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NATIONAL PRIORITIES, GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL REFORM IN JORDAN:

NATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION POLL # 8

June 2011

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 June 25 and 29, 2011

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

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, a series of six local-level polls totaling 23 polls and covering 18 municipalities, and the first-ever tracking and exit polls in Jordan conducted during the July 2007 municipal elections and the November 2007 and 2010 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 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 six 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 eighth 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.
- There was an 89 percent contact rate.
- The margin of error is ± 2.5 percent at 95 percent confidence level.
- MEMRC utilized 50 field researchers.
- The poll was conducted June 25-29, 2011.

Summary of Findings

- More than half of Jordanians believe their country is going in the right direction while one quarter believe things are going in the wrong direction. While this hardly reflects any significant change in right direction responses over [IRI's August 2009 poll](#), Jordanians maintain a positive outlook in spite of the implications of the Arab Spring and the recent developments within the country.
- As has been the case in IRI's national polls since 2005, Jordanians believe the issues of rising prices, rising cost of living, unemployment and poverty are the most important problems facing the country. However, there has been a significant drop since IRI's last poll in the number of people saying price increases are their top concern. Corruption has reemerged as an important issue, along with bad economic conditions and to a lesser extent water shortages.
- Jordanians perceptions about the shape of the economy remained unchanged since the August 2009 poll. Since 2008, there has been a constant minority who describe the current economic conditions as good while a majority of Jordanians describe them as fairly good. Slightly more than one-third describe the current economic condition as bad to very bad.
- Jordanians across the board have felt an upward trend in their personal economic fortunes when compared with the August 2009 national poll.
- Since 2009, Jordanians have become more optimistic that the economy will improve over the next 12 months.
- Jordanians continue to express low satisfaction rates across an array of quality of life indicators, including: standard of living, jobs, future financial security, children's future and the state of the nation. Fairness and equality indicators have slightly regressed from August 2009 levels.
- The Arab Spring has had an impact on Jordan with fewer Jordanians feeling that they do not have the right to speak their minds about their government's policies. Almost one in two Jordanians say that the freedom to publicly criticize the government is somewhat guaranteed, while one in 10 say it is fully guaranteed (no change from 2009).
- Youth movements inside the country have not impressed the majority of Jordanians who said they are not in favor of street protests. Only one in five of those aware of youth movements were in favor of taking to the streets. Half of respondents could not even recall the names of any of the youth movements with less than two in five recalling March 24th Movement. More than half of respondents distrust the youth movements with fewer than one-third of respondents trusting these movements. Most believe political and public engagement should be left to those experienced, a persisting social stigma in spite of a burgeoning youth and protest movements.

- Awareness of various political parties and knowledge of their programs remained stable since previous polls, however, the ongoing public debate on importance of political parties and an eventual parliamentary majority government increased the interest in existing political parties and their platforms. The political party with the highest name identification was the Islamic Action Front (IAF), which participated in public protests and demonstrations.
- Jordanians remain disinclined to trust their elected representatives. More than half of respondents say they are unsatisfied with the performance of the current parliament that was just elected in November 2010, with a small minority saying 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 than those of parliament, with only one in 10 Jordanians fully satisfied with its performance. More than half of Jordanians say that the government has not achieved anything worthy of recognition. This is one of the lowest ratings for incumbent governments in Jordan's history.
- There is skepticism about the government's ability to implement what Jordanians see as the country's main priorities: economic reform and fighting corruption; political reform is the third priority and trails distantly behind the first two. One in 10 Jordanians believe political reform is a priority compared to one in two who believe economic reform and one in three fighting corruption.

