

## Peace Index - June 2011

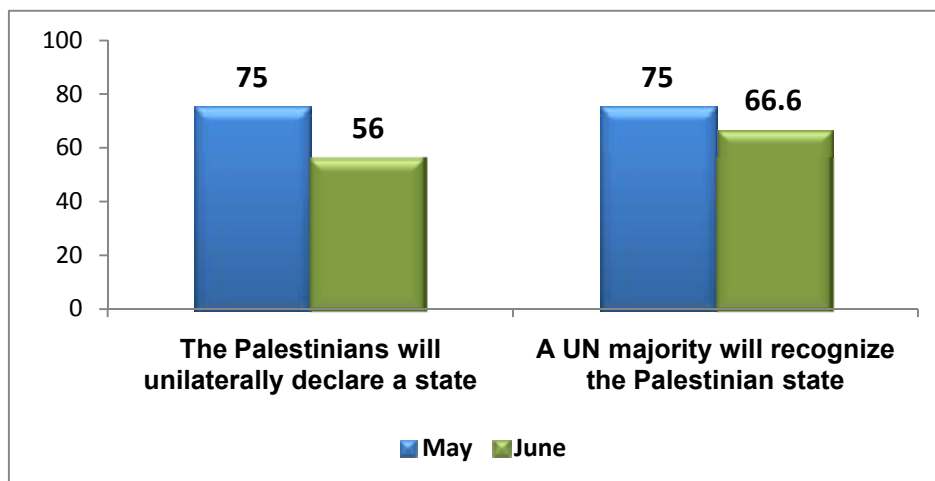
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### Summary of the Findings

- **What is Israel's standing in the world today?** It appears that, despite constant statements about a worldwide anti-Israeli delegitimization campaign, the Israeli Jewish public is not overly alarmed: only about one-half currently think Israel is isolated in the international arena. This is more or less the same rate as those who thought so about a year ago (August 2010): 51.4% compared to 54%.
- **And how is the government functioning on foreign and defense issues?** Apparently still coasting on the public's positive assessment of Netanyahu's visit to Washington last month, the present survey shows a considerable improvement in the public's view of the government's functioning in the foreign sphere, although the scales still tip slightly to the negative side: currently 52% see the government's functioning as poor or very poor, compared to 62% who saw it that way in August 2010.
- **Will the Palestinians declare a state in September and request recognition from the United Nations?** It emerges that, influenced by the reports on the Palestinian leadership's search for an alternative to the UN option because they believe that major countries will not support a unilateral move, the number of respondents who are sure or who think the Palestinians will make such a move has declined considerably, from 75% last month to only 56% in this month's survey.
- **Will the Palestinians have a UN majority?** Here too there has been a substantial decrease in the rate of respondents who are sure or who think a UN majority will recognize a Palestinian state if the General Assembly is asked to do so, with a drop from about 75% last month to 66.6% this month.
- **Is a tsunami coming?** Seventy percent of respondents indeed say they are very or moderately worried about Israel's international situation. However, apparently because of the diminished fear of a Palestinian UN declaration that will win a majority, a clear majority of Israelis (70%) are of the opinion that even if a state is declared and accepted, Israel is not likely to face a political and economic tsunami from the countries of the world if it neither recognizes the Palestinian state nor withdraws from the territories, but rather, at most, Israel may see some changes for the worse in its relations with other countries.

- **And what are the chances of finding a solution in the future?** Only 25% of the Jewish public thinks there is a chance of reaching a peace agreement based on the principle of two states for two peoples in the next two or three years. If the range is increased to the next ten years, the rate of those who see a chance of reaching such a solution rises to 43%, but still represents slightly less than half of the Jewish public.
- **And what should Israel be prepared to “pay” for such a solution?** Only 26% of the Jewish public is currently prepared to support a full peace agreement with the Palestinians in return for evacuating all the territories of Judea and Samaria, while 70% oppose this. As for a peace agreement in return for evacuating the territories while leaving the large settlement blocs in Israel’s hands, support for this possibility gains another 24%, such that the rate of support rises to 50% and the rate of opposition falls to 45%. If a full agreement would include retaining the settlement blocs, a Palestinian declaration of an end to the historic conflict, and Palestinian recognition of Israel as the state of the Jewish people, the support gains another 12%, such that the total rate of support reaches 62% and the rate of opposition declines to 34%.

