**Press Release**

**War in Gaza Survey 9**

**Most Israelis Oppose a Hostage Deal in Exchange for a Halt in Fighting and Releasing all Palestinian Prisoners**

*The majority of Jewish Israelis (60%) oppose such a deal, while among Arab Israelis, the picture is reversed, with 78.5% supporting such a deal*

The Israel Democracy Institute's War in Gaza survey, the ninth in a special series conducted by our Viterbi Family Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research, asked whether Israel should agree to a deal for the release of hostages in exchange for the release of all Palestinian prisoners and a halt in fighting in Gaza. Responses varied across the political spectrum, with 53% on the Left supporting such a deal, compared to 46% in the Center and 24% on the Right.

When asked how long they expect the war against Hamas to continue, about half of Jewish Israelis said they believe it will continue for more than four months. 23% believe the war will continue for two-to-four months; 11% say it will continue one-to-two months; and 15% say they do not know.

**Additional findings:**

**IDF gets high marks from the public; war cabinet gets lower marks**

Among Jewish Israelis, 88% give a positive assessment of the performance of the IDF in the war, while only 43% of Arab Israelis agree. Regarding the war cabinet, 46% of Jewish Israelis and 14% of Arab Israelis hold a positive view. While, among Jews, there is broad consensus on the performance of the IDF across political and demographic groups, a majority on the Right (53%) give have a positive assessment of the war cabinet, compared to a minority in the Center (42%) and Left (19%).

**Give a positive assessment of the functioning of IDF forces and the war cabinet (Jewish sample and Arab sample; %)**

**Most Israelis think Benny Gantz's National Unity Party should stay in Netanyahu's unity government**

We asked: “Against the backdrop of severe differences of opinion in the government, mainly with the right-wing ministers Ben-Gvir and Smotrich, do you think that the National Unity party headed by Gantz should remain in the government or leave the government?” The majority of Jewish Israelis think that the National Unity party should stay in the government (61%), while a majority of Arab Israelis think it should quit (63%). As shown in the graph below, a large majority of voters for both Netanyahu's Likud and Gantz's National Unity party think the latter should stay in the government.

**Think that the National Unity party should remain in the government (total sample, by vote in the 2022 elections; %)**

**Israelis split on the extent to which coordination with the US should be prioritized over judgement of Israeli leaders**

We repeated a question that we asked in mid-November: “Since the outbreak of the war, the United States and President Biden have stood beside Israel in every respect – militarily, diplomatically, and more. There are now signs that the United States also has demands of Israel which are not always acceptable to the Israeli leadership. In your opinion, what should Israel do: act only in coordination with the Americans, or act only in accordance with the judgement of Israel’s leadership?” Among Jewish Israelis the most common answer (49.5%) was to act only in accordance with the judgement of Israeli leadership, while a higher rate of Arab Israelis (60%) support coordinating with the US.

**Israelis divided politically on whether the time has come to investigate the events of Oct. 7**

In the context of fierce public debate on the subject, when asked whether the time has come to investigate the events of October 7 in the political and military arenas, Israelis are truly divided: 46% of Jewish Israelis and 72% of Arab Israelis think the time has come to begin an official investigation. On the Left (Jewish sample), a large majority think that the time has now come to begin such an investigation (82%), as do a smaller majority of those in the Center (59%), whereas a majority of those on the Right (59%) say that the time is NOT yet ripe for an official investigation.

**A majority of the Israelis feel their lives have returned to normal**

We repeated a question we asked in mid-December about whether Israelis' lives had returned to normal recently, and we found an increase in the share of those who responded in the affirmative (from 49% to 62.5%), while the share of those whose lives have not gone back to normal has fallen (from 47% to 33%). This trend is similar between both Jewish and Arab Israelis. In line with this return to normality, a majority of Israelis reported a decline in their news consumption compared to the first weeks of the war.

**Israelis tend to oppose grants incentivizing displaced Israelis to return to their homes in the south**

We asked: “The government recently decided to provide ‘returning home’ grants to some of those who left their homes in the south, with the aim of encouraging them to move back to their homes. In your opinion, is it right or not right at the current time to encourage residents of the south to return home?” Just over one-half of Jewish respondents (52%) think it is **not** right to encourage residents to return home at the moment, while 37.5% say it is the right thing to do.

**Israelis consistently report a high level of public resilience**

For the third time since the beginning of the war, we asked our respondents for their assessment of the resilience of the Israeli public. Since the first measurement, made around two weeks after the events of October 7, there has been no change in the sense of public resilience, and all three surveys found a large majority in the Jewish public who rate this resilience as high (on average, 89%). This view is also held by a stable majority of the Arab public, albeit a smaller majority than that found in the Jewish sample (on average, 57.5%).

*This ninth flash survey was conducted by the Viterbi Family Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research at the Israel Democracy Institute. Data collection was carried out between January 14–17, 2024, with 502 men and women interviewed via the internet and by telephone in Hebrew and 111 in Arabic. The maximum sampling error was ±4.04% at a confidence level of 95%. Field work was carried out by the Lazar Research Institute headed by Dr. Menachem Lazar.*