

Recent polls show preference for Israeli citizenship by East Jerusalem's Arab population

A majority of Palestinians living in Jerusalem would welcome Israeli citizenship, according to a recent poll conducted by a Palestinian research institute. Over half of the 504 respondents, 52 percent, said they would prefer "Israeli citizenship with equal rights," while only 42 percent said they would choose to be Palestinian citizens if and when a Palestinian state were established. This figure marks a sharp increase in the Palestinian interest in Israeli citizenship. A similar poll from 2010 showed one-third of Jerusalem's Arabs preferring Israeli citizenship over Palestinian rule.

In previous polls, Palestinians gave a variety of reasons for favoring Israeli citizenship, Israel's Channel 2 reported, such as better employment options, medical services and health-related benefits. A significant 47 percent said they would prefer to be employed at an Israeli workplace, even if it required a change in their lifestyle. A majority – 62 percent – of Jerusalem Palestinians has come to terms with the fact that Israel will continue to exist in the coming decades, which is a higher rate than among Palestinians in Gaza (42 percent) or in Judea and Samaria (47 percent).

Almost 40 percent acknowledged that the Jews "have rights to the land, together with Palestinians." A poll conducted in January showed that Arabs who already have Israeli citizenship view it as a source of pride. Another poll commissioned by Channel 10 in late 2014 showed that the vast majority of Arabs living in Israel, including Judea and Samaria, would much rather live under Israeli administration than under the

Palestinian Authority (PA).

Anyone living in Israel would not be surprised by these findings, as it is well known that Arabs, as well as Jews, enjoy a high standard of living in the only free country in the Middle East. Arabs are employed by and receive service at all government offices. They study at all universities, including Ariel University in Samaria, and serve as judges, IDF officers and parliamentarians. Accusations of apartheid leveled against Israel are false and baseless.

This information is substantiated in my recent book on Modern Hebrew published last year before these polls were taken. See Modern Hebrew – The Past and Future of a Revitalized Language.