**NATIONAL PRIORITIES, GOVERNANCE
AND POLITICAL REFORM IN JORDAN:**

National Public Opinion Poll # 8

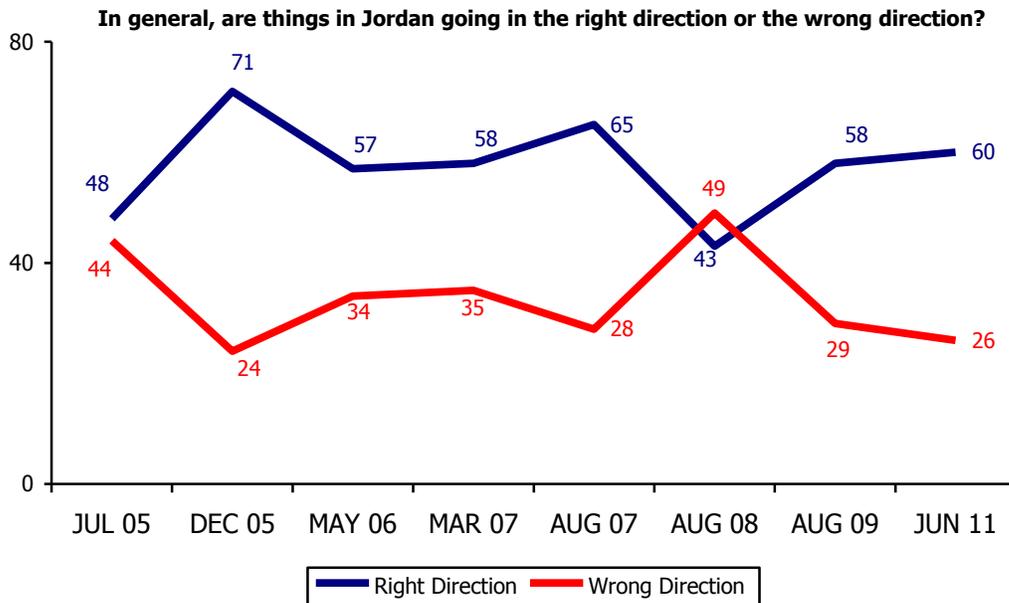
FINDINGS

NATIONAL PRIORITIES, GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL REFORM IN JORDAN:

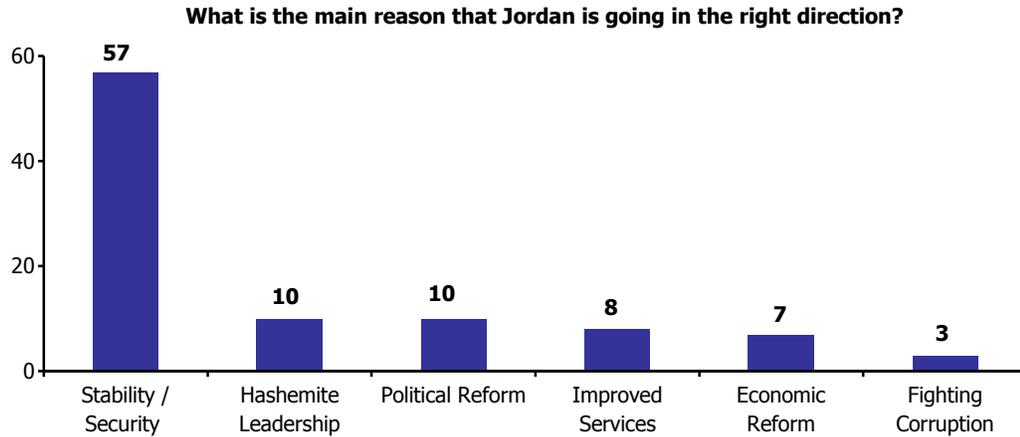
National Public Opinion Poll # 8

MAIN FINDINGS

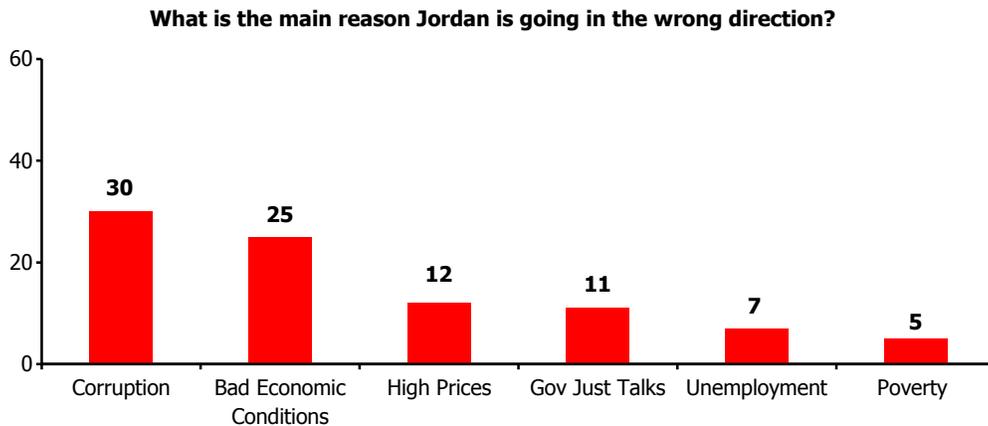
- Sixty percent of Jordanians believe their country is going in the right direction while 26 percent believe things are going in the wrong direction, with the remaining 14 percent unsure. These findings do not represent a significant change from the August 2009 poll.
- Over the course of eight IRI polls, 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 remained positive.



- When those respondents who say the country is going in the right direction are asked why they believe this, 57 percent mention stability and security. Other reasons for right direction trends include: 10 percent for each the Hashemite leadership and political reform, eight percent for improved services and seven percent for economic reform. Just three percent mentioned fighting corruption.



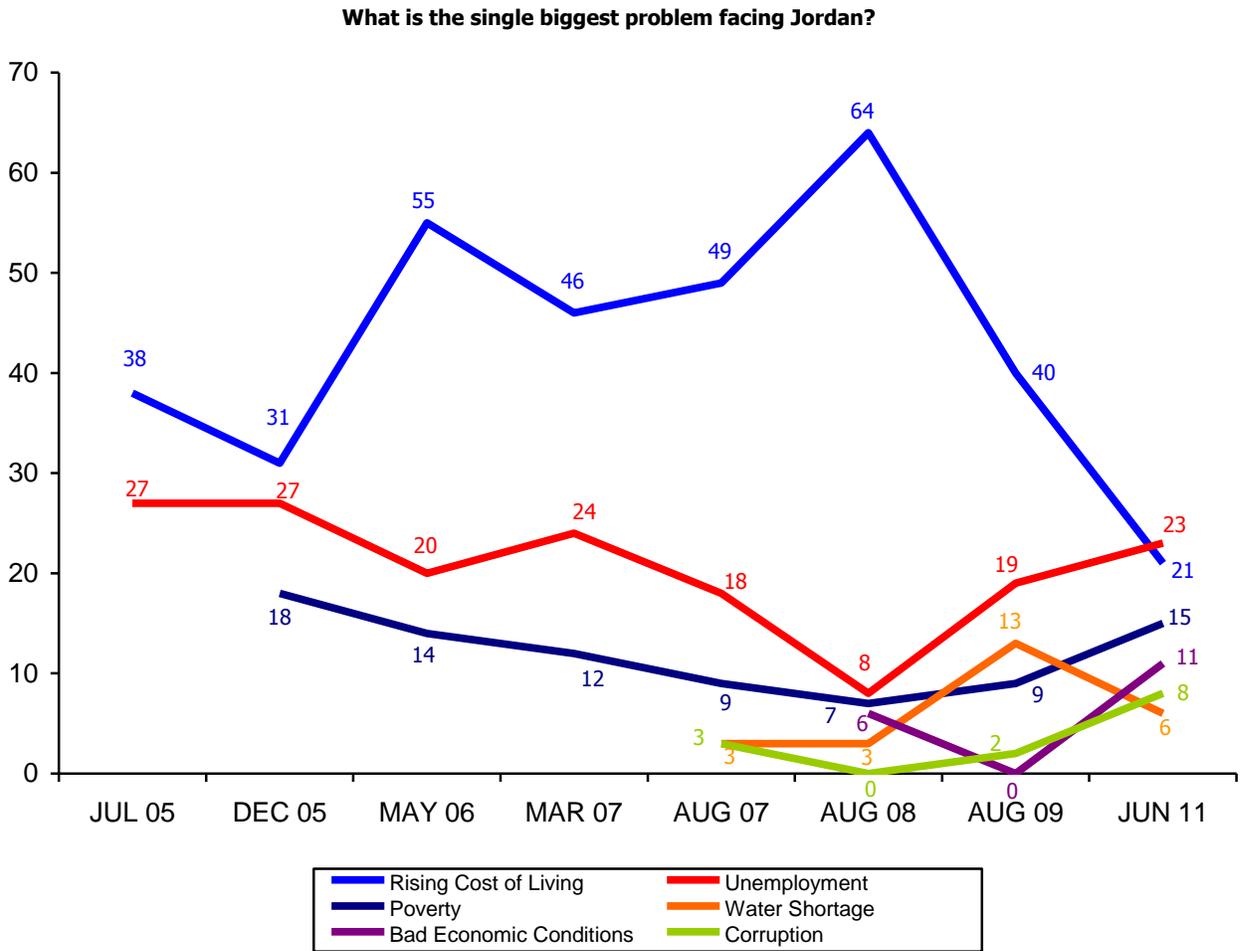
- On the other hand, those who believe the country is going in the wrong direction say so because of corruption (30 percent), prevailing economic conditions (25 percent), high prices (12 percent), government does not deliver (11 percent), unemployment (seven percent) and poverty (five percent). It appears that corruption is re-emerging as the number one issue overshadowing currently urgent economic priorities.



