



## NEC's monthly bulletin on Palestinian perceptions towards politics and economics

### Bulletin # II-1

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#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact:

Jamil Rabah

Near East Consulting

HSBC Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

RAMALLAH

Tel: 02-2961436

Fax: 02-2963114

[info@neareastconsulting.com](mailto:info@neareastconsulting.com)

<http://www.neareastconsulting.com>



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## NEC's monthly bulletin on Palestinian perceptions towards politics and economics

### I. Introduction

*In the period 12-15 January, 2007, Near East Consulting (NEC) conducted a phone survey of over 1212 randomly selected Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem of which 823 were successfully completed. The survey covered a number of issues that fit into NEC's monthly "Palestinian Political Pulse", "Palestinian Peace Pulse", and "Palestinian Security Monitor" with the aim of regularly monitoring Palestinian perceptions of their living conditions and the political situation. These include, inter-alia, factional trust and trust in political figures, Palestinians' feeling of security since the PLC elections, attitudes towards the domestic political crisis, and support for a peace agreement with Israel.*

*It is worth noting that the margin of error is +/- 3.4% with a 95% confidence level.*

### II. Main findings

#### A. Security and the internal situation:

- 48% of Palestinians feel less secure since the January 2006 elections, as compared to 44% in December 2006;
- The majority of Palestinians (91%) of the Palestinians are extremely concerned (56%) or somewhat concerned (35%) about the current situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
- 18% are concerned because of the economic hardship that their household is facing (compared to 32% in December), 26% are concerned because of the general absence of security for their families (compared to 30% in December), while 42% are concerned because of the internal power struggle (compared to 21% in December).
- 24% blame Hamas for the recent internal problems, 22% blame Fateh, and 54% blame both equally. With respect to the security agency Palestinians blame most, 30% put the blame on the Executive Force of Hamas, 15% on the Preventive Security, 5% mentioned various other security agencies, and 37% blamed all equally;
- 79% of the Palestinians believe that the Executive Force should be integrated within the other security forces;
- 50% think that the responsibility of the security forces should be in the hands of the president, 28% think it should rest with the prime minister, and 23% believe that it should be the responsibility of both: the Presidency, and the government;



- 56% do not think that a civil war is likely (compared to 59% in December). This is probably attributed to the belief of 76% of the Palestinians who think that the crisis between Fateh and Hamas will end soon.

### *B. National dialogue and the future steps:*

- 57% support Abu Mazen's call for **presidential** elections (22% strongly support and 35% support to some extent);
- 58% support Abu Mazen's call for **PLC** elections (23% strongly support and 35% supports to a certain extent). In December, still 68% supported Abu Mazen's' call for early presidential and PLC elections;
- Despite their support for elections, 63% of the Palestinians believe that such a call will lead to an intensification of the current internal crisis. Only 37% believe that elections will end the current crisis. In comparison with December, 68% of the respondents still said that early elections will bring an end to the current crisis;
- 51% believe that Abu Mazen should withdraw his call for early elections, while 49% believe that he should maintain his position;
- In contrast, 94% believe that resumption of the National Dialogue for a two-week period is a good initiative and 72% believe that it will lead to positive results;
- 50% of the respondents believe that, if elections were held today, they would vote for the same faction as they did in the last elections, 12% said that they will vote for another faction, while 32% said that they will not cast their vote in future elections;
- The majority of the respondents said that they will vote for Fateh in the next elections (40%), while 23% said that they will give their vote to Hamas;
- President Abbas seems to be the most likely to gain from new presidential elections. When compared with other potential runners for the presidential elections, 38% mentioned Abu Mazen, 20% mentioned Marwan Barghouthi, 18% mentioned Ismael Hanieh, and 7% mentioned Mustapha Barghouthi. However, 20% said that they will not participate in new presidential elections.

### *C. Factions and leaders:*

- 53% most trust Abu Mazen; 47% most trust Ismael Hanieh;
- 71% do not wish Abu Mazen to resign;
- 53% of the respondents think that Abu Mazen is doing enough to end the crisis between Fateh and Hamas and a similar percentage (52%) think that Hanieh is exerting enough effort to end the crisis between the two factions;
- 40% most trust Fateh (compared to 32% in December), 26% most trust Hamas (compared to 27% in December), while 27% do not trust any faction (compared to 35% in December). Fateh has considerably more popular support than Hamas in the Gaza Strip (48% versus 28%).



**D. The Hamas government:**

- 60% believe Hamas has failed to deliver on its campaign promises because it did not get the opportunity, 14% think that Hamas did not utilize the opportunities at its disposal, 17% feel Hamas is incompetent, while 9% think that the Hamas government did not fail to deliver on its campaign promises;
- 33% believe that the level of nepotism in the public sector has dropped since Hamas came to power compared to 29% who said that it increased, while 38% said that it remained the same;
- 52% believe that the time did not come yet for the Hamas government to step down while 48% believe that the movement should step down.

**E. The Palestinian-Israeli context:**

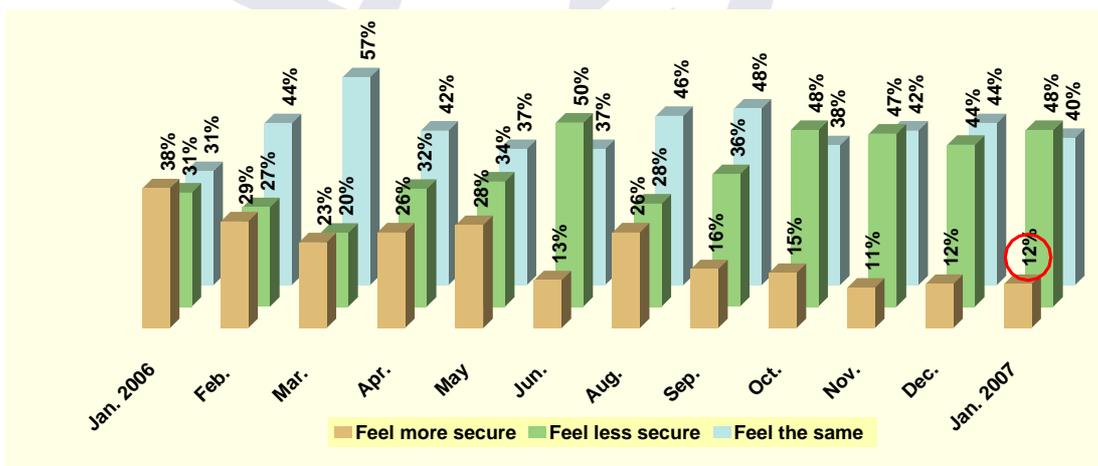
- 72% support a peace settlement with Israel, compared to 77% in December;
- 56% believe that Hamas should change its position towards the elimination of Israel (a drop of 5% since December).

**III. Security and the Internal Situation**

**A. Feeling of security**

The latest clashes in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank between Fateh and Hamas supporters did not contribute to easing the feeling of apprehension amongst the Palestinian situation. As indicated in figure 1, below, 48% of the Palestinians said that they feel less secure since Hamas came to power, an increase of 17% since the organization won the PLC elections in January of 2006.

Figure 1: Feeling of security since the elections



The absence of security is undoubtedly stronger in some sectors of the population than amongst others. As overviewed in table 1, below, the feeling of insecurity is stronger in



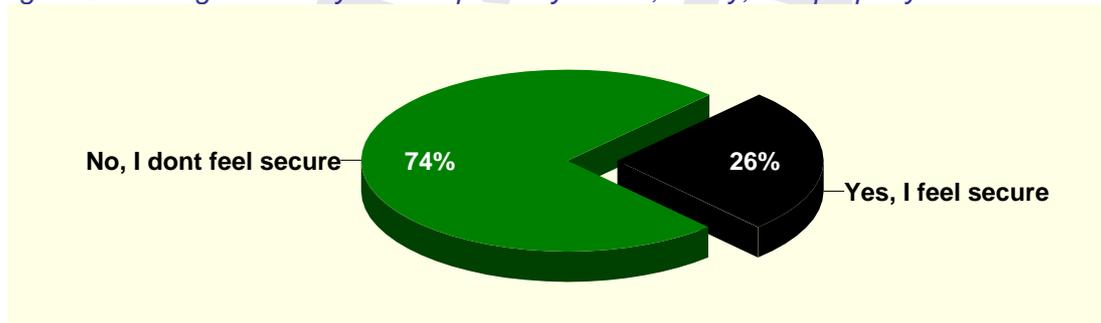
the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank. While 58% of the respondents in the Gaza Strip said that they do not feel secure, the percentage is 42% in the West Bank. Moreover, the highest feeling of insecurity is amongst 69% of those trusting Fateh, as opposed to 27% among those trusting Hamas.

