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NATIONAL PRIORITIES, GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL REFORM IN JORDAN:

NATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION POLL #7

October 2009

Sample size:

**1,000 individuals, 18 years of age or older,
50 percent men and 50 percent women**

**Randomly selected from 100 locations
throughout the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**

Number of field researchers: 50

**The poll was conducted between August 8 and 11, 2009
The margin of error is ± 2.5 percent at 95 percent confidence level**

The fieldwork for this poll was conducted by:

MIDDLE EAST MARKETING AND RESEARCH CONSULTANTS

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FINDINGS

Introduction

The International Republican Institute (IRI) and survey partner Middle East Marketing and Research Consultants (MEMRC) have long examined Jordanians' attitudes on national priorities, political reform, electoral politics and local governance. IRI-MEMRC's in-depth survey research includes seven nationwide polls, six series of local-level polls covering 16 municipalities, and the first-ever exit polls conducted in Jordan during the July 2007 municipal elections and the November 2007 parliamentary elections. The first 10 polls were released in cooperation with the Jordan Center for Social Research.

Starting with the first survey conducted in July 2005, IRI-MEMRC polling in Jordan has sought to gauge the perceptions of Jordanians on their priorities and concerns, democratic processes, voter attitudes and electoral culture, political life and governance for the benefit of decision-makers, elected officials and the general public.

As these polls have appeared at regular intervals over the past four years, crucial benchmarks and trends have been established in order to highlight important shifts and milestones in public opinion which can help decision-makers formulate public policies.

In addition to identifying Jordanians' priority concerns and gauging their attitudes on governance and the political process, IRI-MEMRC's seventh national poll delves deeper into the findings of previous national polls to examine public perceptions of the parliamentary electoral system, the general economic situation and fairness in society.

Besides being relevant to decision-makers and the public at large, the information gathered in this poll will be helpful for Jordanian political parties and other nongovernmental actors in crafting platforms, messages and slogans.

Methodology

- Sample size is 1,000 individuals, 18 years of age or older, 50 percent men and 50 percent women.
- A stratified two stage cluster sample based on the 2004 Housing and Population Census for the selection of 100 clusters across the Kingdom. The Nyman allocation approach was used to distribute the sample of clusters among governorates.
- Ten households were drawn (with replacement allowing for non-contacts) from each cluster using a random start and a systematic procedure of selection to ensure representation of different parts of the cluster in sample and to reduce intra-class correlation.
- Researchers conducted one in-person interview per household, selected using the Kish method.
- Interviewers were provided with building maps identifying households selected for interview.
- The margin of error is ± 2.5 percent at 95 percent confidence level.
- Number of field researchers: 50.
- The poll was conducted August 8-11, 2009.

Summary of Findings

- More than half of Jordanians believe their country is going in the right direction while less than a third believes things are going in the wrong direction. This reflects a significant improvement in right direction responses over IRI's August 2008 poll when nearly one-half of respondents said the country was going in the wrong direction.
- As has been the case in every IRI national poll since 2005, Jordanians believe the issue of rising prices/rising cost of living is the most important problem facing the country followed distantly by unemployment. However, there has been a significant drop since IRI's last poll in the number of people saying price increases are their top concern. Water shortage has replaced poverty as the third most important issue on Jordanians' minds.
- Jordanians are more positive about the shape of the economy than they were last year. A majority of Jordanians describe the current economic situation as very good or somewhat good.
- However, Jordanians are evenly split as to whether the economy will improve over the next 12 months and almost half of Jordanians describe a downward trend in their personal economic fortunes during the past year.
- Moreover, Jordanians continue to express low satisfaction rates across an array of quality of life indicators such as standard of living, jobs, future financial security, their children's future and the state of the nation.
- In times of continuing economic distress, many Jordanians feel they do not have the right to speak their minds about their government's policies. Almost one in two Jordanians says that the freedom to publicly criticize the government is not guaranteed.
- Jordanians remain disinclined to trust their elected representatives. More than half of respondents say they are unsatisfied with the performance of the current parliament elected in November 2007; a small minority says they are satisfied. Three-quarters say that the parliament has not achieved anything worthy of recognition.
- Approval ratings for the current government are not much better with only one in five Jordanians fully satisfied with its performance. Almost half of Jordanians say that the government has not achieved anything worthy of recognition.
- If parliamentary elections were held today, the vast majority of Jordanians would continue to vote for independent candidates (those who are not aligned with any political party). However, intention to vote for political party candidates increased slightly since the last poll, as has support for the opposition Islamic Action Front in particular.
- With regard to how parliamentary elections should be organized in Jordan, a majority of Jordanians prefer that the country have larger electoral districts with multiple seats rather than smaller districts with one seat each.

