

## Peace Index, November 2018

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November 2018 was full of events and developments at home and abroad, while hovering over all is the question of the date of the next elections.

The first subject we will address is the situation at the border with the Gaza Strip.

**Assessing the government's performance in the struggle along the Gaza border:** The majority of the Jewish public is sharply critical of the way the government is dealing with the Palestinians' ongoing struggle along the border with Gaza. At present 76% assess its performance in this context as not good (an increase over June 2018 when a smaller majority of 56.5% assessed the government's performance negatively in this regard). Among the Arabs this rate now reaches 82%. In other words, there are no profound disagreements here between Jews and Arabs, though each group probably has different reasons for its stance. A segmentation of the Jewish interviewees by political camps shows that even among those who defined themselves as right-wing, 73% give the government low grades on this issue, differing very little from the center where 77% view its performance negatively along with 84% on the left.

**Assessing the IDF's performance in the struggle along the Gaza border:** On the same question of performance, a clear majority of the Jewish public (67%) gave the IDF positive grades (though less than in June 2018 when 76% gave it positive grades in this context). Here too there is great similarity between the political camps: on the right 63% give the IDF high grades for how it is dealing with the struggle along the Gaza border, in the center 75%, and on the left 78%. Among the Arab respondents only 14% gave the IDF positive grades in this regard.

**Who has scored greater achievements in the struggle along the Gaza border - Israel or the Palestinians?** One of the explanations for the dissatisfaction with the government's performance is apparently the current widespread assessment in the Jewish public that the Palestinians have scored greater achievements: 33% gave that answer compared to 21% who responded that the Israeli side has won greater achievements. Indeed, slightly more than one-fourth (28%) think that

neither side has had any achievements so far. In the Arab public the majority (60%) thinks that neither side has any achievements to its name, 18% consider that the Palestinians' achievements have been greater and 11% that the Israelis have achieved more. A segmentation of the Jews' responses by political camps revealed that on the right, the largest rate (33%) think the Palestinians have scored greater achievements; in the center, neither side (36%); and on the left, as on the right, the prevailing view is that the Palestinians have achieved more (46%), though the two camps probably interpret the situation differently.

**Was the Netanyahu-led cabinet's decision not to launch a large-scale operation in Gaza, and instead to reach understandings with Hamas on a ceasefire, right or not right?** In the Jewish public 48% hold the opinion that this was not the right decision, while 43% say the opposite. However, a segmentation of the Jews' responses by political camps turns up huge disparities between the camps: on the right only 38% think it was the right decision; in the center, 47%; and on the left - 82%. Among the Arabs 70% consider that it was the right decision.

**Netanyahu is overburdened:** We went on to the question of the burden on Prime Minister Netanyahu after taking upon himself the defense portfolio. A considerable majority of the Jewish public (58%) answered that because of the great burden resulting from his having done so, the prime minister cannot deal adequately with the security issue. A segmentation of the Jewish interviewees' responses by political camps reveals that a majority who say Netanyahu's handling of the security issue is compromised by the excessive burden exists only on the left and in the center (86% and 73% respectively). The right, however, is quite divided on this question. Among the Arabs the rate of those who see Netanyahu as overburdened in the current situation is similar to that among the Jews in general - 55%.

**Whom do you want to see as the next prime minister?** Despite the criticism of Netanyahu's performance, this month's survey indicates that for the Jewish public he has no real competitors as the preferred candidate to serve as prime minister after the next elections. On the question "For each of the following individuals, please mark the extent to which you would want or not want him or her to be the next prime minister of Israel," Netanyahu is clearly in first place with 46% who would want to see him as the next prime minister. Well behind him are: Naftali

Bennett and Yair Lapid (23% each), Avigdor Liberman (19%), Tzipi Livni (18%), Ehud Barak (13%), and Avi Gabbay (10%). We also included among the candidates former chief of staff Benny Gantz, despite the fact that he has declared neither his entry into politics nor his opinions on the country's fateful issues. The responses show that, nevertheless, 39% would want him to be prime minister. That is, despite the lack of knowledge about him, he comes in second after Netanyahu, far ahead of the other candidates all of whom are active politicians. Among the Arabs, Tzipi Livni is in first place with 27% who would want to see her as the next prime minister. Liberman comes in last with only 5% who want to see him in that post.

**The chances of voting for Gantz:** We asked: "If the former chief of staff enters the political arena, what are the chances that you will vote for the political entity he belongs to?" In the Jewish public 36% answered that the chances are high while 45.5% responded that they are low. In other words, it appears that at this moment Benny Gantz is Netanyahu's most serious competitor. A segmentation of the Jewish respondents to this question by political camps revealed that 50% of those situating themselves on the left answered this question positively, 51% of the center, and only 28% of the right. That is, Gantz is a center-left candidate. At the same time, it is important to remember that in the current situation, with it not being known whether he will decide to run and what entity he will head, these data should be regarded with great caution. Beyond that, apart from Gantz, whose opinions, as mentioned, still are not clearly known.

**How well has Alsheikh done in his job?** And if we are dealing with prominent figures, then toward the end of Police Commissioner Roni Alsheikh's tenure we wanted to know what the public thinks about how well he has succeeded. In the Jewish public the highest rate (38%) thinks he has served well, 28% believe he has turned in a so-so performance, while 17% are dissatisfied with how Alsheikh has done his job as police commissioner. On this issue we found large gaps between the political camps: on the left a majority (59%) thinks Alsheikh has fulfilled his role well compared to 46% in the center and only 33% on the right. Among the Arab respondents the highest rate (46.5%) thinks he has done poorly.

