المركز الفلسطيني للبحوث السياسية والمسحية
Palestinian Center for POLICY and SURVEY

Polls

Survey Research Unit

June-August 2016

This poll is part of PSR's project on Palestinian Security Needs in B and C areas in the West Bank

This project has been conducted in cooperation with the Netherland Representative Office in Ramallah and The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Ramallah

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Who Needs Security?

Palestinians residing in area "B," area "C," H-2 in Hebron, and Isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods (excluded by the separation wall) struggle to survive in an environment lacking security and rule of law and hold the Palestinian Authority responsible for their protection

Findings of two special polls on security and rule of law in West Bank territories, particularly those outside area "A"

June-August 2016

The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) conducted two special polls during the period between June and August 2016. The two polls focused on conditions of security and rule of law in the West Bank, particularly in areas classified as "B" and "C" and other similar areas. The first poll included all areas of the West Bank; the second was conducted in areas outside the area known as "A" specifically the following: B, C, H2 in Hebron, and isolated East Jerusalem neighborhoods. The goal of the study is to compare security and rule of law conditions in area A with those in areas outside A. Additionally, the study seeks to identify security and rule of law needs in non-A areas. The period in question witnessed significant reduction in the level of popular Palestinian confrontations and stabbing attacks against Israelis. But the West Bank witnessed a rise in the number of internal security breakdowns resulting from security incidents taking place mostly in the northern part, in places like Yabad and Nablus, leading to death of several Palestinians and two security officers. The same period witnessed the launching of several security campaigns carried out by the Palestinian security forces in various West Bank areas including those in B and C areas.

For further details, contact PSR director, Dr. Khalil Shikaki, or Walid Ladadweh at tel. 02-296 4933 or email pcpsr@pcpsr.org.

Methodology:

All findings indicated in this report were obtained from the two separate West Bank polls mentioned above. The first poll included a representative sample of all West Bankers, including those residing in area A. The second poll was restricted to non-A areas. The first poll was conducted during the period between 2 and 4 June 2016 and the sample was 830 adults interviewed face to face in 83 randomly selected locations.

The second poll was conducted during the period between 4 and 20 August 2016 and sample size was 2107 adults interviewed face to face in 131 randomly selected locations in the following four areas: (1) Area B, where 1170 adults were interviewed in 59 locations; (2) Area C, where 697 adults were interviewed in 60 locations; (3) isolated East Jerusalem neighborhoods (excluded from the city by the separation wall), such as Kofr Aqab, Shufat refugee camp, Qalandia, and others, where 200 adults were interviewed in 19 locations; and (4) H2 area of Hebron, where 40 adults were interviewed in two locations. The sample of the second poll is representative of Palestinian citizens residing outside area A. The margin of error is 3%. The sample of the second poll was reweighted to insure proportional representation of the four areas in question.

Main Findings:

The two polls focused on five issues:

(1) A comparative assessment of security and rule of law conditions in area A and those areas outside it.
(2) An assessment of security threats and those related to rule of law confronting Palestinians residing in B, C, and other areas.
(3) Public perception of the role and performance of the Palestinian police and courts in providing protection and enforcing rule of law.
(4) Public perception of the Palestinian judiciary and justice system in non-A areas.
(5) Public attitudes regarding ways and means of assuring security and law enforcement in those areas lacking effective Palestinian police presence.

Findings clearly indicate that West Bank residents of non-A areas feel less safe and secure than those residing in area A. Moreover, residents of non-A areas are less likely to turn to the Palestinian police and more likely to resort to their families than area A residents. Similarly, residents of non-A areas are less likely than residents of area A to trust the ability of the Palestinian judiciary and system of justice to resolve disputes.

Residents of non-A areas complain of various threats that include car theft, drug trafficking, violations of building codes, lack of investment, armed attacks by other Palestinians, and settlers' violence. Domestic violence against women and denial of women rights are frequently reported by residents. Many indicate that they are afraid to walk out of their homes at night. Indeed, they also report that some of their neighbors have been forced to move out of their areas to more secure areas of the West Bank. Residents of H2 area of Hebron emerge as the most insecure followed by residents of the isolated East Jerusalem neighborhoods. They are also likely to report greater suffering from crimes, such as theft, murder, drugs, and assault, than residents of area B and area C. Other threats reported by residents of non-A areas include delays at Israeli checkpoints, military closures, land confiscation, demolishing of homes, and eviction from homes.

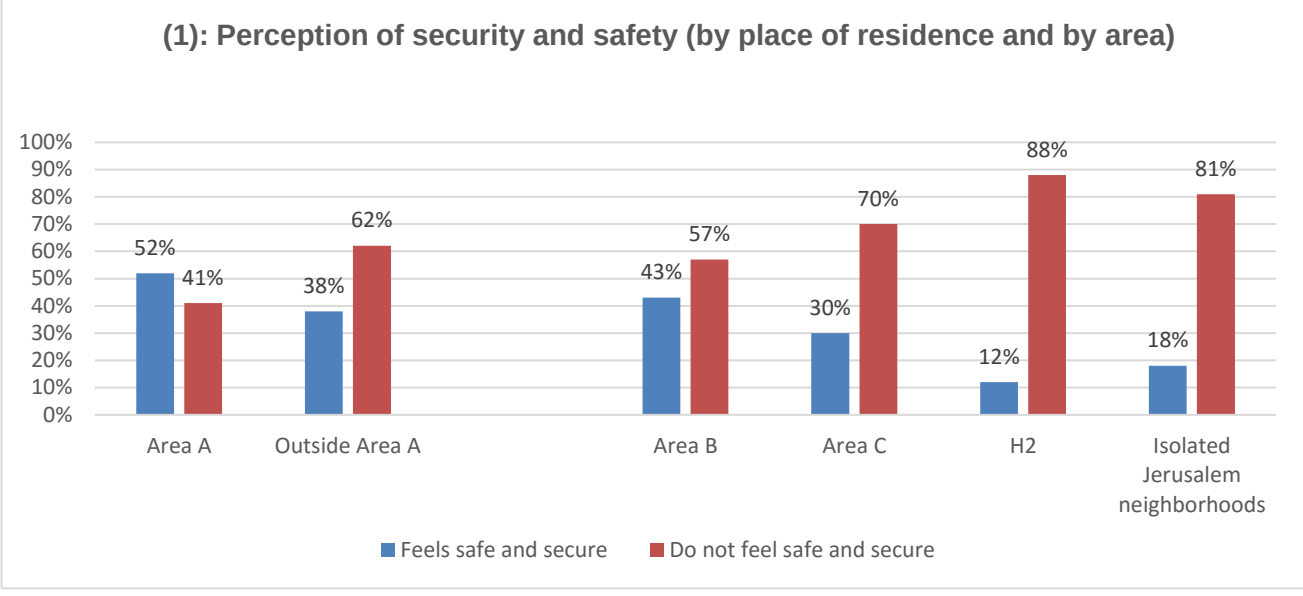
Residents of non-A areas have a great deal of confidence in the Palestinian police and consider it responsible for their protection. They demand the opening of police stations and/or the deployment of daily police patrols in their areas of residence. In places that witnessed recent opening of new Palestinian police stations, residents report significant improvement in security and safety conditions. Residents of area B are most likely to be satisfied with the performance of the Palestinian police while residents of H2 are the least likely to be satisfied. But residents report difficulties in communicating with the Palestinian police and complain of various problems that include, for example, a slow response, a weak follow up, and a lack of privacy when complaining to the police. Many report that women are unable to reach and submit complaints to the police and are less likely to receive protection.

Residents of non-A areas are likely to trust traditional mechanisms of justice than the formal system of justice. They are much more likely to resort to "reform committees" than to courts; mostly because they overwhelmingly believe that the Palestinian courts are very slow in resolving disputes. They also tend to believe that because they live outside area A, they do not receive equal treatment from the justice system.

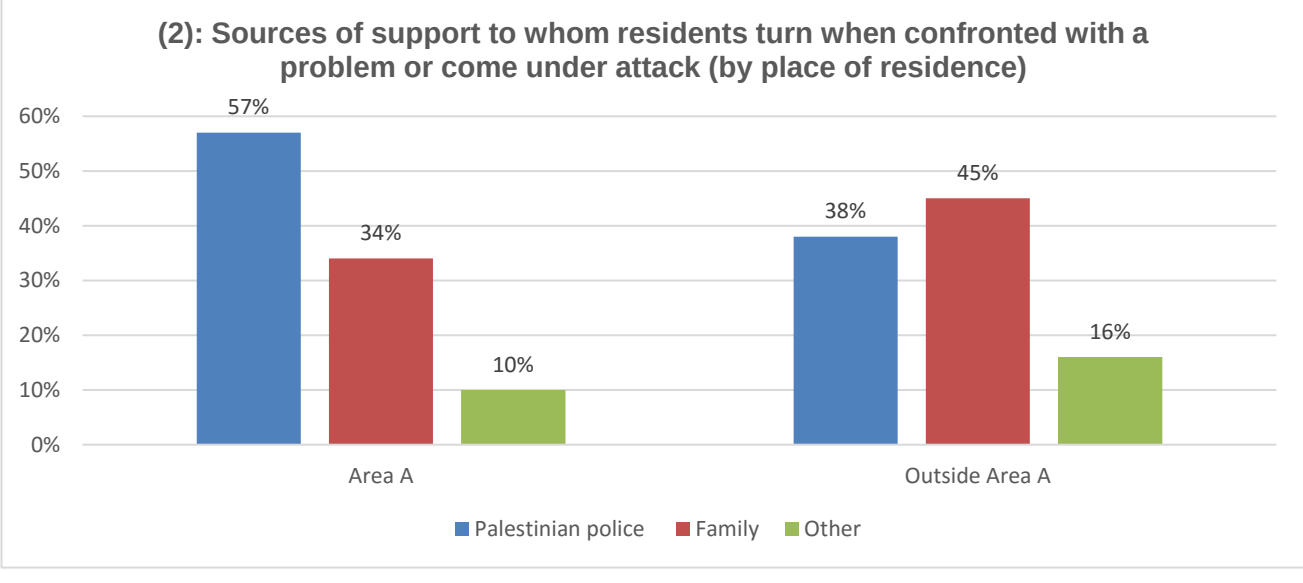
The overwhelming majority of respondents in non-A areas believe that the deployment of Palestinian police in their neighborhood is sufficient to resolve their problems and insure their security. In the absence of such deployment, they are likely to support alternative mechanisms such as the establishment of local civil guard units that coordinate with and report to the Palestinian police. Some support the establishment of local security units that report to the local councils. In other to strengthen the role and performance of the Palestinian police, residents support extending police jurisdiction so that it can treat East Jerusalem residents the same way it treats all other Palestinians in the West Bank. They also support continued coordination with the Israeli authorities in order to allow the Palestinian police access to roads and areas throughout the non-A areas of the West Bank.

