



Palestinian Youth on Leadership and Elections Results of a Specialized Opinion Poll Press Release (3)

Highlights

- Yaser Arafat continues to be the most respected leader among youth, followed by Mahmoud Abbas, Marwan Barghouti, Ahmad Yasin, and Ismail Haniyeh.
- 42 percent have a positive view of the performance of Mahmoud Abbas; 34 percent have a similar evaluation of Haniyeh.
- 23 percent have no opinion of the performance of Rami Hamdallah and 30 percent are neutral.
- 42 percent of Gaza youth evaluate the performance of Haniyeh negatively.
- 75 percent of the youth in the West Bank and Gaza Strip state they are registered for the next elections.
- Fateh remains the most popular party among youth.
- 36 percent of Gaza youth support the creation of a new political party.

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Sample Size: 1200 Palestinian Youth (18-30 years old)

West Bank & Gaza

Margin of error: ± 3 %

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Introduction:

AWRAD recently completed an “Opinion Poll of Palestinian Youth.” In the course of this survey, AWRAD surveyed 1,200 Palestinian youth (18-30 years old) in the West Bank and Gaza, similar to a survey completed in January 2012. The results provide illustrative data on the attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of Palestinian youth. This current press release is one in a series highlighting findings on the following issues: the peace process, political and social activism, the Arab Spring and its implications on Palestine, evaluation of leaders and political groups, and policy priorities. The focus of this specific release is primarily youth attitudes regarding political leadership and potential participation and choices in a future election. The following is a list of significant results from this survey:

I. Leadership:

- **Yaser Arafat continues to be the most respected leader among youth**, followed by Mahmoud Abbas, Marwan Barghouti, Ahmad Yasin and Ismail Haniyeh. These leaders are followed by Mohamed Dahlan, Khaled Mashal, Mustafa Barghouti, Rami Hamdallah, Salam Fayyad, and Ramdana Shallah.
- As for the evaluation of the performance of the President and the prime ministers in the West Bank and Gaza, **Mahmoud Abbas receives the highest favorability ratings**, while Rami Hamdallah remains relatively unknown. Ismail Haniyeh’s evaluation tends to be on the negative side.
- **Mahmoud Abbas garners the highest favorability ratings** in AWRAD’s current poll. 42 percent of youth evaluate his performance positively, while 25 percent believe it is fair, and 30 percent evaluate it negatively. 3 percent are unsure. 35 percent of respondents in Gaza are displeased with Abbas’ performance, compared to 27 percent in the West Bank.
- **Rami Hamdallah is relatively unknown** among Palestinian youth. 23 percent of youth state they are unsure how to evaluate the performance of the new Prime Minister. In addition, 30 percent are neutral. However, 24 percent express positive evaluations of his performance, while another 24 percent are negative. Youth in the West Bank (27 percent) are more likely to positively evaluate Hamdallah’s performance than those in Gaza (18 percent).
- **Ismail Haniyeh receives the most negative evaluations.** 34 percent of youth evaluate Haniyeh’s performance negatively, while 30 percent are neutral and another 30 percent positive. Gaza youth (42 percent) are more negative than their counterparts in the West Bank (28 percent).
- **There is little desire among youth for alternative parties.** Only 28 percent of youth agree, “there is a need for a new political party that is neither Hamas nor Fateh,” compared to 67 percent who disagree. Youth in Gaza (36 percent) are more likely to support the creation of such a party, than those in the West Bank (22 percent).

II. Voter Registration:

- 75 percent of Palestinian youth state that they are registered for the next elections, an encouraging increase of 14 points from the baseline survey in early 2012. This follows the latest round of voter registration by the Central Election Commission in February 2013.
- In contrast, only 22 percent say they are not registered, down from 38 percent in the previous poll.
- Among those who are not registered, only 45 percent state they plan to register in the near future, while 44 percent say the opposite. A final 11 percent are unsure whether they will register or not.
- In Gaza, 79 percent say they are registered to vote in the next elections, compared to 72 percent in the West Bank.
- These are significant changes from AWRAD's previous youth survey, when only 57 percent of Gaza youth said they were registered, and 63 percent of the West Bank.

III. Elections:

Fateh remains the most popular party in a hypothetical election and would receive the vote of 40 percent of Palestinian youth. Hamas remains the second most popular party with 20 percent of youth voicing their support. Support for all the leftist parties, combined, barely tops 10 percent. A quarter of Palestinian youth is undecided or will not vote. In a head to head election between Mahmoud Abbas and Ismail Haniyeh, Abbas is twice as popular among youth, though the large percentage of undecided voters could swing results.

- **In a hypothetical election, Fateh remains most popular.** The party is more popular than any other single party or "pan-Islamic"¹ or "pan-leftist bloc."² Youth in Gaza (43 percent) are slightly more supportive of Fateh than those in the West Bank (38 percent). There are no changes from AWRAD's previous poll.
- **Hamas remains the second most popular party.** 20 percent of Palestinian youth in Palestine state they would vote for Hamas in a hypothetical election; an unchanged rate from the 2012 survey. Support for Hamas is slightly higher in Gaza (23 percent) than the West Bank (18 percent); rates that have not changed since the previous survey.
- **Only a quarter of youth support Islamist parties, with a tenth supporting leftists.** In AWRAD's present poll, 22 percent of youth say they would vote for an Islamist party, though the lion's share of this support is for

¹ In this context, pan-Islamic includes: Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Hizb Tahrer.

² In this context, pan-leftist includes: the PFLP, Third Way, Al Mudabara (Palestinian National Initiative), the DFLP, the PPP, Feda, and Popular Struggle.

Hamas. In contrast, only 11 percent state they would vote for a leftist party. The PFLP (4 percent) has the greatest level of support among these parties.

- **A quarter of Palestinian youth is undecided or will not vote.** Presently, 12 percent of youth state they cannot decide which list they would vote for in a hypothetical election, and another 12 percent say they would not vote at all. Indecision among Gaza respondents (11 percent) has risen by 4 points, while the refusal rate among West Bank respondents (16 percent) has risen by 5 points.
- **Youth strongly committed to their choices.** Among respondents who expressed support for a particular political party if elections were to be held, 81 percent say they are committed to their choice, and a further 16 percent state they are somewhat committed. Only 3 percent say they are not very committed or are unsure. There is no territorial variation in these results.
- **Mahmoud Abbas is twice as popular as Ismail Haniyeh in both the West Bank and Gaza.** While support for Abbas is identical between the West Bank and Gaza, Ismail Haniyeh is more popular in Gaza (27 percent) than the West Bank (20 percent). Despite Abbas' popularity over his rival, he received less than 50 percent of support from youth respondents. 11 percent of Palestinian youth assert they would not vote for either candidate, and 22 percent say they are unsure. While territory does not affect refusal rates, indecision is higher amongst youth in the West Bank (24 percent) than in Gaza (18 percent).