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Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
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The Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation

Main Findings of Public Opinion Survey on the Arab Vote to the 20th Knesset

This report summarizes the main findings of a public opinion survey on voting intentions of Israel's Arab citizens in the 20th Knesset elections. The survey was conducted on a representative sample of the adult Arab population in Israel (N = 509, max. sampling error 4.5%). The survey was conducted from the offices of Yafa Institute between February 14 and 17, 2015.

1. Aim of the survey

The main aim of this survey is to provide answers to the following key questions:

- What is the expected participation rate in the 20th Knesset elections?
- What is the extent of support for the parties that are running in the 20th Knesset elections?
- What factors affect the decision to abstain from voting in the elections?
- Does voting in the elections offer any benefits, and does the establishment of the Joint Arab List have an impact on voting intentions?
- How does the Arab public rank the topics that should be the focus of the elected Arab MKs' work?
- What preferences does the public have regarding the Joint List's future after the elections: continuity or split?
- What do people expect the Supreme Follow-Up Committee to do in view of the establishment of the Joint List?
- What does the public think of the work of the Arab MKs in the 19th Knesset?
- The Arab public's affinity to existing parties.

2. __Methodology__

This report is based on quantitative data collected from a representative sample of the Arab population in Israel over age 18.

The sample comprised 509 respondents, significance level is 95% and sampling error is 4.5%.

The sampling unit is Arab households that own a working phone at the time the survey was conducted. One person — a person over age 18 who answered the telephone — was interviewed from each household. The interviews were conducted between February 14 and 17, 2015.

2.1 Sampling method

The following table lists the regions and localities selected for the sample:

	Geographic region	Arab localities
1	Nazareth	Nazareth, Kufr Kana, Tur'an
2	Valleys – Marj Ibn Amar	Iksal, Sulem and Kufr Meser
3	Shefar'am	Shefar'am and Tamra
4	Sakhnin Valley	Sakhnin and Arabeh
5	Beit Hakerem valley (Galilee)	Deir Al-Asad
6	Western Galilee	Beit Jan and Tuba
7	Upper Galilee	Kufr Yasif and Yarka
8	Mixed Jewish-Arab cities	Haifa and Lod-Ramle
9	Coast	Dalyat al-Karmel, Jisser al-Zarka
10	Northern Triangle	Umm al-Fahem, Baka al-Gharbiyyah, Jatt, Salem, Zalafeh
11	Southern Triangle	Taybe, Kufr Qassem
12	Negev	Rahat, Tel-Sheva, Hura, Aru'ar

2.2 The questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed in Arabic according to the aims of the survey, covering the following topics:

- Voting rate in the elections and intentions to vote for specific parties.
- Reasons for non-participation in the elections and the expected benefit of the elections.
- The impact of the establishment of the Joint Arab List on voting intentions, the topics that are important for its parliamentary work, continuity of action as a joint list versus a split after the elections, and the impact of the establishment of the List on the work of the Supreme Follow-Up Committee.
- Affinity to parties and an evaluation of the work of Arab MKs in the last Knesset.
- Demographic features and other topics.

2.3 Limitations of the sample

The above survey has several limitations that stem from the composition of the sample. The main limitations are:

- The survey only included households that own a landline or mobile telephone.
- The survey does not include the population in the unrecognized Bedouin settlements in the Negev.
- The sample population includes only individuals who were in the country at the time of the survey.
- The survey does not include Arab residents of Jewish localities.

3. Detailed findings

3.1 Socio-economic background

The Arab population was surveyed by geographic region, to create a representative sample of the Arab population in each surveyed region. Findings show that 50.9% of the respondents are male (49.1% female). 79% are Muslim, 13.4% are Christian, and 7.6% are Druze. In terms of religiosity, almost 64% of the respondents defined themselves as being conservative-traditional, 24% defined themselves as being religious, and 12% as being secular.

3.2 Voting intentions in the March 2015 elections and explanations for these intentions

To estimate the voting rate in the 2015 elections, respondents were asked about their intention to participate in the elections in 2015. According to findings, 74.9% noted that they planned to vote, 11.1% were undecided, and 14% stated that they would not vote in the upcoming elections. Based on the interviewers' experience in previous election campaigns, the fact that a portion of the population will be unable to vote because they will be out of the country or due to reasons that are not entirely in their control, and the fact that the survey represents the population in the country at the time — turnout among eligible voters is expected to be lower. Based on all this, voting in the upcoming elections based on the information that was valid on the dates of the survey is expected to be **64.7**%,[1] assuming that no events or circumstances occur that will change the current situation.

