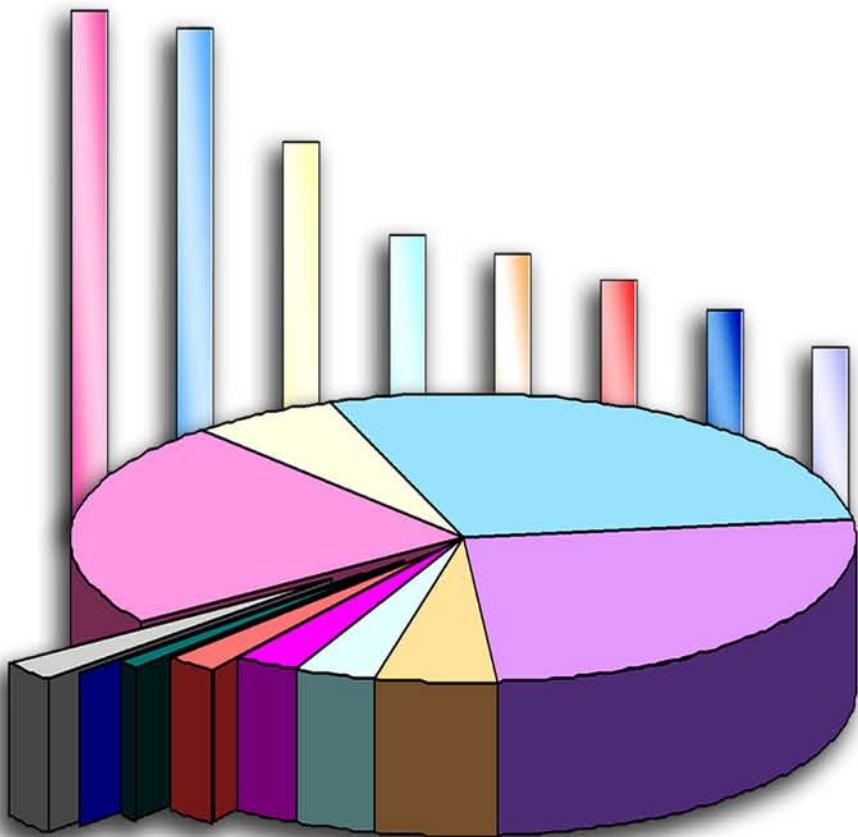


# The Political Views of The Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon:

General Survey May 2006



**Dr. Mohsen Moh'd Saleh**



# **The Political Views of The Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon**

**As Reflected in May 2006**

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الآراء السياسية للاجئين الفلسطينيين في لبنان  
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# The Political Views of The Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon As Reflected in May 2006<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction:

On Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2006, our team affiliated to al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations<sup>2</sup>, conducted a poll to survey the political views of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The aim was to compare and contrast the results of this poll with those of the Centre's previous poll conducted on 12-13<sup>th</sup> November 2005.

## First: Sample and Procedures of the Poll:

The poll surveyed a sample of 1,033 persons, representing approximately 2.5/1,000 of the total number of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (400,000 refugees), as recorded by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), with an estimated 3% margin of error.

The choice of the sample took into consideration place of residence and group age. The surveyed persons were distributed within these groups, with actual percentages according to available statistics. Accordingly, the subjects of the sample were distributed within these groups over the 12 Palestinian camps and the largest nine of the Palestinian small gatherings (other than camps). According to a scientific hypothesis based on population number and a specific percentage, 864 subjects of the sample were distributed all over the camps and 169 others were distributed among the other Palestinian gatherings.

---

<sup>1</sup>The writers would like to acknowledge the invaluable help of the 40 field researchers, who participated in gathering the information. The writers, also, commends the cooperation of *Shahid* Institution and *Beit Atfal Assomoud* that provide al-Zaytouna with many of these field researchers. We benefited a lot from the comments and academic support of Dr. Sari Hanafi, especially in revising the questions of the poll of November 2005 (which is being used here for comparative purposes) and in training the field researchers.

<sup>2</sup>Al-Zaytouna Centre, is an independent centre located in Beirut. It conducts strategic and futuristic studies, with special emphasis on the Palestinian issue and the conflict with Israel.

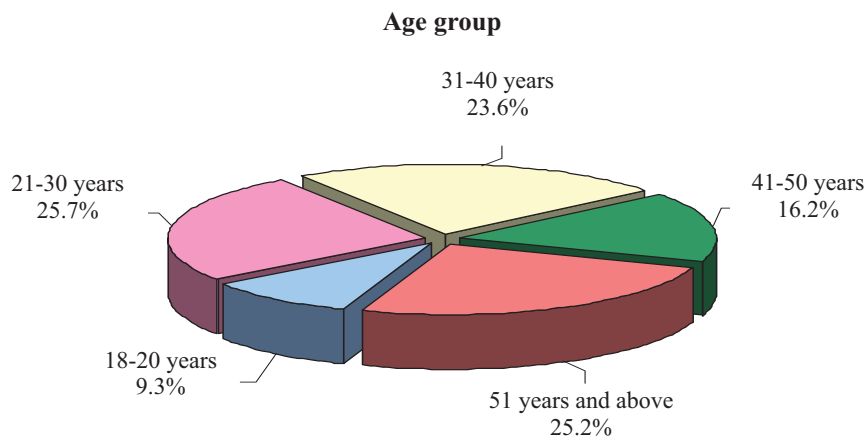




According to the distribution conducted by the Centre, 40.3% of the surveyed Palestinians were females, while 59.7% were males.

Regarding the age, the poll surveyed adult members of the society. The poll applied the same age groups and percentages recognized by UNRWA's official statistics, and the field team managed to maintain close percentages of what is recognized. Thus, the following age distribution was adopted: 9.3% for the age group of 18-20 years, 25.7% for that of 21-30 years, 23.6% for that of 31-40 years, 16.2 for the one of 41-50 years, and 25.2% for the age group of 51 years and above. Hence, the average age of the sample was 39.6 years.

Age group	Count	Percent %
18-20 years	96	9.3
21-30 years	265	25.7
31-40 years	243	23.6
41-50 years	167	16.2
51 years and above	260	25.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,031</b>	<b>100</b>



---

Upon conducting this poll, the highest possible academic levels and scientific methods were pursued. Prior to their engagement in this poll, the 40 field researchers who participated in conducting it, received special training, and were given detailed written instructions on the methods to be used for implementing this exercise, and the problems that they might face. Besides, they were supplied with a detailed table of the numbers needed and the distribution percentages, as well as with leaflets that introduced the Centre, its nature and objectives to the participants in the poll. The volunteers were divided into field groups, each consisting of two persons to conduct a common task, in order to assure the highest possible level of accuracy and objectivity.

The poll was conducted through a form that included 20 questions, divided into two main parts. The first focused on personal information, while the second explored the political views. The forms were filled by means of field interviews conducted by the researchers, or, in some cases, by the surveyed persons themselves. The decision of pursuing either of the two options was left to the convenience of the respondents and the assessment of the field groups.

Finally, the data and indicators were analyzed through the “SPSS” program. The results had been thoroughly reviewed, discussed and analyzed.

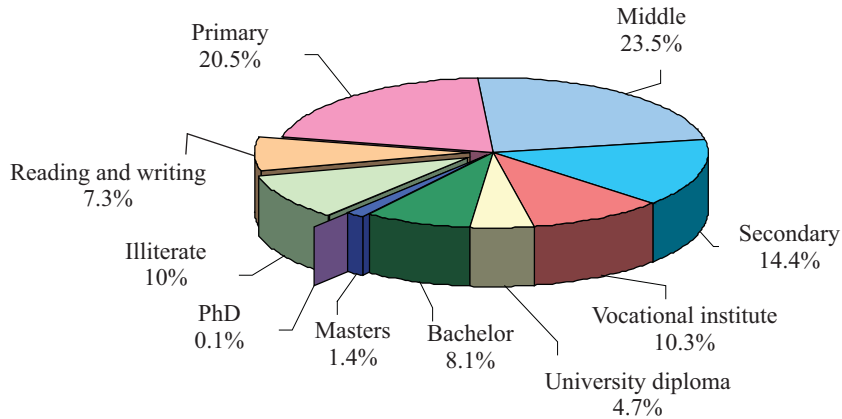
### **Second: Personal Information:**

When asked about their highest educational levels, the respondents answered as follow:

10% were illiterate, 7.3% can read and write, but they did not attain any educational certificate, 20.5% completed primary education, 23.5% completed middle education, 14.4% completed secondary education, and 24.6% joined one of the high learning institutions, of whom 10.3% received certificates from vocational institutions and 8.1% earned university degrees.

