

## Peace Index, January 2017

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The month of January was full of events relevant to our concerns. We focused on four issues: what the Israeli public sees as the desirable policy for Judea and Samaria/the West Bank as U.S. president Trump begins his tenure; the question of the law-enforcement policy toward illegal building by Jews and Arabs in Israel against the backdrop of the events at Umm al-Hiran; aspects of the investigations of the prime minister, including trust in the police and in the attorney-general; and—in the context of what has been revealed about the conversations between Netanyahu and Arnon Mozes—the public's attitude toward the Israeli media organizations.

**Expanding the construction in Judea and Samaria/the West Bank:** Recently right-wing Israeli politicians have declared that as President Trump's tenure begins, our region has also begun a new political era and Israel must exploit the opportunity to expand construction in Judea and Samaria/the West Bank. It turns out that the Jewish public is less enthusiastic than these politicians. Fifty percent think or are sure that it is unwise to expand construction at present, compared to 45% who think or are sure that the opposite is the case. A segmentation of the responses by political camp reveals, as expected, that positions on this issue reflect interviewees' political location on the right-left diplomatic-security spectrum. A segmentation by voting in the latest Knesset elections shows that the party whose voters most strongly support expanded construction is Torah Judaism (83%). But among voters for Kulanu, which is also part of the current coalition, the majority (58%) opposes expanding the building in the territories. As for the Arab public, a clear majority opposes expanding construction (78%).

**Annexing parts of Judea and Samaria/the West Bank:** When it comes to annexing large parts of Judea and Samaria/the West Bank against the backdrop of the change of government in the United States, an idea also raised by the same right-wing politicians, the Jewish public is even

more hesitant. A small majority (53%) thinks or is sure that the new situation should not be exploited to annex, at this moment, large parts of the territories. At the same time, slightly more than a third (37%) takes the opposite view. Most of the support for annexation comes, not surprisingly, from those who define themselves as right-wing in diplomatic-security terms (and they constitute 52% of the Jewish public). Even in this camp, however, one cannot speak of wall-to-wall agreement on annexation. As on the issue of expanding construction, on annexation as well the strongest support comes from Torah Judaism voters (72%). The Arab public opposes annexation at the same rate that it opposes expanding construction.

**Rights for Palestinians in case the territories are annexed:** We wanted to know what political status the Israeli public thinks the Palestinian residents of the territories should be given if the territories are annexed. It turns out, probably to the chagrin of those who dream of a single state with universal rights for all its residents, that at least for now the Jewish public's distribution of views on this question shows staunch opposition. Only one-fourth (24.5%) hold the view that, if the territories are annexed, the Palestinians should be given citizenship. The rest are divided between those who think they should be given "the status of residents, which is less than citizenship—for example, they would not be allowed to vote in elections" (30%) and those who think "they should not be given any status beyond what they have now" (31.5%). Interestingly, among those defining themselves as left or moderate left only a small majority (55%) thinks that, in case of annexation, the Palestinians should be granted Israeli citizenship. Indeed, as the figure shows, this question apparently embarrassed the left: the rate who declined to answer it or did not know the answer was very high. In the center, about a third say that if the territories are annexed the Palestinians should be given citizenship, while on the right, on average, only about 10% take that view. In the Arab public 62% favor granting citizenship to the Palestinians in territories annexed—if they are annexed—to Israel.

**The law-enforcement policy against illegal building by Jews and Arabs in Israel:** A large majority (71%) of the Jewish public supports Prime Minister Netanyahu's recent decision to crack down on construction without the required permits in Israeli Arab communities. At the same time, an overwhelming majority of 79% believe that the state's treatment of building infractions in Israel by Jewish and Arab citizens should be equal. The apparent contradiction between the principled position on equitable enforcement and the support for a crackdown on

illegal Arab building could be at least partly resolved by the finding that half of the Jewish public (and 70% of the right) rejects the claim that illegal Arab building stems from necessity—specifically, from the fact that successive Israeli governments have not taken into account Arab population growth, increased the lands of the Arab local authorities, or allowed the establishment of new Arab communities. Only 38% of the Jewish public, the overwhelming majority of them on left along with a few in the center, accept this contention. In the Arab public about three-fourths (74%) oppose the crackdown that Netanyahu announced, and about the same rate (76%) concurs with the claim that the illegal building results from Israeli governments' inconsiderate policy over the years. At the same time, some 87% affirm that Jewish and Arab building infractions should be treated equally.

**Trust in the police:** The events at Umm al-Hiran and the investigations of the prime minister pose the question of public trust in the police. It turns out that the Jewish public's trust in the police is quite solid. Fifty-eight percent accept the police's claim that the Bedouin teacher Yacoub al-Kiyan was shot by officers because he tried to carry out a ramming attack that caused the death of the officer Erez Levi. A huge majority (80%) of the Arab public, however, does not believe the police's version. A similar rate (60%) of the Jewish public believes that the police are conducting the investigations of the prime minister's affairs professionally and objectively. On this question too, the Arab public does not put trust in the police: the rate who believe the investigators are acting professionally and objectively (30%) is much lower than the rate of those who think the opposite (50%).

And what about the police commissioner's claim that associates of the prime minister are pressuring the police investigators? The rate of those in the Jewish public who believe his contention, and think the prime minister has given a green light for these pressures (45%), is considerably higher than the rate who think the prime minister is not behind them (36%). In the Arab public the majority (58%) thinks Netanyahu has given his associates a green light to pressure the police investigators who are dealing with the affairs he is involved in.

