

Palestinian poll shows a rise in Hamas support, increase in anti-U.S. sentiments



Ramallah, December 15 (RHC)-- A wartime opinion poll among Palestinians shows a rise in support for the resistance movement Hamas, which appears to have ticked up even in the Israeli-bombarded Gaza Strip. The survey was conducted from November 22nd to December 2nd among 1,231 people in the occupied West Bank and Gaza and had an error margin of 4 percentage points. In Gaza, poll workers

conducted 481 in-person interviews during a weeklong cease-fire that ended on December 1st.

The survey provided insights into Palestinian views of the October 7th al-Aqsa Storm Operation by Hamas and other Gaza resistance groups in Israel.

Despite the devastation, 57% of respondents in Gaza and 82% in the West Bank believe Hamas was correct in launching the October operation, the poll indicated. A large majority believed Hamas' claims that it acted to defend the al-Aqsa Mosque compound against extremist Israeli settlers and win the release of Palestinian prisoners.

The findings by a Palestinian pollster signal more difficulties ahead for the U.S. President Joe Biden administration's postwar vision for Gaza and raise questions about Israel's stated goal of ending Hamas' military and governing capabilities.

Washington has called for the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority to eventually assume control of Gaza and run both territories. The PA administers pockets of the Israeli-occupied West Bank and has governed Gaza until an election in which Hamas won in 2007. The Palestinians have not held elections since 2006 when Hamas won a parliamentary majority.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who leads the most right-wing cabinet in Israel's history, has soundly rejected any role for the PA in Gaza and insists Israel must retain open-ended security control there.

"Israel is stuck in Gaza," pollster Khalil Shikaki said ahead of the publication of the survey's results by his Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, or PSR.

The poll also signaled widespread frustration with the international community, particularly the United States, key European countries and even the United Nations, which has pushed for an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza. "The level of anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism is huge among Palestinians because of the positions they have taken regarding international humanitarian law and what is happening in Gaza," Shikaki, who runs regular polls, said.

The United States and its Western allies have said they were still not drawing any red lines for Israel, which has killed more than 18,600 people during a yet-ongoing war against the Gaza Strip.

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