

War-time perceptions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

1 - 6 June 2024



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Context

- ❑ As conversations about the future of Gaza continue in world capitals, and among Palestinians, we believe it is critical to raise the voices of the people vis-a-vis questions that may impact their lives for many years to come.
- ❑ The Institute for Social and Economic Progress (ISEP) commissioned and conducted a representative poll in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza between 1-6 June 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 (1/2)

- This report is made of six sections, together composing a comprehensive picture of Palestinian public's take on the political reality of the day as well as worries, hopes, and expectations for the future:
 - Section (1) of the report examines feelings, perceptions and expectation for the ongoing war
 - Section (2) looks at perceptions and preferences for ceasefire and post-war reality
 - Section (3) discusses popular aspirations for a political solution (one-state/two state solutions)
 - Section (4) deals with WB views on the new government and the future of the Palestinian Authority
 - Section (5) surveys perceptions of global shifts related to the war
 - Section (6) explores support and opposition for key political leaders

Executive summary – main findings (2/2)

- ❑ Less than 5% of Gazans want Hamas to rule in a transitional period after the war
- ❑ There is wide consensus among Palestinians that Hamas should only accept a ceasefire deal with Israel if it includes a permanent end to the war
- ❑ Almost half in the West Bank (46.5%) disapprove of the new government, citing the growing economic crisis, the security situation and the stalled political process
- ❑ In upcoming elections, almost half of voting Palestinians would choose independent candidates over existing political parties
- ❑ Palestinians view international solidarity as extremely important for their cause, chief among which are US campus protests. Today, a majority views the American people more positively as a result of the pro-Palestine campus protests
- ❑ An overwhelming majority of Palestinians continues to accept a two-state solution

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, Deir Al Balah and Khan Younis governorates

Methodology (2/2)

→ Data collection approach:

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

Why Quota Sampling in Gaza?

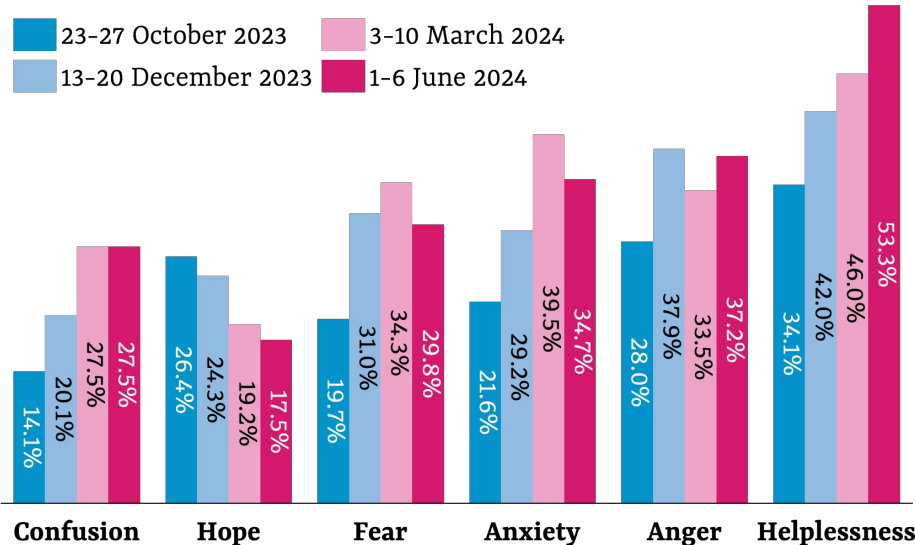
- Before the war, Gaza, like the West Bank, used to be divided into counting areas by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)
- The current war, which displaced over 80% of Gaza's population, disrupted the “natural distribution” based on which counting areas were designed
- Counting areas have become irrelevant, because of the significant change in terms of population density and demographics
- In this context, quota sampling has the highest chance of producing a frame which represents the population in question based on a number of factors that researchers choose. In our case, we used governorate of residence before the war, gender and age
- Once quotas have been decided, enumerators were dispersed to collect responses from 39 areas until each of the quotas is completed

Psychology of war

Feelings and collective hope

In the West Bank, a sense of helplessness is increasingly taking over

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

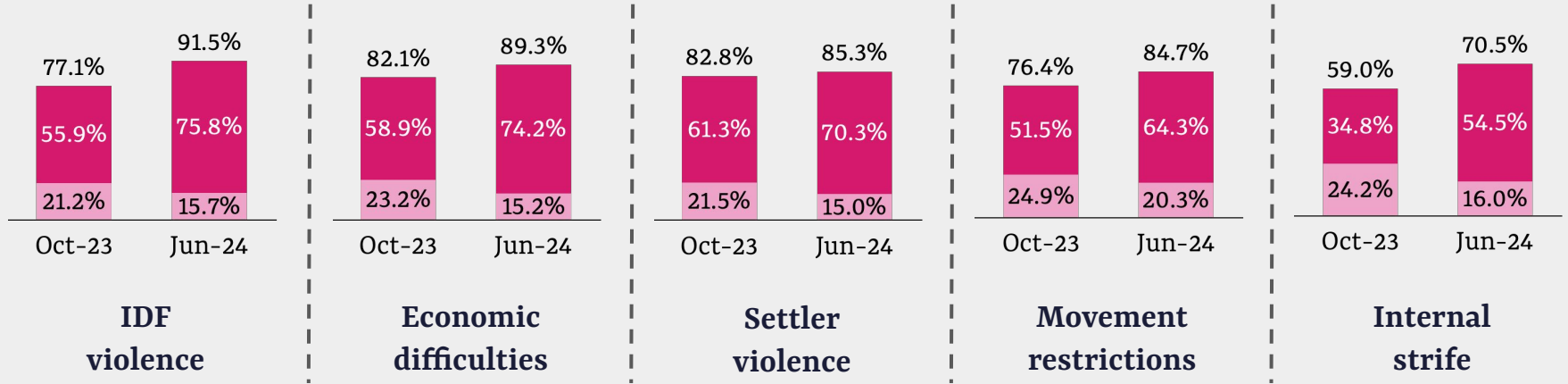


- Helplessness is the defining emotion in the West Bank, and it has steadily grown throughout the war's duration
- Anxiety, fear and confusion are also on the rise
- The sense of hope is slowly dimming for a growing number of respondents

West Bank residents are increasingly concerned about Israeli violence and the rapid worsening of economic conditions

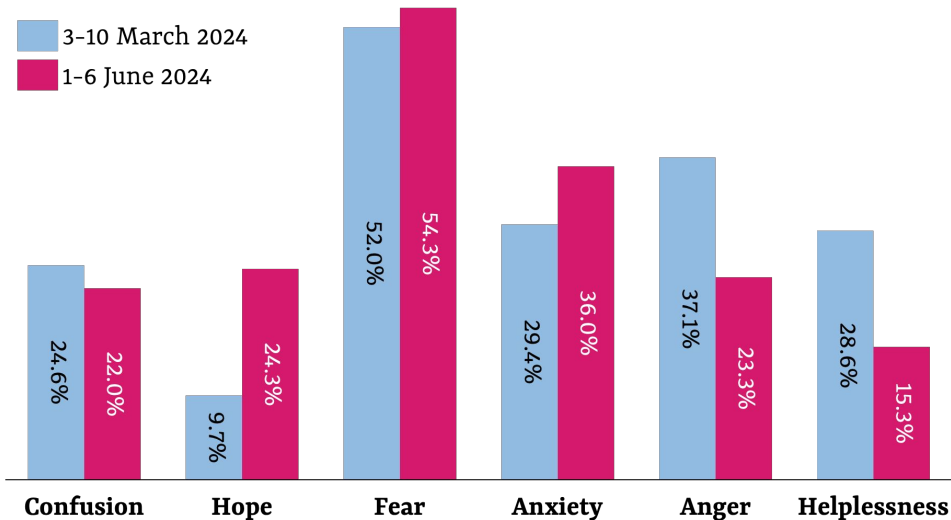
To what extent are you worried about:

Somewhat worried
 Extremely worried



In the Gaza Strip, fear is the most dominant emotion

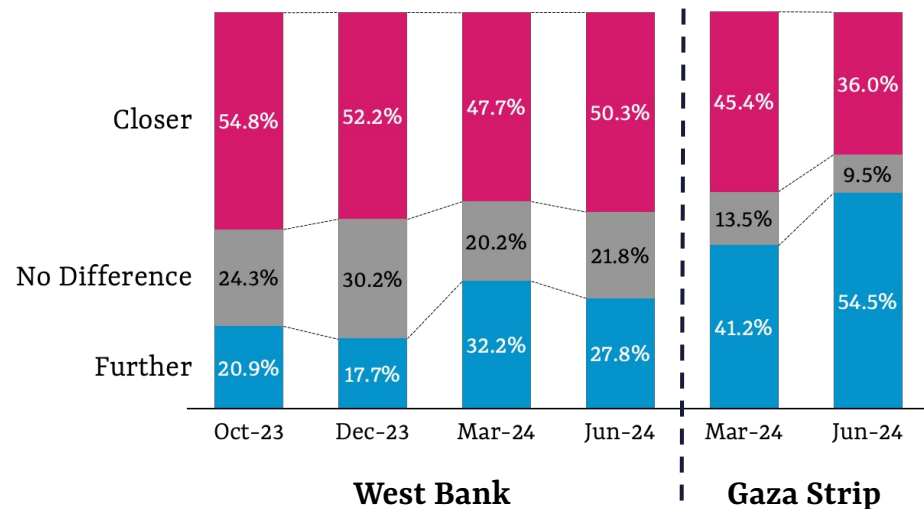
As war continues, which emotion best describes your psychological state? | Gaza Strip



- Unsurprisingly, a majority in the Gaza Strip, report fear as the best description of their current emotional state
- One in four feels hope, more than double the proportion reported three months ago
- Helplessness and anger dropped in the past months

In contrast with the West Bank, a majority in Gaza now believes that the end of occupation is further away

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



- In the West Bank, around half continue to believe that the current war will bring the end of occupation closer
- Only one in three Gazans expect the same outcome, with a significant drop compared to March

Takeaways

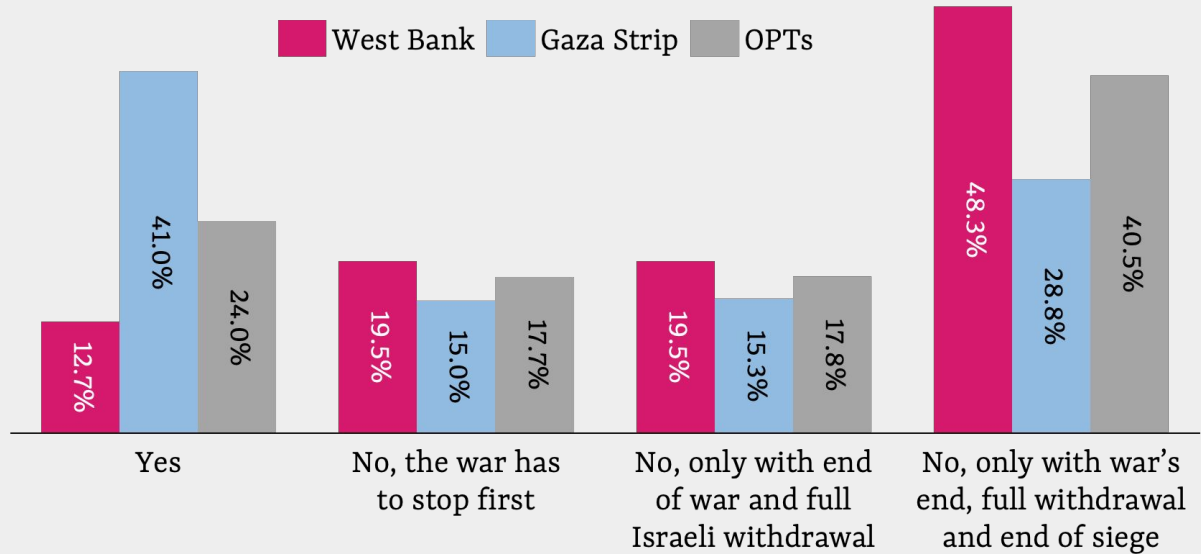
- Helplessness is the defining emotion in the West Bank, and it has steadily grown throughout the war's duration. In Gaza, over 50% of the population report fear as their most dominant emotion.
- Worry about basic safety and economic security has gone to a new high in the West Bank with nearly 90% being either worries or extremely worries about Israeli Army violence and economic conditions.
- In contrast with the West Bank, where a majority believes that we are now closer to the end of occupation, over 50% of Gazans now believe that the end of occupation is further away as a result of the current war.

Ceasefire and post-war reality

Preferences and expectations

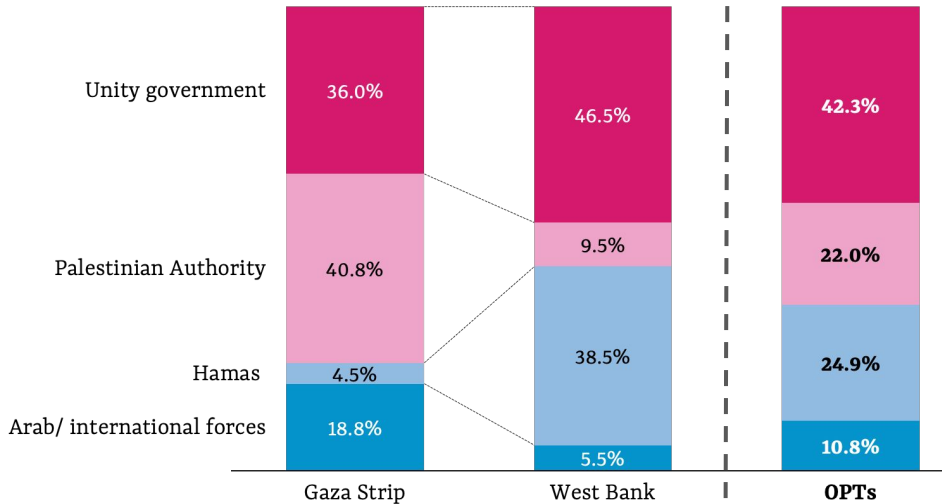
Three in four Palestinians, in both West Bank and Gaza, do not want Hamas to accept a temporary ceasefire in negotiations with Israel

During war negotiations, should Hamas accept a temporary ceasefire?



However, West Bank and Gaza respondents have starkly different preferences for post-war transition

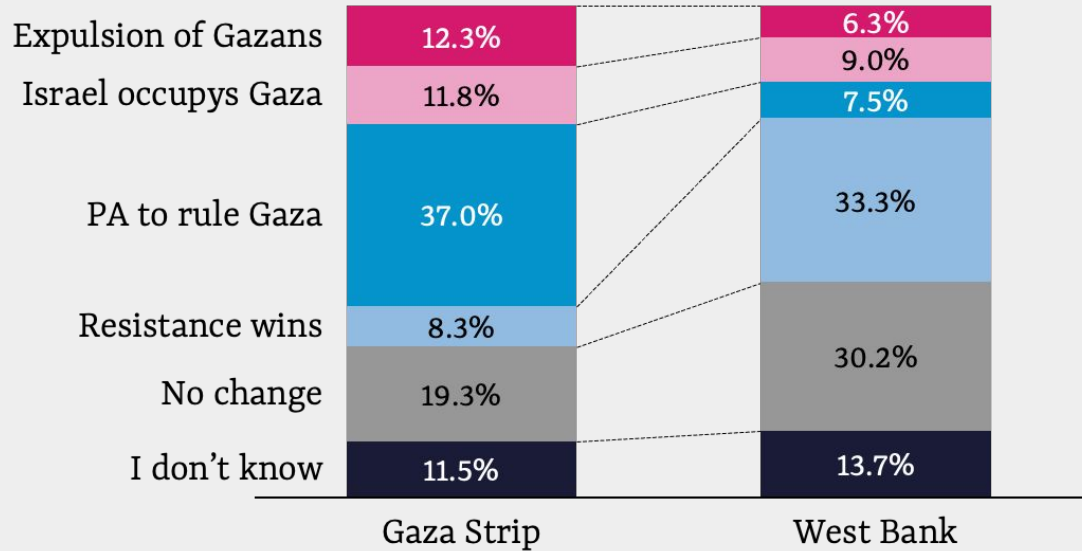
If there was a transition period after the war, who would you want to rule the Gaza Strip?



