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Poll No. 211

74% of Palestinians view Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia negatively

Beit Sahour – The Palestinian Center for Public Opinion (PCPO):

The visit of U.S. President Donald Trump to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia following his re-election is considered a significant political event that attracted wide popular and media attention, especially in light of the escalating tensions and ongoing conflicts in the region, foremost among them the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip.



Dr Nabil Kukali

In this context, Dr. Nabil Kukali, President of the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion, conducted a public opinion poll during the third week of May 2025, covering a random sample of 402 Palestinian citizens from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The results of the poll showed that the majority of Palestinians view this visit of Trump to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia negatively, with 74.0% of respondents believing that the visit does not serve the interest of the Palestinian cause.

This poll presents an analysis of Palestinian public opinion regarding this visit, based on comprehensive field data. The results reveal varied positions, predominantly characterized by pessimism and criticism, particularly regarding the goals, motivations, and potential outcomes of the visit. The results were as follows:

Overall Evaluation of the Visit

The poll results showed that an overwhelming majority of participants (70.6%) evaluated U.S. President Donald Trump's visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia—his first visit to the Arab world after being re-elected—as negative. In comparison, 17.9% viewed it as somewhat positive, and only 5.0% described it as very positive. Those who had no opinion or were not following the news constituted 6.5%. These results indicate a broadly critical and skeptical public stance among Palestinians regarding the true objectives and motives of the visit, as well as its potential impact.

Importance of the Visit at the Current Time

In response to the question, “How important is the visit at the current time?”, nearly half of the participants (50.2%) indicated that the visit was merely ceremonial and would not lead to any tangible impact. Meanwhile, 18.7% believed it aimed at lifting sanctions on Syria, and 15.7% considered it a possible opportunity to end the war in Gaza. In contrast, only 8.0% described it as “very important,” and 7.5% answered “I don’t know.” This suggests that the Palestinian public does not place high hopes on the visit as a meaningful turning point in key regional issues, especially the Palestinian cause.

Primary Purpose of the Visit from the Public’s Perspective

A majority of 58.2% of respondents believed that the primary purpose of the visit was to sign major economic deals, while 17.2% thought it aimed at advancing normalization steps with Israel. This result reflects a clear public perception that U.S. interests in the region are primarily economic rather than political or humanitarian. Additionally, 11.2% pointed to strengthening political relations and alliances. Those who viewed the visit as support for Saudi Arabia's regional role or expressed disinterest each accounted for 6.7%. These results suggest a widespread belief among Palestinians that economic interests

are the primary driver behind the visit, accompanied by a keen awareness of the political and regional implications it carries.

Impact of the Visit on Saudi Arabia's Global Image

More than half of the participants (51.5%) believed the visit could portray Saudi Arabia as a subordinate state to the United States. In comparison, only 19.7% thought it would enhance the Kingdom's status as a leading power. Meanwhile, 22.6% saw no real impact, and 6.2% declined to answer. These findings indicate public concern over the potential erosion of Saudi Arabia's political independence in the eyes of regional populations, and that such visits may weaken perceptions of Saudi decision-making autonomy.

Impact of the Visit on the Palestinian Cause

A total of 43.5% of respondents stated that the visit would have no impact on the Palestinian cause, while 31.3% believed it would have a negative effect. Only 21.1% thought it would have a positive impact, and 4.1% declined to answer. These figures reflect a prevailing lack of public confidence in the effectiveness of current diplomatic efforts in securing real gains for the Palestinians.

Expected Saudi Role Toward Gaza

A total of 58.5% of participants stated that they do not expect Saudi Arabia to play any active role during the visit. In comparison, 21.6% believed it might pressure the United States to end the aggression and lift the blockade on Gaza. Meanwhile, 15.9% expected humanitarian aid and the opening of border crossings, and only 4.0% anticipated a firm stance against normalization. These results further confirm widespread public pessimism regarding the effectiveness of Saudi diplomacy in the Palestinian file.

Trust in Saudi Arabia to Demand Trump Stop the War

About 41.0% of respondents expressed a complete lack of trust that Saudi Arabia would call on President Trump to stop the war in Gaza. Another 20.9% had low trust, 25.6% had moderate trust, and only 12.4% expressed very high trust. These findings highlight a significant gap between Saudi leadership and regional public expectations concerning the Kingdom's role in halting the aggression on Gaza.

Palestinian Expectations Regarding U.S. Response to Saudi Demands to End the Aggression on Gaza

The poll results regarding the likelihood of a U.S. response to a Saudi demand to end the aggression on Gaza revealed a divided Palestinian public opinion. A total of 39.6% believed that the U.S. "might" respond to such a request, while 36.3% were skeptical and stated that the U.S. "would not respond at all." On the other hand, 19.4% of respondents were optimistic and answered "yes, definitely." Those who answered "don't know" made up 4.7%.

These findings reflect a state of caution and doubt in the Palestinian street regarding the influence Saudi Arabia may have on U.S. decision-making, with a clear tendency toward distrust in Washington's willingness to take firm action in response to any Arab pressure, even if it comes from a strategic ally like Saudi Arabia.

Public Messages to the Saudi Leadership

A majority of 62.9% of the Palestinian public called on King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to deliver a clear message to President Trump, demanding an immediate halt to the aggression on Gaza. Another 21.1% called for humanitarian aid and the opening of crossings into Gaza, while 5.7% urged the rejection of any normalization steps with Israel. About 10.2% chose not to answer. The

overwhelming demand for a firm Saudi position sends a clear message reflecting a strong public desire for bold action that goes beyond soft diplomacy.

