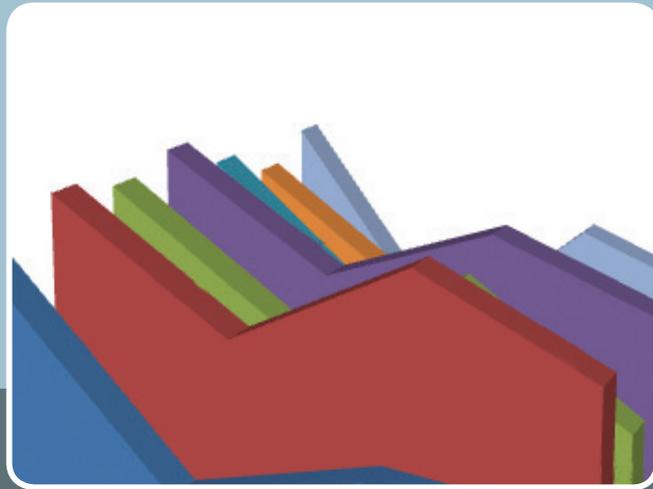


TRACKING PALESTINIAN PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR  
**ARMED RESISTANCE DURING THE  
PEACE PROCESS AND ITS DEMISE**



by Charmaine Seitz

Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre

December 2011

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with the support of



Jerusalem Office

Our deepest thanks to Manal Warad, who heads the JMCC's polling department and prepared the data presented here, and without whom the writing of this booklet would have been impossible.

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مركز القدس للإعلام والاتصال

First Edition

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study analyzes the attitudes of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories towards armed resistance against Israel over the last 14 years, starting in April 1997 and ending in November 2011.

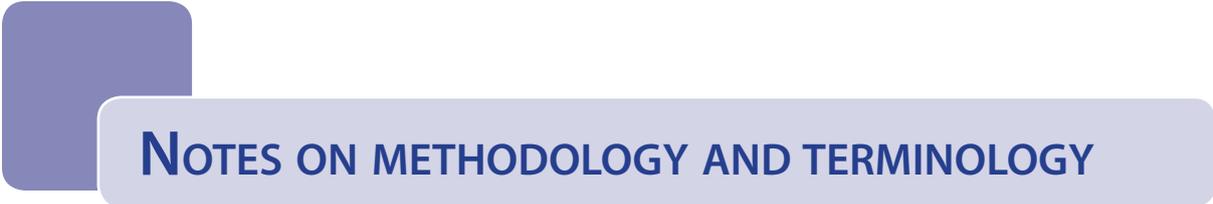
Specifically, it analyzes how respondents answered the question: “Do you support the continuation of military operations against Israeli targets as an appropriate response in current political conditions or do you oppose them and believe they harm Palestinian national interests?”

The study’s main findings are:

- Palestinian support for military operations against Israel is remarkably uniform across various sectors of society, meaning that when it is high and when it is low, women and men, young and old and Palestinians from different backgrounds support it at very similar rates.
- Public support for military operations roughly correlates with the number of Palestinian fatalities at the hands of the Israeli military and settlers. The relatively few Palestinian fatalities in 2011 appears to be one of the reasons why current support for military operations remains low, despite the current collapse in the peace process between Israel and Palestinians.
- The highest point of public support for military operations was in September 2001, measured at 84.6%, and its lowest point was in November 2011, at 29.3%.
- Palestinians who trust Hamas and Islamic Jihad are most consistently supportive of military operations, with those who trust the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine behind them.
- The 20-30% of Palestinians that say they trust no political faction are usually less supportive of military operations than the general public.
- Political divisions (between Fateh and Hamas) and geographic separation (between Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem) appear to have made more pronounced the differences of opinion that do exist (between factions and geographical areas) over the use of military operations. No clear trends were apparent in support for military operations when examining age, family income and place of residence (city, village or refugee camp).

- The isolation of Hamas after its win in 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections coincides with increased support for military operations among those who trusted it. This set the stage for Operation Cast Lead, Israel's 22-day offensive in the Gaza Strip in which 1,390 Palestinians were killed, most of them civilians, and 13 Israelis, nine of them soldiers, were killed.
- Palestinians who are critical of the performance of the Palestinian Authority are only slightly more supportive of military operations (with support ranging from 8.3-15.9 percentage points higher).
- When asked in November 2011, respondents said that economic considerations (72.2%) and the political situation (72.9%) were the most important in determining if they supported military operations.

Generally, the study shows that support for military operations is related to increased violence between Palestinians and Israelis. The interaction between high rates of casualties, political leaders' decisions, and public opinion on armed resistance warrants further investigation, however.



## NOTES ON METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

The Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre (JMCC) was established in 1988 by a group of Palestinian journalists and researchers seeking to disseminate information on events in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

It was the first Palestinian organization to conduct regular opinion polls of Palestinian political attitudes, and these surveys have been a critical benchmark on the health of the peace process and other key issues for nearly two decades.

### Methodology

To conduct its polls, the JMCC selects a stratified three-stage cluster random sample of 1,200 individuals 18 years or older from the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip. The first stage of this selection involves choosing 60 clusters with populations of 1,000 or more individuals (after stratification by district and type of community—urban, rural, and refugee camp) with probabilities proportional to size. The second stage involves selecting 20 households in each of the chosen clusters. Stage three involves selecting one individual in each household using Kish tables. Face-to-face interviews are then conducted with the selected individuals.

JMCC follows the following detailed methodology to conduct its household surveys:

- JMCC sample size is 1,200, and since no single interviewer is expected to interview more than 20 respondents, the number of primary sampling units is normally 60.
- Sample is stratified in the West Bank and Gaza Strip according to population.
- Stratification for districts for each of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is also carried out according to population.
- Cities in each district are stratified according to population.
- Villages and refugee camps in each district are randomly selected (simple random sampling).

- All population concentrations within each district in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip are considered for selection. Concentrations include towns, villages, and refugee camps.
- Each of these concentrations is entered into a district database for randomization purposes on the basis of size. Each concentration is divided by 1,000, which is designated as a single unit. If a certain village, for example, has a population of 10,000, then it is assigned ten units; accordingly it has ten chances of being randomly selected.
- After the population concentrations are randomly selected, interviewers are instructed to go to assigned primary sampling units to conduct the interviews.
- The household selection method is based on a pre-defined route. Interviewers are instructed to follow a specific route when selecting the household. Since most population concentrations are not well-planned, nor are there well-defined bloc systems, interviewers, particularly in villages and refugee camps, are asked to go to a specific place (mosque, elementary school, etc.) to begin their route. They are instructed to start from that place and then take, for example, the fourth street on their left. When the street is determined, they are instructed to choose the third or second house on their right, then the third house on the left, etc. The number of levels in each house is also taken into consideration, as is the number of streets where the household is selected.
- In cities, this same method is used. The city is divided into neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are also randomly selected. Interviewers have a starting point in each of the neighborhoods then each neighborhood is treated as described above for the selection of households.
- Among members of the household, respondents are selected using Kish tables. The Kish method is an objective procedure for selecting respondents within the household.
- Each household is visited no more than twice if the selected person is not available.

The margin of error for all JMCC polls is  $\pm 3$  percent, with a confidence level of 95%.

## Terminology and Data

The issue of how Palestinians refer to their struggle against Israel is delicate and beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that, while some English-language readers might find uncomfortable the reference to “military operations” in the main study question used in this research, it is how Palestinians sometimes refer to their struggle. In conducting polling research, it is more important that respondents understand the question being asked in their context than that it “translate” nicely for English readers. JMCC polls use the term “amaliyat askariya” or “military operations” to

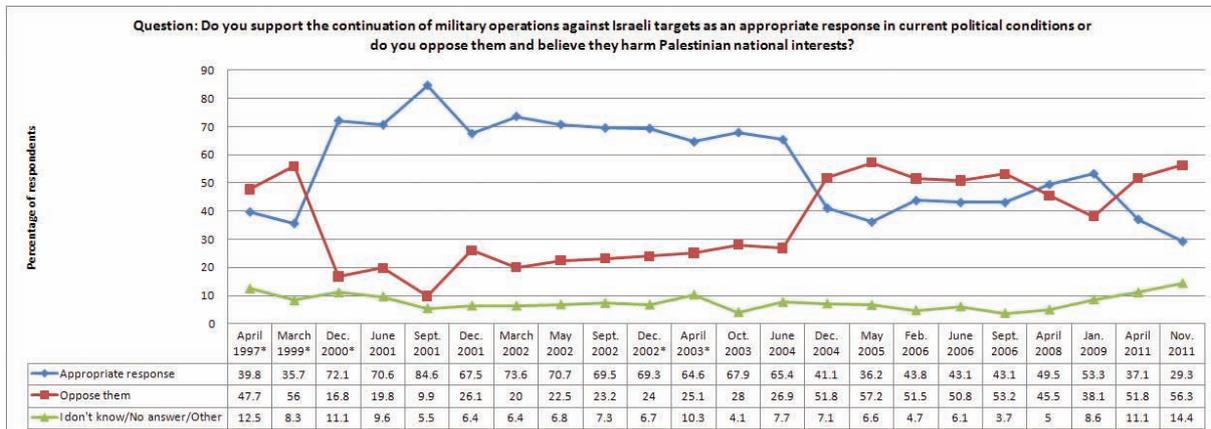
discuss the idea of organized armed resistance against Israel's occupation.<sup>1</sup> To refer to "violence", for example, would be incomprehensible to the respondents, who do not think of their struggle in those terms. In that spirit, we have done our best in this study to remain true to the original ideas of the Palestinians polled.

Throughout this study, in order to simplify issues, the data discussed often reflects only those who support military operations. This is possible because the percentage of respondents who responded "I don't know" or didn't answer at all when asked if they support military operations was consistently low. As such, the percentage of supporters of military operations is nearly obverse to the percentage of opponents.

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<sup>1</sup> JMCC has also asked at various times what Palestinians think about suicide bombings. Those results can be found on the JMCC website at [www.jmcc.org](http://www.jmcc.org), but were not referenced here.

# I. SUPPORT FOR AND OPPOSITION TO MILITARY OPERATIONS – 1997 TO 2011



\*The answers for these years did not include the response “other”.

Palestinian support for military operations, as measured in polls carried out by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre since April 1997, began at a low mark. Approximately 40% (39.8%) of respondents said they thought military operations were an appropriate response at that time, and 47.7% opposed them.

While this would ultimately mark an ebb in support for military operations, it is notable that at the height of the peace process with Israel, over a third of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip still advocated armed resistance to Israel’s occupation. This is consistent with a general Palestinian belief that it is their right to resist Israel through both non-violent and violent means.<sup>2</sup> Palestinians have used strikes, boycotts, demonstrations as well as armed attacks including rockets and suicide bombings to pursue their cause. The Second Intifada (roughly between Sept. 2000 and 2005) marked a rise in use of armed tactics by Palestinians. Hamas, in particular, insists upon the right to armed resistance, while at times tactically setting it aside,<sup>3</sup> and the conjunction of the Islamist movement’s rise to prominence in a time of punishing open conflict with Israel is not coincidental.