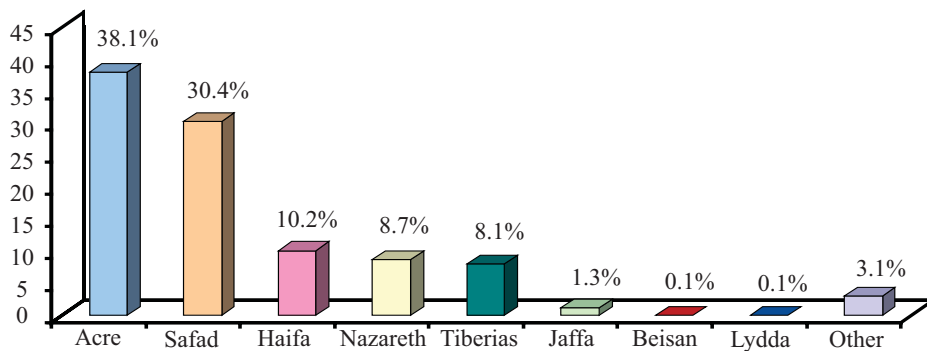


**Levels of education (18 years and above)**



The survey confirmed the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Palestinians living in Lebanon came from Northern Palestine. Hence, it showed that 38.1% of them came from Acre and its villages, 30.4% from Safad, 10.2% from Haifa, 8.7% from Nazareth and 8.1% from Tiberias. These percentages represent a total of 95.5%, and reflect the natural direction of immigration that took place during the 1948 calamity “*Nakbah*.” They also confirm the reality that the Palestinians migrated towards the nearest safe location to their boundaries.

**Area of origin**

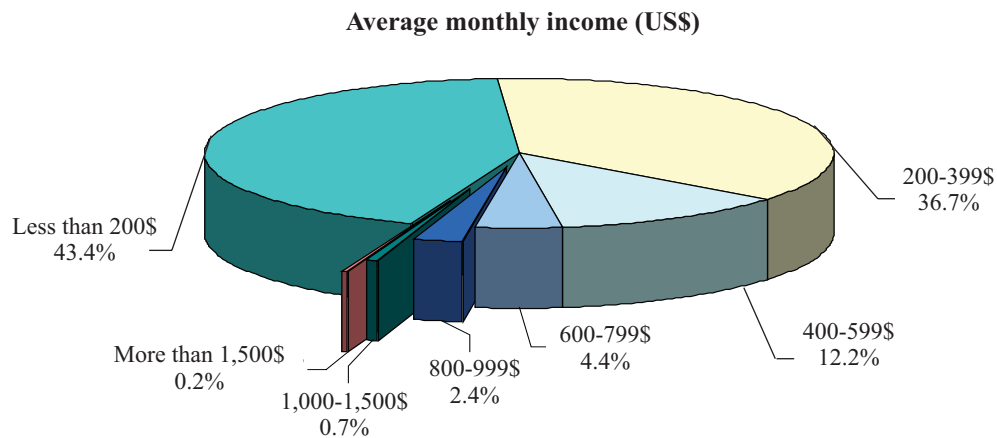


As for religion, 97.9% of the respondents recorded that they are Muslims, while 2.1% replied that they are Christians. However, it should be noticed that 1.6% of the surveyed did not answer this question on religion.

The survey revealed that most of the Palestinians living in Lebanon suffer from poverty, or belong to the groups that receive the least income. 43.4% of them claimed that the income of each of the guardians of their families is less than 200\$, while 36.7% of them mentioned that this income varies between 200 and 399\$. This means that 80.1% of the surveyed Palestinians are from families that receive the least income. On the other hand, 12.2% of the respondents mentioned that their income ranges between 400 and 599\$, 4.4% puts it between 600 and 799\$, and only 3.3% records it as 800\$ and above.

**Table 2: Average monthly income (US\$)**

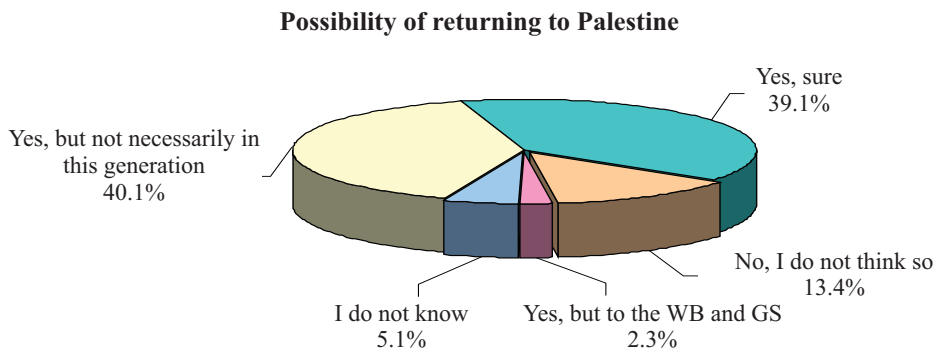
What is the average monthly income of the family supporter/s?	Percent %
Less than 200	43.4
200-399	36.7
400-599	12.2
600-799	4.4
800-999	2.4
1,000-1,500	0.7
More than 1,500	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>



### Third: Possibility of Returning to Palestine:

The poll did not ask the subjects about their belief in their right of return to Palestine, because this is viewed to be a natural and inalienable right. However, the surveyed Palestinians were asked their views on the actual possibility of their return to Palestine. 40.1% of the respondents answered: “yes, but not necessarily in this generation,” 39.1% replied: “yes, for sure,” 2.3% said that they think they will return to the territories occupied in 1967, the West Bank (WB) and Gaza Strip (GS), while 13.4% ruled out the possibility to return to Palestine, and 5.1% replied with: “I do not know.” Thus, despite the spiral of misery of the Palestinians in Lebanon for the last 58 years, and the frustrating local, Arab, regional and international circumstances, 81.5% of the surveyed Palestinians still believe that they will be able to return to Palestine; while only 13.4% of them are pessimistic about this eventuality.

<b>Do you think it is actually possible for you to return to Palestine?</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
Yes, but not necessarily in this generation	40.1
Yes, sure	39.1
No, I do not think so	13.4
Yes, but to the WB and GS	2.3
I do not know	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>



This conviction in the possibility of return was, generally, confirmed irrespective of the age group or the educational level or the income of the respondents. However, the survey show more certainty among older age groups in confirming their return, as 44.4% of age group 51 and above were sure that they will go back to Palestine, comparing to 33.3% of age group 18-20 and 32.2% of age group 21-30. Hence, younger age groups put their hope in return for the coming generations, i.e., 44.8% of age group 18-20 and 41.3% of age group 21-30, comparing to 37.5% of age group 51 and above. This may led to a conclusion, that younger age groups are more realistic or less passionate than older age group in dealing with this sensitive issue. Furthermore, younger age groups were more pessimistic towards the possibility of their return, as 16.7% and 17.8% of age groups 18-20 and 21-30 respectively, do not think they will return, while only 9.7% of those 51 years and above share the same opinion. This could be taken as an alarming sign for concerned Palestinian, in keeping the issue of refugees alive.

Table 4: Do you think it is actually possible for you to return to Palestine? * Age group. Cross tabulation % within age group		Age group					Total
		18-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51 and above	
Do you think it is actually possible for you to return to Palestine?	Yes, sure	33.3	32.2	40.3	43.1	44.4	39.1
	Yes, but to the WB and GS	2.1	2.3	3.7	3	0.8	2.3
	No, I do not think so	16.7	17.8	12.8	10.8	9.7	13.3
	Yes, but not necessarily in this generation	44.8	41.3	40.7	38.9	37.5	40.1
	I do not know	3.1	6.4	2.5	4.2	7.7	5.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The answers of those whose income below 800\$, on being sure that they will go back to Palestine, were around the average. However, the relatively few numbers (3.3% of the whole respondents) of those who enjoyed higher income of 800\$ and above, were less optimistic, as 31.3% of them selected this choice. Moreover, 25% of them were thinking that they will not return, and 37.5% were expecting return in the coming generations. Those whose income below 200\$ were, also, below the average in thinking that they



will not return (16.1%) and in expecting return in the coming generations (35.8%). Conversely, respondents whose income ranges between 200 and 799\$ were slightly more optimistic.