(1) Comparing area A with non-A areas:

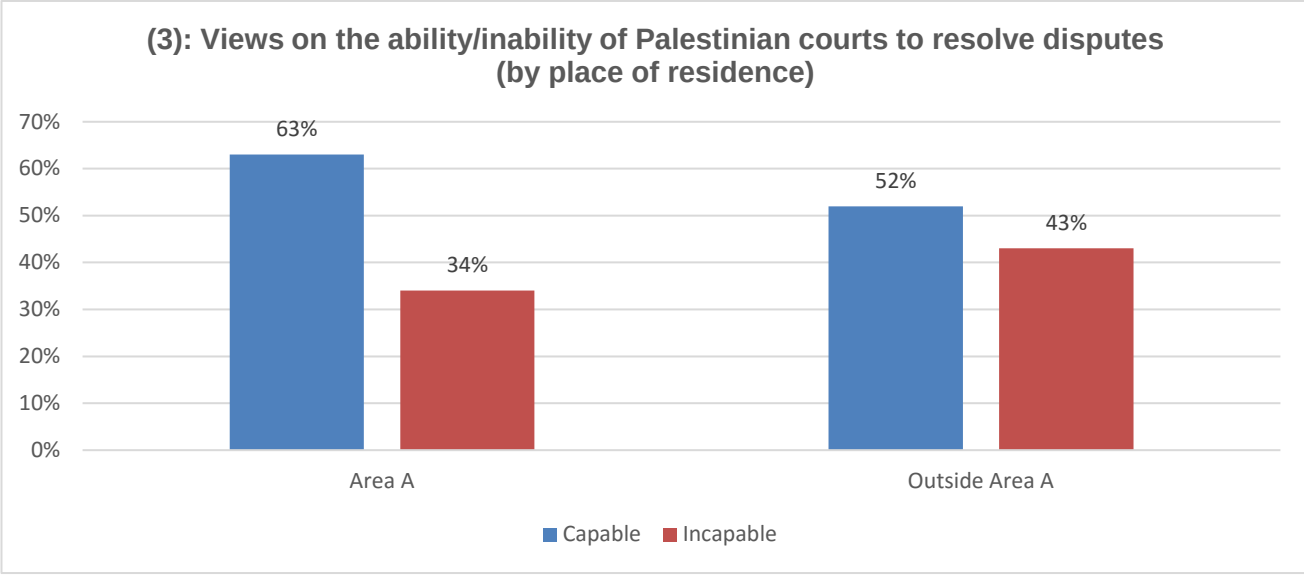
- Perception of personal and family safety and security stands at 52% among residents of area A and 38% among residents of areas outside A (see figure 1 below). Moreover, the percentage of non-A residents who report that security conditions are worsening is higher than the percentage among area A residents (21% to 14%).



- 57% of the residents of area A, compared to 38% of non-A areas indicate that they depend on the Palestinian police and security services and go to them when attacked or confronted by problems. The following figure shows that the largest percentage of residents in non-A areas depends on and goes to family or notables (traditional local leaders).

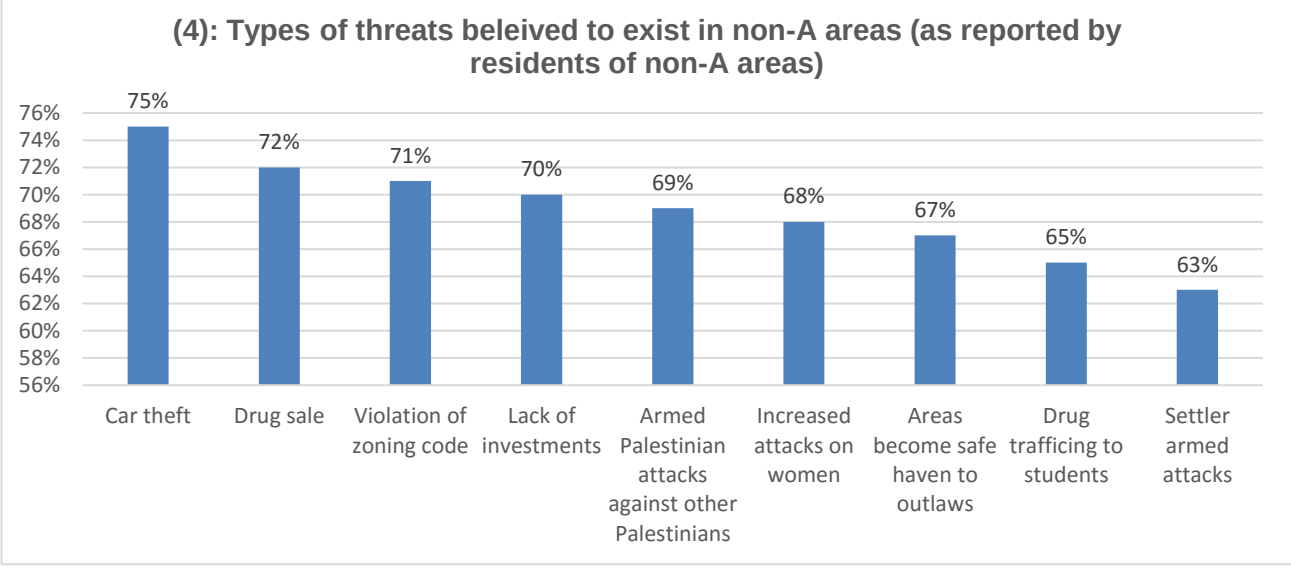


- Moreover, 63% of area A residents, compared to only 52% on non-A residents, indicate that if a dispute arises with other Palestinians, Palestinian courts would be able to resolve the dispute (see figure 3). Nonetheless, residents in all areas of the West Bank believe that the Palestinian courts are likely to be slow in issuing decisions: 86% in area A and 81% in all other areas. If courts issue decisions, 60% of residents in area A and 56% of residents of non-A areas believe that they are likely to be implemented.



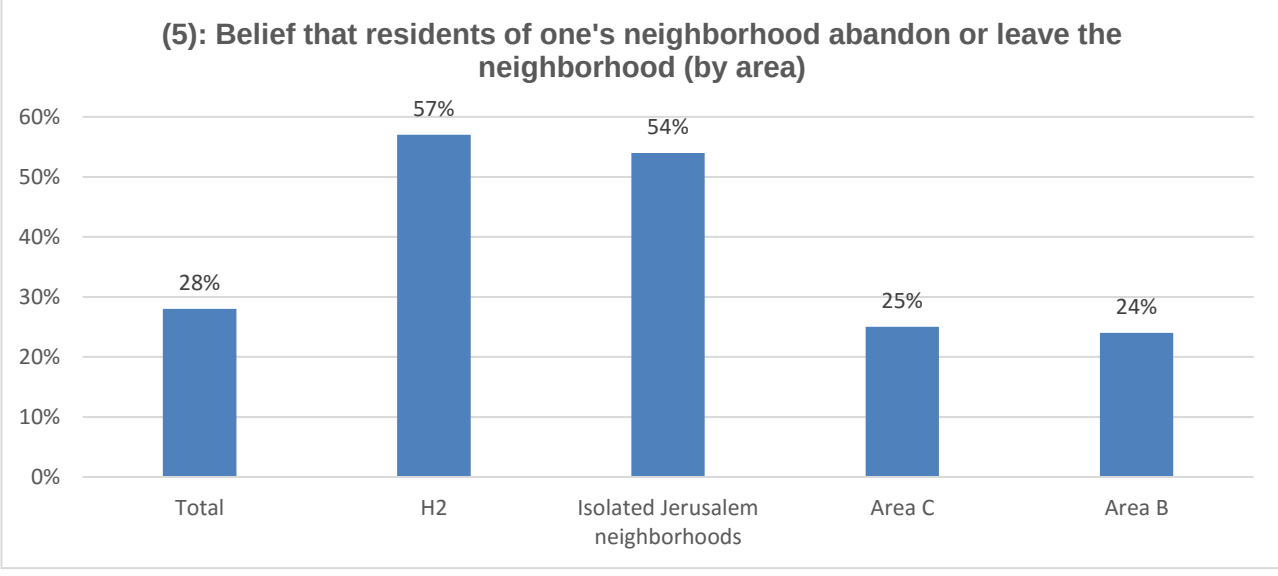
(2) Nature of threats prevailing in non-A areas:

- Large majorities of the residents of non-A areas believe that their areas suffer from numerous problems and threats. On top of those threats, car theft has been referred to by 75% of the residents, drug trafficking by 72%, violations of building and zoning codes by 71%, lack of investments and developmental projects by 70%, armed assault by Palestinians against other Palestinians (69%), attacks on women by family members by 68%, use of area as safe haven for outlaws by 67%, drug trafficking for school kids by 65%, and armed settlers attacks by 63% (see figure 4 below).

