



Current Protests:

An Online Study of Palestinian Youth (16-35 Years Old)

Publication Date: 10 December 2015

Fieldwork: 1-7 December 2015

Sample Size: 505 Palestinian youth

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Introduction: From December 1-7, AWRAD conducted a specialized public opinion survey targeting Palestinian youth. The goal of this survey was to assess current perceptions regarding the wave of protests that has occurred in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBG) since September 2015, as well as a variety of other themes related to the lives of youth. The poll targeted 505 Palestinian men and women between the ages of 16 and 35, both inside and outside of the WBG.

Highlights:

- 86 percent of youth believe there are insufficient opportunities for growth and 80 percent believe that participation of youth in national decision-making processes is unsatisfactory.
- The majority of youth are active to some degree in following the protests and demonstrations on social media.
- Youth largely believe that the current protests are non-partisan, and that they are participated in by only a small cross-section of society.
- Frustration with the failure of the peace process and the continuing occupation is believed to be the main cause of the current protests, followed by dissatisfaction with Hamas and Fatah, and youth expressing their patriotism.
- Youth believe the current protests will continue for some time, at the current intensity, though they are skeptical that anything substantive will be achieved. A majority of youth supports the protests, regardless.
- The majority of youth are critical of the responses of all major parties and organizations to the current situation, though they are most upset with the reaction of the PA.
- Significant numbers of youth in East Jerusalem and the West Bank report that they or their family members have had negative experiences with Israelis (soldiers or settlers) since the start of the recent round of clashes.
- At the present time, the majority of youth support attacks against Israeli soldiers and settlers. They are more divided, however, when it comes to supporting attacks on civilians within the Green Line.
- At the present time, a majority of youth identify armed struggle as the best means to end the occupation.

General Youth Circumstances: Overall, Palestinian youth believe they are marginalized with few opportunities, facing obstacles from both the Israeli occupation and Palestinian governments. The majority (86 percent) of youth believe there are insufficient opportunities for growth, to varying degrees.¹ A similar majority (80 percent) believes that the participation of youth in national decision-making process is unsatisfactory, to varying degrees. Additionally, 35 percent believe their economic situation is bad, compared to 25 percent who believe it is good and 39 percent who believe it is fair.

Palestinian youth identify restrictions on rights and freedoms as the greatest impact of the Israeli occupation. The largest group of respondents (44 percent) says the ability to move freely is the aspect of their life that is most influenced. A further 24 percent identify the ability to find work and economic opportunities; while 14 percent choose

¹ This figure is an aggregate of respondents who selected “somewhat insufficient opportunities” and “insufficient opportunities.”

the ability to maximize their talents and a final 3 percent select the ability to get a good education. Significantly, only 12 percent identify exposure to direct violence as the greatest impact of the occupation.

Overall, these economic, political and social factors have engendered a prevailing sense of pessimism among youth. Specifically, 84 percent identify their outlook for their future as “bleak,” compared to only 11 percent who are hopeful.

Perceptions of the Current Protests: Youth display varying degrees of activity in the current protests. Presently, 21 percent are following the news and posting or reposting related pictures and videos on their Facebook pages. The greatest number (44 percent) are frequently following events through the media, including social media, though not actively posting or commenting. In contrast, 28 percent are only occasionally following events through media and a final 4 percent are too busy to become involved.

Youth largely believe that the current protests are non-partisan. Specifically, 86 percent believe that the protests are spontaneous actions by individual Palestinians, as opposed to organized events by political parties. Additionally, 70 percent believe that protests are carried out by a small number of participants, rather than being a popular demonstration by all segments of society.

According to a plurality of respondents (37 percent), the cause of current protests is the failure of the peace process and the continuation of the occupation. This is followed by approximately one-fourth (24 percent) who believe the protests are an expression of frustration against the PA in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza. A similar number (22 percent) believe it is an expression of patriotism by youth too young to have participated in the First or Second Intifada. A final 12 percent believe the cause is frustration over limited economic prospects.

The Future of the Protests: Youth do not believe that the intensity of the current protests will change substantially in the near term. Currently, 53 percent believe they will continue at the same level of intensity for some time, while 24 percent believe they will expand into a Third Intifada and 19 percent believe they will end soon, with little achievement.

Regardless of their duration or intensity, youth do not believe the demonstrations will alter the *status quo*. 50 percent believes that the current protests will have no change on the Palestinian struggle for statehood, and a similar number (48 percent) believe they will produce no substantive change on the ground. A plurality of respondents (41 percent) believes that the protests will neither improve nor worsen their personal life.