Table 5: Do you think it is actually possible for you to return to Palestine? * Income. Cross tabulation % within income		Average monthly income (US\$)			Total
		Less than 200\$	200-799\$	800\$ and above	
Do you think it is actually possible for you to return to Palestine?	Yes, sure	39.9	39.3	31.3	<b>39.3</b>
	Yes, but to the WB and GS	1.9	2.4	3.1	<b>2.2</b>
	No, I do not think so	16.1	10.7	25	<b>13.5</b>
	Yes, but not necessarily in this generation	35.8	44.2	37.5	<b>40.3</b>
	I do not know	6.3	3.6	3.1	<b>4.7</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Fourth: Settling the Palestinian Refugees Problem:

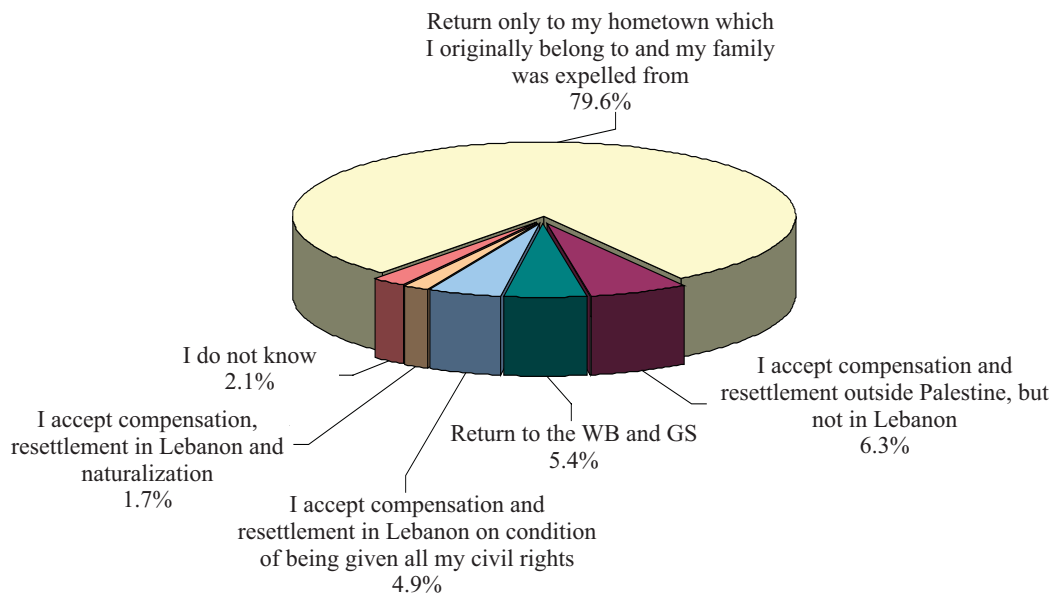
The surveyed subjects were asked their views on the acceptable solution for resolving the problem of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. 79.6% of the respondents accepted nothing but return to their original hometowns from which they and their families were expelled, 5.4% accepted returning to the territories occupied in 1967 (the WB and GS); while 6.3% accepted compensation and resettlement outside Palestine, but not in Lebanon, 4.9% accepted compensation and resettlement in Lebanon on condition that they enjoy all their civil rights, and 1.7% accepted compensation, resettlement in Lebanon and naturalization (getting Lebanese citizenship). Hence, only 6.6% of the surveyed Palestinians accepted resettlement in Lebanon, and 2.1% replied: "I do not know." However, returning to historical Palestine was the choice of 85% of the surveyed Palestinians. This poll obviously reveals that the insistence of the Palestinians to return to their hometowns or villages is not restricted to the Palestinian elites and activists but is rather a sweeping demand, notwithstanding the long and tremendous pressures to which the Palestinian peoples were subjected. Only a small sector has fallen



into despair and frustration. Additionally, these results thoroughly indicate to the Lebanese authority that 98.3% of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon do not accept naturalization, although most of them were born in Lebanon and are not familiar with any other country.

<b>Table 6: Settling the Palestinian refugees' problem</b>	
<b>What is the acceptable solution for you regarding settling the Palestinian refugees' problem in Lebanon?</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
Return only to my hometown which I originally belong to and my family was expelled from	79.6
I accept compensation and resettlement outside Palestine, but not in Lebanon	6.3
Return to the WB and GS	5.4
I accept compensation and resettlement in Lebanon on condition of being given all my civil rights	4.9
I accept compensation, resettlement in Lebanon and naturalization	1.7
I do not know	2.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**Settling the Palestinian refugees' problem**





When the answers of this question were cross tabulated with age groups, it was clear that older ages are more insistence on returning only to hometown, i.e., 88.8% of those 51 years and above, comparing to 64.6% and 74.5% of age groups 18-20 and 21-30 respectively.

Table 7: What is the acceptable solution for you regarding settling the Palestinian refugees' problem in Lebanon? * Age group. Cross tabulation % within age group		Age group					Total
		18-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51 and above	
What is the acceptable solution for you regarding settling the Palestinian refugees' problem in Lebanon?	Return to the WB and GS	8.3	5.7	5.8	5.5	3.5	5.4
	Return only to my hometown which I originally belong to and my family was expelled from	64.6	74.5	78.1	84.1	88.8	79.6
	I accept compensation and resettlement outside Palestine, but not in Lebanon	13.5	10.6	5.8	3.7	1.5	6.3
	I accept compensation and resettlement in Lebanon on condition of being given all my civil rights	8.3	5.7	5	3	3.8	4.9
	I accept compensation, resettlement in Lebanon and naturalization	2.1	0.8	2.9	1.8	1.2	1.7
	I do not know	3.1	2.7	2.5	1.8	1.2	2.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Besides, the survey revealed that those who supported the Islamic Resistance Movement ( Hamas ) are more insistence on returning only to hometown (85.8%) versus those who chose the Palestinian National Liberation Movement ( Fatah ) (79.7%), notwithstanding that both percentages are high. As for other Palestinian movements: Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine 66.7%, Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine 93.3%, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine ( PFLP ) 79.6% and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command ( PFLP-GC ) 85.3%. It should be noted that the low numbers of other movements' supporters (recorded in this survey) are not much encouraging in concluding their exact inclinations or views. Hence, cross tabulation could be more accurate, with the big numbers we have, of Fatah and Hamas supporters. Therefore, we may take the results



of other movements' cautiously and with some reservation, though we found them, generally, in line with the total average of the views.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, if we cross examine the answers, with the highest certificate earned; we will not find any significant change among levels of education. However, there was a slight margin in favor of returning only to hometown among those earning secondary schools certificates and lower levels (81.8%), comparing to those of higher levels (75.1%).

Table 8: What is the acceptable solution for you regarding settling the Palestinian refugees' problem in Lebanon? * Highest certificate earned. Cross tabulation % within highest certificate earned		Highest certificate earned		Total
		Secondary schools certificates and lower levels	Higher levels	
What is the acceptable solution for you regarding settling the Palestinian refugees' problem in Lebanon?	Return to the WB and GS	5.2	6	5.4
	Return only to my hometown which I originally belong to and my family was expelled from	81.1	75.1	79.6
	I accept compensation and resettlement outside Palestine, but not in Lebanon	5.7	8.4	6.3
	I accept compensation and resettlement in Lebanon on condition of being given all my civil rights	4.6	5.6	4.9
	I accept compensation, resettlement in Lebanon and naturalization	1.9	0.8	1.7
	I do not know	1.5	4	2.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Moreover, it seems that higher incomes affected positively the insistence on returning only to hometown, as 83.3% of those whose income is 400\$ and above accepted this solution comparing to 79.6% whose income is below 400\$.

<sup>3</sup> Please, see the results of the poll on movements' support in the coming pages. The total count of the supporters of the Democratic Front was 21, Hamas 290, Fatah 263, Islamic Jihad 30, Popular Front 49, Popular Front-General Command 35, Fatah al-Intifadah 9 and al-Sa'iqa 1. Hence, for next pages, we may concentrate on comparison between Fatah and Hamas.