The establishment of the Joint Arab List affected the voting intentions expressed by the respondents. 44.8% of the respondents stated that the establishment of the Joint List had a strong impact on their intention to vote, while more than one third (36.8%) noted that the Joint List had no effect on them and that they had intended to vote in any case. 15.7% noted that they their position had not been affected by the establishment of the Joint List, and that their original intention was not to vote in any case.

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[1] Weighted according to the survey results.

Dividing the group of eligible voters in 2015 by social and demographic variables shows a significant difference between men and women in voting behavior: voting intentions are stronger among males, and undecided voters account for a greater proportion of females.

Dividing the group by years of education reveals no significant differences among the different education groups, but significant differences in voting intentions are observed by age, where voting intention increases with age. Furthermore, there is a significant difference in voting intentions by religion, where Muslims and Christians have a higher percentage of intended voters than Druze.

On the other hand, the undecided respondents explain their position as follows: 44.8% stated that they don't care of about the elections, 16.1% stated that the general situation of Arabs in Israel does not encourage them to vote, 9.9% stated that they won't vote because the Arabs are unable to influence decision making, and 21.8% stated that they are boycotting the elections for ideological reasons (7.4% stated other reasons).

Findings indicate that close to 30.6% of the respondents doubt that there is any benefit in their voting. This group is divided into two sub-groups: The first (17%) stated that there *may* be no benefit to the Arab population if they vote, while the second group (12.2% of the total sample) was more unequivocal and stated that there is no benefit in the Arab population voting in the elections. 61.3% of the respondents stated that there was certainly a benefit in the Arab population voting in the elections, and 18.7% agreed but expressed reservations about such benefits.

Finally, we can summarize and state that 67% of the respondents voted in 2013.

3.3 Support for political parties

Findings of the survey are consistent with expectations. The Joint List has the most support. 69.1% of the respondents who intend to vote support the Joint List. If the reasons stated by the undecided group are also weighted into this, support of the Joint List increases to 80.7%. On the other hand, 6% of the intended voters support the Arab List headed by former MK Talab el-Sana, and 0.3% of the intended voters support the third Arab list, "Hope for Change." 9.8% of the intended voters support non-Arab lists, and after weighting the results, this figure increases to 13% who support non-Arab lists, headed by Meretz. However, 15.4% of the intended voters are undecided about the party they support.

The differences among the education groups approach statistical significance and a clear trend shows increasing support for the Joint List as education increases. The largest group of undecided voters is in the 0-8 years of education group. Strongest support for Zionist parties is also in this group of 0-8 years of education, and weakest support for Zionist parties is in the group of 13-15 years of education (most of these respondents are currently in school).

Differences among the age groups are not statistically significant, but differences among religious groups are significant: More Muslims support the Joint List and fewer support Zionist parties, and the opposite is the case among the Druze population: The majority of the Druze support Zionist parties. Among the Christians, the majority support the Joint List.

3.4 Day after the elections

Most of the Arab public wishes to see the Joint List continue operating as such after the elections. 86.3% of the respondents believe that the Joint List should continue to operate as a single, united faction in the Knesset. This percentage increases to 90.4% among the respondents who intend to vote. 4.1% of the respondents believe that the Joint List should split back into their origins factions after the elections yet continue to act in a coordinated manner, with intended voters expressing a similar position. 3.6% of the respondents believe that the Joint List should split up after the elections with each faction operating independently. This percentage drops to 2.1% among the intended voters.

Respondents ranked the areas in which the Arab MKs should focus after the elections. 44.3% of the respondents state that the most important issue is the internal concerns of Arab society such as employment, education, healthcare, violence, and women's status; The second most important issue (indicated by 28.1% of the respondents) is government policy on the Arab population; The third most important issue (19% of the respondents) is negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. Cultural ties between the Arab public in Israel and the Arab and Muslim world are next in ranking, and in final place, the relations between Arab and Jewish citizens in Israel.

The meaning of this ranking is that the issues connected to everyday life, or civic issues, are the most important issues that respondents prefer Arab MKs to address, and only after that, the Palestinian problem as a national issue. Other topics are ranked lower. These findings indicate that the Arab public views the other topics as supplementary, not as topics that replace the highest ranking issues.

On the other hand, and in view of the establishment of the Joint List, 61.3% of the Arab public believe that the Knesset will become an effective arena of action for them, in contrast to 12.2% who disagree.

84% of the respondents believe that following the establishment of the Joint List, the Supreme Follow-Up Committee should take more effective steps to represent the Arab public, in addition to parliamentary work.