- Almost half of respondents prefer keeping the current “one-man one-vote” system which allows one vote for the candidate that is most preferred by the voter; whereas a slightly smaller percentage of respondents prefer an electoral system where every voter is allowed a number of votes equal to the number of seats in the voter’s district.
- A majority of respondents prefer that the number of voters per parliamentary seat is the same in all districts; whereas approximately one-third prefers the current system which allows some districts to have fewer voters per-seat than other districts to ensure representation for smaller, underdeveloped communities.
- One in four respondents is in favor of adding a quota for registered political parties to a new parliamentary elections law. Two-thirds are against this option.
- Nearly half of Jordanians believe that the six-seat quota for women in the current electoral law should remain as it is, while one-quarter believe the number of quota seats should be increased. Another quarter believes the women’s quota should be abolished.

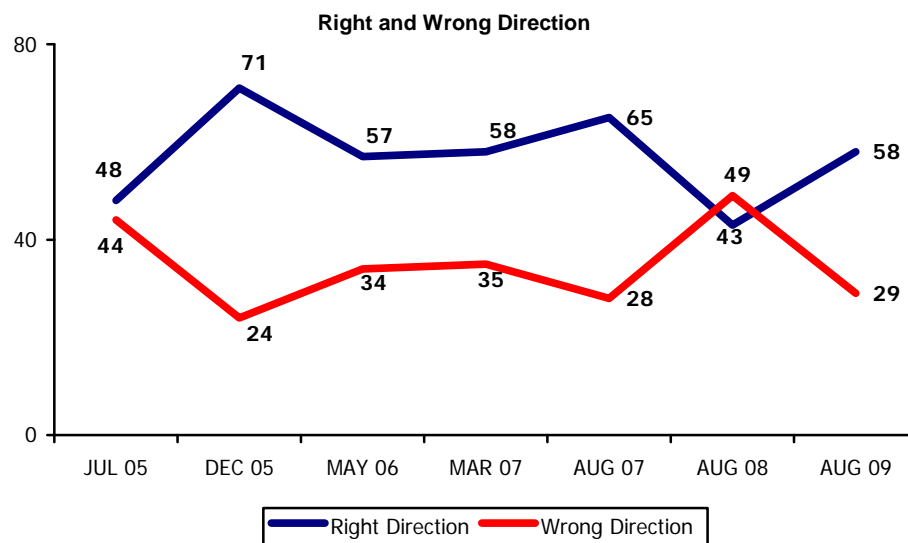
NATIONAL PRIORITIES, GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL REFORM IN JORDAN:

