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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Palestinian Peace Pulse #6, June 2006**



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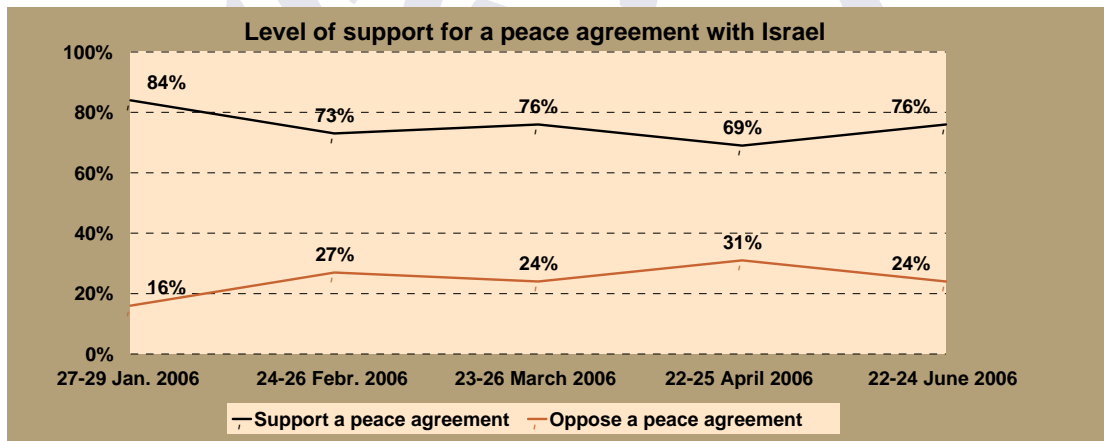
## The Palestinian Peace Pulse June 2006, #6

During the period 22-24 June, 2006, Near East Consulting (NEC) conducted a phone survey of over 1,200 randomly selected Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem of which 840 were successfully completed. The survey covered a number of issues that fit into NEC's monthly "Palestinian Peace Pulse" with the aim of monitoring Palestinian perceptions over time. These include: support for a peace agreement with Israel, support for a cease-fire, support for Abu Mazen's call to stop rocket attacks on Israel, perceptions on whether or not there is a peace partner in Israel, perceptions on whether or not there is a Palestinian peace partner and opinions on whether or not Hamas should maintain its position on the elimination of Israel.

The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.38% with a 95% confidence level.

### Main findings

In general, the six-month period since the January 2006 PLC elections has witnessed a downwards trend in the support among Palestinians for a peace agreement with Israel. By NEC's May survey support for a peace agreement with Israel stands at its lowest rate since January 2006. In the most recent June survey, however, support for a peace agreement has regained support and stands at 76%.

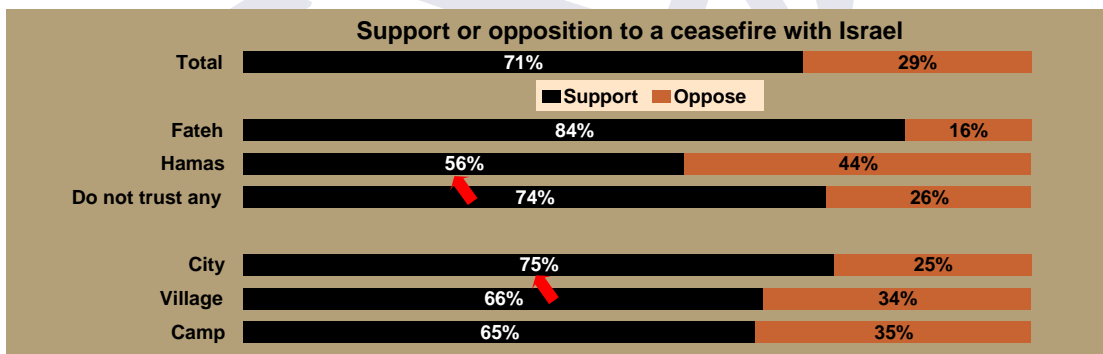


The support for a peace agreement with Israel is highest among those most trusting Fateh (90%) and those not trusting any faction (77%). However, even the majority of Palestinians most trusting Hamas (62%) support the principle of a peace agreement with Israel.