- Gazan's first preference is for the PA to rule Gaza followed by a preference for a unity government.
- West Bankers would rather see a unity government rule as a first preference followed by a continued Hamas rule

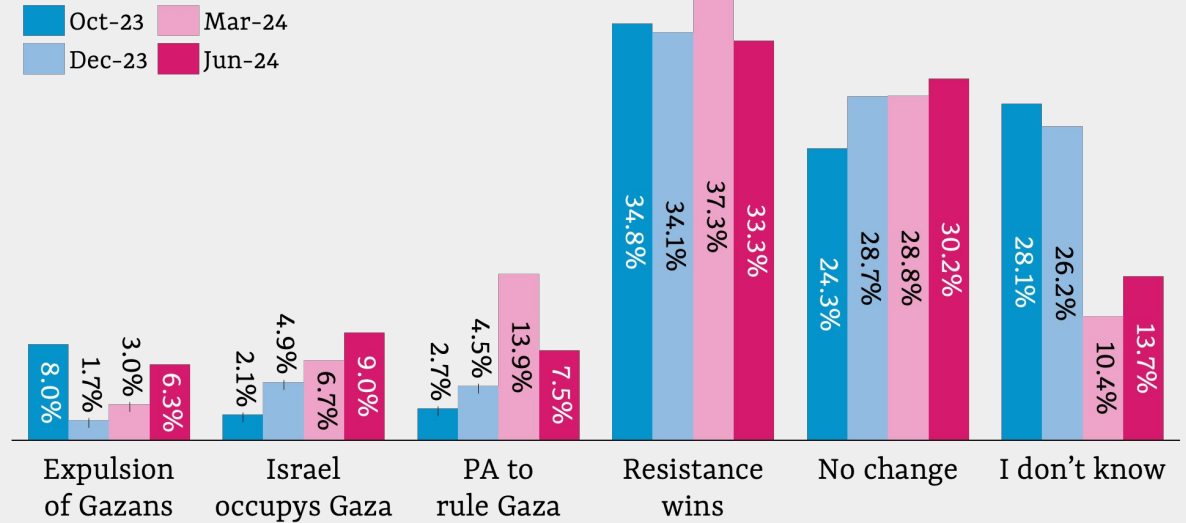
Similarly, expectations of post-war outcomes differ significantly when comparing West Bank and Gaza respondents

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



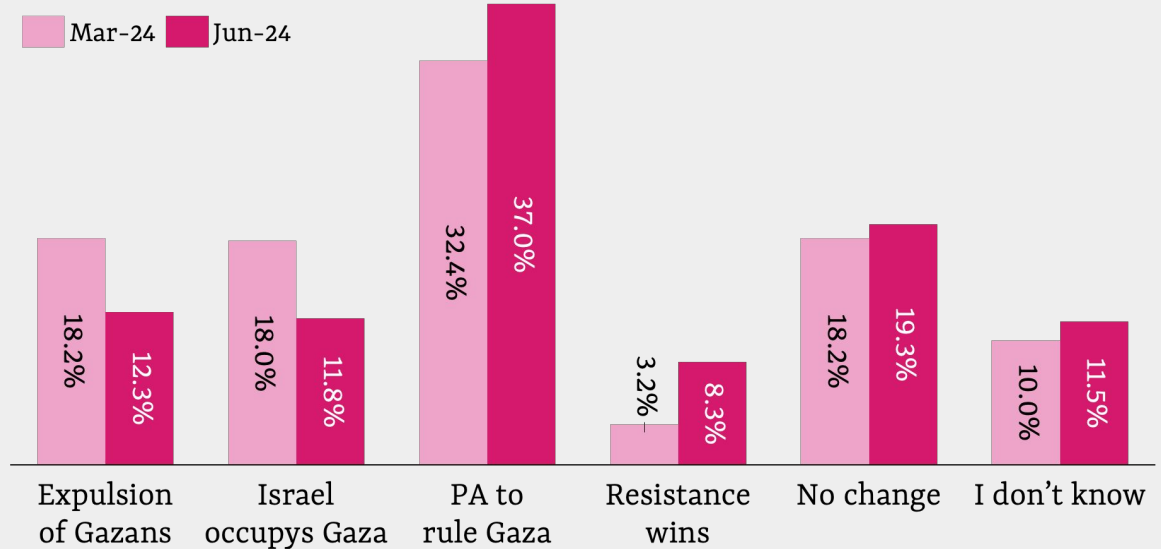
In the West Bank, a majority of respondents expect Hamas to remain in power, but are divided on whether that constitutes a win

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



In the Gaza Strip, a majority continues to expect Hamas rule to end, despite slight increase in expectations Hamas remaining in power

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



Takeaways

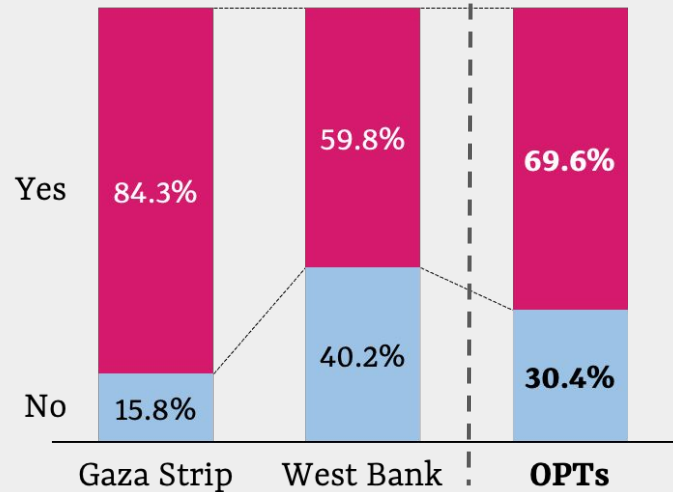
- There is wide consensus among Palestinians, in both West Bank and Gaza, that Hamas should not accept a temporary ceasefire
- Gazans prefer the Palestinians Authority or a unity government to rule Gaza in a transitional period. However, West Bankers would rather see a unity government rule in Gaza for a transitional period as a first preference followed by continued Hamas rule
- A majority of Gazans believe that Hamas will no longer rule in Gaza after the war, and most of them believe that PA will rule in its place. In the West Bank, the majority believe that Hamas rule will continue, and half of those believe that Hamas will secure gains.

Aspirations for a political solution

Expectations and preferences

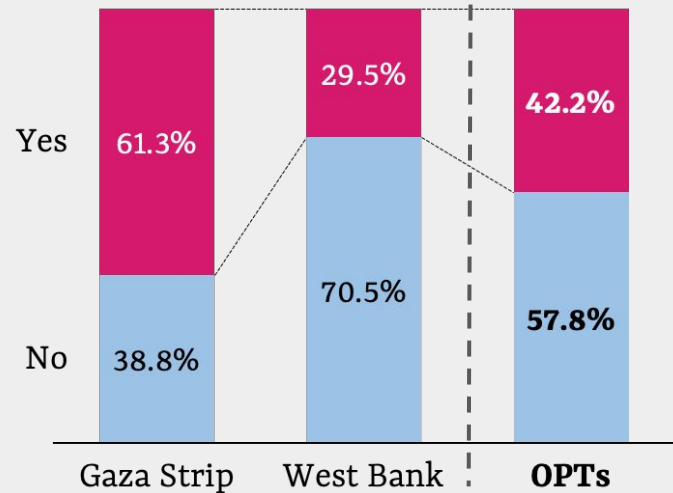
A majority in both the West Bank and Gaza is willing to accept a two-state solution

