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This month the Peace Index focused on three immediately relevant issues: the public image of the members of Knesset, the ongoing wave of Palestinian terror, and the worldwide status of the Islamic State (Daesh) organization.

The public image of the members of Knesset: The image of the members of Knesset at present is, in the vernacular, lousy. The Jewish public broadly agrees (80%) that only a small part, or none, of the members of Knesset could serve as an example for the public regarding their personal behavior. A similar majority (77%) agrees that recent years have seen a deterioration in the personal quality of the Knesset members. This agreement exists across the political parties; there is not even a single party whose voters think otherwise. In the same vein, a large majority (71%) disagree with the claim that most of the members of Knesset work hard and fulfill their roles as they should. As expected, when it comes to the behavior of the Knesset members from the parties for which the interviewees voted, the picture is a bit different: generally the rate of those who are proud of the behavior of their own Knesset representatives (54.5%) is considerably higher than the rate of those who are not proud (39%). Here, though, we found three anomalous parties for which the rate of their voters who are not proud of the Knesset members of the party they voted for is higher than the rate of those who are proud: Yisrael Beiteinu (62%), Likud (52%), and Kulanu (51%).

The picture for the Arab public is generally similar to that for the Jewish public. Sixty-five percent think that only a small part or none of the members of Knesset could serve as a personal example, and 62.5% agree that recent years have seen a deterioration in the quality of the Knesset members. As for upholding their responsibilities, in the Arab public, too, the scale tips to the negative: 44.5% (vs. 38.5%) do not agree that most of the Knesset members work hard and fulfill their duties as they should. A slightly smaller majority than in the Jewish public (51.5%) is proud of the behavior of the Knesset members of the party they voted for.

Characterizing the current terror wave: Slightly more than half of the Jewish public (54%) agree with the security officials’ assessment that the current wave of terror is a “limited uprising,” that is, not a mere random accumulation of attacks but also not a full-fledged intifada (43% disagree with this characterization). We found a majority of voters for three parties who do not accept this characterization of the current wave of violence; however, the reasons for this apparently shared disagreement
probably differ in light of these parties’ different locations on the left-right spectrum: Meretz—65%; Habayit Hayehudi—63%; Shas—61%.

Spontaneous or orchestrated from above?: A considerable majority of the Jewish public (61%) believes that the current wave of terror emerged with the planning and guidance of the Palestinian leadership, with only a minority (21%) saying that it grew spontaneously from the Palestinian public. A segmentation by parties revealed that the highest rates of those who see it as a spontaneous uprising are among Meretz (41%) and Zionist Union (37%) voters.

In the Arab public the gap between those who see it as a limited uprising and those who reject that characterization is smaller: 46% consent to the characterization compared to 40% who do not. On the question of whether it is a spontaneous uprising or orchestrated from above, the Arab public’s position is the reverse of the Jewish public’s, with the majority (59%) viewing it as a popular uprising.

Fear for personal security: An interesting question is to what extent the Israeli public fears the current wave of violence. The finding for this month: a clear majority of the Jewish public (67%) fears that they personally, or one of the people who are important to them, will be harmed by the current terror – considerably higher than the rate we found last month (57%). In other words, the continuation of the attacks has caused a deterioration in the sense of personal security, though significant portions of the public still do not fear for their safety or that of their loved ones (30% this month compared to 41% last month). In the Arab public, however, the rate of those who fear for their own and their loves ones’ safety declined from 78% last month to 65% this month.

Can peace put an end to the terror? In a long-term perspective, there is broad agreement in the Jewish public (71%) that even the signing of an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement would not bring an end to Palestinian terror against Jews. The only party for which a majority of the voters think a peace agreement would bring an end to the terror is Meretz (81%). The Arab public’s view is the diametrical opposite of the Jewish public’s: 72% believe that if a peace agreement is signed the terror will stop.

Easements as a remedy for violence: Although the Jewish public’s positions on the military brass’s recommendation to counter the current wave of terror by providing economic easements to the Palestinian population and strengthening the Palestinian security mechanisms are not uniform, the tendency to oppose these recommendations is quite clear. Forty-two percent oppose both recommendations, 20% support providing economic easements but oppose strengthening the security
mechanisms, 8% support strengthening the security mechanisms but oppose providing economic easements, and 21% support both recommendations. That is, while there is greater opposition in the Jewish public to strengthening the Palestinian security mechanisms ("Don’t give them weapons") than to providing economic easements to the Palestinian population at large, neither recommendation is particularly popular. Although, in the Arab public, the rate of those who do not know or declined to answer the question is high (about one-fourth), making it hard to gauge the exact distribution of opinions, the highest rate supports both recommendations (36%).

Support for Daesh in the Muslim world: A majority (59%) of the Jewish public considers that most of the Muslims in the world do not support the actions of Daesh. The distribution of opinions on the degree of Israeli Arabs’ support for the organization is almost identical, with a majority of the Jewish public assessing that most Israeli Arabs do not support Daesh. The exceptions on this issue are the voters for Torah Judaism, Shas, and Yisrael Beiteinu, among whom we found a majority believing that most Israeli Arabs do support Daesh (64%, 56.5%, and 55% respectively).

In the Arab public the rate of those who think a majority of the Muslims in the world do not support Daesh (87%) is even higher than in the Jewish public overall, and the rate of those who think the same about the Israeli Arabs’ position reaches 89%.

The chances of destroying Daesh: About half of the Jewish public (49.5%) sees small chances that the Western and Arab forces fighting Daesh will succeed to destroy it in the foreseeable future. A slightly smaller rate (45%) thinks the chances are high. A clear majority (58%) also considers that even if Daesh is defeated and eradicated, the radical Islam that it represents will not be weakened. Opinions in the Arab public are the opposite: a majority (61%) assesses the chances that the West will defeat Daesh as high, and 55% believe that a defeat of Daesh would also constitute a fatal blow to the radical Islam that it represents.

Negotiations Index: 44.3 (Jews 41.5)
Graph of the month: Of how many members of Knesset can it be said that their personal behavior can serve as an example to the public? (%)