

Peace Index - July 2011

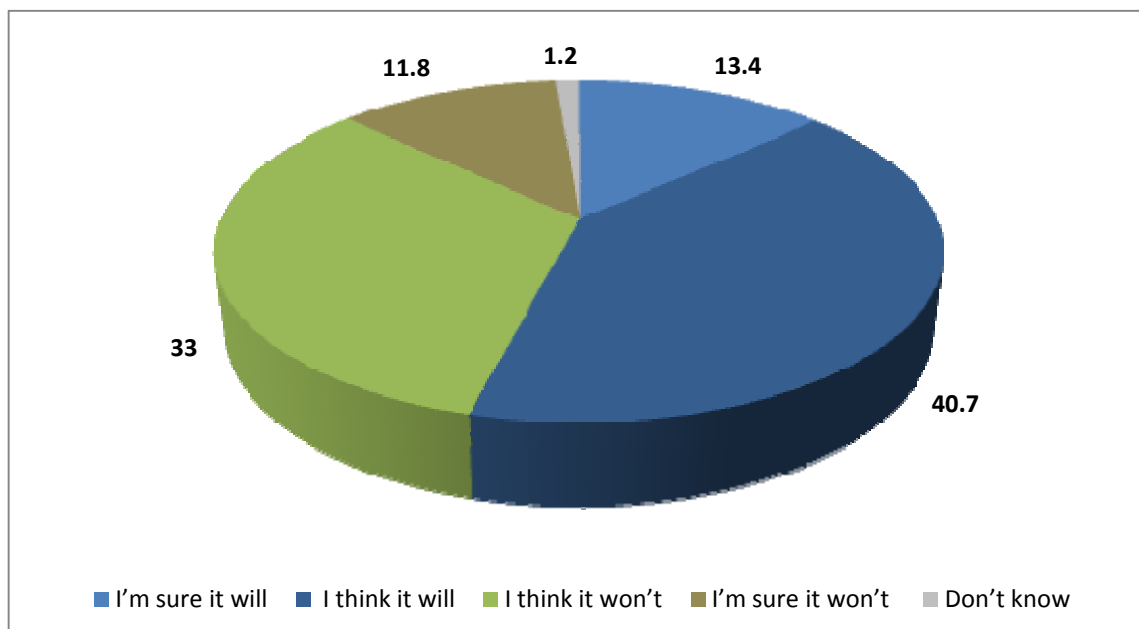
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Summary of the Findings

- **Support for the protest, and optimism** – 91% of the Jewish public supports the housing protest . A majority (53%) also thinks the protest is likely to bring about a change in the situation.
- **A sincere and genuine protest, not a leftist one** – This is what the large majority (77%) believes. Only 17% see the protest as leftist. The rest have no clear opinion on the matter.
- **A “blue and white” protest** – A large majority (78%) of the Jewish public says this is an authentic Israeli protest. Only 13% see it as influenced by the “Arab spring.”
- **A popular revolt? Not here!** – As in the past, the majority does not expect the Israeli public to take to the streets en masse with the goal of changing the government. There has been, however, a sharp increase in the minority that sees a popular revolt, similar to the revolts in Egypt and other countries of the region, as likely in Israel (up from 7% in February 2011 to 25% at present).
- **A democracy changes governments through elections** – This is the preferred (29%) explanation for the view that there will not be a popular revolt in Israel. In second place (22%) is the explanation that, as the public sees it, even a change of government will not substantially alter the situation. At the same time, the explanation that the public is too apathetic to take to the streets has declined sharply in popularity – from 25% in February 2011 to only 10% today.
- **A reversal in the perception of the country’s overall situation** – The majority (54%) now defines Israel's overall situation as very bad or bad, compared to 55% who defined it as very good or good this past February.
- **Closing the socioeconomic gaps** – The public sees this as the top priority that the government should have (50%), while 18% cited the creation of affordable housing as the government's top priority. Eleven percent opted for reaching peace with the Palestinians, about the same rate chose improving Israel’s international standing, and 10% saw increasing Israel’s military power as the most important objective. In other words, two-thirds give the highest priority to socioeconomic issues while one-third put the political-security sphere first.
- **The government lacks a clear order of priorities** – Or so a majority (56%) of the Jewish public thinks.