2 For example, see Ibrahim Shikaki’s “What is the ‘right’ type of resistance?,” al-Jazeera International, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/06/20116289553754742.html> (last accessed December 13, 2011).

3 For example, Hamas head leader Khaled Meshaal told AFP in an interview published November 25, 2011: “Every people has the right to fight against occupation in every way, with weapons or otherwise. But at the moment, we want to cooperate with the popular resistance... We believe in armed resistance but popular resistance is a program which is common to all the factions.” See AFP, “Hamas to focus on popular resistance: Meshaal,” <http://news.yahoo.com/hamas-focus-popular-resistance-meshaal-141422438.html> (last accessed December 13, 2011)

This also illustrates another finding of this study: that there is a segment of Palestinian society that consistently advocates more militant tactics against Israel. Later, we will explore in depth who these people are and what appears to influence them.

The graph above shows that, as the peace process failed to deliver, support for armed operations against Israel increased.

Between April 1997 and March 1999, Palestinian and Israeli leaders signed the Wye accords, which marked the start of Palestinian security cooperation with Israel, as well as a decline in support for military operations. But between March 1999 and December 2000 (a relatively short period), support for military operations as an appropriate response nearly doubled. This change coincided with the failure of talks over a final status accord at Camp David. A discussion of what happened at those talks is beyond the scope of this paper, but the build-up to the negotiations and the subsequent blame that was placed on Palestinian leaders by the US and Israel has been documented elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

On September 29, 2000, the second Palestinian uprising, also known as the al-Aqsa Intifada, broke out. One year later, in September 2001, Palestinian support for military operations was at the highest level it would reach over the coming decade, at 84.6%. These views were reflected on the ground by armed groups: according to the Israeli foreign ministry, in 2002, Palestinians carried out 55 suicide bombings, killing 220 people.<sup>5</sup> (That year saw the highest number of Israeli casualties incurred in the life of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; most years the number of Israelis killed by Palestinians does not climb above 100, as the graph on p. 14 shows.)

Support for military operations receded over the next three months rather markedly, then remained high (between 65-75%) for the next three years of the uprising until June 2004. Between June and December 2004, public support for military operations dropped dramatically, from 65.4% to 41.1%.

These two shifts, in late 2001 and the second half of 2004, illustrate how quickly the Palestinian public can change its mind about support for armed resistance.

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4 See Robert Malley and Hussein Agha, "Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors", New York Review of Books, August 9, 2001, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2001/aug/09/camp-david-the-tragedy-of-errors/?pagination=false> (last accessed December 13, 2011)

5 Israeli foreign ministry website at <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism--Obstacle+to+Peace/Palestinian+terror+since+2000/Victims+of+Palestinian+Violence+and+Terrorism+sinc.htm>

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Event
Jan. 15-17, 1997	Hebron agreement signed as part of the Oslo accords; the West Bank city is divided between Israeli and Palestinian control
July 30, 1997	13 Israelis killed in twin suicide bombings in Jerusalem's main market
Sept. 4, 1997	5 Israelis killed in triple suicide bombings in Jerusalem
Oct. 23, 1998	Wye agreement signed establishing Palestinian-Israeli security cooperation
July 11-25, 2000	Palestinians and Israelis fail to reach final status agreement at the US-sponsored Camp David talks
Sept. 29, 2000	Israeli leader Ariel Sharon visits Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque, setting off the 2nd Intifada
Jan. 21-27, 2001	Taba summit achieves some breakthroughs, but end without agreement before imminent Israeli elections
March 4, 2001	Hamas carries out the first suicide bombing of the 2nd Intifada, killing 3 in Netanya
Mid-2001	Hamas' armed wing in Gaza begins first rocket launches towards Israel, actual dates disputed
June 2001	Israel starts construction on "the Wall", a series of barbed wire fencing, patrol roads, cement walls and guard towers built largely inside the West Bank
Jan. 27, 2002	Fateh carries out its first suicide bombing with a female bomber in Jerusalem, killing 1 Israeli
March 29 - May 3, 2002	Israel conducts Operation Defensive Shield, re-occupying all major West Bank cities
Sept. 24, 2004	A Qassam rocket causes its first Israeli fatality
End-2004	Israeli settler population in the occupied Palestinian territories has risen to 441,165
March 2005	Hamas and Fateh sign the Cairo Declaration, paving the way for Hamas participation in parliamentary elections
August 15, 2005	Israel commences its disengagement from the Gaza Strip, evacuating settlers and soldiers
Nov. 15, 2005	Palestinians and Israelis sign the Agreement on Movement and Access governing Gaza's crossings with Egypt
Jan. 25, 2006	Hamas wins a majority in parliamentary elections
June 25, 2006	Gaza armed groups capture an Israeli soldier in a cross-border raid
June 14, 2007	Hamas takes control of the Gaza Strip in armed clashes with Fateh
June 2007	Israel clamps a blockade on the Gaza Strip, severely restricting the movement of people and goods
Nov. 27, 2007	Annapolis conference fails to reach agreement
Dec. 27, 2008 - Jan. 18, 2009	Israel carries out its Cast Lead operation in the Gaza Strip; 1,390 Palestinians and 13 Israelis are killed
End-2009	The Israeli settler population in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, rises to 516,569
Sept. 22, 2010	US hosts a meeting of Palestinian and Israeli officials to try to restart talks
Sept. 23, 2011	PLO leader Mahmoud Abbas applies for statehood at the UN

Between December 2004 and September 2006, support for military operations against Israel hovered in the high thirties to low forties range. During this period, Israel withdrew its settlers and military from the Gaza Strip, unwilling any longer to bear the high cost of defending them. Then-opposition group Hamas also agreed with its rival Fateh to halt attacks on Israel and join in the political process, culminating in Palestinian parliamentary elections in January 2006. Hamas representatives won a majority in the parliament, starting an era of open antagonism between the now-competing political groups. Hamas formed a cabinet to run the Palestinian Authority, but was met with an international political and financial boycott that made it very difficult to govern successfully.

The challenges posed by this difficult period appear to have soured Palestinians on democratic and non-violent means of expression. By August 2008, support for military operations against Israel was once again climbing at 49.5%. Hamas had wrested control of the Gaza Strip from the Fateh-dominated Palestinian Authority and Israel had subsequently tightened the closure on Gaza's borders, instituting what is now known as the "blockade" on Gaza.

Then, in late December 2008, Israel commenced Operation Cast Lead, bombing the Gaza Strip and sending troops into the territory. A poll taken in January 2009 saw another marked rise in support for military operations.

Unfortunately, the question on military operations was not asked again until April 2011, so there is no way to determine fluctuations in the interim period. What we do know is that between January 2009 and April 2011, support for military operations dropped 16.2 percentage points, from 53.3% to 37.1%. That decline has continued through 2011, finally reaching the lowest public support (29.3%) for military operations since 1997 in November 2011.

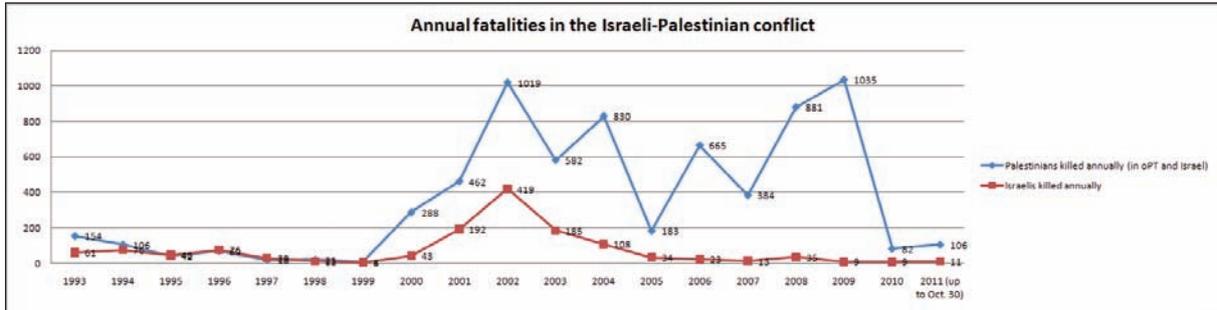
It is possible that this decline has been driven by largely non-violent revolutions sweeping the Arab world, where Tunisians and Egyptians succeeded in unseating rulers who had governed undemocratically for decades. It can also be partly ascribed to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' appeal to the United Nations for statehood in September 2011, which provided a limited diplomatic alternative to resistance.<sup>6</sup>

Still, the drop is rather surprising, considering the parallel stagnation in the peace process. Palestinians and Israelis have not made any substantial achievements in direct talks since the November 2005 signing of the Agreement on Movement and Access governing passageways out of Gaza, an agreement that quickly fell by the wayside. One would think that, given the failure of negotiations, the Palestinian public would be clamoring to pressure Israel through other, perhaps violent, means.

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<sup>6</sup> While Abbas' views on armed resistance are not well-documented, one can extrapolate from the actions of the Palestinian Authority he leads that he and other officials have little interest in a new uprising. While Abbas called for "popular resistance" to support the statehood request at the UN, for example, PA security forces ensured that demonstrations took place inside Palestinian cities, away from Israeli military installations, thus precluding clashes with the Israeli military.

Instead, it seems that there is another factor that plays a more direct role in Palestinians' positions on military operations. There appears to be a correlation between the numbers of Palestinians killed in the conflict with Israel and Palestinian support for military operations against Israel.



Source: B'Tselem website

Often, when Palestinian casualties increased, support for military operations also increased. This is visible in the dramatic increase in support that occurred between March 1999 and December 2000 and in the rise in support for military operations that was measured after the 2008-09 Israeli offensive in Gaza, in which over 1,300 Palestinians were killed. Israel might say that Palestinian support for military operations means more Palestinian attacks, to which it responds, producing Palestinian casualties. The graphs above show, however, that Israelis killed in the Second Intifada did not rise markedly until 2002, the uprising's second year, while the numbers of Palestinian dead and support for military operations were already both high.

It also could help to explain why, despite the blocked peace process, Palestinians have not increased their support for military operations in 2011. However, such correlations are only a blunt guide and do not always account for Palestinian support for military operations. For example, between June, Sept. and Dec. 2001, public support for military operations rose from 70.6% to 84.6% before dropping again to 67.5%. As shown in the table below, Palestinian fatalities in Israel and the oPt continued rising through the later part of the year, providing no explanation for why public support for military operations would have declined.

