

Peace Index – July 2013

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- **Assessing the chances of the peace talks** – U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's success in achieving a breakthrough and convincing Israeli and Palestinian decision-makers to resume peace talks has not convinced the majority of the Israeli Jewish public that the renewed negotiations will lead to a peace agreement. Only about one-fifth (18%) rate the chances of the talks producing a peace agreement as high or very high, while the majority (80%) sees the chances as moderately low or very low. The Arab public is much more optimistic, though here too doubts are considerable: 47% assess the chances of getting to a peace agreement as high or very high compared to 41% who view them as low or very low. A segmentation of the responses of the Jewish public by voting in the recent Knesset elections shows that only among Meretz voters is there a majority (65%) that sees high or very high chances that the talks will bear fruit.
- **The sincerity of the sides** – The Jewish public's high level of pessimism about the negotiations' chances of success is undoubtedly connected to its widespread opinion (64%) that the Palestinian leadership does not genuinely want to resume these talks. Regarding the Israeli government, the response of the Jewish public is in the opposite direction: 63% say the Israeli government really does want to resume the talks. On this question, too, the Arab public is more optimistic about both leaderships: a large majority (85%) of the Arab public is sure or thinks that the Palestinian leadership sincerely wants to resume peace talks; a smaller majority (58%) thinks or is sure this is true of the Israeli government as well. A segmentation by voting shows that the highest rate of those believing that the Israeli government is sincere is found among Yesh Atid voters (73%). Regarding the sincerity of the Palestinian side, only among Meretz voters does a majority believe that the Palestinian Authority is sincere (76.5%).
- **Netanyahu's conduct of the negotiations** – It appears that the Jewish public makes a distinction between the position of the Israeli government and the motives of the prime minister. A majority (60%) indeed trusts Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to conduct the negotiations such that Israel's security will be safeguarded. But when asked whether Netanyahu will conduct the negotiations such that "to the extent that it depends on Israel, a peace treaty will be signed," the Jewish public splits into two equal camps: 48% trust him on this score and 47% do not. The Arab public does not

trust Netanyahu in either regard: 63.5% do not trust him to conduct the negotiations such that Israel's security will be ensured, and 59% do not trust him to conduct the negotiation such that, to the extent that it depends on Israel, the talks will lead to peace.

- **Readiness for concessions** – The findings of this survey indicate that the positions of the Jewish public on the terms of a peace agreement do not bode well for the chances of the negotiations' success. Even given the terms that we presented—"Israel and the Palestinians will reach an understanding and a permanent peace agreement that includes security arrangements for Israel, a demilitarized Palestinian state, international guarantees, and a Palestinian declaration of the end of the conflict"—the majority of Jewish respondents, to different extents, is not prepared to concede to the Palestinians on any of the four problems that stand at the heart of the conflict. Some 77% oppose Israeli recognition in principle of the right of return, with a small number of Palestinian refugees being allowed to return and financial compensation for others; 62.5% oppose a withdrawal to the 1967 borders with land swaps; 58% oppose evacuating settlements except for Ariel, Maaleh Adumim, and the settlement blocs; and 50% oppose transferring the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem to the Palestinian Authority with a special arrangement for the holy places. Among these four no's, the greatest opposition is on the issue of the right of return and the least is on the Jerusalem issue. In the Arab public there is (variable) majority support for concessions on all four of the issues, with the largest majority supporting Israeli recognition in principle of the right of return while offering the possibility of a limited number of refugees to return to Israel (82%), and the smallest majority (55%) supporting the transfer of Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem to the Palestinian Authority with a special arrangement for the holy places. The latter finding may be because some of the respondents are Arab residents of East Jerusalem who do not want to be under PA sovereignty.
- **Support for a referendum** – In the past, we have always found majority support for a referendum to ratify a peace agreement, should one be attained. This time we also asked if a peace agreement is reached that includes a withdrawal from Judea and Samaria and an evacuation of settlements, is there a need to approve it in a referendum or should the decision be left to the government and the Knesset? This time, as in the past, a clear majority of the Jewish public (62%) affirmed that if peace is reached a referendum should be held. In the Arab public, the rate of support for a referendum is even higher at 72%.

