



Peace Index, February 2019

- **The Jewish public is unhappy with the existing situation regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but finds it difficult to point to an agreed-upon desirable solution and tends to believe that the present situation will continue.**
- **The Arab public in Israel prefers the two-state solution, but also tends to believe that the present situation will continue.**
- **Netanyahu's attempts to damage the credibility of the attorney general have had some success: About a third of the Jewish public thinks his recommendation to put Netanyahu on trial, subject to a hearing, was an unbiased professional decision and a third believes that the decision resulted from bias against Netanyahu.**
- **About half of the Israeli public oppose enactment of the "French Law" and support putting Netanyahu on trial, subject to the attorney general's recommendation, even if he succeeds in forming a coalition after the elections. About half of the public also oppose a plea bargain for Netanyahu and believe that he should be put on trial like any other citizen.**
- **About a month before the elections, there is a clear majority among the Jewish public who prefer a right-wing government and believe that it will be formed. In line with the messages of the right-wing parties, about half of the Jewish public define the views of the Blue and White party as left-wing, in contrast to the Arab public who define the party's views as tending to the right.**
- **Two issues – security-political and socio-economic policies – equally represent the crucial considerations for Israeli voters in their decision about who to vote for in the coming elections.**



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What is desirable and what is feasible when considering the Jewish-Arab conflict? More than half of the Jewish public (58%) oppose continuation of the existing situation vis-à-vis the Palestinians. They also oppose creating a Palestinian state alongside Israel (54%) and reject annexing the occupied territories and establishing one state under Israeli rule with limited rights to Palestinians (59.5%). Opposition to creating a binational state between the Jordan and the Mediterranean with full and equal rights to Jews and Palestinians is even stronger (78%). Ultimately, the solution which gains much more support is still the creation of two states (39%), and following that, continuing the existing situation (31%), annexing territories (29%), and creating a binational state (13%). As can be seen, except for the broad opposition to a binational state, there are relatively small differences between the level of opposition to the other solutions. Thus, it appears that the Jewish public well knows which solutions it does not want but does not know what it does want. With regard to the potential implementation of the various solutions, the findings indicate that almost a half of the Jewish public (46%) believe that the existing situation will continue, while the chances of realizing other solutions are judged by the public to be extremely small: the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel – 21%; the annexation of the territories – 15%; the creation of a binational state – 5%. In other words, whatever has existed up to now will continue to exist in the future. In the Arab sector, we received a similar pattern of replies.

Regarding the desired solution among Arab citizens of Israel, as expected, a completely different scenario has emerged, as the great majority (70%) support the creation of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel (in contrast to 15% who oppose this solution). A clearly smaller majority (54%) supports the creation of a binational state (in contrast to 28% who are opposed).



Thus, Arab citizens of Israel prefer a solution in which they will continue to be a minority in a state whose basic law defines it as the nation-state of the Jewish people, rather than a solution in which they will become integrated with their own nation in a binational state. Two other solutions – annexation or continuing the existing situation – are equally rejected by a large majority of Arab respondents (about 60%).

Bills of indictment against Netanyahu and their implications: Against the backdrop of the intervention in Benjamin Netanyahu's political future by the legal system, and the implications of this intervention on the election campaign and its results, we presented interviewees with three relevant questions. The first dealt with the extent to which the attorney general's decision to serve bills of indictment against Netanyahu in three cases was unbiased and professional, or whether it was a result of bias and pressure from both supporters of Netanyahu and those who oppose him. The answers received from the Jewish public indicate that the respondents were equally divided (37% for each alternative) between those who believe that the decision was a result of bias against Netanyahu and a desire to influence the elections, and those who maintained that the decision stemmed from professional considerations and was unbiased. A small minority (8.5%) considered that the decision was a result of bias in favor of Netanyahu and the desire to lighten the terms of indictment against him. So the number of those who believe that the attorney general's decision did not stem from bias against Netanyahu is slightly higher than those who believe the opposite (17% stated that they did not know). It is interesting to note that, among only right-wingers, there was a clear majority who believe that the decision was a result of bias against Netanyahu (53%), in contrast to the more moderate right (40%), centrists (16.5%) and left-wingers (4%). In the Arab public, a larger percentage (45%) believed that the decision was unbiased in contrast to those who believed that the decision was based on bias against Netanyahu (24%).



