

# Palestinian Refugee and IDP Youth's Views on **Political Participation**



This survey of Palestinian youth's views of the avenues, effectiveness, objectives, contributing factors, and means of activating political participation demonstrates the youth's dissatisfaction with and non-confidence in the Palestinian political system and its operating mechanisms.

This is mostly illustrated by:

- Youth's reluctance to engage in political participation avenues due to:
  - Palestinian division
  - Absence of a national liberation strategy
  - The distribution of the Palestinian people in exile.
- Ineffectiveness of general elections in various regions.
- The decrease in youth participation in avenues that require common (collective) engagement.
- The decrease in youth engagement in official and semi-official avenues.

# About this Survey: Political Participation in the Palestinian Context

In this survey, 1,000 Palestinians between the age of 18-29 (half of them are women) from 1948 Palestine, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Lebanon, and Jordan participated in this poll on the subject of political participation. This survey was carried out in March 2022, and included discussions within focus groups in each of the different regions, with the addition to Syria.

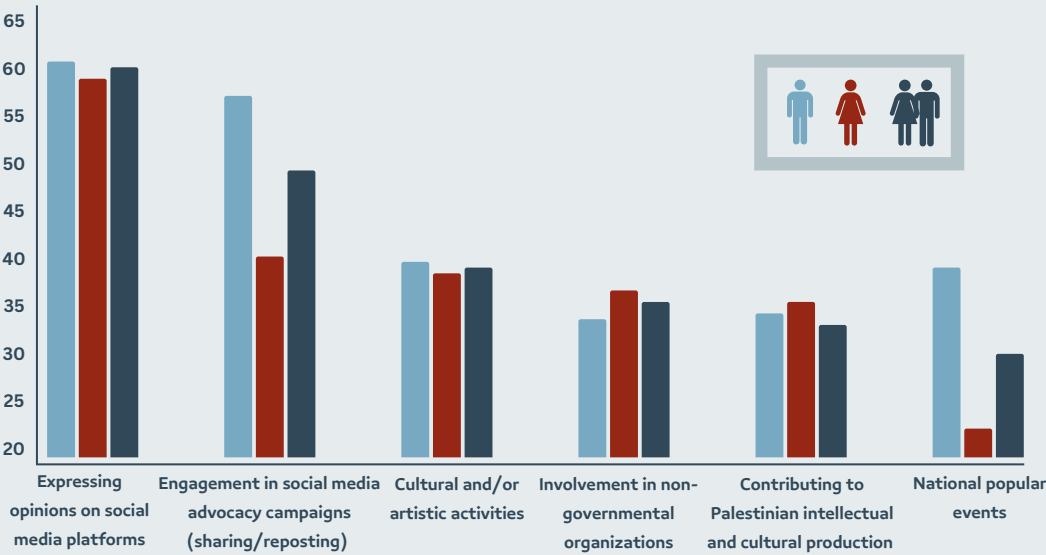
Previous research has shown that the participation of Palestinian youth in official and traditional political frameworks is almost non-existent. This opinion poll wishes to explore this phenomenon more deeply by answering the following questions:

- 1 What are the official, semi-official, and non-official mechanisms, avenues, and frameworks to practice political participation that are available to Palestinian youth?
- 2 Which mechanisms, avenues, and frameworks are most frequently used by Palestinian youth?
- 3 Which avenues do Palestinian youth believe are the most effective?
- 4 What are the youth's objectives for political participation?
- 5 How can effective and influential political participation of youth be achieved?



Palestinian Youth Forum, Aida Refugee Camp, 2022.

# Most Prominent Avenues of Youth Participation by Gender

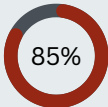


## Note that...

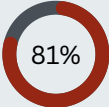
- There are high participation rates in informal and individual areas that do not require organizational or collective action.
- The decrease in women's participation in popular events can be attributed to the decrease in the public space available for women's participation due to general decline of popular participation, and possibly the increase in social restrictions of a religious nature.

## Reasons for the Lack of Youth's Political Participation

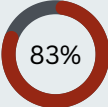
Lack of confidence in participating in the official Palestinian mechanisms



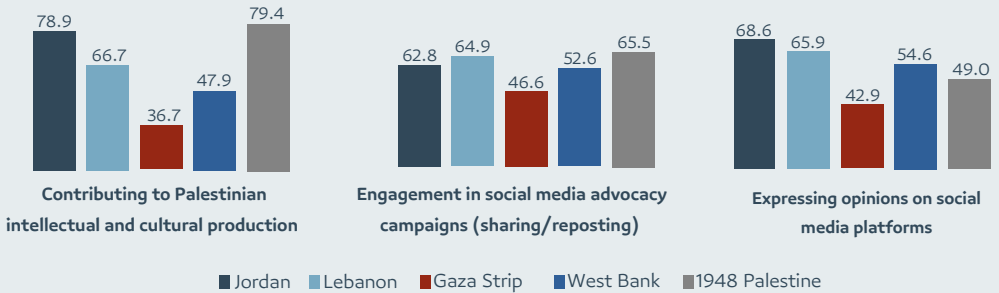
Lack of confidence in participating in the civil frameworks available in the place of residence to achieve national and socio-economic rights