Table 1: *Feeling of security since the elections according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust*

Variable		I feel secure	I do not feel secure	My feeling of security remained the same
Region of residence	West Bank	11%	42%	47%
	Gaza Strip	15%	58%	26%
Factional trust	Hamas	31%	27%	42%
	Fateh	4%	69%	27%
	I trust no faction	7%	44%	49%

As illustrated in figure 2, below, when respondents were asked about how safe they feel about their families and properties nowadays, 74% said that they do not feel safe.

Figure 2: *Feeling of security with respect to yourself, family, and property*



Lack of security is evident even among Hamas supporters (63%), albeit at a lower rate than among Fateh supporters (80%) and among those who do not trust any faction (76%). Also, the feeling of insecurity is stronger in the Gaza Strip (81%) than in the West Bank (71%).

Table 2: *Feeling of security with respect to yourself, family, and property according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust*

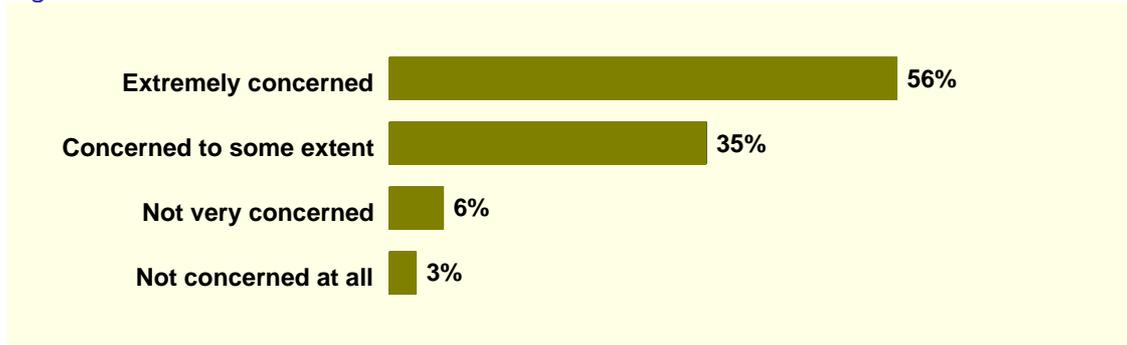
Variable	Value	I feel secure	No I don't feel secure
Region of residence	West Bank	29%	71%
	Gaza Strip	19%	81%
Factional trust	Hamas	37%	63%
	Fateh	19%	81%
	I trust no faction	24%	76%

**B. Reasons for concern**



The strong feeling of insecurity is also substantiated by the high percentage of Palestinians who feel concerned about the situation in general. As illustrated below in figure 2, only 9% said that they are not really concerned about the situation, while 56% said that they are extremely concerned and 35% are concerned to a certain extent.

Figure 3: Level of concern



Again, the high level of concern about the Palestinian situation is more intense in the Gaza Strip and among Fateh supporters. Although the majority of Hamas supporters are 'concerned' indeed, the highest level of 'lack of concern' is among Hamas supporters (14%).

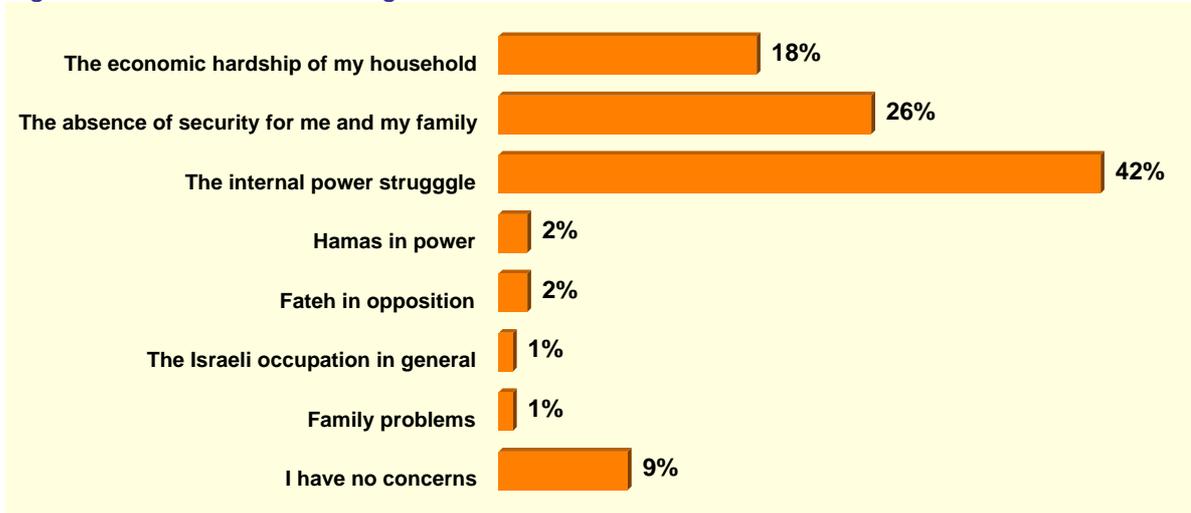
Table 3: Level of concern according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

Variable	Value	Extremely concerned	Concerned to some extent	Not very concerned	Not concerned at all
Region of residence	West Bank	53%	38%	6%	3%
	Gaza Strip	63%	30%	6%	1%
Factional trust	Hamas	51%	35%	11%	3%
	Fateh	59%	34%	6%	2%
	I trust no faction	61%	33%	4%	4%

Despite the economic and social hardships that the Palestinians are currently facing, the majority of the respondents indicated that the main reason for their apprehension and concern is the security situation. As indicated in figure 3, below, 68% of the respondents attributed their concern either to the "internal power struggle between Fateh and Hamas" (42%), compared to 21% in December 2006, or to the absence of personal security (26%). Only 18% said that the main reason for their concern is the economic situation, compared to 32% in December.



Figure 4: Main issue for feeling of concern



Again, the absence of personal security as the reason for concern is more evident in the Gaza Strip (32%) than in the West Bank (23%). However, as evident in table 4, below, the economy as the main issue of concern is more pronounced in the West Bank (22%) than in the Gaza Strip (13%) and among Fateh supporters (19%) than among Hamas supporters (13%).

Table 4: Main issue for feeling of concern according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

		The economic hardship of my household	The absence of security for me and my family	The internal power struggle	Other reasons	I have no concerns
Region of residence	West Bank	22%	23%	40%	7%	9%
	Gaza Strip	13%	32%	45%	4%	6%
Factional trust	Hamas	13%	26%	41%	8%	12%
	Fateh	19%	25%	43%	6%	7%
	I trust no faction	20%	26%	42%	0%	7%

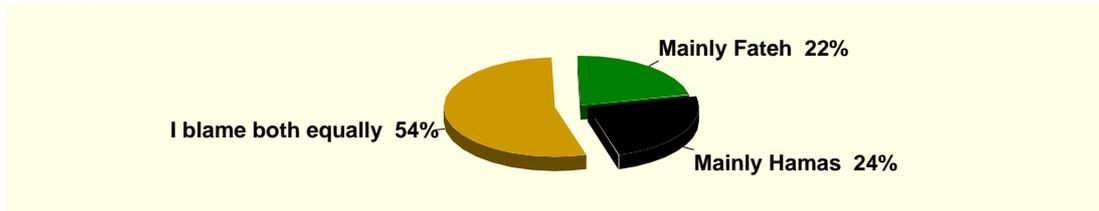
C.

D. Attitudes towards the responsibilities of Fateh and Hamas in the security situation

In general, the Palestinian public equally blames Fateh and Hamas for the deterioration in the security conditions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. As portrayed in figure 5, below, 24% of the respondents blame Hamas and 22% blame Fateh, while 54% blame both factions.



Figure 5: Perception about the responsibility for the recent problems between Fateh and Hamas



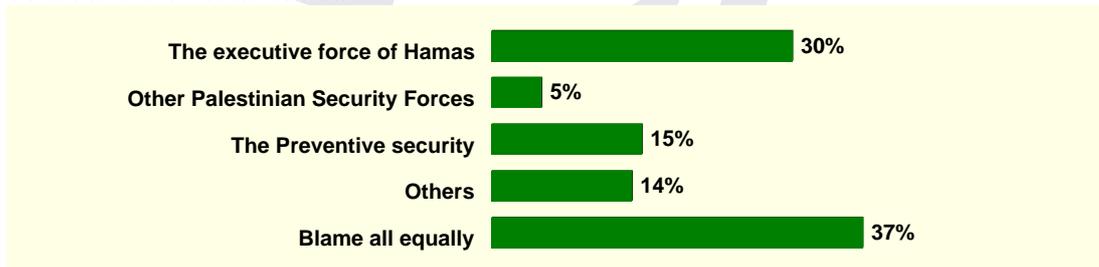
Although the results for January are consistent with those of previous months, it seems that putting the blame on Hamas has increased in the Gaza Strip while blaming Fateh has increased in the West Bank. While 25% of Gazans blamed Hamas in November for the clashes, the percentage stands now at 31%. Conversely, while 20% of West Bank respondents blamed in November, the percentage stands now at 22%.