**Trust in the attorney-general:** Against the backdrop of the prime minister's claim that the left is heavily pressuring the attorney-general with the aim of undemocratically ousting the Likud government, we asked: "To what degree do you trust or not trust the attorney-general to reach a

decision on the issue of serving an indictment in a professional fashion, without giving in to pressures of one kind or another?" The distribution of responses to this question is clear: 60% of the Jewish public trusts the attorney-general to do his work faithfully. As on the issue involving the police, in the Arab public the rate who do not trust the attorney-general (47%) is higher than the rate of those who do trust him regarding the investigations of the prime minister (37%).

**Why did Netanyahu record Mozes?:** 35.5% of the Jewish public believe Netanyahu's claim that he taped the conversations with Arnon "Noni" Mozes, owner and editor of the newspaper *Yediot Aharonot*, so that he would have proof that Mozes had tried to blackmail him. 50% do not believe Netanyahu's explanation. In the Arab public the rate of those who do not believe Netanyahu is even higher (60.5%).

**When should Netanyahu resign if an indictment is served against him?:** Given the above-noted mistrust, it comes as no surprise that the majority of the Jewish public (52%) holds the view that if an indictment is served against him, the prime minister should resign immediately even though, according to the letter of the law, he need not do so until he is convicted and his appeal is rejected. In the Arab public the rate of supporters of immediate resignation upon the serving of an indictment comes to 71.5%.

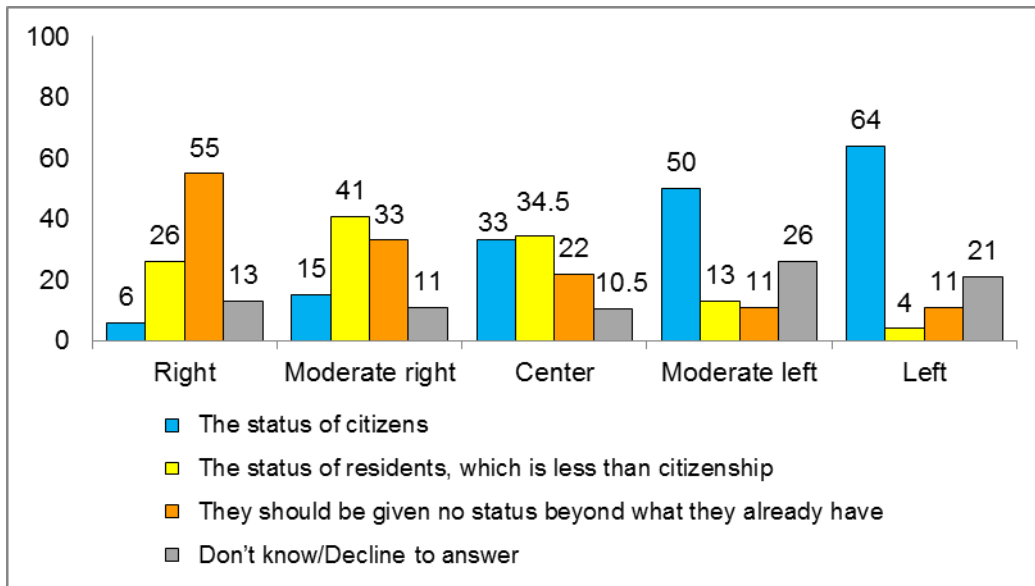
**Trust in the Israeli media organizations:** In the context of Mozes' investigation and the relationship between his newspaper and the prime minister, this week we looked into the public's degree of trust in the media. The survey findings in fact show a deep distrust of the various media. At the bottom of the ladder of trust is the print media; only 15% of the Jewish public and 18% of the Arab public have a great deal or quite a lot of trust in the information it provides. The information coming from the social networks is trusted by only 19% of the Jewish public and 14% of the Arab public. The information from television is trusted by 29% of the Jewish public and 17% of the Arab public. And the information conveyed by the radio wins the trust of 30% of the Jewish public and 18% of the Arab public.

**Who, or what factors, infringe or could infringe freedom of the press in Israel?** On this question we tested four factors: the military censorship, interference by governmental entities, reactions on the internet (Talkbacks), and interference by publishers or owners of media

organizations. At the top of the ladder of factors that could infringe or are already infringing freedom of the press in Israel, in the public's opinion, is interference by publishers and owners of media (73% of the Jewish public and 57% of the Arab public say so). In second place is interference by governmental entities (according to 69% of the Jewish public and 67% of the Arab public). The rates who think talkbacks and the competition between media infringe freedom of the press are a bit lower both among Jews and Arabs. Only in the case of the military censorship, a majority of the Jewish public (54%) believes it does not infringe freedom of the press, a position that could be explained by this public's great sensitivity to security matters. In the Arab public 60% think the military censorship does infringe freedom press freedom.

**Negotiations index: 45.9 (Jews—44.0)**

**Diagram of the month: And if Israel annexes territories in Judea and Samaria/the West Bank, what political status should it give the Palestinian residents of those territories after the annexation?**



*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 and Internet from January 30 to February 1, 2017, by the Midgam Research Institute. The survey included 600 respondents (100 Arabs and 500 Jews), 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.*

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