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

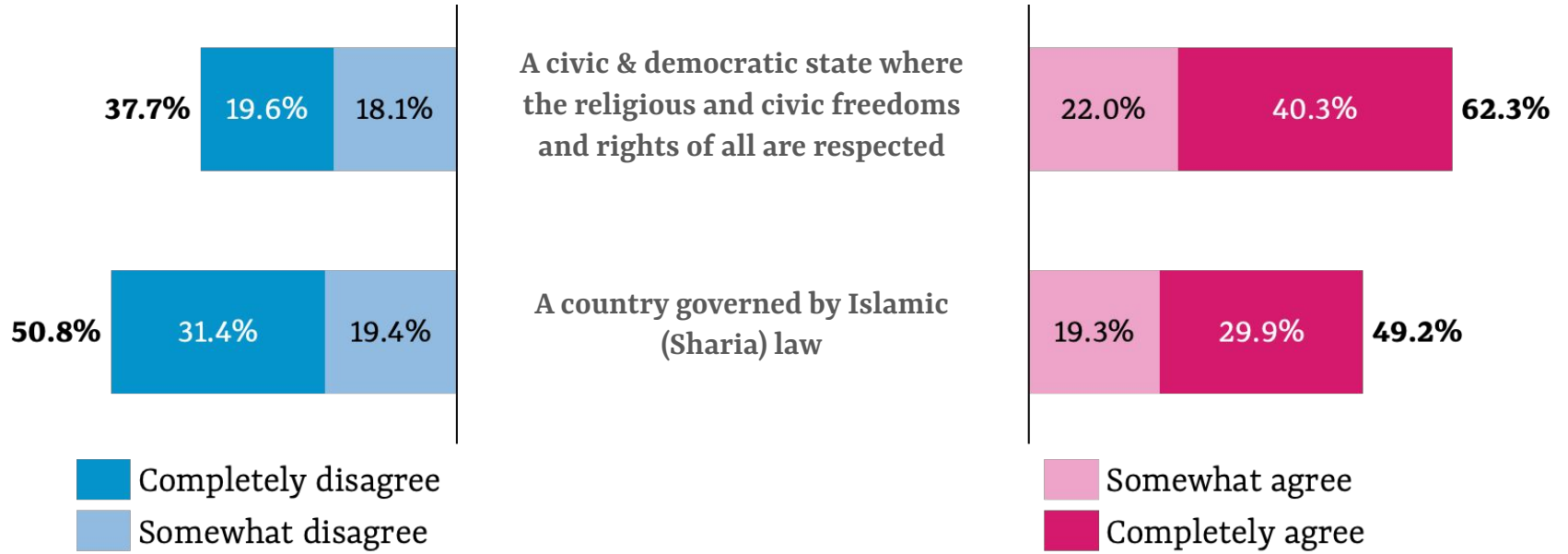


A majority in the Gaza Strip would accept a one-state solution, but in the West Bank a majority would not accept it

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



The majority of Palestinians in the OPTs prefer to live in a secular state, and half would accept living under Sharia law

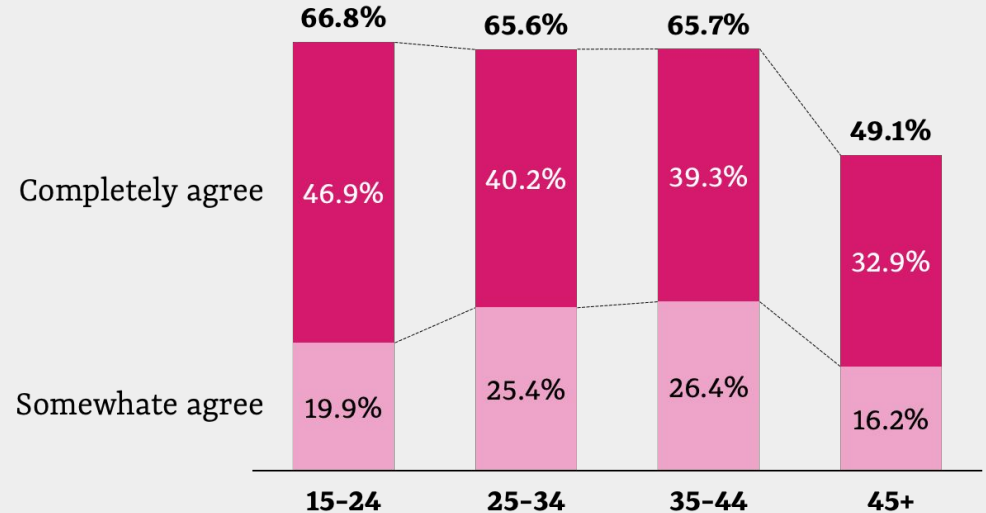


Question: To what extent do you agree/ disagree with these options regarding the system of government in Palestine?

Support for secularism is significantly more concentrated among younger respondents (below 45)

To what extent do you agree with these options regarding the system of government in Palestine?

A civic and democratic state where the religious and civic freedoms and rights of all are respected



Takeaways

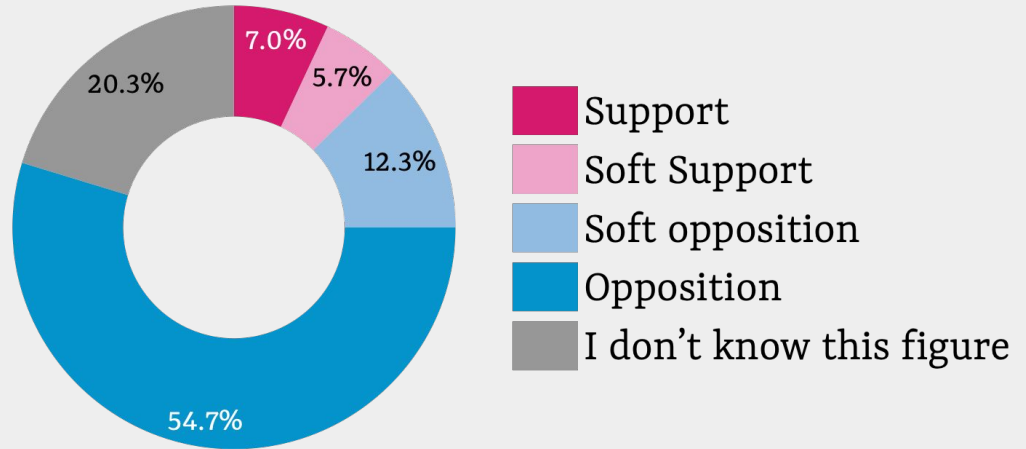
- Willingness to accept a two-state solution has been steady since March with an overwhelming majority of Palestinians (~70%) willing to accept it
- Around 40% of Palestinians would also accept a one-state solution, which indicates an increase in the willingness to accept solutions which fulfill the Palestinian national aspiration
- Just over 62% of Palestinians prefer to live in a secular state, and half would accept living under Sharia law
- Support for secularism is significantly more concentrated among younger respondents (below 45), which points to a growing progressive sentiment among the young

The role of the Palestinian Authority

Views on the new government and the future of the
Palestinian Authority among West Bank residents

The newly appointed Palestinian Prime Minister, Dr. Mohammad Mustafa, remains unknown to many in the West Bank

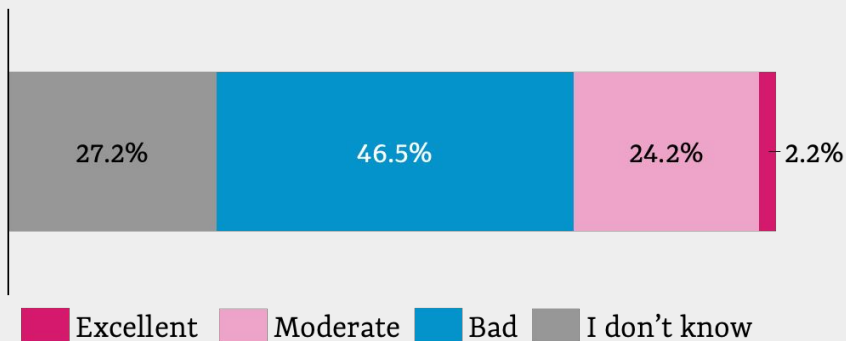
*Evaluate the extent of your support or opposition for the following leaders: Mohammad Mustafa**



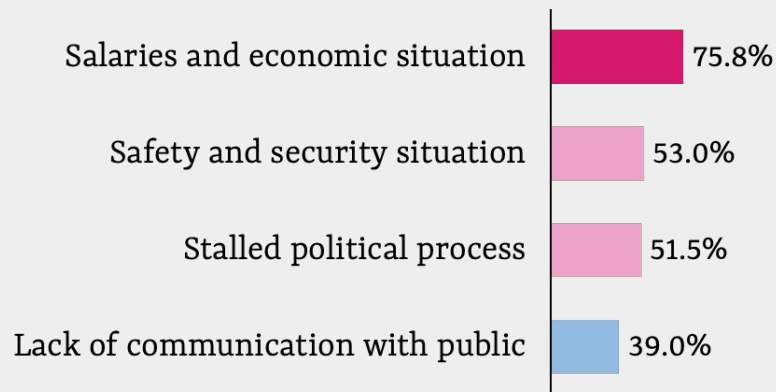
* Rate from 0 to 6. 0 = I don't know this figure, 1 = Opposition, 6 = Support.