- As has been the case over the past six years, Jordanians continue to believe the most pressing problem facing Jordan is unemployment and rising prices/rising cost of living followed by poverty.
- The issue of rising prices and high cost of living continued to drop from 64 percent in August 2008 to 40 percent in August 2009 to 21 percent in this most recent poll, ranking second place after unemployment.
- Twenty-three percent of Jordanians believe unemployment is the most important problem facing the country. Poverty, now at 15 percent, has replaced water shortage, at six percent, in third place. Previous IRI opinion polls ([August 2008](#), [August 2007](#), [March 2007](#), [May 2006](#) and [December 2005](#)) have shown that the high cost of living,

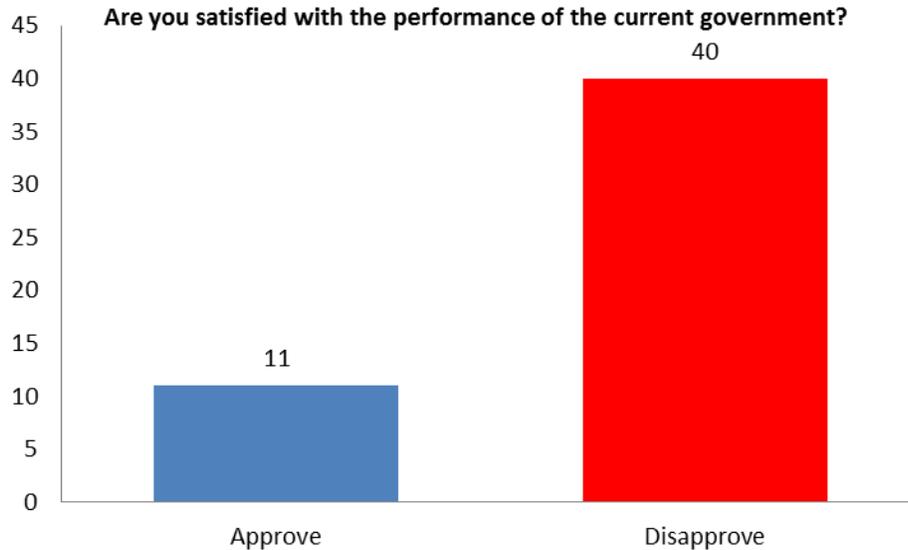
unemployment and poverty are the top three issues of concern and have remained so since July 2005.

- Corruption reemerged as an issue of importance at eight percent, compared to two percent in August 2009 and three percent in August 2007. There has been ongoing press coverage of opening corruption cases, reflecting a primary demand by protestors throughout Jordan. More often cited, are bad economic conditions, at 11 percent.



Government Approval Ratings

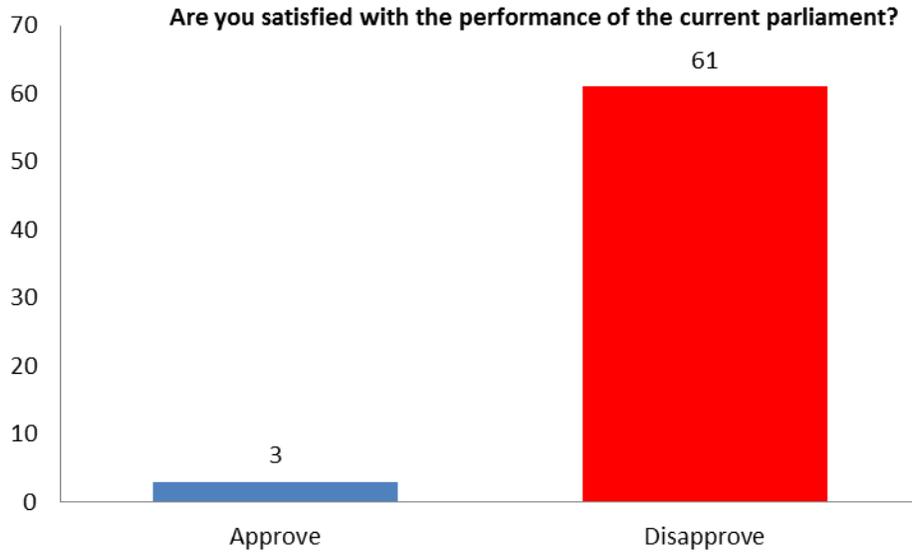
- Satisfaction ratings for the Jordanian government are at an all time low with only 11 percent of respondents saying they are satisfied with the current government’s performance. As many as 40 percent of respondents say that they are not satisfied or not at all satisfied with the government’s performance. Forty-four percent say they are somewhat satisfied. These results mean that the current government has probably one of the lowest performance indicators in the history of Jordan’s governments since the 1990s.



