

War-time perceptions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

3 - 10 March 2024



معهد التقدم الاجتماعي والاقتصادي
Institute for Social and Economic Progress

Context

- ❑ Conducting a poll in Gaza in addition to the West Bank and East Jerusalem was a difficult decision due to ethical and safety consideration.
- ❑ However, as conversations continue in world capitals about the future of Gaza, and Palestine as a whole, we decided that it is critical to raise the voices of the everyday people vis-a-vis questions which will impact their lives for many years to come.
- ❑ The Institute for Social and Economic Progress (ISEP) commissioned and conducted a representative poll in the WB&G between 3-10 March 2024.
- ❑ Some findings of this research are contingent on the events that are still unfolding and might change over the course of the war or after.

Executive summary (1/3)

- ❑ The first section of the report examines feelings, perceptions and expectation for the ongoing war. Main findings include:
 - Fear is the most reported emotion in Gaza while helplessness dominates the West Bank
 - In Gaza, the most common expectation is that Israel will defeat Hamas and hand the Strip over to the PA
 - Palestinians are not optimistic about political and economic prospects in the near future, but 1 in 2 continue to believe that ending the occupation is now closer than it was before the war

Executive summary (2/3)

- The second section of the report sheds light on aspirations and preferences vis-a-vis ending the occupation and governance. Highlights include:
 - Gazans prefer the Palestinian Authority or a unity government to rule the Strip
 - Around 72% of the population is now willing to accept a two-state solution and 51% are willing to accept a one-state solution
 - Of those who would accept a two-state solution, 51% would agree to a demilitarized state (37% of the total adult population), though 61% of those come from Gaza.

Executive summary (3/3)

- ❑ The third section of the report examines support for key political figures as well as characteristics of a preferred leader for the future:
 - In upcoming elections, almost half of Palestinians would vote for independent candidates
 - A majority of Palestinians want leaders who are young, independent, and have a vision for the future
 - Marwan Barghouti is the only leader with a majority support in both West Bank and Gaza

Methodology (1/2)

→ **Target population:**

- ◆ West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza Strip
- ◆ Aged 15 years or older

→ **Size of samples:**

- ◆ West Bank - 600 respondents from 62 random locations
- ◆ Gaza Strip - 400 respondents from 39 locations in the Rafah governorate (most Gaza residents from other governorates have fled to Rafah)

Methodology (2/2)

→ Data collection approach:

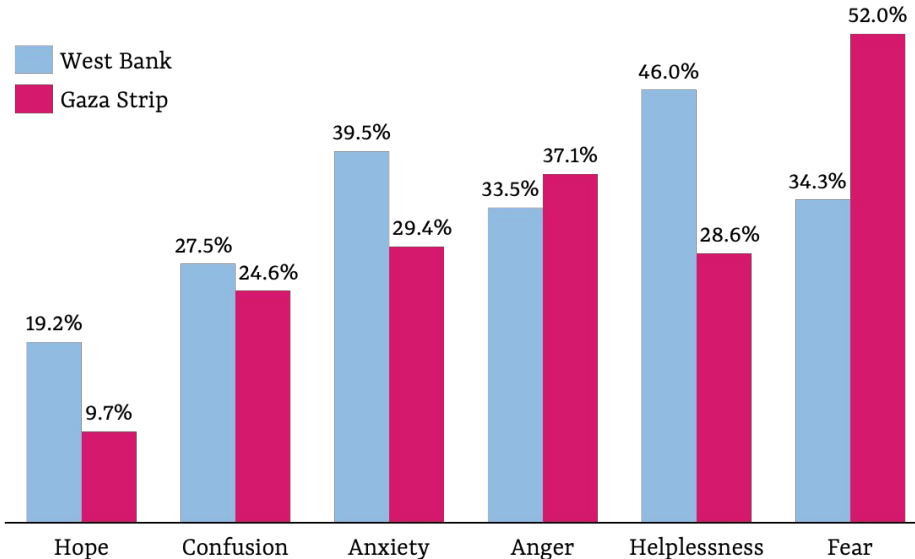
- ◆ Street-intercept surveys within counting areas
- ◆ Face-to-face interviews
- ◆ 35 close-ended questions
- ◆ Stratified random sampling in the West Bank
- ◆ Quota sampling in the Gaza Strip (based on pre-war location of residence)

Psychology of war

Current feelings and future expectations

The war is weighing heavily on the psychological well-being of Palestinians in both regions