- **A gap between the government's goals and the public's preferences** – Of the 39% of respondents who believe the government has a clear set of priorities, the majority (68%) believes the government has the ability to achieve its goals; at the same time, however, a majority (54%) agrees that the government's order of priorities does not match that of the general public.
- **Similar but different:** The Arab public's positions are similar to those of the Jewish public with two notable exceptions: the Arabs tend more to attribute the protest in Israel to the influence of the wave of protests in the Arab world (43%), rather than seeing it as a "blue and white" product, and they see promoting a peace agreement with the Palestinians as the top national priority (39%).
- **A decline in the perceived likelihood of a Palestinian declaration in September** – This month saw a further decline in the rate of those who think the Palestinians will ask the United Nations to recognize a Palestinian state in September. Today only half of the Jewish public (51%) believes the Palestinians will do so. Yet a majority (64%) still expects that if the Palestinians appeal to the UN, a majority of the General Assembly will grant the new state recognition.

Graph of the month: In your opinion, what is the likelihood that the housing protest will bring about a change of policy and a significant improvement in the housing situation?



The Findings in Detail

One of the fascinating aspects of the present wave of protest, at least in its first stage, is the support it has received across Israel's political camps. In the course of the survey, 91% of the Jewish public expressed support for the housing protest. We checked for differences in support between people of different income levels, and found that the disparities are negligible: among those who reported below-average income, 91% expressed support, as compared to 95% of respondents with average income and 89.5% of respondents with above-average income. A segmentation by self-identification as right-wing, centrist, or left-wing also did not yield very significant differences, although support for the protest was highest on the left. Among those who identified themselves as right-wing, 88% supported the housing protest, as did 94% in the center and 95.5% on the left. Quite surprisingly, age also turned out to be an insignificant variable regarding support for the protest .

A slim majority (53%) thinks the housing protest is likely to bring about a change. Here larger gaps emerged based on income and political affiliation. The most optimistic were those of average income; 63% of this group believed the protest could bring about a change, compared to 52% of respondents with above-average income, and 51% of respondents with below-average income. The right is more optimistic than the center and the left; the rates of those who believe that the protest may cause a change are 59%, 55%, and 45.5% respectively.

Despite the abovementioned differences between camps, the large majority (77%) of the respondents viewed the protest as sincere and genuine, while only 17% of the total Israeli Jewish public saw it as a leftist phenomenon (the rest had no clear opinion on the issue). Not surprisingly, though, the rate of those on the right who see the protest as a leftist protest is much higher than in the center or on the left—26%, 8%, and 3% respectively.

Consistent with our findings from earlier surveys on whether respondents regard themselves as part of the Middle East, a large majority (78%) of the Jewish public affirms that the protest is an authentic, Israeli, “blue and white” protest, with only 13% seeing an influence of the “Arab spring.” Here the center is less inclined to see a link between the popular protests in the Arab countries and the present wave of protest in Israel than the other two camps: only 12% of those who identified themselves with the political center see a link between the phenomena, compared to 20% on the right, and 27% on the left. The above-average income group sees less of a connection between these phenomena than the average-income and below-average groups: 23% compared to 14% and 15% respectively. Here too age did not play a significant role.

Despite the wave of protest that has swept Israel, today, as in the past, the majority does not expect the Israeli public to take to the streets en masse in order to replace the government. There was, however, a dramatic increase in the minority that thinks that a popular revolt, similar to those in Egypt and other Arab countries, is likely in Israel—from 7% in February 2011 to 25% at present. Those with below-average and average income are slightly more “optimistic” about the chances of a popular revolt (25% and 26% respectively) than those with above-average income (20%). Young respondents (18–24) and respondents in the medium age group (25–45) are more optimistic than the older group (28% and 25% compared to 18%). The same is true for the left and the center, where 29% of respondents of each camp see a possibility of a popular revolt in Israel, compared to only 20% on the right .