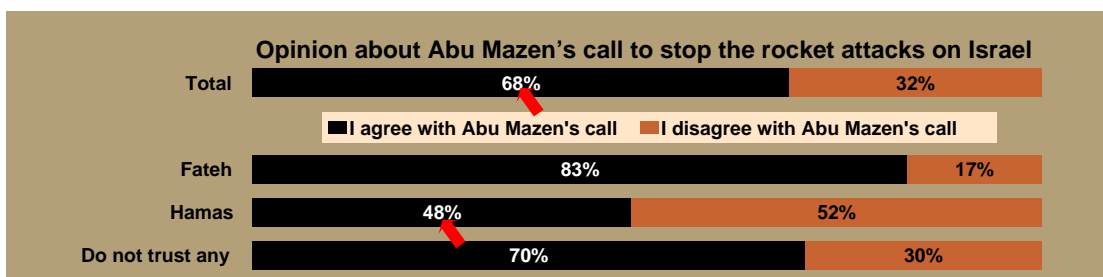


Given the decision of Hamas’s al-Qassam Brigades to end the end a 16-month old ‘hudna’ (cease-fire) with Israel in the wake of the assassination of a member of the Hamas-led government, Jamal Abu Samhadana, and six Palestinian civilians picnicking on the beach in the Gaza Strip, the NEC team decided to include a question to the survey that gauges Palestinians’ level of support or opposition to a cease-fire with Israel.

In general, 71% of Palestinians support a cease-fire with Israel. As overviewed in the figure below, this support is more pronounced among those who most trust Fateh (84%) and those not trusting any faction (74%) than among those who most trust Hamas (56%). Furthermore, support for a cease-fire with Israel is more widespread in cities (75%) than in villages (66%) and refugee camps (65%).

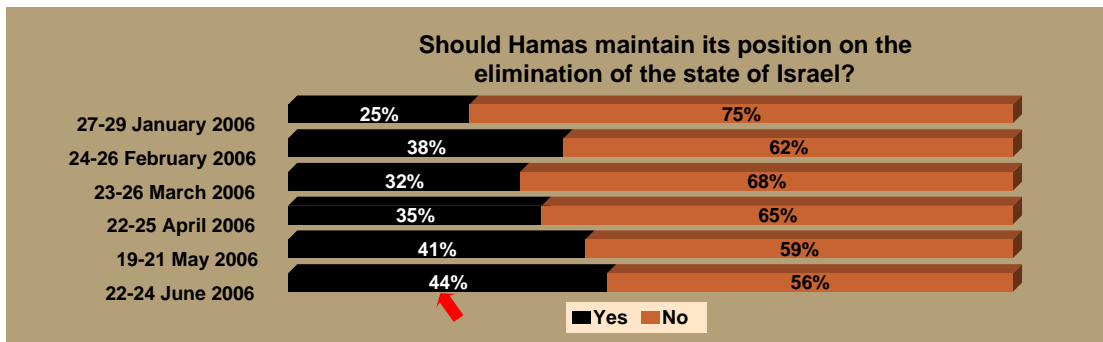


As for Abu Mazen’s recent call to stop rocket attacks on Israel, in general, 68% agree with Abu Mazen’s call. Again, however, the highest proportion of those agreeing with Abu Mazen’s call to stop rocket attacks on Israel can be found among Fateh supporters (83%) and those who do not trust any faction (70%). Less than half of the respondents who most trust Hamas (48%) agree with Abu Mazen’s call.