Table 9: What is the acceptable solution for you regarding settling the Palestinian refugees' problem in Lebanon?*		Average monthly income (US\$)		Total
		Less than 400\$	400\$ and above	
What is the acceptable solution for you regarding settling the Palestinian refugees' problem in Lebanon?	Return to the WB and GS	5.7	3.8	5.3
	Return only to my hometown which I originally belong to and my family was expelled from	79.6	83.3	80.3
	I accept compensation and resettlement outside Palestine, but not in Lebanon	5.9	5.9	5.9
	I accept compensation and resettlement in Lebanon on condition of being given all my civil rights	4.9	3.8	4.7
	I accept compensation, resettlement in Lebanon and naturalization	1.4	2.2	1.6
	I do not know	2.5	1.1	2.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

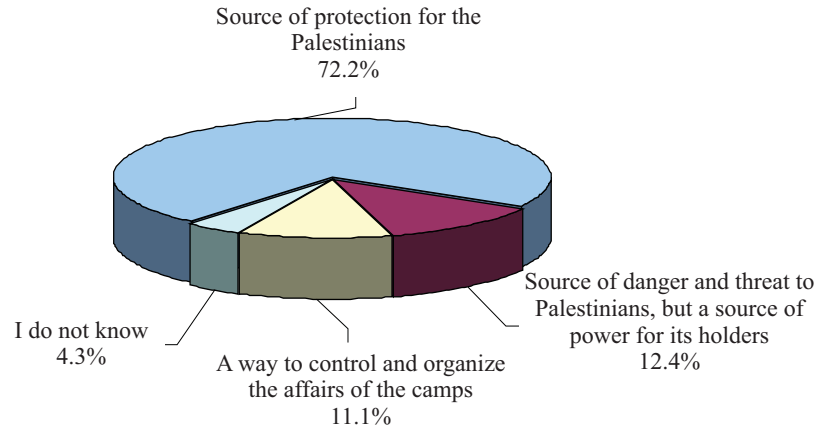
### Fifth: The Palestinian Weapons:

On the current issue of the weapons in the camps of the Palestinian refugees, the majority of the surveyed Palestinians (72.2% of the sample) replied that it is a source of protection for the Palestinians, 11.1% considered it a vehicle to control and organize the affairs of the camps; while 12.4% regarded it as a source of danger and threat to the Palestinians, but a source of power for its holders, and 4.3% replied with: "I do not know."

Table 10: Best Description of Palestinian weapons in the refugees' camps	
What is your best description of the current situation of the weapons in the Palestinian refugees' camps?	Percent %
Source of protection for the Palestinians	72.2
Source of danger and threat to Palestinians, but a source of power for its holders	12.4
A way to control and organize the affairs of the camps	11.1
I do not know	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>



**Best description of Palestimian weapons in the refugees' camps**



The views on the weapons were not affected by variation between age groups or levels of education; though a variety of differences on the issue appeared between the settlers in the camps and those in the different Palestinian gatherings. The views of those supporting Fatah and Hamas were close to each another, and both of them were above the average (Fatah 76.3% and Hamas 77.9%) in describing Palestinian weapons in camps as a source of protection.

Table 11: What is your best description of the current situation of the weapons in the Palestinian refugees' camps? * Which Palestinian movement do you support? Cross tabulation % within which Palestinian movement do you support		Which Palestinian movement do you support?	
		Fatah	Hamas
What is your best description of the current situation of the weapons in the Palestinian refugees' camps?	Source of protection for the Palestinians	76.3	77.9
	A way to control and organize the affairs of the camps	13.7	9
	Source of danger and threat to Palestinians, but a source of power for its holders	8	9.7
	I do not know	1.9	3.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



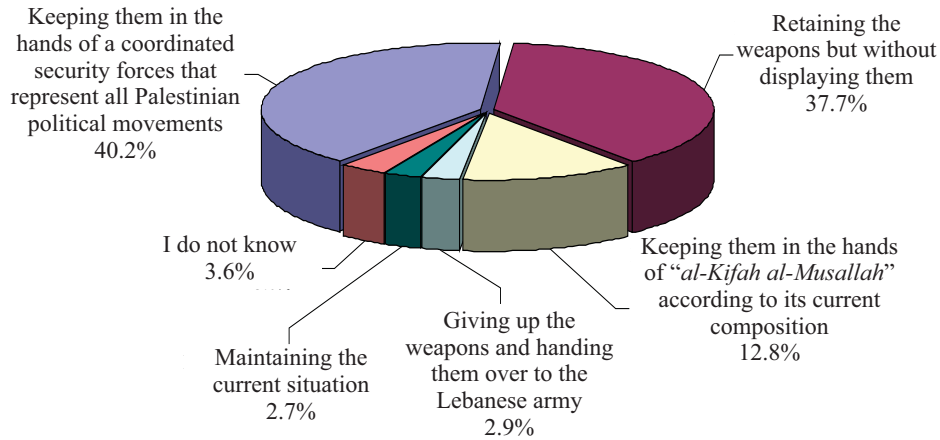
Regarding the same subject, the researchers asked the surveyed Palestinians about the best way to deal with the Palestinians weapons in the camps, and their answers were as follows: 40.2% said that they should be kept in the hands of a coordinated security forces that represent all Palestinian political movements, 37.7% supported their retention but without being displayed, and 12.8% wanted them to be kept in the hands of “*al-Kifah al-Musallah*” (Armed Struggle), a military group currently affiliated to Fatah. Accordingly, a total of 90.7% suggested that it is necessary to reconsider the current status of the Palestinian weapons in the camps, and to modify it in any form, but a small percentage, 2.7%, wanted to maintain the status quo. However, the overwhelming majority of the Palestinians did not support the idea of surrendering the weapons to the Lebanese army, only 2.9% supported this option.

It should be noticed that this question referred only to the weapons inside the camps, but not those outside the camps (i.e, the rest of the Lebanese territories), to which different findings may have been concluded. Nevertheless, it was obvious that all Palestinians living in Lebanon feel secured with these weapons in their hands because of reasons related to their bitter historical experience, pending a clear commitment that the Lebanese authority will be able to guarantee their security and civil rights; as they are not satisfied with the current way of handling these issues.

<b>What is the best way to deal with Palestinian weapons in the Palestinian refugees’ camps?</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
Keeping them in the hands of a coordinated security forces that represent all Palestinian political movements	40.2
Retaining the weapons but without displaying them	37.7
Keeping them in the hands of “ <i>al-Kifah al-Musallah</i> ” according to its current composition	12.8
Giving up the weapons and handing them over to the Lebanese army	2.9
Maintaining the current situation	2.7
I do not know	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>



**Best way to deal with Palestinian weapons in the refugees' camps**



If we make a cross tabulation to this question with the support of Palestinian movements, we will find some variety in responding to it. Hamas (42.8%) and most other movements' supporters showed stronger inclination, comparing to Fatah (37.4%), to retaining the weapons, but without displaying them. The same was applied on the choice of keeping the weapons in the hands of a coordinated security forces (Hamas 45.2% and Fatah 32.4%). Relatively, big numbers of Fatah supporters were with keeping arms in the hands of "al-Kifah al-Musallah" only, i.e., 22.9% comparing to 6.6% among Hamas supporters.

<b>Which Palestinian movement do you support? Cross tabulation</b>		<b>Which Palestinian movement do you support?</b>	
		Fatah	Hamas
<b>What is the best way to deal with Palestinian weapons in the Palestinian refugees' camps?</b>	Retaining the weapons but without displaying them	37.4	42.8
	Keeping them in the hands of "al-Kifah al-Musallah" according to its current composition	22.9	6.6
	Keeping them in the hands of a coordinated security forces that represent all Palestinian political movements	32.4	45.2
	Maintaining the current situation	3.4	3.1
	Giving up the weapons and handing them over to the Lebanese army	2.3	0.7
	I do not know	1.5	1.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



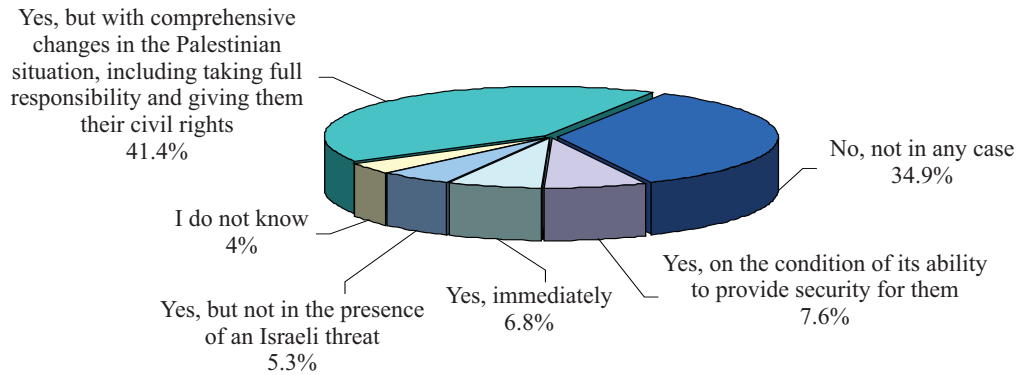
### **Sixth: Lebanese Authority Assuming Responsibility of Security All over the Palestinian Camps:**

When answering the question whether the Lebanese authority should assume the responsibility of security all over the camps, 54.3% of the respondents showed conditional approval. For 41.4% of them wanted this step to be accompanied with sweeping changes in the Palestinian situation, including giving the Palestinians full responsibility and all civil rights, and 7.6% supported it only if the Lebanese authority is in a position to provide security for them, while 5.3% endorsed it but not in the presence of an Israeli threat. Only 6.8% considered that the Lebanese authority should assume responsibility immediately. This means that a total of 61.1% of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon support the assumption by the Lebanese authority of the security responsibility all over the camps but under different circumstances and conditions. On the other hand, 34.9% refused this under any circumstances; while 4% replied: “I do not know.” The percentages of support varied between different Palestinian camps and gatherings, while the different trends of support, especially those linking security control to acquisition of civil rights, increased with the rise of the educational level and income. In cross examining this question with the support of Palestinian movements, we did not find any significant differences among Palestinian movements. Almost all of them were in line or close to the total percentage of the choices.