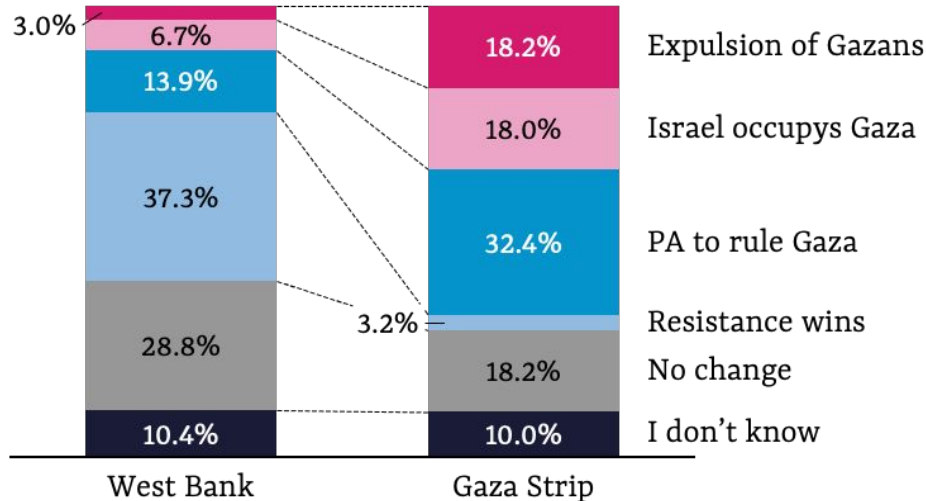
As war continues, which emotion best describes your psychological state?



- Helplessness and anxiety are the most reported emotions in the West Bank
- After five months of horror, fear is the dominant emotion in Gaza followed by anger
- Hope is the least reported emotion in both regions

Expected outcomes of the war differ significantly between the West Bank and Gaza

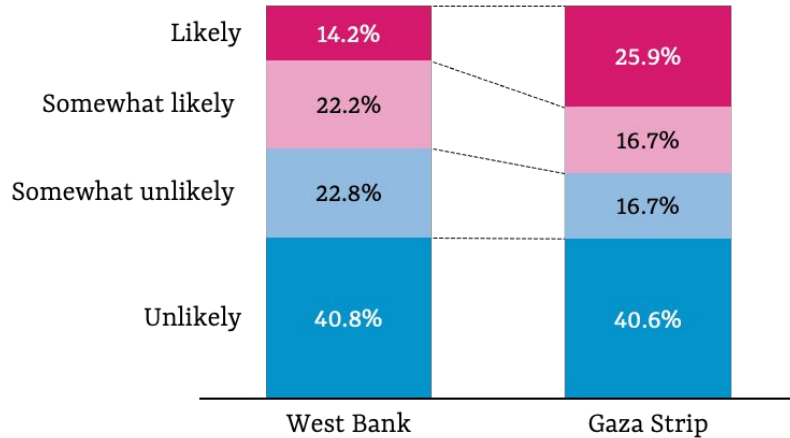
What do you think is the most likely outcome of the war?



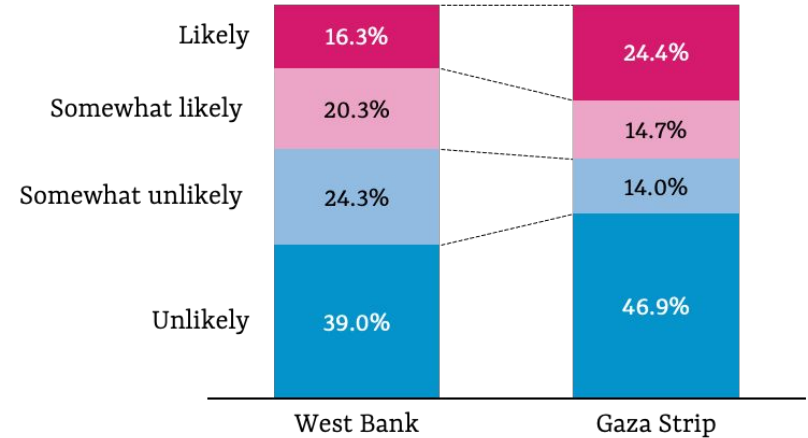
- In West Bank, 1 in 3 expect Hamas to win the war, while almost none expect it in Gaza
- In Gaza, the most common expectation is that Israel will defeat Hamas and hand the Strip over to the PA
- 1 in every 5 Gazans expects to be expelled to Egypt

While the majority in the West Bank and Gaza are pessimistic about the future, Gazans are slightly more optimistic

Political situation*



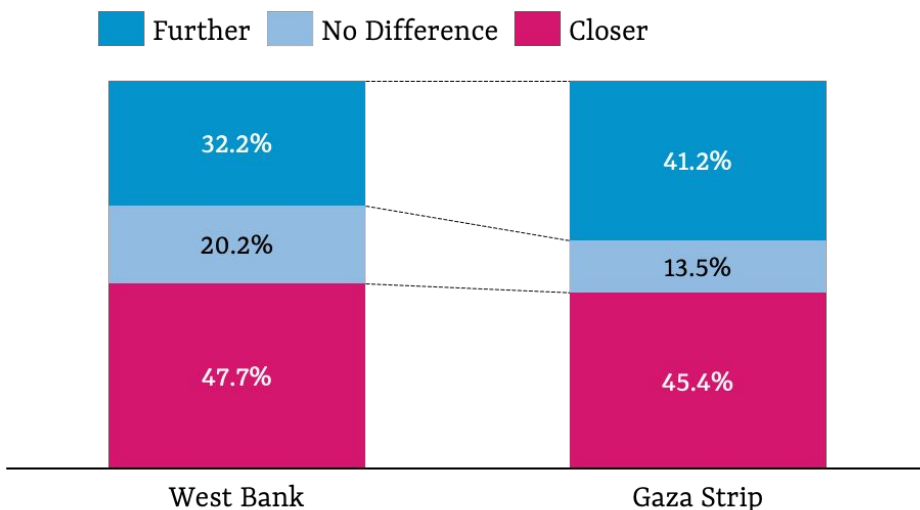
Economic situation*



Question: In your view, how likely is an improvement in the a) political situation, and b) economic situation after the war?

