

PRESS RELEASE

Joint Israeli Palestinian Public Opinion Poll, June 2008

Israelis strongly oppose cease-fire with Hamas if agreement does not include release of Gilad Shalit; Palestinians strongly oppose such an agreement if it does not include the West Bank or does not stipulate an immediate opening of the Rafah crossing to Egypt

These are the results of the most recent poll conducted jointly by the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah, between May 27 and June 7, 2008.

Cease-Fire-Agreement

Assuming that Shalit's release was part of an agreement, the Israeli public is split in supporting an accord in which Hamas will cease the violent attacks and Kassam launching from the Gaza Strip, and Israel will stop its military operations in the Gaza Strip and remove the closure.

The figures were: 50% opposing and 47% supporting such an agreement. If the agreement does not include Shalit, 68% oppose and only 30% support such an agreement. Among Palestinians, 78% support the cease-fire with Israel, but support declines sharply to around 20% if the cease-fire agreement does not include the West Bank or does not stipulate an immediate opening of the Rafah crossing to Egypt.

Assessment of Negotiation Tracks

The joint poll also examined Israelis' and Palestinians' assessments of the various negotiation tracks including the Israeli-Palestinian track, the Israeli-Syrian track and the Saudi (Arab League) plan.

The poll indicates a hardening of Israeli opposition to the return of the Golan Heights for full peace with Syria: 67% of Israelis oppose such an agreement, compared to 56% in March 2008. There is also a noticeable decline in Israelis' support for concessions to the Palestinians as embodied in the Clinton parameters or Taba negotiations. These parameters have been considered to be the most realistic framework for a final status agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. For the first time since December 2003, support for Clinton's package decreased below 50% (49%), whereas in previous polls, support reached as high as 64%. Among Palestinians, findings show that two-thirds believe that Syrian-Israeli progress or a peace agreement would contribute to successful Palestinian-Israeli negotiations or have no impact on those negotiations. Minority support among Palestinians for a package along the lines of the Taba negotiations or the Clinton Parameters remains stable at 46%. Recent talks among Palestinians in favor of the one-state solution did not affect their public attitudes, as only 27% support this solution while a majority of 58% prefers the two-state solution.

Olmert Lost Legitimacy

The weeks preceding the poll were characterized by significant political events in Israel, including the Talanski testimony and Barak's demand of Olmert to detach himself from political decisions. Israeli data collection began after the Talanski scandal so it reflects the full impact of the testimony. Barak's statement however was made midway the poll so it reflects only part of its impact. Israelis' decline in support for concessions to the Palestinians and Syria can be interpreted as a result of the public's confusion and disillusion with its leadership and Olmert's loss of legitimacy to conduct negotiations on such crucial issues while being under police investigation.

The Palestinian sample size is 1270 adults interviewed face-to-face in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 127 randomly selected locations between June 5 and 7, 2008. The margin of error is 3%. The Israeli sample includes 1006 adult Israelis interviewed by phone in Hebrew Arabic or Russian between May 27 and June 5, 2008. The margin of error is 3%. The poll was planned and supervised by Dr. Yaacov Shamir, the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace and the Department of Communication and Journalism at the Hebrew University and Dr. Khalil Shikaki, director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR).

For further details on the Palestinian survey contact PSR director, Dr. Khalil Shikaki or Walid Ladadweh, at tel. 02-296 4933 or email pcpsr@pcpsr.org. On the Israeli survey, contact Dr. Yaacov Shamir at tel. 03-6419429 or email jshamir@mscc.huji.ac.il.

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