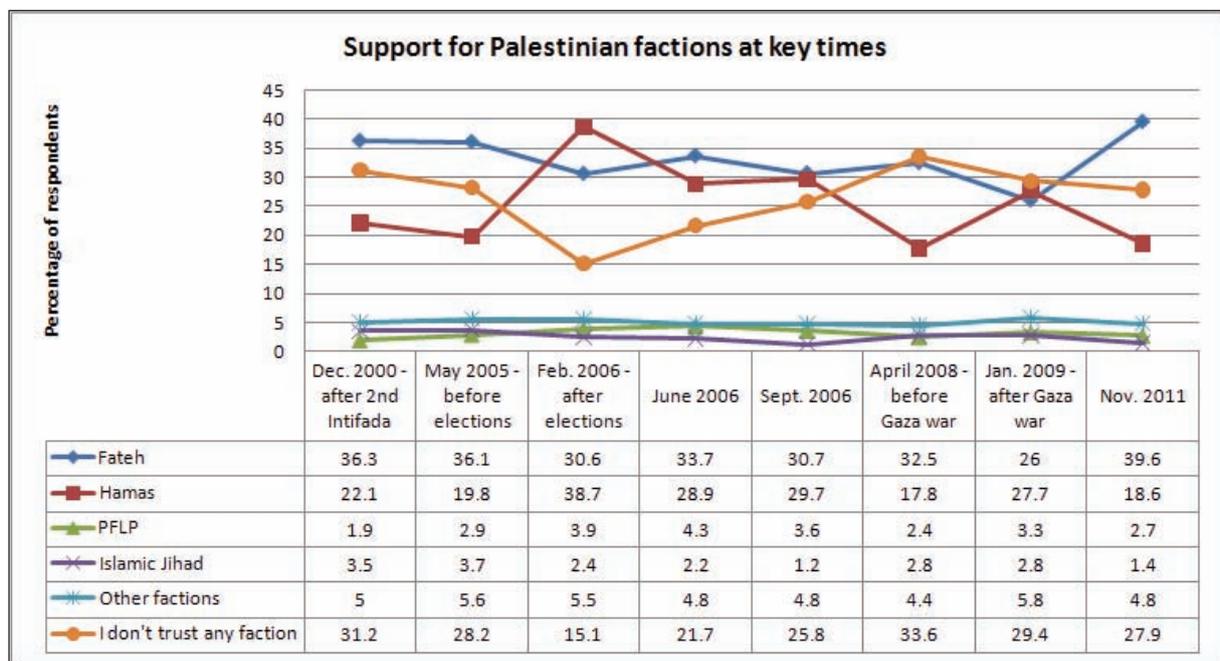
		Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
2001	Palestinians killed in Israel and oPt	24	19	29	23	46	15	31	36	59	85	35	67
	Support for military operations against Israel						70.6%			84.6%			67.5%

Source for casualties: B'Tselem website

Also, this report will more deeply examine the rise in support for military operations in January 2009, after Operation Cast Lead when more than 1,300 Palestinians were killed in 22 days. Sometimes, as we will see, high numbers of Palestinian casualties can result in a decline in support for military operations. The relationship between casualties and support for armed resistance needs additional examination.

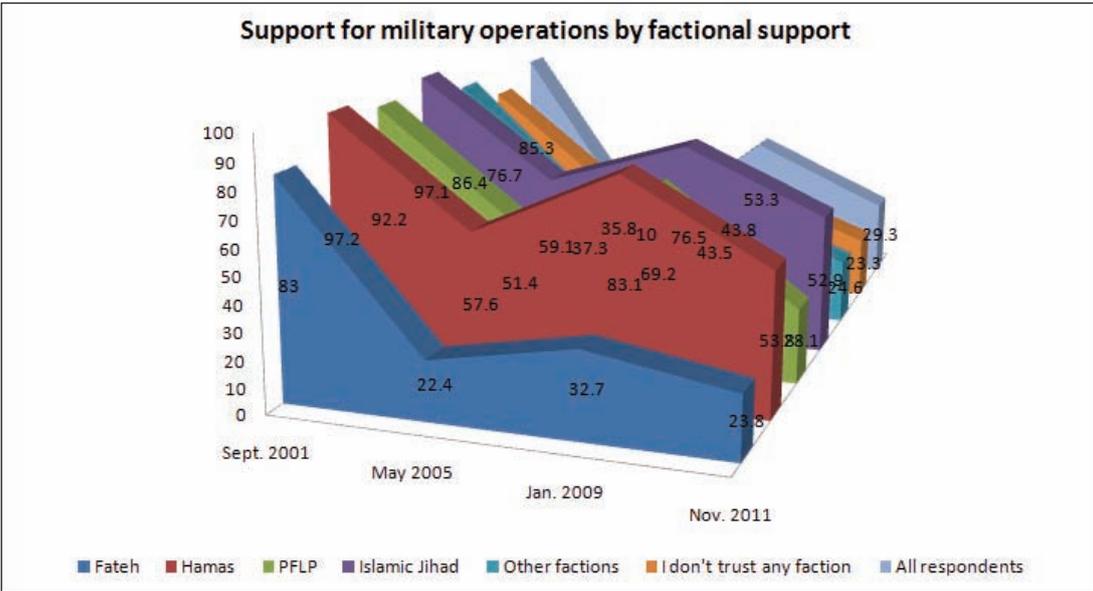
## II. SUPPORT FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS BY FACTIONAL SUPPORT

Public support for Palestinian factions has been characterized over the last decade by the rise of Islamist faction Hamas to compete with Fateh, which previously dominated the political landscape. The other major trend visible in the following chart is the increasing proportion of respondents who say that they trust no political faction. Other factions, such as the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Palestinian People's Party, remain small and have been combined for the purpose of this study.

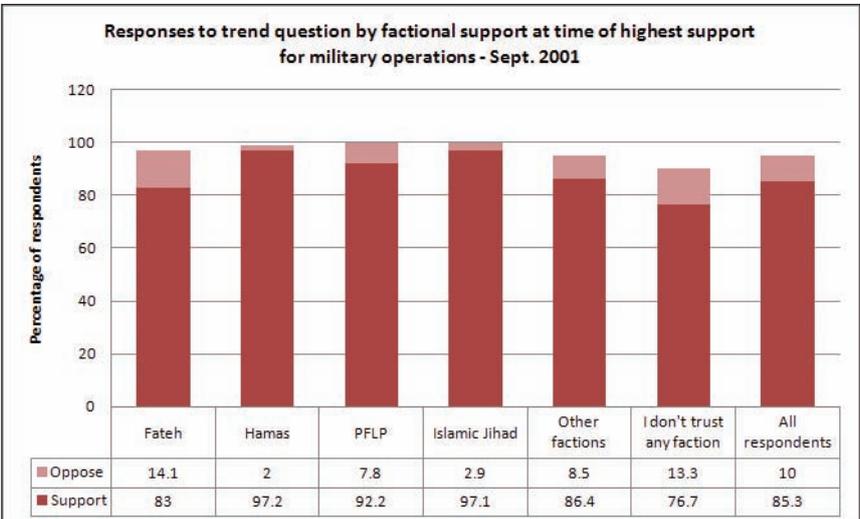


Hamas, throughout its rise in prominence, has maintained its key platform that armed resistance against Israel should be retained as an option. At times, such as prior to the 2006 parliamentary elections and recently in Gaza, Hamas has decided to halt military operations in order to pursue other objectives. Examining the views of its supporters, and those of Fateh and other factions, on military operations provides a window into the dynamics shaping Palestinian politics.

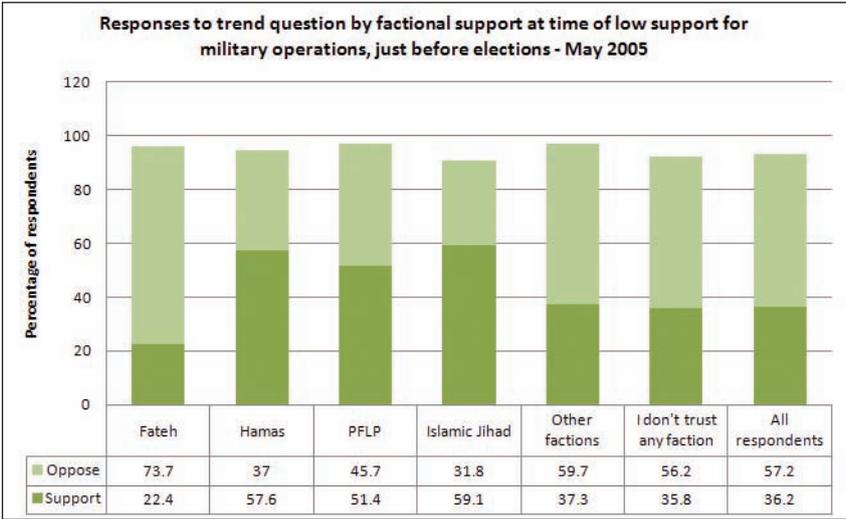
As shown below, trends in support for military operations are reflected across the Palestinian political spectrum. Still, those who trust Islamist factions Hamas and Islamic Jihad form the bulk of support for military operations, particularly when that support is high.



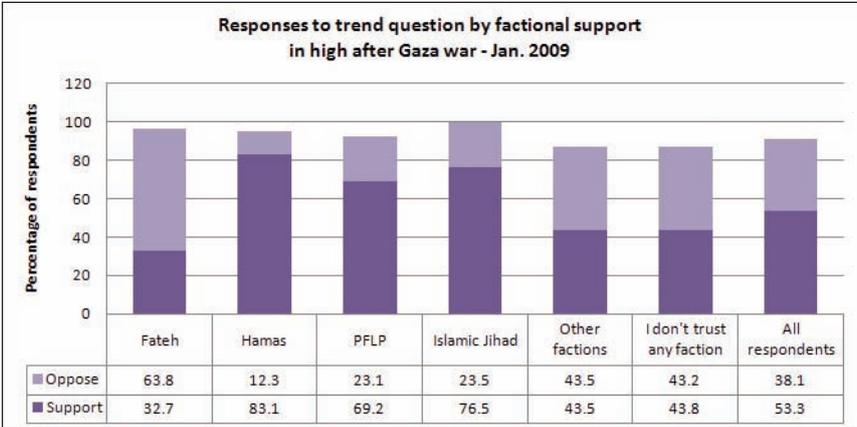
Looking more closely, the high in support for military operations registered in September 2001 at the height of the Second Intifada is quite uniform across Palestinian political factions. Those who trust Fateh (83%) and those who trust no political faction (76.7%) were those least supportive of military operations at that time. Those who trust Hamas (97.2%) and Islamic Jihad (97.1%) were the most supportive of military operations, with those who support the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (92.2%) a close third. The difference between these poles was 20.5 percentage points.



At times of low support for military operations, as show in the chart below, a higher proportion of the support comes from those who say they trust Hamas (57.6%), Islamic Jihad (59.1%), and then the Popular Front (51.4%) for the Liberation of Palestine. Those who trust Fateh had the least amount of support for military operations (22.4%), and the important swing group of those who trust no faction were in the middle of the spectrum (35.8%). The difference between the factional extremes of those who were supportive and those who were less supportive of military operations widened to 36.6 percentage points.