The second question investigated whether there was support for a plea bargain for Netanyahu, in which he would resign all political positions in return for the cancellation of the bills of indictment against him. The strikingly most common opinion (47%) among all of the respondents – Jews and Arabs alike – was that Netanyahu should not be presented with a plea bargain agreement and that he should stand trial like any other citizen. Only 12% thought that he should be presented with a plea bargain while 24% felt that the bills of indictment against Netanyahu should be revoked without a plea bargain, and 17% did not know. Among Jewish respondents, centrists expressed the greatest support for a plea bargain (27%) while rightists indicated the greatest support for revoking the indictments (46%) and those on the left conveyed the greatest support for having Netanyahu stand trial like any other citizen (76%).

The third questions dealt with the idea of the “French Law”, according to which an indictment cannot be presented to a serving prime minister. The replies show that about half of the survey participants (48%) – Jews and Arabs – believe that the rule of law should have primacy and if Netanyahu is accused, he should resign, even if he has succeeded in forming a coalition after the elections. Forty percent believe that considerations of the will of the electorate should take precedence in this situation.

The election campaign: The last part of the survey dealt with various aspects of the elections taking place this month. Regarding the question, “Which government would you prefer to be formed?”, the answers indicate that the preferred government among the Jewish public is right-wing (40%). In descending order, the second most preferred alternative is a right-center government (25%), a national unity government, including right, center and left (16%), a center-left government and a left-wing government (15% in total). In other words, almost two-thirds of the Jewish public (65%) prefer to have a government which tends to the right. This is in keeping



with the self-definition of this population in the political-security realm, as 66% of them identify themselves as right-wing or moderately right-wing. In comparison with the previous month, there has been a trend towards radicalization and growing right-wing sentiments among the Jewish public, while the level of support for a centrist government has fallen by 6%, and the level of support for a right-wing government has grown by 5%. As expected, most of the Arab public supports a left-wing or center-left government, and 24% did not express an opinion on the issue. The answers to the question, “Which government has a better chance of being formed?” indicate the significant gap between the preference for a right-center government and the chances that it will be formed (25% in contrast to 36%). As a result of these differences, two governments – right-wing (39%) and right-center (36%) are more or less equal in their electoral strength. It is important to stress that the increase in the strength of the right-center government comes at the expense of the chances for all of the other governments, that is, a national unity government of right, center and left (10%), and a government leaning towards the left (6%). There are no significant differences in this question between the Jewish and Arab publics, although on this question as well, a quarter of the Arab respondents did not express an opinion, in comparison to 9% among the Jewish public.

We also checked the political-security image of the Blue and White party and almost half of the Jewish public (47%) deem the party as either center-left or left, while only 23% identify it as center and 17% as center-right. Considering that this party tries to locate itself at the political center, with messages and personalities representing the right as well, it may be assumed that the right-wing camp has succeeded in its efforts to convince large sectors of the Jewish population that Blue and White is a party leaning to the left. In this regard, there is a great gap between left and right in the Jewish public, as 67% of rightists categorize Blue and White as left or left-center, as well as 54% of those who term themselves moderate right, as opposed to only 24% of



respondents from the center and 19% of those on the left who view Blue and White as left-leaning. In the Arab public, on the other hand, 51% of the respondents positioned Blue and White on the right or right-center, and 32% did not express an opinion on the matter.

Finally, we checked the relative importance of various issues when considering for whom to vote in the coming elections. The findings indicate that, among the Jewish public, the security-political and the socio-economic issues were cited as very central considerations or as central considerations of almost equal importance (88% and 87% correspondingly). Next in importance were corruption and morality (72%) and significantly less, religion and tradition (45.5%). Religion and tradition represents a very central consideration or a central consideration to a much greater extent in the Arab public (60%), alongside the other issues: the political-security issue (71%), corruption (75%) and socio-economic concerns (77%). Interestingly, corruption represents a central or very central consideration for women (76%) compared with men (68.5%), and for the ultra-Orthodox (5%) much less than for the rest of the public (74%).

Negotiation Index:

General sample: 42.7 (A decrease of 2.8 points in comparison to last month).

Jewish sample: 42.3 (A decrease of 0.2 points in comparison with last month).

The negotiation index is calculated by a weighing two questions: Level of support for negotiation with the Palestinian Authority, and level of trust that negotiation with the Authority will lead to peace in the coming years.

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The Peace Index is conducted by the Evens Program in Mediation and Conflict Management at Tel Aviv University and the Midgam Consulting and Research Institute under the authority of Mano Geva and Dr. Mina Zemach. The survey was conducted by telephone and internet on 10-11 March 2019, among 600 respondents, a representative sample of the entire adult population (ages 18 and over) in Israel. Maximum margin of error for the entire sample is +/-4.1% at a confidence level of 95%. Statistical analysis: Ms. Yasmin Alkalay.



Diagrams of the month: The ideal vs. the real with regard to continuing the present situation in the Israeli- Palestinian conflict (Jewish sample)