<b>Table 14: Stand on Lebanese authority assuming responsibility of security all over the Palestinian camps</b>	
<b>Should the Lebanese authority assume responsibility of security all over the Palestinian camps?</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
Yes, but with comprehensive changes in the Palestinian situation, including taking full responsibility and giving them their civil rights	41.4
No, not in any case	34.9
Yes, on the condition of its ability to provide security for them	7.6
Yes, immediately	6.8
Yes, but not in the presence of an Israeli threat	5.3
I do not know	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>



**Lebanese authority assuming responsibility of security  
all over the Palestinian camps**



**Seventh: Supporting Palestinian Movements:**

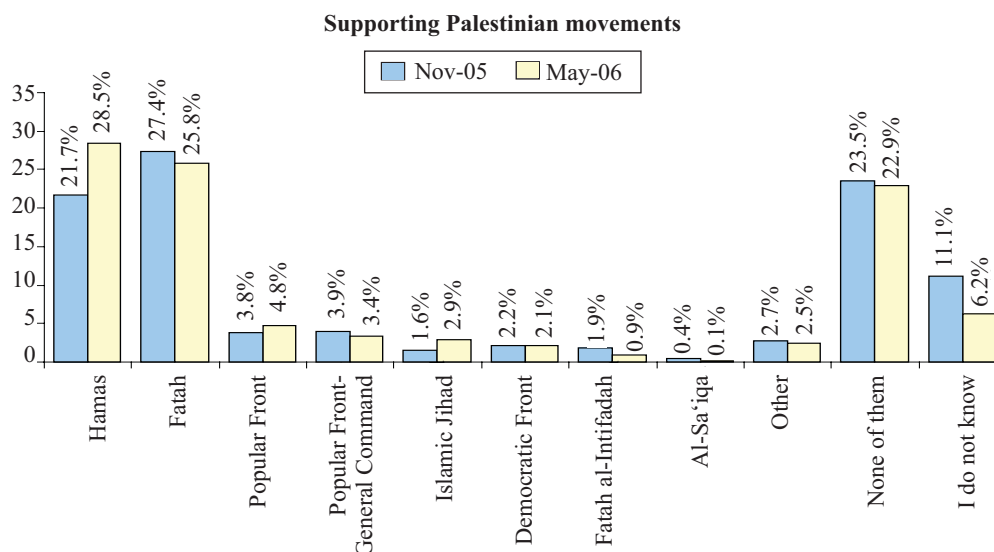
Both polls, conducted in November 2005 and May 2006, revealed close percentages of popularity between Hamas and Fatah. Fatah came ahead of Hamas in the first poll, while the latter superceded the former in the second poll with a slight difference.

When asked, in May 2006, about the Palestinian movement that they support or find it close to their inclinations, 28.5% of the surveyed Palestinians expressed their support to Hamas and 25.8% supported Fatah. Conversely, 27.4% supported Fatah and 21.7% supported Hamas in November 2005 (before the conduct of the legislative elections in the WB and GS). The following table displays the popularity of the movements and the changes that occurred.

Movement	November 2005		May 2006		Difference (%)
	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %	
<b>Hamas</b>	161	21.7	290	28.5	6.8
<b>Fatah</b>	203	27.4	263	25.8	-1.6
<b>Popular Front</b>	28	3.8	49	4.8	1
<b>Popular Front-General Command</b>	29	3.9	35	3.4	-0.5
<b>Islamic Jihad</b>	12	1.6	30	2.9	1.3
<b>Democratic Front</b>	16	2.2	21	2.1	-0.1
<b>Fatah al-Intifadah</b>	14	1.9	9	0.9	-1
<b>Al-Sa'iq</b>	3	0.4	1	0.1	-0.3
<b>Other</b>	20	2.7	25	2.5	-0.2
<b>None of them</b>	174	23.5	233	22.9	-0.6
<b>I do not know</b>	82	11.1	63	6.2	-4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,019</b>	<b>100</b>	







These results indicate that the popularity of Hamas among the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon shifted from the second to the first position, with an additional percentage of 6.8 points. It seems that a good percentage of those who answered with: “I do not know” in the first poll shifted towards Hamas. On the other hand, the popularity of Fatah retracted from the first to the second position, with a loss of 1.6 points. In other words, while Fatah enjoyed the highest percentage of public support, with a difference of 5.7 points from its closest competitor “Hamas,” in the first poll, Hamas advanced over Fatah in the second poll by 2.7 points. This result leads us to convincingly conclude that the political position of the Palestinians in the diaspora is directly affected by the political mood of their compatriots inside Palestine, where a direct confrontation with the occupation is taking place.

In general, the support of other Palestinian movements did not exceed 16.7%, and it witnessed various changes. For example, the percentage of support of the Popular Front increased one point, while that of the Islamic Jihad increased 1.3 points, though it boycotted the legislative elections. Other Palestinian movements, especially Fatah al-Intifadah, lost part of their support between the first and the second polls. It is important to record that a big percentage of the surveyed Palestinians, estimated by 29.1%, showed no specific preference or support to any of the Palestinian movements.

In analyzing movements’ support by age groups for poll May 2006, we found that Fatah was ahead in age group 18-20, while Hamas was ahead in all

other age groups. The margin in favor Hamas was very tiny for ages 21-40, while Hamas has a more comfortable position for age groups 41 and above.

Besides, comparing to Hamas, it was evident that Fatah maintained higher popularity among people who are illiterate ( 28% vs. 24%), reading and writing (31.5% vs. 30.1%) and primary schools graduates (29% vs. 25.2%). whereas, Hamas enjoyed a better position, comparing to Fatah, among higher levels of educations holding certificates of middle (31% vs. 26.4%) and secondary (30.8% vs. 26%) schools, institute (29.8% vs. 22.5%), bachelor (25.9% vs. 14.8%) and masters (38.5% vs. 15.4%). Almost, the same trend was found in the November 2005 results. For example, illiterate (31.2% vs.13.8%), reading and writing (38.3% vs. 21.3%) were in favor of Fatah; while diploma/ institute (39.2% vs. 24.1%) and bachelor (33.3% vs.17.8%) were in favor of Hamas.

Table 16: Which Palestinian movement do you support? * Age group. Cross tabulation % within age group		Age group										Total	
		18-20		21-30		31-40		41-50		51 and above			
		2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
Which Palestinian movement do you support?	Democratic Front	1.4	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.3	2.9	1.7	1.2	2.6	1.9	2.2	2.1
	Fatah	30.6	28.1	27.3	28.3	22.9	27.8	32.2	23	27.7	22.6	27.4	25.9
	Hamas	26.4	25	21.9	29.5	24.6	28.2	23.5	32.1	15.7	26.5	21.6	28.4
	Islamic Jihad	1.4	2.1	1.6	3.9	2.3	2.9	1.7	2.4	1	2.7	1.6	2.9
	Popular Front	4.2	5.2	1.6	2.3	4	5	6.1	7.9	4.2	5.1	3.8	4.8
	Popular Front-General Command	2.8	4.2	4.8	3.9	4.6	2.1	4.3	4.8	2.1	3.1	3.8	3.4
	Fatah al-Intifadah	2.8	1	2.7	1.2	1.7	0.8	2.6	1.2	0.5	0.4	1.9	0.9
	Al-Sa'iqa	0	0	0	0	1.1	0.4	0	0	0.5	0	0.4	0.1
	Other	2.8	1	2.1	1.9	3.4	2.5	0.9	4.2	3.7	2.3	2.7	2.5
	None of them	13.9	27.1	22.5	20.2	25.7	21.6	19.1	21.8	28.8	25.7	23.5	22.8
	I do not know	13.9	4.2	13.4	7	7.4	5.8	7.8	1.2	13.1	9.7	11.1	6.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	



Table 17: Which Palestinian movement do you support? * Highest certificate earned. Cross tabulation % within highest certificate earned			Highest certificate earned									Total
			Illiterate	Reading and writing	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Institute / Diploma	Bachelor	Masters	PhD	
Which Palestinian movement do you support?	2005	Fatah	31.2	38.3	29.6	29.9	20.6	24.1	17.8	0	-	27.1
		Hamas	13.8	21.3	13.6	19	17.5	39.2	33.3	50	-	21.7
	2006	Fatah	28	31.5	29	26.4	26	22.5	14.8	15.4	0	25.8
		Hamas	24	30.1	25.2	31	30.8	29.8	25.9	38.5	0	28.5

On the other hand, if we examine movements' support by income, some other interesting results will be revealed. 53.1% of Fatah supporters came from those whose monthly income is below 200\$, comparing to 33.7% supporting Hamas. Support of Hamas is higher among all other categories of income.