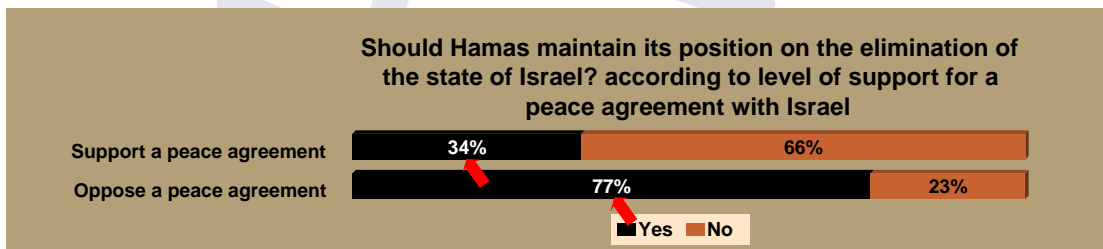




Very much related to Palestinians' opinions about support for a peace agreement with Israel, is their position vis-à-vis the Hamas refusal to recognize the state of Israel. In general, a minority of 44% of the respondents believe that Hamas should maintain its position on the elimination of the state of Israel. However, in comparison to the results on the same question in NEC's previous monthly surveys, the belief that Hamas should change its position on the elimination of the state of Israel has gradually decreased from 75% in January to 56% in the most recent June survey.



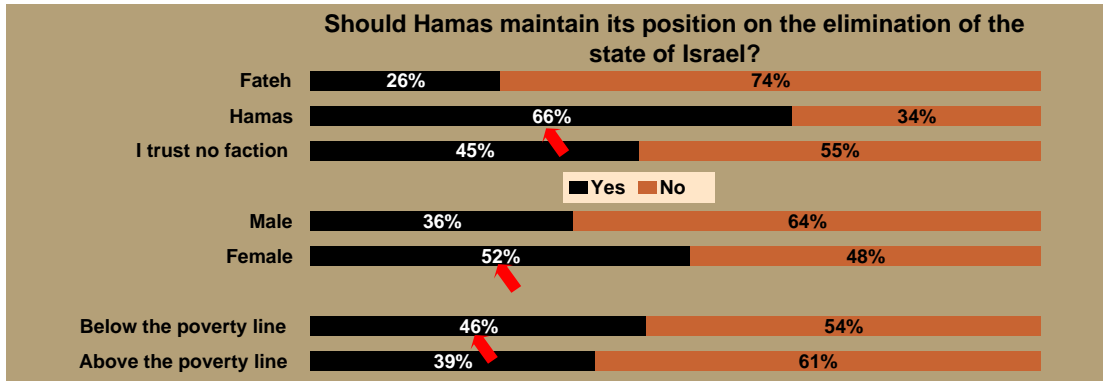
Meanwhile, a higher percentage of respondents who oppose a peace agreement with Israel (77%) than those who support a peace agreement with Israel (34%) believe that Hamas should maintain its position on the elimination of Israel. In comparison with NEC's April survey, it is worth noting that the percentage of respondents opposed to a peace agreement who believe that Hamas should keep its position on the elimination of the state of Israel has increased drastically by 33%, while the percentage of respondents supporting a peace agreement who believe that Hamas should maintain its position has also increased by 4% in that time-frame.



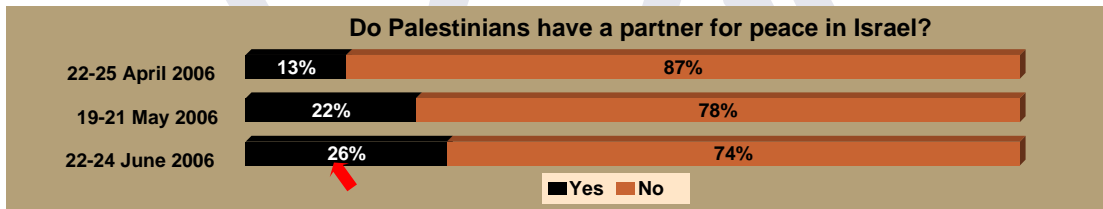
When examining Palestinians' opinions with regard to the Hamas position on the elimination of Israel according to the faction they trust most, it is clear that a significantly higher percentage of Palestinians trusting Hamas (66%) than those trusting Fateh (26%) or even those not trusting any faction (45%) are of the belief that Hamas should uphold its position concerning the state of Israel. In addition, a higher percentage of women (52%) than men (36%) are of the opinion that Hamas should not recognize the state of Israel. Finally, the results indicate that the perception that Hamas should maintain its stance vis-à-vis Israel is more widespread among Palestinians with a monthly household



income that falls below the poverty line (46%) than among Palestinians who are financially relatively better-off (39%).