Despite the dire situation and general pessimism, many see progress towards the end of occupation

Based on recent developments, do you think the end of occupation is closer or further away?



- In both the West Bank and Gaza, almost half believe that the current war will bring the end of occupation closer
- The proportion of Gaza respondents that expect the war to prolong occupation is higher than in the West Bank

Takeaways

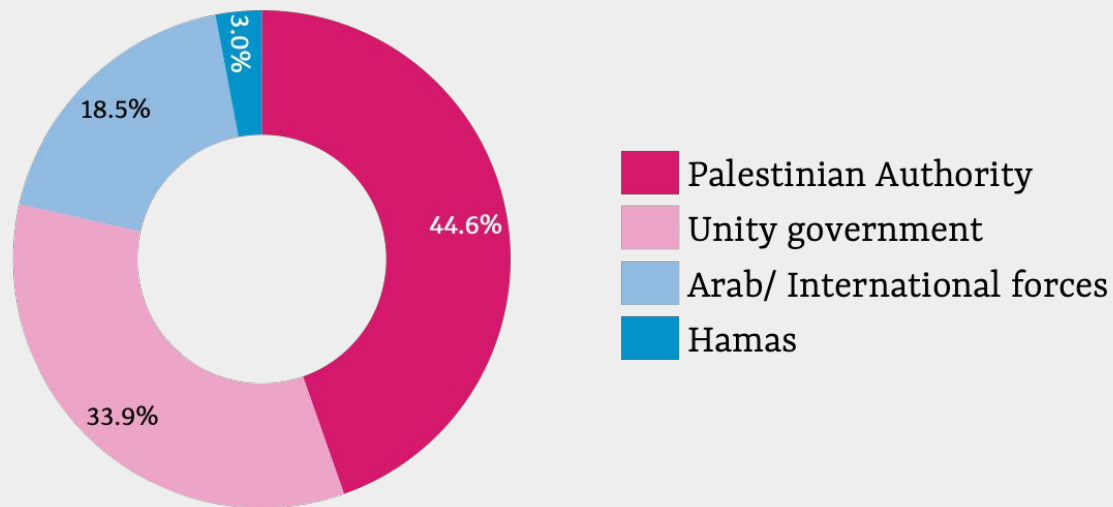
- Negative emotions dominate WB/G with helplessness and anxiety reigning in the WB and Fear and Anger in Gaza.
- Perceptions of what's unfolding in Gaza seems to shape outcome expectations differently in WB/G. While the most common expectation in Gaza is that Israel will defeat Hamas and hand governance back to the PA, more than 1 in 3 in the WB expect Hamas to win.
- While most Palestinians are pessimistic about political and economic prospects in the near future, just under half of the population believes that ending the occupation is now closer than it was before the war.

Aspirations for the end of occupation

Expectations and preferences

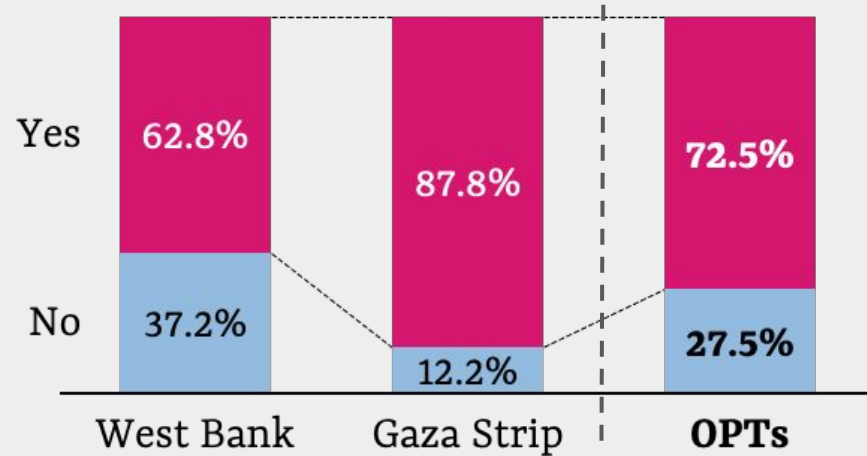
During a post-war transition period, Gazans prefer the Palestinian Authority or a unity government to rule the Strip

If there was a transition period after the war, who would you want to rule the Gaza Strip?