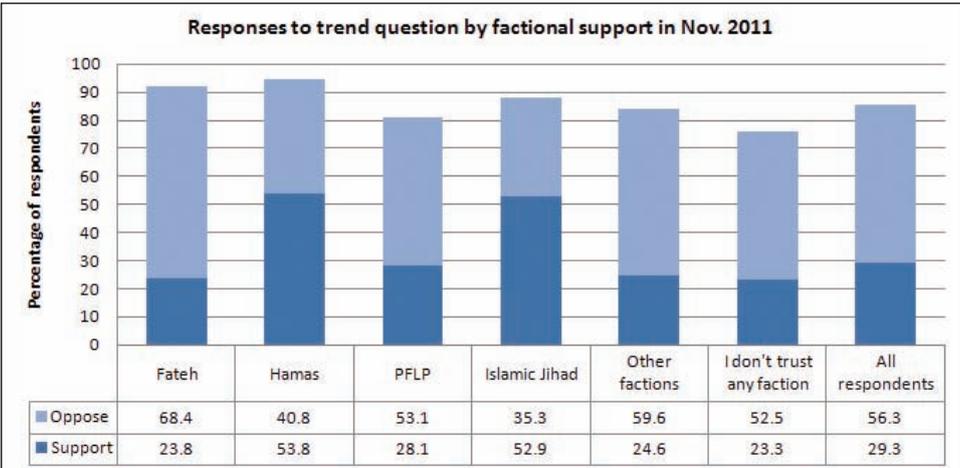


Importantly, it appears that that the ongoing division between Fateh and Hamas is also correlated with factional differences over support for military operations. At the start of the Second Intifada, when over 85% of all respondents supported military operations, the difference in support between those who trust Hamas and those who trust Fateh was only 14.2 percentage points, with Hamas supporters higher. In the high of support recorded in January 2009, after Operation Cast Lead, the difference in support for military operations between Hamas supporters and Fateh supporters was 50.4 percentage points.



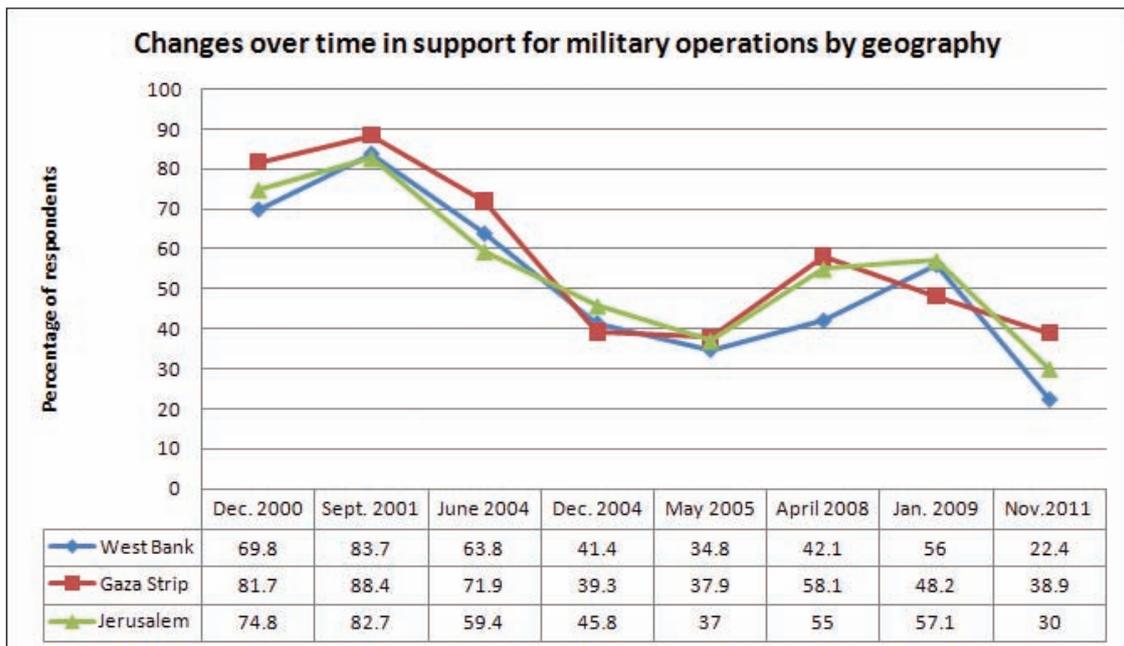
One might argue that Israel’s Gaza war was directed primarily at Hamas, giving its supporters more reason to support armed resistance. However, the Israeli campaign against Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and West Bank security forces that characterized the start of the Second Intifada could also have been viewed as an assault on the Fateh-dominated Palestinian Authority, thus drawing support for an armed response. Nevertheless, the difference in support for military operations at that time was not nearly as stark as that seen after the confrontations between Hamas and Fateh. It appears that political and geographic division is fragmenting what were previously broadly-held views across factions.

This contrast is again apparent in the most recent poll on support for military operations. In November 2011, over half of those who trust Hamas (53.8%) continued to support military operations, while 23.8% of those who trust Fateh said the same, a 30-point difference. Those least supportive of military operations were those who trust no faction, at 23.3%.



### III. SUPPORT FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS BY GEOGRAPHY

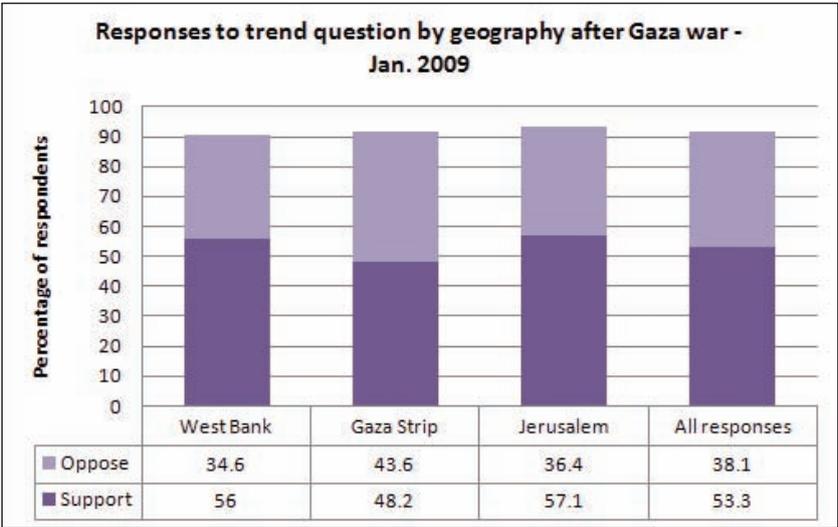
A similar conclusion can be drawn by examining trends in support for military operations by geography. While attitudes on armed resistance in the occupied West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem once closely mirrored each other (with Gaza residents giving slightly more support for military operations), after the political division that came about in 2007, with Hamas governing the Gaza Strip and the Fateh-led Palestinian Authority governing the West Bank, this changed.



The chart above illustrates the divergence in attitudes towards military operations that occurred in the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem between May 2005, before the parliamentary elections, and April 2008, after Hamas' control of Gaza and just before the Gaza war. It appears that the Israeli and international reaction to the elections radicalized Gaza and Jerusalem residents. The findings on Jerusalem, while representing a relatively small sample size, point to the Israeli reaction to the

elections there, where Hamas was successful. Elected Hamas parliamentarians were rounded up by the Israeli police and a campaign was begun to strip them of their residency rights in the city. It may be that this increased support for military operations in Jerusalem.

Another sign of the effects of political and geographical division are visible in respondents' answers after the war in Gaza.



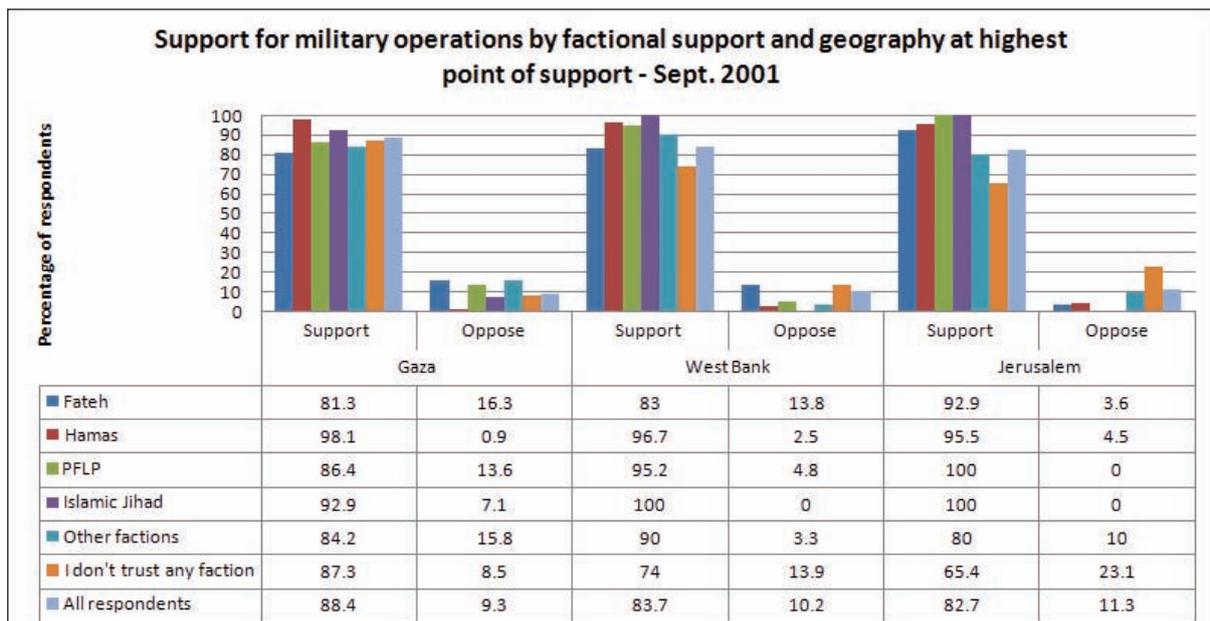
Here, Gaza residents' support for military operations has declined considerably from April 2008, when they were the most supportive of military operations (58.1%). Conversely, support of residents of the West Bank and Jerusalem for military operations actually increased over the same period, from 42.1% and 55% respectively.

This contrast illustrates the divergent opinions of the divided regions, more pronounced as geographic separation and isolation has increased. But more than that, it also returns us again to the finding that high numbers of Palestinian casualties can impact the public's views on military operations. It appears that, in the case of the Gaza war, the cost was so high for Gaza residents that they were subsequently exhausted and sought calm, rather than revenge. In the West Bank and Jerusalem, where the actual cost in life and infrastructure was not felt, support for military operations against Israel was rising after Operation Cast Lead.

## IV. SUPPORT FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS BY FACTIONAL SUPPORT AND GEOGRAPHY

In light of the findings that Gaza residents' support for military operations declined immediately after the 2008-09 Operation Cast Lead, it is interesting to examine if a similar divergence occurred at the start of the Second Intifada, which largely took place in the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem.

