

BICOM Briefing: Israeli public opinion on the peace process – December 2013

Key points

- Despite setbacks, support for the two state solution has remained consistent among the Israeli public for more than a decade.
- However, Israelis remain sceptical about the outcome of the peace talks and about the Palestinians as reliable partners.
- Whilst Israelis are divided over particular concessions, surveys indicate clear majority support for a 'yes' vote in any future referendum on a deal.

Recent Polling

- A '[Peace Index](#)' poll by Midgam on 03 December 2013 showed 66.9 per cent of the Israeli public were strongly or somewhat in favour of holding peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. However, in this poll, just 29 per cent of Israelis believed current talks would lead to peace. Despite this pessimism, in a '[Dialog](#)' poll published in *Haaretz* on 18 October 2013, only 38 per cent believed negotiations should be halted in light of recent Palestinian terrorism.

Longer Term Trends

- In their '[People's Voice](#)' survey of Jewish Israelis, the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) found increased support for the principle of two states for two peoples, from 64 per cent in 2009 to 69 per cent in 2012. Only 36 per cent believe 'there is no political solution to the conflict'; while 63 per cent of Israelis were ready to evacuate certain settlements in the context of a final settlement agreement.

Reluctance over concessions in theory, but strong support in a referendum

- The Israeli public shows considerable reluctance over certain key concessions that would be part of any future agreement. For example, according to the INSS survey only 29 per cent of Israelis support transferring control of the Jordan Valley, even whilst retaining a military presence for a long period.
- However, according to the same INSS survey, only 27 per cent of Israeli Jews would reject a government approved peace deal, if put to a referendum, whilst 51 per cent said they would support it.
- This is supported by data from a '[Dialog](#)' poll, published in *Haaretz* on 24 July 2013. It claimed 55 per cent of Israelis would back a government approved peace deal in a referendum; no more than 20 per cent would reject it.
- There is also evidence that a significant proportion of the Israeli right would accept the two state solution. Polls commissioned by the [Abraham Center](#) published in *Haaretz* on 31 December 2012 found 58 per cent of Likud-Beitenu and 53 per cent of Jewish Home voters would back a peace agreement based on the 1967 borders, if the issue were put to a referendum.

Pessimism about talks and the Palestinians

- There appears to be an overarching pessimism involving the outcome of the negotiations. According to the [INSS](#), only 29 per cent of Israelis believe a peace agreement is possible, a 10 per cent decline from 2005. Almost half (46 per cent) of Israelis believe 'the gap between both parties is too large.'
- Some 67 per cent believe the Palestinians wish to conquer Israel and would not be satisfied with the 1967 borders. Additionally, a mere 15 per cent of Israelis believed there was any hope of a peace settlement with Hamas.