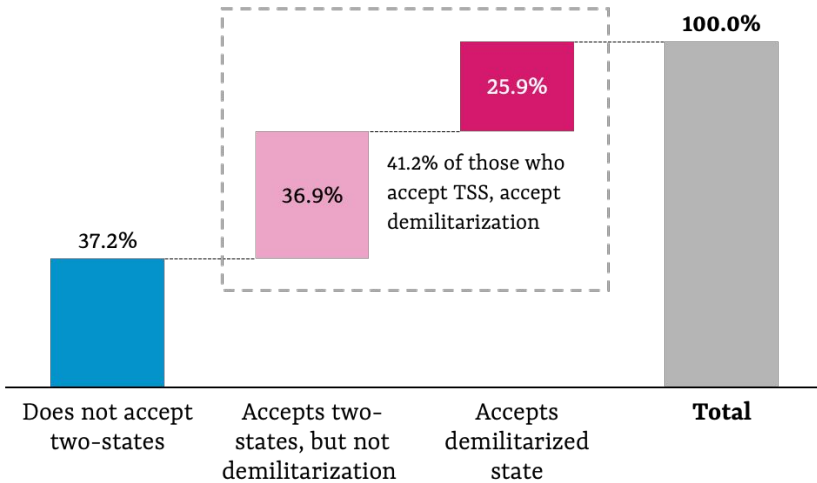
A majority in both the West Bank and Gaza is willing to accept a two-state solution

If serious negotiations took place, would you accept a Palestinian state along 1967 borders?



A small minority in the West Bank would accept a Palestinian state if it was demilitarized, compared to a majority in the Gaza Strip

West Bank*



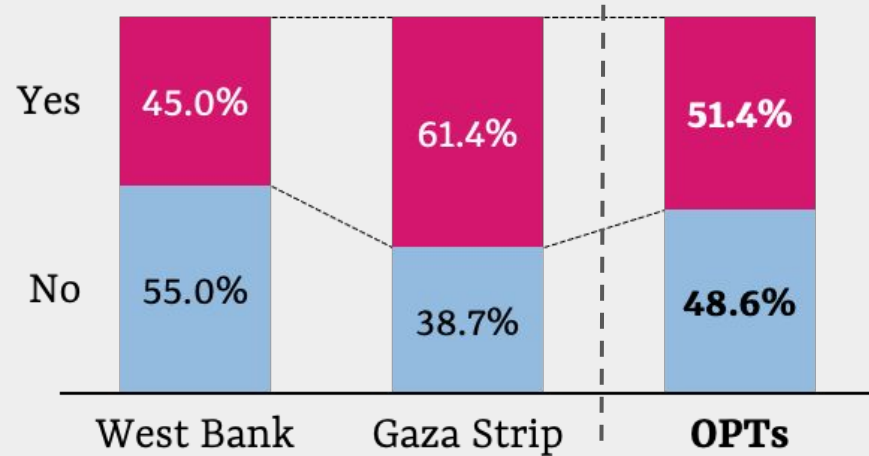
Gaza Strip*



Question: Would you accept a state if it was demilitarized?

A slim majority of Palestinians would accept a one-state solution, but in the West Bank a majority would not accept it

If serious negotiations took place, would you accept a one state with equal rights for Jews and Palestinians?



Takeaways

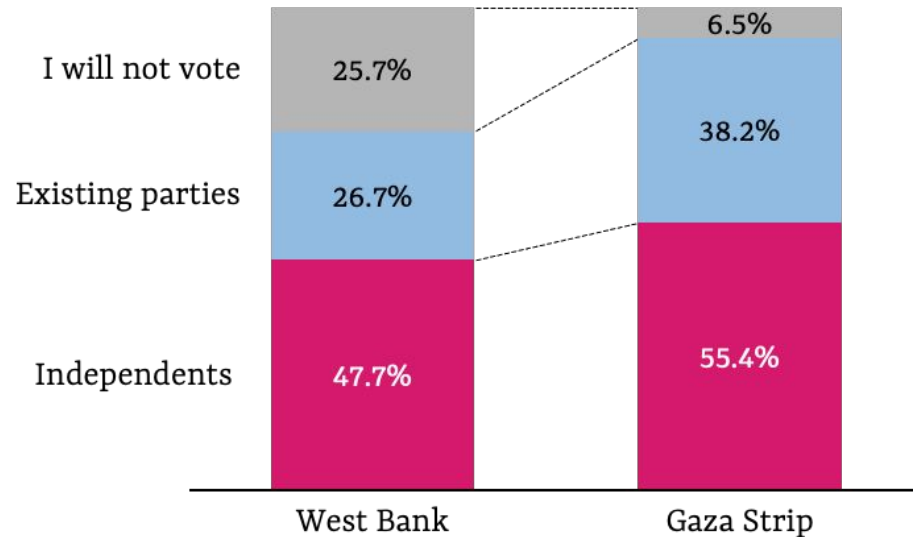
- Willingness to accept a two-state solution is now at 72.51% which reflects a 30-point increase from December 2022 (~42%).
- Of those who would accept a two-state solution, 51% would agree to a demilitarized state (37% of the total adult population), though 61% of those come from Gaza.
- A slim majority (51%) are willing to accept a one-state solution, though 58% of those come from Gaza. The majority in the West Bank oppose.
- The trend we observe is that willingness/ appetite for a political solution has increased significantly. We provide further analysis in [this article](#).