Table 5: Perception about the responsibility for the recent problems between Fateh and Hamas according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

		Mainly Hamas	Mainly Fateh	I blame both
Region of residence	West Bank	20%	22%	57%
	Gaza Strip	31%	21%	48%
Factional trust	Hamas	4%	55%	41%
	Fateh	51%	4%	45%
	I trust no faction	9%	13%	78%

More concretely, when respondents were asked about the security agency that they blame for the clashes in Gaza, the largest percentage (37%) blamed all security agencies, 30% blamed the Executive Force of Hamas, and 15% blamed the Preventive Security forces, as indicated in figure 7, below.

Figure 6: Perception about the responsible faction for the recent problems in Gaza between Fateh and Hamas



Again, blame on the Executive Force was higher in the Gaza Strip (40%) than in the West Bank<sup>1</sup>, where the blame is significantly lower (23%). Expectedly, Fateh supporters mainly place the responsibility for the recent problems in the Gaza Strip on the Executive Force (62%), while Hamas supporters mainly blame the Preventive Security (39%).

<sup>1</sup> The Executive Force of Hamas operates primarily in the Gaza Strip and does not have evidence in the West Bank.

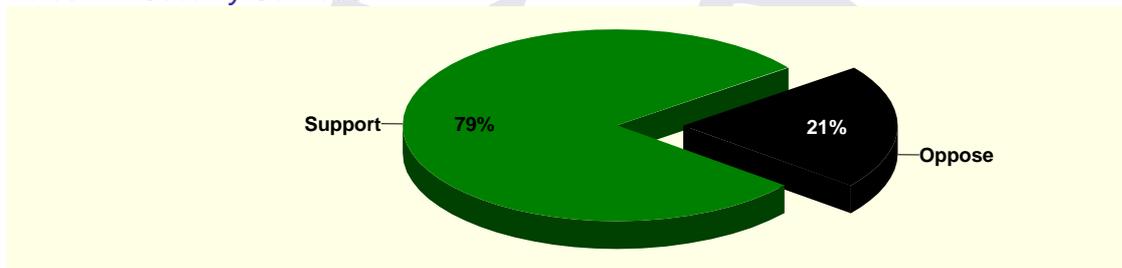


Table 6: Perception about the responsible faction for the recent problems in Gaza between Fateh and Hamas according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

		The Executive Force	Other Palestinian Security Forces	The Preventative security	Others	Blame all equally
Residence	West Bank	23%	6%	15%	16%	40%
	Gaza Strip	40%	5%	14%	10%	31%
Factions	Hamas	5%	14%	39%	18%	23%
	Fateh	62%	1%	4%	7%	26%
	I trust no faction	13%	3%	9%	15%	61%

The seemingly clear position that people have towards the Executive Force perhaps explains why 79% of the respondents want the Executive Force to be integrated within the Palestinian security forces. Another reason behind the strong popular support for this integration is perhaps a result of the strong feeling of Palestinians in favor of a national unity government.

Figure 7: Support or opposition to the integration of the Hamas Executive Force into the Palestinian Security Services



As indicated in table 7, below, support for this integration is stronger, however among Hamas supporters (78%) than among Fateh supporters (72%), while the level of support for the issue reaches identical percentages in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (78%)

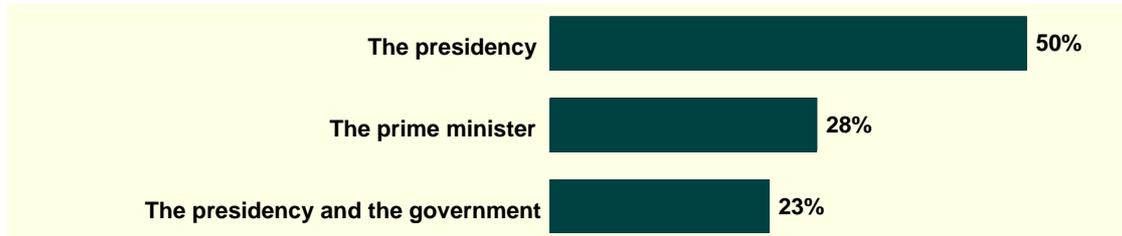
Table 7: Support or oppose the integration of the Hamas Executive Force into the Palestini Security Services according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

		Support	Oppose
Region of residence	West Bank	78%	22%
	Gaza Strip	78%	22%
Factional trust	Hamas	76%	24%
	Fateh	72%	28%
	I trust no faction	85%	15%

Finally, when respondents were asked about who should be responsible for the security agencies, the majority seem to choose the president and the presidency (50%), while 28% prefer that it is controlled by the prime minister.



Figure 8: The responsibility of controlling the Palestinian security forces is that of...



As expected, the majority of Fateh supporters (81%) prefer the security agencies to be under the responsibility of the president and only 10% would like to see it under the responsibility of the prime minister. As for Hamas supporters, a significant percentage (21%) still believes that the president should have control over the security agencies, while 56% said the prime minister. No significant differences occur in the attitudes of Westbankers and Gazans on this issue.

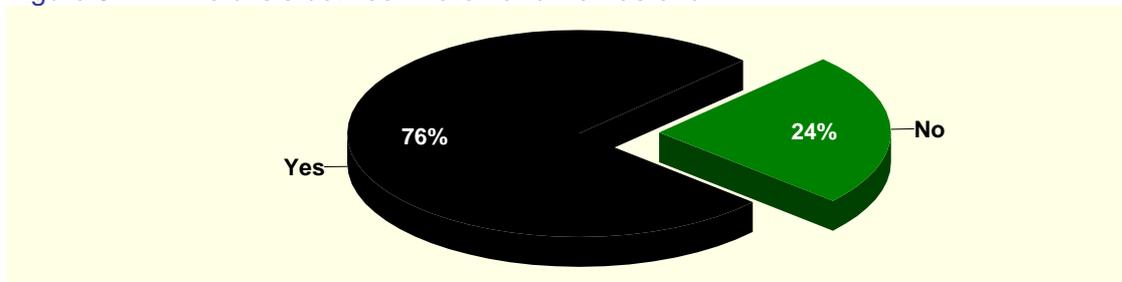
Table 8: Perception about who is responsible for the security forces according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

		The president	The prime minister	The presidency and the government
Region of residence	West Bank	49%	28%	23%
	Gaza Strip	51%	26%	23%
Factional trust	Hamas	21%	56%	23%
	Fateh	81%	10%	10%
	I trust no faction	32%	24%	44%

**E. Future prospects and reconciliation**

The recent developments and prospects for reconciliation between Fateh and Hamas probably explain why the majority of the respondents are optimistic about an end to the crisis between the two. As indicated in figure 9, below, 76% of the Palestinians believe that the crisis between Fateh and Hamas will end.

Figure 9: Will the crisis between Fateh and Hamas end?





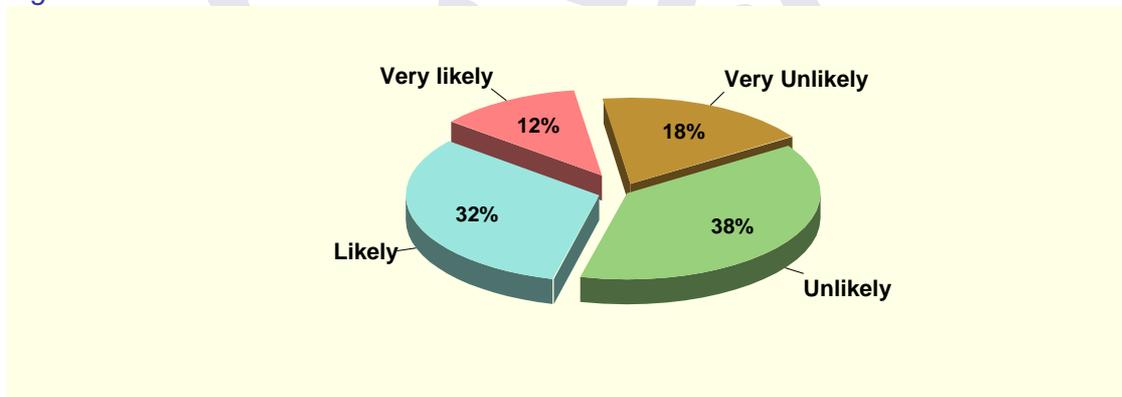
This optimism is shared by all, including Gazans and Fateh supporters. The optimism is slightly higher in the West Bank (78%) than in the Gaza Strip (74%) and higher among Hamas supporters (82%) than among Fateh supporters (72%). These results are overviewed in table 9, below.