- Fifty-eight percent of Jordanians say the current government has not achieved anything worthy of recognition versus just 25 percent who say it has achieved something.
- Achievements mentioned on the basis of the total sample are fighting corruption (six percent), security and stability (five percent), wage restructuring (five percent), job creation (three percent), service delivery (three percent) and curbing petrol prices (two percent).
- As many as 47 percent of those surveyed believe there are urgent issues the government has yet to address. The issues cited requiring immediate attention, on the basis of the total sample, include: curbing rising prices at 19 percent, promoting job creation at 16 percent, raising standard of living at 10 percent, increase wages at nine percent and fighting corruption at nine percent. Only two percent of respondents mentioned political reform as an issue requiring immediate attention.

Parliament Approval Ratings

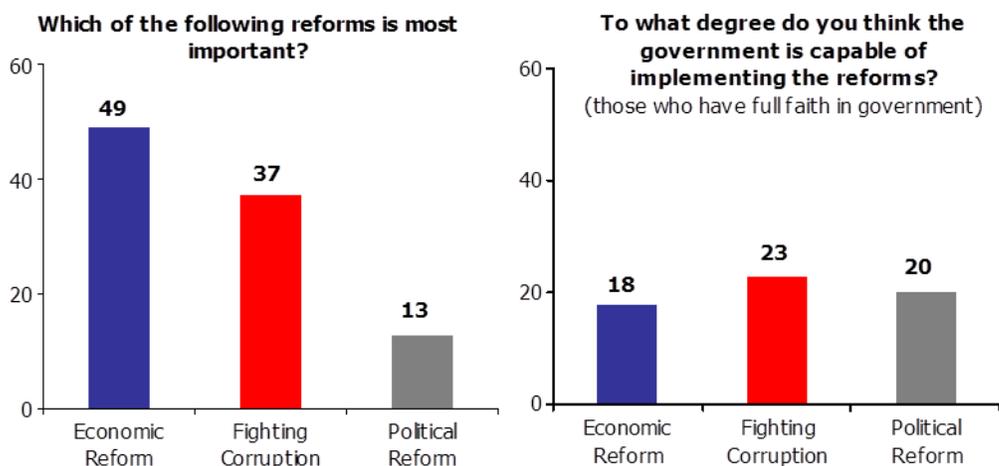
- Approval ratings for the Jordanian parliament are even lower than the government with only three percent saying they are satisfied with the current parliament's performance. Sixty-one percent of respondents say they are not satisfied or not at all satisfied. These results mean the current parliament has hit the lowest mark of confidence since IRI began measuring parliamentary approval in 2008.



- An overwhelming majority of Jordanians (77 percent) say that the current parliament has not achieved anything worthy of recognition versus just six percent who say it has.

Priorities of Jordanians and the Government's Ability

- When asked to rank the most important among three national priorities, 49 percent of respondents mentioned economic reform as a first most important priority followed by 37 percent for fighting corruption and just 13 percent for political reform.
- Twenty percent of respondents had full faith in the government's ability to implement political reform in a reasonable period of time and a further 50 percent are somewhat optimistic. Twenty-seven percent of respondents are not hopeful the government will implement political reform.
- Only 18 percent of respondents had full faith in the government's ability to implement economic reform in a reasonable period of time, 45 percent are somewhat optimistic and 35 percent are not hopeful.
- As for fighting corruption, 23 percent of respondents had full faith in the government's ability to fight corruption in a reasonable period of time, 38 percent are somewhat optimistic and 37 percent are not hopeful.



Youth Movements

- Forty-nine percent of respondents are aware of youth movements that emerged to speed up the reform process. An equal portion of respondents are not aware, while approximately two percent is not sure.
- Of those who said they were aware of such movements, 33 percent named the March 24th Movement, seven percent named the April 15th Movement, three percent named the Islamic Youth Movement and two percent named the May 25th Movement. Most respondents however, were unable to name any movements.
- Respondents were asked what they believed was the main motivation behind the youth movements.
 - Fifty-two percent believed they were imitating other youth movements in the Arab world.
 - Twenty-four percent believed it's the conviction that youth have a major role to play in the political reform process.
 - Eleven percent believed they were formed to make sure the political reform process takes the demands of youth into consideration.
 - Ten percent were not sure of the motivation behind the youth movements.
- Of those who said they were aware of such youth movements, eight percent said they fully trust these movements and 58 percent have little or no trust whatsoever. Twenty-eight percent somewhat trust the movements.
- Similarly, just nine percent are fully confident these movements would positively influence the political reform process in Jordan versus 54 percent who don't share that confidence. Twenty-nine percent are somewhat confident.
- Ninety-five percent of those who said they were aware of youth movements said that they had heard of the demonstrations and sit-ins staged by these movements. Sixty-two percent are against such activities versus 21 percent who are in favor, while 16 percent have no opinion. Of those who said they were aware, 26 percent believe these

demonstrations and sit-ins were instigated by political parties, a similar 25 percent said they started independently but were later exploited by political parties while 29 percent still believe they started as independent movements and remained as such. Twenty percent were not sure of how the sit-ins started.

