



The Sabra Report

Support For Hamas Grows in West Bank

Lucy Williamson, BBC News, December 13th, 2023

Recap:

A poll carried out last month found that support for Hamas had more than tripled in the West Bank compared to before the war.

The Context:

- ✦ On October 7th, Hamas invaded Israel and brutally slaughtered 1,200 people while taking 240 hostages to Gaza where 135 are still held captive. More than 18,400 Palestinians have died during Israel's counteroffensive, 7,000 of whom are Hamas terrorists [1].
- ✦ The wartime poll shows a dramatic rise in support for Hamas in the West Bank & Gaza with nearly 90% of participants calling on Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas to resign [2]. Over 70% of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza support Hamas's decision to carry out the October 7th Massacre and most do not believe that Hamas carried out atrocities during the massacre [3]. While 85% of West Bank Palestinians expressed satisfaction with Hamas, only 52% of Gazan Palestinians felt the same.
- ✦ The PA was established in 1994, as part of the Oslo Accords, to represent the Palestinian people. Prior to 2007, Fatah, the PA's dominant party, controlled both the West Bank and Gaza until Hamas, a political and ideological rival, won elections and violently expelled Fatah from Gaza. Fatah's Abbas is serving his 18th year of a 4-year term, fearing that if elections were held in the West Bank today, he would lose to Hamas. According to recent polling, Ismail Haniyeh, a Hamas leader who lives in Qatar, would indeed trounce Abbas [4]. Fatah, who currently administers the West Bank, is seen as inept domestically & abroad and according to a survey conducted before the war, "Palestinians don't feel that any of their leaders are really legitimate [5]."
- ✦ Washington has called for a "revitalized PA" to eventually assume control of Gaza and run both territories as a precursor to statehood. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to destroy all remnants of Hamas and rejected any role for the PA in Gaza, insisting Israel must retain security control there following the war.

Conversation Points:

- ✦ What explains the significant differences between the attitudes of West Bank Palestinians and Gazan Palestinians?
- ✦ Is it realistic to expect the PA to one day govern Gaza considering its standing among Palestinians?
- ✦ If Hamas is anathema to Israel and the PA to Palestinians, who is best suited to run Gaza after the war?
- ✦ Will physically destroying Hamas destroy its influence amongst Palestinians?

Notes:

1. [Poll shows soaring Palestinian support for Hamas; 72% back October 7 atrocities](#), Times of Israel, December 13th, 2023.
2. Ibid.
3. [Palestinians largely support October 7 massacre, deny atrocities - poll](#), TZVI JOFFRE, Jerusalem Post, DECEMBER 13, 2023
4. [Poll shows soaring Palestinian support for Hamas; 72% back October 7 atrocities](#), Times of Israel, December 13th, 2023.
5. [Survey sheds light on Palestinian views ahead of Hamas attack on Israel](#), CHELCEY ADAMI, Stanford, December 5th, 2023

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