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Public Opinion Poll

**On the government of Dr. Ma'arouf al Bakhit 100 days after
its formation**

Opinion Polling Unit

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Introduction

The Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan has conducted a public opinion poll to evaluate the performance of the government under Dr. Marouf al Bakhit after 100 days on its formation. The poll was carried out between the 9th to the 13th of March 2006. The total size of the ‘National Sample’ amounted to 984 respondents, while the sample size of ‘Opinion Leaders’ amounted to 641 respondents that were divided along the seven categories, as shown in table (1).

Group	Completed	Refusals	Total
Business people (CEO or GD of companies)	79	21	100
Political Parties’ Leaders (highest executive committee of each party)	100	0	100
Professionals (Lawyers, engineers, medical doctors, dentists, pharmacists, geologists, nurses, agricultural engineers.)	89	11	100
Media (writers, artists, journalists)	96	4	100
Leaders of professional associations, trade Unions and GNOs	93	7	100
High ranking state officials (former ministers, directors generals, MPs, senates, former security officers and, tribal and camps leaders)	94	6	100
University professors	90	10	100
Total	641	59	700

The aim of this poll is to identify the direction Jordanian citizens are taking in evaluating the performance of Dr. al Bakhit’s government one hundred days after its formation, especially with regards to the government’s ability to solve the problems and issues it had dealt with. Also, the poll identified the priorities of Jordanian citizens that the government ought to deal with immediately.

This report consists of four main sections. The **first** section addresses the general expectations and evaluations of the Jordanian public opinion on the performance of the government compared to the previous governments since 1996. This section also includes the results of all polls that have been carried out for every government (formation, hundred days, 200 days, one year, one year and a half, two years). To be able to properly observe the direction of the Jordanian public opinion towards governments, we have calculated the percentage of respondents that believe that the government “will highly succeed” in carrying out its responsibilities, as well as the percentages of those who believe that the government “has not been successful in carrying out its responsibilities since its formation” in all previous polls.

The **second** section presents a general comparison between the expectations of respondents and their evaluation of the performance of every individual prime minister, the ministers (with the exception of the prime minister), as well as the government as a whole (both prime ministers and ministerial team). This section calculates the mean into a percentage for the three questions relating to the prime minister, the government, and the ministerial team, in order to observe the trend of public opinion in Jordan since 1996. The **third** section examines public opinion of Dr. al Bakhit’s abilities in solving specific issues that have been assigned to him, and comparing the results to the original expectations of success that were addressed in the formation poll. The **fourth** section addresses the main problems currently facing Jordan that the government must immediately address. This also includes citizens’ perceptions of the financial/ economic status of their family during the past three years.

Section One: Total General Evaluation of all Governments

In comparing the results of this poll to the results of all previous polls, we find that there has been a steady decline in the percentage of respondents who believe that the governments have been successful “to a large extent” in carrying out their responsibilities 100 days after their formation. This decline corresponds with a noticeable increase in the percentage of respondents that believe the governments “will not succeed” in carrying out their responsibilities, as illustrated in figure (1) and figure (2). Dr. al Bakhit’s government was no exception to this in the national sample, where only 18% of respondents believed that the government would be “highly successful” in carrying out its responsibilities since its formation (i.e. for the past 100 days); this compares to 29.7% of respondents who expect the government to be able to carry out its responsibilities at the time of the government’s formation. The perception of opinion leaders did not differ much in the one hundred days since the first poll on al Bakhit’s government: after 100 days 27.3% of opinion leaders believed the government has been “highly successful” in carrying out its responsibilities, compared to 26% who believed so at the time of the government’s original formation.

Regarding the percentage of the national sample that believe the government “has not been successful” in its responsibilities during the first 100 days: the percentage rose to 16.2%, compared to only 7.1% that expected the government would not be successful during the first poll (at the time of the government’s formation). With regards to the opinion leader sample: the percentage rose to 7.3%, compared to 5.1% that expected the government would not be successful during formation.

Furthermore, figure (1) shows that there is a growing lack of confidence between the national sample and successive governments in general. This does not apply to opinion leaders, however, and there was no significant change despite the fact that there are fluctuations in their expectations and evaluations of the government’s performance. With regards to the national sample, the lack of confidence could further increase with the current government—and future governments as well—if they are not seen to succeed in solving specific problems such as poverty, unemployment, and price hikes. These are the largest problems currently facing Jordan, according to citizens, and thus should be addressed by the government immediately.

