

Peace Index – December 2016

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Amid the uproar following the ruling in the Elor Azarya trial, the first part of this month's Peace Index survey will focus on the public's positions on this issue. The second part will deal with the implications of the U.S. change of government for relations with Israel, and of the United Nations Security Council resolution on building in the settlements. Finally, as the new secular year begins, we will look at the public's expectations on the personal level and for the country in 2017.

The people are with Elor: The survey was conducted during the two days before the ruling (on January 2-3). We found that even before there was a conviction, that is, independent of the outcomes of the trial that still were unknown, a large majority of the Jewish public (59.5%) thought that putting Azarya on trial was unjustified. Similarly, 57% held the view that the trial had been conducted unfairly. We segmented the responses to these two questions according to several variables. A segmentation by political camp (on the diplomatic-security issue) revealed that in the right-wing camp as a whole, a huge majority thought the trial was unjustified (right—90%, moderate right—73%). In the center and on the left, however, the majority thought the trial was justified (center—49%, moderate left—75.5%, left—69%). A segmentation by the same variable of the responses to the question about the trial's fairness "moved" the center to the right; in the center, too, the higher rate believed the trial had not been conducted fairly (right—77%, moderate right—70%, center—46%, compared to 40% who viewed the conduct of the trial as fair). On the left only a minority saw the conduct of the trial as unfair (moderate left—30%, left—22%). An interesting and worrisome finding emerged from analyzing the question of the trial's fairness by age: the rate who thought the trial was conducted unfairly was especially high among the youngest age group (18-24) at 72%, compared to a range of 43%-60% among the other age groups.

A segmentation by ethnic extraction revealed a majority in all the groups who thought it was unjustified to put Azarya on trial, but at different rates. Among those of Asian-African background (first and second generation), 66% thought it was unjustified; among second-generation Israeli natives—61%; among immigrants from the former Soviet Union (first and second generation)—59%; and among those of American-European background (first and

second generation), only 49% took that position. An analysis by ethnic extraction of the responses to the question on the (un)fairness of the trial revealed an identical pattern. In all the groups, the higher rate thought the trial had not been conducted fairly, but the specific rates differed: Asian-African background—63%, Israeli natives—60.5%, Soviet immigrants—54%, and U.S.-European background—44% (compared to 38% who thought the opposite).

In the Arab public the prevailing opinion (48%) is that putting Azarya on trial was justified, though 30% of the respondents did not know or declined to respond to this question. An interesting finding is that the highest rate of respondents in the Arab public (46%) also thought the trial was conducted unfairly, but probably for different reasons than those who thought so in the Jewish public.

From there we moved on to positions regarding the change of government in the United States and the condemnatory Security Council resolution on building in the settlements.

Obama—unfriendly to Israel, Trump—apparently a friend, Putin—neutral: A majority of the Jewish public (57%) thinks that during the years of his tenure the attitude toward Israel of Barack Obama, the outgoing U.S. president, was unfriendly. Some 69%, however, expect the attitude toward Israel of Trump, the incoming president, to be friendly. We also looked into the public's position on the attitude toward Israel of the Russian president, Putin, with whom Trump has recently developed friendly ties, and we found that the prevailing opinion (41%) is that his attitude toward Israel is neutral. Twenty-six percent view his attitude toward Israel as unfriendly and 19% as friendly. A segmentation by political camp showed that on the right as a whole and in the center, only a small minority sees Obama's attitude toward Israel as friendly (right—13%, moderate right—9%, center—27%). On the left, however, a majority views it as friendly (moderate left—51%, left—63%). As for Trump, we found that a majority in all the political camps expect him to be friendly toward Israel (right—80%, moderate right—76%, center—62%, moderate left—57%, left—54%). Concerning Putin, we did not find systematic differences between the camps.

The Arab public agrees with the assessment that Trump will be friendly toward Israel (73%) but disagrees with the views about Obama and Putin: a majority (64%) sees Obama as friendly to Israel and 55% also regard Putin as a friend of Israel.

The cause of the Security Council's condemnatory resolution: hostility to Israel: A small majority of the Jewish public (53%) thinks that the condemnatory resolution on settlement building in the territories that the UN Security Council recently adopted stemmed mainly from hostility to Israel. Only 28.5% said it stemmed mainly from a principled position in keeping with international law. A segmentation by political camp reveals that on the right as a whole and in the center, the majority ascribed the resolution to hostility to Israel (right—64%, moderate right—64%, center—45%, compared to 40% who thought otherwise). On the left as a whole, only a minority believe it was hostility that caused the Security Council to adopt the condemnatory resolution (moderate left—19%, left—11%). In the Arab public the prevailing opinion (52%) is that the Security Council resolution was mainly influenced by the council's principled position in keeping with international law.

The U.S. nonveto of the resolution: because of Obama-Netanyahu relations: As for why the U.S. refrained from vetoing this resolution, the most common position in the Jewish public (45%) is that the decision was made against the backdrop of the poor relations between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Obama. At the same time, considerable rates (33% of the Jewish public as a whole) ascribed the nonveto to a principled position (right—38.5%, moderate right—30%, center—28%, moderate left—45%, left—46%). In the Arab public the prevailing view (40%) is like the opinion on the Security Council resolution—that is, that the main motive was a principled position on the issue.