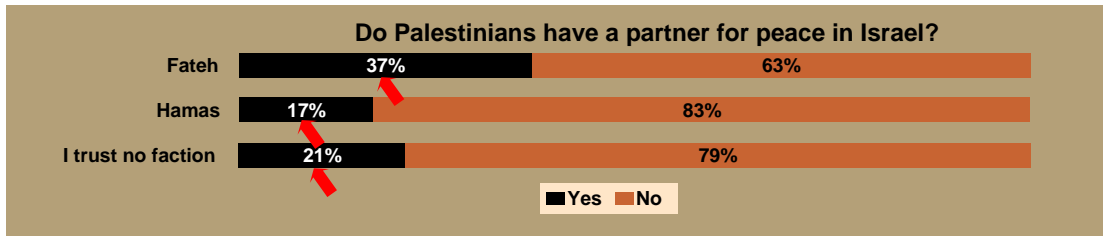
For the third month in a row, NEC has asked interviewees whether or not they believe that Palestinians have a peace partner in Israel. The results in the figure below indicate that the belief that Palestinians have a partner for peace in Israel has doubled since NEC's April survey. Indeed, whereas in April 2006, a mere 13% believed that Palestinians have a peace partner in Israel, this is the case for 26% in the recent June survey. Still, 74% of Palestinians continue to believe that there is no partner for peace in Israel.



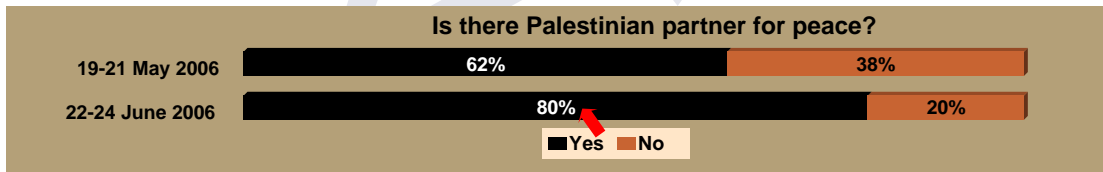
The perception that Palestinians have no partner for peace in Israel is more pronounced among Palestinians who oppose a peace agreement with Israel (85%) than among those who support a peace agreement with Israel (71%). The results are overviewed in the figure below.



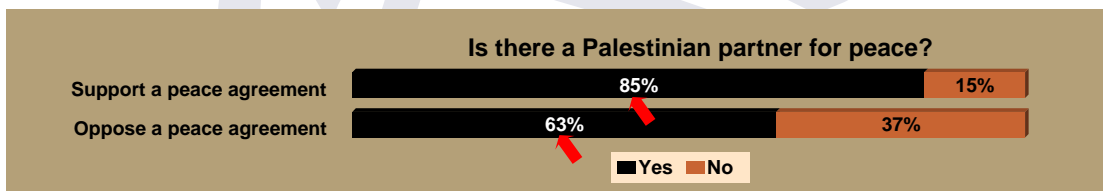
Finally, once more, according to factional trust, a higher percentage of Fateh supporters (37%) than Hamas supporters (17%) and those who do not trust any existing Palestinian faction (21%) believe that Palestinians have a partner for peace in Israel.



It is frequently argued that especially since the Hamas victory in the January 2006 PLC elections, there is no Palestinian partner for peace. However, the survey results point to the opposite. Even more, the perception that there is a Palestinian peace partner has become stronger in the past two months. Whereas in NEC's May survey, 62% of the respondents said that in their opinion there is a Palestinian peace partner, this is the opinion of 80% of the respondents in NEC's most recent June survey. Only 20% of the respondents believe that there is no Palestinian peace partner.



Again, the perception that there is no Palestinian peace partner is more pronounced among Palestinians who oppose a peace agreement with Israel (37%) than among those who support a peace agreement with Israel (15%). The results are overviewed in the figure below.



Finally, the perception that there is a Palestinian peace partner is more pronounced among those who most trust Fateh (87%) than among those who most trust Hamas (74%) or those who do not trust any faction (76%). In addition, this opinion is shared by a higher percentage of Westbankers (82%) than Gazans (76%). Lastly, the results indicate that a lower percentage of women (75%) than men (84%) believe that there is a Palestinian peace partner.

