

## Peace Index, October 2018

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The first part of this month's Peace Index survey was devoted to two issues in the field of foreign affairs and defense: the strategy that should be adopted in the struggle against Hamas and the preparedness and morality of the IDF. The second part focused on the impending local-authority elections. The third issue we dealt with this time was the MeToo campaign as its first year comes to a close.

**The preferred strategy toward Hamas:** A majority (56%) of the Jewish public supports Minister Naftali Bennett's position that "the policy that Defense Minister Lieberman is conducting along the border with Gaza is too soft." About three-fourths support Bennett's position on the right while a similar majority opposes it on the left. The rate of opposition to Bennett's position in the Arab public is very similar to the rate among the Jewish left (about 70%).

**Alleviations for the Gaza residents:** A similar picture of a majority holding a hawkish position toward the other side emerged on the question of whether Israel should or should not offer various alleviations - regarding, for instance, the entry of goods and freedom of movement - so as to make the Gaza residents' lives less difficult. In the Jewish public 59% (exactly the same rate as last May when we asked the same question) think or are sure that Israel should not provide alleviations to improve the lives of the Gaza residents. The Arab public is unanimously in favor of Israel granting such alleviations.

**A ceasefire with Hamas:** At the same time, the Israeli public would like to see long-term calm on the border with Gaza. We asked: "Do you support or oppose Israel signing a long-term ceasefire agreement with the Hamas leadership under international supervision?" Sixty-four percent of the Jews and 80% of the Arabs support such an agreement. In other words, there is public legitimacy for reaching a ceasefire with Hamas despite its declared opposition to Israel's existence. This may be because of the price in blood that Israel will pay if the conflict escalates, or out of confidence that international supervision will enable the ceasefire to take hold and

continue. Note that even among the Jews who defined themselves as right-wing, we found a majority (51%) who favor such a ceasefire (on the left and in the center this majority exceeds 80%).

**The IDF's preparedness for war:** Recently a public dispute erupted between former IDF ombudsman Gen. (res.) Brik and Chief of Staff Eizenkot on the question of whether the IDF is now properly prepared for war if one were to break out. Brik published a report in which he claimed that the army is not sufficiently prepared, while Eizenkot completely rejected this claim. We asked the interviewees which of the two assessments appeared more credible to them. It turns out that on this issue the Israeli Jewish public does not take a clear-cut position: 36% put more credence in Brik's warning that there are grave shortcomings in the IDF's preparedness, while 39% were more inclined to believe Chief of Staff Eizenkot's view that everything is in a state of proper preparation. An especially high rate (25%) answered that they do not know, a reasonable response given that it is hard for ordinary citizens to know what is really the case here. It is also interesting to note that on this question a segmentation by political camps revealed no substantial differences, and that almost no difference emerged between the Jewish and Arab interviewees' positions. Also interesting in itself is the fact that the rate of those viewing the chief of staff's position as the right one is very similar to the rate for another military man who is of lower rank and no longer in active service.

**The IDF is the most moral army in the world:** In contrast to the previous question, this one evoked a wide consensus of the Jewish public across the camps: a clear majority (86%) agrees that "the IDF is the most moral army in the world." While a segmentation of the Jewish respondents by political camps revealed that, indeed, in all three of them those asserting that the IDF is the most moral army in the world are the majority, there are large differences in the size of this majority: on the right 91.5% hold that view, in the center 89%, and on the left 58.5%. However, 76% of the Arab interviewees disagreed with the claim.

**Ensuring that actions conform to international law:** We wanted to know the public's position on the extent to which the IDF should be committed to operate in accordance with the rules of international law. The majority of the Jewish public (53%) answered that the rules of

international law should indeed be obeyed, though a very considerable minority (40%) responded negatively. A division by political camps (Jewish public) shows that on the right only 44% think the rules of international law must be obeyed, compared to 62% in the center and 92% on the left. A cross-checking of the answers to the questions reveals that 91% of those who do not think the IDF needs to operate according to the rules of international law also think the IDF is the most moral army in the world; that is, they do not see a contradiction between, on the one hand, not upholding the rules of international law and, on the other, morality.

**Protecting the lives of IDF soldiers at the price of harming Palestinian civilians:** We presented two versions of a question on this issue. The first was: “The lives of IDF soldiers must be protected at any price, even the price of increasing the number of Palestinian civilian casualties.” Here we found 87% of the Jewish respondents agreeing with this statement. The second version was: “It is legitimate to take measures that could increase the number of Palestinian casualties if this reduces the chances of harm to IDF soldiers.” Here the rate of support was lower (79%), but this is still a large majority to whom protecting IDF soldiers is more important than avoiding harm to civilians on the enemy side. It is interesting to note that the first version also won the support of a majority of those defining themselves as on the left (65%). For the second version we did not find such a majority on the left; only 50% expressed support for the statement- an example of the importance of the wording in survey questionnaires.

**Voting intentions for the local elections:** The level of public interest in the upcoming local elections seems to be high. Very high rates of the Jewish public (83%) and of the Arab public (71%) are sure or think they will vote in the local-authority elections that will be held at the end of the month. In the Jewish public about half (49%) know who all the candidates are for the authority in which they live, and a similar rate (46%) know the names of some of the candidates. In the Arab public the rate of those who know who all the candidates are is higher than in the Jewish public (76%), and another 7% know who some of the candidates are.

**Considerations in deciding whom to vote for in the local elections:** To the question “When you decide which list or candidate to vote for in the local elections, to what extent is it important to you that the party they represent will be the same party you voted for in the Knesset

elections?” the majority of the Jewish interviewees (65%) answered that it is not important to them that it should be the same party. That is, a considerable majority of the public distinguishes between its voting considerations in the Knesset elections and its voting considerations in the local-authority elections. In the Arab public it is important for a majority (56%) that it be the same party.