Table 9: Perception about the likelihood of reduced tension between Fateh and Hamas according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

		Yes, it will	No, it will not
Region of residence	<b>West Bank</b>	78%	22%
	<b>Gaza Strip</b>	74%	26%
Factional trust	<b>Hamas</b>	82%	18%
	<b>Fateh</b>	72%	28%
	<b>I trust no faction</b>	76%	24%

The high level of optimism among the various sectors of the Palestinian population is one of the reasons why the majority of the Palestinian population does not believe that a civil war<sup>2</sup> is likely. As indicated in figure 10, below, 56% believe that it is either very unlikely (18%) or unlikely (38%), compared to 44% who think that it is either very likely (12%) or likely (32%).

Figure 10: The likelihood of a civil war



While the majority of Palestinians think that a civil war is unlikely, the majority of Fateh supporters think otherwise. As indicated in table 10, below 53% of Fateh supporters think that a civil war is either very likely (15%) or likely (38%), as compared to Hamas supporters of which only 32% of Hamas supporters who believe that a civil war is either very likely (8%) or likely (24%).

<sup>2</sup> Historically, the Palestinian internal tension was characterized by the ability of the contending parties to contain any rift from escalating to a wider conflict. This was evident when the Palestine Liberation Organization and its various factions were stationed in Lebanon. In addition, the political divisions among the Palestinian are not drawn on religious or sectarian bases which often render civil wars more plausible and conceivable.



Table 10: Perception about the likelihood of a civil war according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

		Likelihood of a civil war			
		Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
Region of residence	West Bank	11%	32%	37%	21%
	Gaza Strip	13%	32%	40%	15%
Factional trust	Hamas	8%	24%	44%	24%
	Fateh	15%	38%	33%	14%
	I trust no faction	12%	32%	38%	19%

#### IV. National Dialogue and the future steps

The apprehension of Palestinians towards the security situation and the present sidelining of the issue of the Israeli occupation in the current Palestinian discourse explains why the majority of Palestinians want a continuation of the national dialogue and the establishment of a national unity government. As indicated in figure 11 and table 11, below, 94% of the Palestinians, across all sectors and political affiliations believe that the initiative to resume the national dialogue is a positive one.

Figure 11: Perception about the new initiative concerning national dialogue

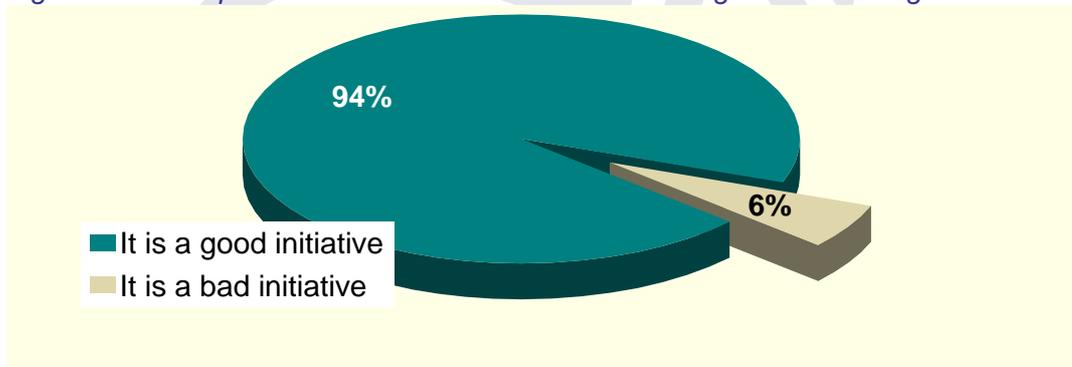


Table 11: Perception about the new initiative concerning national dialogue according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

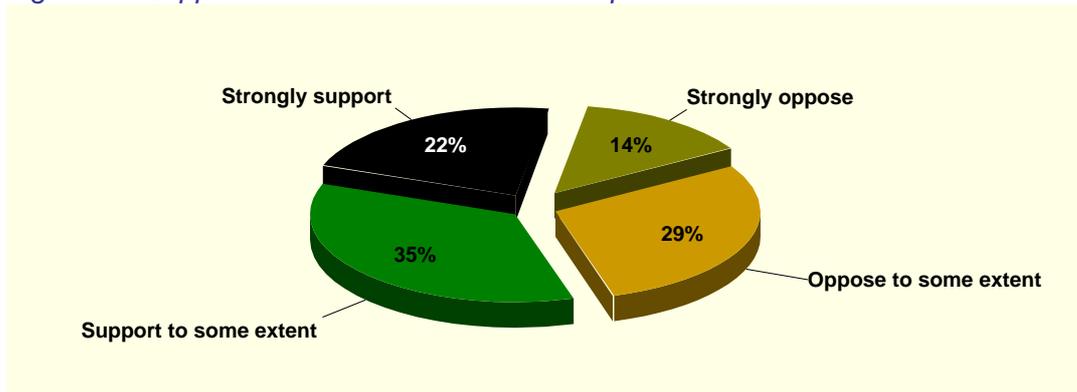
		It is a good initiative	It is a bad initiative
Region of residence	West Bank	93%	7%
	Gaza Strip	95%	5%
Poverty	Below the poverty line	94%	6%
	Above the poverty line	93%	7%
Factional trust	Hamas	94%	6%
	Fateh	95%	5%
	I trust no faction	90%	10%



**A. Level of support for early elections**

Currently, more Palestinians support presidential elections than oppose it. As overviewed in figure 12, below, 57% support Presidential elections and 43% oppose it.

Figure 12: Support of Abu Mazen's call for new presidential elections



Support for presidential elections is more pronounced in the Gaza Strip (60%) than in the West Bank (55%), among Fateh supporters (72%) than among Hamas supporters (45%), and among those who live below the poverty line (55%). Support for presidential elections is least among those who do not trust any faction (46%). These results are overviewed in table 12, below.

Table 12: Support of Abu Mazen's call for new presidential elections according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

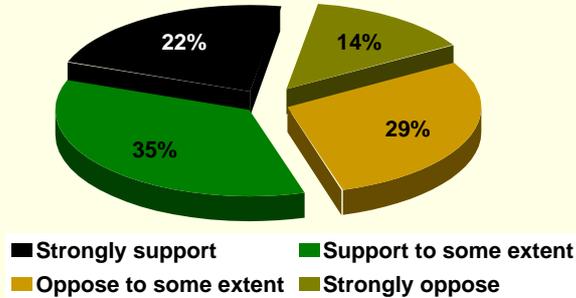
		Strongly support	Support to some extent	Oppose to some extent	Strongly oppose
Region of residence	West Bank	19%	36%	30%	15%
	Gaza Strip	27%	33%	27%	13%
Poverty	Below poverty	23%	35%	29%	13%
	Above poverty	18%	33%	29%	19%
Factional trust	Hamas	18%	27%	35%	20%
	Fateh	32%	40%	17%	11%
	PFLP	27%	27%	45%	0%
	Islamic Jihad	25%	40%	15%	20%
	Others	16%	42%	26%	16%
	I trust no faction	13%	33%	39%	15%

When examining the level of support for early elections for the PLC, one notices that there is a major drop in support for early elections. As indicated in figure 13, below, while in December 68% of the Palestinians declared their support for early elections, the results for January 2007 are 57%.



Figure 13: Support of Abu Mazen's call for new PLC elections

Support for new elections this month has dropped (-11%) from where it stood last month in December at 68%. 43% of respondents this month oppose Abu Mazen's call for new elections compared to only 32% in December that shared this opposition.



Again, support for early elections is stronger in the Gaza Strip (64%) than in the West Bank (55%), among Fateh supporters (89%), and significantly less among those respondents who said that they do not trust any faction (48%). As revealed in table 13, support for early PLC elections among Hamas supporters does not exceed 24%.

