

Palestinian Opinion Poll: Majority Supports Terrorist Attacks

An overwhelming majority of Palestinians support a recent spate of attacks on Israelis amid heightened tensions in Jerusalem, according to an opinion poll released Tuesday.

The poll also found that more than half of Palestinians support a new uprising against Israel, and that the Hamas terrorist group would win presidential elections if they were held today.

Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki said the results reflected Palestinian anger over statements by Israeli politicians about the Temple Mount, as well as a loss of hope following the collapse of peace talks last spring and the fighting in the Gaza Strip during the summer.

The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research interviewed 1,270 people in the West Bank and Gaza last week. The poll had an error margin of 3 percentage points.

"There is an environment in which violence is becoming a dominant issue," said Shikaki. "This seems to be one of the most important driving forces."

There has been a spate of attacks in Jerusalem over the past month and a half, at a time of rising tensions over the Temple Mount, which Muslims refer to as the Noble Sanctuary.

A number of Israeli politicians became more vocal in recent months about demands that Jews be allowed to pray at the Muslim-run site, which is home to Al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock. Many Palestinians fear this is a pretext for a gradual Jewish takeover—a claim Israel denies.

The poll found 86 percent of respondents believe the shrine is in grave danger from Israel. It said 80 percent supported individual attacks by Palestinians who have stabbed Israelis or rammed cars into crowds at light rail stations.

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