

Two thirds of Palestinians Support Cease-fire Proposed by New Palestinian PM Ahmed Qurei: Poll

JERUSALEM, Nov 13 (AFP) - Two thirds of Palestinians support the ceasefire with Israel which Palestinian prime minister Ahmed Qurei has made a priority of his newly sworn-in government, said a poll published Thursday.

The survey carried out by the Palestinian Centre for Public Opinion said 35.4 percent of Palestinians "strongly support" a ceasefire, 30.6 percent "somewhat support" it, while 29.7 percent oppose it and 4.3 percent did not express an opinion.

The Beit Sahur-based institute revealed that more Palestinians (44.5 percent) favour putting an end to the intifada than those who wish to see it continued (42.6 percent).

An easing of the Israeli army's restrictions on the population in the West Bank also emerged as a priority among those polled, with 64.2 percent saying it would contribute to reducing the level of violence and 26.6 percent arguing the opposite.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's popularity was unwavering, according to the poll, which revealed that 58.3 percent of Palestinians see him as the only man capable of signing a peace agreement with Israel and 72.4 percent support him.

The poll was carried out on a sample of 669 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and has a margin of error of 3.8 percent.