The preferred explanation (29%) for discounting the likelihood of a popular revolt in Israel is that Israel is a democratic country where the government is changed by elections; in second place (22%) is the belief that even if the government is replaced, the situation will not change substantially. At the same time, the explanation that the public is too apathetic to take to the streets has declined greatly in popularity—from 25% in February to only 10% today.

In this month's measurement, we found that a reversal has occurred in assessments of the country's overall situation: at present the majority (54%) defines the country's overall situation as bad or very bad, compared to 55% who defined it as good as very good this past February. Here we found significant differences based on generational status: the most negative were respondents in the medium age group, 56% of whom see the situation as bad; next were the young respondents, at 53%, while only a minority—albeit large—of older respondents defined Israel's overall situation negatively (47.5%). Political affiliation yielded an even more significant disparity: among respondents who located themselves in the center, exactly half saw Israel's situation as bad, compared to 52% on the right, but 62% on the left .

Half of the respondents identified reducing socioeconomic gaps as the most important goal for the government to adopt. Following this, in descending order, came creating affordable housing (18%), achieving peace with the Palestinians (11%), and about the same rate for improving Israel's international standing. Only 10% identified increasing Israel's military power as the most important goal. In other words, two-thirds of the Israeli Jewish public today assigns the highest priority to socioeconomic issues, compared to one-third who rank the political-security sphere at the top of the scale of priorities. Reducing socioeconomic gaps is the most important goal for all the age groups (50% among young respondents, 52% in the medium age group, and 41.5% among older respondents). There is, however, a significant difference between the members of these

groups regarding the goal that is second most important; in the eyes of the older group, the second most important objective is strengthening Israel's military power, while the medium and young age groups see it as creating affordable housing. A segmentation of the answers to this question by political identification reveals that all three camps give priority to the goal of reducing social gaps, with only minor disparities between them. At the same time, as expected, the groups differ from each other in the importance they ascribe to achieving a peace agreement, with only 3% of respondents on the right viewing it as the most important goal, compared to 16% in the center and 24% on the left .

An especially disturbing finding is that a majority of the public (56%) thinks that the government does not have a clear set of priorities. This position is found especially among respondents with above-average income (65%, as compared to 55% of the average-income group and 48% of the below-average income group), respondents of medium age (63%, as compared to 48% of the older group and 47% of young respondents), and the left (71%, as compared to 64% in the center and 46% on the right). Not surprisingly, among the 39% who think the government has a clear set of priorities, the majority (68%) also affirms that the government has the ability to achieve its goals. At the same time, a majority (54%) of respondents who think the government has a clear set of priorities does not think that the government's order of priorities matches that of the general public .

In the Arab public, perceptions of the social protest and the government's priorities are very similar to those of the Jewish public, with two notable exceptions: the Arabs tend more to attribute the protest in Israel to the influence of the wave of protests in the Arab world (43%) than to see it as a "blue and white product," and see promoting a peace agreement with the Palestinians rather than closing socio-economic gaps as the supreme national priority (39%).(

On a different matter, in this month's survey, we again checked perceptions of the likelihood that the Palestinians will declare an independent state in September. Today only half of the Jewish public (51%) believes the Palestinians will make a declaration of this nature, yet a majority (64%) still expects that if there is an appeal to the United Nations, a majority of the General Assembly will recognize the Palestinian state. As in the previous months, in the Arab public, a majority (53%) believes the Palestinians will not ultimately turn to the UN; a majority (60%), however, expects that if the Palestinians do appeal to the United Nations, their request will win majority support in the General Assembly.

The Negotiations Index for July, 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 Negotiations 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.

Negotiation Index: General sample 49.0; Jewish sample: 47.3

The Peace Index is a project of the [Evens Program for Conflict Resolution](#) at Tel Aviv University and [the Israel Democracy Institute](#). This month's survey was conducted by telephone on July 26-27, 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.