Political leadership

Support and opposition for key political leaders

In upcoming elections, almost half of Palestinians would vote for independent candidates

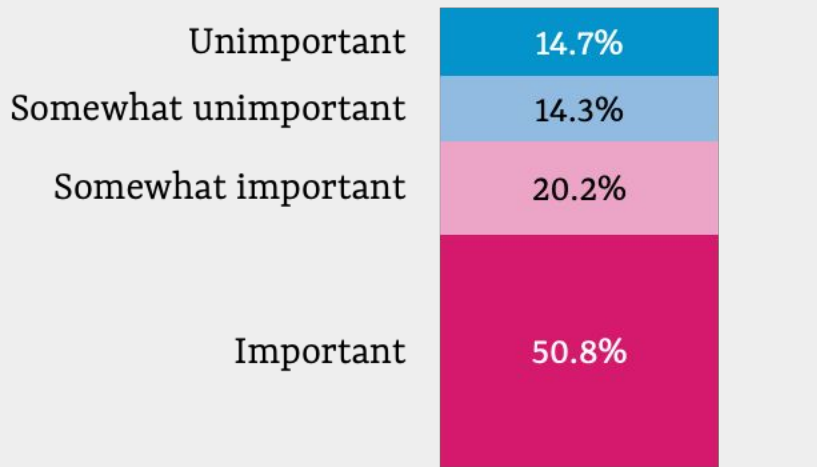
If elections were to take place in the coming months, who would you vote for?



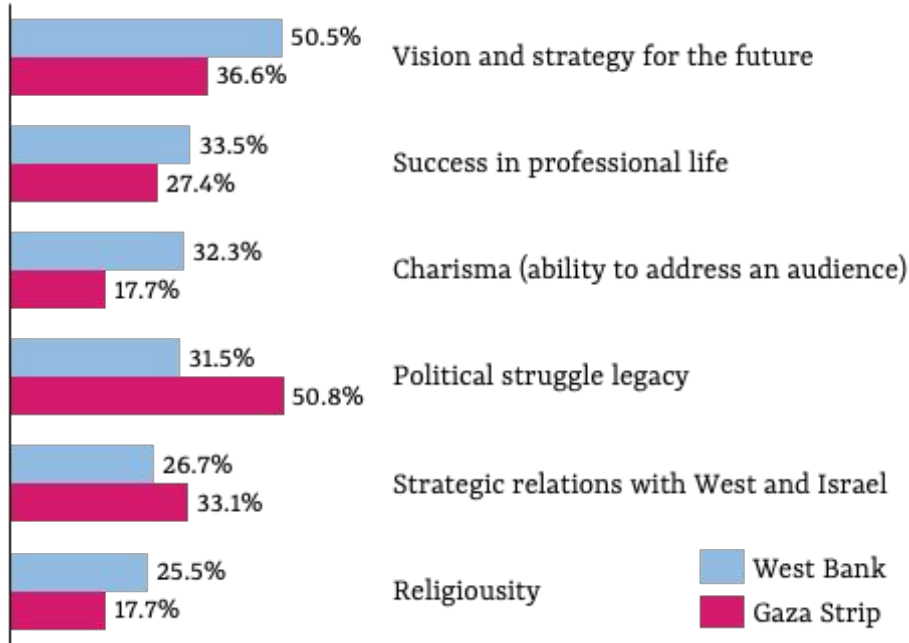
- In Gaza, 2 in 5 would vote for existing parties, but only 1 in 5 among those aged 25-34
- In West Bank, 1 in 4 would not vote, a trend prevalent among women, and those aged 35-45
- In Jerusalem, 55% would not vote and less than 5% would vote for existing parties

Most Palestinians prefer younger leaders, especially in Gaza where the population is younger

How important is it that the next Palestinian leader be young?



West Bank and Gaza respondents differ in their views on the characteristics of the 'ideal leader'



- In the West Bank, the ideal leader must demonstrate a clear vision for the future
- In Gaza, the ideal leader must have a track-record in resisting Israeli occupation
- Religiosity is the least important leadership trait in both regions