National Public Opinion Poll #7

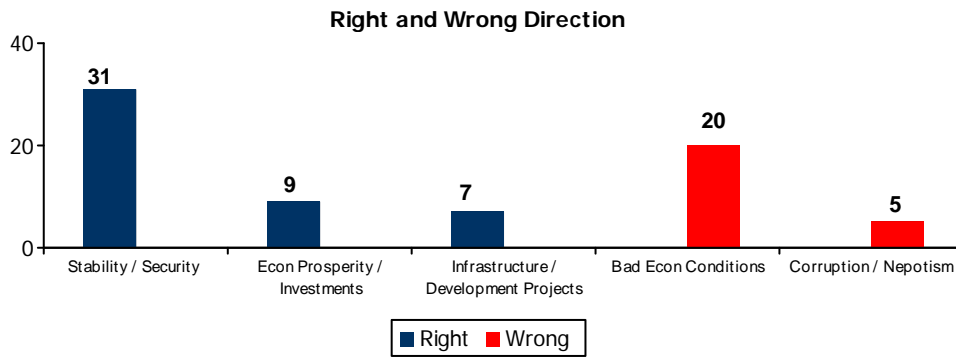
MAIN FINDINGS

General

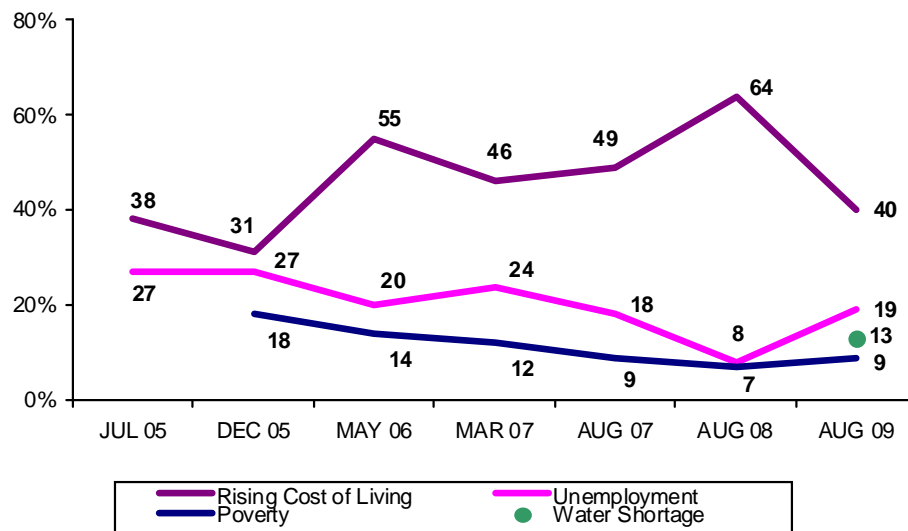
- Fifty-eight percent of Jordanians believe their country is going in the right direction while 29 percent believe things are going in the wrong direction. This reflects a significant improvement of 15 percentage points in right direction responses over IRI's August 2008 poll.
- Meanwhile, the wrong direction responses have fallen 20 percentage points from the August 2008 poll. Over the course of seven IRI polls, there have been two times when wrong direction responses have nearly equaled or exceeded right direction responses: in August 2008 when the country was facing runaway inflation due to rapid increases in the price of oil; and in July 2005 during a period of high tension between the government and parliament. The findings in the current poll reveal that public perceptions of the country's direction have returned to a positive outlook. (See graph below).



- When those respondents who say the country is going in the right direction are asked why they believe this, 31 percent mention stability and security. This is followed by nine percent for economic advancement and foreign investment and seven percent for infrastructure and development projects.
- On the other hand, those who believe the country is going in the wrong direction say so because of prevailing economic conditions (20 percent) and corruption, nepotism and favoritism (five percent).
- It appears that corruption, nepotism and favoritism are emerging as important issues although they are currently being overshadowed by urgent economic priorities.



- As has been the case over the past four years, Jordanians believe the issue of rising prices/rising cost of living is the most important problem facing the country.
- However, only 40 percent of respondents say the rising cost of living is the most important problem compared to 64 percent in August 2008. This could be attributed to the fall in oil prices since last year. It could also be due to the fact that Jordanians have adapted to the reality of high commodity prices. (See graph below).



- In second place after high cost of living, 19 percent of Jordanians believe unemployment is the most important problem facing the country. Water shortage is in third place at 13 percent replacing poverty which is now at nine percent. Previous IRI opinion polls (August 2008, August 2007, March 2007, May 2006 and December 2005) have shown that the high cost of living, unemployment and poverty are the top three issues of concern.
- Water shortage seems to have emerged as a major problem as press reports have appeared recently of whole communities having no water supply for months.

Government's Approval Ratings

- Satisfaction ratings for the Jordanian government are low with 19 percent saying they are satisfied with the current government's performance. Twenty-nine percent

of Jordanians say that they are not satisfied or not at all satisfied with the government's performance. Forty-eight percent say they are somewhat satisfied.