These results confirmed almost the same results of the poll of November 2005; as 49.7% of Fatah supporters came from those whose monthly income is below 200\$, comparing to 27.9% of Hamas supporters. However the bulk of Hamas supporters came from the next category of 200-399\$ monthly income; as 41.9% and 52.6% of its supporters came from this category, in polls of May 2006 and November 2005, respectively.

If we see, the same results from a different angle, i.e., popularity within each category of income, we will find that those whose monthly income is below 200\$ gave 31.1% of their votes to Fatah, in comparison of 22.4% who gave their votes to Hamas. On the other side, the result was in favor of Hamas in the category of 200-399\$ (32.5% vs. 23.3%). Besides, Hamas was in a better position in category 400-599\$ (32.2% vs. 19.1%). Same better position for Hamas can be found in other categories.



Can we conclude that Fatah is more appealing to less educated and poorer sectors? Some may argue that Fatah is more caring and closer to the sufferance of those people, while others may argue that it is using its financial influence in gathering support from these needy people. Moreover, some may argue that Hamas is in a better position in convincing educated, enlightened and self-sufficient people. Nonetheless, we should not rush or jump for conclusions, as different approaches may be used in explaining them. However, the results may open the eyes for further studies and discussions.

<b>Table 18: Which Palestinian movement do you support? *</b> <b>Income. Cross tabulation</b> <b>% within which Palestinian movement do you support</b>			<b>Average monthly income (US\$)</b>					<b>Total</b>
			<b>Less than 200\$</b>	<b>200-399\$</b>	<b>400-599\$</b>	<b>600-799\$</b>	<b>800\$ and above</b>	
<b>Which Palestinian movement do you support?</b>	2005	Fatah	49.7	38.9	7.3	3.1	1	<b>100</b>
		Hamas	27.9	52.6	11.7	4.5	3.2	<b>100</b>
	2006	Fatah	53.1	33.9	9.2	2.5	1.3	<b>100</b>
		Hamas	33.7	41.9	13.7	7	3.7	<b>100</b>

<b>Table 19: Which Palestinian movement do you support? *</b> <b>Income. Cross tabulation</b> <b>% within income</b>			<b>Average monthly income (US\$)</b>					<b>Total</b>
			<b>Less than 200\$</b>	<b>200-399\$</b>	<b>400-599\$</b>	<b>600-799\$</b>	<b>800\$ and above</b>	
<b>Which Palestinian movement do you support?</b>	2005	Fatah	33.8	24.2	21.9	20.7	11.1	<b>27.4</b>
		Hamas	15.1	26.1	28.1	24.1	27.8	<b>21.8</b>
	2006	Fatah	31.3	23.3	19.1	14.6	10	<b>25.4</b>
		Hamas	22.4	32.5	32.2	46.3	33.3	<b>28.7</b>

### **Eighth: The Presidency of All Palestinians (Inside and Outside Palestine):**

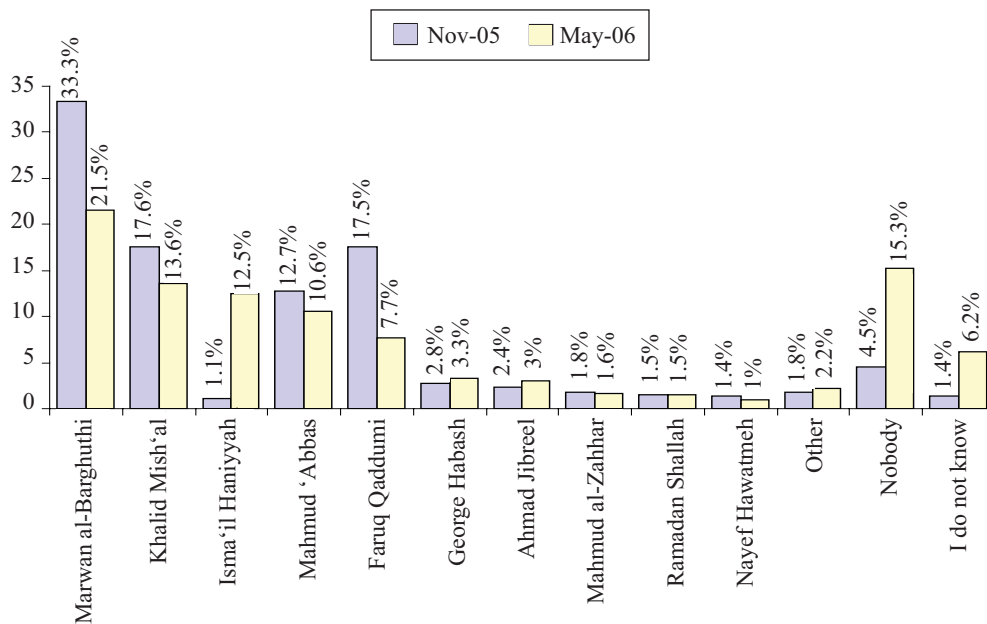
When asked who would they elect as their president if a general elections are held among all Palestinians, “inside and outside Palestine,” 21.5% of the respondents chose Marwan al-Barghuthi, 13.6% Khalid Mish‘al, 12.5% Isma‘il Haniyyah, and 10.6% Mahmud ‘Abbas. The following table compares the percentages attained by each candidate for the Palestinian presidency in the two polls, November 2005 and May 2006:



**Table 20: The presidency of all Palestinians (inside and outside Palestine)**

Candidate's name	Popularity (%) November 2005	Popularity (%) May 2006	Difference (%)
<b>Marwan al-Barghuthi</b>	33.3	21.5	-11.8
<b>Khalid Mish'al</b>	17.6	13.6	-4
<b>Isma'il Haniyyah</b>	1.1	12.5	11.4
<b>Mahmud 'Abbas</b>	12.7	10.6	-2.1
<b>Faruq Qaddumi</b>	17.5	7.7	-9.8
<b>George Habash</b>	2.8	3.3	0.5
<b>Ahmad Jibreel</b>	2.4	3	0.6
<b>Mahmud al-Zahhar</b>	1.8	1.6	-0.2
<b>Ramadan Shallah</b>	1.5	1.5	0
<b>Nayef Hawatmeh</b>	1.4	1	-0.4
<b>Other</b>	1.8	2.2	0.4
<b>Nobody</b>	4.5	15.3	10.8
<b>I do not know</b>	1.4	6.2	4.8

**The presidency of all Palestinians (inside and outside Palestine)**



Marwan al-Barghuthi was the most popular candidate in both polls, with a relatively significant advance over his closest competitor, though his popularity decreased by 11.8 points in the second poll; i.e., he secured the first position in the first poll, with a difference of 15.7 points over the second candidate, but this margin dropped to 7.9 points in the second poll in which his competitor, had, in turn, lost four points of his popularity.