Section Two: General Evaluation of Prime Minister, Government, and Ministerial Team

When it comes to the differences between the two samples (national, opinion leaders) towards the abilities of the prime minister, his government, and the abilities of the ministerial team during the first 100 days since the government’s formation, there has been a decline in the evaluation of the national sample, while the opinion leader sample has not seen significant change when compared to the previous poll taken at the time of formation. Following is an analysis of the results:

National Sample

Upon formation, 72% of the national sample expected the prime minister to succeed in his position’s responsibilities, and 100 days later the number has dropped to 59% (who agree that he has been successful). Similarly, upon formation, 69% of the national sample respondents expected the government to successfully carry out its responsibilities. This number dropped to 56% after 100 days. Expectations of the ministerial team also suffered a similar fate: after 100 days, only 51% of the national sample respondents expected the ministerial team to successfully carry out their responsibilities, compared to 66% of respondents polled during formation.

This trend in national sample opinion has occurred with all previous governments, with the exception of Dr. Fayed Tarawneh’s government. Otherwise, there has always been a fall in the percentage of people who think the government will succeed, when comparing results of the initial formation of government with results taken after 100 days of formation. This is illustrated in figure (3).

Opinion Leaders Sample

The survey shows that 74% of opinion leaders sampled upon the formation of the government expected the prime minister to succeed in carrying out his responsibilities, and 74% of respondents continued to expect the prime minister to succeed 100 days after the formation. Likewise, upon formation, 68% of the opinion leader respondents expected the government to successfully carry out its responsibilities. This number remained the same, 68%, after 100 days. Expectations of the ministerial team declined slightly: after 100 days, 58% of the opinion leader respondents expected the ministerial team to successfully carry out their responsibilities, compared to 62% of respondents polled during formation.

Despite the fixed percentages for the expectations of the prime minister and government, there was a slight decline in the evaluation of the ministerial team since its formation. Compared to previous government polls, we find that evaluation of governments' performance after 100 days in office fall from the expectations of the the previous governments of Dr. Badran, Mr. Abu Ragheb, Mr. Rawabdeh, Dr. Majali, and Mr. Kabariti. Despite the fluctuations in the public opinion leaders samples over time, the general trend remains almost stable without significant change as shown in figure number 4.

Section Three: Evaluating the Performance of the Government on Specific Issues

The opinion poll sought to compare the evaluation of the government 100 days after its formation with expectations of the government immediately after its formation. We thus compared the evaluation of government performance on specific issues highlighted in the government's designation letter with the expectations of their success at the time of formation. Table (2) shows these issues and the percentages of those who expected the government to succeed after 100 days, compared to the initial expectations upon formation.

A- The National Sample

The results of the 100-day opinion poll show a noticeable fall in performance expectations compared to initial predictions upon formation. Upon formation, national sample respondents expected the government to succeed in 17 of the original 19 issues assigned to it (success here is measured as receiving over 50% acceptance). Following the 100 days, 7 of the original 19 issues received less than 50% success rates, while the other 12 successes were also relatively low in comparison to the initial public perception. Furthermore, there was a decline in standards of expectations of success of the government in the majority of cases it was assigned, as shown in table (2).

Table (2): Percentages of National Sample Respondents who rated the government's achievements so far as "successful" (in the 100 days following the government's formation)

	National Sample	
	Expectations of Success at Formation	Expectations of success after 100 days
Reducing poverty	44	26
Reducing unemployment	49	28
Improving the standard of living	51	32
Improving equal opportunity	51	40
Fighting corruption	55	41
Offering housing to low-income individuals	60	47
Working towards achieving a democratic political party law*	62	48
Working towards achieving a democratic municipal law*	64	51
Working towards achieving a democratic electoral system*	66	52
Encouraging freedom of expression through creating opportunities for freedom of opinion and respect for opinions of others (i.e. democracy)	66	58
Improving public sector	72	60
Increasing number of citizens with health insurance	72	61
Speeding up privatization efforts	72	64
Supporting Iraqi population	71	68
Running foreign policy	79	69
Attracting/increasing foreign and domestic investment	78	70
Supporting Palestinian population	78	73
Improving the education sector	82	73
Taking appropriate steps to face acts of terrorism	86	78

* In the 100-day poll, the phrase "working towards" was added to these questions.

