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PRESS RELEASE

Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No. (21)

Despite Dissatisfaction with the Performance of the Hamas Government, Especially Regarding Salaries, and Despite Public Preference for a National Unity Government in which Fateh and Hamas are Equal, Hamas' Popularity Remains Largely Unchanged and the Majority does not Think it Should Recognize Israel

14-16 September 2006

These are the results of the latest poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during September 14-16, 2006. Total size of the sample is 1268 adults interviewed face to face in 127 randomly selected locations. Margin of error is 3%. For further details, contact PSR director, Dr. Khalil Shikaki, or Walid Ladadweh at tel 02-296 4933 or email pcpsr@pcpsr.org.

Main Findings:

- A majority of 54% is dissatisfied with the overall performance of the Hamas government and 42% are satisfied. Dissatisfaction with the performance of the Hamas government regarding economic issues, such as salaries and poverty, reaches 69% and satisfaction stands at 26%.
- The public exhibits a total consensus (85%) that the situation of the Palestinians today is bad or very bad with only 5% describing Palestinian conditions today as good or very good. Moreover, 80% say they and their families do not feel safe or secure in the Palestinian areas. Perception of corruption in the PA is at its highest, at 89%, while 72% believe that jobs these days are largely obtained through wasta (personal and family connections).
- Yet, despite the widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of the Hamas government, the percentage of those who say that they would vote for it if new elections are held today remains essentially unchanged, standing at 38% compared to 39% three months ago. Fateh's popularity increases slightly during the same period from 39% to 41%. The popularity of all other factions and groups combined reaches 9% in this poll and 12% remain undecided. Hamas' popularity reached a highest point in March 2006, one month after the parliamentary elections, when it stood at 47% compared to Fateh's 39%.
- Moreover, a majority (66%) does not think that Hamas should accept the demand of the donor community to recognize Israel and only 30% believe it should.
- Only a quarter supports the formation of a national unity government composed of all factions but under the leadership of Hamas. Another quarter (24%) supports an apolitical government made up of professionals and technocrats. The largest percentage supports a national unity government in which Fateh and Hamas have equal weights.
- The largest percentage (32%) wants the top priority of the national unity government to be the enforcement of law and order, followed by a return to the peace process and negotiations (25%), ending the international financial and political sanctions on the PA (23%), and implementing political reforms and fight corruption (18%).
- Satisfaction with the performance of President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazin) stands at 55%. Three months ago, his popularity stood at 53%.
- The largest percentage (46%) believes that the strike by PA employees and teachers is not political and that it aims at protesting the deteriorating living conditions while 36%

believe it to be political targeting the Hamas government, and 16% view it as a political strike protesting against the international community.

- An overwhelming majority (86%) opposes the kidnapping of foreigners residing in Palestinian areas and 13% support it.

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