

## Peace Index - January 2011

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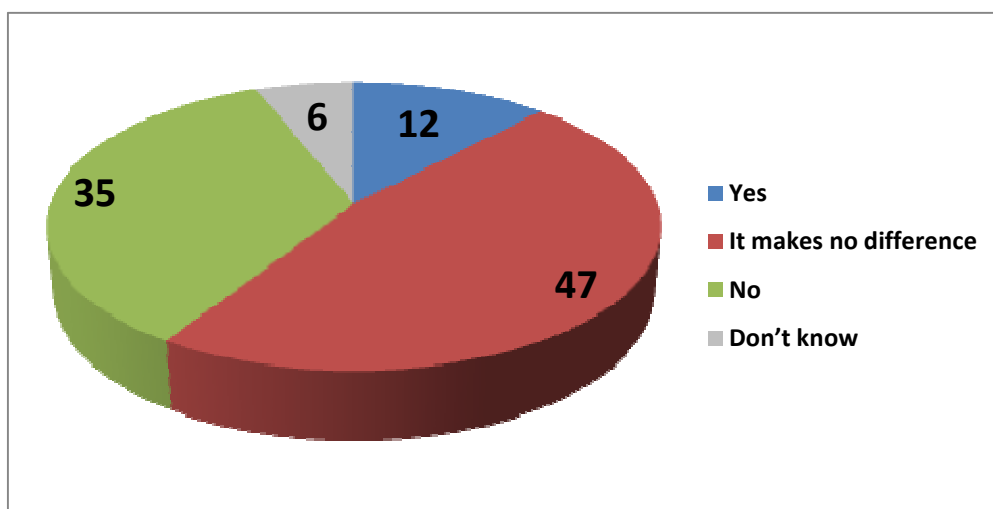
### Summary of the Findings

- **Peace with Syria?** The degree of the Jewish public's readiness for a full peace with Syria in return for all of the Golan Heights, combined with its (dis)belief in the chances of this in the foreseeable future, is amazingly consistent over time: ever since 1994, about two-thirds oppose giving up the Golan for peace, and about the same percentage does not believe in the chances for peace with Damascus or in the sincerity of Assad's declarations that he is interested in peace. In the Arab public, the majority is prepared for peace in return for the Golan and believes in Assad's sincerity; as in the Jewish public, however, only a third believe in the chances that this will happen.
- **And with the Palestinians?** A clear majority (68%) of the Jewish public thinks that the Palestinians do not see the two-state solution as the end of the road, and that even if a peace agreement is signed, the Palestinians will continue the struggle to create a Palestinian state in the entire Land of Israel. A recent survey in the territories, which was conducted by an American team, found that the majority of Palestinians indeed view the two-state formula as an interim stage, and believe the conflict will only end when a Palestinian state is established in all the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Is there a possibility of a unilateral Palestinian declaration of independence?** Fifty percent of the Jewish public thinks that, notwithstanding the stalled negotiations, the chances for a unilateral Palestinian declaration of independence are low, but a large minority (44%) sees the chances as high (this in contrast to the Arab public, in which only 28% estimate the chances as high). The Jewish public is split (48% for each side) on whether Israel can count on an American veto in the United Nations to prevent an overall recognition of the Palestinian state without a peace agreement (a majority of the Arabs expect a U.S. veto). This is apparently one of the reasons that a Jewish plurality (47% as opposed to 39%) views the present situation,

in which there is no progress in negotiations, as bad for Israel's national interests. Among the Arabs two-thirds see it that way.

- Should organizations' funding sources be investigated?** A majority of the Jewish public (66.5%) and a small majority of the Arab public (53%) favors investigating the funding sources of the human rights and peace organizations. However, a much larger Jewish majority (84%, and a 62% majority of the Arabs) considers that, if it is decided to investigate the foreign funding, all the organizations should be investigated whatever their political positions. Seventy-two percent of the Jewish public think the investigation should be conducted by the legal authorities rather than by the Knesset, while only 14.5% say the opposite.
- Does Barak's departure from Labor make any difference?** Only 12% of Jewish public agree with the assertion that Barak's departure from the Labor Party signals to the Palestinians that Israel has a stable, united government that is fit for serious negotiations on a peace agreement. In the eyes of 47% the move makes no difference, while 35% see Barak's breakaway as a negative signal .

**Graph of the month: Does Barak's departure from Labor signal to the Palestinians that the Israeli government is a stable partner for negotiations?**



## The Findings in Detail

Every so often, the issue of peace negotiations with Syria appears on the Israeli public agenda. To date, talks that began several times with a bang ended soon after in a whimper. However, the Peace Index data over the years show that the Israeli public is not impressed by the renewal of such talks nor, for that matter, by their failure. Like most of the measurements since 1994, the latest survey shows that about two-thirds (64.5%) of Jewish public oppose an exchange of “the full Golan Heights for a full peace.” A majority (56%) also does not believe there will be full peace between Israel and Syria in the foreseeable future. There is a high probability that these negative positions are influenced by the feeling of the majority (68%) of the Jewish public that President Assad is not sincere when declaring his desire for peace with Israel.