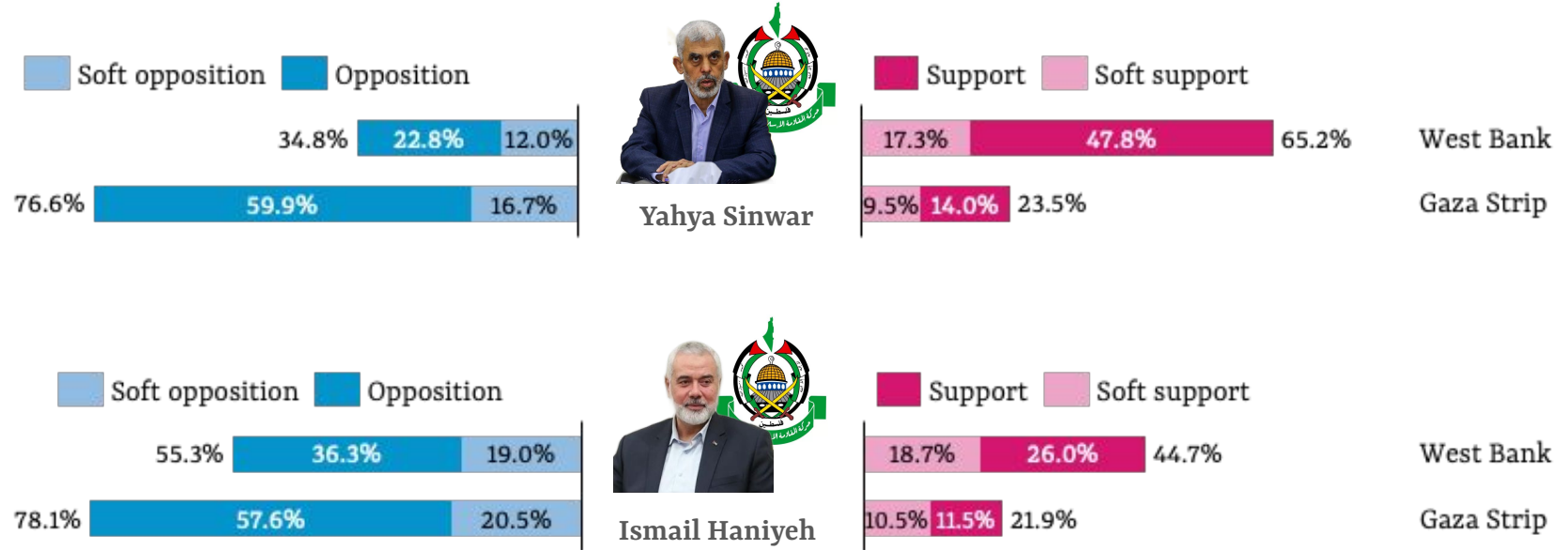
Question: Which of these characteristics are most important in a future leader? (pick two)

Marwan Barghouti is currently the most popular political figure, with 77% of Palestinians viewing him favourably



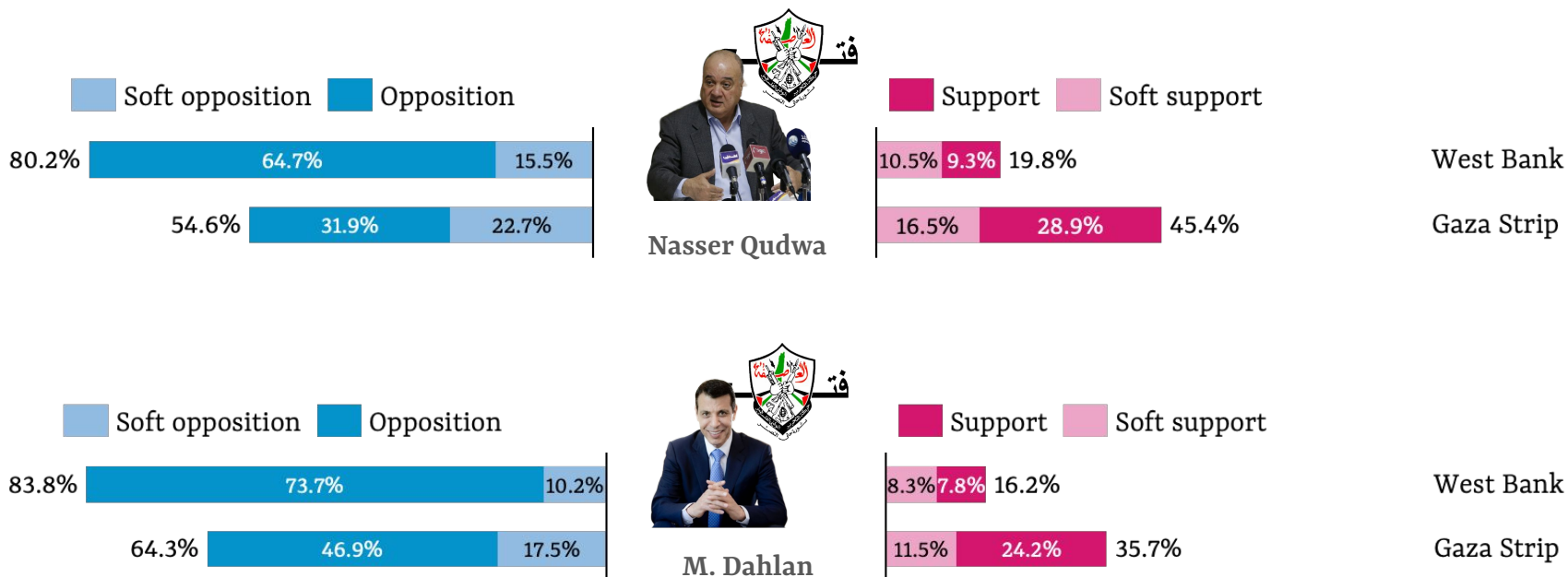
Question: Evaluate the extent of your support or opposition for the following leaders (rate from 1 to 6).