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In both polls, Khalid Mish'al was the second popular candidate. However, despite the increase in the percentage of support to Hamas after the Legislative Council elections, the popularity of Mish'al decreased, perhaps due to the vicious campaign orchestrated against him after his speech of 23/4/2006 during the memorial of 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Rantisi, and because of the rising popularity of Isma'il Haniyyah. The latter, who had then shared with Mish'al part of Hamas' vote, was the least popular candidate in the November 2005 poll, though he was at the top of Hamas's list of candidates for the legislative elections. Haniyyah came in the third place in the poll of May 2006, which was conducted after the elections and his assumption of the premiership of the Palestinian government. His popularity increased by 11.4 points; which reveals the importance of the media in presenting leaders and personalities. It also reflects a state of satisfaction with Haniyyah's performance, at least among Hamas supporters. President Mahmud 'Abbas came in the fourth place in both polls, losing 2.1 points of his previous popularity. Faruq Qaddumi, who occupied the third place in November 2005, retreated to the fifth position in May 2006, and his popularity decreased by 9.8 points. The popularity of Mahmud al-Zahhar decreased slightly, notwithstanding Hamas' victory and al-Zahhar's occupation of the portfolio of Minister of Foreign Affairs in Hamas' government. George Habash, Ahmad Jibreel and Ramadan Shallah maintained their same positions, with a slight increase in the popularity of the first two. Nayef Hawatmeh remained the least fortunate candidate, with a slight decrease in his popularity.

The percentage of those who refrained from choosing any candidate increased by 10.8 points. This reveals an increasing uncertainty among the surveyed towards the candidates. Generally speaking, the three Fatah leaders occupied in the November 2005 poll three out of the first four popular positions, as they then attained 63.5% of public support, but this relatively changed in May 2006, as only two of these leaders remained in the first four positions, and the total support for three of them was 39.8%. On the other hand, the public support of Hamas leaders increased from 20.5% in November 2005 to 27.7% in May 2006.

When we made a cross tabulation for president's elections by movements' support for May 2006 poll, the expected results was found, as most of the candidates obtained their support from their own movements, e.g. 'Abbas 86.8%, Mish'al 84.7%, Shallah 86.7%, Haniyyah 80.3%, Hawatmeh 90%, al-Zahhar 75% and Habash 66.7%. However, al-Barghuthi got only 41.2% of his votes from Fatah, 24.1% from those who refrained from choosing



any movement and 14.8% from Hamas supporters. This may mean that al-Barghuthi managed to break the boundaries of his movement, and having a better chance in being seen as a national figure in the eyes of the Palestinians in Lebanon. Qaddumi has an “in between” case, as he got only 55.1% of his votes from Fatah, 24.4% from those who refrained from choosing any movement and 12.8% from Hamas supporters.

However, if we examine how votes were distributed with regard to president’s election among every movement, we will find that Fatah supporters gave 35.2% of their votes to ‘Abbas, 34.1% to al-Barghuthi and 16.5% to Qaddumi. Hamas supporters gave 40.4% of their votes to Mish‘al, 35.5% to Haniyyah, 11.1% to al-Barghuthi and 4.2% to al-Zahhar. Generally, a stronger commitment among Fatah supporters to their leaders was seen in this exercise.

Table 21: If elections are held to choose a president (inside and outside Palestine)? * Which Palestinian movement do you support? Cross tabulation % within which Palestinian movement do you support		Which Palestinian movement do you support?										Total	
		Democratic Front	Fatah	Hamas	Islamic Jihad	Popular Front	Popular Front - General Command	Fatah al-Intifadah	Al-Sa'iqqa	Other	None of them		I do not know
If elections are held to choose a president (inside and outside Palestine)?	Mahmud ‘Abbas	0	35.2	0.3	0	0	2.9	0	0	8.3	2.6	6.5	10.5
	George Habash	0	0.8	0	0	45.8	5.7	11.1	100	0	1.7	1.6	3.3
	Khalid Mish‘al	9.5	0.8	40.4	13.8	2.1	2.9	11.1	0	8.3	1.7	6.5	13.6
	Ramadan Shallah	0	0	0.7	44.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.5
	Faruq Qaddumi	9.5	16.5	3.5	3.4	6.3	0	0	0	0	8.2	0	7.7
	Mahmud al-Zahhar	0	0.4	4.2	0	2.1	0	11.1	0	0	0.4	0	1.6
	Nayef Hawatmeh	42.9	0.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Ahmad Jibreel	4.8	0.4	1	0	6.3	48.6	11.1	0	0	1.7	1.6	3.1
	Marwan al-Barghuthi	23.8	34.1	11.1	13.8	10.4	14.3	11.1	0	25	22.5	27.4	21.4
	Isma‘il Haniyyah	0	1.5	35.5	10.3	2.1	8.6	11.1	0	16.7	2.6	4.8	12.6
	Other	4.8	0.8	0.7	0	14.6	0	22.2	0	4.2	3	0	2.2
	Nobody	0	6.5	1.4	10.3	4.2	8.6	11.1	0	33.3	45.5	19.4	15.4
	I do not know	4.8	2.7	1	3.4	6.3	8.6	0	0	4.2	10	32.3	6.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

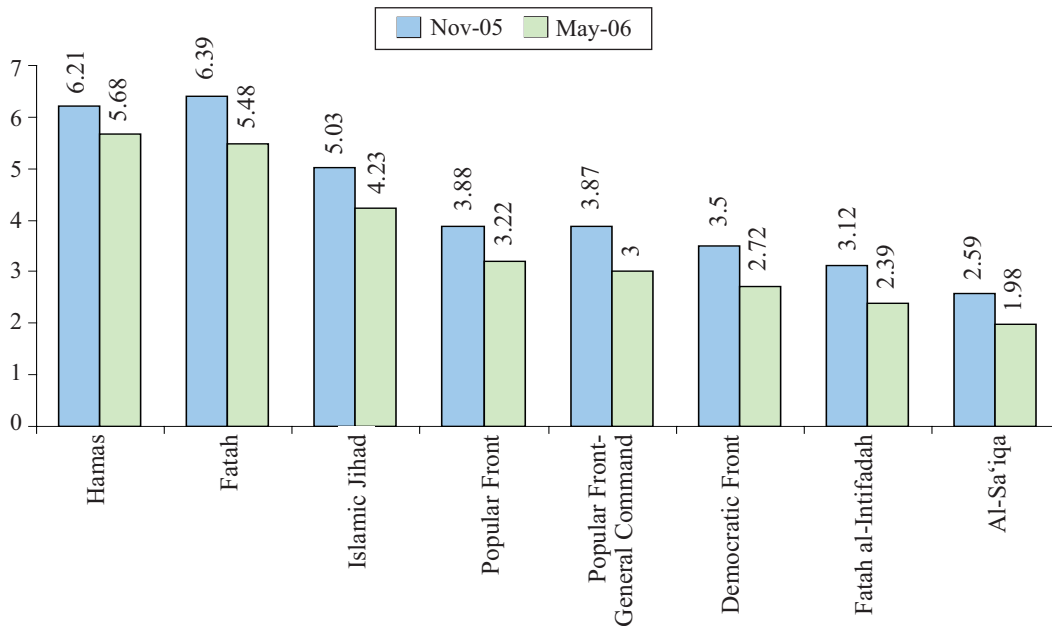


### Ninth: Performance of Movements towards Palestinians in Lebanon:

The researchers asked the surveyed Palestinians to give on a scale of 1-10 their evaluations of the performance of the movements, where grade 10 represents the top evaluation and grade one represents the least one. They were asked to evaluate this performance in two main directions: the movements' performance towards the Palestinians in Lebanon, and their performance in serving the national Palestinian struggle.

Movement	Hamas	Fatah	Islamic Jihad	Popular Front	Popular Front-General Command	Democratic Front	Fatah al-Intifadah	Al-Sa'iqqa
<b>November 2005</b>	6.21	6.39	5.03	3.88	3.87	3.5	3.12	2.59
<b>May 2006</b>	5.68	5.48	4.23	3.22	3	2.72	2.39	1.98
<b>Difference</b>	-0.53	-0.91	-0.8	-0.66	-0.87	-0.78	-0.73	-0.61

**Evaluation of the movements' general performance in Lebanon (on a scale: 1-10)**





It is obvious from these figures that the performance of all the movements scored lower grades in May 2006 than that of November 2005, with an average decrease of 0.74 points, although the questions asked and the methods of evaluating the results were similar in both polls. Fatah's performance was mostly affected, decreased by an average of 0.91 points. This performance was classified the best in November 2005, though with a slight increase over that of Hamas, no more than 0.18 points. Yet, in May 2006, Fatah came in the second place, with a similar small advance of 0.2 points over its counterpart Hamas that had then occupied the first place. The Islamic Jihad came in the third place forming a middle point. Leftist movements came after, with slight variations between them, while al-Sa'iq'a's position was far behind the rest of the movements.