The position of the Jewish Israeli population on talks with the Palestinians is apparently more positive, with 71% affirming this month their support for negotiations with the Palestinian Authority. Yet here too less than one-third (30%) believe such talks will lead to peace in the foreseeable future. This skepticism probably stems from the negative assessment of the other side’s intentions. We have already pointed in the past to the Jewish majority’s belief that the Palestinians would destroy Israel if they could. This time we asked another question: “Do you accept or not accept the claim that most of the Palestinians do not see the two-states-for-two-peoples solution as the end of the road, so that even if a permanent peace agreement is signed with them, the conflict will not end because they will continue their struggle to create a Palestinian state in the whole Land of Israel?” Only 29% of the interviewees disagreed with that assertion, while the majority (68%) agreed with it. It is worth noting that this assessment apparently is not inconsistent with reality since, in a recent survey conducted in the Palestinian Authority by an American research team, two-thirds of the Palestinian respondents stated clearly that for them, the signing of a peace agreement with Israel based on the two-states-for-two-peoples formula would not be the end of the conflict, and only the establishment of a Palestinian state in all the territory between the Jordan and the Mediterranean would do so.

Furthermore, in the Palestinian context, a number of countries recently recognized an independent Palestinian state, while the Palestinians have announced that in the near future, they will unilaterally declare independence even in the absence of a peace agreement with Israel. Nevertheless, a slim majority of the Jewish public does not see such a declaration as imminent, with 50.5% viewing the chances of it actually transpiring as low. At the same time, a considerable minority (44.5%) of the Jewish public assesses the chances of a unilateral Palestinian declaration as high. A segmentation of the answers to this question by support or opposition to negotiations with the Palestinians reveals a certain link between the issues. While those who favor negotiations split down the middle (47%-48%) between those who see the chances of a Palestinian declaration as low and those who see it as high, among those who oppose negotiations, the rate of those who see the chances as low (54%) clearly exceeds the rate of those who see them as high (40%). (If the Palestinians do unilaterally declare independence, can Israel count on the United States to stand by its side and veto UN recognition of the Palestinian state in the absence of a peace agreement? Here the Jewish public is split down the middle: 48% believe that Israel could count on Washington in this regard and about the same number would not. A segmentation of the responses to this question by degree of support or opposition to negotiations with the Palestinian Authority revealed that, whereas most (53%) supporters of negotiations would count on a U.S. veto while a minority (42%) would not, among the opponents of negotiations the picture is the opposite: 66% would not count on such a veto while only 33% would.

The issue of foreign funding for human rights and peace organizations has lately been at the center of the public discourse. This concerns both proposed laws that would require ongoing reporting of contributions from foreign countries and other, official external bodies, as well as Knesset resolution to appoint a committee of inquiry to investigate the funding sources of these organizations. We looked into the public's position on the question of investigating outside funding sources. It turns out that a majority (66%) of the Jewish public supports such an investigation. A segmentation of the answers to this question by self-definition on a right-left political spectrum shows that among those who define themselves as right-wing, 80% are in favor of an investigation, among those who define themselves as in the center, 58% are in favor of an investigation, and among those

who define themselves as left-wing, only 43% support such measures. At the same time, a large majority of the Jewish public as a whole (71%) thinks it is the legal authorities, rather than the Knesset, who should deal with this matter. An even larger majority (84%) agrees that if it is decided to investigate foreign funding, this should not only focus on human rights and peace organizations, but on all organizations that receive foreign funding, regardless of their political positioning on the left or right.

As for the recent political shakeup caused by the breakaway of Ehud Barak and his four allies from the Labor party, and Prime Minister Netanyahu's statement that this move signals to the Palestinians that the Israeli government is more stable than in the past and is therefore a good partner for peace negotiations, it turns out the public does not share that assessment. The highest rate in the Jewish public (47%) thinks the move will make no difference one way or the other, 35% do not see it as sending a positive signal to the Palestinians, and only 12% see it as a positive signal to the Palestinians regarding the Israeli government's stability.

Another issue we dealt with in this month's survey is the tension between civil law and halakhah (Jewish religious law) in the public sphere. We found that over three-quarters (75.5%) of the Jewish public prefer a state that is run according to civil law, while only a small minority (17.5%) prefers one run by halakhah. Also in this context, a minority of 24.5% think that when there is a conflict between civil law and halakhah, it is the latter that should prevail. A segmentation of these answers by self-definition on a haredi-secular spectrum yields the expected results: whereas 96% of ultra-Orthodox respondents favor a halakhic state, only half (51%) of those who define themselves as religious would want such a state, 21% of those who define themselves as traditional, and just 2% of those who define themselves as secular. An almost identical picture emerges regarding the supremacy of halakhah over civil law.

Finally, with the beginning of the new calendar year, the Jewish public sees the future as quite rosy both on the individual level and that of the country: 73% are optimistic about their personal future and 62% are optimistic about the country's. The Arab public manifests a similar feeling on the personal level, with 78% optimistic about their future.

Only 42% of Arab respondents, however, were found to be optimistic about the country's future.

### **The Negotiations Index for January, 2011**

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: 50.6; Jewish sample: 49.8**

**Syria Index: General sample: 36.6; Jewish sample: 31.2**

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*The Peace Index is a project of the [Evans Program for Conflict Resolution at Tel Aviv University](#) and [the Israel Democracy Institute](#). This month's survey was conducted by telephone on January 18-19, 2011, by the Dahaf Institute. The survey included 600 respondents, who constitute a representative sample of the adult Jewish population of Israel. The measurement error for a sample of this size is 4.5%; statistical processing was done by Ms. Yasmin Alkalay.*