While figures associated with Hamas are popular in the West Bank, they are very unpopular in the Gaza Strip



Question: Evaluate the extent of your support or opposition for the following leaders (rate from 1 to 6).

Opposition voices within Fatah enjoy significant support in Gaza, but they are very unpopular in the West Bank

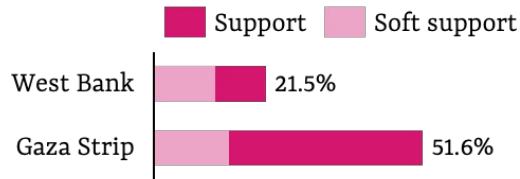


Question: Evaluate the extent of your support or opposition for the following leaders (rate from 1 to 6).

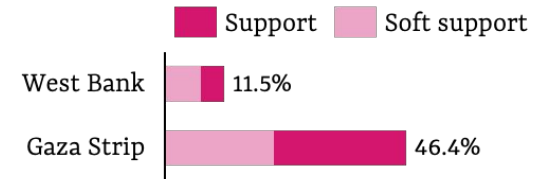
Figures associated with the Palestinian Authority garner low levels of support in the West Bank, but higher levels in the Gaza Strip



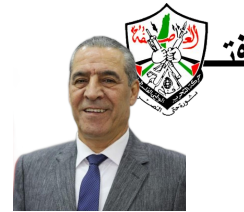
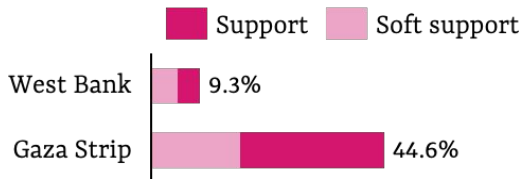
M. Mustafa



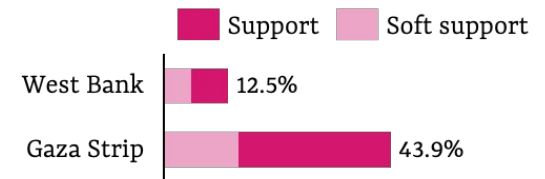
Jibril Rajoub



M. Shtayyeh



Hussein Al-Sheikh

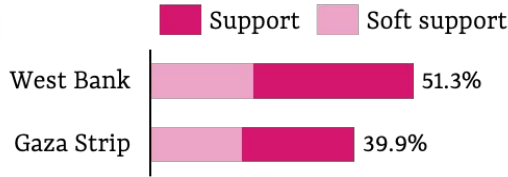


Question: Evaluate the extent of your support or opposition for the following leaders (rate from 1 to 6).

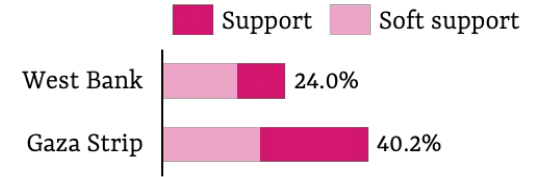
Support for some independent figures, such as Mustafa Barghouti, is significant in both the West Bank and Gaza



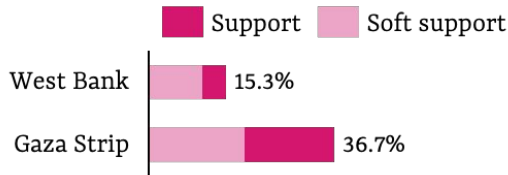
Mustafa Barghouti



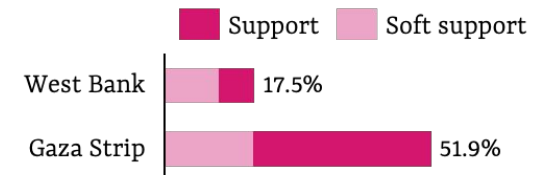
Bashar Masri



Hanan Ashrawi



Salam Fayyad



Question: Evaluate the extent of your support or opposition for the following leaders (rate from 1 to 6).