Looking at the following graph, however, it is difficult to discern that there is any notable geographical difference in attitudes on military operations, despite the heavy losses incurred in the West Bank between Sept. 2000 and Sept. 2001. Support for military operations is slightly higher among Gaza residents, a trend that is repeated over the last decade, except for just after the Gaza war.

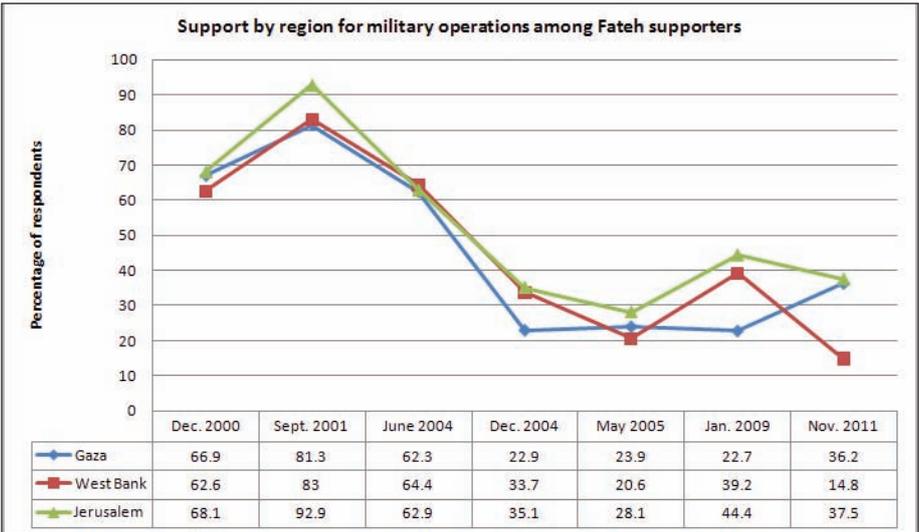


This graph also demonstrates that support for military operations was consistently high across political factions in different regions after the first year of the Second Intifada. Supporters of the

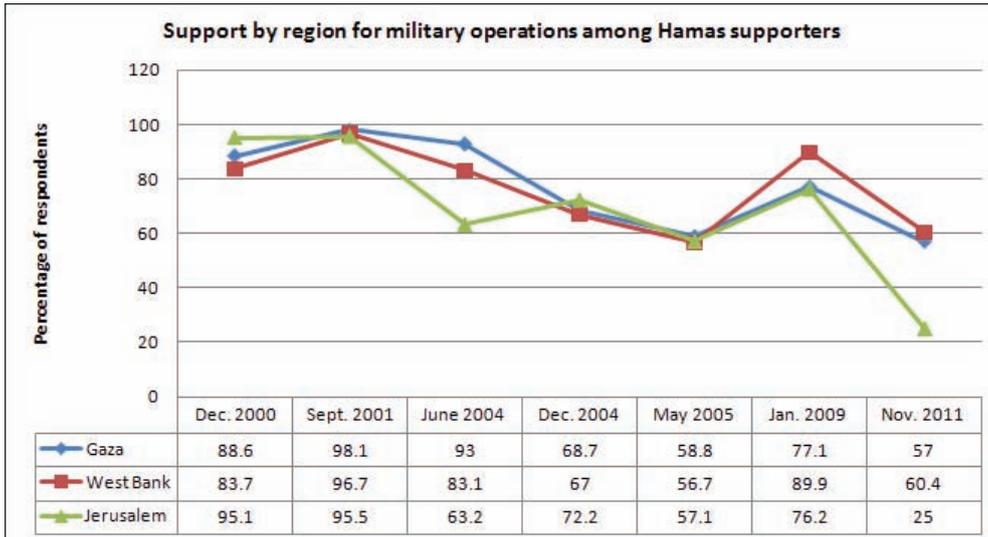
three main factions that approved of military operations ( Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation for Palestine) did so at a similar rate, not matter what region they were residents of.

Those who trusted Islamic Jihad in the West Bank and Jerusalem were more supportive of military operations, a finding that was true in other polls. The sample group here, however, is so small in both cases that it is difficult to know if this is truly representative.

Again it appears that existing political and geographic divisions are contributing to fragmenting attitudes on resistance towards Israel. The graph below illustrates how support for military operations against Israel among Fateh supporters has diverged and fragmented since Hamas' parliamentary win and control over the Gaza Strip. While those who trust Fateh in the West Bank and Jerusalem supported military operations against Israel by 39.2% and 44.4% respectively, only 22.7% of those who trusted Fateh in Gaza supported military operations after Operation Cast Lead. In November 2011, when the support for military operations is at its lowest point among the rest of Palestinian society, it is on the rise among those who trust Fateh in the Gaza Strip, up to 36.2% from 22.7% in January 2009.

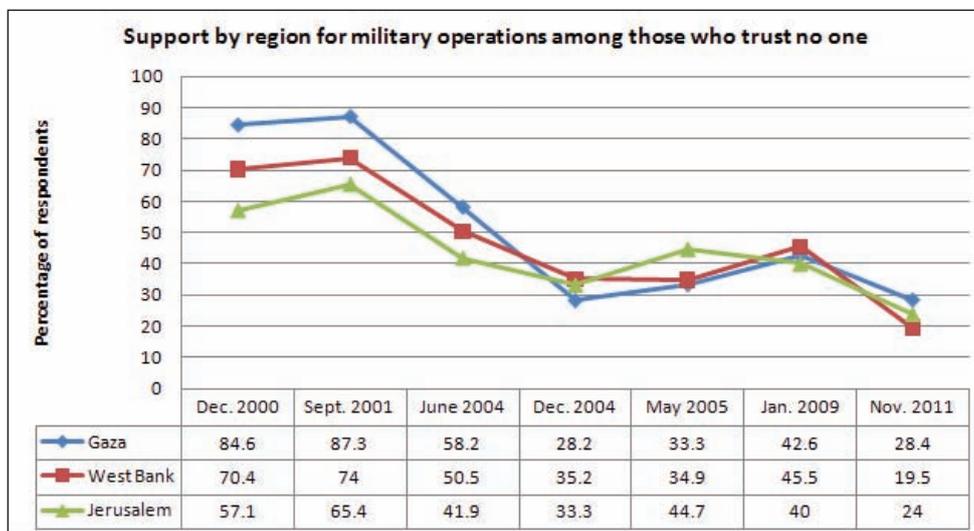


A breakdown of the views of those who support Hamas shows that the drop in support among Gazans for military operations after Israel's 2009-09 war in Gaza can be largely subscribed to those who trust factions other than Hamas. Support for military operations against Israel among those who trust Hamas in Gaza rise in January 2009 to reach 77.1%.



Instead, those who trust Hamas in all regions of the occupied territories are much less supportive of military operations after January 2009. This likely reflects a leadership position among Hamas that, after Operation Cast Lead and with changing regional conditions, there is a need for calm. Those who support Hamas remain relatively uniform in their views across geographical areas (while there are marked differences among those who trust Hamas in Jerusalem, they represent such a small sample that it is difficult to draw conclusions from their responses).

Those respondents who trust no political faction, a group that has comprised as much as a third of the Palestinian public in the last ten years, have become less divergent across regions in their support for military operations.



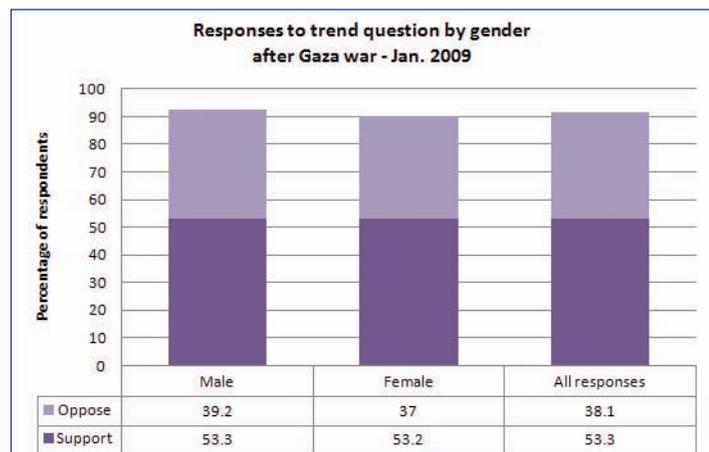
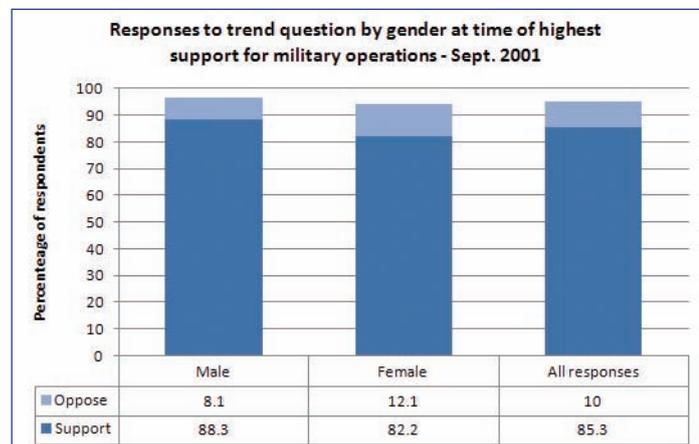
## V. SUPPORT FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS BY GENDER

While Palestinian males are somewhat more supportive than females of military operations against Israel, the difference is slight and sometimes within the polls' margin of error.

In September 2001, at the time of highest support for military operations against Israel, 88.3% of male respondents supported armed attacks while 82.2% of female respondents supported them.

Similarly, in the general rise in support for armed resistance registered after Operation Cast Lead, male and female respondents were nearly identical in their support for military operations against Israel.

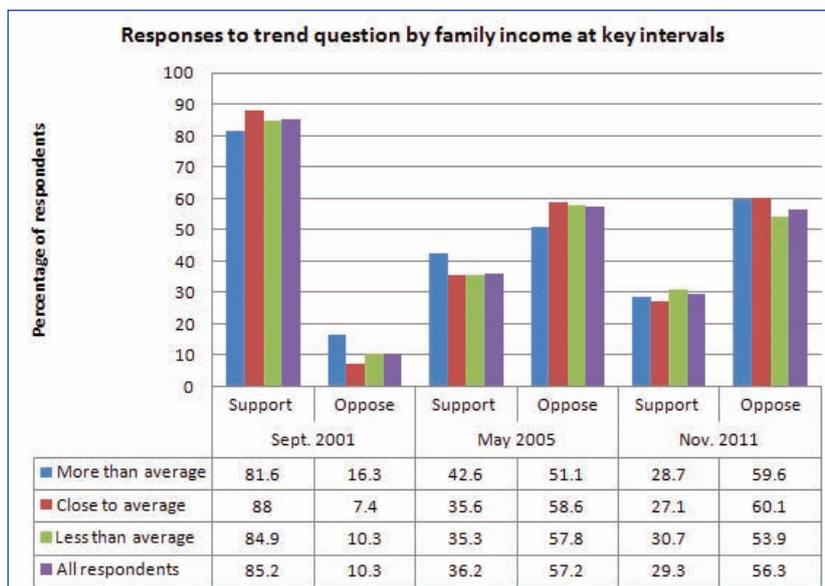
There appears to be little difference in male and female attitudes towards military operations.