Ineffectiveness of the official Palestinian Authority mechanisms and bodies



## Avenues Perceived to be the Most Effective by Region



# Gaza Strip:

Political participation  
is almost  
**ineffective!**

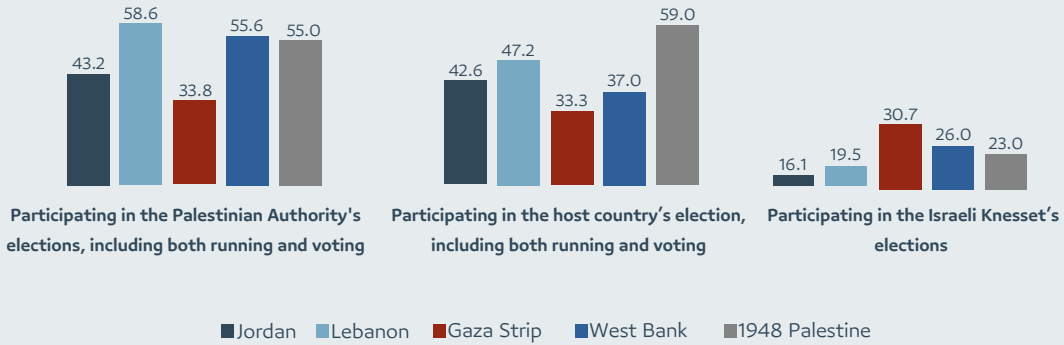


Return demonstrations, Gaza.  
Photo by: Yousef Munayer

Compared to other regions, Gaza Strip reflected the lowest assessment of effective Palestinian participation (virtually ineffective) in the various frameworks, avenues, and mechanisms, with the exception of participation in the Knesset's elections. When asked about the reason/s, the youth focus group from Gaza attributed this to:

“ The international community's failure to lift the unjust blockade and security restrictions on political or any public action that runs counter to the de facto government and traditional political parties [...] Under the current Palestinian division and harsh economic situation, youth are unable to either overcome or defy existing political parties. If they do, youth would be subject to charges that may amount to treason. ”

# Avenues Perceived to be the Least Effective by Region



Participation in the Knesset's elections **is the least effective** among other avenues!

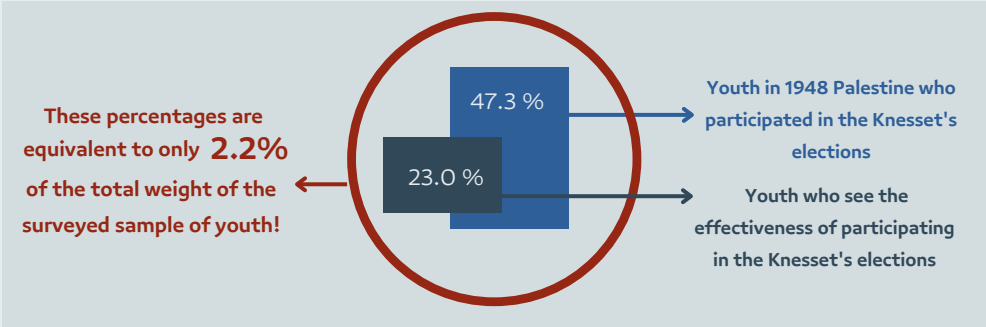
Participation in the Knesset's elections is the least effective and feasible among the various avenues across and within all surveyed regions (26.0%). This mechanism, scoring the least in the view of young 1948 Palestinians, is also considered the least effective among all the various avenues.

When they debated the survey results, the youth focus group from 1948 Palestine almost unanimously agreed that participation in the Knesset's elections was:

“A reaction to intimidation campaigns to reduce Israeli right wing parties' victory in the elections,” and/or “more of an expression of a social habit or a family tradition than an informed political practice,” or perhaps “an attempt to avoid exclusion as a consequence of non-participation.”



Shifa 'Amro, 2021. Source: Palestinian Refugees Portal





# How to Activate the Role of Youth?

In order to activate the role of Palestinian youth, the Palestinian leadership (PLO), political factions, and national civil society organizations, need to develop strategies to address the following:

- Palestinian youth's reluctance to participate in existing official and semi-official frameworks and bodies, or even political parties;
- The Palestinian division, including repression of freedoms and exclusion of youth under the pretext of dubious agendas;
- Youth's decreasing trust in the possibility of achieving the realization of national and/or socio-economic rights through international organizations;
- Youth's desire to dismantle of the quota scheme within Palestinian political system;
- Youth's strong desire to democratize the Palestinian political system and society;
- Women's declining participation in avenues for political participation that require visibility in the public sphere;
- The lack of a national strategy for liberation;
- The dwindling interest in Palestinian public affairs and the dominance of individualism both as a culture and as a behavior

## Youth's views on political participation

The youth focus groups that participated in this opinion poll concluded that the political participation in the Palestinian context could be defined as any individual or collective activity that aims to advance Palestinian human rights, whether undertaken in order to achieve national rights of self-determination and return, or other human rights, be they political, civil, social, economic or cultural, as to be freely enjoyed by Palestinians everywhere.

The results of the full and detailed opinion poll, as well as an analysis based on the views of focus groups of youth are available in Chapter 5 of the *Survey of Palestinian Refugees and*

*IDPs, 2019-2021*, 10th Edition, available at:

[www.badil.org](http://www.badil.org)

