

Peace Index - September 2011

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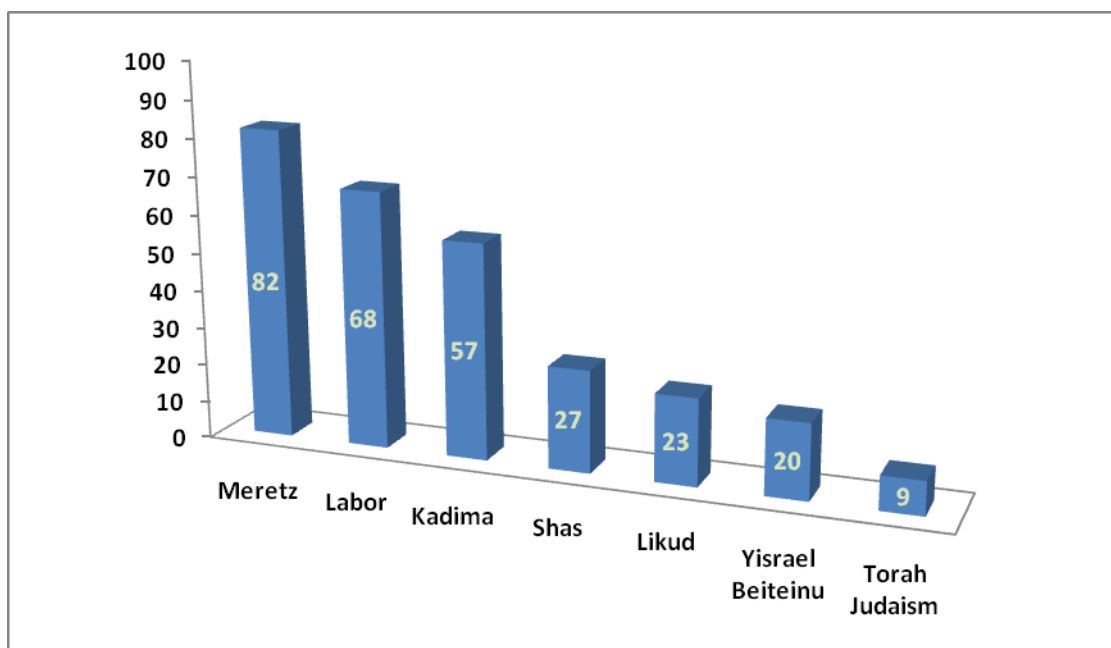
Summary of the Findings

- **What happened on the international level over the past year?** A large majority of the public (69% of the Jews and 55% of the Arabs) thinks Israel's status changed for the worse over the past year .
- **What happened regarding security?** Here a considerable gap was found between Jews and Arabs: the prevailing view among the Jews is that security remained the same (40%), followed by the opinion that the situation worsened (39%). Among the Arabs, however, the majority thinks the security situation improved (55% .
- **What happened in the economic sphere?** Here, too, large disparities were found between Jews and Arabs. On the personal economic level, the majority (55%) of the Jews say their situation remained as it was, while 31% report that it worsened. Among the Arabs, though, a large majority (65%) says their situation deteriorated. As for the economic condition of the country as a whole, the most common view among the Jews is that it deteriorated (38%), with 32.5% thinking it remained as it was. Among the Arabs, a large majority (60%) think the situation worsened and only 35% say it stayed the same. A minority of both groups believes the situation improved .
- **What happened as far as national solidarity is concerned?** Here the picture among the Jews is more positive: 36% think the people's unity remained as it was, while 32% see it as having strengthened. Among the Arabs, conversely, the majority thinks the situation deteriorated in this regard (58%).
- **What happened in the area of relations between the citizen and the leadership?** On this question there is in fact a consensus between the Jews and the Arabs, a majority of whom (63% and 62%, respectively) consider that a deterioration occurred in this regard over the past year.
- **What will the government do with the Trajtenberg Committee's recommendations?** The answers to this question reflect a lack of trust in the leadership, especially among the Jews, where a majority (68%) sees low chances that the government will carry out the recommendations. Among the Arabs, indeed, a majority (54%) believes the opposite. A segmentation of the responses by age revealed that although the majority in all age groups is skeptical about the chances of implementation, the skepticism is, in fact, lower among young respondents than among the more mature age groups (the younger group—59%, the middle age group—70%, and the older group—72%).
- **Should the protest continue?** On this there is broad agreement: the majority of both Jews (80%) and Arabs (66%), and of all the age groups favor continuing the protest

(the younger group— 75%, the middle age group—83%, and the older age group— 87%).