## VI. SUPPORT FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS AND FAMILY INCOME

It is commonly believed that poverty generates militancy, which in the Palestinian case might reflect support for military operations against Israel. To determine family income, typically a sensitive subject, JMCC asks respondents if their household income is less than, close to, or more than an average of NIS 3,000 a month.

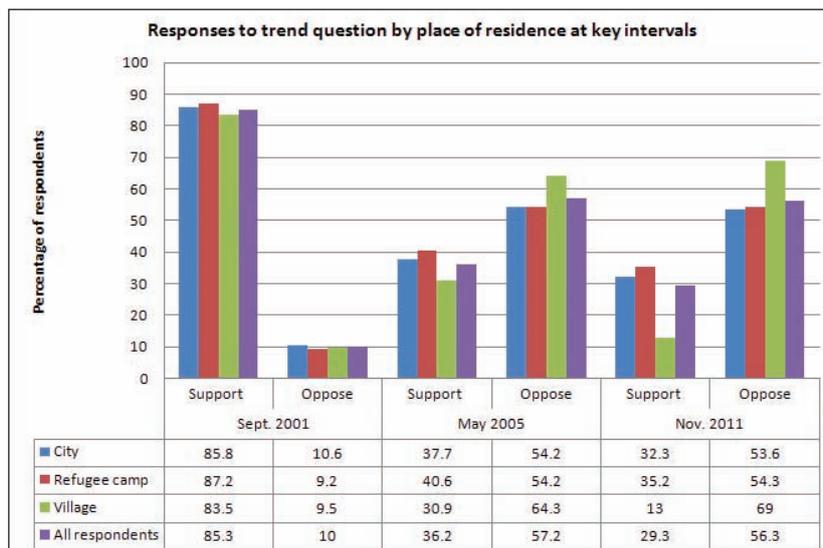
Rather surprisingly, there appears to be very little difference in support for military operations between these income groups. In September 2001, at the height of support for military operations, respondents with near-average family income were those most likely (at 88%) to support military operations. But in May 2005, at a deep low in support for military operations, respondents with a higher-than-average income supported armed resistance slightly more (7.3 percentage points) than those with less-than-average income, who expressed the lowest level of support at 35.3%.



In sum, no trends are apparent related to income and support for military operations.

## VII. SUPPORT FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Respondents to JMCC polls are categorized as residents of a city, a village or a refugee camp. Palestinian support for military operations appears to be consistently higher, albeit slightly so, among refugee camp residents. In three polls—September 2001 at the height of support for military operations, May 2005 at a deep low and in November 2011 at the lowest point of support—refugee camp residents were a bit more supportive of military operations, although each reading falls within the margin of error.



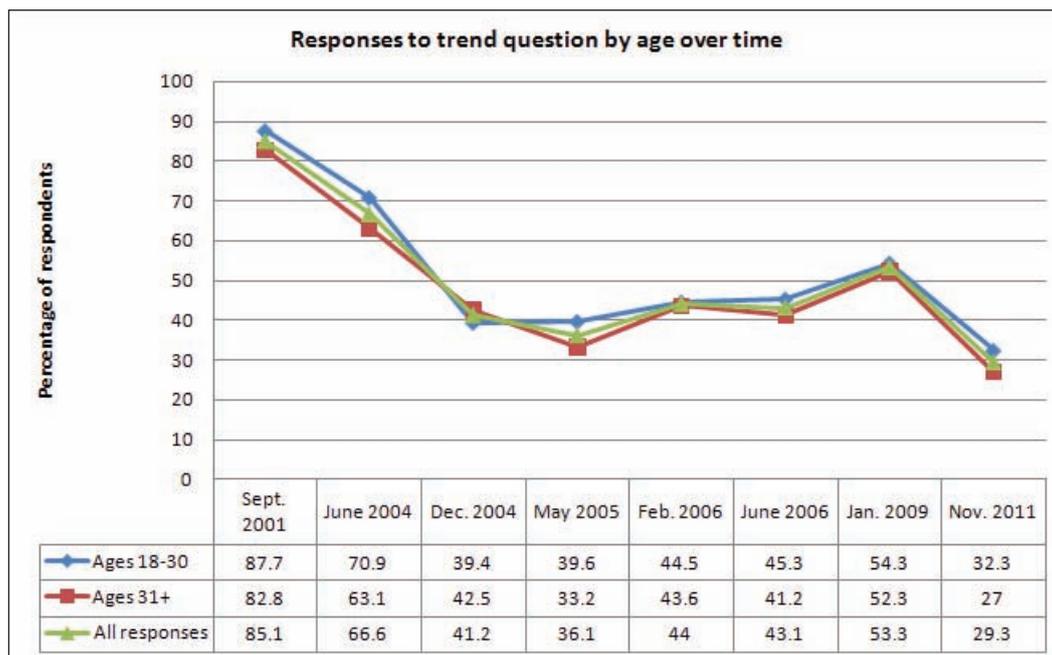
A more marked change is visible in the support of village residents for military operations. While village residents showed high support (83.5%) for military operations in September 2001 just as did other groups, by May 2005, village residents were expressing dramatically less support than other groups. In November 2011, village residents were half as likely (13%) to support military operations than city (32.3%) and refugee camp residents (54.3%).

Interestingly, most of these villagers are located in the West Bank (out of 450 questionnaires distributed in the Gaza Strip in November 2011, only 10 were distributed to village residents due to the lack of rural areas). As such, we can conclude that support for military operations has become quite unpopular among West Bank villages. This may result from the fact that these villages are located close to Israeli settlements and may experience retaliation from them when armed operations are carried out. It may also result from the strong campaigns of popular resistance (largely peaceful demonstrations facing the Israeli military) that have been underway for several years in Bilin, Nabi Saleh, Beit Omar and other West Bank villages.

## VIII. SUPPORT FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS BY AGE

Palestinian society is a very young society, with 41.3% of its population made up of children under age 15.<sup>7</sup> It is important, then, to know if support for military operations is higher among the younger generation, who also have come of age during an era characterized by a struggling economy and a failed peace process.

Remarkably, however, there is no major difference between the attitudes of respondents aged 18-30 and their older peers in their support for military operations. The greatest gap between their views was in May 2005, where 39.6% of respondents aged 18-30 supported military operations, compared with 33.2% of respondents age 31 and over.

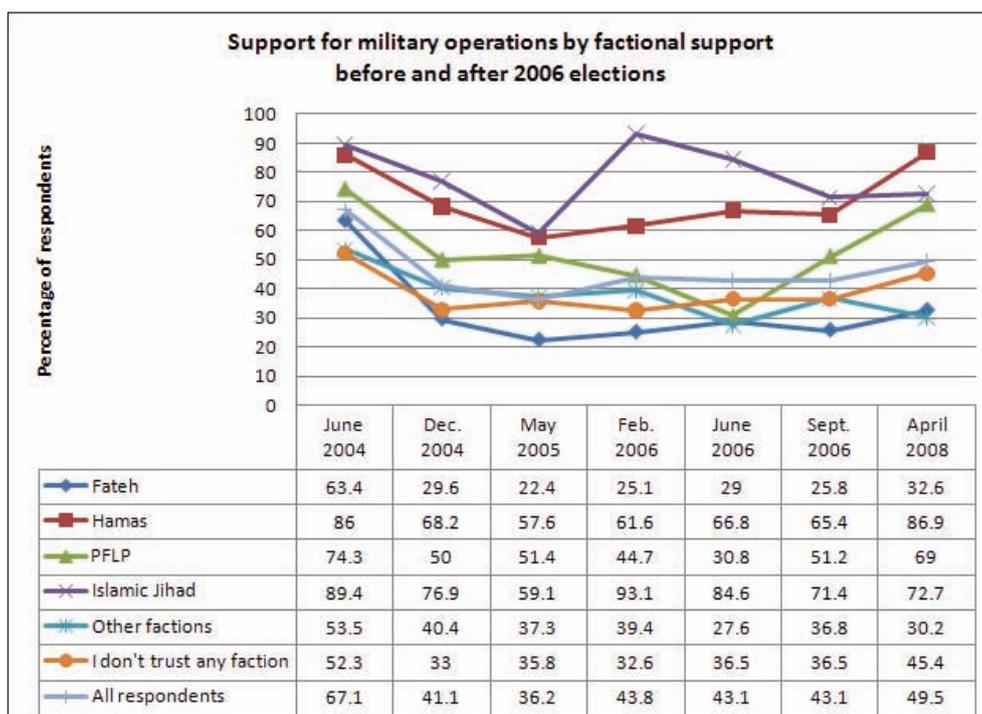


7 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, April 4, 2011, "On the Occasion of International Children's Day", [http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/\\_pcbs/PressRelease/childDay\\_E2011.pdf](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/childDay_E2011.pdf) (last accessed December 13, 2011)

## IX. ELECTIONS: BEFORE AND AFTER

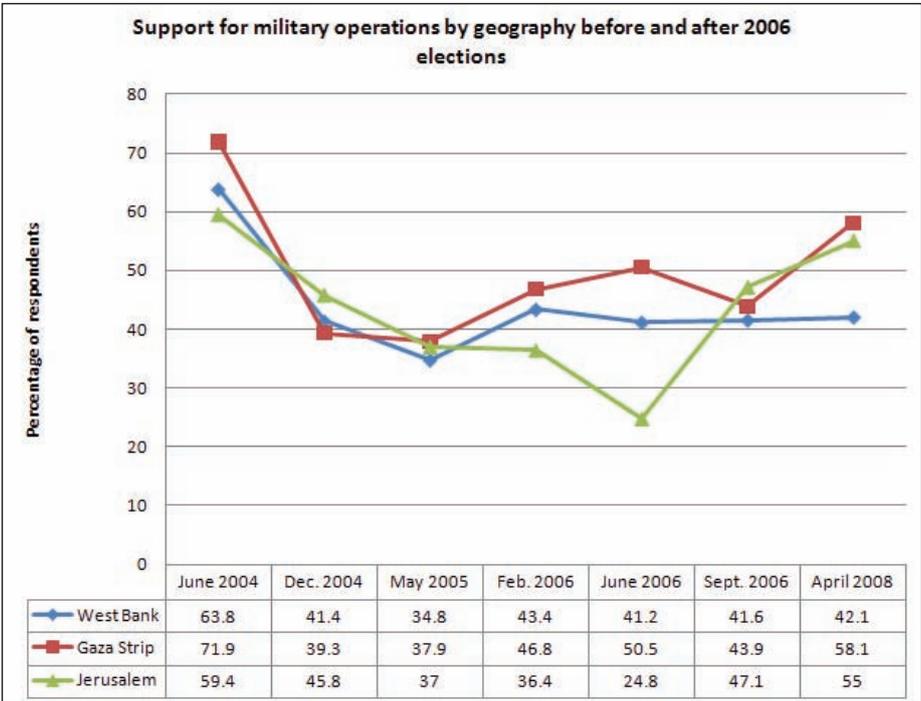
In examining the factors that have influenced increased support for military operations, we have already noted that the period of relative calm that preceded the January 2006 parliamentary elections was accompanied by a decline in support for armed resistance. Looking at the chart of casualties (p. 14), both Israeli (34) and Palestinian (184) fatalities declined in 2005 to their lowest point since 1999, before the Second Intifada. More in-depth study is needed to determine how the main factors—public sentiment, Israel’s decision to slow military operations, or the agreement of Palestinian factional leaders to enforce calm—interacted.

