

**Palestinian Opinion Poll on the Impact of Covid-19, Evaluation of the Performance of Actors, and Areas in Need of Improvement**

**(Round 2)**

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**Date of the poll: 13-17 April 2020**

**Poll sample: 650 economically and socially active Palestinian men and women**

**Introduction**

Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD) presents to you the results of its second opinion poll conducted among Palestinians who are considered socially and politically active (employees of the public, private, civil, and international sector; activists and community leaders; influential people such as those working in the media; university professors; youth activists and leaders of civil and feminist institutions, etc.). This poll focused on monitoring the developments of views on the performance of the Palestinian government as well as other actors including civil society, the private sector and the EU. The results of this poll serve to provide an assessment of points of strength and weakness from the perspective of a wide range of opinion leaders in order to guide and promote effective policies and actions to combat the spread of the virus and to mitigate the resulting economic and social damage.

**Survey Methodology**

The poll was conducted through an online survey, and it was answered by 650 Palestinians, 74% from the West Bank and 26% from the Gaza Strip. More women (52%) than men (48%) participated in this survey. The vast majority of the participants (89%) have some university education, with 30% of them holding an MA or more. Of the sample, 26% work in the public sector, 27% in the private sector, 15% in NGOs, and 7% in international institutions. A quarter of the participants (respondents) state they do not work in any of the sectors: some are recently unemployed, while others are students or retired. As for age distribution, 27% were 18-30 years old, 56% were 31-50 years old, and 17% were older than 50. The questionnaire was presented to a wide sample of socially active Palestinians through social media platforms and groups, while ensuring the largest possible representation of all geographical regions and socio-economic variables. The survey was open for a period of 5 days (13-17 April).

Soon after this, AWRAD will be publishing a specialized analysis of the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis on the livelihoods of families and individuals and their coping strategies. It will provide insights on the impacts of the crisis on various aspects of life, including economic and social repercussions, mental health, smoking, exercise, GBV, social solidarity and voluntarism.

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**Highlights**

1. 80% support President Abbas’s decision to extend the State of Emergency.
2. 75% of respondents evaluate the overall performance of the government of Dr. Shtayyeh positively, and give the government a score of 7.8 out of 10.
3. 64% do not believe that the Covid-19 pandemic will lead to an end to the internal Palestinian division. Only 7% believe it will.
4. 93% expect negative consequences regarding the economy and 85% regarding education.
5. Expectations that violence against women would increase skyrocketed (a 51% relative increase in expectations from AWRAD’s first poll).
6. 58% expect that community violence and crime will increase.
7. Perceived improvement in the government’s handling of the issue of Palestinian workers returning from Israel.
8. The ability of the government to secure basic commodities, the increase of Palestinian presence in communities surrounding Jerusalem and the establishment of a national fund to combat Covid-19 (i.e., Waqfat Izz) each received positive evaluations from a majority of respondents.
9. The highest level of positive evaluation is for the transparency in information sharing by the Palestinian government.
10. Majorities of respondents continue to perceive finding alternatives to school educationand unemployment compensation as inadequate.
11. A majority disagree with the relaxation of movement restrictions in Gaza.
12. Improvement in the level of positive evaluation of the Ministry of Health (71. to 7.3), Palestine TV (6.4 to 6.5) and the Authorities in Gaza (from 5.2 to 5.7).
13. Out of 10 points, participants give the key actors the following scores: Local Emergency Committees (6.6), Fatah (6.2), the EU (5.3) and Hamas (4.2).
14. The overall personal feeling of security regarding contracting the Covid-19 virus (Covid-19 security index) is 6.1 (out of 10 as high feeling of security) and the Covid-19 security index regarding one’s own other household members is 5.9.

**Detailed Results**

**(1) A Majority Continues to Positively Evaluate the Performance of the Shtayyeh Government**

In this survey, 75% rated the government performance as good, 20% as average, and 5% as weak. This is a statistically slight decline from 2 weeks ago, where 82% rated the overall performance of the government as good. While the positive evaluation of the performance of Dr. Shtayyeh’s government was equal between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip two weeks ago, this poll shows a widening gap between the two regions where the positive evaluation is now higher in the West Bank (77%) than Gaza (66%). Women tend to be more positive towards the performance of the government (78%) than men (72%).