**Graph of the month:**



### **The Findings in Detail**

In recent months, politicians and the media have frequently referred to what is called the "international delegitimization campaign against Israel," which is being waged on different fronts. Yet the data from this month’s survey shows that such admonitions have not made a substantial impression on the Israeli Jewish public. Indeed, while about half of Jewish respondents (51%) think Israel is isolated at present in the international community, there has been no change for the worse regarding this perception; in fact,

there has even been a tiny improvement from the 54% who held this opinion in August 2010. Interestingly, in the Arab public, the rate of those viewing Israel as currently isolated stands at 32%. This is both much lower than the prevailing perception in the Jewish public, and much lower than the perception of Arab respondents a year ago, when 48% of Israel's Arab citizens saw Israel as isolated in the world.

When it comes to the government's functioning in the area of Israel's foreign relations, a small majority (52%) of the Jewish respondents assess the government's functioning as poor. The Arab public is more critical, with 67% giving the government a negative grade. In most cases, a cross-check of the responses to this question of Jewish respondents with their report of their voting in the most recent elections does not yield surprises. Among Likud and Shas voters, 70% say the government's functioning in the area of foreign relations is good, among Meretz voters not a single person thinks so, and only a small minority of Labor and Kadima voters assess it as such – 22.5% and 25%, respectively. Interestingly, among voters for Yisrael Beiteinu, a party that is considered "far right," the majority that views the government's functioning in the realm of foreign relations as good is quite small, at only 55%. Voters for another right-wing party, the National Union (HaIchud HaLeumi), are evenly split between positive and negative assessments. Presumably, in both of those cases, the criticism of the government's functioning stems from the divergence between the positions of right-wing parties regarding foreign policy and the positions of parties on the left and center.

As to whether the Palestinians will declare an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders and seek recognition for it from the UN General Assembly in September, the present survey reveals a significant decline in the rate that the Jewish public thinks such a step will indeed be taken as compared to last month, with a drop from 75% last month to only 58% this month. This change apparently stems from recent media reports that the Palestinian leadership is seeking to "climb down from the tree" and find a substitute for a declaration of statehood and appeal to the UN because of statements indicating that leaders of major Western countries, including the United States and Germany, will not support a unilateral Palestinian measure. In the Israeli Arab public, the rate of those who believe the Palestinian leadership will declare a state in September – 41% – is low, but is higher than in the Jewish public and similar to previous months, when only a minority of Israeli Arabs thought the Palestinians ultimately would declare a state or turn to the UN.

Similarly, the Jewish public has seen a significant decline in the rate of those who think that if the Palestinians declare an independent state and ask the General Assembly to recognize it, a majority of the Assembly will do so: this has dropped from 75% in the two surveys that were conducted last month (before and after

Netanyahu's visit to Washington in May) to 67% this month. In this case, the prevailing view in the Arab public is the reverse, with only 43% foreseeing a General Assembly majority.

The Jewish public's confidence in Israel's ability to cope with international pressures is evident from the fact that even though 70% of Jewish respondents are worried about the country's international situation, exactly the same number say that even if a Palestinian state is declared and recognized by the UN, Israel is not likely to face a political and economic tsunami from the countries of the world if it does not recognize the Palestinian state. At most, the majority thinks that Israel's relations will deteriorate here and there. In the Arab public, however, opinions are divided: the prevailing view (48%) is that Israel is likely to face a political and economic tsunami, while 43% do not see such a wave of hostility on the horizon.