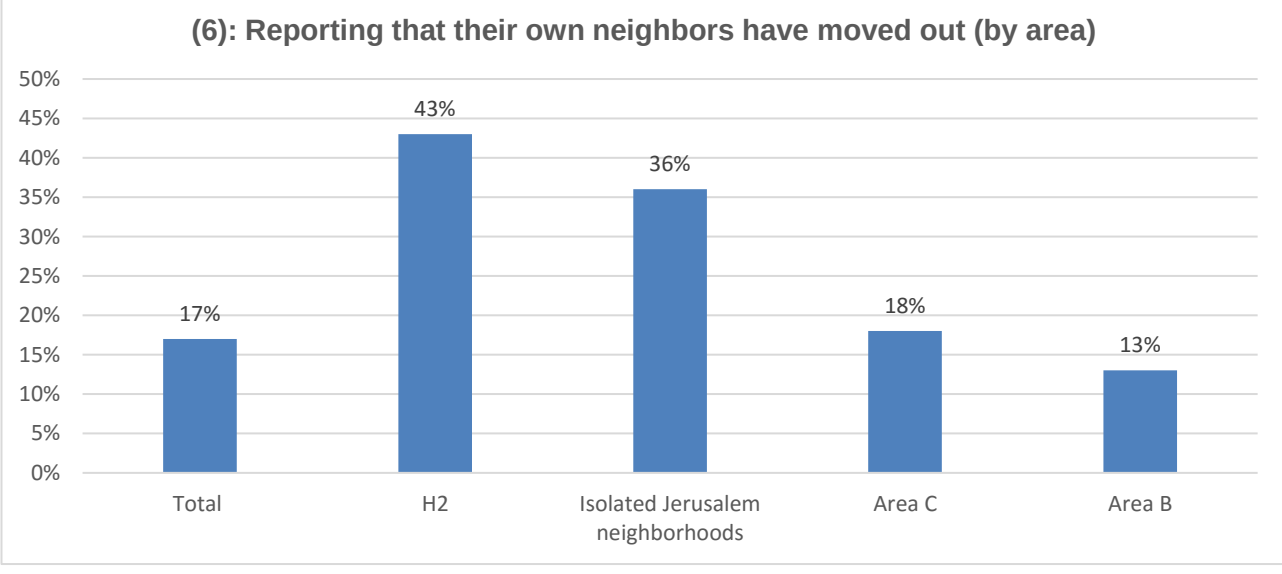


- When asked to identify the most serious threat confronting their own area of residence, the largest percentage (20%) selected drug trafficking while 13% selected attacks by armed settlers; 11% said it was the violation of building and zoning codes; 10% said it was car theft; 6% said it was armed attacks by Palestinians against other Palestinians, 5% said it was the lack of investment; and 2% said it was the use of their areas as a safe haven for outlaws.
- Respondents also identified internal challenges that affect the provision of basic services. For example, 32% indicated that some residents in their neighborhoods steal electricity and 20% indicated that some residents steal water.
- Attacks on women have been identified as a major threat: 13% have indicated that women in their area of residence come under attack; 19% indicated that women are unable to receive protection if attacked by family members; 25% believe that women are unable to reach and submit complaints to the Palestinian police; and 42% indicated that women are unable to receive their fair share of inheritance. In fact, women tend to perceive these threats in greater percentages than men. For example, 46% of women, compared to only 38% of men, believe that women are denied their fair share of inheritance.

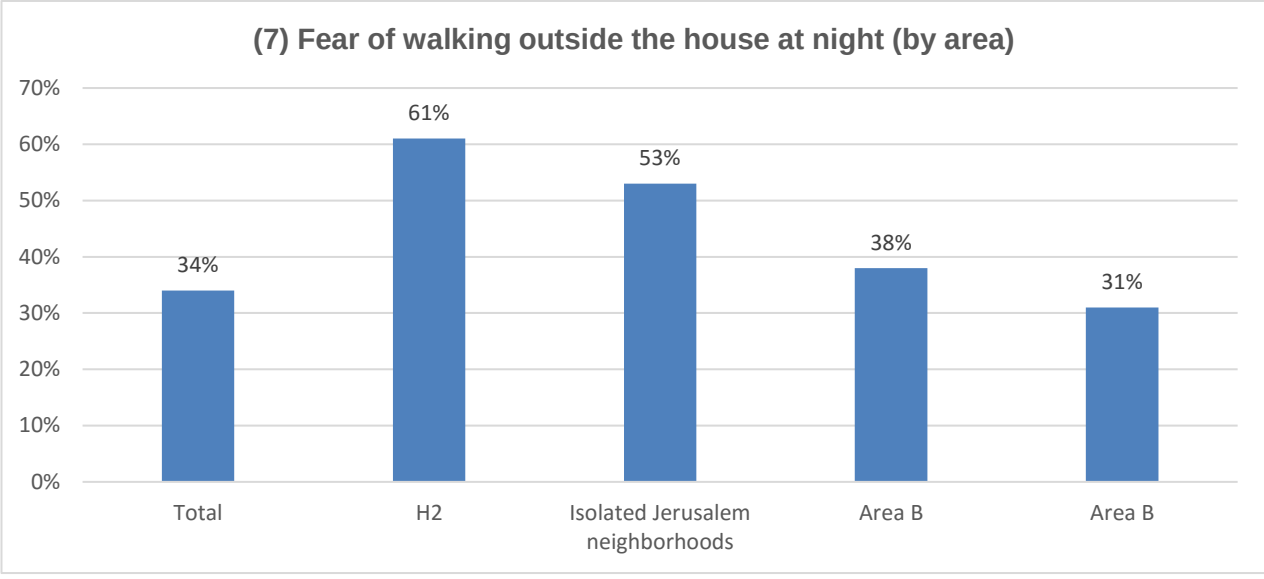
• When asked about drug use among the youth, 31% indicated that it is on the rise in their own area of residence. This is clearly evident in places like the isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods (58%) and in H2 (56%) compared to C and B areas (24% and 30% respectively).
• Findings also indicate that 28% of the residents of non-A areas believe that residents in their own neighborhoods are abandoning or leaving these areas due to the absence of security or due to the existence of Israeli army checkpoints and imposition of closures. As indicated in figure 5, this threat is particularly evident in H2 in Hebron (57%) and in the isolated Jerusalem areas (54%) followed by C and B areas (25% and 24% respectively).



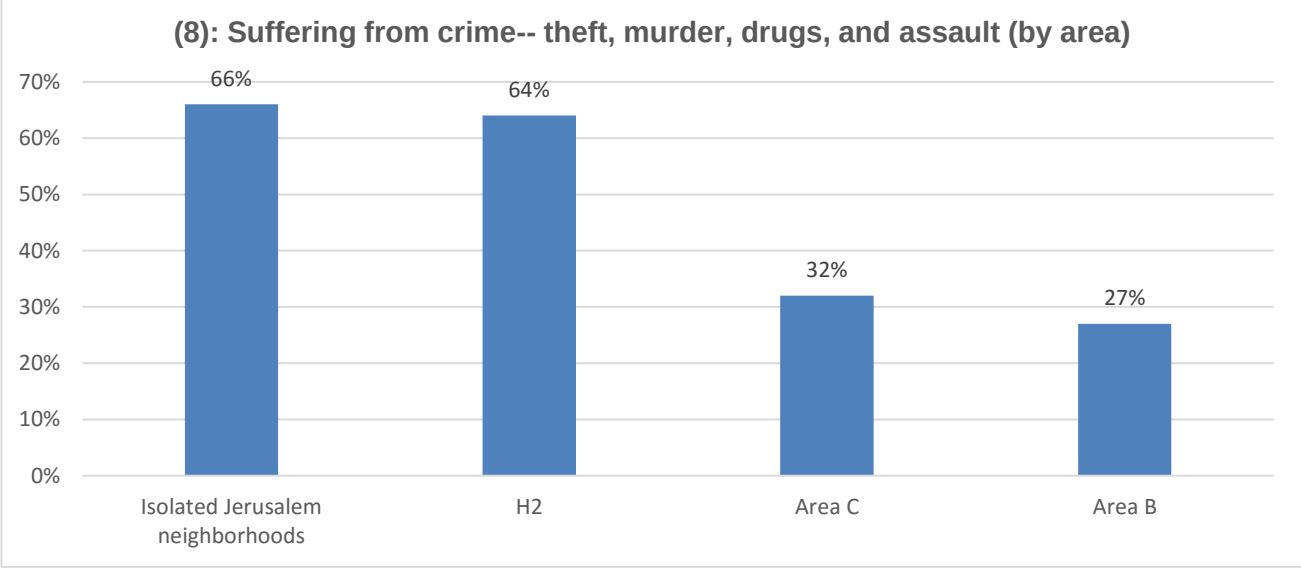
• When asked if their own neighbors have left their area of residence due to the Israeli occupation threats and restrictions, 17% confirmed that this has indeed been happening as people move to more secure places. As figure 6 shows, the movement out of these areas is highest in H2 in Hebron (43%) followed by isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods (36%), then area C (18%) and area B (13%).



