

BDS: What Palestinians think

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The BDS (boycott, divestment, sanctions) movement against Israel, which has gained some traction [in mainline denominations](#), raises hotly contested questions. (See, for example, [my article “Boycotting the boycott”](#) and the responses to it.)

A particularly salient one: Do ordinary Palestinians support BDS? Do Palestinians in the occupied territory want more separation from Israel or more integration with it?

[A poll](#) sponsored by the [Washington Institute for Near East Policy](#) sheds some interesting light. It found that two-thirds of West Bankers want Israel to allow more Palestinians to work in Israel, and 55 percent want Israeli companies to offer more jobs in the West Bank. In short, they want economic cooperation and investment.

These sentiments accord with another finding: When asked to pick their top priority, most West Bankers name “making enough money to live comfortably” (44 percent) and “having a good family life (34 percent), whereas only 14 percent say it is “working for a Palestinian state.” Of course, that answer may simply reflect the perceived hopelessness of the cause, as well as a natural pragmatism.

As for the possibility of solving the conflict via the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, the poll offers both hopeful and discouraging news. On the hopeful side, most West Bankers (56 percent) agree on the principle of two states for two people, and 51 percent would accept “that the right of return [of Palestinian refugees] would apply to the West Bank and Gaza, not to Israel.” A tiny majority could live with a settlement that didn’t grant Palestinians the right to return to family homes in Jaffa or Haifa. (Whether the Palestinian leadership would accept this provision is another matter.)

On the less hopeful side is evidence that for most Palestinians a negotiated two-state solution would not end the struggle. Fifty-eight percent of West Bankers and 65 percent of Gazans say that the struggle against Israel would continue “until all of historic Palestine is liberated.”