**Assessment of the local authority’s functioning:** A majority of the Jewish public (57%) is satisfied to one extent or another with the functioning of the local authority in which they live. Among the Arab interviewees only 41% expressed satisfaction with the functioning of the authority in which they live.

**Corruption in the local authority:** Only 17% of both the Jewish public and the Arab public assess that in “their” local authority there is no corruption at all. Here the similarity ends; among the Jewish interviewees only 34% think there is quite a lot or a great deal of corruption in their local authority compared to 62.5% (!) among the Arab interviewees. An interesting if not surprising finding is that the rate who think there is corruption in the local authority where they live and who are also satisfied with the authority’s functioning is much lower than the rate of those who are satisfied among those who do not think corruption has spread in “their” authority (18% vs. 64%).

**Women’s suitability to be local-authority heads:** We asked: “Do you agree or disagree with the claim that in light of the challenges now facing local authorities, men are better suited than women to serve as heads of these authorities?” A large majority of the Jewish interviewees (73%) and a smaller majority of the Arab interviewees (56%) disagreed that men are preferable to women when it comes to running a local authority. On this issue we did not find differences by gender; the numbers are similar among male and female interviewees. We did find differences in the Jewish public according to religiosity: 80% of the secular disagreed with the statement compared to only 42% of the haredim.

Also in the context of gender, after a year of the MeToo campaign we thought it worthwhile to look into the public's positions on some matters related to this phenomenon.

**The prevalence of sexual-harassment victims:** To the question “Do you know someone personally who has experienced sexual harassment?” 45% of the Jewish interviewees answered that they are sure or think that they do, while 48% responded that they are sure or think they do not. Among the Arab interviewees 41% answered that they are sure or think that they do compared to 54% who answered that they are sure or think they do not. A segmentation by gender revealed that the rate of women who responded that they know people who have experienced sexual harassment is significantly higher than the rate of men who responded that way.

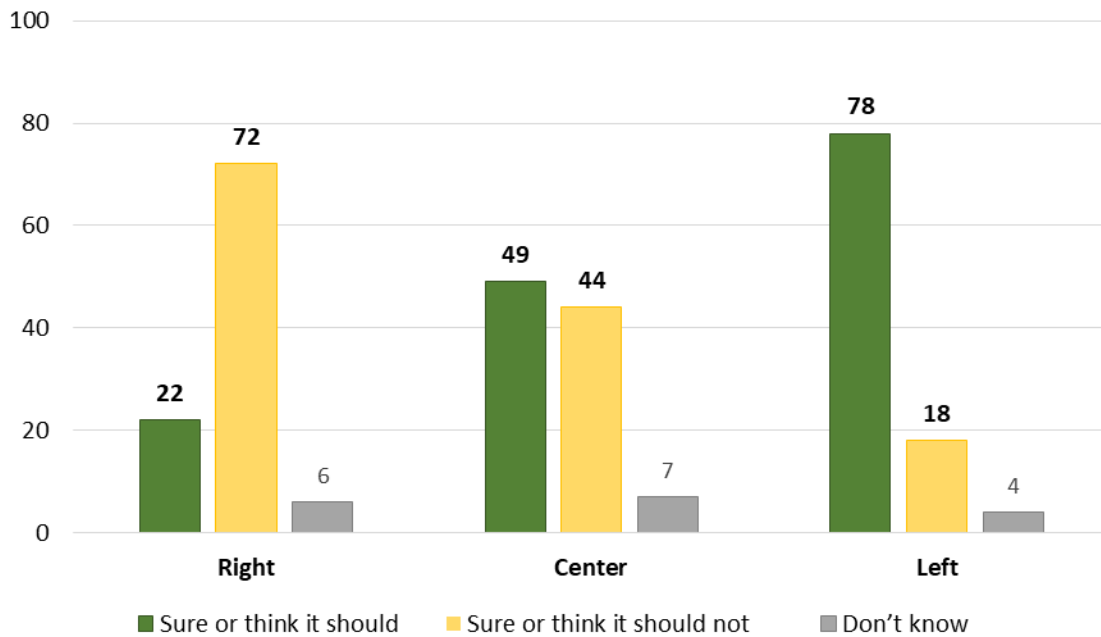
**The attitude toward the MeToo endeavor:** It is well known that, as part of this campaign, women and men who have undergone sexual harassment reveal what happened to them to the media and the social networks and sometimes also say who harassed them. We asked: “Do you support or oppose such exposure?” The responses show that a majority of the Jewish public (62%) supports it compared to 49% of the Arab interviewees.

**Will MeToo succeed to change values?** When we asked “What, in your opinion, are the chances that because of the MeToo movement the social rules will change and there will be less sexual harassment?” the interviewees' answers reflected skepticism: 50% of the Jewish respondents answered that the chances of such a change are high while 38% gave the opposite response. Among the Arab interviewees as well, the opinions were divided: 43% think the movement will bring about an ethical change while exactly the same rate thinks it will not succeed to do so.

**A scary time for men?** Regarding U.S. president Trump's recent remark about the MeToo movement that “It's a very scary time for young men,” it turns out that the Israeli public is divided. Among the Jews 44% agreed with Trump while 46% disagreed; likewise, in the Arab public, 44% agreed and 41% disagreed. A segmentation by gender revealed that, not surprisingly, the rate of women who disagreed with Trump's assertion was significantly higher than the rate of men who did.

**Negotiation Index:** 42.4 (Jewish sample: 42.1)

**Diagram of the month: Should or should not Israel offer various alleviations - regarding, for instance, the entry of goods and freedom of movement - so as to make the Gaza residents' lives less difficult? (% , 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 and internet on October 16-17, 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>*