Almost half in the West Bank (46.5%) describe the performance of the new government as bad, citing the growing economic crisis

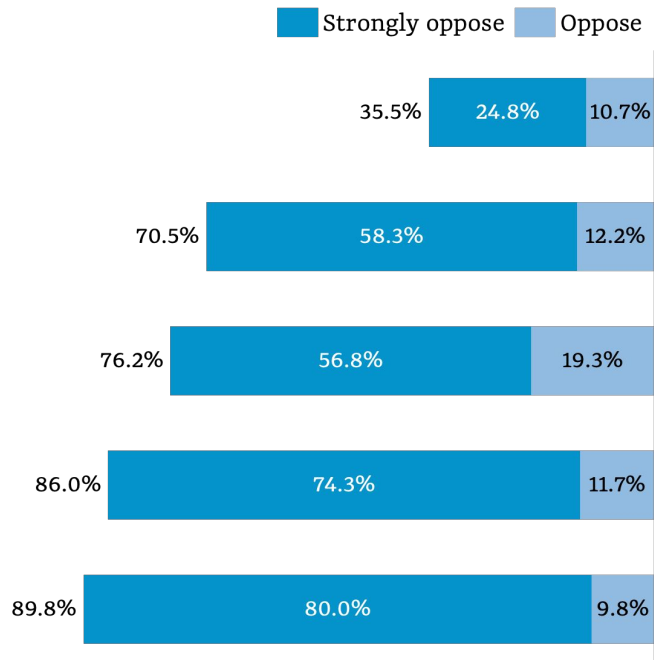
How do you evaluate the performance of the new government led by Dr Mohamed Mustafa?



[For those who answered "Bad"] Why did you find it to be bad?



A majority in the West Bank would prefer to reform the PA rather than dissolve it, but only if reform is comprehensive and democratic



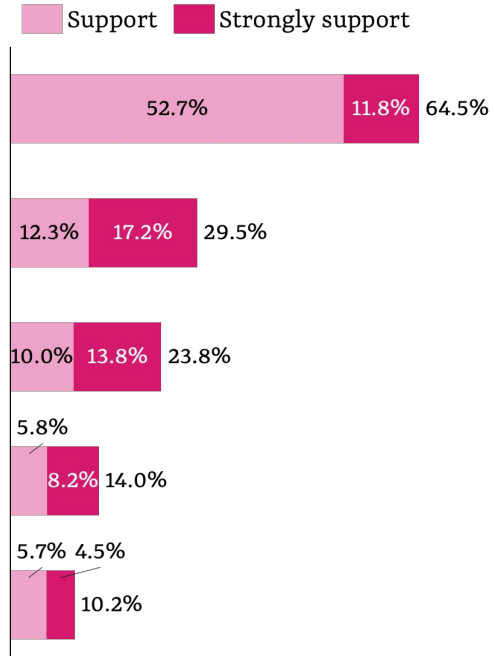
Free elections and full reform of PA/ PLO

Dissolution of the PA, with regional self-rule

PA reform, but with no elections in short-term

Dissolution of the PA (Israeli rule)

Dissolution of the PA (Jordan/ Egypt rule)



Question: To what extent do you oppose or support the following steps regarding governance in Palestine?

Takeaways

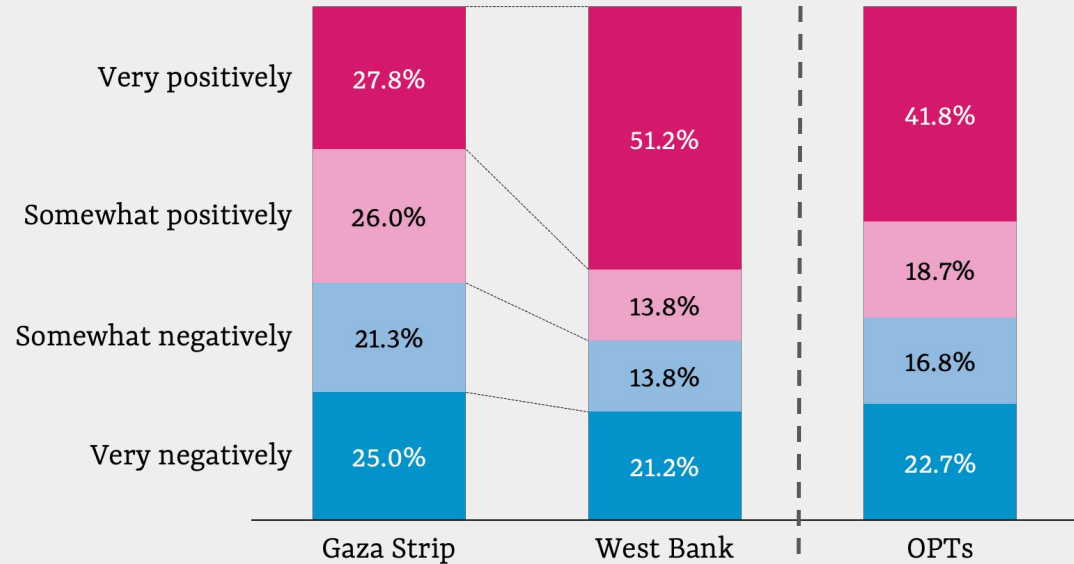
- The newly appointed Palestinian Prime Minister, Dr. Mohammad Mustafa, remains unknown to many in the West Bank, with 20% saying that they have never heard of him
- Almost half in the West Bank (46.5%) describe the performance of the new government as bad, citing the growing economic crisis, the safety and security situation and the stalled political process
- Despite all the difficulties and high level of dissatisfaction with PA performance, majority in the West Bank would prefer to reform the PA rather than dissolve it, but only if reform is comprehensive and democratic

Global shifts related to the war

Awareness and perceptions of international developments

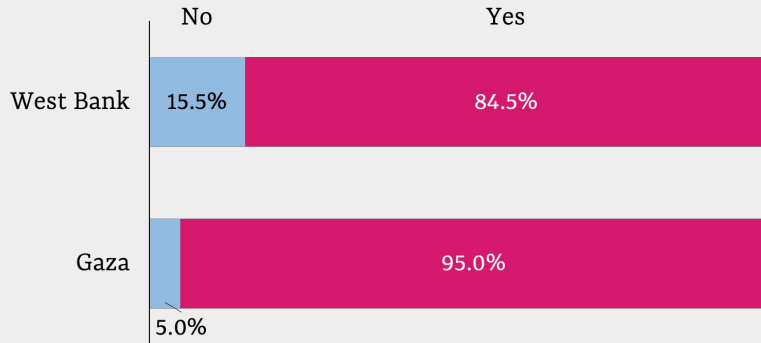
A majority in the West Bank view the Iranian attack on Israel positively, but Gazans are divided on the matter

How do you view the Iranian attack on Israel in April?

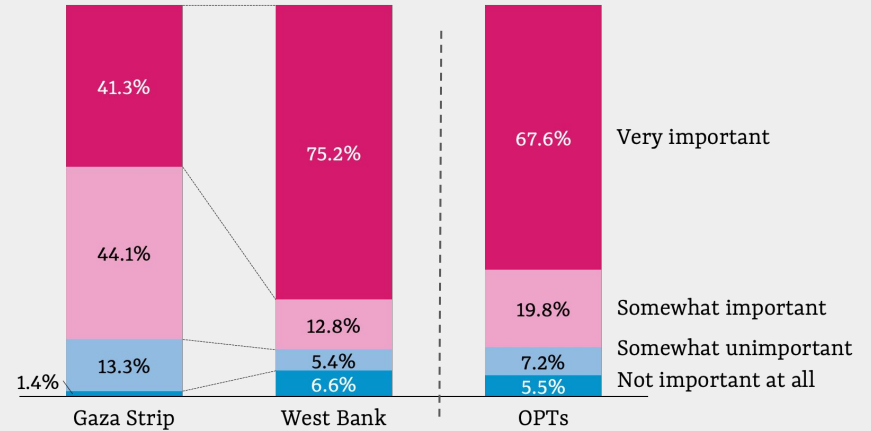


The absolute majority of respondents have heard of pro-Palestinian protest at US university campuses and believe they are important

Are you aware of pro-Palestine demonstrations on American campuses?