**Figure 1: Overall Evaluation of the Performance of the Government (A Comparative Perspective)**

**(2) Evaluation of the Measures to Deal with the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The following measures were assessed by the participants once in terms of their appropriateness (as in the previous round of the poll), and once in terms of level of improvement during the past two weeks:

* **Transparency and information sharing:** 82% evaluate the transparency in publishing data as appropriate, while 10% believe that it is less than needed. There is a slight improvement in this regard from last poll (2 points). At the same time, 43% believe that the performance of the government in this regard has improved during the past two weeks, 48% believe that it stayed the same and 6% believe that it declined.
* **Sufficiency of quarantine centers:** Two thirds consider the availability and quality of quarantine centers as appropriate, an 18-point improvement from last poll. About a quarter believe that the availability and quality of quarantine centers is less than needed. On this issue, 47% notice improvement from two weeks ago, 43% believe that nothing has changed and only 2% believe that it has declined.
* **Sufficiency of testing centers:** 52% consider the availability and quality of testing centers as appropriate, a 10-point improvement from the last poll. As much as 40% believe that the availability and quality of testing centers is less than needed. On this issue, 46% notice improvement from two weeks ago, 41% believe that nothing has changed and only 4% believe that it has declined.
* **Dealing with the issue of workers in Israel and settlements:** AWRAD’s last poll revealed a majority discontent with this issue. This poll, however, finds that the largest relative improvement made by the government is on this issue. 52% consider the way the government is handling this issue as appropriate, a 26-point improvement from last poll. In contrast, 39% believe that it is less than needed. On this issue, 46% notice improvement from two weeks ago; 33% believe that nothing has changed and 12% believe that it has declined.
* **Finding alternatives to school education (distance education):** While there is a 17-point improvement in the positive evaluation of this measure, a majority (51%) continues to believe that the actions in this regard are less than needed. In contrast, 36% believe that the measures are appropriate. On this issue, only 20% notice improvement from two weeks ago; 59% believe that nothing has changed and 13% believe that it has declined.
* **Compensation for the unemployed:** The Palestinian government continues to face a major challenge in addressing this issue, according to the majority of participants. The poll also reveals a decline in the positive evaluation from our last poll by 10 points (26% to 16% now). As much as 70% believe that the government action is less than needed. On this issue, 17% notice improvement from two weeks ago; 48% believe that nothing has changed and 19% believe that it has declined.

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| **Table 1: Evaluation of Measures, Comparison with AWRAD’s Last Poll Results, and Participants’ Perception of Change**  |
|  | **Less than needed** | **Appropriate** | **Change from last poll (percentage points)** | **% perceiving improvement** | **% perceiving no change** | **% perceiving decline** |
| 1  | Transparency in publishing data on infection cases | 10% | 82% | +2 | 43% | 48% | 6% |
| 2 | Sufficiency (availability and quality) of quarantine centers | 26% | 66% | +18 | 47% | 43% | 2% |
| 3 | Sufficiency (availability and quality) of testing centers | 40% | 52% | +10 | 46% | 41% | 4% |
| 4  | Dealing with the issue of workers in Israel and settlements | 39% | 52% | +26 | 46% | 33% | 12% |
| 5  | Finding alternatives to school education (distance education) | **51%** | 36% | +17 | 20% | 59% | 13% |
| 6  | Compensation for the unemployed | **70%** | 16% | -10 | 17% | 48% | 19% |