3.5 Evaluation of the achievements of the outgoing MKs and political affiliation with the parties

Respondents were asked about the achievements of the Arab MKs in the 19th Knesset. Responses indicate that 27.7% think very highly of their achievements, 45.3% think rather highly of their achievements, 11.5% do not think so highly of their achievements and 11% do not think highly of their achievements at all. Respondents were also asked about their affinity to the parties. They are mainly affiliated with Arab parties, headed by the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Hadash) with 23%, followed by the United Arab List (Ra'am-Ta'al-Mada), and with the National Democratic Alliance (Balad) in third place with 16.6%. Among the non-Arab parties, respondents feel closest to the Labor party (4.7%).

4. Appendix: Detailed results

4.1 Do you intend to vote in the upcoming Knesset elections (2015)?

Response	Entire survey population (%)	Entire population after weighting (%)
Yes	74.9	
Expected voting rate		64.7
Have not decided yet	11.1	
No	14.0	
Total	100.0	
N=509		

4.2 Which list do you intend to vote for in the elections?

	Distribution (%)	Distribution after weighting the undecided group (%)
Joint List headed by Aiman Ouda	69.1	80.7
Arab List headed by Talab el-Sana	5.5	6
Hope for Change, headed by Atef el-Krennawi	0.3	0.3
Jewish parties		13
Zionist Camp (Labor), headed by Issac Hertzog and Tzippi Livni	1.6	
Likud, headed by Benyamin Netanyahu	2.2	
Meretz, headed by Zahava Galon	2.9	
Yesh Atid, headed by Yair Lapid	0.3	
Sash headed by Aryeh Deri	-	
Kulanu ("All of Us"), headed by Moshe Kahalon	0.3	
Habayit Hayehudi ("Jewish Home") headed by Naftali Bennet		
Yisrael Beytenu headed by Avigdor Lieberman	1.1	
Yahad ("Together") headed by Eli Yishay	0.3	
Other	1.1	
Undecided	15.4	
Total	100	100
N=381		

4.3 What is the main reason that you have not yet decided if you are going to vote in the 2015 elections? (among the undecided)

	Among those who have not yet decided whom they will vote for (%)	Among those who have not yet decided whether they will vote (%)
I am still not sure which of the Arab parties I will vote for	60.2	37.6
I am still not sure which of the non-Arab parties I will vote for	8.3	–
I am still not sure whether I will vote for an Arab party or a non-Arab party	10.9	8.9
I am considering abstaining as an ideological statement	–	11.9
I haven't made my mind up yet	19.6	34.9
Other	1.0	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0

4.4 Why don't you want to vote? (among the group that stated that it plans not to vote)

Reason	%
The general situation of the Arabs in this country does not encourage me to vote	16.1
Because the Arabs are unable to affect the decisions	9.9
I don't care about the elections	44.8
I am boycotting the elections for ideological reasons	21.8
Other	7.4
Total	100.0
N=71	

4.5 In general, do you think that there is a benefit to the Arab public voting in the Knesset elections?

	%
Yes, certainly	61.3
Yes, with reservations	18.1
Possibly no	17.7
No	12.2
N/A	0.7
Total	100.0
N= 509	

4.6 Rank the areas (from most important to least important) that you think the Arab MKs should focus on after the elections. Assign the number 1 to the most important issue, and so forth. Read the entire list of issue before you begin ranking.

Issue	Most important >> Least important (%)					Total	N
Negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians	19.0	29.2	27.9	12.2	11.6	100.0	508
Cultural and religious ties between the Arab public and the Arab and Muslim world	6.9	8.2	19.3	44.3	21.3	100.0	508
Relations between Jewish and Arab citizens in Israel	1.6	5.3	11.9	27.5	53.7	100.0	508
Government and government institution policy on the Arab population	28.1	34.7	23.4	8.6	5.1	100.0	508
Internal problems of Arab society: women's status, employment, education, violence, healthcare	44.3	22.1	17.6	7.4	8.6	100.0	508

4.7 Do you think the members of the Joint List should continue to operate as a single faction in the Knesset after the elections, or should they split back into their original factions?

	Total (%)	Respondents who intend to vote (%)
Should continue to work in the Knesset as a single faction after the elections	**86.2**	**90.4**
Should split back into their original factions, but operate in a coordinated manner	**4.1**	**4.2**
Should split back into their original factors, and act independently from then on	**3.6**	**2.1**
Do not know/ Have no answer	**6.1**	**3.3**
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**

N=509