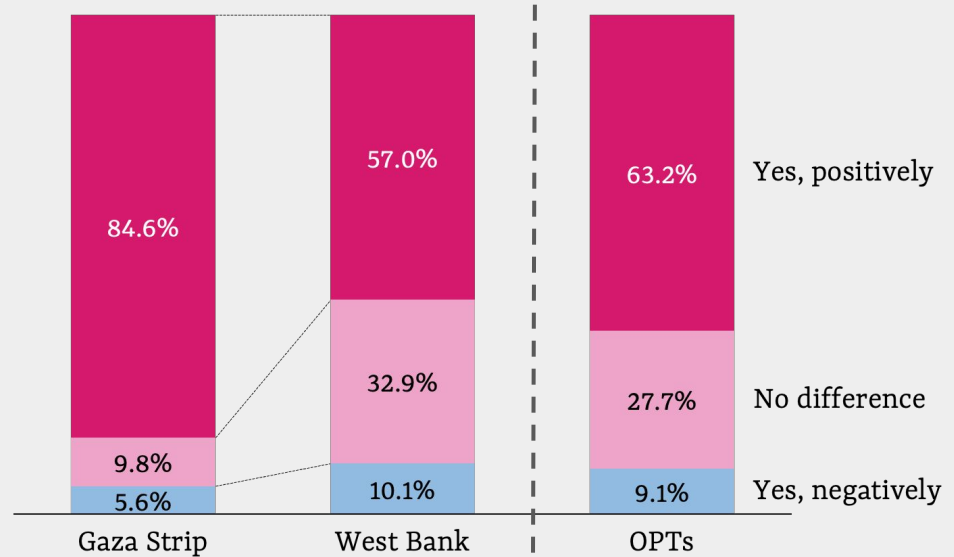


In your view, how important or unimportant are these demonstrations for the Palestinian cause?



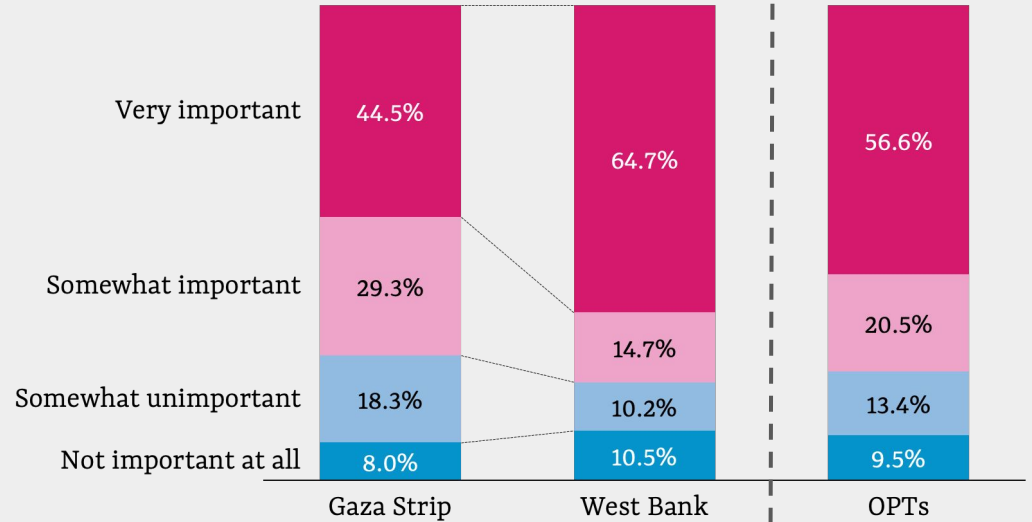
A majority of those aware of the protests state that their views of the American people have improved as a result, especially in Gaza

Do you view the American people differently after these demonstrations?



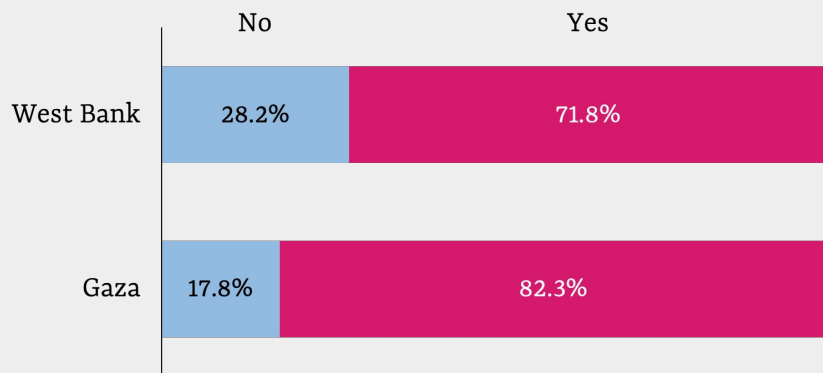
International statehood recognitions are also widely known and seen as important development for the Palestinian cause

Some European countries recognized Palestine and others may follow soon. In your view, how important or unimportant is this for the Palestinian cause?

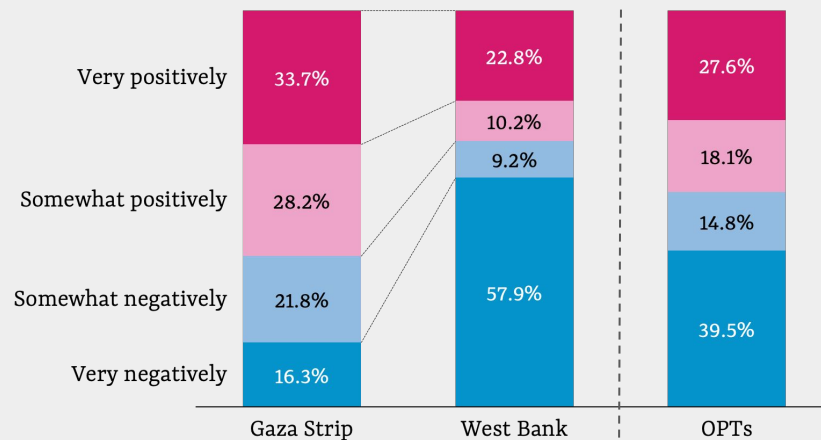


Over half (54.3%) view the establishment of pier off the coast Gaza is negatively, but most of these respondents are in the West Bank

Are you aware of the pier/ port that the US government established in Gaza?

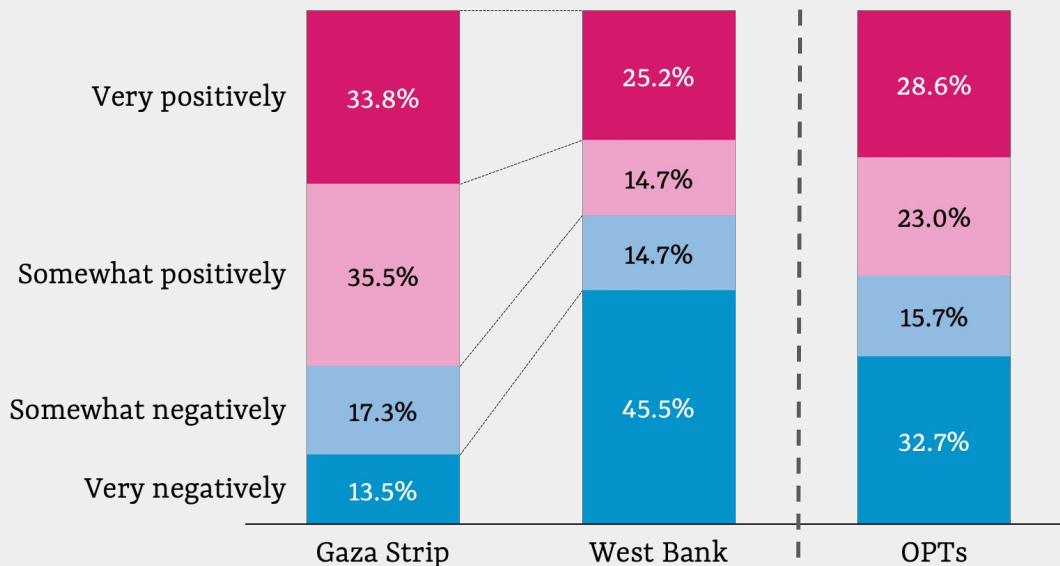


[For those who answered “Bad”] Why did you find it to be bad?



Half of respondents (51.6%) view the presence of international forces in Gaza positively, but most of these respondents are in Gaza

How do you view the presence of international forces in Gaza for a transitional period?



