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## PRESS RELEASE

### *The Israeli Voice Index – January 2022*

# **About half of the public believes that judges are too quick to issue surveillance orders - Only a third think the police ensure that surveillance of citizens within the bounds of the law**

**January 31, 2022 – The Israeli Voice Index for January 2022**, published today by the Israel Democracy Institute's Viterbi Family Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research, found that about two-thirds of the public thinks the Israeli authorities should intervene and prevent NSO from selling its controversial technology to foreign countries that use the software to monitor civilian activists and government opponents. A majority of Israelis think that their governmental agencies, such as the police, engage in monitoring and surveillance of innocent citizens. While a large majority of Israelis justifies such surveillance in cases of when there is the possibility of security threats or pedophilic activity, only a minority approves of such measures in cases of antigovernment activity.

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

#### **Main findings:**

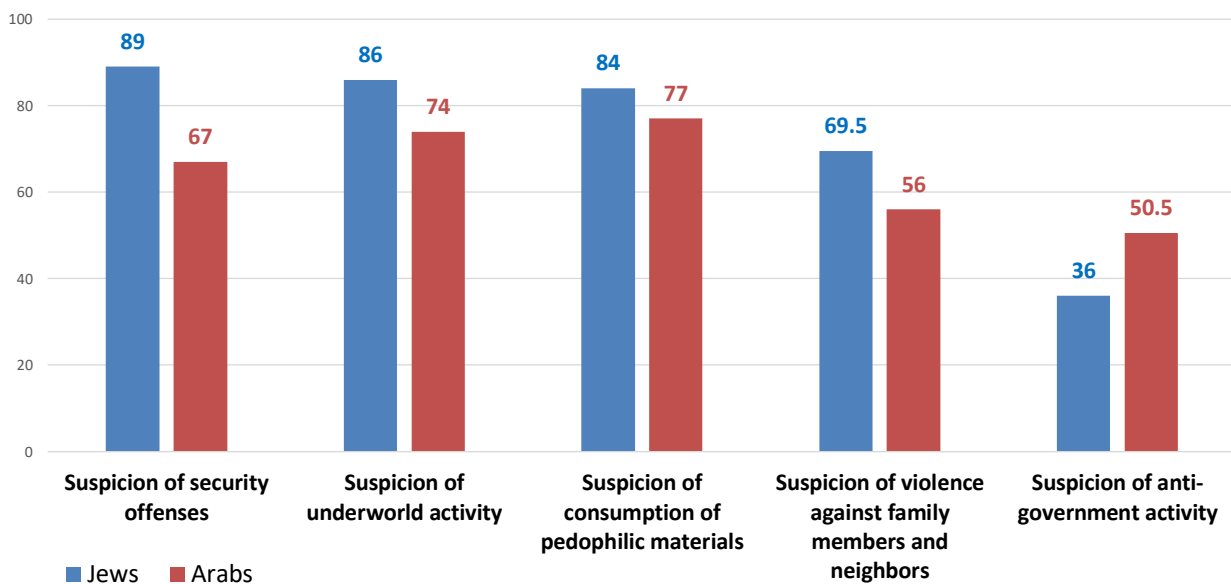
**The NSO affair:** It seems likely that at least some of the decline in public trust in the police is related to the disclosure that it employed surveillance software to track citizens and intercept their communications. Only a third agree that the Israel Police are meticulous about ensuring that all surveillance of ordinary citizens remains within the bounds of the law.

**Citizens under surveillance:** Most of the public (62%) is certain or believes that government agencies, such as the police, are surveilling or listening in on ordinary citizens. An even higher

percentage (82%) is certain or believes that commercial firms, such as Facebook and Google, are tracking them.

**When are electronic surveillance and tracking justified?** A very large majority justifies surveillance of citizens when there are suspicions of national security offenses, underworld involvement, or online pedophilia. Among Jews, who are more supportive of this than are Arabs, the highest support is for cases of security offenses; only a third justify it when there is suspicion of involvement in political activity against the government.

**In each of the following cases, do you think it justified to conduct electronic surveillance and tracking of ordinary citizens (% who say it is justified, Jews and Arabs)**



**Sale of spyware to undemocratic regimes.** A majority of the public (64%) agreed that Israeli authorities should intervene to prevent the sale of spyware to authoritarian regimes who may use it to track, and even harm, human rights activists and political opponents. This is a slight increase from the 59% recorded in July, most of it among Jews who defined themselves as rightwing.