- **From the standpoint of the Israeli interest, is it desirable that a Palestinian state be established at present?** A modest majority of the Jewish public (54%) says that, in terms of the Israeli interest, it is not desirable that such a state be established today. The Arab public is evenly split on the question. A segmentation of the public by voting for the Knesset shows that among voters for Meretz, Labor, and Kadima, a majority believes that from Israel's standpoint it is desirable that a Palestinian state be established .
- **Is the Palestinian leadership capable of honoring obligations it would assume in the context of an agreement with Israel?** A majority (79%) of the Jews say the Palestinian leadership would not be capable of upholding its obligations; a majority (59%) of the Arab public thinks the opposite.
- **Should Israel cooperate with the Palestinian state if it is established?** A small majority (51% vs. 42%) of the Jewish public would favor such cooperation, and a very large majority (82%) of the Arab public.
- **Is President Obama more pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian?** Unlike in the past, when the Jews saw Obama as pro-Palestinian, today there is an even split between those who think he is more pro-Israeli and those who view him as equally sympathetic to both sides (39%). Among the Arabs, however, a huge majority (87%) currently sees Obama as more pro-Israeli.

**Graph of the month: Is it in Israel's national interest that an independent Palestinian state be established now?
(Jewish sample, by voting in the last election)**



The Findings in Detail

A In this month's survey we addressed the two "burning" issues on September's agenda: the social protest and the Palestinians' statehood bid at the United Nations. We also carried out a brief annual "overview" of sorts, which opens this report .

The data show that in the public's opinion, the past year was not a good one on the international level. A large majority (69% of the Jews and 55% of the Arabs) think Israel's international status changed for the worse. A segmentation of the Jewish sample by voting for the Knesset in the most recent elections raised a particularly interesting finding. As one would expect for Meretz, Labor, and Kadima voters, a huge majority considers that Israel's international situation has deteriorated (100%, 91%, and 95%, respectively). However, even among Likud voters, the majority (65%) thinks so as well. Conversely, the majority of religious-party and Yisrael Beiteinu voters say the situation has remained the same or even improved .

On the security issue, however, we found that the large divide is between Jews and Arabs: while the prevailing opinion (40%) among the Jews is that security remained as it was, followed by the view that the situation deteriorated (39%), the majority of the Arabs think the security situation improved (55%). Rather surprisingly, on this issue a segmentation of the Jewish interviewees by Knesset voting did not yield systematic results .

In the economic sphere as well we found large Jewish-Arab disparities. On the personal economic level, the majority (55%) of the Jews say their situation remained as it was, while 31% report that their situation deteriorated. Among the Arabs, however, a large majority (65%) says their situation has worsened. Against the backdrop of the summer protest, it is interesting to note that a segmentation by age did not reveal that the economic situation of the young got worse this year. On the contrary, according to the reporting in this survey, their situation deteriorated less than that of the medium and older age groups. As for the economic condition of the country as a whole, the most common view among the Jews was that the situation worsened (38%), with 32.5% assessing that it remained as it was. As for the Arabs, a large majority (60%) thinks the situation has deteriorated and only 35% that it has stayed the same. A minority of both groups believes the situation has improved. A segmentation by Knesset voting reveals that the rate of those who think the country's economic condition worsened over the past year is highest among Kadima and Labor voters (47%)—precisely the parties whose voters reported a personal economic deterioration less than everyone else!

In the area of national solidarity, the picture among the Jews is more positive: 36% think the unity of the people remained as it was and 32% even see it as having strengthened. Among the Arabs, though, the majority considers that the situation worsened in this regard (58%). A segmentation of the Jewish respondents by age turns up very large

disparities: among the young, 42% think the solidarity has intensified, compared to 33% of the middle –age group and only 17% of the older age group. A segmentation by voting did not turn up systematic results, though they indicate that in fact among voters for the small parties there was a greater sense of enhanced solidarity than among voters for the three large parties, where the prevailing assessment is that the situation remained as it was.