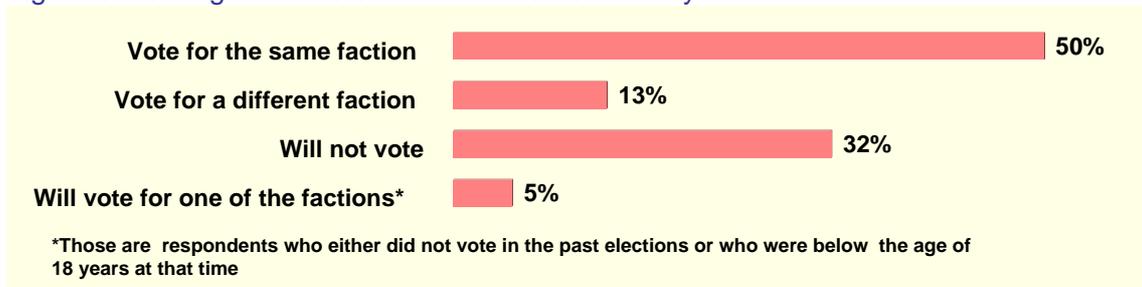
Table 13: Support of Abu Mazen's call for new PLC elections according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

		Strongly support	Support to some extent	Oppose to some extent	Strongly oppose
Region of residence	West Bank	18%	37%	28%	17%
	Gaza Strip	31%	33%	25%	11%
Poverty	Below poverty	23%	37%	27%	13%
	Above poverty	22%	31%	28%	19%
Factional trust	Hamas	4%	20%	42%	33%
	Fateh	46%	43%	8%	3%
	I trust no faction	12%	36%	38%	15%

### B. Palestinian voting behavior

As overviewed in figure 15, below, the majority of respondents (50%) said that they will vote for the same faction if elections were held today, 13% said that they will change to another faction, and 32% said that they will not participate in the elections.

Figure 14: Voting behavior if elections were held today





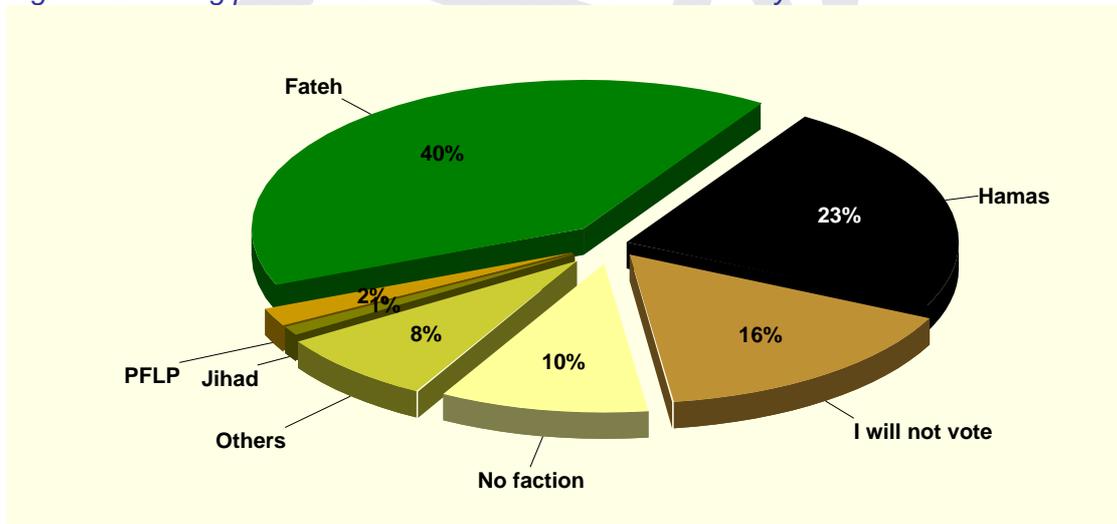
As outlined in table 14, below, 67% of Hamas supporters and 62% of Fateh supporters said that they will vote for the same faction. However, 63% of those who do not trust any faction said that they will not participate in such elections.

Table 14: Voting behavior if elections were held today according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

		Vote for the same faction	Vote for a different faction	Will not vote	I will vote for one of the factions in the next elections
Region of residence	West Bank	48%	12%	35%	5%
	Gaza Strip	53%	13%	29%	5%
Poverty	Below poverty	49%	13%	32%	5%
	Above poverty	54%	10%	30%	6%
Factional trust	Hamas	67%	8%	19%	5%
	Fateh	62%	17%	17%	5%
	I trust no faction	22%	9%	63%	5%

When asked about the faction they will vote for in case elections were held today, the majority (40%) said Fateh, and 23% said that they will vote for Hamas.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 15: Voting preference if PLC elections were held today



The strong attitude towards Fateh is more evident in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank. Whereas 46% of the Gaza respondents said that they will vote for Fateh today, the percentage was 37% in the West Bank. Moreover, it seems that Fateh supporters are more likely to stick to the 'party line' than Hamas supporters. As indicated below,

<sup>3</sup> Voting for an organization does not mean voting for individuals. Support for Fateh, for example, does not necessarily mean support for Fateh candidates, i.e. **attitudes** towards voting (whom you want to vote for) is often different than voting **behavior** (whom you actually vote for)



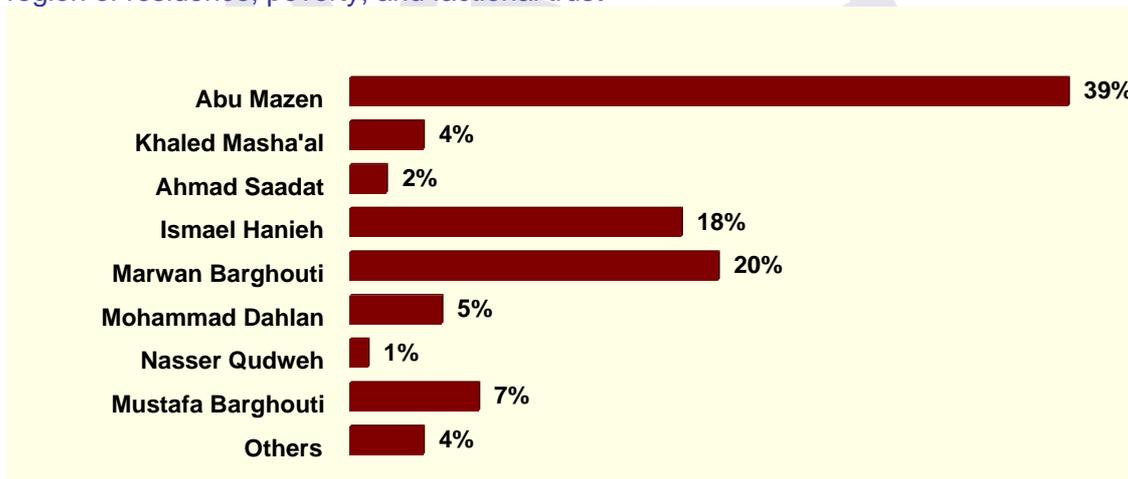
89% of Fateh supporters said that they will vote for Fateh, while 78% of Hamas supporters said that they will vote for Hamas.

Table 15: Voting preference if PLC elections were held today according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

		Hamas	Fateh	PFLP	Jihad	Others	No faction	I will not vote at all
Region	West Bank	22%	37%	2%	1%	8%	11%	19%
	Gaza Strip	24%	46%	1%	1%	7%	9%	12%
Poverty	Below the poverty line	23%	42%	1%	1%	6%	11%	16%
	Above the poverty line	20%	37%	3%	2%	15%	9%	14%
Factional trust	Hamas	78%	5%	1%	1%	2%	4%	11%
	Fateh	2%	89%	0%	0%	2%	2%	4%
	PFLP	0%	20%	50%	0%	20%	0%	10%
	Islamic Jihad	20%	10%	0%	35%	5%	15%	15%
	Others	0%	0%	5%	0%	68%	5%	21%
	I trust no faction	5%	12%	2%	1%	15%	28%	36%

When respondents were asked about which individual they would vote for in case Presidential elections were to be held today, 39% of the respondents mentioned Abu Mazen, 20% would vote for Marwan Barghouti, and 18% prefer Ismael Hanieh.

Figure 16: Voting preference if Presidential elections were held today according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust



Support for Abu Mazen as President is strong in both the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, more among the respondents who are economically less privileged than among the above the poverty line respondents. Support for Abu Mazen among those respondents who trust Fateh is expected.



Marwan Barghouti is the second man for the job if presidential elections would take place. Support for Marwan Barghouti as a possible presidential candidate is higher among West Bankers than among Gazans. Marwan Barghouti is more strongly supported in the West Bank than in the Gaza Strip. Respondents living below the poverty line also favour Marwan Barghouti for president. Support for Marwan Barghouti is highest among those respondents who trust Islamic Jihad, followed by those who do not trust any faction, and only then by those who trust Fateh.