Israel should not refrain from building in the wake of the Security Council resolution: To the question "In the wake of the Security Council's condemnatory resolution, in your opinion should or should not Israel cease the construction in the territories?" 62% of the Jewish public replied that the building should continue. Here too there were large gaps between the political camps. On the right and the moderate right, a huge majority affirms that Israel should not blink on the issue of building in the territories (89% and 83.5%). In the center the opinions are divided, with a tendency toward the right-wing stance (45% in favor of continued building, 42% against). As expected, on the left as a whole only a minority supports continued building (moderate left—21%, left—15%). In the Arab public the large majority (71%) is in favor of ending the construction.

The building in the territories will continue under Trump: Seventy-one percent of the Jewish public assesses that under the Trump administration Israel will be able to keep building in the settlements. We did not find large gaps between the political camps on this question. In the Arab public the rate that thinks so is even higher—80%.

Netanyahu's response to the resolution—reasonable: On Netanyahu's reactions in protest of the different countries' votes in favor of the Security Council's condemnatory resolution, 47% of the Jewish public take the view that his reactions were reasonable, 35% regard them as too extreme, and only 10% say Netanyahu's reactions were too moderate. On the moderate left and on the left, the majority thinks Netanyahu's response was too extreme (72% and 89%). In the Arab public a majority was found (55%) who view Netanyahu's response as too extreme.

One state can be both democratic and Jewish: A majority of the Jewish public (58%) rejects U.S. secretary of state Kerry's assertion in his recent speech that if there is no two-state solution and "the choice is one state, Israel can either be Jewish or democratic—it cannot be both." Not surprisingly, a segmentation by political camps reveals that on the left the majority agrees with Kerry's words (moderate left—72%, left—75%).

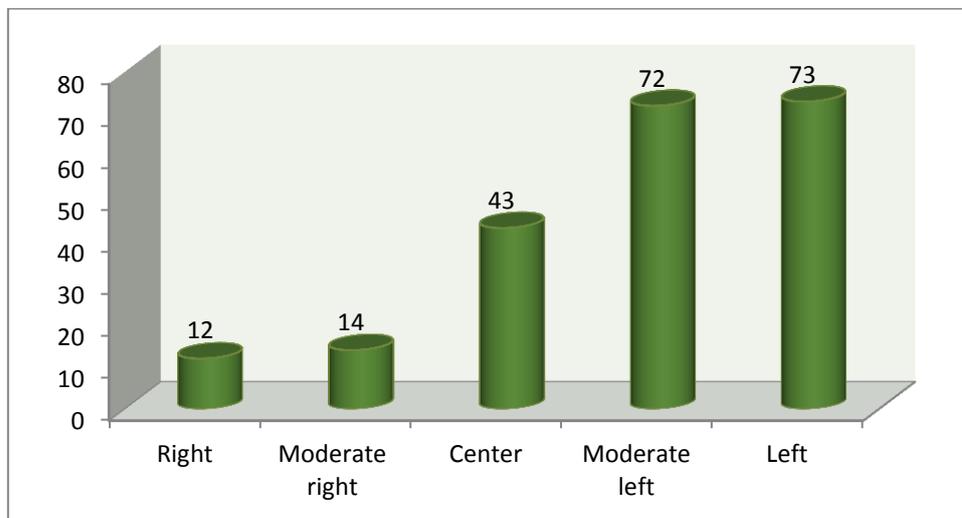
Trump will move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem: The prevailing opinion (50%) in the Jewish public is that despite the expected negative reaction in the Arab world, Trump will uphold his promise to transfer the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Thirty-five percent think the opposite and 15% do not know. A segmentation by political camp reveals that on the right a majority believes that the promise will be honored (right—63%, moderate right—55%). The center is split (45% believe it will be upheld while exactly the same rate does not). On the left as a whole, only a minority thinks the embassy will be moved to Jerusalem as promised (moderate left—21%, left—30%).

And as for what we can expect in the coming year:

A 2017 fraught with blessings: A large majority of the Jewish public (70%) are optimistic about their personal future in the year that has begun. On the personal level we did not find disparities when we segmented the responses by age or political camp. Regarding Israel's future, the rate of optimists in the Jewish public as a whole exceeds the pessimists, though by much smaller margins: optimistic—50%, neither optimistic nor pessimistic—20%, pessimistic—28%. On the future of the country we found large disparities between the rates of optimists in the different political camps: right—61%, moderate right—56%, center—46%, moderate left—26%, left—18%. In the Arab public 77% are optimistic about their personal situation in the coming year, and 48% are optimistic about the country's future.

Negotiations Index: 47 (Jewish sample—45.7)

Diagram of the month: In his speech last week U.S. secretary of state Kerry said that if the two-state solution is not implemented and one state emerges between the Jordan and the sea, it will be either Jewish or democratic but cannot be both Jewish and democratic. In your opinion, is this statement right? (% right, Jews, by political camp)



The Peace Index is a project of the Evens Program for Mediation and Conflict Resolution at Tel Aviv University and the Guttman Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research of the Israel Democracy Institute. This month's survey was conducted by telephone on January 2-3, 2017, by the Midgam Research Institute. The survey included 600 respondents (500 Jews, 100 Arabs), who constitute a representative national sample of the adult population aged 18 and over. The maximum measurement error for the entire sample is $\pm 4.1\%$ at a confidence level of 95%. Statistical processing was done by Ms. Yasmin Alkalay. <http://www.peaceindex.org>