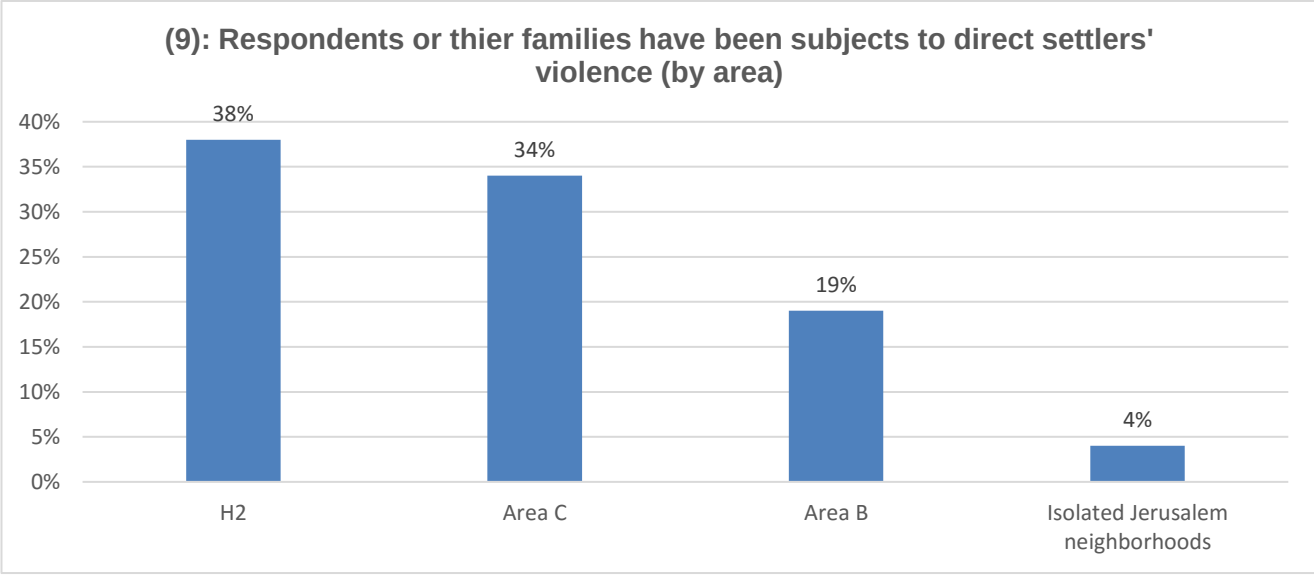
• When asked if they can go out of their homes at night, 34% said they cannot and 22% said they can do so only if accompanied by other members of the family; 43% said they can go out of their home without a companion (see figure 7). The percentage of those who cannot go out of their own home at night is highest in H2 (61%) followed by the isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods (53%), area C (38%) and area B (31%).



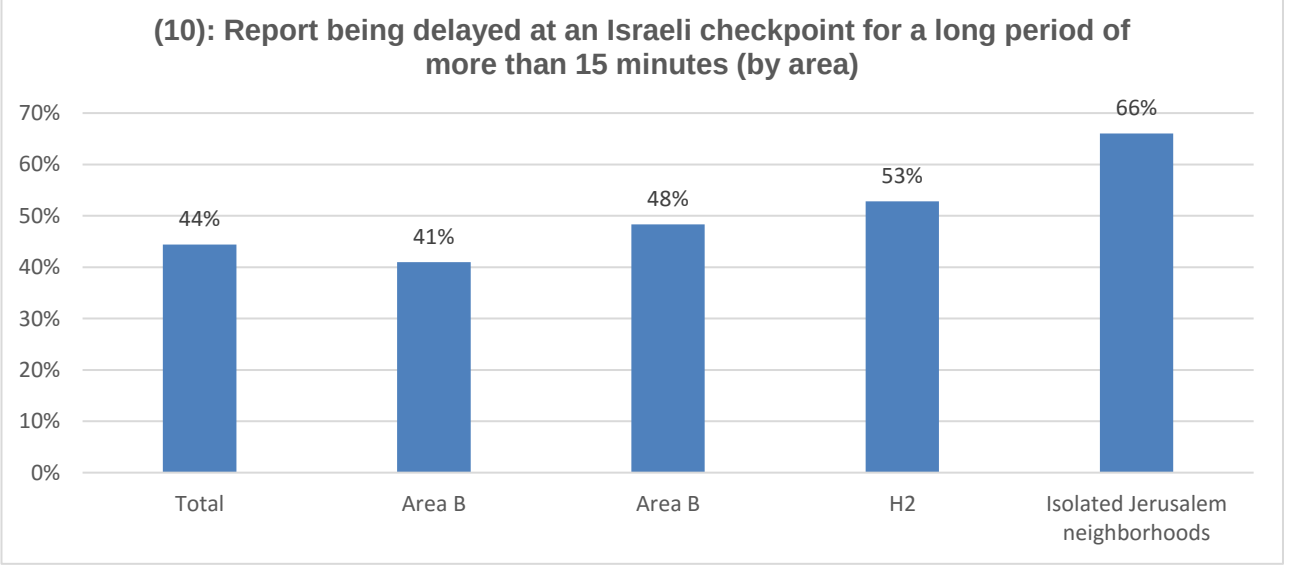
• We asked respondents to tell us how much suffering these threats cause them in their daily life. Findings indicate that the extent of suffering is related to the sources of the threat in question. Internal Palestinian threats cause less suffering than those caused by Israeli sources. With regard to the internal ones, 44% indicate that illegal construction causes them great or some suffering while 52% indicate that it causes them no or little suffering. The same applies to violation of building and zoning codes with 44% indicating great or some suffering. Crime comes next (see figure 8), standing at 34%, followed by massive disregard to traffic regulations (28%), and use of their area of residence as a safe haven for outlaws (20%). Suffering is greater in the isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods (66%) and H2 (64%) than in area B (32%) and area C (27%).



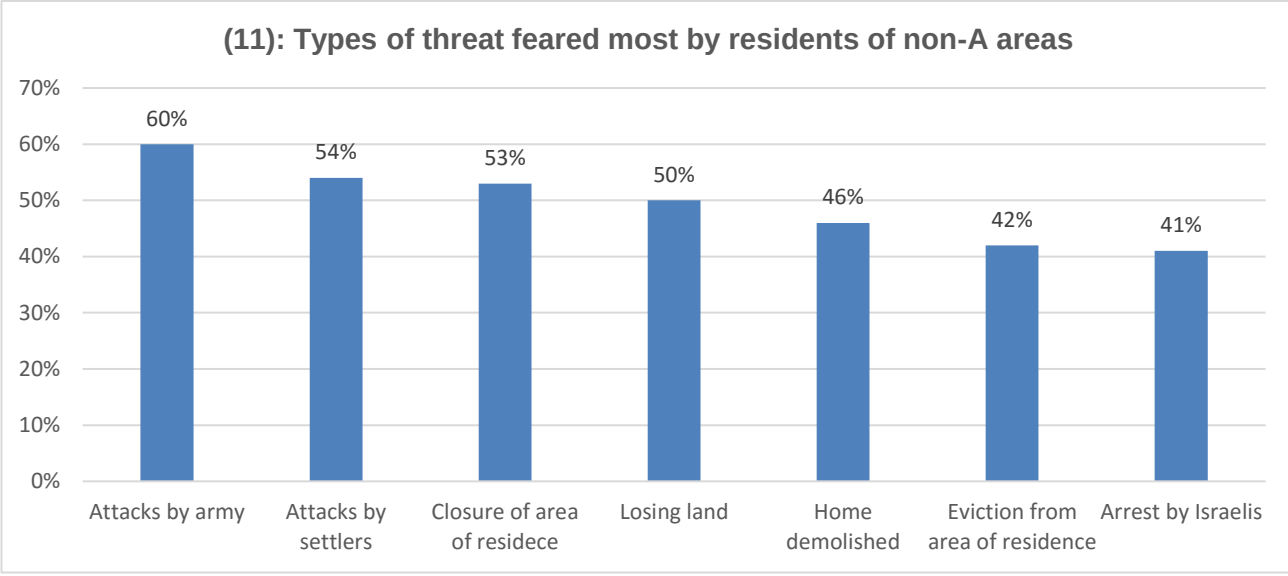
• Threats from the Israeli side are more painful: 54% indicate great or some suffering due to delays at checkpoints while 44% indicate little or no suffering. Similarly, 35% indicate suffering due to the building of the wall or separation barrier. 31% point to setters' violence as the source for their suffering. In fact, 17% indicate that settlers have already attacked their neighborhoods during the past two years with residents of H2 complaining the most (47%) followed by area C residents (24%) compared to residents of area B and isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods (15% and 6% respectively). When asked if they or a member of their family have been subject to settlers' violence, 24% said yes. As figure (9) shows, this is particularly true in H2, followed by area C, area B, and isolated Jerusalem areas (38%, 34%, 19%, and 4% respectively).