Meanwhile, voting preferences among Palestinians for president do not highly suggest a possible win for Ismael Hanieh. Ismael Hanieh is supported more in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank but lacks the strong support that Abu Mazen holds. However, as with Abu Mazen, Ismael Hanieh is supported slightly more among the below poverty line respondents than among above poverty line respondents but not as significant as the 10% difference between below and above poverty line respondents when it comes to voting for Abu Mazen. As with Fateh supporters, Hamas supporters are more likely to vote for Ismael Hanieh if it comes down to new presidential elections than they would for any other candidate. Voting preferences in case of Presidential elections are detailed in table 16, below.

Table 16: *Voting preference if Presidential elections were held today according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust*

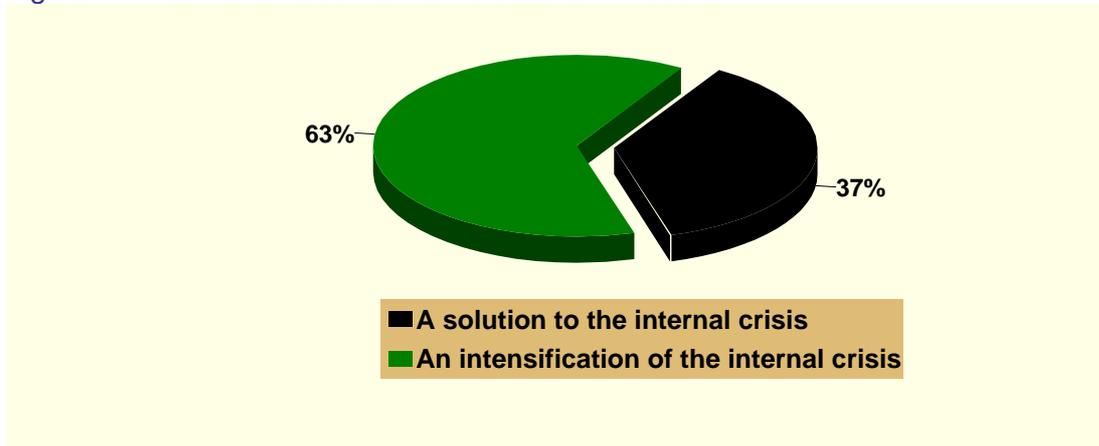
		Abu Mazen	Khaled Mash'al	Ahmad Saadat	Ismael Hanieh	Marwan Barghouti	Mohammad Dahlan	Nasser Qudweh	Abu Ala'	Mustafa Barghouti	Other
Region of residence	West Bank	38%	5%	2%	16%	23%	2%	2%	0%	7%	5%
	Gaza Strip	39%	3%	2%	20%	16%	10%	0%	0%	7%	2%
Poverty	Below the poverty line	41%	5%	1%	19%	20%	5%	1%	0%	6%	2%
	Above the poverty line	31%	3%	3%	17%	21%	6%	3%	0%	8%	10%
Factional trust	Hamas	13%	14%	1%	55%	9%	0%	0%	0%	6%	3%
	Fateh	59%	0%	0%	1%	22%	10%	1%	0%	4%	2%
	I trust no faction	27%	3%	4%	9%	30%	3%	4%	0%	13%	8%

### C. Consequences of Abu Mazen's call for early elections

Palestinians are generally fearful that Abu Mazen's call for early elections will bring some kind of solution to the internal crisis in the oPt. This belief has changed among Palestinians since December when they were first asked about the possible ramifications for Abu Mazen's call for early elections. While in December 63% of the Palestinians believed that Abu Mazen's call for early elections would calm the tension between Fateh and Hamas, the results in January show that 63% believe that early elections will further intensify the internal conflict between Fateh and Hamas.



Figure 17: Abu Mazen's call for new elections will lead to ...



There is no difference between West Bankers and Gazans when it comes to their attitudes about the possible ramifications of new elections. Below poverty line respondents are more hopeful that new elections will lead to some kind of solution between Fateh and Hamas than are above poverty line respondents. More supporters of Fateh have a positive attitude about what new elections would bring than do supporters of Hamas or those who do not trust any faction.

Table 17: Attitudes about the consequences of new elections according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

		Bring a solution to the internal crisis	It will lead to an intensification of the internal crisis
Region of residence	West Bank	36%	64%
	Gaza Strip	36%	64%
Poverty	Below the poverty line	38%	62%
	Above the poverty line	31%	69%
Factional trust	Hamas	19%	81%
	Fateh	57%	43%
	I trust no faction	27%	73%

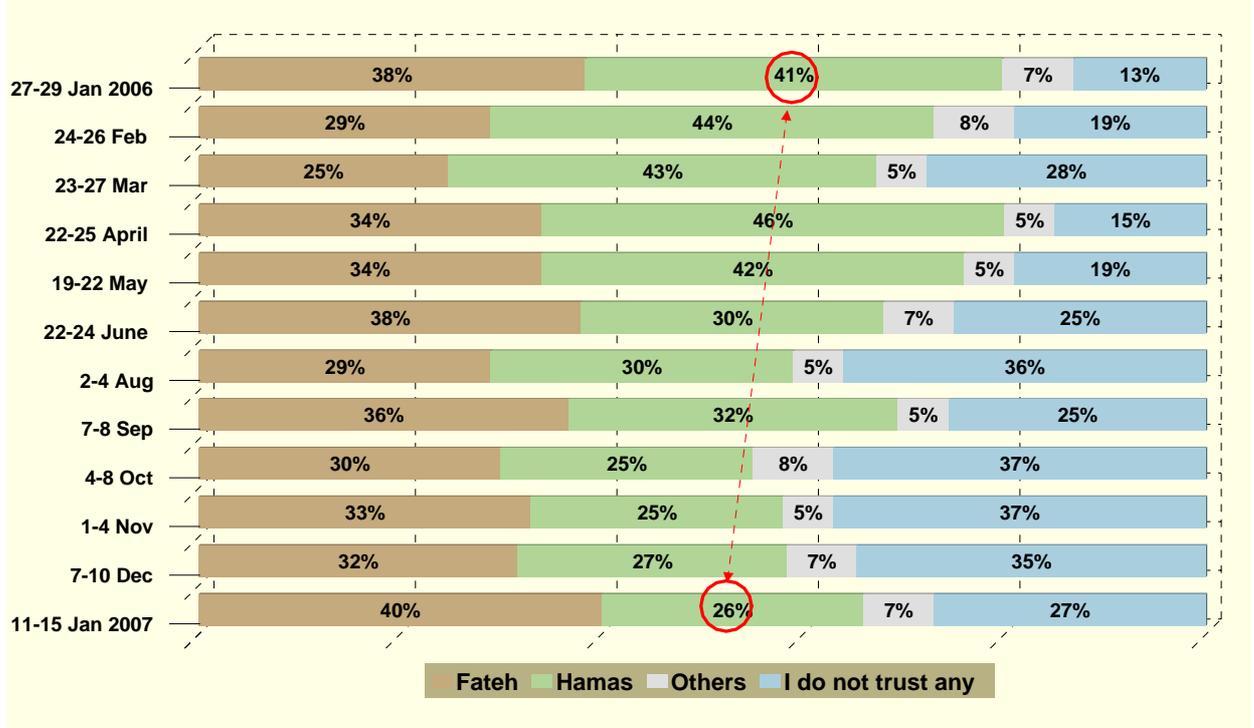
## V. Factions and Leaders

### A. Factional trust

Trust in Fateh seems to have regained some ground in comparison with a year ago in January 2006, whereas trust in Hamas has dwindled dramatically from 1% in January 2006 to 26% today. The percentage of respondents who do not trust any faction has doubled since last year in January and now stands at 27%.



Figure 18: Factional trust (January 2006 till January 2007)



The largest concentration of trust for Fateh can be witnessed among Gazans. This is also the case for respondents in the Gaza Strip who trust Hamas. The West Bank contains a higher concentration of respondents who do not trust any faction. Trust for Hamas and Fateh is higher among respondents who live below the poverty line than among those respondents who live above the poverty line.