Despite perceptions of limited efficacy, Palestinian youth remain supportive of the protests. A majority (57 percent) expresses support for their continuation, while 28 percent express opposition and the final 15 percent are neutral.

Perception of Palestinian Parties: Palestinian youth are critical of major parties and their behavior and responses to the current protests. The PA receives the greatest criticism, with 67 percent of youth saying they view the body’s response negatively.

Islamic Jihad receives the least criticism, though a majority (54 percent) still expresses negative opinions of the group's response to date.

Violence and Support for Attacks: Since the current wave of protests began in September, Palestinian youth report various direct impacts experienced by themselves or members of their family. Palestinian youth in East Jerusalem (52 percent) are most likely to report harassment, which is also common among youth in the rest of the West Bank (45 percent). Those in East Jerusalem (15 percent) are also more likely than those in the West Bank (12 percent) to report damage to their property. In contrast, youth in the West Bank are more likely to have experienced arrest (16 percent v. 7 percent) or injury and death (14 percent v. 7 percent). These impacts are less likely in Gaza as a result of the limited direct contact with Israeli soldiers and none with settlers. However, residents in Gaza (4 percent), along with those in East Jerusalem (4 percent), are more likely to have experienced home demolitions.

Within the current context, a majority of Palestinian youth expresses support for attacks on Israelis, though variances in opinion are visible. Youth are most likely to support attacks against Israeli soldiers (81 percent), while slightly less support attacks against Israeli settlers (77 percent). Fewer (49 percent) support attacks against Israeli civilians within the Green Line (Israel proper).

At the present time, a majority of Palestinian youth (53 percent) identify armed struggle as the best means to end the occupation. Other options include international advocacy (16 percent), non-violent protest (11 percent) and negotiations (8 percent). 12 percent are uncertain which they prefer.

Future Outlook: 43 percent of youth believe that Palestinian society is heading in the wrong direction, while 39 percent believe it is heading in the right direction and 19 percent are unsure. These misgivings are reflected in the future outlook of youth with 49 percent pessimistic about the future, compared to 45 percent who are optimistic.

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Table of Results

1) How would you best describe the level of opportunity for youth in Palestine?

Sufficient opportunities for growth	3.6%
Somewhat sufficient opportunities	9.9%
Somewhat insufficient opportunities	33.5%
Insufficient opportunities	52.5%
DK/No answer	0.6%

2) How would you best describe the participation of Palestinian youth in national decision-making processes?

Satisfactory	3.6%
Satisfactory, to some extent	14.5%
Unsatisfactory, to some extent	23.6%
Unsatisfactory	56.6%
DK/No answer	1.8%

3) How do you view the future for Palestinian youth?

Hopeful outlook	10.9%
Bleak outlook	84.2%
DK/No answer	5.0%

4) How would you describe your current economic situation?

Very good	6.7%
Good	18.0%
Fair	39.4%
Bad	19.6%
Very Bad	15.6%
DK/No answer	0.6%

5) What is the one aspect in your life that is most influenced by the Occupation? (One choice)

Ability to move freely	44.4%
Ability to find work/economic opportunities	24.0%
Ability to utilize/maximize my talents/potential	13.9%
Exposure to violence	12.3%
Ability to get a good education	3.0%
DK/No answer	2.6%

6) Which statement best describes your level of interest in the ongoing protests?

I am following the news and posting/reposting pictures/videos related to the protests on my Facebook page	21.2%
I am frequently following events through the media, including social media	44.2%
I occasionally follow events through the media, including social media	28.1%
I am too busy to follow the ongoing events	4.0%
DK/No answer	2.6%

7) Do you believe that the current protests will..?

Expand into a Third Intifada	23.6%
Continue for some time, at the same level	53.3%
End soon, with little achievement	19.4%
DK/No answer	3.8%

8) In your opinion, which statement best describes the true cause of the current protests? Are they mostly..... ? (one choice)

An expression of frustration by youth at the failure of the peace process and the continuation of the occupation	37.3%
An expression of frustration with the PA in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza	24.0%
An expression of patriotism by youth too young to have participated in either the First or Second Intifada	22.4%
An expression of frustration by youth over little economic prospects	11.7%
DK/No answer	4.6%

9) Do you believe that the current protest will lead to....?