And what happened on the level of relations between the citizen and the leadership? On this question there is, again, a national consensus that the situation got worse, with a majority of Jews and Arabs (63% and 62% respectively) thinking so. Kadima, Labor, and Meretz voters are, as expected, the ones with a particularly negative appraisal (84%, 74%, and 70%, respectively). However, even among Likud voters a small majority (51%) believes such a deterioration occurred. A segmentation by age did not produce systematic results .

As for the answers to the question of what the government will do with the recommendations of the Trajtenberg Committee, they indeed reflect a distrust of the leadership, primarily among the Jews, a majority of whom (68%) see low chances that the government will implement them. A majority (54%) of the Arabs, in fact, think the opposite. A segmentation of the responses to this question by age revealed that, though in all age groups the majority is skeptical about the chances of implementation, the skepticism is actually lower among the young than for the older age groups (the younger group—59%, the middle group—70%, the older group—72%). A segmentation by voting shows that the most optimistic about the government carrying out all of the committee's resolutions are—not surprisingly—the voters for the core parties of the coalition: Yisrael Beiteinu (37%) and Likud (30%), though here too the majority thinks otherwise. Voters for Shas, despite its being in the coalition, were more skeptical on the matter with a mere 9% seeing high chances for this .

Logically enough, then, there is wide agreement in the public that the protest should continue: the large majority of both Jews (80%) and Arabs (66%), and of all the age groups (the younger group—75%, the middle group—83%, the older group—87%) think so. Interestingly, whereas a sweeping majority of the Jews (83%) affirm that the protest has so far achieved its purpose—boosting awareness of the social-justice issue—only a minority (41%) of the Arabs hold that view .

Another gap between Jews and Arabs was found on the question: “In principle, do you support or oppose substantially cutting the defense budget and transferring the money to social purposes such as education, health, welfare, and housing?.” Whereas 80% of the Arabs supported such a transfer, opinions among the Jews were divided: 49.5% were in favor of substantially cutting the defense budget for the sake of those other areas while 42% were against it .

And in the sphere of the country's foreign relations, given the Palestinians' move at the United Nations at the end of September, we asked whether, from the standpoint of the Israeli interest, it is desirable or not desirable for a Palestinian state to be established at present. A modest majority of the Jewish public (54%) says that, in terms of the Israeli interest, it is not desirable that such a state be established at this time, while the Arab public is evenly split on the question. A segmentation of the Jewish public by Knesset voting shows that among voters for Meretz, Labor, and Kadima, in fact a majority believes that from the standpoint of Israel's national interest it is currently desirable that a Palestinian state be established .

And yet a large majority of the Jewish public (79%) considers that the Palestinian leadership would not be capable of honoring obligations it would take upon itself in the context of a peace agreement with Israel. In the Arab public, however, a majority (59%) thinks the opposite. A segmentation of the Jewish interviewees' responses to this question by Knesset voting revealed that among no party's voters, not even those for Meretz, does a majority think the Palestinian leadership would be able to fulfill these commitments. Nevertheless, a small majority (51% vs. 42%) of the Jewish public favors cooperation with the Palestinian state, and a vast majority (82%) of the Arab public. A segmentation of the Jewish respondents by age showed that, as we found in the past, the young are more hawkish than the old: while only 40% of the young favor cooperation with the Palestinian state if established, 51.5% of the middle age group would support it, and 63% of the older group would support it .

Finally, we repeated a question we have asked a number of times in the past: is President Obama more pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian? Whereas in the past the Jewish public saw the American president as more pro-Palestinian, at present there is an even split between those who think he is more pro-Israeli and those who view him as equally sympathetic to both sides (39%). Among the Arabs, however, a huge majority (87%) currently sees Obama as more pro-Israeli. Among the Jews the highest rate of those who think Obama is more pro-Israeli (66%) was measured among Meretz voters. Exactly half of Yisrael Beiteinu voters think so too, and 43% of Kadima voters. The rates of those holding this perception are lower among voters for the rest of the parties .

Negotiations index: General sample: 49.6; Jewish sample: 49.7

The Peace Index is a project of the [Evans Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution](#) at Tel Aviv University and the [Israel Democracy Institute](#). This month's survey was conducted by telephone on October 2-3, 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.