Table 18: Factional trust according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

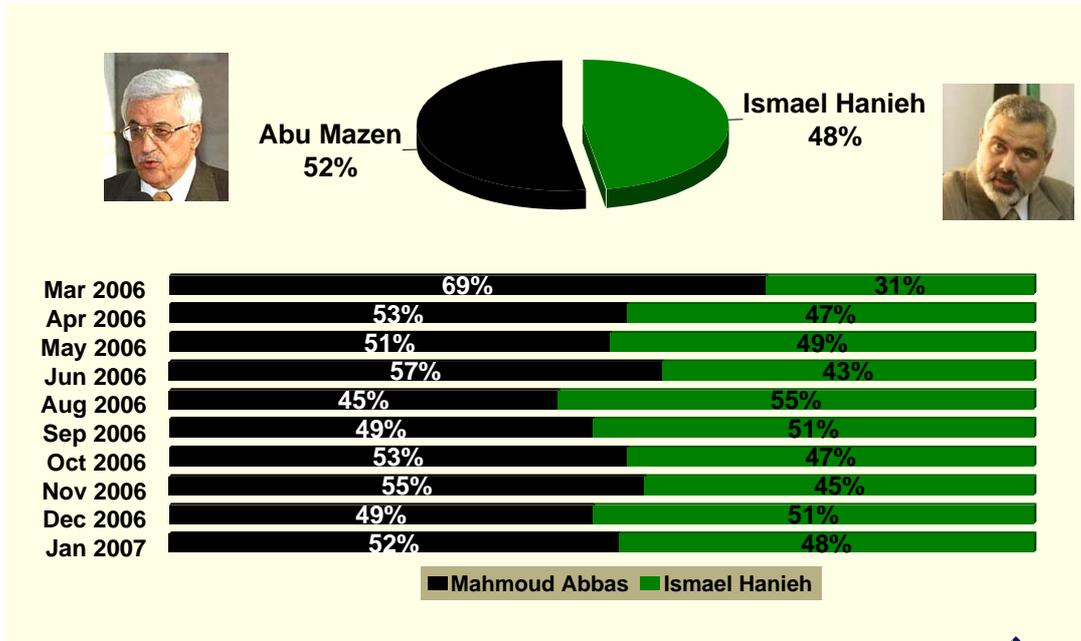
Region of residence		Factional trust					
		Hamas	Fateh	PFLP	Jihad	Others	no faction
Region of residence	West Bank	25%	35%	2%	4%	4%	31%
	Gaza Strip	28%	48%	1%	2%	1%	20%
Poverty	Below poverty	27%	42%	1%	2%	1%	27%
	Above poverty	21%	37%	2%	8%	7%	25%

**B. Trust in leaders**

Trust in Abu Mazen and Ismael Hanieh continues to shift and hover around a split percentage of 50/50 give or take a few points. Since last month, trust in Abu Mazen has increased by 3% to 52% at the expense of trust in Ismael Hanieh (48%)



Figure 19: Trust in Abu Mazen vs. Ismael Hanieh



According to region of residence, Abu Mazen is slightly more trusted in the Gaza Strip (55%) than he is in the West Bank (51%), while the opposite picture appears when it concerns trust in Ismael Hanieh. Also overviewed in table 19, below, is the high trust among Fateh supporters (91%) in Abu Mazen, and the equally high trust among Hamas supporters (90%) in Ismael Hanieh. Palestinians who do not trust any faction clearly tend to trust Ismael Hanieh (62%) over Mahmoud Abbas (38%).

Table 19: Trust in Abu Mazen vs. Ismael Hanieh according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

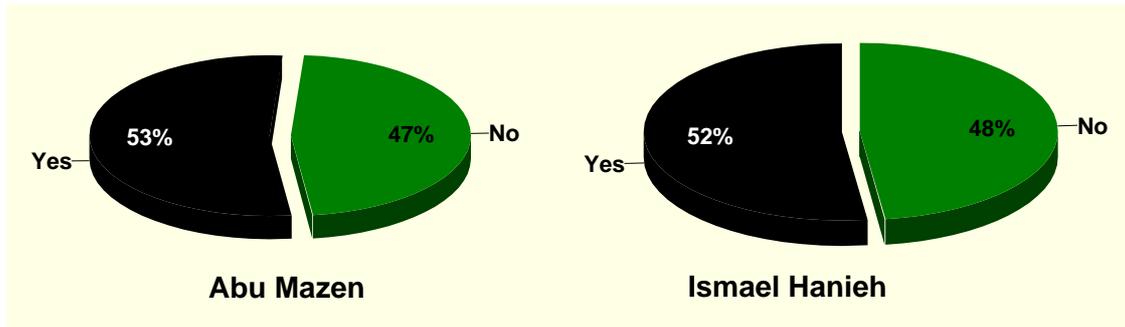
Variable	Value	Mahmoud Abbas	Ismael Hanieh
Region of residence	West Bank	51%	49%
	Gaza Strip	55%	45%
Poverty	Above the poverty line	55%	45%
	Below the poverty line	53%	47%
Factional trust	Hamas	10%	90%
	Fateh	91%	9%
	I trust no faction	38%	62%

When asked about whether or not Abu Mazen and Ismael Hanieh are doing enough to end the current crisis between Fateh and Hamas, both leaders received about the same evaluation. In general, 53% of Palestinians believe that Abu Mazen is doing enough to end the crisis, while 52% believe that Ismael Hanieh is doing enough. Palestinians'



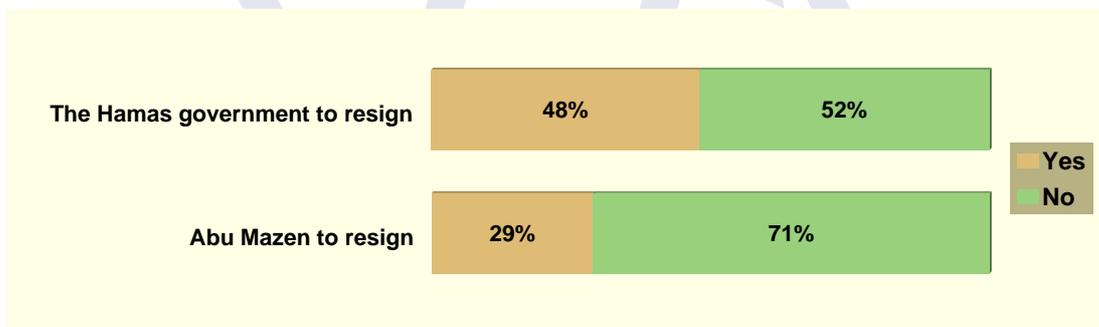
views on both leaders' efforts to end the inter-factional crisis do not differ significantly according to their factional preference.

Figure 20: Are Abu Mazen and Ismael Hanieh doing enough to end the current crisis between Fateh and Hamas



Palestinian opinions about the possible resignation of the Hamas government are more divided than their opinions about whether or not Abu Mazen should resign. Whereas 48% of the Palestinian public feels that the Hamas government should resign, 71% believe that Abu Mazen should not resign.

Figure 21: Feelings about the resignations of the President and the government



A higher percentage of Gazans (50%), those below the poverty line (49%), those trusting Fateh (78%) and those not trusting any faction (44%) than their counterparts believe that the time has come for the Hamas government to resign.

As for the question if the time has come for Abu Mazen to resign, there are no significant differences according to the region in which respondents reside and their poverty level. However, whereas 40% of Hamas supporters believe that the time has come for Abu Mazen to resign (40%), this is the case for 33% of Palestinians who do not trust any faction and 22% of Fateh supporters. The results are overviewed in table 20, below.



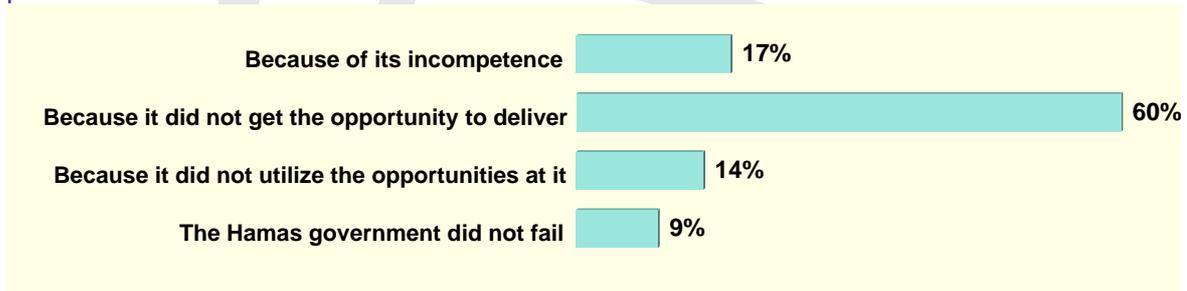
Table 20: *Feelings about the resignations of the President and the government according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust*

		Has the time come for the Hamas government to resign?		Has the time come for Abu Mazen to resign?	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Region of residence	West Bank	46%	54%	29%	71%
	Gaza Strip	50%	50%	31%	69%
Poverty	Below the poverty line	49%	51%	29%	71%
	Above the poverty line	45%	55%	32%	68%
Factional trust	Hamas	13%	87%	40%	60%
	Fateh	78%	12%	22%	78%
	I trust no faction	44%	56%	33%	67%

## VI. The Hamas government

A majority of Palestinians (60%) are convinced that the main reason behind the failure of Hamas to deliver on its campaign promises because it was never given the opportunity to deliver for whatever reason. Furthermore, 14% of the respondents think that Hamas did not utilize the opportunities that they had at their disposal, 17% feel that the reason for Hamas's failure is because of their incompetence, while 9% of respondents do not believe that Hamas has failed in delivering on its campaign promises.