Favorable outcomes for Palestinians	34.1%
No real change on the ground	47.7%
Unfavorable outcomes	11.7%
DK/No answer	6.5%

10) Do you believe that the current protests will impede or advance the Palestinian goal of statehood?

Advance	24.6%
Impede	13.9%
There will be no change	49.7%
DK/No answer	11.9%

11) Do you believe that the current wave of protest will improve or worsen your personal life?

Improve	21.4%
Worsen	27.7%
Will have no impact	41.2%
DK/No answer	9.7%

12) Do you believe that the current protests represent a popular Intifada (with wide participation from all social strata) or are being carried out by a small number of participants?

Popular	25.9%
Small number of participants	69.7%
DK/No answer	4.4%

13) Do you believe that current protests are organized by political parties or are spontaneous actions by individual Palestinians?

Organized by political parties	8.9%
Spontaneous/individual actions	85.9%
DK/No answer	5.1%

14) Do you support or oppose the continuation of the protests as is?

Support	57.0%
Oppose	28.3%
DK/No answer	14.7%

15) Do you support or oppose attacks against the following groups?

	Support	Oppose	DK/No answer
Israeli soldiers	80.8%	9.8%	9.4%
Settlers in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem)	76.9%	11.6%	11.4%
Israeli civilians inside the Green Line	49.4%	35.9%	14.7%

16) How do you evaluate the response of the following groups to the recent protests?

Item	Positive	Positive, to some extent	Negative, to some extent	Negative	No answer/DK
The PA	8.2%	19.1%	13.5%	53.1%	6.2%
Fatah	12.0%	22.9%	17.9%	41.0%	6.2%
Hamas	10.0%	21.1%	19.5%	42.0%	7.4%
Islamic Jihad	12.4%	24.8%	17.4%	36.3%	9.2%
PFLP	9.5%	22.1%	21.1%	37.6%	9.7%
Al Mubadara	7.2%	19.9%	19.7%	40.6%	12.5%

17) Please tell us if you or a member of your immediate family has been exposed to the following during the recent clashes (since September 2015):

Item		East Jerusalem	West Bank ²	Gaza Strip	Total
Harassment by Israelis (soldiers, settlers)	Yes	51.9%	45.2%	5.1%	29.2%
	No	44.4%	52.4%	92.9%	68.4%
	No answer/DK	3.7%	2.4%	2.0%	2.4%
Damage to property (land, crops, cars, etc.) by Israelis (soldiers or settlers)	Yes	14.8%	11.6%	6.6%	10.4%
	No	77.8%	85.3%	91.8%	86.7%
	No answer/DK	7.4%	3.2%	1.5%	2.9%
House demolition	Yes	3.7%	0.8%	3.6%	3.9%
	No	92.6%	95.6%	94.9%	93.2%
	No answer/DK	3.7%	3.6%	1.5%	2.9%
Arrest by Israeli authorities	Yes	7.4%	15.7%	3.1%	9.9%
	No	85.2%	81.1%	95.4%	87.2%
	No	7.4%	3.2%	1.5%	2.9%

² Rest of the West Bank (not including East Jerusalem)

	answer/DK				
Injury (or death) in confrontations with Israelis (soldiers or settlers)	Yes	7.4%	13.5%	5.1%	9.7%
	No	88.9%	83.7%	93.3%	87.9%
	No answer/DK	3.7%	2.8%	1.5%	2.5%

18) Do you believe that Palestinian society is heading in the right or wrong direction?

Right direction	38.6%
Wrong direction	42.8%
DK/No answer	18.6%

19) Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future?

Optimistic	44.6%
Pessimistic	49.1%
DK/No answer	6.3%

20) Which of the following methods do you personally support to end the occupation?

Armed struggle	53.3%
International advocacy (UN, international courts and international agreements)	16.0%
Non-violent protest	10.5%
Negotiations	7.9%
DK/No answer	12.3%

Sample Distribution

Region of Residence		Gender	
East Jerusalem	5.5%	Male	61.6%
Rest of the West Bank	51.7%	Female	38.4%
Gaza Strip	40.0%	Age	
Outside of West Bank & Gaza	2.8%	16-18	5.9%
Profession		19-23	24.4%
Student	25.0%	24-28	37.0%
Government employee	12.1%	29-35	32.7%
Private business employee	25.0%	Type of Residence	
Laborer	5.5%	City	60.6%
Farmer	0.2%	Town/village	25.7%
Self-employed	10.3%	Refugee camp	13.7%
Don't work/unemployed	21.0%		
DK/No answer	1.0%		