This month, we checked the extent to which the Jewish public is currently prepared for an evacuation of the territories. It emerges that the critical question concerns the "terms of the deal." If one talks about a permanent peace agreement in return for evacuating all of the territories, only 25% of Jewish respondents express support. When one offers those who oppose a deal on such terms the possibility of leaving the large settlement blocs in Israel's hands, the rate of support rises considerably to half of the Jewish public. If those who also oppose this formula are offered two more "benefits"—Palestinian recognition of Israel as the state of the Jewish people and a declaration of the end of the conflict—the rate of support for the whole package rises to 62%.

Prime Minister Netanyahu recently stated in an interview with writer Etgar Keret that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not territorial but primarily national-religious and hence apparently irresolvable. In light of this statement, it is worth noting that 20% of the Jewish public see the conflict as mainly a territorial conflict, 13% as a political conflict, and 13% as a religious conflict, while the dominant view (43%) is that the conflict is simultaneously territorial-political-religious. In the Arab public, 35% define the conflict as territorial, 18% as national, 7% as religious, and 32% as all three together.

While slightly over half of Jewish respondents ranked the government's functioning in the area of foreign as poor, the picture in the socio-economic domain is gloomier. Sixty-two percent of the Jewish public considers the government's functioning in this area as poor. Moreover, a sweeping majority of 80% say that the socioeconomic issue is troubling to them.

In order to identify the source of the public's unease about the government's socioeconomic policy, we asked the following question: "In recent years the Israeli

economy has been characterized by two parallel trends—stability and economic growth, and a parallel widening of the gap between rich and poor. Some claim that the two trends are interrelated: reducing the gap is likely to harm growth and stability, while enhancing growth and stability widens the gap. If this claim is true, what would you choose today – more growth and stability or more efforts to reduce the gap?” The distribution of the answers in the Jewish and Arab publics is unequivocal: in both, the overwhelming majority chooses the option of reducing the gaps (95% of the Jewish public and 89% of the Arab public).

At the same time, when the respondents were asked whether their personal and family economic situation has changed in recent years, 27% of the Jewish public responded that it had improved, 41% said that it had not changed, and 31.5% indicated that it had worsened. The corresponding figures in the Arab public are 19%, 1%, and 75%, respectively; that is, the negative effect of the economic situation on this sector is much more severe than on the Jewish sector.

As indicated above, in the Jewish public, despite the harsh criticism of the government’s socioeconomic policy, only a minority claim that their personal and family socioeconomic situation has worsened. There may be two explanations for this disparity, which do not necessarily contradict each other. One possibility is that the economic situation of those who claim that their situation has remained the same was not good in the first place, and therefore they are not satisfied with the government’s functioning. The second possibility is that even those whose economic situation is relatively good are not indifferent to the widening of socioeconomic gaps. Indirect support for the second explanation comes from the finding that even among those who reported that their economic situation has improved, the large majority (73%) are troubled by the socioeconomic situation in general. Not surprisingly, though, concern about the overall socioeconomic situation is much higher among those whose own situation has recently worsened; among this group, 92.5% say they are worried.

Finally, a heated debate has recently emerged in the Jewish public over whether the Yizkor prayer for fallen IDF soldiers should begin with the words “May the people of Israel remember” or with the words “May God remember.” The distribution of the answers shows that the rate supporting the first formulation (63.5%) is over three times higher than the number who favor the second one (20.5%). As expected, a cross-check of the respondents’ answers to this question and their religious self-definition reveals a very close connection between the two:

	Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox)	Religious	Traditional-Religious	Between traditional and secular	Secular
Support "May the people of Israel remember"	12%	30%	49%	70%	82%
Support "May God remember"	62%	48%	29%	15%	6%
Other	26%	22%	22%	15%	12%

As the table shows, there is a clear "line of demarcation" between ultra-Orthodox and religious respondents, on the one hand, a majority of whom favor "May God remember," and the other three categories, including the traditional-religious group, among whom a clear majority prefers "May the people of Israel remember".

### The Negotiations Index for June, 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: 49.7; Jewish sample: 49.4**

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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 June 27-28 2011 by the Dahaf Institute. The survey included 599 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.*