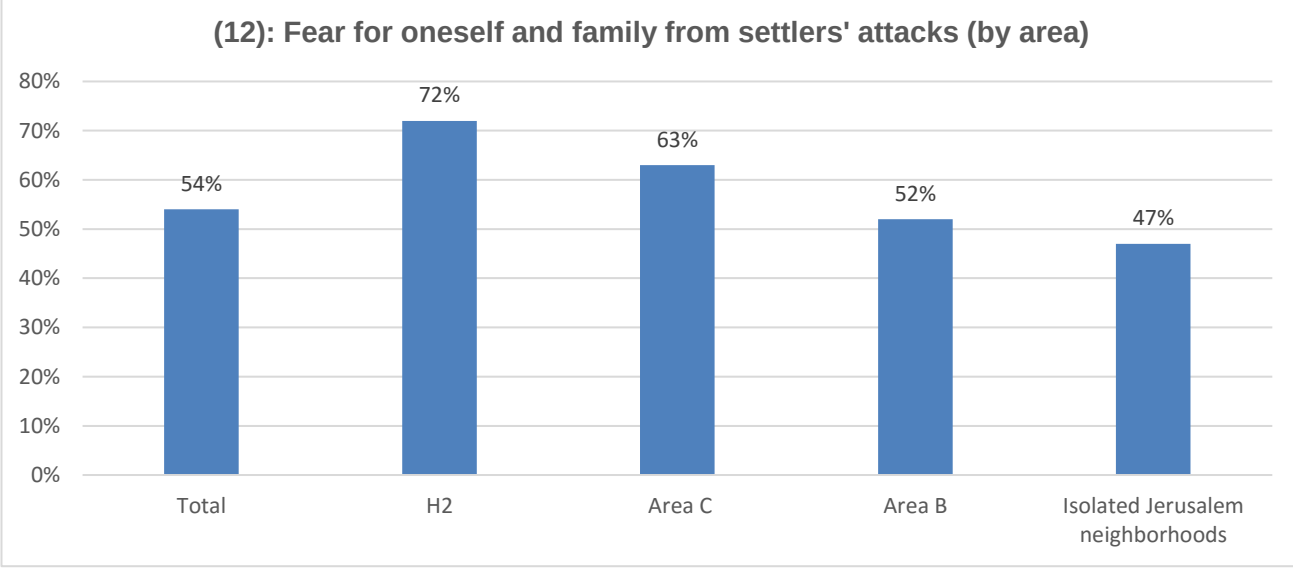
• Suffering due to movement restrictions imposed by the Israeli army varies: 44% suffer from delays at checkpoints for long periods of time (extending for more than 15 minutes) every time they try to access these checkpoints, every day, or several time a week or a month. This does not include suffering inflicted just one time. About one quarter (24%) indicates that they have been prevented from accessing a checkpoint; 22% have suffered from closure or siege imposed on their place of residence; 16% were insulted by Israeli soldiers when stopped at checkpoints; and 7% were prevented from travel or from exiting their place of resident. Here too we see significant differences based on area of residence: as figure (10) shows, while 66% of the resident of isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods indicate that they have been delayed for long periods at Israeli checkpoints, the percentage drops to 53% among H2 residents, 48% among area C residents, and 41% among area B residents.



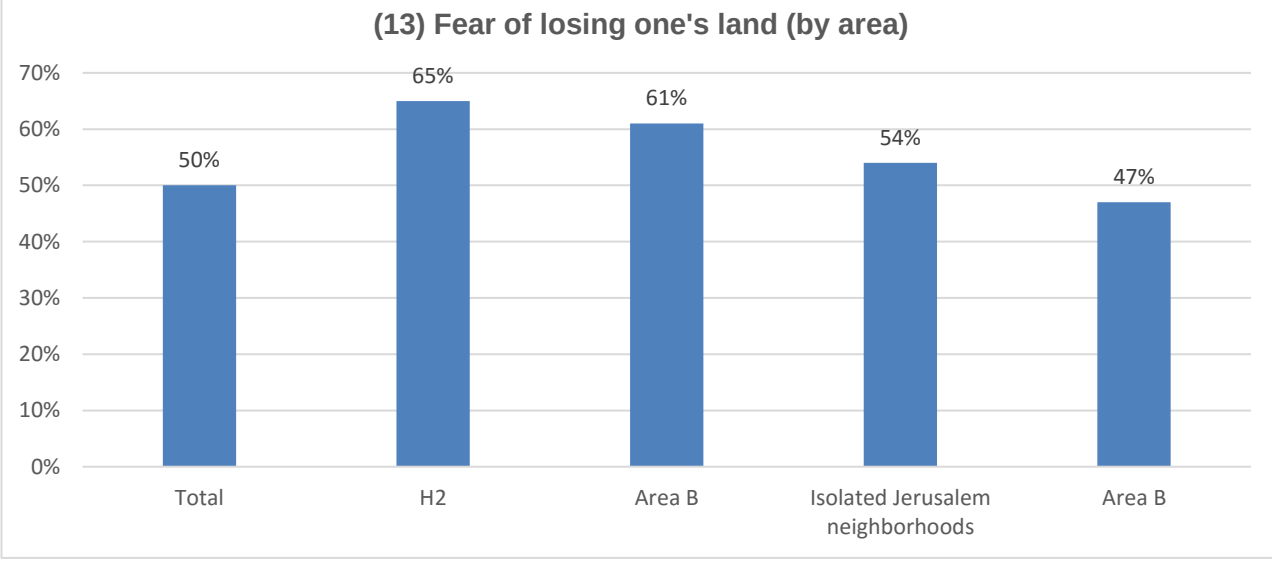
• We asked respondent to tell us what specific Israeli or settlers' threats cause them to worry. As indicated in figure (11), the highest percentage (60%) indicates that they are greatly or fairly worried in their daily life from attacks by the Israeli army; 54% from settler's attacks, 53% from closure or movement restrictions, 50% from the threat to lose their land, 46% from the threat to demolish their home, 42% from the threat to be forced out of their place of residence, 41% from threat of being arrested.



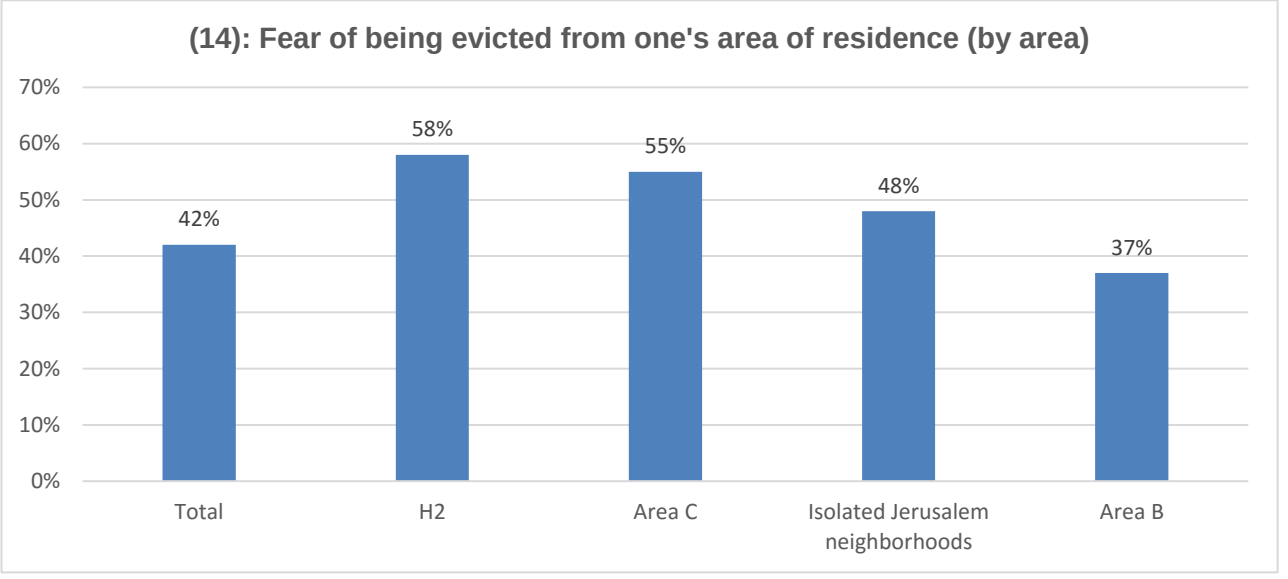
- As figure (12) shows, threat from settlers' violence is particularly evident in H2 area in Hebron, standing at 72%, followed by area C (63%), area B (52%), and isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods (47%).



- Figure (13) shows that fear of losing one's land is highest in H2 in Hebron (65%) followed by area C (61%), isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods (54%), and area B (47%).



• Figure (14) shows that fear of eviction is highest in H2 (58%), followed by area C (55%), isolated Jerusalem area (48%), and area B (37%).

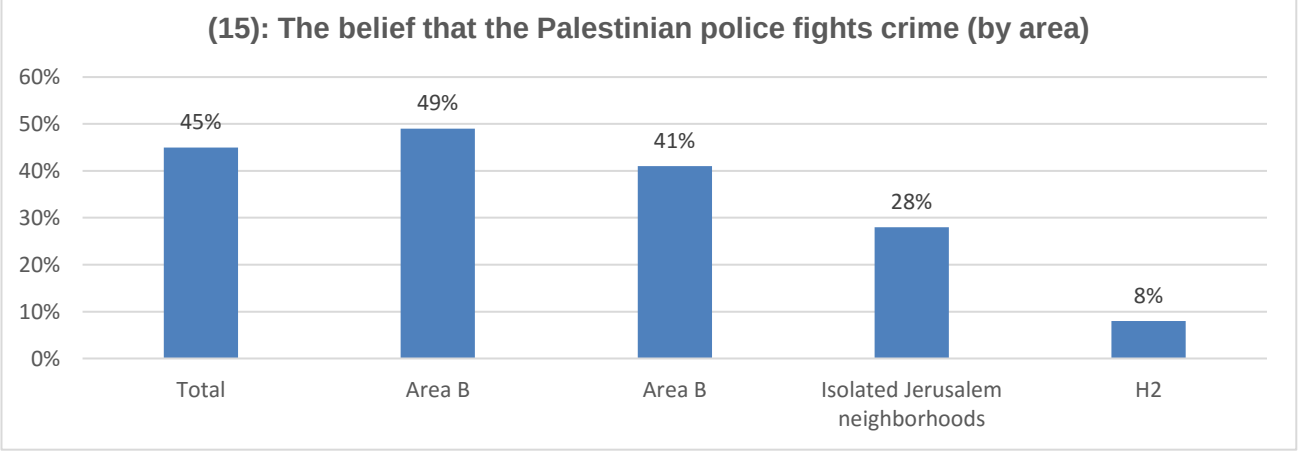


(3) Role of the Palestinian police and security services:

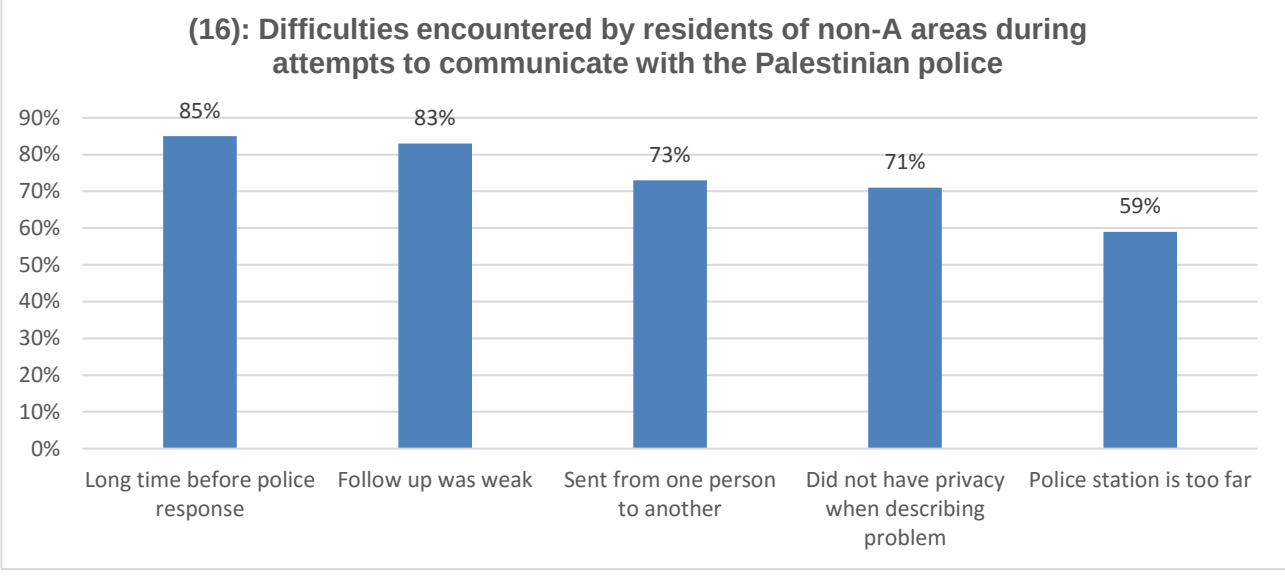
• We asked respondents about the extent to which the Palestinian police is currently providing protection against the various threats prevalent in their areas of residence. Findings show that the Palestinian police is perceived as effective in meeting internal threats but not those originating from Israeli sources. For example, 61% think the police provides protection against Palestinians attacks on private homes and property of other Palestinians. As would be expected, this is clearly evident in area B (67%). Yet, findings show that 57% of the residents of area C think the same. The percentage drops to 28% among residents of isolated East Jerusalem neighborhoods and 21% among residents of H2 in Hebron. Findings also show that 59% believe that the police provides protection against domestic violence, particularly against women; 50% think it provides protection against armed Palestinian attacks, and 49% think it provides protection against drug trafficking.

• But confidence in the ability of the Palestinian police to provide protection drops dramatically to 10% when the threat comes from Israeli settlers and to 7% when the threat is from Israeli army incursions. Belief that the police provides protection against settlers stands at 11% among residents of area B, 9% in area C, 3% in isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods, and 2% in H2 in Hebron.

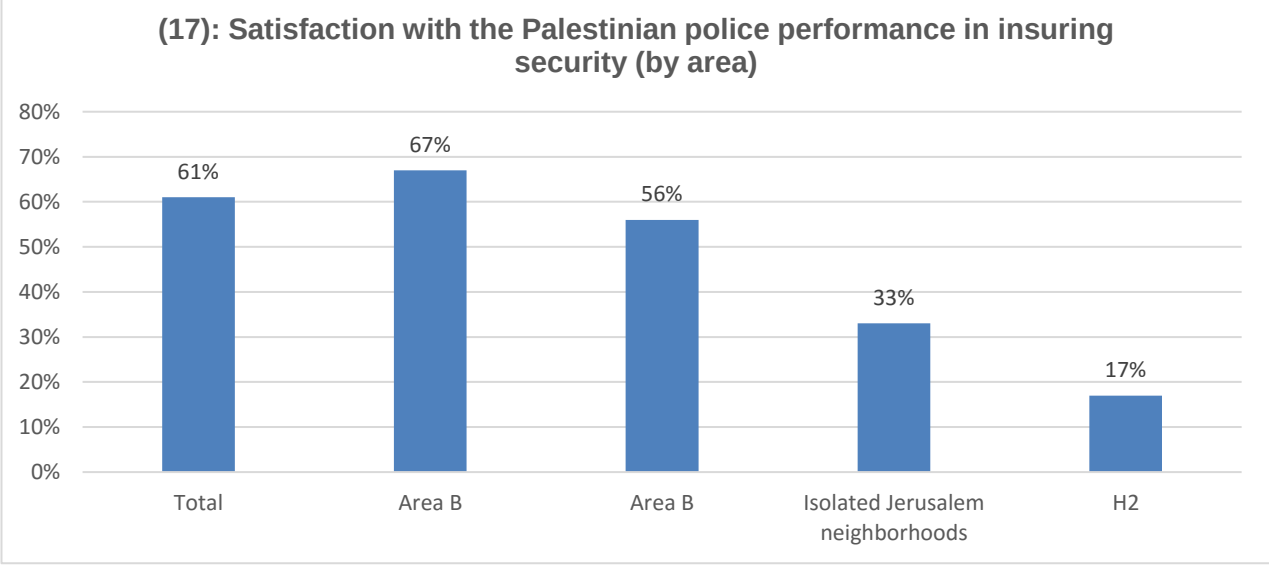
• We asked residents how often the Palestinian police carries out its responsibility to protect them. 45% said the police always or most of the time fights crime (such as theft and drug trafficking) and 48% said it does not fights crime or does so only from time to time. As figure (15) shows, 49% of the residents of area B think the police fights crime in their area always or most of the time. The percentage drops to 41% among residents of area C, 28% among residents of isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods, and only 8% among H2 residents. Moreover, 50% said the police implements court decisions and 39% said it provides protection against attacks from armed gangs or groups.



• We asked respondents if they would go to the Palestinian police to complain if they confront a problem or face a threat. An overwhelming majority of 80% says it would indeed do so while 20% says it would rather go to the family or notables or take matters into their own hand. Percentage of those who would not go to the police is highest, standing at 38%, in H2 followed by isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods (31%).
• 22% of the residents of non-A areas indicate that they have had an experience with the Palestinian police and most of those (71%) indicate that they personally have communicated with officers in Palestinian police stations. But 27% of those who did have an experience with the police indicate that they have confronted difficulties during that process: As figure 16 shows, 85% (of the 27%) indicate that a long period of time passed before the police responded to their calls; 83% indicate that police follow-up was weak or non-existent; 73% indicate that they have been transferred from one officer to another; 71% indicate that they did not have privacy while providing details of the problem or threat to the police; and 59% say the police station was too far away from their place of residence.

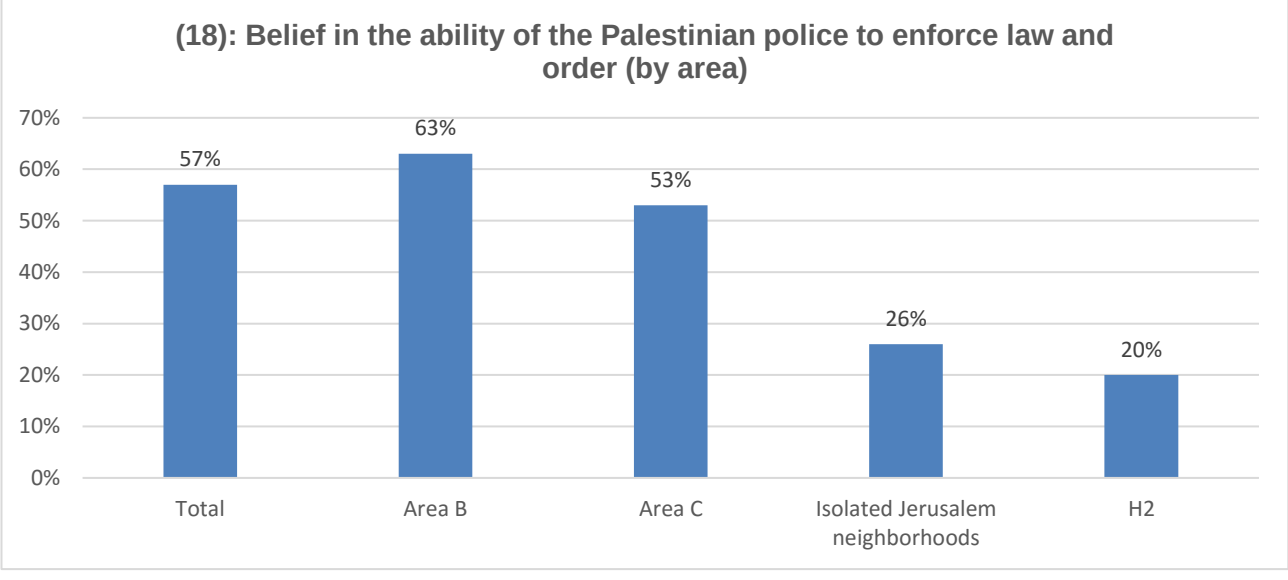


• 61% of the residents indicate that they are satisfied with the performance of the Palestinian police in delivering security to them and their families while 36% say they were dissatisfied. As figure (17) shows, satisfaction is highest in area B (67%) followed by area C (56%), isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods (33%), and H2 in Hebron (17%).



