

Peace Index – June 2016

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With the fiftieth anniversary of the Six Day War approaching, this month the Peace Index survey mostly explored the public's positions on the war's ramifications for the situation today and in the future. In light of the recent referendum in Britain, we also looked into the public's views on a possible referendum in Israel on the future of the territories, along with their preferences were such a referendum to be conducted. In addition, we inquired into what the public thinks of the agreement between Israel and Turkey.

The impact on Israel's situation of the developments since the Six Day War: Both the Jewish public and the Arab public are divided, in very similar proportions, between those who think the developments in the territories have improved Israel's security situation and those who believe they have worsened it (Jews: improved—44%, worsened—43%; Arabs: improved—48%, worsened—49%). As for the diplomatic situation, a majority (57%) in both the Jewish public and the Arab public sees the developments in the West Bank/Judea and Samaria as having worsened Israel's situation.

The settlements and the national interest: We opened with a general question: "Sometime after the Six Day War the settlement enterprise began to develop. In your opinion, from a perspective of 50 years later, has the settlement enterprise contributed to or damaged Israel's national interest?" We found that a majority (52%) of the Jewish public thinks the settlement enterprise has contributed to the national interest. More concretely, we gauged the public's views on how the investment in the settlements has affected the national resource allocation. We asked: "Some claim that over the years Israeli governments have invested many resources and monies in developing the Jewish settlements and infrastructures in the West Bank/Judea and Samaria, and previously also in Gaza, at the expense of other areas and populations in Israel that are disadvantaged and would have needed these resources and budgets. Others claim that there is no connection between the two because one does not come at the expense of the other. With which claim do you agree?" Here the Jewish public is divided, with a slight advantage for those who say there is no connection between investments in the territories and the lack of resources for socioeconomic problems besetting deprived areas and disadvantaged populations. (The investment in the territories comes at the expense of budgets for deprived areas and disadvantaged populations—45%; there is no connection between the two—49%.) In the Arab public, a two-thirds majority considers that

the investments in the territories have detracted from investments in deprived areas and disadvantaged populations.

We wanted to know how much the Israeli public is factually aware of the situation in the territories:

What is the Green Line? We asked: "In your opinion, is the following sentence true or not true: the Green Line is the Israeli border that was set in the Armistice Agreements that were signed at the end of the War of Independence between Israel and the Arab armies in 1949." The responses show that a bit less than half of the Jewish public are sure (15%) or think (33%) that this definition is right, while 39% are sure or think that it is not (13% did not know or declined to answer). That is, only a very small minority of the Jewish public now knows for certain what the Green Line is! However, it turned out that a clear majority (63%) of the Arab interviewees knew what the Green Line is, of whom 42% were sure of it.

What is the size of the Jewish population and of the Palestinian population in the territories? A majority of the Jewish public also does not know for sure the size of the Jewish or of the Palestinian population in the West Bank/Judea and Samaria. We asked how many Jews live in these territories (not counting the neighborhoods of expanded Jerusalem such as Gilo or Pisgat Ze'ev). About one-fourth gave an underestimation of 100,000-250,000, 30% answered correctly that the number is 250,000-500,000, 13% gave an overestimation of 500,000-750,000, 3% thought the correct number was 750,000 to a million, and about one-fourth did not know at all. Regarding the Palestinian population (not counting Jerusalem), the estimates were: 24%—half a million to a million, 36%—one to two million, only 10%—two million to three million (the accepted evaluation in Israel), 3%—over three million. The rest (again 27%) did not know. That is, the Jewish public underestimates the size of the Palestinian population in the territories. It turns out, then, that the Jewish public's assessments of the current situation in the territories, and of what will happen in the future, are based to a large extent on a lack of knowledge of the facts and on incorrect estimates of the relative sizes of the populations there.

This lack of knowledge is linked with a very high rate of Jewish Israelis who have not stepped foot in the territories in recent years.

Frequency of visits/trips in the territories: Among those who answered that they do not live in the territories and do not have family members there, 52% responded that they had

not visited or taken a trip in the West Bank/Judea and Samaria during the last five years. Thirty-three percent said they had visited or taken a trip there once in a while, while only 13.5% responded that they had visited or taken a trip there frequently.