- Forty-seven percent of Jordanians say the current government has not achieved anything worthy of recognition versus 41 percent say it has achieved something.
- Achievements mentioned by respondents are increased attention to infrastructure and construction at 12 percent, meeting citizens' needs at 11 percent, decent housing and national employment corporation at nine percent, and promotion of education/building schools and universities/IT and internal security each at seven percent.

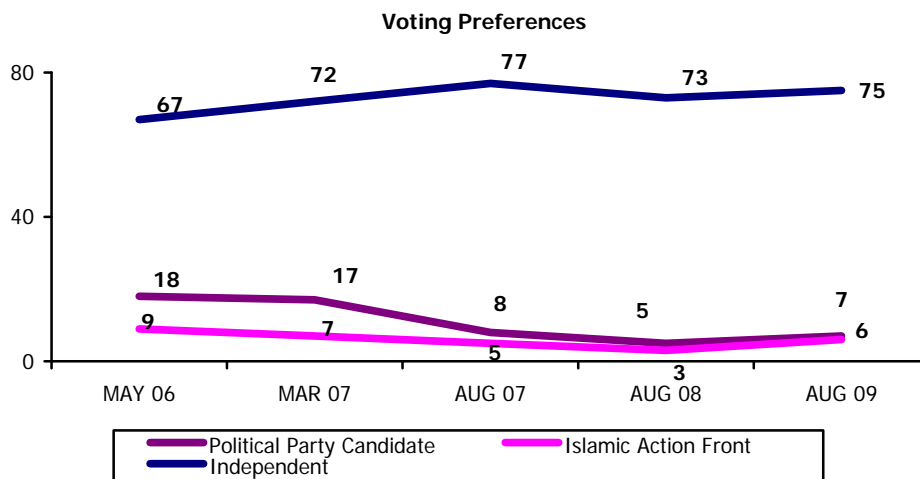
Parliament's Approval Ratings

- Approval ratings for the Jordanian parliament are even lower than the government's with only seven percent saying they are satisfied with the current parliament's performance. Thirty-three percent are somewhat satisfied. Fifty-three percent of Jordanians say that they are not satisfied or not at all satisfied.
- An overwhelming majority of Jordanians (74 percent) say that the current parliament has not achieved anything worthy of recognition versus just seven percent who say it has.

Participation in Parliamentary Elections

- Forty-two percent of respondents say that the current Parliament is barely representative or not at all representative of all Jordanians while 16 percent say it is representative and 36 percent somewhat representative.
- Fifty-nine percent of respondents say that they voted in the November 2007 parliamentary elections versus 40 percent who say they did not.
- Forty-four percent of those who voted for the winning candidate say they would vote for the same candidate again versus 39 percent who would not, while 15 percent are not sure.
- Forty-five percent of those who would vote again for their winning candidate would do so because their elected candidate has extended services to constituents.
- Thirty-three percent would do so again because he/she is a person of integrity, modesty and competence.
- Seventeen percent would do so because he/she is from same tribe/family/neighborhood.
- Those who would not vote for their winning candidate again (39 percent) would not do so because:
 - Their member of parliament did not render services (88 percent);
 - Or they want to try someone new (eight percent).

- If parliamentary elections were held in the near future, 75 percent say that they would vote for an independent candidate. Seven percent would vote for a political party candidate an increase of two percentage points from August 2008. (See graph below)



- Six percent would vote for an Islamic Action Front (IAF) candidate, an increase of three percentage points from the August 2008 national poll. This is a significant increase in the support for the IAF who seemed to be losing ground over the past three years.
- Besides the IAF, no other registered political party receives support above the margin of error (2.5 percent of the total sample).

The Current Elections Law

Parliamentary elections in Jordan are held according to a 2003 Temporary Election Law which stipulates a one-person one-vote system, i.e. a single non-transferable vote system in multiple member districts which allows voters to choose one candidate on the ballot. The current law divides the Kingdom into 45 electoral districts. Eighteen of these have one seat only while the rest have two to seven seats. The previous electoral law mandated 21 districts. The number of parliamentarians increased from 80 to 110 in the current law. The law also established a six-seat quota for women, a nine-seat quota for Christians and three seats set aside for Circassians/Chechens. There is also a nine-seat quota for the Bedouin, or Badia representatives, three seats from each of the Northern, Central and Southern Badia. Army and public security and General Intelligence Department (GID) personnel are no longer allowed to vote as they were under previous laws.

