**Press Release**

**January 2024 Israeli Voice Index
War in Gaza Survey 10**

**Most Israelis Prioritize Hostage Release Over Toppling Hamas | Large Majority Wants Early Elections**

*When asked to choose, 51% of Israelis said they think bringing the hostages home should be the main goal of the war; 36% say toppling Hamas should be the main goal; 13% say they don't know. There are large divides by population sectors.*

In our January 2024 Israeli Voice Index—conducted by our Viterbi Family Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research—we asked: “Recently, it has been argued that there is a contradiction between Israel’s two war goals—toppling Hamas and bringing the hostages home. In your opinion, which of the two should be Israel’s main goal today?” Jewish Israelis are fairly split on the matter, with 47% saying bringing home the hostages should be the main goal and 42% saying the same of toppling Hamas. Among Arab Israelis, 69% say bringing the hostages home should be the main goal, versus a tiny minority (8%) who prioritize toppling Hamas. A sizeable 23% of Arab Israelis say they don't know.

Israelis are divided on this question by political orientation with voters for pre-war coalition parties prioritizing toppling Hamas, while voters for the pre-war opposition parties mostly support releasing the hostages as the top priority. Among Jewish Israelis, prioritization of the hostages over toppling Hamas is higher among women (53%) than among men (40%).

**Additional Findings:**

**Most Israelis oppose the establishment of a Palestinian State even as part of a normalization deal with Saudi Arabi**

We asked: “Do you support or oppose the notion that as part of a deal to end the war—which will include long-term military quiet, guarantees from the United States, and an agreement with Arab states such as Saudi Arabia—Israel should agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state?” 51% of Israelis oppose this proposal, compared to 36% who support. A breakdown by nationality reveals that a majority of Jewish Israelis are opposed (59%, versus 29% who are in favor), while among Arab Israelis the picture is reversed (69% support and only 10% opposed).

**The overwhelming majority of Israelis want early elections**

Only a minority of Israelis (21.5%) think that the next Knesset elections should be held on their original date, i.e., in November 2026. A large majority (71%) think that the elections should be called sooner: 38% think elections should be held when the war ends while 33% think elections should be announced now and then held in around three months’ time, as the law requires in such cases. As shown in the graph below, responses vary a great deal between Jewish and Arab Israelis, and across the political Left, Center, and Right.

**When should the next Knesset elections be held? (Jewish and Arab samples; %)**

**Half of Jewish Israelis: ICJ ruling on genocide was harsh on Israel**

We asked: “In its ruling last week, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague did not accept South Africa’s claims that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza and did not order a ceasefire, but it did issue a series of temporary orders requiring Israel to minimize harm to civilians and infrastructure in Gaza and to allow the entry of humanitarian aid. In your opinion, with regard to Israel, is this ruling lenient or harsh?" 50% of Jewish Israelis said the ruling was harsh on Israel, compared to 39% who thought it was lenient and 11% who did not know. Among Arab Israelis, only 19% thought the ruling was harsh, compared to 46% who thought it was lenient and a sizeable 35% who did not know.

**Was the ruling by the International Court of Justice in The Hague harsh or lenient with regard to Israel ? (Jewish and Arab samples; %)**

**Views vary on whether to postpone investigations into October 7**

Amid fierce public debate on the question of when to investigate and apportion responsibility for the events of October 7, we asked the following: “The IDF chief of general staff has decided to suspend the work of the review committee he established to investigate the events of October 7. Do you support or oppose this decision?” Overall, 43% support this suspension, and 42% are against it, though the rate of support varies across the Left (29%), Center (39%) and Right (54%). A similar question was posed regarding the IDF Chief of Staff's statement that the State Comptroller's investigation into October 7 should be postponed. A clear majority of 63% agree with this statement—a majority that stands across the political Left (74%), Center (67%) and Right (71%).

**Low rate of Israelis think the State is successful in security of citizens; not unique to wartime**

Only 39% of Israelis think the State of Israel is successfully ensuring the security of its citizens – this is similar to the rate in 2022, but represents a sharp decline from 76% in 2020 and 56% in 2021.

**Rates of optimism about the future fairly steady since start of the war**

In terms of optimism about both the future of Israel’s security (39% today) and the future of democratic rule (41% today) in Israel, there has been almost no change relative to last month. This month’s optimism scores are slightly lower than those found in November, but identical to October’s, and are higher than the average for the period of the protests during 2023, when optimism was at a low.

*The January 2024 Israeli Voice Index was prepared by the Viterbi Family Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research at the Israel Democracy Institute. The survey was conducted via the internet and by telephone (to include groups that are under-represented on the internet) between January 28–30, 2024, with 619 men and women interviewed in Hebrew and 153 in Arabic, constituting a nationally representative sample of the adult population in Israel aged 18 and over. The maximum sampling error was ±3.59% at a confidence level of 95%. Field work was carried out by the Dialogue Research and Polling Institute. The full data file can be found at: https://dataisrael.idi.org.il.*