From there we moved on to the future, first of all regarding the recent referendum in Britain as an example of a country's fateful decision that was left to the public to make.

Would it be desirable to hold a referendum on the issue of leaving the territories? A majority of the Jews (59%) and an even larger majority of the Arabs (73%) would favor holding a referendum on the issue of leaving the territories if, in the future, there were to be progress in talks with the Palestinians leading to a draft peace agreement that would be acceptable to the Israeli government.

Voting if a referendum were to be held in Israel today on the question of leaving the territories: We asked: "If a referendum were to be held in Israel today on whether, in principle, it is desirable to remain, as at present, in the West Bank/Judea and Samaria or to leave it while retaining the large settlement blocs, how would you vote?" A majority (52%) of the Jewish interviewees reported that in the existing situation they would vote against a withdrawal, while 36% answered that they would vote in favor. Among the Arabs a majority (69%) said that if a referendum were to be held today, they would vote in favor of leaving the territories while retaining the large settlement blocs.

Voting if there were to be a referendum based on a draft peace agreement: A slightly different distribution, almost even, would emerge if the Jewish public were to vote in a referendum in a situation where a draft agreement with the Palestinians was on the table. At present, 46% say they would vote against a withdrawal from the West Bank/Judea and Samaria, whereas 43% say they would vote in favor. Among the Arabs, the rate of voters favoring a withdrawal would exceed three-fourths.

Who would be entitled to participate in a referendum on the future of the territories? In a democratic country all citizens are entitled to participate in a referendum. However, only about half of the Jewish public (51%) thinks that in such a referendum, if it were to be held, all the citizens of the country would be entitled to participate. A large minority (44%) believe that only the Jewish citizens of the country would be entitled to participate in it.

Will Britain's exit from the EU affect the EU's policy? On how the British referendum will affect the EU's intention to pressure Israel on the Palestinian issue, close to half of the public (48%) considers that Britain's exit from the EU, or Brexit, will not have an effect one way or the other, 17% think Brexit will strengthen the EU's intention to pressure Israel, 11% believe it will weaken it, and 24% do not know. Among the Arabs a clear majority (65%) thinks that the situation regarding pressure on Israel will not change if Britain leaves the EU.

And what is the likely situation in the territories in the future? The prevailing view among the Jewish public (37.5%) is that the situation will continue as it is. Twenty percent hold the view that the international community will force Israel to withdraw to the 1967 borders. An identical rate thinks Israel will annex the territories without giving the Palestinians equal rights to those of the Israelis, and 9% anticipate that Israel will annex the territories and grant equal rights to the Palestinians. In the Arab public the most common assessment (45%) is that the situation will remain as it is.

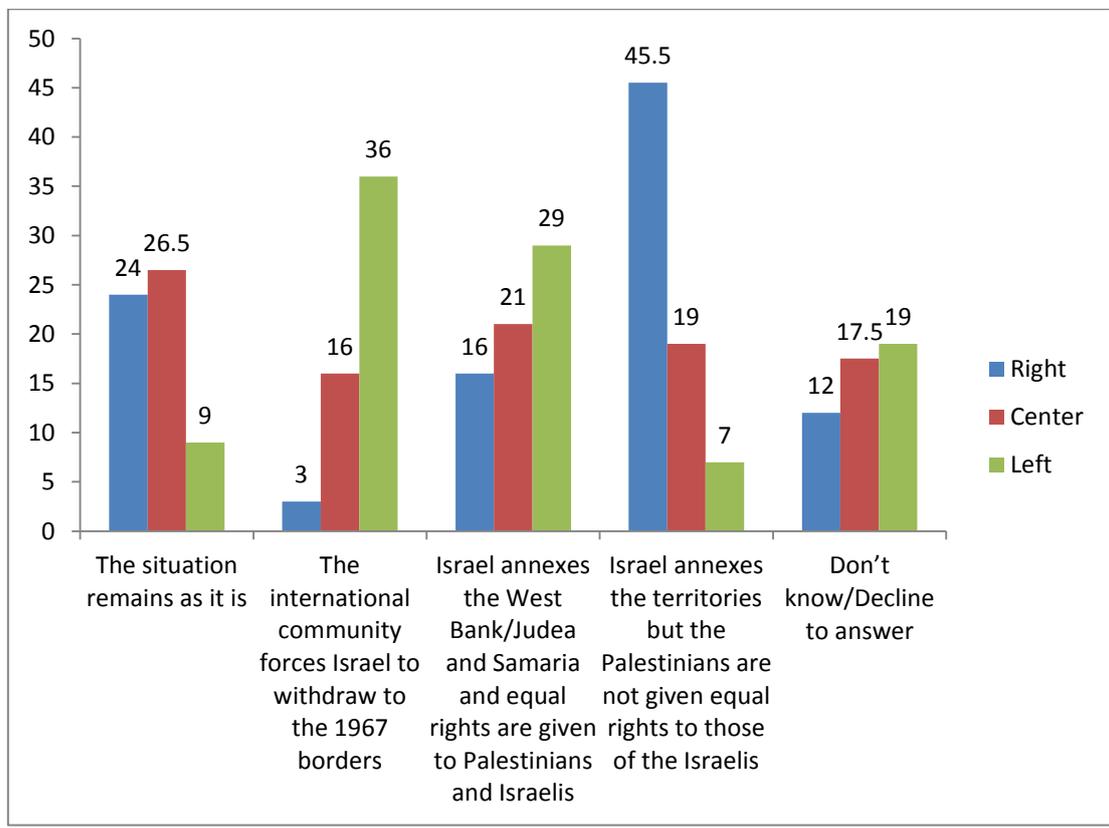
And what is the desirable situation in the territories in the future? Here 23% of the Jewish public prefers that the situation should remain as it is, 12% prefer the intervention of the international community, 32% prefer annexation without giving equal rights to the Palestinians, and 19% prefer annexation that includes the granting of equal rights. In other words, a majority of the Jewish public (55%) prefers continued Israeli rule over the Palestinians, whether it means sustaining the existing situation or annexation without giving equal rights to the Palestinians. Only few support a return to the 1967 borders or a one-state solution in which equal rights are given to Israelis and Palestinians. The most common preference in the Arab public is that the international community should force Israel to withdraw (34%), followed immediately by the preference that the situation should remain as it is (33%). Naturally, only very few (3%) would like to see an annexation without the giving of equal rights to the Palestinians; neither, though, is there any great desire (only 26%) for a one-state solution with equal rights for Jews and Palestinians.

The agreement with Turkey: Before the agreement was signed, the prevailing view in the Jewish public (43%) was that Israel and Turkey would gain to the same extent from the reconciliation agreement between them. Thirty-eight percent think Turkey will gain more from it, while 7.5% see Israel as the one that will gain more. The rest think neither country will gain from the agreement or do not know. We also asked in this context: "The families of the missing casualties Oron Shaul and Hadar Goldin and of the civilian Avera Mengistu, who is being held by Hamas in Gaza, are demanding that the reconciliation agreement with

Turkey not be signed until Hamas returns the bodies and frees Mengistu. Others claim that the agreement with Turkey should be signed as soon as possible because it is an important strategic interest for Israel, and that the issue of returning the bodies and Mengistu should be dealt with later in the framework of the agreement. With which position do you agree more?" On the eve of the agreement, 49% supported the families' demand to delay the signing while 40% opposed it.

Negotiations Index: 45.1 (Jews: 41.4)

Graph of the month: Which of the four possibilities concerning the future of the territories is preferable in your eyes?



The Peace Index is a project of the Evens Program for Mediation and Conflict Resolution at Tel Aviv University and the Guttman Center for Surveys of the Israel Democracy Institute. This month's survey was conducted by telephone on June 28-29, 2016, by the Midgam Research Institute. The survey included 600 respondents (500 Jews, 100 Arabs), who constitute a representative national sample of the entire adult population of Israel aged 18 and over. The maximum measurement error for the entire sample is ±4.1% at a confidence level of 95%. Statistical processing was done by Ms. Yasmin Alkalay. <http://www.peaceindex.org>