**Evaluation of other relevant measures is as follows:**

* The largest support was for the extension of the **State of Emergency** till the end of April by President Mahmoud Abbas (80%). Only 9% view that negatively.
* This was followed by the government’s performance in **ensuring the availability of needed goods and supplies** (77%). In contrast, 8% view that negatively.
* Increasing **Palestinian security presence in the villages surrounding Jerusalem** was perceived as positive by 68% of the participants. Only 7% view it negatively, and 25% are neutral or do not know.
* **Establishing a national fund** to combat the impacts of the Covid-19 virus (namely, Waqfat Izz) received a majority of positive evaluation (68%). Only 9% view it negatively, and 23% are neutral or do not know.
* 58% view positively the banning of family members from attending the funeral of Corona-related deceased family members. In contrast, 19% view that negatively, and 23% are neutral or do not know.
* 54% view positively the level of social and community solidarity during the pandemic. In contrast, 16% view it negatively, and 30% are neutral or do not know.
* Less than a majority (48%) view positively the measures to monitor and keep in check the prices of commodities. One third view that negatively, and 19% are neutral or do not know.
* 44% positively evaluate the conditions of quarantine centers in the West Bank, with 10% viewing them negatively. As much as 46% are neutral or do not know.
* 42% positively view the recent arrangements to secure the return of Palestinians made by the Palestinian Embassy in Egypt. 17% view that negatively, and 41% are neutral or do not know.
* 39% positively view the present distribution of assistance to the poor, while 31% view it negatively. 30% are neutral or do not know.
* 34% positively view the recent arrangements made by the Palestinian authorities in Gaza to receive the Palestinians arriving from Egypt. 13% view that negatively, but as much as 53% are neutral or do not know.
* 32% positively view the easing of restrictions of movement in Gaza, while 26% view that negatively. As much as 42% are neutral or do not know.
* 18% positively evaluate the conditions of quarantine centers in the Gaza Strip, with 19% viewing that negatively. As much as 63% are neutral or do not know.

**Figure 2: Percentage of Participants Positively Evaluating the following Covid-19–related Measures**

**(3) Evaluation of Relevant Actors**

In the survey, the role of relevant actors was evaluated and in some cases compared to AWRAD’s last poll two weeks ago. As previously mentioned, the role of the government led by Dr. Shtayyeh is the highest among all actors evaluated, but with a slight decline from 8.2 to 7.8 points out of 10. As for the rest of the parties, the evaluation was as follows: The Ministry of Health ranked second, improving from 7.0 to 7.3 points, followed by the Local Emergency Committees established by the government (6.6), Palestine TV (6.5), Palestinian official radio (6.3), the role of the Fatah movement (6.2), and then the Authorities in the Gaza Strip (5.7), organizations providing psychosocial services (5.4) the European Union (5.3), and Palestinian NGOs (5.2). The actors receiving a score of less than 5 out of 10 are the private sector (4.6) and the Hamas movement (4.2).

**Figure 3: Evaluation of Relevant Actors (Score out of 10)**

To shed more light on these results, the following observations are important:

* The positive evaluation for the Ministry of Health has increased from 7.1 to 7.3, and the positive evaluation of Palestine TV from 6.4 To 6.5, and the Authorities in Gaza from 5.2 to 5.7.
* The evaluation of the following has slightly or significantly declined: The Palestinian Government (from 8.2 to 7.8), and the role of NGOs (from 5.4 to 5.2).
* The evaluation of the role of the private sector did not change.
* The evaluation of the above-listed actors is either related to the level of knowledge of their work or to the limited role that they play, hence it is not recognized. As much as 34% of the participants in the poll (who are generally of higher educational attainment) say they do not know about the role of Hamas, and 31% do not know of the role of the Authorities in Gaza; therefore are unable to evaluate it. As much as 26% say that they do not know about the role of the European Union; 19% do not know about the role of Fatah; 17% do not know about the role of Palestine Radio; 16% do not know about the role of psychosocial services; and 9% do not know about the role of the NGOs and the private sector. Only 1% say that they do not have knowledge of the role of government led by Shtayyeh and that of the Ministry of Health. Only 5% do not know of the role of Palestine TV and Local Emergency Committees.

**(4) Future Expectations**

The level of pessimism has significantly increased during the past two weeks.

* The level of pessimism about the economy increased from 66% to 93% (a 41% relative increase).
* The level of pessimism about education increased from 62% to 85% (a 38% relative increase).
* The level of pessimism about community violence/crime increased from 40% to 58% (a 45% relative increase).
* The level of pessimism about the increased burdens on women increased from 48% to 54% (a 13% relative increase).
* The level of pessimism about violence against women is especially alarming, increasing from 35% to 53% (a 53% relative increase, the highest relative increase between all issues).
* The level of pessimism about violence against children increased from 36% to 49% (a 36% relative increase).

**Figure 4: Percentage of Participants Expecting Negative Developments in the Following Fields (Comparison with 2 weeks ago)**

**(5) Covid-19 and the Potential for Palestinian Reconciliation**

The Covid-19 pandemic is not viewed as powerful enough to move Fatah and Hamas closer to ending the Palestinian division and reaching reconciliation. Only 7% believe that the pandemic would lead to ending the division, while 64% do not believe that. As much as 29% do not know or uncertain.