- Respondents were asked if they preferred specific methods for engaging in the political reform process.
 - Sixty-seven percent are in favor of running for elected councils like parliament, municipal councils and unions.
 - Fifty-one percent mentioned establishing political parties and actively engaging in youth civil society organizations.
 - Fifty-five percent are in favor of using social media activism and citizen journalism.
 - Fifty-six of respondents think the political reform process should be left to those experienced.
 - Thirty-two percent opted for issuing demands through demonstrations.

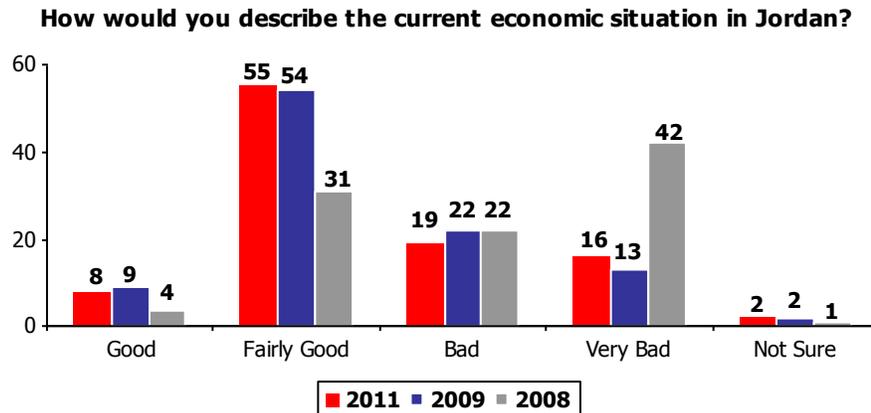
Awareness of Political Parties and Platforms

- In terms of awareness, IAF scored the highest level at 57 percent, while the remaining parties trailed behind.

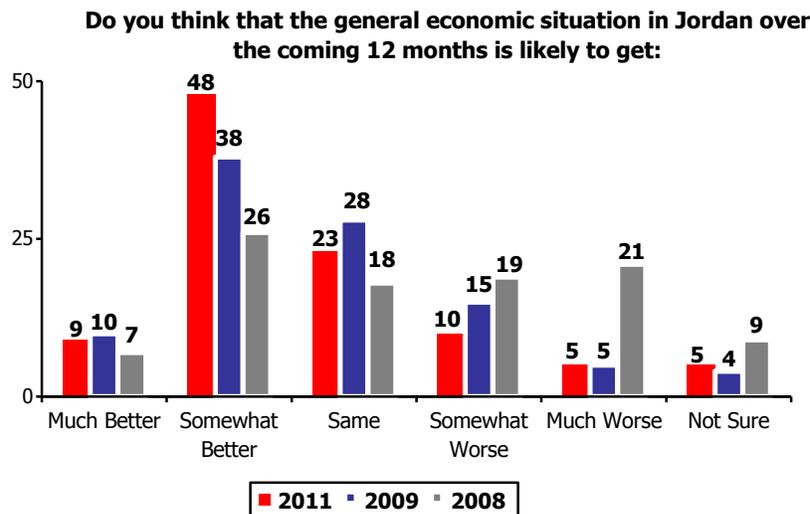
Party Total Sample	Level of Awareness	Knowledge of Platform
IAF Party	57	8
National Stream Party (National Current Party)	25	2
Arab Socialist Ba'athist Party	22	2
Communist Party	21	1
Wasat Islamic Party	20	2
National Constitutional Party	16	1
Watani Party	16	2
Freedom and Equality Party	15	2
Arab Progressive Ba'athist Party	13	1
National Democratic Party	13	1
Justice and Development Party	11	1
Hashd Party	11	1
Jordan Unified Front	11	1
Dou'a Party	10	1
Popular Unity Party	10	1
Rafah Party	9	1
Hayat Party	9	0

Economic Conditions

- When asked to describe the current economic conditions in Jordan, eight percent of respondents said they were very good, 55 percent said they were fairly good, 35 percent described current economic conditions as bad or very bad.

