

Press Release

Public Opinion Poll No (97)

PSR findings point to a Palestinian political landscape in transition. Hamas has lost substantial public support, while Marwan Barghout emerges as the strongest potential presidential candidate and dissatisfaction with the existing leadership remains exceptionally high. At the same time, Palestinians increasingly question whether armed struggle has delivered meaningful results after the devastation of Gaza, contributing to a notable rise in support for negotiations. Yet this shift remains fragile: most Palestinians still oppose Hamas disarmament before full Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, view settlement expansion as undermining the two-state solution, and remain deeply skeptical of both Palestinian and Israeli leadership.

These are the results of the latest poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip between 5 and 8 August 2026. The period preceding the survey witnessed the announcement of Palestinian legislative elections to be held on November 28, 2026, and presidential elections in early 2027. Hamas also announced its acceptance of the Nikolay Mladenov Plan to begin the second phase of the Trump Gaza Plan, including the movement's relinquishing of its weapons. Israeli elections were scheduled for the end of October 2026. During this period, Fatah held its Eighth General Conference and elected a new Central Committee, while Hamas elected Khalil al-Hayya as head of its Political Bureau. At the same time, settler attacks in the West Bank escalated to unprecedented levels under the protection of the Israeli government, while settlers and the Israeli government intensified efforts to expand settlements and establish new outposts. Domestically, the West Bank public was affected by a major fuel crisis that resulted in long lines of cars at gas stations. Externally, the United States attacked Iran, initially jointly with Israel at the end of February 2026 and later on its own. Restrictions on Palestinian movement in the West Bank continued, with the Israeli army closing the entrances to most towns and villages to prevent residents from reaching major roads.

The survey covers all of the above issues, as well as other topics including domestic conditions, the internal balance of power, the peace process, and the alternatives available to Palestinians in light of the current stalemate in that process.

The survey was conducted face-to-face in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip using tablets or mobile phones. Upon completion of each interview, the data were automatically transmitted directly to our server, which can be accessed only by our researchers. There is no way for anyone to intercept or manipulate the collected data. The sample consisted of 1,270 respondents: 830 interviewed in the West Bank across 83 residential localities and 440 in the Gaza Strip across 44 localities. The margin of error was 3.5%.

To ensure the safety of our field researchers in the Gaza Strip, interviews with residents were conducted in areas west, south, and north of what has become known as the "Yellow Line," areas where there is no Israeli military presence. Interviews with residents of areas under

Israeli military occupation, such as Rafah and parts of northern Gaza and Khan Younis, were conducted in shelters.

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Summary of Main Findings

The survey shows a Palestinian political landscape marked by continued rejection of the existing leadership, declining Hamas popularity, and growing uncertainty about the political future. If elections were held today, Marwan Barghouti would be the strongest presidential candidate, followed by Khalil al-Hayya and Mahmoud Abbas. Fatah and Hamas are now tied at a quarter each in general partisan identification, but Hamas has lost more than ten points in ten months. The decline is particularly pronounced in the West Bank, where Hamas support fell from about a third to about a fifth, while in Gaza it declined to one third. Thus, the political picture is not simply a shift from Hamas to Fatah: dissatisfaction with both major movements is substantial, with a large percentage saying that neither deserves to represent or lead the Palestinians.

The Gaza war has also altered perceptions of Hamas. Only one fifth of the public now believes Hamas won the war, compared with twice that share ten months earlier; six in ten believe neither side won. Yet this does not translate into support for immediate disarmament. About three quarters oppose Hamas disarming before a complete Israeli withdrawal, and the same percentage believe that disarmament would lead to renewed war rather than Israeli withdrawal. Following Hamas's acceptance of the Nikolay Mladenov's proposal as part of the Trump Plan, four out of ten expect the current situation—with continued killings—to persist, while only three out of ten anticipate genuine stability and reconstruction. At the same time, the Houthis, Hezbollah, and Iran receive relatively high satisfaction, while Trump and Abbas receive very low ratings. This suggests that Palestinian appreciation is increasingly shaped by perceptions of resistance and opposition to Israel rather than by formal diplomatic influence.

Domestically, the picture is bleak: more than three quarters feel unsafe, an overwhelming majority perceives corruption in PA institutions, and about two thirds view the PA as a burden. These attitudes reinforce the broader leadership crisis.

Most strikingly, attitudes toward the peace process show less enthusiasm for armed confrontation and greater interest in negotiations. Support for armed struggle as the most

effective means of achieving statehood fell from four out of ten to less than three out of ten, while support for negotiations rose from a little over a third to a little less than half, its highest level in four years. Peaceful popular resistance also increased modestly. This does not mean Palestinians have abandoned armed resistance or become optimistic about peace: half still believe armed resistance has been effective, and about six out of ten believe the two-state solution is no longer practical. Rather, the findings suggest a growing recognition that, after the devastation of Gaza and the failure to achieve decisive results through armed struggle, negotiation may currently offer the more promising path—even as confidence in the existing Palestinian and Israeli political leadership remains extremely low.