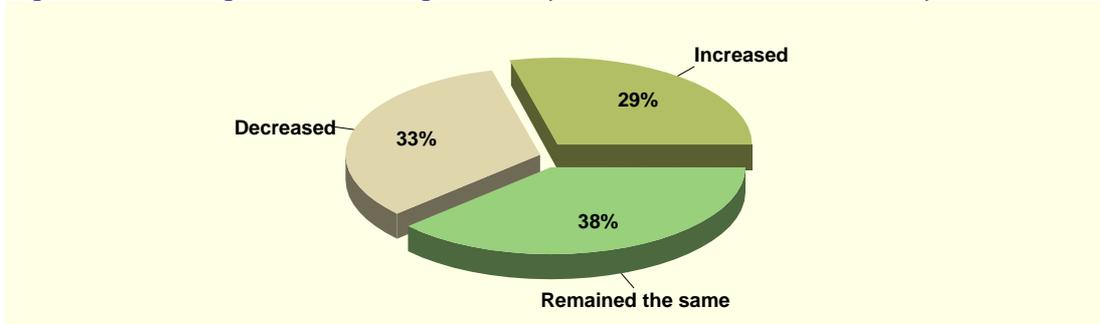
Figure 22: *Reasons behind the belief that Hamas failed to deliver on its campaign promises*



As illustrated in figure 23, below, the majority of the Palestinians believe that the degree of nepotism in the public sector since Hamas came to power has either decreased (33%) or remained the same (38%), whereas 29% of respondents feel that it has increased. The results to this question significantly differ according to factional preferences. Whereas 60% of Hamas supporters said that the degree of nepotism has increased since Hamas came to power, the percentage is 19% among Fateh supporters and 27% among the respondents who do not trust any faction.



Figure 23: Feelings about the degree of nepotism since Hamas came to power....

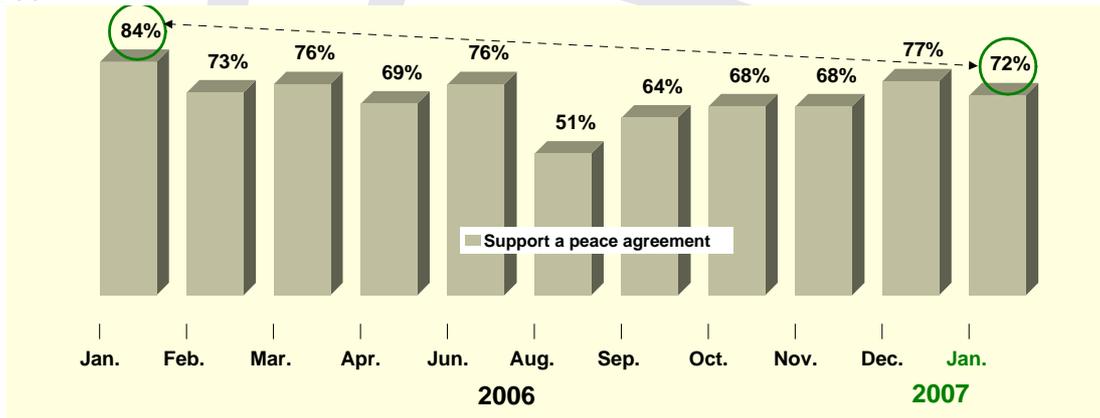


## VII. The Palestinian-Israeli context

### A. Support for a peace agreement with Israel

The level of support for a peace process remains high, but has decreased from where it once stood in January 2006 by about 12%. This month, 72% of Palestinians support a peace agreement with Israel. The lowest level of support for a peace agreement was witnessed in August 2006 during the Israeli-Lebanon war and during the Gaza incursions. However, Palestinians remain hopeful and continue to support a peace agreement with Israel despite the conflict.

Figure 24: Level of support for the peace process: Comparison between Jan 2006 - Jan 2007



Support for a peace agreement with Israel is higher among Gaza Strip residents (77%) than among Westbankers (69%), and slightly higher among Palestinians above the poverty line (74%) than among those below the poverty line (72%). Not unexpectedly,



more respondents that trust Fateh support a peace agreement with Israel compared to those that trust Hamas or who do not trust any faction.

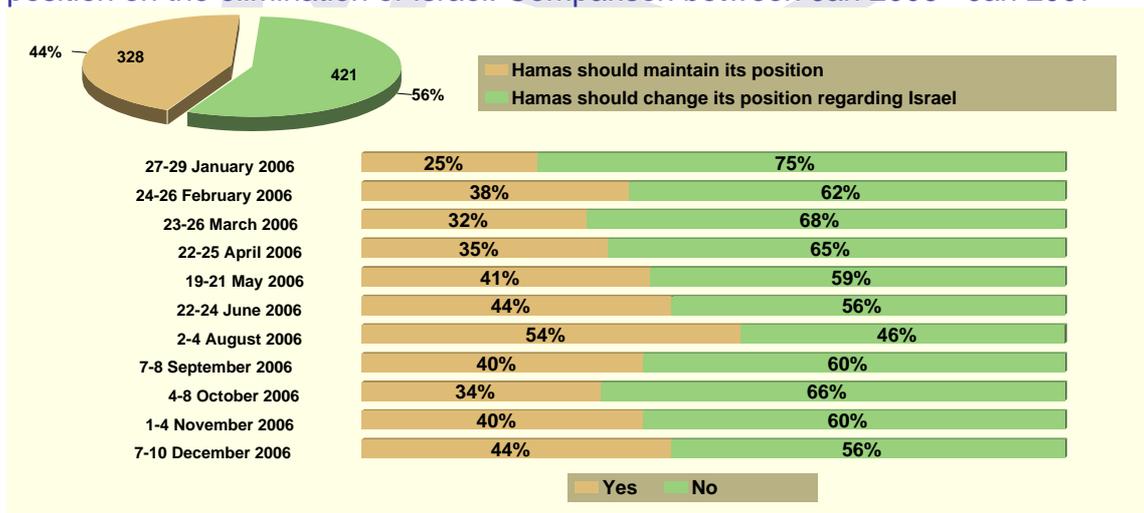
Table 21: Level of support for the peace process: Comparison between Jan 2006 - Jan 2007 according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

Variable	Value	I support a peace settlement with Israel	I oppose a peace settlement with Israel
Region of residence	West Bank	69%	31%
	Gaza Strip	77%	23%
Poverty	Above the poverty line	74%	26%
	Below the poverty line	72%	28%
Factional trust	Hamas	53%	47%
	Fateh	85%	15%
	I trust no faction	72%	28%

**B. Attitude towards the position of Hamas towards Israel**

In general, 44% of public opinion believes that Hamas should maintain its position on the elimination of Israel. This indicates to an increase of 4% who share this view I comparison to last month. In comparison to one year ago, the percentage of Palestinians who are of the opinion that Hamas should maintain its position with regard to Israel has increased by 19 points. The evolution in opinions on this issue over the past year is overviewed in figure 25 below.

Figure 25: Palestinian perceptions about whether Hamas should maintain its position on the elimination of Israel: Comparison between Jan 2006 - Jan 2007





A higher percentage of Westbankers (46%) than Gazans (40%) and Gaza Strip residents believe that Hamas should change its position regarding the Israel; however this is witnessed more among Gazans than among West Bank residents. This is also the case for Palestinians below the poverty line (45%) in comparison with those with a living standard above the poverty line (41%). As detailed in table 22, 67% of Hamas supporters compared to 26% of Fateh supporters and 46% of those who do not trust any faction think that Hamas should maintain its position vis-à-vis Israel.

Table 22: Palestinian perceptions about whether Hamas should maintain its position on the elimination of Israel according to region of residence, poverty, and factional trust

Variable	Value	Hamas should maintain its position regarding	Hamas should change its position regarding
		Israel	Israel
Region of residence	West Bank	46%	54%
	Gaza Strip	40%	60%
	Total	45%	55%
Poverty	Above the poverty line	41%	59%
	Below the poverty line	45%	55%
Factional trust	Hamas	67%	33%
	Fateh	26%	74%
	I trust no faction	46%	54%

\*\*\*\*\*