

BAKU, Azerbaijan, September 25, 2013 /PRNewswire/ --

President Ilham Aliyev enjoys the overwhelming support of Azerbaijanis, just two weeks ahead of Presidential elections in the country, according to the results of a survey by renowned U.S. polling firm Arthur J. Finkelstein and Associates.

The national pre-election survey of voters showed an 86 per cent approval rating for Aliyev. Among those who said they always vote, that number rises to a staggering 90.5 per cent.

"We are confident of the accuracy of this data," said George Birnbaum, Executive Director of Arthur J. Finkelstein

. "The President's popularity is not only due to Azerbaijan's

high-growth economy - which the clear majority feel has and is improving - but also his strong leadership."

Qualitative and quantitative research shows that Azerbaijan's security and domestic issues are among the top priorities among voters, which is reflected in the large support for Aliyev.

"Voters believe he is taking the country forward and will continue to protect it," Birnbaum said.

Some 87 per cent said they believe Aliyev has safeguarded the country against acts of terrorism, and 82 per cent said he has protected Azerbaijan against Armenian aggression. The Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding provinces - which has resulted in over a million displaced Azerbaijanis - remains a hot-button issue for voters. Despite resolutions by the United Nations, European Union and other international bodies, describing it a violation of international law, Armenia has refused to end the occupation.

"There is a very real correlation between how voters view the President's performance, the resolute support for him on a personal level, and the fact that the opposition has not put up a candidate that is able to excite the people," Birnbaum said.

The survey of 1,000 likely voters was conducted in late August and early September in collaboration with the local research firm Tarragi - Institute for Progress. The margin of error is +/- 2.77 per cent.

Arthur J. Finkelstein and Associates will also conduct an exit poll in Azerbaijan's Presidential elections on October 9th Oc

. Its media partner APA Holding has invited the company to Azerbaijan

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SOURCE Azerbaijan Press Agency (APA)