Poll results show that public support for military operations declined in late 2004, before the leaderships’ decision to create calm in preparation for the elections as embodied in the Cairo document of 2005. Between June and December 2004, public support for military operations declined from a majority of 67.1% to a minority of 41.1%. Closer examination shows that this shift occurred across political factions.



During this period, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, the face of the Palestinian cause since its rise to the world stage, died on November 11, 2004. He passed away in a French hospital after a long Israeli siege of his compound in Ramallah. Palestinian elections had already been planned, and Egypt was involved in implementing a ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinians. However, it may well be that the general reconfiguration of Palestinian politics (within Fateh, which Arafat lead, and between Fateh and Hamas) after Arafat’s death depressed Palestinian support for military operations.

The change was uniform across geographical areas. And, as we can see in the graphs on pages 22-24, it was also uniform among factions within each geographical area, although those who trusted Hamas in the Gaza Strip were slightly more approving of military operations in December 2004 than those who trusted other factions.



After the elections, another shift took place, albeit more gradually. In February 2006, those who trust Hamas were once again increasingly supportive of armed operations (61.6%). By June of that year, their ranks had gone up again to 66.8%. Because the trajectory of support for military operations continues, spiking in April 2008 at 86.9%, just before the Gaza war, one can conclude that Hamas' supporters were frustrated by the response to their elections success. There appears to be some evidence here that isolating Hamas increased its supporters' backing for armed resistance.

Further, the second graph above shows that growing support for military operations was most pronounced in Gaza, where between February and June 2006 support for armed resistance rose from 46.8% to 50.5%. During this same period, attitudes stayed nearly the same in the West Bank and support dropped in Jerusalem.

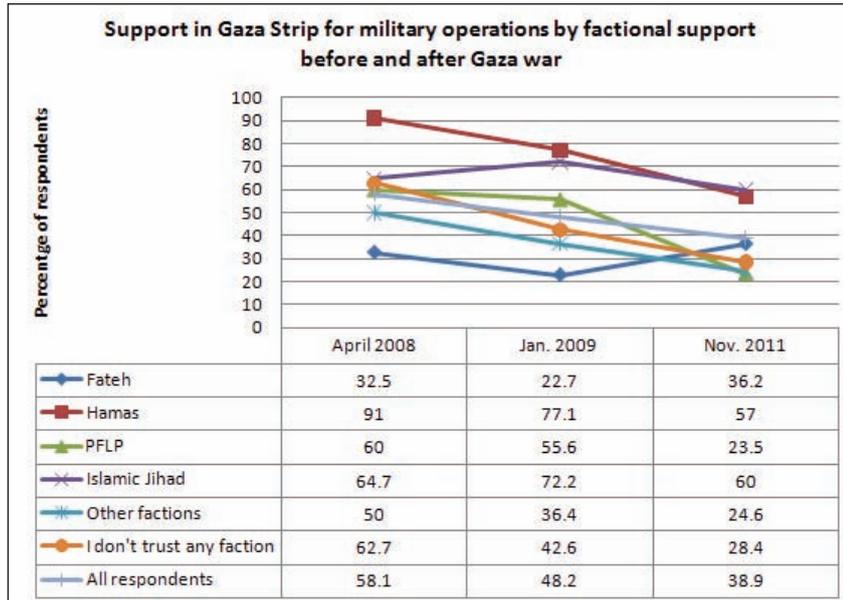


## X. WARNING SIGNS?: SUPPORT FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS AND ISRAEL'S OPERATION CAST LEAD

As described above, the aftermath of the 2006 Palestinian elections included a rise in support for military operations that appears to have set the stage for the 2008-09 operation in Gaza. While Operation Cast Lead was an Israeli initiative, it was preceded by armed activity on the part of groups in Gaza, including the planned kidnapping of soldier Gilad Shalit and the firing of rockets into Israel. The public, particularly in Gaza, appears to have backed that activity.

One asks then: is a rise in public support for military operations a harbinger for violence? Between April 1997 and March 1999, general support for military operations remained low (39.8% and 35.7%) even as Hamas and other rejectionist factions carried out numerous attacks on Israelis. Unfortunately, data is not available that would allow us to examine the factional affiliations and regional location of those Palestinians who supported military operations on Israelis at that time.

However, that data is available in polls taken prior to and after the 2008-09 Gaza war. As noted previously in this report, support for military operations among all Palestinian respondents declined following the war and continues to drop today. Among those who trust Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip (see below), there is a similar decline, but support for military operations remains relatively high: 57% and 60%, respectively. Because Hamas governs the Gaza Strip, and Islamic Jihad is active in firing rockets at Israel (it has clashed with Hamas over truces or "tahdiyas" with Israel), one could say there remains considerable support for armed resistance and a likelihood of violence.



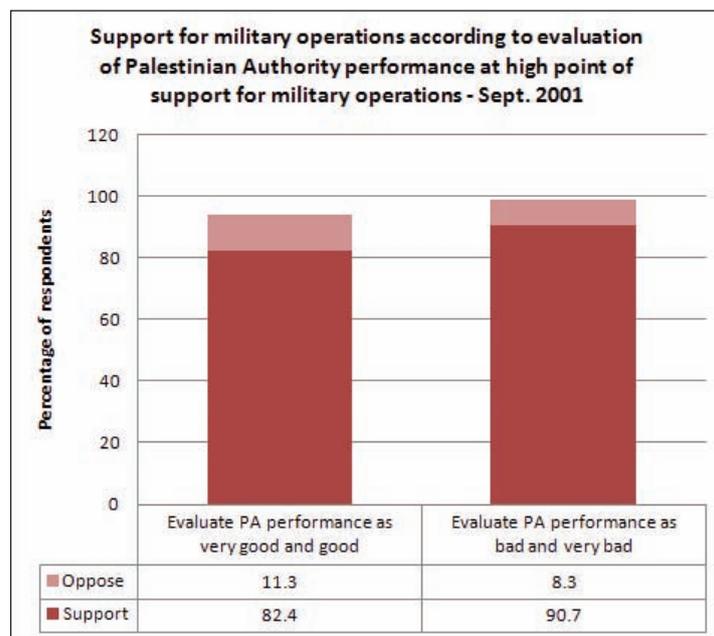
In fact in the last decade, support for military operations among those who trust Hamas has rarely dipped slightly below 60%. One can conclude, therefore, that attitudes among Hamas supporters have not changed deeply, despite its transformation from a small opposition party to the governing faction it is today. Rather, Hamas supporters' attitudes about military operations have shifted somewhat with tactical needs and in response to regional conditions.

## XI. SUPPORT FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

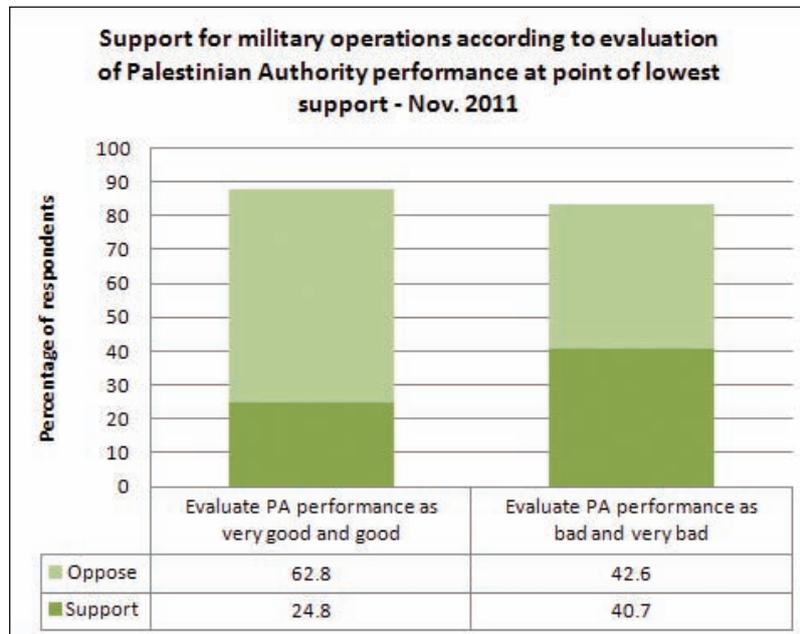
It stands to reason that, if Hamas supporters and other rejectionist factions are more likely to support military operations on Israel, there would also be higher support for military operations among those who are critical of the Palestinian Authority. Indeed, experts have argued that the uprising of the Second Intifada was just as much a rejection of the Palestinian Authority as it was of Israel's occupation.

However, examination of the attitudes of those who evaluate Palestinian Authority performance as "very good" and "good", as compared with those who evaluate the Palestinian Authority performance as "bad" and "very bad", shows that the differences in their support for military operations do exist—but are not extensive.

In September 2001, when support for military operations was at its highest, the difference in support between those who evaluated Palestinian Authority performance positively and negatively was only 8.3 percentage points.



Most recently, in November 2011, at the lowest point of support for military operations, the divergence was more pronounced. Those who evaluated Palestinian Authority performance positively were less supportive (24.8%) of military operations, while respondents who evaluated Palestinian Authority performance negatively were more supportive at 40.7%. Still, this is only a difference of 15.9 percentage points.