The following is a summary of the main findings:

1. Palestinian Political Landscape: The survey points to continued dissatisfaction with the Palestinian political leadership, but also to a significant reshuffling of political preferences. Marwan Barghouti is the strongest potential successor to President Mahmoud Abbas, preferred by 39%, followed by Hamas leader Khalil al-Hayya at 16%, Mohammed Dahlan at 15%, and Mustafa Barghouti at 6%. In a hypothetical presidential election, Marwan Barghouti would receive 54% from among the likely voters, al-Hayya 26%, and Abbas only 14%. At the same time, 79% want Abbas to resign, confirming the persistence of exceptionally high dissatisfaction with his leadership.

Hamas has also experienced a significant decline in popularity. Its overall support has fallen to 24%, compared with 35% ten months earlier, while Fatah remains at 24%. Among likely voters, Fatah would receive 32% and Hamas 29%, with third forces receiving 18%. Confidence in Hamas's ability to represent Palestinians has also declined, from 41% to 28%, while 44% now say that neither Hamas nor Fatah deserves to lead. These findings suggest that dissatisfaction is increasingly directed not toward one faction alone but toward the broader Palestinian political system.

2. Gaza War and the Trump Plan: The survey shows a major shift in perceptions of the Gaza war. Only 20% believe Hamas emerged victorious, 15% believe Israel did, and 60% believe neither side won. This represents a sharp decline in perceptions of a Hamas victory, particularly in the West Bank, where only 21% now see Hamas as victorious compared with 48% ten months earlier.

Despite this, 72% oppose Hamas disarming before Israel fully withdraws from Gaza, and the same percentage believe that disarmament would lead to renewed war rather than Israeli withdrawal. Public confidence in the institutions established under the

Trump Plan is limited: only 24% trust the Board of Peace and 32% trust the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza. Palestinians therefore appear receptive to an end to the war but skeptical about the proposed mechanisms for governing Gaza afterward.

Satisfaction with Hamas's performance during the war has fallen sharply, from 60% to 42%, while satisfaction with Abbas stands at only 18%. Among regional actors, the Houthis receive the highest satisfaction at 61%, followed by Qatar at 51%, Hezbollah and Iran at 50%. Spain leads among international actors at 50%, followed by China at 40%, while satisfaction with Trump remains extremely low at 5%.

3. Domestic Conditions: Domestic insecurity and dissatisfaction with Palestinian governance remain pronounced. Only 23% feel personally and familiarly safe, while 76% feel unsafe. A striking 83% believe corruption exists within Palestinian Authority institutions, and 65% now describe the PA as a burden rather than an achievement. Most respondents also see little meaningful change resulting from the recent Fatah and Hamas leadership elections.

4. Palestinian-Israeli Relations and the Peace Process: Support for the two-state solution stands at 44%, while 50% oppose it—virtually unchanged from ten months earlier. Yet support for a specific two-state formula based on the 1967 borders is considerably higher, at 56%, including 61% in Gaza. Confederation receives 14% and a single democratic state with equal rights 10%. At the same time, 58% believe the two-state solution is no longer practical because of settlement expansion, and 64% see little or no chance of an independent Palestinian state emerging within five years.

There is nevertheless a notable shift in preferred strategies for achieving Palestinian statehood. Negotiations are now viewed as the most effective approach by 44%, up from 36% ten months earlier and the highest level in four years. Support for armed struggle has fallen from 41% to 27%, its lowest level in four years, while support for peaceful popular resistance has risen from 14% to 19%. However, Palestinians remain evenly divided over whether armed resistance has been effective, with 50% saying it has failed to protect Palestinians or end the occupation and 50% rejecting that assessment.

5. The US-Iran War: The recent US-Iran war has produced a distinctly favorable Palestinian orientation toward Iran: 45% say they sided with Iran, compared with only 12% who sided against it, while 40% sided with neither Iran nor the United States.

6. Palestinian Top Priorities: The survey reveals that statehood remains the leading national aspiration. Forty-three percent identify Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders and establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital as the Palestinian people's highest priority. Twenty-eight percent prioritize the right of return, 15% emphasize building a religious society based on Islamic teachings, and 11% prioritize democratic government and human rights.

In brief, the survey depicts a Palestinian public deeply dissatisfied with its political leadership and profoundly insecure, yet increasingly skeptical of the effectiveness of armed confrontation. The combination of declining support for Hamas, growing preference for negotiations, continued attachment to the 1967-based two-state framework, and strong opposition to Hamas disarmament before Israeli withdrawal suggests that Palestinians may be moving toward a more pragmatic conception of conflict resolution—but without abandoning core national demands or developing confidence in the political actors currently expected to deliver them.