- Sixty-eight percent of respondents believe that the current number of electoral districts (45) reflects a true representation of all Jordanians, while 19 percent say it does not. Nine percent say that a better representation would be achieved if the number of electoral districts were increased and seven percent say that a better representation would be achieved if the number of districts were decreased. Thirteen percent are not sure.

- Fifty-four percent of Jordanians believe the number of parliamentary seats allocated to their own districts ensures true representation versus 33 percent who believe it does not. Twenty-eight percent believe the number of seats in their district should be increased to ensure better representation while three percent say that the number should be decreased. Thirteen percent are not sure.
- Fifty-eight percent of respondents believe the current number of deputies in parliament (110) ensures a true representation of all Jordanians versus 31 percent who believe it does not. To achieve better representation, 18 percent believe the number of deputies should be increased and 11 percent believe it should be decreased. Eleven percent are not sure.
- With regard to what is most important in ensuring the true representation of all Jordanians in parliamentary elections, 40 percent of respondents say the number of deputies in parliament is the most important element followed by the number seats assigned to their home district (32 percent) and the total number of electoral districts (21 percent).
- Forty-seven percent of Jordanians believe the six-seat quota for women should remain as it is, while 24 percent believe the number of quota seats should be increased. Twenty-two percent believe the quota should be abolished. Four percent believe the number of women's quota seats should be reduced.
- Fifty-nine percent believe the nine-seat quota for Christians is sufficient versus 12 percent who believe this number should be increased. Thirteen percent believe it should be reduced and another 12 percent believe the quota should be abolished.
- Fifty-seven percent believe the three-seat quota for Circassians/Chechens is sufficient against 10 percent who believe this number should be increased. Thirteen percent believe it should be reduced and another 14 percent believe the quota should be abolished.
- Fifty-nine percent believe the nine-seat quota for Badia representatives is sufficient versus 22 percent who believe this number should be increased. Five percent believe it should be reduced and another nine percent believe the quota should be abolished.

When given two options of how parliamentary elections in Jordan can be organized and asked which is closest to their point of view, Jordanians give the following responses:

- Fifty-three percent of Jordanians prefer a larger district with five to seven deputies/representatives versus 40 percent who prefer a smaller district with only one deputy/representative. Six percent are not sure.
- Forty-five percent prefer a system where every voter is granted a number of votes equal to the number of deputies/representatives allocated to his/her district versus 49 percent who prefer keeping the current "one-man one-vote system" which allows only one vote for the candidate that is most preferred by the voter. Six percent are not sure.
- Fifty-eight percent of respondents prefer that the number of voters for every seat in parliament is the same in all districts versus 33 percent who prefer that some

districts have less voters per-seat than other districts, if it ensures that rural and underdeveloped communities can also elect their own representatives. Eight percent are not sure.

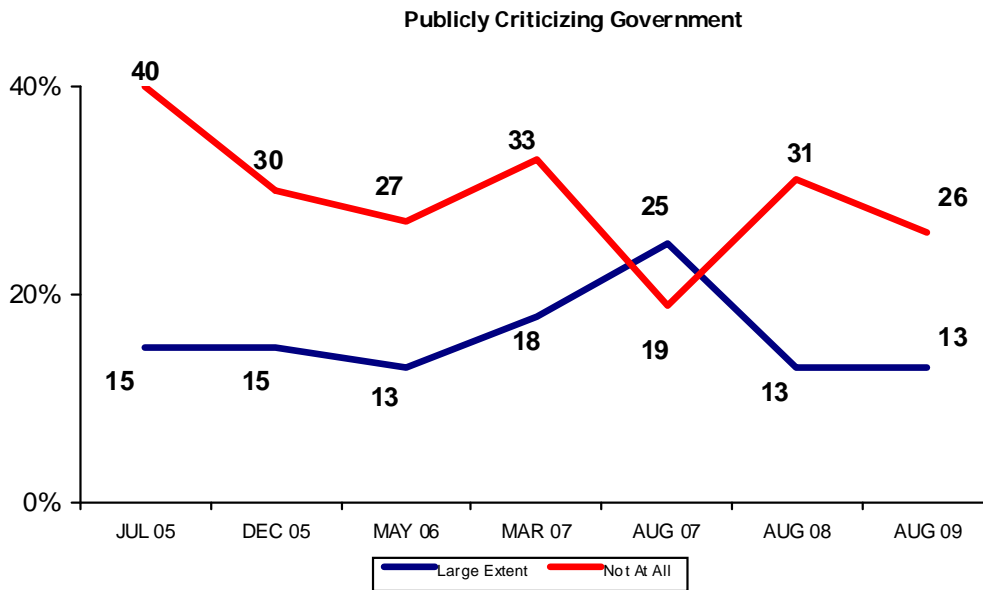
- Twenty-four percent of respondents are in favor of adding a quota for registered political parties to a new parliamentary elections law. Sixty-six percent are against this option and 10 percent are not sure.
- In contrast, a majority of Jordanians are in favor of giving army, public security and GID personnel the right to vote in the next parliamentary elections. Sixty percent support this option, while 35 percent are against and four percent are not sure.