• The largest percentage (42%) indicate that the performance of the Palestinian police in their area of residence has not changed compared to the situation a year ago. But 37% indicate that the performance has improved and 18% indicate that it has become worse. Perhaps for this reason, findings show that the percentage of those who think that the number of incidents of theft and violation of the law in their area of residence have decreased is greater than those who think the number of incidents have increased: 35% to 31%.

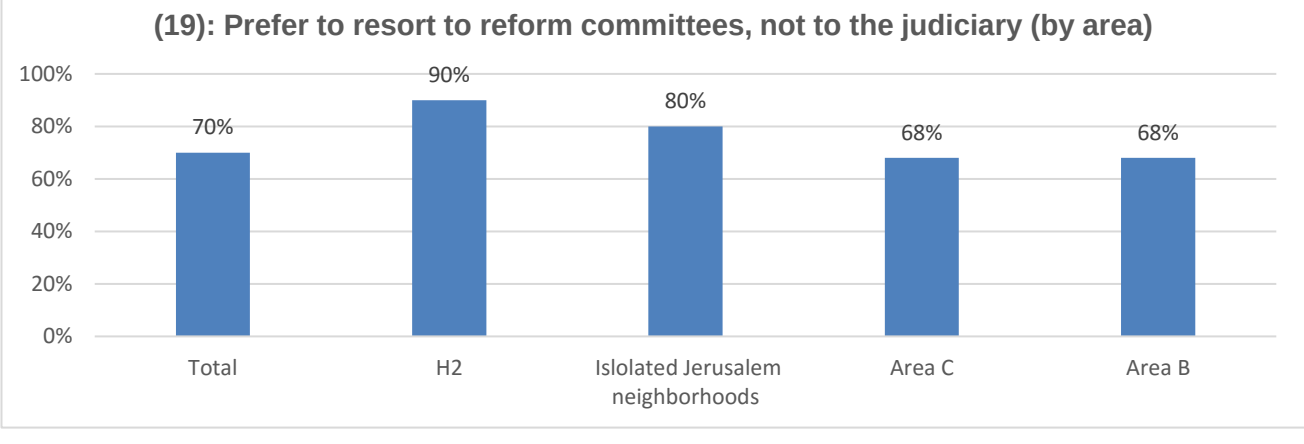
• Satisfaction with the performance of the Palestinian police is highest (75%) for its role in finding and apprehending thieves, drug traffickers, and other criminals and for respecting the privacy of homes (72%). It declines to 55% when regarding police presence in the streets of their place of residence in order to deter criminals and to investigate complaints. It should be pointed out that only 53% of the respondents have reported seeing Palestinian police officers in uniform during the previous two months before the interview.
• Moreover, large majorities indicate that they have a full or a fair amount of confidence in various aspects of Palestinian police work. For example, 71% think it is professional; a similar percentage thinks it is qualified to do its work; 70% think it implements court decisions; 61% think it responds to complaints within a reasonable time; and 57% think it has the capacity to enforce law and order in their place of residence. But confidence varies from one area to the other. For example, as shown in figure (18) below, confidence stands at 63% in area B, but it declines to 53% in area C and to 26% in the isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods and 20% in H2 in Hebron.



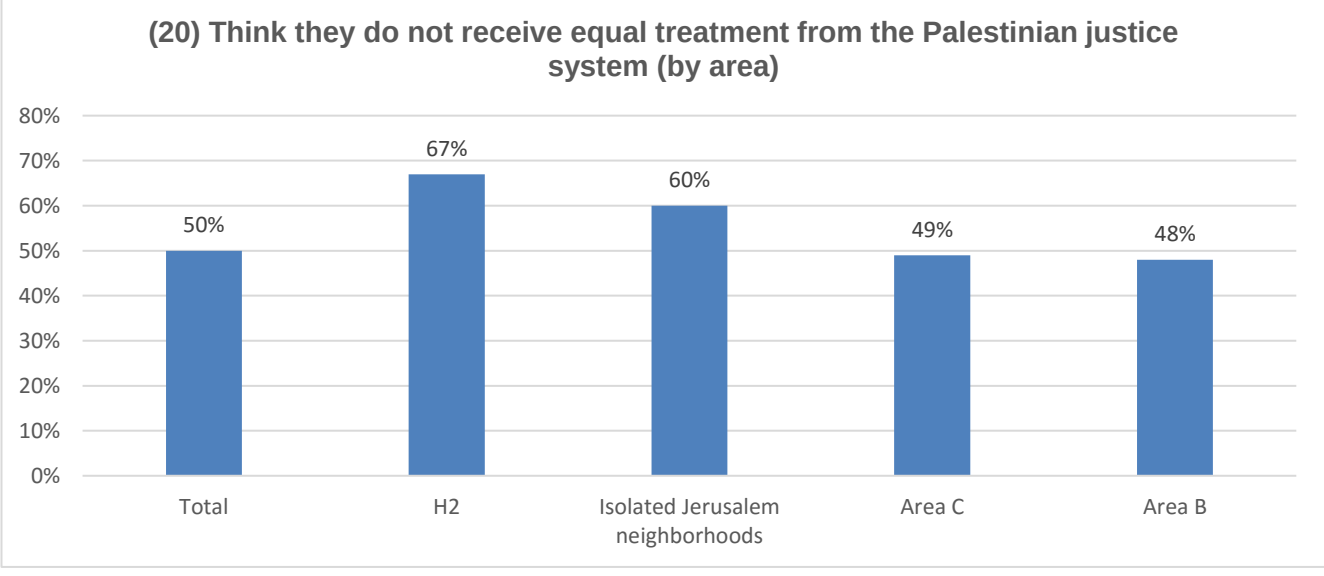
• Confidence in the Palestinian police drops also when it comes to treating citizens equally, standing at 44%, and declines considerably, to 19%, when it comes to protecting residents against settlers' violence.
• It should also be pointed out that only 15% of the respondents believe that the Palestinian police always serve citizens equally regardless of their political or party affiliation while 20% think it does that most of the time. Moreover, only 21% believe the police always abide by the law during its work; 25% think it does that most of the time.

(4) Judiciary and System of Justice:

• Respondents from non-A areas were also asked where they would go to resolve disputes with other Palestinians: to the Palestinian judiciary or to reform committees? A decisive majority of 70% indicate that it would go to reform committees while only 23% indicate that they would turn to the judiciary. As shown in figure (19) turning to the reform committees is highest in H2 in Hebron (90%) followed by the isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods (80%), and area B and C (68% each).

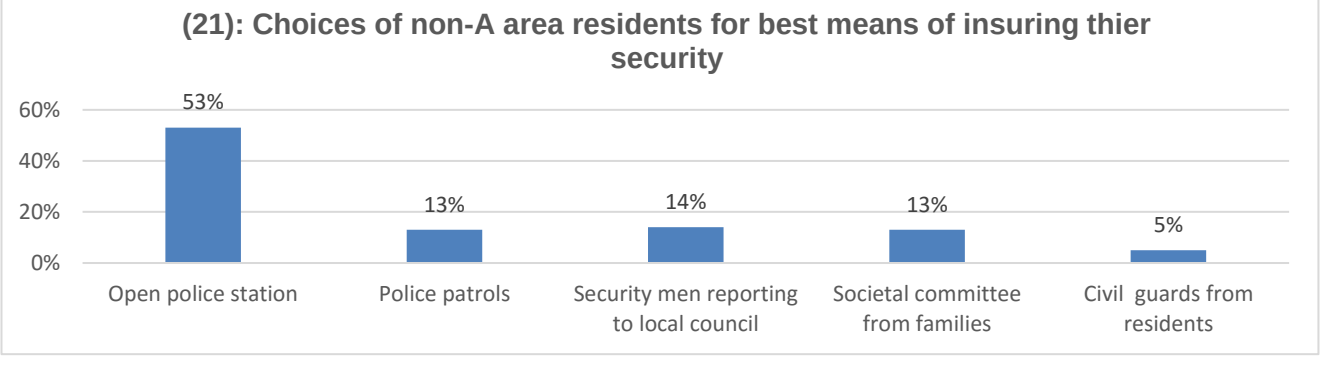


- Other responses indicate the reasons for respondents' preference for reform committees: 86% believe that such committees are faster than courts in settling disputes.
- Despite the preference for reform committees, 21% of respondents say that they have gone to the Palestinian courts during the past five years. Among those who have gone to the courts, 47% report a positive impression while 51% report a negative impression.
- Findings show that 69% of the public believe that when courts do make decisions, they are implemented. The problem, in the eyes of 79% of the respondents, is that courts are slow in making decisions. There might be an additional reason for the reluctance of the residents of non-A areas to go to courts: 50% of those residents believe that the justice system in the West Bank does not treat citizens equally regardless of their place of residence; only 40% believe the system is equally fair to residents of all areas, in A, B, or C. As figure (20) shows, the belief that the justice system does not treat all areas equally is highest in H2 in Hebron (67%) followed by the isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods (60%), area C (49%, and area B (48%).