Social and Economic Field

- 26% of the national sample saw the government as successful in solving the issue of poverty, compared to 44% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 28% of the national sample saw the government as successful in solving the issue of unemployment, compared to 49% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 32% of the national sample saw the government as successful in improving the standard of living, compared to 51% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 40% of the national sample saw the government as successful in improving equality of opportunity, compared to 51% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 41% of the national sample saw the government as successful in fighting corruption, compared to 55% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 47% of the national sample saw the government as successful in offering housing to low-income individuals, compared to 60% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 61% of the national sample saw the government as successful in increasing number of citizens with health insurance, compared to 72% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 70% of the national sample saw the government as successful in increasing foreign and domestic investment in the country, compared to 78% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 73% of the national sample saw the government as successful in improving the educational sector, compared to 82% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 64% of the national sample saw the government as successful in speeding up privatization efforts, compared to 72% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.

Political Field

- 48% of the national sample saw the government as successful in working towards creating a democratic political party law, compared to 62% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 51% of the national sample saw the government as successful in working towards creating a democratic municipality law, compared to 64% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 52% of the national sample saw the government as successful in working towards creating a democratic electoral law, compared to 66% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 58% of the national sample saw the government as successful in encouraging freedom of expression through creating opportunities for freedom of opinion and respect for opinions of others, compared to 66% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 60% of the national sample saw the government as successful in improving the public sector, compared to 72% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 68% of the national sample saw the government as successful in supporting the Iraqi people, compared to 71% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 69% of the national sample saw the government as successful in administering foreign policy, compared to 79% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.

- 73% of the national sample saw the government as successful in supporting the Palestinian people, compared to 78% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 78% of the national sample saw the government as successful in taking appropriate steps to face acts of terrorism, compared to 86% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.

B- Opinion Leaders Sample

The results of the 100 days poll indicate that there has been a noticeable decline in performance expectations compared to the poll taken immediately after formation. Upon formation, opinion leader respondents expected the government to succeed in 14 of the original 19 issues assigned to it. After the 100 days, only 10 of the original 19 issues received less than 50% success rates, while the other 9 successes were relatively low in comparison to initial public perception. Furthermore, there was a decline in standards of expectations of success of the government in the majority of cases it was assigned, as shown in table (3).

Table (2): Percentages of National Sample Respondents who rated the government's achievements so far as "successful" (in the 100 days following the government's formation)

National Sample		
	Expectations of Success at Formation	Expectations of success after 100 days
Reducing poverty	32	20
Reducing unemployment	34	22
Improving the standard of living	42	27
Fighting corruption	42	28
Working towards achieving a democratic electoral system*	58	38
Improving equal opportunities for all	48	39
Working towards achieving a democratic political party law*	56	39
Working towards achieving a democratic municipal law*	63	43
Offering housing to low-income individuals	62	47
Improving the public sector	57	49
Encouraging freedom of expression through creating opportunities for freedom of opinion and respect for opinions of others (i.e. democracy)	60	52
Increasing number of citizens with health insurance	64	54
Attracting/increasing foreign and domestic investment	72	60
Improving the education sector	70	61
Supporting the Iraqi people	70	62
Speeding up privatization efforts	73	65
Running foreign policy	78	65
Supporting Palestinian population	77	68
Taking appropriate steps to face acts of terrorism	88	78

* In the 100-day poll, the phrase "working towards" was added to these questions.

Social and Economic Field

- 20% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in solving the issue of poverty, compared to 32% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 22% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in solving the issue of unemployment, compared to 34% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 27% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in improving the standard of living, compared to 42% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 39% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in improving equality of opportunity, compared to 48% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 28% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in fighting corruption, compared to 42% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 47% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in offering housing to low-income individuals, compared to 62% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 54% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in increasing number of citizens with health insurance, compared to 64% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 60% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in increasing foreign and domestic investment in the country, compared to 72% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 61% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in improving the educational sector, compared to 70% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 65% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in speeding up privatization efforts, compared to 73% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.