Fairness and Equality

- Fifty-six percent say a Jordanian has a good chance of getting fair and just treatment in a court of law versus 35 percent who do not believe so and nine percent who are not sure.
- Fifty-four percent say a Jordanian has a good chance of getting fair and just treatment in a police investigation versus 36 percent who do not believe so and 10 percent who are not sure.
- Forty-six percent say a Jordanian has a good chance of getting fair and just treatment at the Tax Department versus 39 percent who do not believe so and 14 percent who are not sure.
- By contrast, only 25 percent say Jordanians have equal opportunity in competing for a public sector job versus 69 percent who do not believe so and six percent who are not sure.
- Likewise, only 38 percent say Jordanians have equal opportunity in competing for a private sector job versus 55 percent who do not believe so and seven percent who are not sure.
- Finally, 44 percent say Jordanians have equal opportunity in competing for a university seat versus 48 percent who do not believe so and eight percent who are not sure.

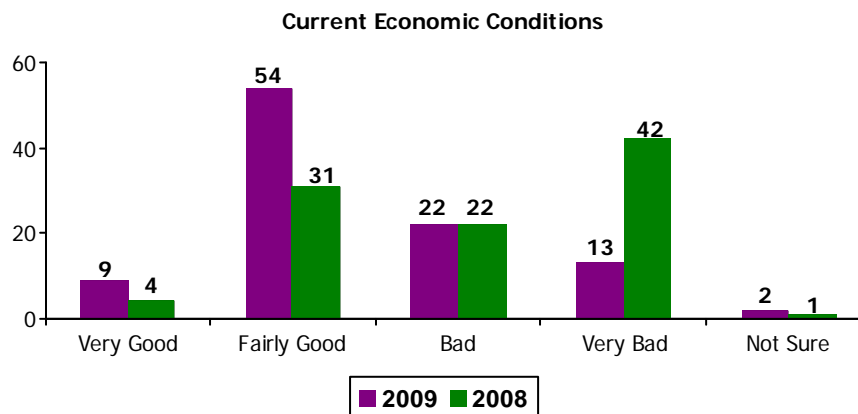
Freedom to Criticize the Government

- Twenty-six percent of Jordanians think that the right to publicly criticize the government's policies and decisions is not at all guaranteed, a slight drop of five percentage points from August 2008 but seven percentage points higher than August 2007. Twenty percent say it is not much guaranteed. Thirteen percent of Jordanians think that this right is guaranteed to a great extent, no change from August 2008 but 12 percentage points lower than August 2007. Another 33 percent think that it is somewhat guaranteed, no change from the last poll. (See graph below).