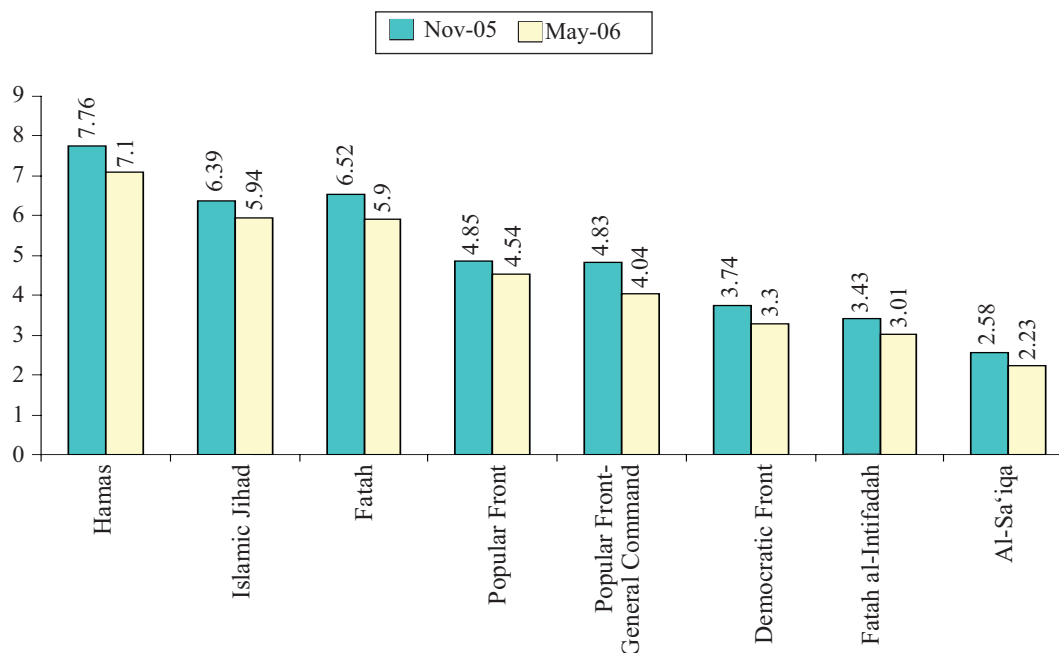
### **Tenth: Performance of the Palestinian Movements with Regard to Serving Palestinian National Struggle:**

The results of evaluating the movements' performance on the issue of serving the Palestinian national struggle were as follows:

**Table 23: Evaluation of the movements' general performance (on scale: 1-10)**

<b>Movement</b>	<b>Hamas</b>	<b>Islamic Jihad</b>	<b>Fatah</b>	<b>Popular Front</b>	<b>Popular Front-General Command</b>	<b>Democratic Front</b>	<b>Fatah al-Intifadah</b>	<b>Al-Sa'iq'a</b>
<b>November 2005</b>	7.76	6.39	6.52	4.85	4.83	3.74	3.43	2.58
<b>May 2006</b>	7.1	5.94	5.9	4.54	4.04	3.3	3.01	2.23
<b>Difference</b>	-0.66	-0.45	-0.62	-0.31	-0.79	-0.44	-0.42	-0.35

**Evaluation of the movements' general performance (on scale: 1-10)**



Though indicating a similar tendency of decrease in the evaluation levels, by 0.5 points on average, these results show that the movements' performance in serving the Palestinian national struggle was generally better than the one towards the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The results also show that Hamas came in the first position both in November 2005 and May 2006, with a significant distinction between it and the closest movement, Fatah. Fatah came in the second place in November 2005, with a slight distinction between it and the Islamic Jihad. But in May 2006 Fatah declined to the third place, preceded by the Islamic Jihad, but with a slight distinction. This relative increase in the ranking of the Islamic Jihad confirms that there is a relation between the Palestinians' evaluation of the movements' performance and their pursuance of armed confrontation against the occupier. Moreover, it is obvious that the evaluation of the performance of the Islamic Jihad in serving the Palestinian struggle was in general significantly better than on its performance towards the Palestinians in Lebanon. The same also applies to Hamas.

It is important to record here that when analyzing the data of this poll we realized that the grading of the movements was so obviously affected by the

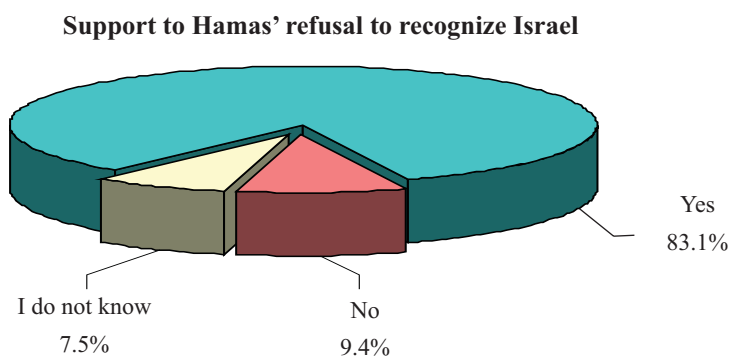


behavior and movements support of the surveyed Palestinians to the extent that high degree of fervor was reflected in some cases. Some supporters of specific movements gave full grades to their movements, while they gave very low grades to their competitors, especially in the cases related to Fatah and Hamas. This attitude contributed to the decrease in the average of evaluation of the movements.

**Eleventh: Support to Hamas’ Refusal to Recognize Israel:**

The last question in the May 2006 poll was: “Do you support Hamas stand not to recognize Israel despite different pressures?” the answers were as follows: 81.3% replied: “yes,” while 9.4% replied: “no” and 7.5% replied with: “I do not know.” This certainty of supporting Hamas stand was, generally, confirmed irrespective of the age group, the educational level or the income of the respondents.

<b>Do you support Hamas’ refusal of recognizing Israel despite different pressures?</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
Yes	83.1
No	9.4
I do not know	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>



This support was obviously overwhelming and across all movements, although its percentage varied from one movement to another. The supporters of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad endorsed this stand with a respective

percentage of 96.5% and 96.6%, while the support of the supporters of the Popular Front-General Command and the Popular Front to this stand was respectively 85.7% and 79.2%. Quite interestingly, 66.2% of Fatah supporters were with Hamas stand, and 23.5% were against it, while 10.4% of them replied with: “I do not know.” This support also included those who do not follow any of the Palestinian movements, as 84.4% of them were with Hamas’ stand while only 5.6% opposed it.

Table 25: Do you support Hamas’ refusal of recognizing Israel despite different pressures? * Which Palestinian movement do you support? Cross tabulation % within within which Palestinian movement do you support		Which Palestinian movement do you support?											
		Democratic Front	Fatah	Hamas	Islamic Jihad	Popular Front	Popular Front -General Command	Fatah al-Intifadah	Al-Sa’iqa	Other	None of them	I do not know	Total
Do you support Hamas’ refusal of recognizing Israel despite different pressures?	Yes	85.7	66.2	96.5	96.6	79.2	85.7	88.9	100	84	84.4	82.5	83.3
	No	9.5	23.5	1.4	0	12.5	5.7	0	0	12	5.6	6.3	9.4
	I do not know	4.8	10.4	2.1	3.4	8.3	8.6	11.1	0	4	10	11.1	7.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

It was also noticeable that this sizable majority remained visible among the surveyed Palestinians, notwithstanding their variable choices of candidates for the presidency. For although the main issue of contest between President Mahmud ‘Abbas and Hamas government is the recognition of Israel, 59.3% of ‘Abbas’ supporters were with Hamas stand while 28.7% of them refused it. As for the supporters of Faruq Qaddumi and Marwan al-Barghuthi, 79.5% and 82.7% were respectively with Hamas stand. Moreover, 75.3% of the respondents, who did not nominate anyone for the presidency, supported Hamas stand not to recognize Israel.



### **Conclusion:**

The results of the poll confirmed the difficult financial situation of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, their strong willingness to return to Palestine and their refusal of resettlement in Lebanon. It also revealed the Palestinian desire to reconsider the status of the weapons in the camps, and showed that more than half of the Palestinians accept the idea that the Lebanese authority assume the responsibility of security all over the camps on certain basic conditions, notably that the Palestinians be given their civil rights.

The results also show that Fatah and Hamas are neck to neck in terms of popularity among the Palestinians, though with a slight margin in favor of Hamas. It also indicated that Marwan al-Barghuthi is the most preferred personality among both the “inside and outside” Palestinians for the presidency, followed by Kahlid Mish‘al. Moreover, the poll confirmed the Palestinian support to Hamas’ stand not to recognize Israel, notwithstanding different pressures and constraints.

