



IRI Jordan Index

The International Republican Institute's (IRI) March 4-7, 2013, national public opinion survey measured Jordanians' opinions on key issues related to the recent parliamentary elections held on January 23, 2013. This survey is the 10th national poll IRI has conducted in Jordan in partnership with the Middle East Marketing and Research Consultants.

General State of Affairs

The March 2013 survey indicates that there is a growing sentiment in Jordan that the country is going in the wrong direction. A significant majority of survey respondents (59 percent) believe the country is going in the wrong direction while only 32 percent believe the country is headed in the right direction. This is the most negative sentiment that IRI has recorded since the Institute began conducting polls in Jordan in 2005. In IRI's [July 2012](#) survey, 45 percent of Jordanians believed the country was headed in the wrong direction, while 43 percent believed the country was going in the right direction.

When asked why the country was going in the wrong direction, respondents noted high prices (44 percent), corruption (18 percent) and poor economic conditions (10 percent) as their top three answers. Economic issues continue to dominate the concerns cited by respondents explaining why they feel like the country is heading in the wrong direction. Notably, rising prices for gas and petroleum products have caused sporadic public protests over the last six months. Concern over rising prices has risen dramatically among survey respondents who believe that Jordan is headed in the wrong direction, with only 18 percent of such respondents citing price increases in IRI's July 2012 survey compared to 44 percent of such respondents in the March 2013 survey. Significantly, four percent of respondents cited Syrian refugees as the main reason the country was going in the wrong direction, the first time this reason has appeared in IRI polling.

Respondents who felt the country is headed in the right direction overwhelmingly cited security and stability (50 percent) as the main reason for that view, continuing a trend seen in past polls with 46 percent of July 2012 respondents and 57 percent of [June 2011](#) respondents citing security and stability as the prime reason the country was headed in the right direction

Independent Electoral Commission

In May 2012, changes to Jordan's election law created an Independent Election Commission (IEC) to take over election administration from the Ministry of Interior. The January 23, 2013 parliamentary elections were the first opportunity for the IEC to administer elections.

When asked how they felt about the IEC management of the elections instead of the Ministry of Interior, respondents were generally favorable. Approximately 55 percent of those surveyed believed the IEC was able to ensure fair and transparent elections to a large or moderate degree. Only 22 percent of respondents indicated that the IEC was unable to ensure the elections were fair and transparent. This compares to 43 percent of respondents who thought the newly-created IEC would ensure fair and transparent elections to a large or moderate degree when asked in the July 2012 survey. It should be noted that at the time of the July 2012 survey the IEC had just been created and 56 percent of survey respondents were not aware that it existed.

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When asked to what degree they were satisfied with the voting process, respondents confirmed their approval of the IEC's performance in the parliamentary elections. Sixty-six percent of those surveyed were either satisfied to a large or moderate degree with the process of voting. However, when asked to what degree they were satisfied with the vote counting processes, 51 percent noted they were satisfied to a large or moderate degree and just 48 percent said they were satisfied to a large or moderate degree with the IEC's announcement of the election results.

Approximately 73 percent of respondents said that their names were registered in the voter registry making them eligible to vote and 52 percent of those surveyed indicated that they voted in the January 23, 2013 parliamentary elections. According to the survey respondents, 71 percent of registered voters said they voted on Election Day compared to the actual turnout of 57 percent of registered voters that voted as reported by the IEC. The difference in reported turnout versus actual turnout is due to IRI's survey relying on a nationally representative sample as opposed to a sample representative of each of Jordan's 45 parliamentary districts.

On the day of the elections, respondents who report that they voted indicated overwhelmingly that they did not face any serious problems. Approximately 91 percent of those surveyed noted that their polling station had qualified IEC staff, 92 percent did not have difficulties reaching their polling center and 96 percent indicated they did not have difficulties in finding their assigned polling station once inside the polling center. A minority of those surveyed who indicated that they had voted (27 percent) faced crowds and long lines at the polling centers.

Voter Education

Of those who voted in the parliamentary elections, a large majority responded that they were well enough informed about the election procedures and the candidates. Approximately 86 percent of respondents said they were informed to a large or moderate degree on the voting procedures. Similarly, 86 percent of respondents who said they voted indicated they were well enough informed to cast an educated vote for a candidate in their local district. A comparatively lower number of respondents (68 percent) believed they were informed to a large or moderate degree to vote for a national list during the elections.

Asked when they made their decision to vote for their district candidate, 43 percent of respondents stated that they made their decision more than a month before the elections. For the national list, responses were more varied. Only 23 percent of respondents noted they made a decision a month prior to the elections, while 21 percent said they made their decision on Election Day. Similarly, 20 percent of respondents stated they did not solidify a decision until the last seven days before the elections.

Tribal affiliation and being from the same town remain the most often cited reasons for voting for district candidates (25 percent) and national lists (16 percent). Other reasons cited for voting for district candidates included: honesty and integrity (17 percent), services provided by the candidate (17 percent) and trustworthiness (nine percent). Reasons cited by self-reported voters for voting for national lists included the list's election platform (10 percent) and good reputation (nine percent) while 13 percent of respondents stated they could not identify the main reason for their vote for a national list.

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Vote Buying

Approximately 53 percent of respondents said they believe vote buying occurred to a large or moderate degree; only 20 percent said they believe it did not occur at all. Similarly, 54 percent of respondents said they think that vote buying had a large or moderate effect on the outcome of the elections, while only 12 percent of respondents said vote buying had little or no effect.

However, only seven percent of respondents who said they voted reported that they were offered money by a district level candidate for their vote. Only one percent of self-reported voters surveyed stated that a national list offered money for their vote.

Attitudes Regarding Parliament

Although voters were generally satisfied with the IEC's management of the parliamentary elections, the majority of voters have a negative view of the new parliament. The majority of respondents believe that the new parliament will not be able to accomplish much in terms representing constituents.

When survey respondents were asked if one or more of the newly elected parliamentarians will represent their opinions, concerns or needs, 60 percent responded no and only 31 percent responded yes. When survey respondents were asked how long they expect the new parliament will stay in office, only 20 percent indicated that they expect that the parliament will complete its full four-year term. Furthermore, when asked if they would follow the work of the newly elected parliament, 53 percent responded they would not.

When asked what three issues the new parliament should start to tackle, 25 percent said curbing the rise in prices, followed by fighting corruption and fighting unemployment, issues that were each cited by 17 percent of survey respondents.

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