Economic Conditions

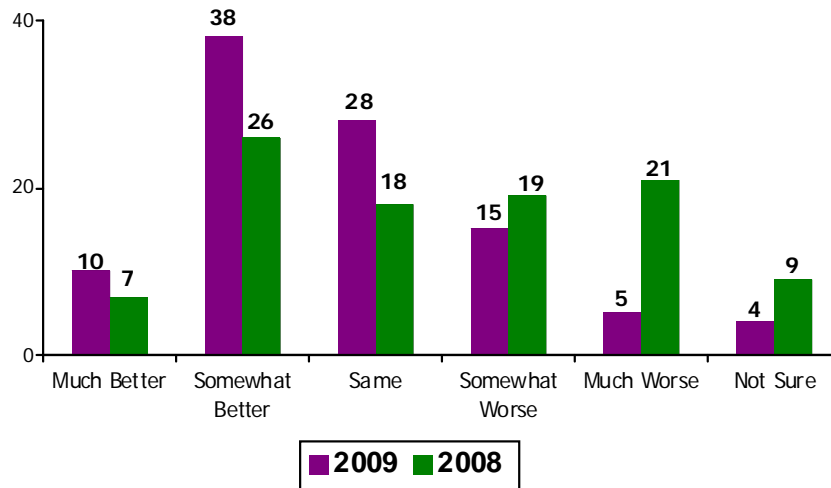
- When asked to describe the current economic situation in Jordan, nine percent of respondents say it is very good, an increase of five percentage points from 2008; 54 percent say it is fairly good, up from 31 percent in August 2008.
- Thirty-five percent describe current economic conditions as bad or very bad, a drop of 29 percentage points from August 2008. (See graph below)
- Of the 35 percent who describe the economic situation as bad or very bad, 37% say that the bad situation is due to rising prices and cost of living, followed by low income (20 percent), unemployment (18 percent), poverty (eight percent) and bad economic conditions (seven percent).



- With regard to Jordanians' expectations on how the economy will do over the next 12 months, 10 percent say it will become much better; with another 38 percent predicting it will become somewhat better. This represents a total of 48 percent who have an optimistic outlook on the future, compared to 33 percent in August 2008.
- Twenty-eight percent say the economic situation will remain about the same while 20 percent say economic conditions will get somewhat worse or much worse. This

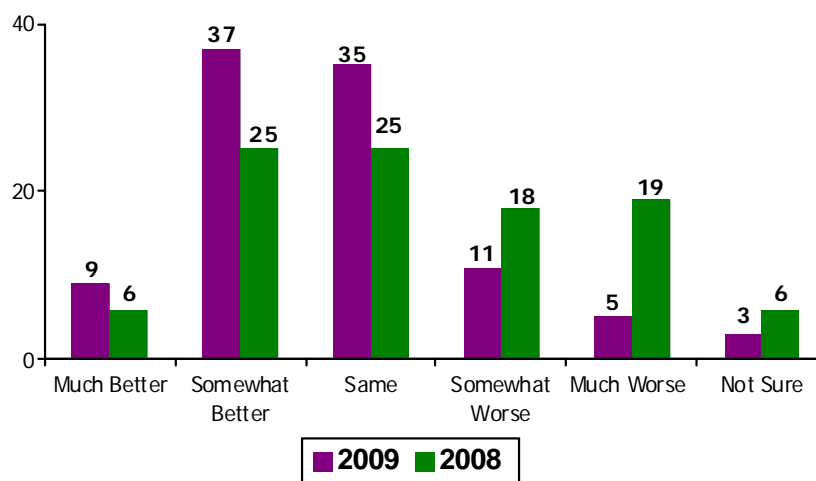
represents 48 percent who have a generally pessimistic outlook on the future, 10 percent percentage points lower than said so in August 2008. (See graphs below)