Takeaways

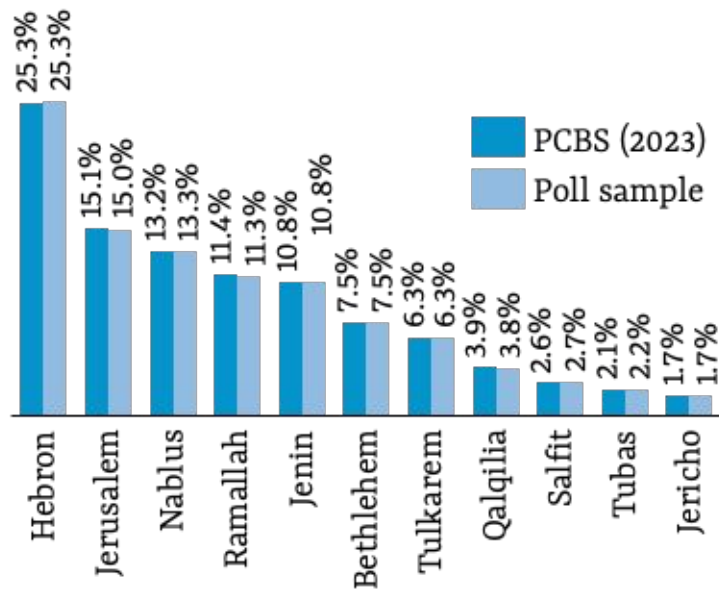
- After 17 years of the Hamas-Fatah split, most Palestinians seem to have turned away with 51% stating that they would vote for independents in an upcoming election.
- Over 50% have also stressed the importance of the leaders being young.
- Marwan Barghouti is the only leader with a majority support in both West Bank and Gaza
- Fatah leaders are very unpopular in the West Bank and Hamas leaders are unpopular in Gaza
- Continued Hamas rule is extremely unpopular in Gaza even amongst Hamas members

Conclusions

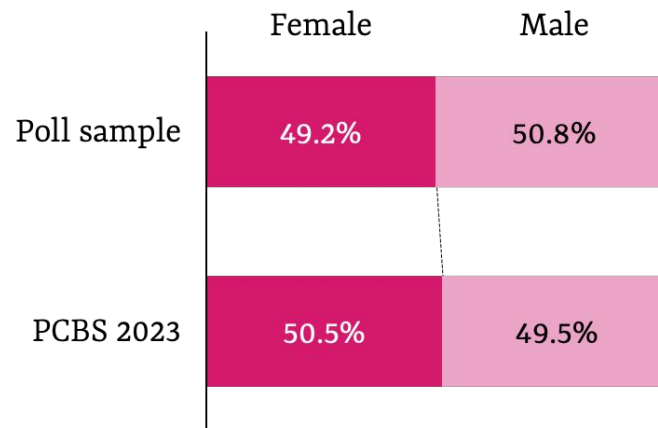
- While negative emotions reign in the OPTs as a result of the extreme distress, there is unique appetite for political change
- Support for political solutions has increased significantly, especially the public's willingness to accept both the two-state solution (~72%) and one-state solution (51%)
- With no support for a Hamas rule in Gaza, there is a significant opportunity for unity and the reform of political institutions
- Marwan Barghouti is the only unifying figure as Hamas and Fatah leaders prove divisive and unpopular
- Palestinians seem to agree on the type of leader they want; young, independent, and has a vision for the future

Annex 1 - Sample distribution in the West Bank

Distribution by Governorate

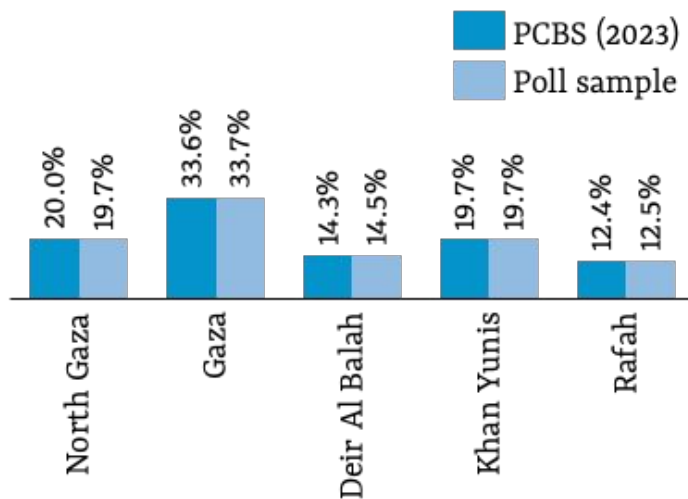


Distribution by Gender

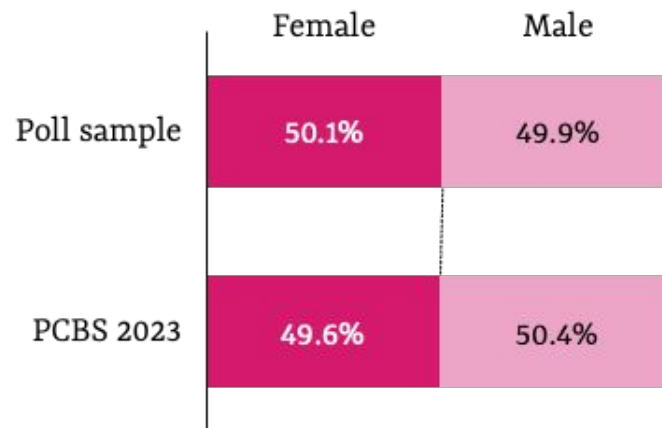


Annex 2 - Sample distribution in the Gaza Strip

Distribution by Governorate



Distribution by Gender





Contact us:

info@insitute4progress.org

Website:

www.insitute4progress.org