Takeaways

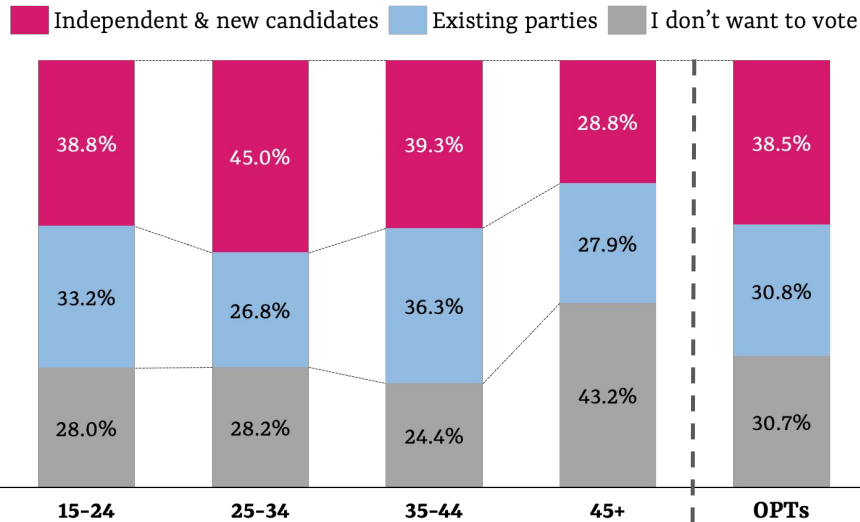
- A slim majority in the West Bank view the Iranian attack on Israel positively, but Gazans are divided on the matter
- The vast majority view the demonstrations on US campuses positively with 86% stating that these protests are either very important or somewhat important
- Over 84% of Gazans and 57% of West Bankers now view the American people more positively as a result of the campus protests
- A majority of Palestinians see the statehood recognition as an important development for the Palestinian cause
- A majority of Gazans view the pier established by the US positively or somewhat positively, whereas a majority of West Bankers view the step negatively
- Half of Palestinians would accept the presence of international forces in Gaza but most of the positive responses come from Gaza

Political leadership

Support and opposition for key political leaders

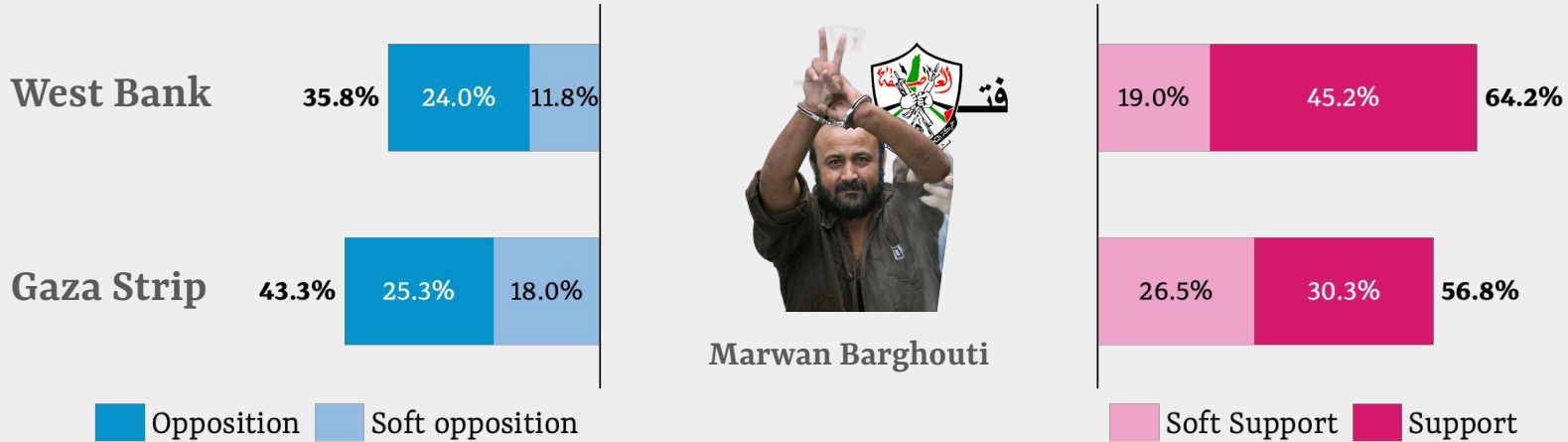
In upcoming elections, almost half of voting Palestinians would choose independent candidates

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



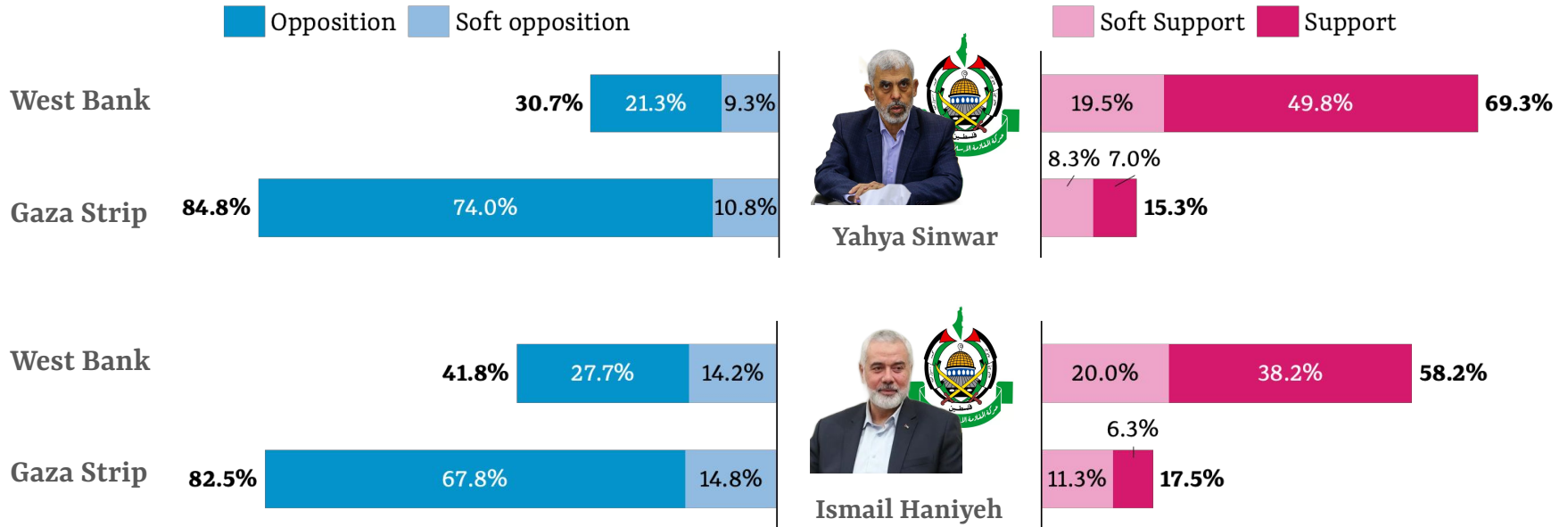
- Younger people are more likely to vote for independent candidates rather than existing political parties
- Younger people are also more likely to go out to vote by a margin in an upcoming election

Marwan Barghouti is currently the most popular political figure, with 61% 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

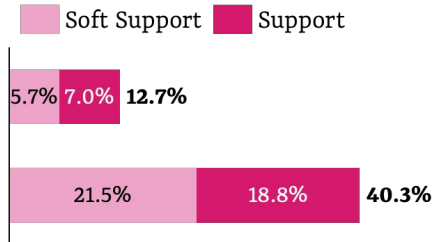


Question: Evaluate the extent of your support or opposition for the following leaders (rate from 1 to 6).