**The elections from the party perspective:** We asked: “In the coming year, elections will be held in Israel. What are the chances that you will vote for the party you voted for in the previous elections?” As in previous inquiries, this time too the majority of the Jews (61%) answered that the chances are high. On the right 66% gave that answer, and in the center and on the left, 54%. As for the Arab interviewees, 72% said they would vote for the same party they had voted for in the past. Again we found that, while among the rest of the parties the majority (of various sizes) currently think they will vote for the same party they voted for in the previous elections, among Kulanu voters only a minority gave that response (48%).

Last of all we looked into the issue of funding for the arts and culture and the control of artistic contents, as reflected in the positions of the public and in the context of the Loyalty Law that Culture Minister Regev initiated and that did not pass the hurdle of the first vote in the Knesset.

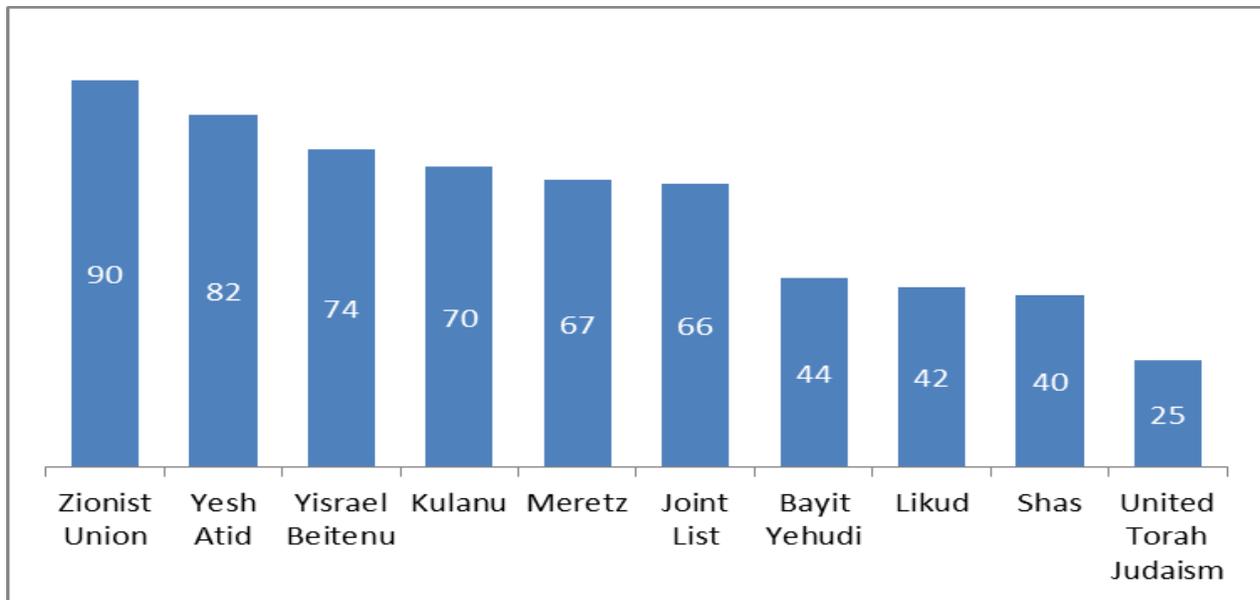
**Funding justifies involvement in contents:** We asked: “If the government gives money to cultural and artistic activities and institutions, should it or should it not, in your opinion, also exercise influence over their artistic contents?” The responses indicate that the Jewish public is almost evenly split on this question, with a small majority (53%) favoring the state’s involvement in the contents if it provides funding and 48% opposing it. A division by political camps shows that on the right 66% favor state involvement, in the center 26%, and on the left 10%. Among the Arab interviewees the majority (61%) thinks that funding does not entail a right to involvement in the contents.

**Who determines what and whom to fund?** We went on to ask: “Who among the following should determine which cultural activities and institutions will receive funding from the state?” The distribution of the responses shows a relatively wide dispersal of opinions on this question in the Jewish public, in the following order: the culture minister - 31%, representatives of different groups in the society - 27%, the artists themselves or experts in the field - 21%, Finance Ministry officials - 7%. That is, no actor, including the artists themselves on the one hand and the culture minister on the other, wins majority support on this question, though the minority who think the authority in this regard should be in the culture minister’s hands is larger than the minority who think it should be in the hands of the artists themselves or of experts in the field. Finally, it is

hard to ignore the fact that only a tiny minority considers that the authority on this question should be put in the hands of Finance Ministry officials. Among the Arab interviewees the highest rate (28%) considers that representatives of different groups in the society should be the ones to decide what gets funded.

**Negotiation Index: 38.2 (Jewish sample: 40.2)**

**Diagram of the month: Does the burden on Prime Minister Netanyahu now that he has taken upon himself, in addition to his other posts, the defense portfolio as well, allow him to deal appropriately with Israel's security issues? (% , does not allow him to, according to voting in the 2015 Knesset elections)**



*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 on November 27-28, 2018, by the Midgam Research Institute. The survey included 600 respondents, who constitute a representative national sample of the adult population of Israel aged 18 and over. The maximum measurement error for the entire sample is  $\pm 4.1\%$  at a confidence level of 95%. Statistical analyses were done by Ms. Yasmin Alkalay. <http://www.peaceindex.org>*