Political Field

- 39% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in working towards creating a democratic political party law, compared to 56% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 43% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in working towards creating a democratic municipality law, compared to 63% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 38% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in working towards creating a democratic electoral law, compared to 58% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 52% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in encouraging freedom of expression through creating opportunities for freedom of opinion and respect for opinions of others, compared to 60% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 49% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in improving the public sector, compared to 57% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 62% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in supporting the Iraqi people, compared to 70% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 65% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in administering foreign policy, compared to 78% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.

- 68% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in supporting the Palestinian people, compared to 77% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.
- 78% of the opinion leader sample saw the government as successful in taking appropriate steps to face acts of terrorism, compared to 88% who had initially expected the government to succeed in this field during formation.

Section Four: Evaluating the Most Important Problems Jordan Currently Faces

The number one problem currently facing Jordan is unemployment, according to the national sample (34.2%) as well as the opinion leaders sample (23.7%). The second most important problem was found to be poverty—listed by 25.4% of the national sample and 23.1% of the opinion leaders' sample. The problem of rising costs of living came in third place, with 23.5% of the national sample and 14.4% of the opinion leaders polled. Terrorism came in fourth place for the national sample (3.9%), while corruption came in fourth place for opinion leaders.

Opinion Leader Sample			National sample		
Problem	Number	Percentage	Problem	Number	Percentage
Unemployment	152	23.7	Unemployment	336	34.2
Poverty	148	23.1	Poverty	249	25.4
Rising costs	92	14.4	Rising costs	231	23.5
Corruption	71	11.1	Terrorism	39	3.9
Economic situation in Jordan	46	7.2	Corruption	34	3.4
Democracy	39	6.1	Economic situation in Jordan	22	2.3
Regional situation	19	3.0	Water	9	0.9
Terrorism	11	1.7	Expatriate workers	9	0.9
Expatriate workers	5	0.8	Other	55	5.6
Water	4	0.6	Total	984	100.0
Other	54	8.4			
Total	641	100.0			

The problem of the general economic conditions in the country came in at sixth place with the national sample, and at fifth place with the opinion leaders. The problem of democracy came in at sixth place with opinion leaders. It should be noted that both the problems of water and expatriate workers have only just begun to appear considering they are some of the most important issues currently plaguing Jordan, and must be immediately addressed by the government.

It should also be noted that the three most important problems Jordan is currently facing, as outlined by the two samples, are economic in nature, which is due in large part to the worsening of the economic conditions of the respondents' families; 42% of respondents in the national sample and 41.2% of the opinion leaders polled claimed that their family's financial situation has worsened in the past three years. Furthermore, 40.9% of the national sample and 33.9% of the opinion leaders sample stated that their family's financial situation has not changed over the past three years, while 17% of the national sample and 24.5% of the opinion leader sample claimed that their family's financial situation has improved in the past three years.

Conclusion

The results of the 100-day opinion poll on Dr. al Bakheit's government highlights that the overall evaluation of the government's performance has been lower than originally anticipated during the initial formation poll. There continues to be a lack of confidence between the society and successive governments. There is also a noticeable difference between the evaluations by the national sample and those by the opinion leaders sample: while the overall direction for opinion leaders between 1996 and 2006 has remained stable without large increases or decreases, yet the direction taken by the national sample shows a continued fall in the level of confidence between the people and the governments, and the current government under Dr. al Bakheit is no exception to this rule.

Despite correlating evaluation percentages for the prime minister and his government in general among opinion leaders between the 100-day poll and the initial formation poll, yet the evaluation of the ministerial team by opinion leaders has unexpectedly fallen when compared to initial evaluations at the time of formation.

With regards to specific issues, the national sample found the government to be successful in combating 12 of the 19 assignments it was given. As for the opinion leaders polled, they found the government to be successful in 9 of the 19. The poll also uncovered that the problems of unemployment, poverty, and rising costs of living are the three major problems Jordan currently faces, and thus must be immediately addressed by the government.

In conclusion, there was some consistency between the general evaluation and the specific issues, where there was an overall decline after 100 days. On the contrary, the sample of opinion leaders did not show a significant change in the general evaluation, but rather there was a significant fall in specific government issues compared to initial perception upon the formation of the government. This means that the opinion leaders continue to believe that the government has an opportunity to succeed, whereas it appears that the national sample's overall confidence in the government generally depends on the government's abilities to address these specific issues.