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PRESS RELEASE

The Israeli Voice Index – August 2021

Ahead of the Jewish New Year, 60% of Israelis Define the National Mood as "Pessimistic"

52% of Jewish Israelis May Skip Holiday Meals with Unvaccinated Guests

August 31, 2021 – The Israeli Voice Index for August 2021, published today by the Israel Democracy Institute's Viterbi Family Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research, found that for the first time since the Index began measuring how Israelis feel about the state of their democracy and their security in April 2019, the rate of those optimistic (47%) about the future of Israeli democracy exceeds the rate of those optimistic about the future of their country's national security (44.5%). The decline in how Israelis assess the security situation is evident primarily among those who self-identify as belonging to the right-wing political camp.

The Israeli Voice Index is a monthly survey conducted by the Viterbi Family Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research.

Main Findings

COVID-19

Grading the Government – The average grade (on a scale of 1 to 10) the Israeli public gives the government on handling the current wave of COVID-19 is medium to low – 4.53. The average grade that Jewish Israelis give the government for its handling of COVID-19 (4.33) is substantially lower than the grade assessed by Arab Israelis (5.54).

Segmentation by political camp among Jewish Israelis reveals large disparities. While on the left and in the center the majority awards the government a positive grade (70% and 60% respectively), on the right a very large majority assigns it a negative grade (78%).

COVID Restrictions – 49% of Israelis think the current restrictions the government is imposing on those who choose not to vaccinate are too lenient, 29% think they are appropriate and 15% think they are too restrictive. Whereas a majority of Jewish Israelis view the restrictions as too lenient (53%), only a third of Arab Israelis agree with this sentiment (32.5%). The most

widespread response among Arab Israelis is that the directives are appropriate (44%), compared to only a quarter of Jewish Israelis who feel this way.

Vaccinations – 83% of the public claims that they have received all the vaccination doses as recommended for their age group by the Ministry of Health. A segmentation by national group shows that 84% of Jewish Israeli and 73% of Arab Israeli said they had had received all recommended vaccinations. Among those who have not received the vaccines they are eligible for, 29% justified their actions by stating their belief that the vaccine harms their health, 23% said they had not found the time to get vaccinated and 21% claimed that vaccinations do not prevent COVID-19.

The Outlook for the New Year - When it comes to the overall population– the data in the Index reflects a certain degree of optimism, or a sense of stability, regarding the coming year. Among the entire sample, the highest rate, 33.5%, think the new year will be better than the one now ending, while 30% say it will be similar to the previous year. 26% think it will be a slightly or much worse than last year. Arab Israelis were less optimistic than their Jewish counterparts, but they too do not foresee the new year being less good than the outgoing one.

Holiday Meals – 82% of Jewish Israelis like their family meals held over the holidays.

		Like family meals for the holidays (%) *
Self-placement on the Haredi-secular spectrum	Haredi	(75) 97
	Religious	(58) 84
	Religious traditional	(55) 88
	Nonreligious traditional	(51) 86
	Secular	(35) 78
Political camp	Left	(31) 72
	Center	(40) 78
	Right	(54) 86

* In parentheses – the rate of those who “really like” family meals for the holidays.

At the same time, 52% of Jewish Israelis responded that the attendance of unvaccinated people could cause them to not to partake in their family meals. 43% of respondents said that the presence of unvaccinated guests would not impact their decision.

Segmentation by age reveals that 67% of those over the age of 55, 52% of those ages 35-54, and only 38% of those under 35 said that the attendance of unvaccinated people could cause them to not partake in their family gatherings.

The US Withdrawal from Afghanistan – among Jewish Israelis, half (49%) think that Israel must now take into account the possibility that the US will also lessen its commitments to Israel's security – 36% do not think there is reason for such concern. Among Arab Israelis, the rate of those who see no reason for such a concern exceeds the rate of those who see a basis for it (38% vs. 25%; in the Arab sample the rate of “Don't knows” was especially high – over a third).

Segmentation by political camp shows that on the left and in the center, a higher percentage (59% and 45% respectively) regards the US as a true friend of Israel and therefore sees no reason to fear that what occurred in Afghanistan will affect Israel's security situation. On the right, however, the majority (60%) says the possibility that the US will renege on its commitments to Israel must now be taken into account.

The Israeli Voice Index for August 2021 was prepared by the Viterbi Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research of the Israel Democracy Institute. In the survey, which was conducted on the internet and by telephone (supplements of groups that are not sufficiently represented on the network) from August 23 to 26, 2021, 602 men and women were interviewed in Hebrew and 155 in Arabic, constituting a representative national sample of the entire adult population of Israel aged 18 and older. The maximum sampling error for the entire sample was 3.59±% at a confidence level of 95%. The fieldwork was done by the Midgam Institute. For the full data file see: <https://dataisrael.idi.org.il>