fatah candidates receive 50 percent of the vote, while Hamas candidates receive 16 percent. The distribution of votes might be distributed in the following fashion based on political affiliation:

Fatah	%	Islamic	%	Independent	%	Leftist	%
Abbas	37.6	Haniyeh	12.1	Mustafa	6.6	Saadat	1.8
Marwan	10.5	Meshaal	2.0	Fayyad	4.7	Salhi	0.3
Dahlan*	1.6	Zahhar	1.3	Ashrawi	0.8	Kamal	0.1
Qurie	0.3	Shallah*	0.9				
Aloul	0.3	Elshaer	0.8				
Total	50.3		17.1		12.1		2.2

* Dahlan was officially expelled from Fatah but still widely perceived as Fatah, Shallah is the leader of the Islamic Jihad.

In a four-way race that involves Abbas, Haniyeh, Fayyad and Mustafa Barghouthi, the poll reveals the following results:

- Abbas receives 43 percent of the vote,
- Haniyeh receives 18 percent,
- Mustafa Barghouthi receives 12 percent,
- Fayyad receives 7 percent.

In a four-way race that involves Marwan Barghouthi, Haniyeh, Fayyad and Mustafa Barghouthi, the poll reveals the following results:

- Marwan receives 32 percent of the vote,
- Haniyeh receives 19 percent,
- Fayyad in number three with 16 percent
- Mustafa Barghouthi in number 4 with 12 percent.