- **Who should take part in the referendum?** On the question of whether all Israeli citizens without distinction, both Jews and Arabs, should have the right to vote in the referendum, opinions among Jewish respondents are divided between those who support granting the right to everyone (46%) and a slightly higher rate who think that only Jewish citizens should be granted the right to vote in the referendum (49%). Among the Arabs, a very large majority (88%) think the right to vote in the referendum should be given to all Israeli citizens. A segmentation of the answers of Jewish respondents by voting in the latest Knesset elections reveals that only among Kadima, Labor, and Meretz voters does a majority support giving the right to all Israeli citizens without distinction (54.5%, 64%, and 83% respectively). A segmentation of the responses by self-definition of religiosity in the Jewish public turned up large disparities: only 13% of those who defined themselves as Haredim favor participation of all citizens in the referendum, 33% of religious respondents, 31% of religious-traditional respondents, 46% of nonreligious-traditional respondents, and 60% of secular respondents.
- **Likely results of the referendum** – The prevailing opinion in the Jewish public (58%) is that if a referendum were to be held today among all Israeli citizens, Jews and Arabs, there would not be majority support for a peace agreement that includes an Israeli withdrawal from the territories and evacuation of settlements. In the Arab public, however, exactly the same rate thinks that if a referendum of all citizens were to be held, there would be majority support for a peace agreement. A cross-tabulation of the responses of the Jewish public regarding the anticipated referendum results and their responses regarding who should participate in the referendum shows that of those who think that a majority would support the agreement, the majority (57%) support the participation of all Israeli citizens—including Arabs—in the referendum. However, among those who think that a majority would not support the agreement if all Israeli citizens took part in the referendum, only 40% support Arab participation in the referendum.
- **Join or quit the government because of peace talks?** – A plurality (48%) of the Jewish public (vs. 35%) thinks that the Labor Party should join the Netanyahu government immediately so as to support the effort to reach a peace agreement from within. Seventy-one percent of the Arab public thinks the same. Among those voters who voted for Labor in the recent elections, 68% think Labor should join the government immediately for this purpose. However, only a minority of the Jewish public (33%) thinks that the Habayit Hayehudi party, headed by Naftali Bennett,

should leave the government immediately so as not to participate in a process that, if successful, will undoubtedly entail evacuating settlements. Among Arab respondents, the highest rate (41%) would want Habayit Hayehudi to leave the government; their main motivation, however, is most likely not the motivation presented in the question but rather a desire to weaken the right-wing nature of the government. A segmentation of the responses of Habayit Hayehudi voters to this question shows a problematic internal division: 46% are in favor of leaving the government immediately while 49% are against it.

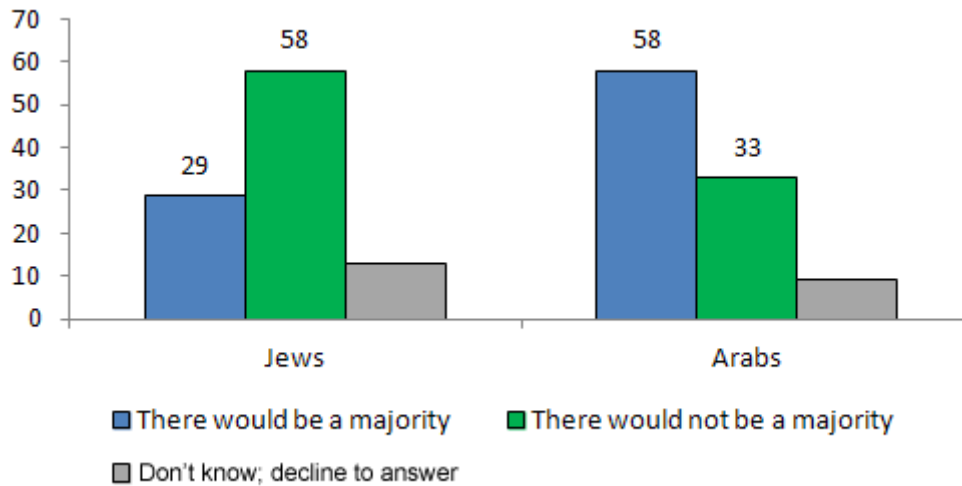
- **The elections for the Chief Rabbinate** – Things happen so fast in Israel that the elections for the Chief Rabbinate may already seem to be history. Still, it is noteworthy that according to the results of the survey, only 12% of the Jewish public think the latest elections to the Chief Rabbinate were “clean,” 23% placed them midway between clean and corrupt, while the majority (42%) characterized them as corrupt. (About 25%, an especially high rate in our surveys, said that they did not know or declined to answer the question.) As for how the elections for Chief Rabbi will influence the status of the institution of the Chief Rabbinate, 31% think the elections will not have an influence, 27% believe the status of the Chief Rabbinate will be weakened by the elections, and 19% expect the status of the Chief Rabbinate to be strengthened. (Again about one-fourth did not know or declined to respond.)

The Negotiations Index for July, 2013

The Peace Index project includes ongoing monitoring of the Israeli public's attitudes towards peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The monthly Negotiation Index is comprised of two questions, one focusing on public support for peace negotiations and the other on the degree to which the public believes that such talks will actually lead to peace. The aggregated replies to these two questions are calculated, combined, and standardized on a scale of 0-100, in which 0 represents total lack of support for negotiations and lack of belief in their potential to bear fruit, and 100 represents total support for the process and belief in its potential. Each month, the Negotiations Index presents two distinct findings, one for the general Israeli population and the other for Jewish Israelis.

Negotiations Index: General sample: 46.4; Jewish sample: 42.3.

Graph of the month: If a referendum were to be held today among all Israeli citizens, Jews and Arabs, would there be majority support for a peace agreement with the Palestinians? (%)



The Peace Index is a project of the [Evans Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution](#) at Tel Aviv University and the [Israel Democracy Institute](#). The survey was conducted by telephone on July 28-30, 2013, by the Midgam Research Institute. The survey was conducted in Hebrew, Arabic, and Russian and included 602 respondents, 502 from the Jewish sector and 100 from the Arab sector. A calculation was done such that the total of the respondents would constitute a representative national sample of the adult population aged 18 and over. The margin of error is $\pm 4.5\%$.