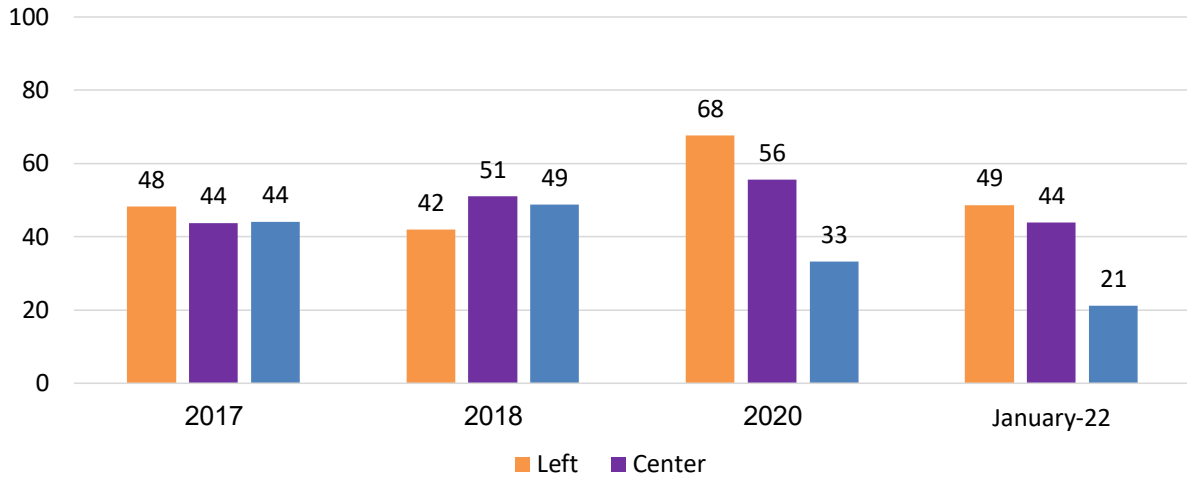
**A rubber stamp?** About half of the respondents believe or are certain that judges are too quick to permit state agencies to track ordinary citizens and intercept their communications. Only a third believe the contrary.

**Support for a plea bargain with Netanyahu.** On this question, 39.5% support an arrangement in which Netanyahu would plead guilty to some of the charges against him and quit public life, and 43% are opposed to the idea. Segmentation by how people voted in the last Knesset election shows that half of those who supported the current coalition parties (50%) are in favor of a plea bargain, while only 29% of those who voted for the opposition parties support it.

With regard to the issue of moral turpitude, a plurality (45%) believe that this is an essential element of a plea bargain with Netanyahu; only 36% are certain or believe that it isn't necessary. Here the disparities between the political camps among the Jews are immense: on the left, 81% think that moral turpitude must be included in such a deal, as do 63% of those in the center. But only 26% of those on the right agree.

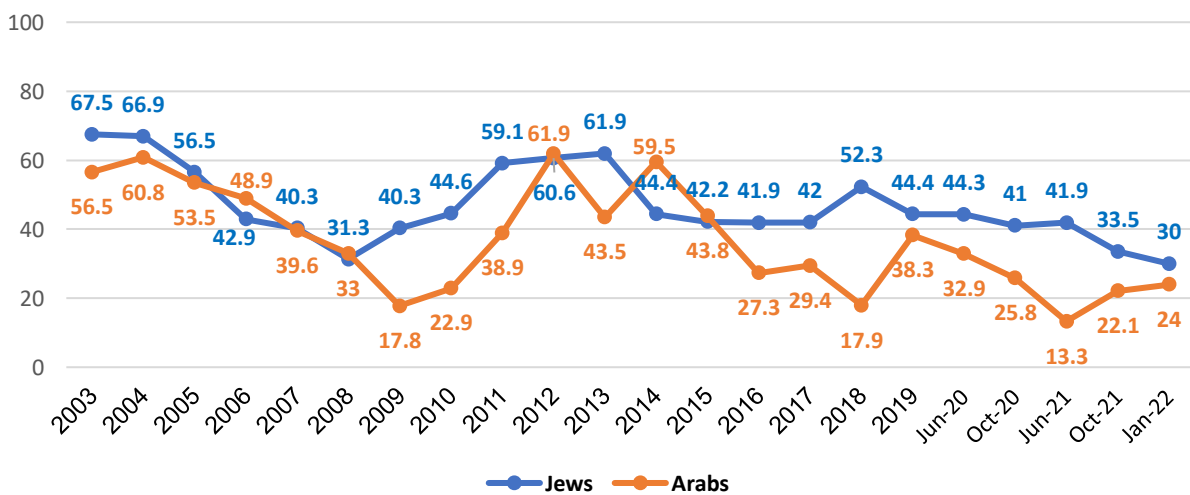
**Trust in the Attorney General:** The public's trust in the Attorney General is the lowest ever measured—31% (down from 42% in 2020 and an average of 49% in all previous indexes). Segmentation of the Jewish public reveals that whereas until 2018 the three political camps reported similar levels of trust, over the last two years they have diverged greatly. In 2020, after Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit decided to file an indictment against then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, there was a sharp rise in trust in the Attorney General on the left and a decline on the right. This time, there was decreased trust on the left and center as well as on the right.

**Trust in the Attorney General, 2017–2022 (% of Jewish respondents, by political camp)**



**Public trust in the police has hit an all-time low.** Only 29% of the respondents expressed trust in the Israel Police, the lowest since the index was launched in 2003. Among Jewish respondents trust in the police has shown a steady decline since 2018. Among Arabs there was actually a slight increase this time, although the general trend remains downward.

**Trust in the Israel Police, 2003–2022 (% , Jews and Arabs)**



A segmentation by political camp reveals that a majority in all three camps does not trust the police, with the highest level of distrust expressed by those who define themselves as on the right (72%), trailed by those on the left (62%) and those in the center (54%).

*The January 2022 Israeli Voice Index was compiled by the Viterbi Family Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research of the Israel Democracy Institute. The survey was conducted online and by telephone (to contact groups that are under-represented on the internet) on January 25–27, 2022. A total of 602 women and men were interviewed in Hebrew and 151 in Arabic. They compose a representative national sample of the Israeli adult population aged 18 and over. The maximum sampling error for the entire sample is 3.59%, at a confidence level of 95%. The fieldwork was done by the Midgam Institute. The full data file is available at <https://dataisrael.idi.org.il>.*