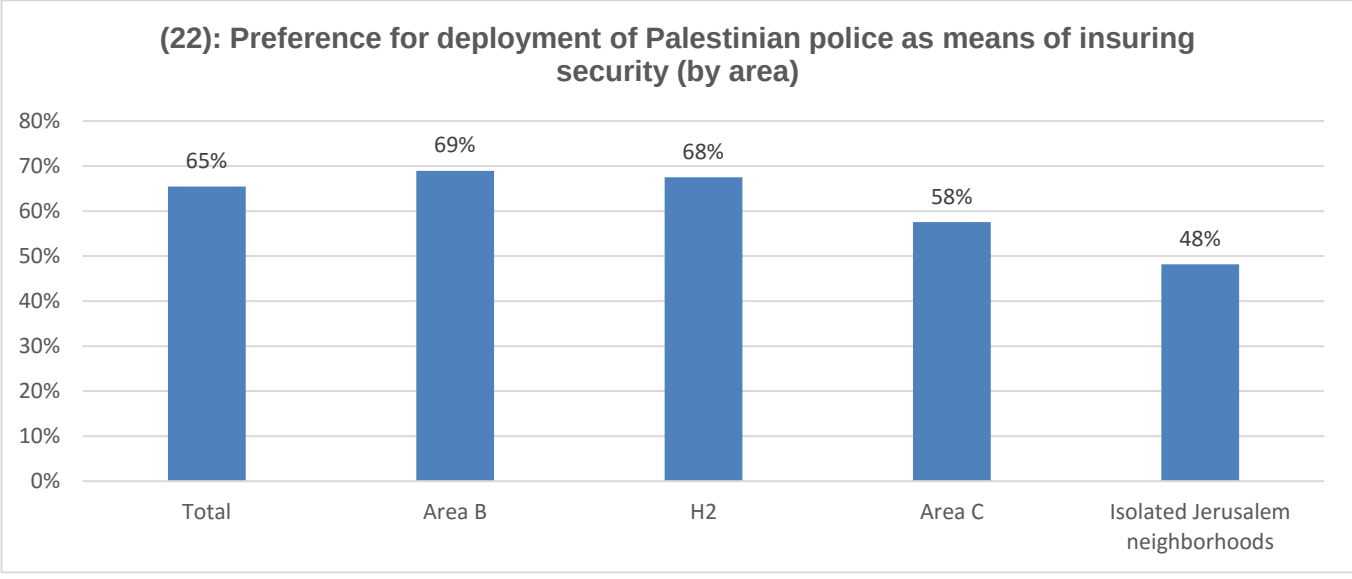


(5) Meeting Security Needs in non-A Areas of the West Bank:

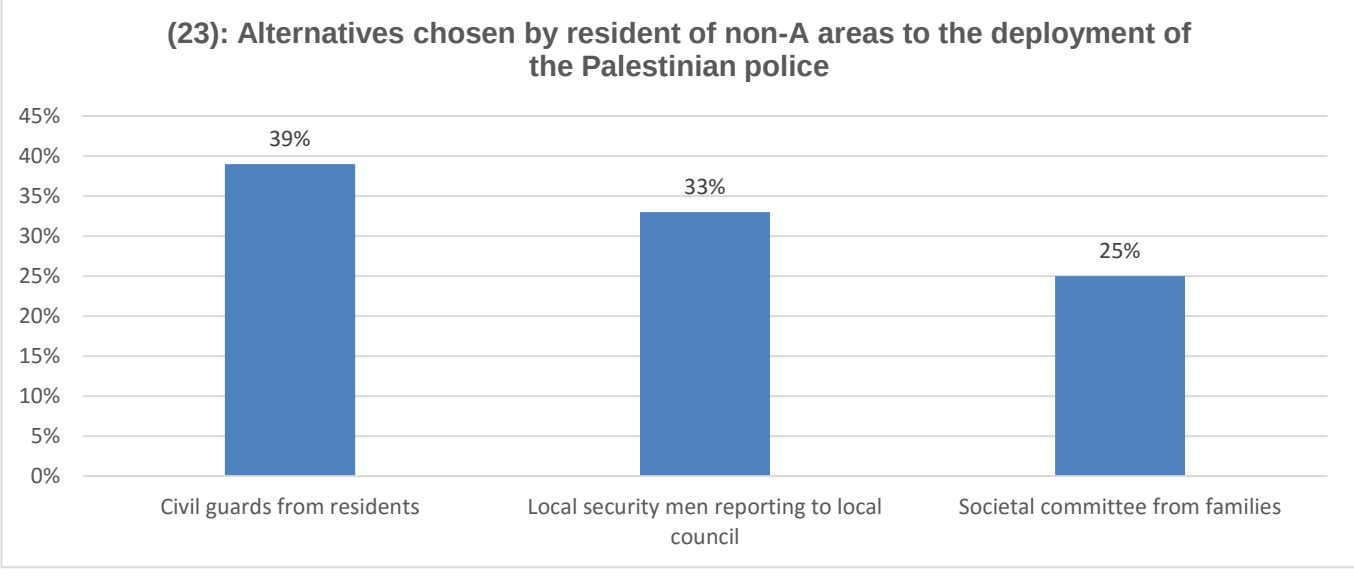
- The overwhelming majority of respondents in non-A areas of the West Bank believes that their needs for security and the enforcement of law and order can under normal conditions be achieved by the presence of Palestinian police stations and daily police patrols in their places of residence. Indeed, 79% would like to see a Palestinian police station in their place of resident and 80% would like to see daily police patrols in their neighborhoods. If police presence can be assured, 83% think that condition would be better. By contrast, only 16% agree that the presence of the Israeli police in their place of residence would make conditions better.
- We asked respondents about the best means of enforcing law and order in their place of residence given the current political conditions. About two thirds (65%) think the best means of fighting crime and assuring security is through the presence of the Palestinian police, either by opening police stations (as 53% indicated) or by deploying daily police patrols (as indicated by 13%). By contrast, 14% think the solution to security and law enforcement needs is in establishing local police units under the control of the local councils while 13% prefer the establishment of a local committee made up of representatives of the families in the area and entrusted with the task of enforcing the law. 5% prefer to see the establishment of local civil guard units that coordinates directly with and report to the Palestinian police (see figure 21 below).



• As figure (22) shows, with the exception of the isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods, majorities in all other areas prefer the presence of the Palestinian police force.



• When Palestinian police presence is not an option, respondents, as shown in figure (23), opt first to the civil guard option (one that coordinates with the Palestinian police), selected by 39%%, followed by a local council security force (33%) and finally a societal committee led by local families (25%). It is worth noting that the civil guard option was selected by 65% of the residents of H2 in Hebron.

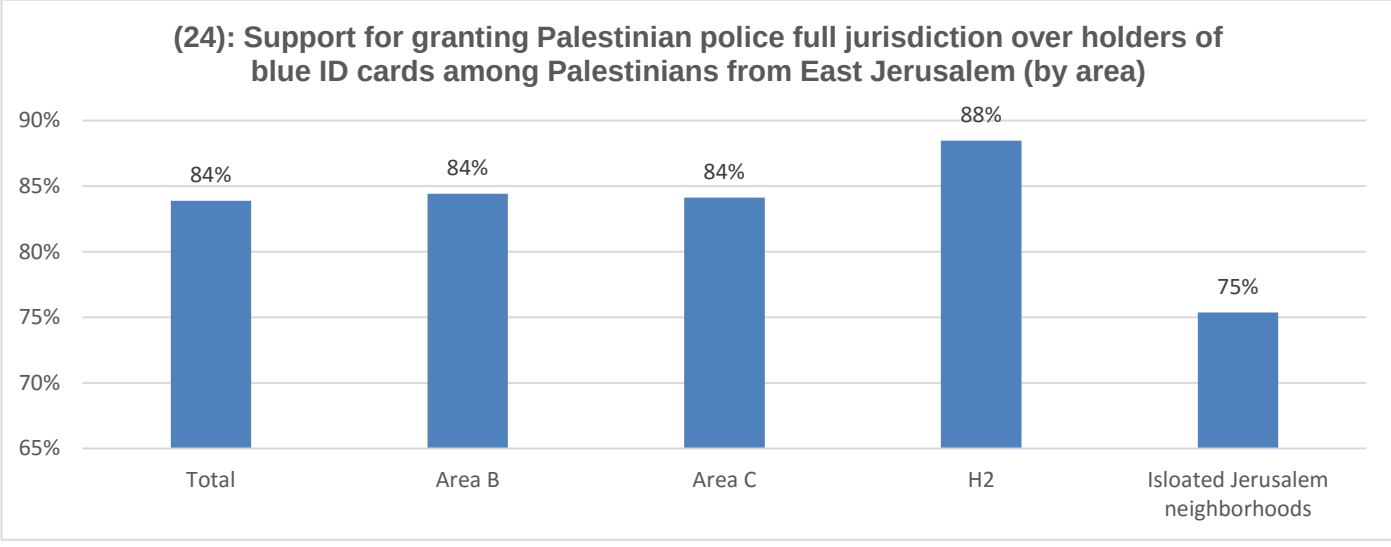


• Findings clearly show that the demand for the Palestinian police presence stems from the belief that such presence would insure improvement in security conditions. The poll asked respondents whether a police station has recently (during the past two years) been opened in their place of residence or in the neighboring areas and then asked those who said yes whether conditions of security and law enforcement have improved, worsened or stayed the same after that. Only 17% indicate that a police station has been opened recently in their place of residence. Among those, 60% report improvement while only 10% indicate that conditions have worsened since then.

• Among those who said no police station has been opened recently in their place of residence or neighboring areas (81%), a large majority of 70% demand the opening of such stations in their area of residence.

• This demand for a Palestinian police presence is seen essential not only to combat crime and enforce the law, but also to provide protection against settlers' attacks. When respondents are asked about the best means to fight settlers' violence, 53% indicate that the deployment of the Palestinian police in the areas targeted by settlers would be the most effective means while 37% think that the formation of local unarmed defense guard units would be the best means.

• To improve the performance of the Palestinian police, the overwhelming majority of the respondents demand the enhancement of its authority by giving it full jurisdiction over Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem (carrying blue ID cards) when committing crimes in areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian police. Findings show that this demand is made from all non-A areas residents including those in the isolated East Jerusalem neighborhoods (75%) as shown below in figure (24).



• Similarly, about three quarters (74%) of the residents of non-A areas agree that it is essential to maintain the current coordination between the Palestinian police and the Israeli authorities thus allowing Palestinian police cars to have access to their places of residence; only 23% indicate opposition.