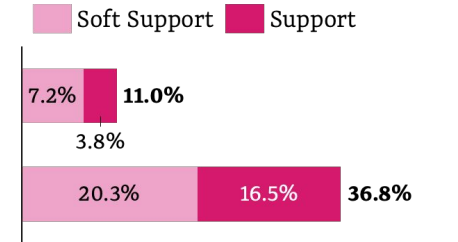
Palestinian Authority and Fatah leaders garner low levels of support in the West Bank, but higher levels in the Gaza Strip



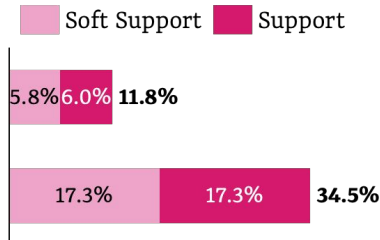
M. Mustafa



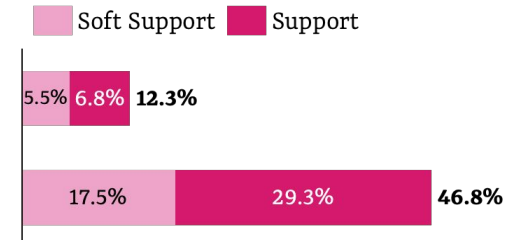
Mahmoud Aloul



Hussein Al-Sheikh

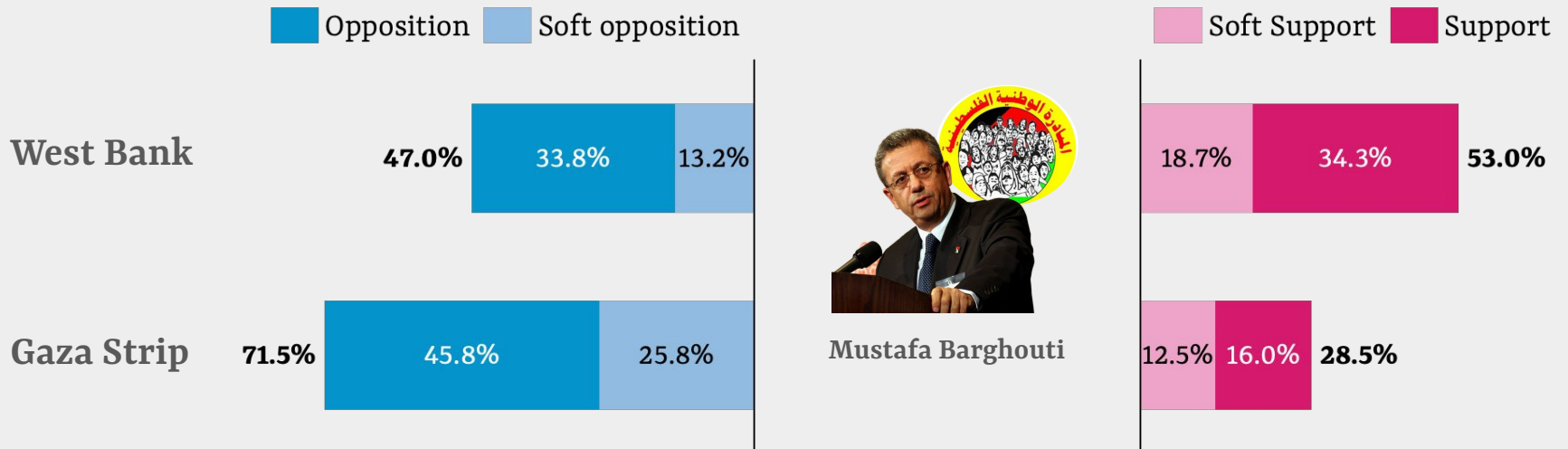


M. Dahlan



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

Mustafa Barghouti, an independent political figure, continues to enjoy significant support in the West Bank and Gaza



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

Takeaways

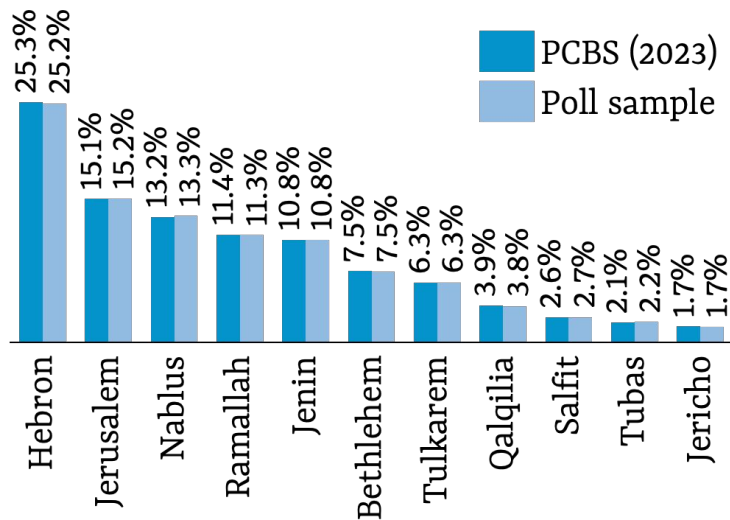
- In upcoming elections, almost half of Palestinians who would vote will choose independent candidates over established political parties
- Marwan Barghouti remains to be the most popular political figure, with 61% of Palestinians viewing him favourably
- While Sinwar, followed by Haniyeh, continue to be very popular in the West Bank, support for the Hamas leaders has hit a new low in Gaza
- On the other hand, Fateh leaders approval rating is between 11% and 12% in the West Bank but is three times as much in Gaza
- Mustafa Barghouti is the most popular independent figure in Palestine but most of his popularity comes from the West Bank

Conclusions

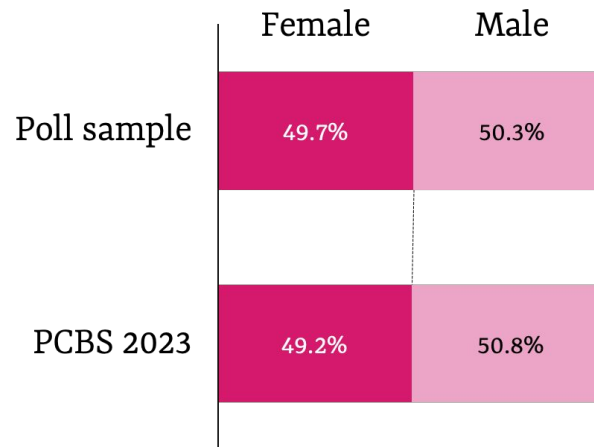
- A ceasefire deal which is acceptable to Palestinians must include a permanent end to the ongoing war at a minimum for it to gain popular support
- The majority of Gazans want the PA or a unity government to rule Gaza in a post-war transitional period, and less than 5% want Hamas to govern
- A vast majority of Palestinians would accept a two-state solution and would like to live in a civic state rather than a religious state
- Palestinians would rather reform the PA than dissolve it but that's only if the reform is comprehensive and democratic
- In upcoming elections, a majority of voting Palestinians would choose independent candidates

Annex 1 - Sample distribution in the West Bank

Distribution by Governorate

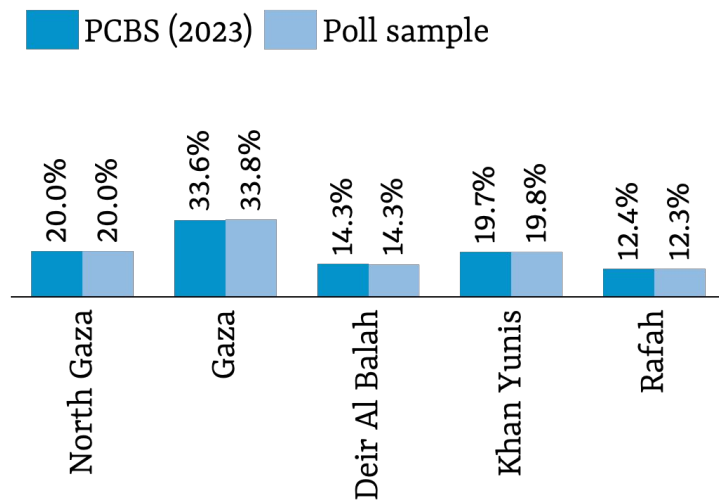


Distribution by Gender

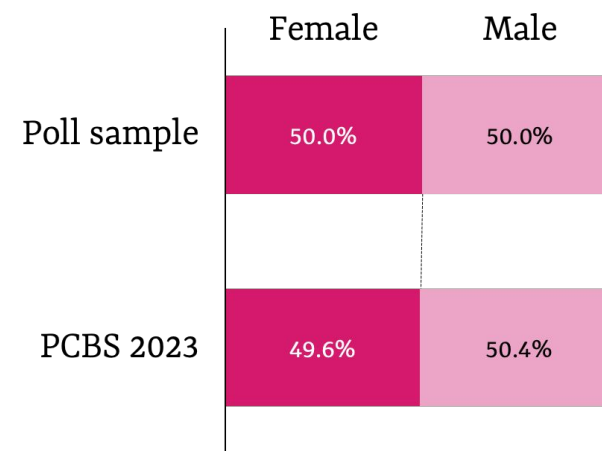


Annex 2 - Sample distribution in the Gaza Strip

Distribution by Governorate



Distribution by Gender





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