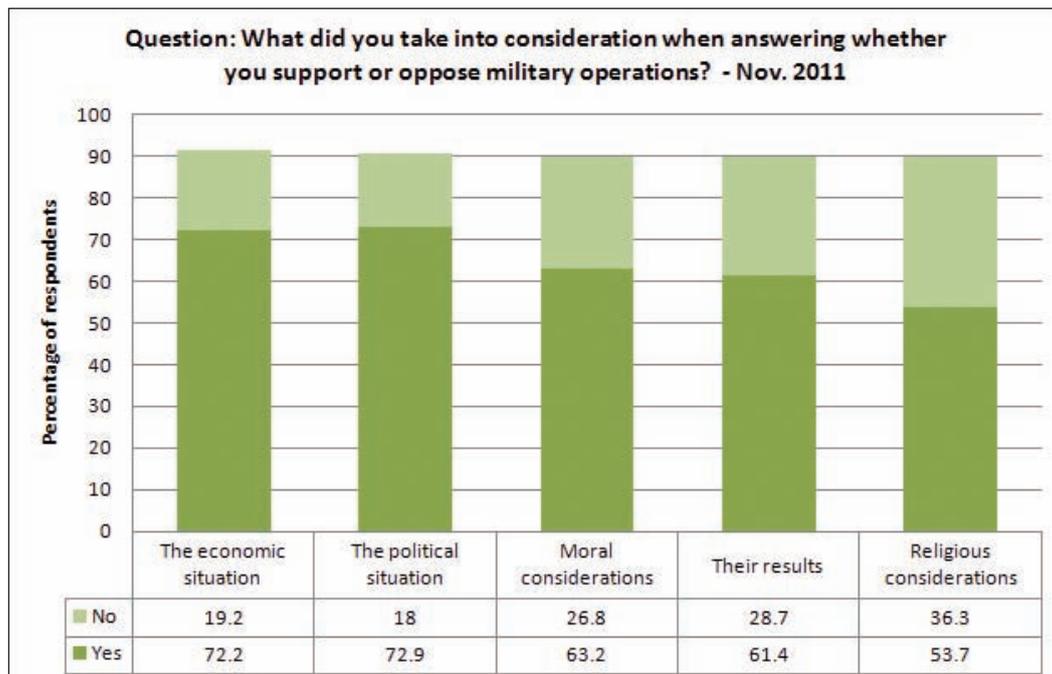
It appears that the correlation between support for armed operations and a negative evaluation of the Palestinian Authority is weak. This issue warrants more study.

## XII. CONSIDERATIONS IN SUPPORTING MILITARY OPERATIONS

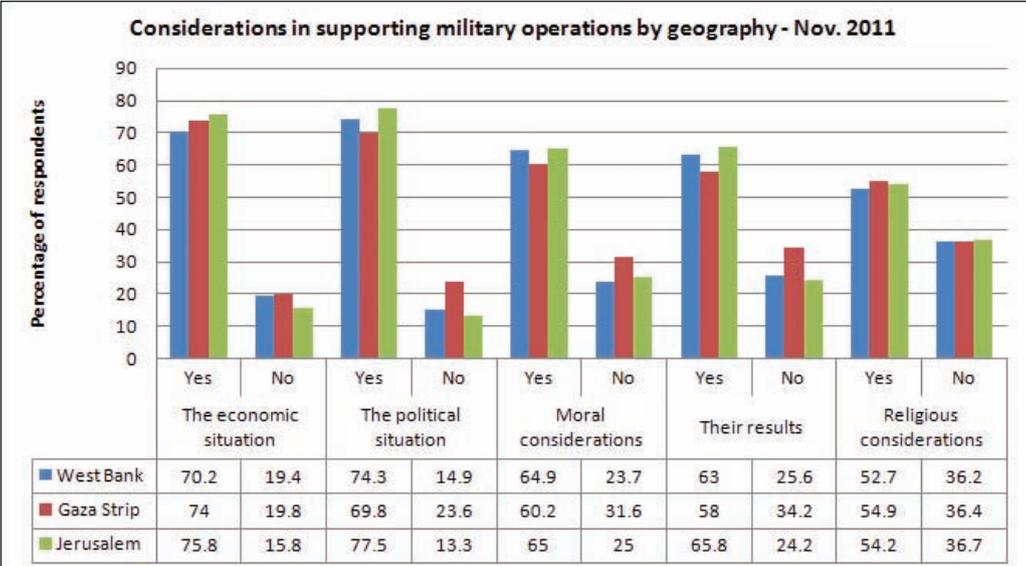
In November 2011, the JMCC sought to determine the motivations behind public support for military operations. Respondents were asked the follow-up question: “What did you take into consideration when answering if you support or oppose military operations?” They were then given several choices (“The economic situation”, “The political situation”, “Moral considerations”, “Their results”, and “Religious considerations”) and asked to respond “yes” or “no” to each one.

As noted, support for military operations at this time was at its lowest point since 1997, which may have impacted how respondents thought about this question. As seen in the findings throughout this study, differences between various groups of respondents are always more pronounced when support for military operations are low. As shown below, the differences in responses were not very pronounced, however.

Most crucial in respondents’ considerations, they said, were economic considerations (72.2%) and the political situation (72.9%).



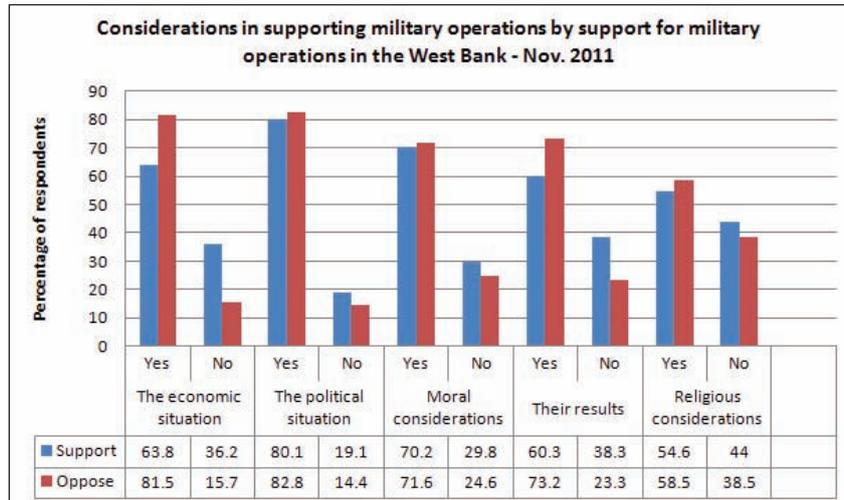
When analyzed by geography, the responses showed that economic considerations (75.8%), the political situation (77.5%), and the results of military operations (65.8%) concerned Jerusalem residents more than those in other regions. Jerusalemites' close proximity to Israelis and the Israeli economy means that they are easily affected when there are attacks on Israelis and may explain these answers.



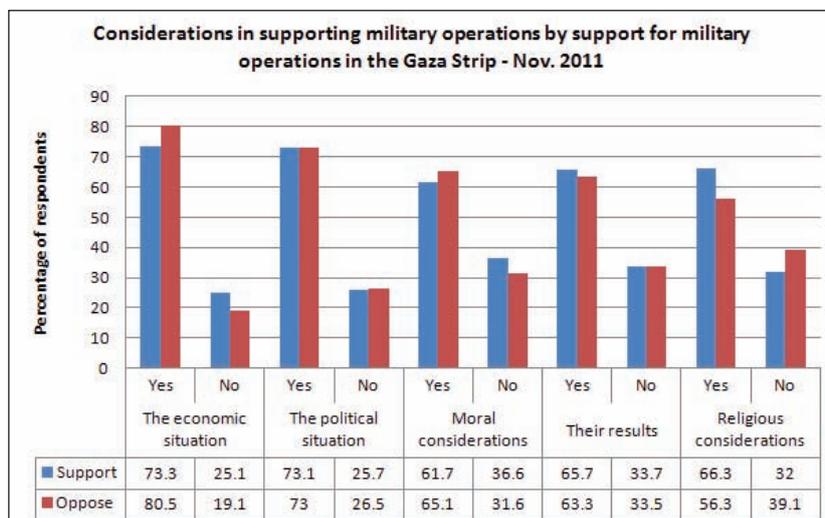
Gaza residents, of residents in all regions, were least concerned about the political situation (69.8%), moral considerations (60.2%) and the results of military operations (58%). West Bank residents, of those in all regions, were most concerned about moral considerations (64.9%) and least concerned about the economic situation (70.2%) when considering their support or opposition to military operations.

When respondents' considerations were cross-referenced with their support or opposition for military operations, in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, those who took the economy into account were most likely to oppose military operations. Those who took the political situation into account were nearly evenly divided in their opposition or support for military operations in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Remarkably, however, those in the West Bank who took into consideration the results of military operations mostly opposed the operations (73.2% opposed, 60.3% supportive).

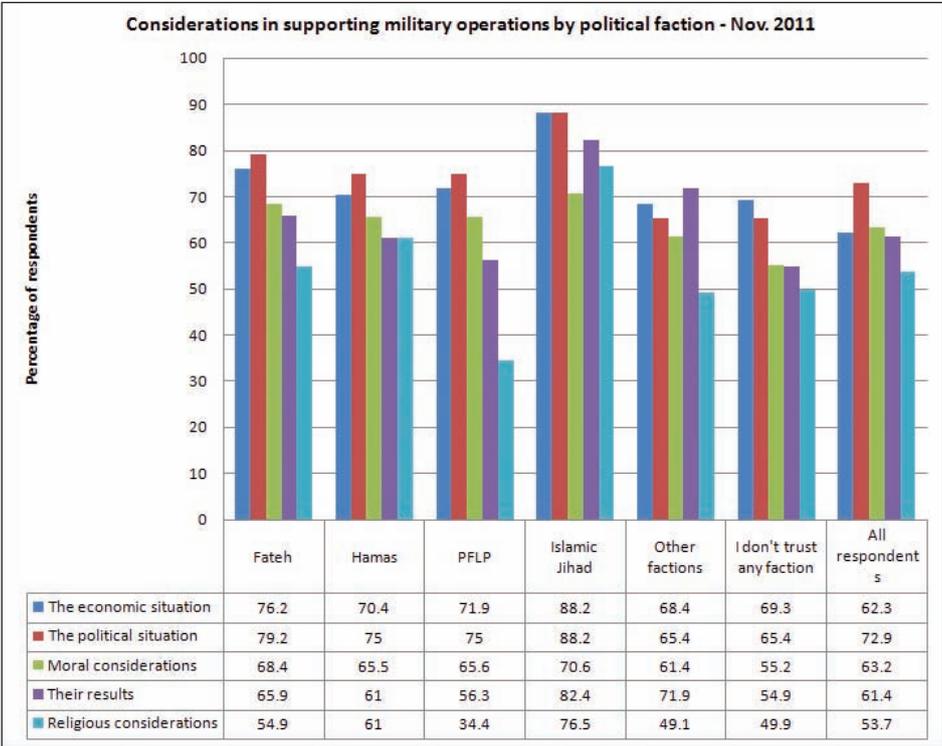


In contrast, Gaza residents that considered the military operations' results were slightly more supportive of military operations (65.7% compared to 63.3% opposed), although the difference was within the margin of error. A similar difference existed between the West Bank and Gaza Strip among those who took into account religious considerations: Gaza residents who considered this factor were markedly more supportive of military operations than West Bank residents (66.3% as compared with 56.3%).



The views of Jerusalem residents were not broken down in this way because of the small sample size.

Finally, considerations in supporting military operations were analyzed by trust for political faction. Most notable here is that respondents supporting nearly every faction thought that political considerations were most important in deciding whether to support or oppose military operations. Only supporters of the smaller factions like the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Palestinian People’s Party and others considered the results of military operations the most important consideration. Respondents who said they trust no faction said the most important consideration was the economic situation.





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