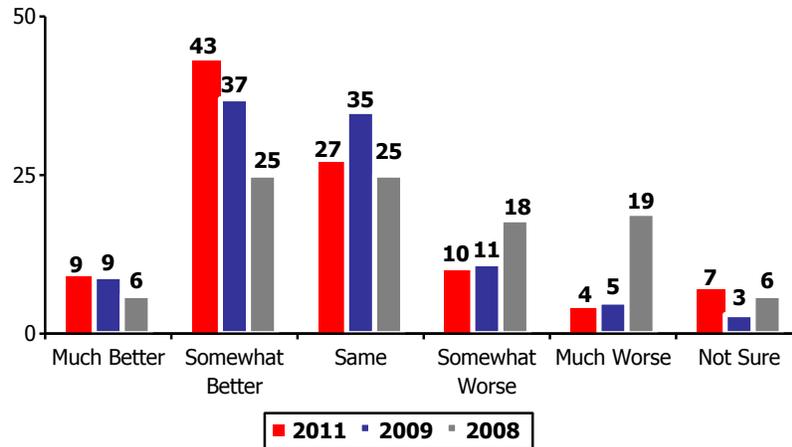


- Of the 35 percent who described the economic situation as bad or very bad, a majority of these respondents said that the bad situation is due to rising prices and cost of living (35 percent), followed by low income (18 percent), unemployment (18 percent), poverty (10 percent) and corruption (nine percent).
- With regard to Jordanians' expectations on how the economy will do over the next year, nine percent of respondents say it will become much better, with another 48 percent predicting it will become somewhat better. This represents a total of 57 percent who have an optimistic outlook on the future. Twenty-three percent said the economic situation will remain about the same while 15 percent said economic conditions will get somewhat worse or much worse. This represents 38 percent who have a generally pessimistic outlook on the future.

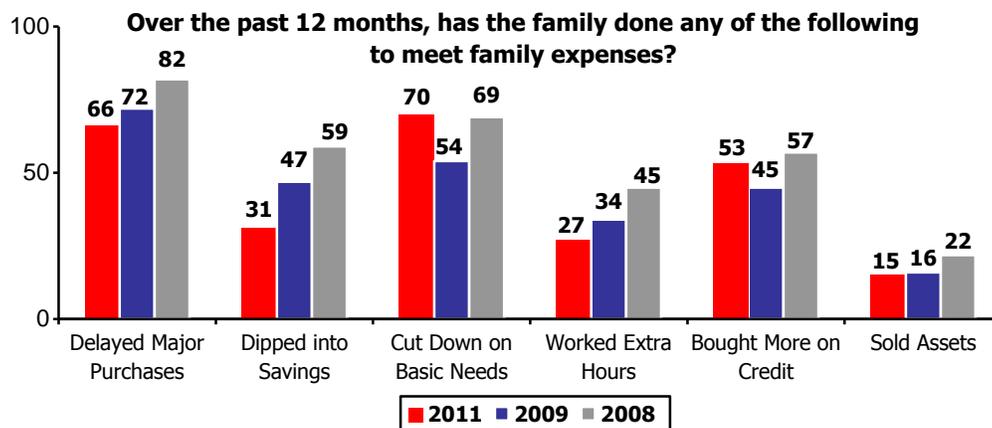


- When Jordanians compare their current household economic situation with one year ago, the findings are similar. Fifty-two percent said their household economic conditions improved or somewhat improved, nine percent much improved and 43 percent somewhat improved. Twenty-seven percent said conditions remained about the same, and 14 percent said their conditions worsened or very much worsened over the past 12 months. This represents a combined 41 percent who have seen no improvement or a worsening of their families' economic situation over the past year.

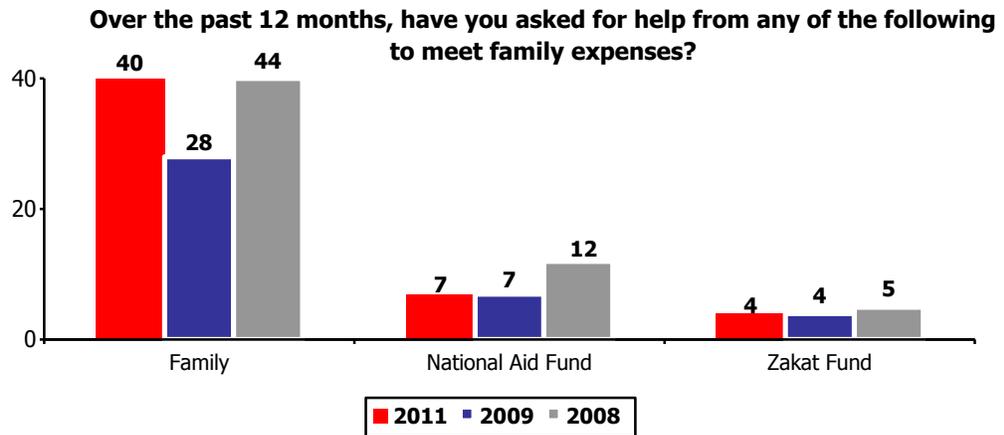
Thinking now about your own household economic situation compared with one year ago, would you say that you are now:



- Respondents were asked what measures they have taken in the past 12 months to meet the family expenses due to the rising cost of living. Below is the result of what respondents cite as measures they have taken:
 - Sixty-six percent said they delayed major purchases;
 - Seventy percent said they cut down on basic needs;
 - Thirty-one percent said they dipped into their savings;
 - Fifty-three percent said they bought more on credit;
 - Twenty-seven percent said they worked overtime or looked for a part-time job;
 - Fifteen percent said they sold some sort of personal asset.



- Forty percent of Jordanians said that they have had to ask for help from family due to the rising cost of living. Seven percent had to ask for assistance from the National Aid Fund and four percent from the *Zakat* Fund.



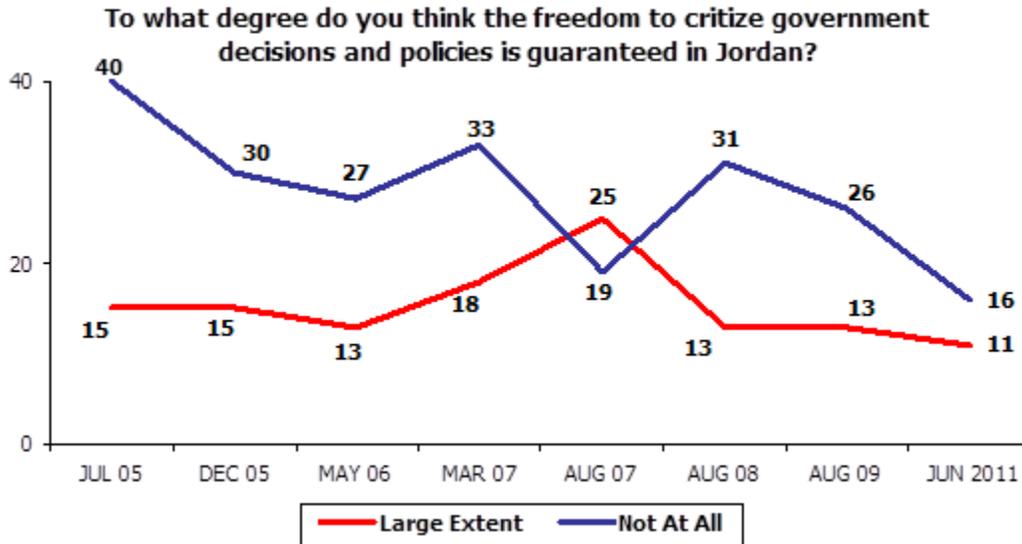
Fairness and Equality

- Forty-nine percent of respondents said they have a good chance of getting fair and just treatment in a court of law versus 33 percent who did not believe so and 18 percent who were not sure.
- Fifty-two percent said they have a good chance of getting fair and just treatment in a police investigation versus 31 percent who did not believe so and 17 percent who were not sure.
- Forty-one percent said they have a good chance of getting fair and just treatment at the Tax Department versus 34 percent who did not believe so and 25 percent who were not sure.
- By contrast, only 28 percent said that Jordanians have equal opportunity in competing for a public sector job versus 55 percent who did not believe so and 17 percent who were not sure.
- Likewise, only 34 percent said that Jordanians have equal opportunities in competing for a private sector job versus 49 percent who did not believe so and 17 percent who were not sure.
- Finally, 36 percent said Jordanians have equal opportunities in competing for a university seat versus 45 percent who did not believe so and 18 percent who were not sure.

Freedom to Criticize the Government

- Sixteen percent of Jordanians think that the right to publicly criticize the government's policies and decisions is not at all guaranteed, a drop of 10 percent from August 2009. Twenty percent said it is not much guaranteed. Eleven percent think that this right is

guaranteed to a great extent, hardly any change from August 2009. Another 44 percent think that it is somewhat guaranteed.



Feel Good Indicators

Feel good indicators have remained largely stagnant since 2008 with the exception of a steady increase of respondents who feel good about the state of the nation and job satisfaction rates, which rose slightly from 2009 following a precipitous fall from 2008 to 2009.

- Only 25 percent of respondents feel good about the quality of their lives overall.
- Only 21 percent feel good about their general standard of living.
- Only 20 percent feel good about the state of the nation.
- Of those who have children, only 13 percent feel good about their children’s future.
- Only 14 percent feel good about their future financial security.
- Of those who have a job, only 14 percent feel good about their current job.