Expectations of Economic Conditions in Coming 12 Months



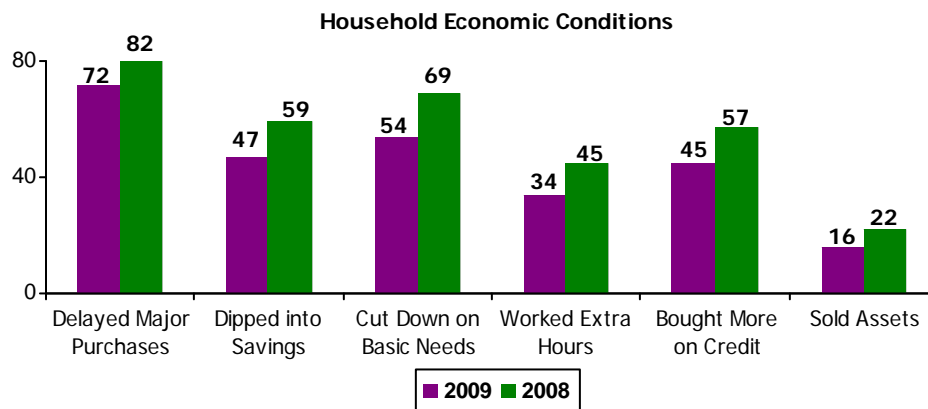
- When Jordanians compare their current household economic situation with one year ago, the findings are similar. Forty-six percent say their household economic conditions improved or somewhat improved, (nine percent much improved and 37 percent somewhat improved). Thirty-five percent say conditions remained about the same, and 16 percent say their conditions worsened or very much worsened over the past 12 months. This represents a combined 51 percent who have seen no improvement or a worsening of their families' economic situation over the past year. In August 2008, 31 percent of respondents said their financial situation had improved over the past 12 months while 62 percent said that they had seen no improvement or a worsening of their situation.

Household Economic Conditions Compared with 12 Months Ago

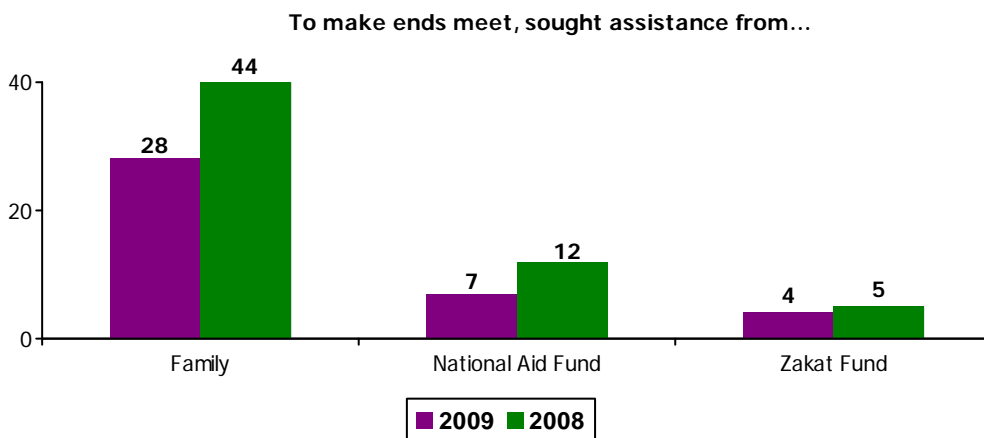


- When Jordanians are asked what they have had to do to meet family expenses over the past 12 months due to the rising cost of living:

- Seventy-two percent say they delayed major purchases (compared to 82 percent saying this in August 2008);
- Fifty-four percent say they cut down on basic needs (compared to 69 percent in August 2008);
- Forty-seven percent say they dipped into their savings (compared to 59 percent in the last poll);
- Forty-five percent say they bought more on credit (compared to 57 percent in the last poll);
- Thirty-four percent say they worked overtime or looked for a part-time job (compared to 45 percent saying so a year before);
- Sixteen percent say they sold some sort of personal asset (compared to 22 percent saying so a year ago).



- Twenty-eight percent of Jordanians say that they have had to ask for help from family due to the rising cost of living (down from 44 percent in August 2008). Seven percent have had to ask for assistance from the National Aid Fund and four percent from the Zakat Fund. (See graph below)



Feel Good Indicators

- Only 29 percent of respondents feel good about the quality of their lives overall (up from 21 percent in August 2008).
- Only 24 percent feel good about their general standard of living (up from 16 percent in the last poll).

- Only 19 percent feel good about the state of the nation (up from 11 percent a year ago.)
- Only 16 percent (of those who have children) feel good about their children's future (up from 10 percent in August 2008).
- Only 15 percent feel good about their future financial security (up from nine percent a year ago.)
- Of those who have a job, only 12 percent feel good about their current job (26 percent said so in the last poll, a significant drop of 14 percent in just one year). (See graph below)