The Primary Motive Behind the Visit

57.5% of respondents believe that promoting economic investments is the primary motive behind the visit, which aligns with the prevailing view of the American administration's priorities in the region, seen as primarily focused on economic interests. In contrast, 20.1% believe the goal is to support Israel, while 7.5% consider the purpose of the visit to be finding a solution to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. 11.2% answered “none of the above,” and 3.7% said they do not know. These figures indicate that the majority do not perceive the visit as having a just or humanitarian political dimension, but rather view it within the context of deals and economic interests, with strong concerns about U.S. support for Israel.

Concerns about Trump’s Policies

A total of 49.8% of respondents expressed varying degrees of concern about President Trump’s policies after his re–election, while 43.0% said they were not concerned. Another 7.2% responded with “I don’t know.” This variation reveals that Trump remains a divisive figure in the eyes of the Arab public.

Normalization and Its Link to the Palestinian Cause

The poll showed that 39.1% of participants believe normalization with Israel should be linked to achieving a just solution to the Palestinian cause. In contrast, 50.5% rejected this linkage or considered normalization to be an option independent of the political solution. Meanwhile, 10.4% declined to answer this question.

These findings reflect a clear public divide over the most appropriate strategy for dealing with Israel, between those who insist that any normalization must be tied to Palestinian rights and those who adopt a more pragmatic or realistic approach that separates political and diplomatic tracks. This data suggests that the Palestinian public continues to view normalization as a symbolic and nationally sensitive issue, closely tied to the pursuit of justice and the right to self-determination.

Dr. Nabil Kukali's Comment on the Poll Results

Dr. Nabil Kukali, President of the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion, stated that the results of the latest poll conducted regarding U.S. President Donald Trump's visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reflect a state of frustration and distrust prevailing among the Palestinian public toward any regional or international initiatives that do not rely on clear references guaranteeing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people—chief among them, ending the occupation and establishing an independent Palestinian state.

He emphasized that the findings serve as a crucial indicator for decision-makers at both the Arab and international levels, as they reveal the general public mood of Palestinians and their core demands—most notably, a genuine commitment to the Palestinian cause, rather than rhetorical slogans or short-term interests.

Dr. Kukali pointed out that most Palestinians view Trump's visit with suspicion and skepticism, particularly concerning its potential implications for the Palestinian issue. He explained that the results showed a decline in trust in the Saudi role in this context, amid a growing conviction that priorities in the region have shifted toward economic interests and normalization, rather than political action or support for rights.

He added that there is a prevailing sentiment among Palestinians that the visit falls within the framework of strengthening economic alliances and advancing normalization, without offering any genuine support for causes, especially the Palestinian cause. Kukali noted

that this perception reflects an accumulated sense of disappointment regarding Riyadh's positions, as well as doubt in Washington's ability to take meaningful steps to stop the Israeli aggression or improve conditions in the Gaza Strip.

Dr. Kukali concluded his statement by emphasizing that the poll results convey a clear and direct message to policymakers: the Palestinian public feels marginalized and distrustful, and it demands concrete actions based on justice and international legitimacy, rather than economic interests or regional understandings that overlook the essence of the conflict.

Sampling and Data Collection Methodology

Dr. Elias Kukali, Head of the Research Department at the Center, stated that the study sample was selected using the Random Digit Dialing (RDD) method, which allows for the creation of a representative probability sample from mobile phone numbers distributed among members of the target population. This method helps include unlisted or newly issued numbers within the sampling frame, thereby reducing coverage bias and enhancing the comprehensiveness of the study.

The data collection process was carried out using the Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. This system enables interviewers to follow a standardized digital questionnaire and enter responses directly into the system, ensuring consistency and accuracy in data collection.

The gender distribution of the sample showed an acceptable balance, with males comprising 54.2% of participants (218 respondents), while females accounted for 45.8% (184 respondents). This distribution offers a balanced representation, enabling an objective analysis of opinions from a gender perspective.

Dr. Elias Kukali added that there was a notable diversity in the age range of participants, which enhances the inclusiveness of the findings. Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 75 years, with a significant concentration in the 20–45 age group. This distribution reflects a diversity of perspectives across different life stages.

He also explained that the sample was geographically distributed between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with 61.1% of participants (245 respondents) from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and 38.9% (157 respondents) from the Gaza Strip. This regional distribution enables accurate comparisons between general trends in both areas.

Kukali pointed out that this survey included a representative random sample of 402 citizens from the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip, all aged 18 and above. The margin of error in the results is $\pm 4.9\%$ at a 95.0% confidence level.

Summary and Conclusions

- A predominantly pessimistic tone characterizes public perceptions of Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia.
- There is a clear lack of trust in American and Saudi intentions regarding the Palestinian cause.
- The economic focus of the visit has become a firmly held public belief, overshadowing political and humanitarian concerns.
- The public is calling on Saudi Arabia to take clearer and bolder positions, particularly concerning the aggression on Gaza and normalization with Israel.

Recommendations

- Strengthen governmental communication with the Arab public to clarify official policies and stances on the Palestinian issue.

- Adopt firm and public positions in support of Palestinians that enhance Saudi Arabia's image as an independent, leading power.
- Link any actual normalization steps to tangible achievements on the ground that benefit the Palestinian people, especially in Gaza.
- Work to rebuild public trust through concrete political and humanitarian initiatives, rather than merely offering diplomatic courtesies.

Contact Information

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