



Two-State Solution Coalition “TSC” Press Release

TSC Public Opinion Poll: the Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process June 2020

The TSC conducted a poll on Palestinian public perception of the peace process. The poll was conducted in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip between 17-20 June 2020. The period before the conduct of the poll witnessed several developments including the spread of the Corona virus throughout the world and in the Palestinian territories leading the Palestinian Authority to impose a lockdown throughout the Palestinian territories which brought to a standstill many economic activities. It also witnessed the formation of a new Israeli government lead by prime minister Netanyahu and the announcement of the government intentions to annex the Jordan Valley and the settlement areas in the occupied West Bank. In response, the PA announced ending its commitment to the Oslo agreement and severed relations with Israel in security and civil realms. This was followed by ending Palestinian-Israeli security coordination and Israel stopped the transfer of Palestinian clearance funds thereby negatively affecting the PA’s ability to pay salaries for the month of May 2020.

Total size of the sample is 1200 adults interviewed face to face in 120 randomly selected locations. Margin of error is +/-3%.

The poll explores public support for the two-state solution as well as alternative ideas to resolve the conflict, such as the one-state solution. It addresses the Trump plan and Palestinian response to it as well as the preferred PA response to the Israeli plan to annex West Bank territories. It also examines public perception of the likely future scenarios, the role of leadership and the parties responsible for the continuation of conflict, and attitudes regarding making Jerusalem an open city. Finally, it explores public attitudes regarding a resumption of negotiations with the new Israeli government led by prime minister Netanyahu.

MAIN FINDINGS

Conflict resolution: the two-state solution and its alternatives

We asked the public about its preference for a solution to the conflict with Israel. Three in particular were presented to the public: a two-state solution; a democratic one-state solution in which a single state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea would be created and in which Jews and Arabs would enjoy equal rights; and a one-state solution in which the status of the Palestinians in the occupied territories would be equivalent to that of Israeli Arabs today. The largest percentage, or 38%, indicated a preference for the two-state solution while 21% opted for a democratic one-state, and 13% for a one-state in which Palestinians would have the same status

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as Israeli Arabs. Only minor differences were found between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with one notable exception: more Gazans (18%) than West Bankers (9%) supported the idea of one state in which the status of Palestinians would be similar to the status of Israeli Arabs today.

A separate question about support for the two-states for two-peoples, Palestine for Palestinians and Israel for the Jewish people, along the 1967 lines with minor and equal border adjustments show similar results with support standing for 36% and opposition at 54% and 11% undecided. Support in the West Bank for this solution (40%) is higher than that of the Gaza Strip (30%).

Should the PA make a counter offer to the Trump Plan?

We asked the public whether the Trump peace plan can be implemented. Half of the public believe it cannot be implemented while 41% believe it can be. Findings show that Gazans tend to believe that the plan cannot be implemented (58%) while West Bankers are divided (46% think it can and 44% think it cannot be implemented). A slim majority of 51% do think that the PA should make its own counter proposal to the Trump plan in consultation with Arab and friendly countries while 36% think it should not. Opposition to a Palestinian counter proposal is greater in the West Bank (38%) than it is in the Gaza Strip (33%).

Israeli Annexation:

Similarly, we asked the public about its view of the most preferred response to an Israeli annexation of Palestinian territories in the West Bank. Respondents were given three possible responses: (1) cancel the agreements with Israel and permanently dismantle the Palestinian Authority; (2) cancel the agreements with Israel but without dismantling the PA, and (3) end the split and restore unity in order to confront the Israeli plan but without canceling the agreements with Israel and without dismantling the PA. The largest percentage (43%) selected the third response, restore unity, while options 1 and 2 received similar levels of support, 22% and 23% respectively. It should be pointed out that that support for option 3, restore unity, is higher in the West Bank (49%) compared to the Gaza Strip (36%). Support for cancelling the agreements with Israel and dismantle the PA is higher in the Gaza Strip (31%) compared to the West Bank (16%).

Future scenarios:

We asked the public to tell us what, in its view, might happen during the next 10 years between Palestinians and Israelis. Respondents had three choices and a fourth in which they can imagine their own scenario. The one that received the largest percentage is one in which nothing happens: “the status quo will continue” with 43%% selecting it (51% in the Gaza Strip and 39% in the West Bank). The scenario selected next was the one in which “Israel will annex part of the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and a Palestinian state will be created on the rest of the territories,” as 33% selected it (39% in the West Bank and 24% in the Gaza Strip). Scenario number three was one leading to “the creation of a Palestinian state along the lines of 1967,” with only 14% selecting it. Only 3% envisaged other possibilities and 7% were not sure or did not provide an answer.

Respondents were then asked to speculate about the behavior of the Palestinian leadership when confronted with these scenarios. The largest percentage (42%) indicated that it believes that the leadership will “accept an Israel annexation of part of the 1967 occupied Palestinian territories and establish a Palestinian state in the remaining part.” By contrast, 37% believe that the PA leadership will “insist on the creation of a Palestinian state along the lines of 1967.” Only 3% of the

respondents thought the PA will follow a different path and the rest were not sure or did not provide an answer.

Who is responsible for the stalemate in peace making?

We asked the public “which player is the primary impediment to peace making in the region. Respondents were given four options to choose from: Palestine, Israel, the US, and the Arab countries. A majority 57% believes Israeli is the primary impediment while only 2% said Palestine was the primary impediment to peace making. The US was seen as an impediment by 25% of the public and only 13% selected the option of “Arab countries”.

Negotiating with the new Israeli government:

We asked the public about resuming negotiations with the new Israeli government. A large majority of 63% expressed opposition and only 29% expressed support. Opposition to resumption of negotiations with Israel is higher in the Gaza Strip (66%) compared to the West Bank (60%).

Resolving the Jerusalem question:

We asked the public about its support for the idea of making Jerusalem, both East and West, an open city whereby East Jerusalem would be the capital of the Palestinian state and West Jerusalem the capital of the Israel based on the two-state solution. A large majority of 70% expresses opposition to the idea and less than a quarter (23%) support it. Opposition is strong in both the West Bank (68%) and the Gaza Strip (72%).

This poll was commissioned by the TSC in cooperation with the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR).