



Public Poll Findings:
Positions of the Israeli Public
and the Political Leadership (MKs)
Regarding a Possible Peace Agreement

January 2010
Poll 2756

Executive Summary

The purpose of the poll was to examine among the general public and among the Members of Knesset the following points:

- A. The level of willingness to support an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement based on the following principles:
- Two states: Israel the state of the Jewish people and Palestine the state of the Palestinian people.
 - Palestinian refugees will have a right to return only to the state of Palestine.
 - The Palestinian state will be demilitarized, without an army.
 - Borders will be based on the 1967 lines and will include land swaps equal in size that will take into consideration Israel's security needs and will maintain the large settlement blocks under Israeli sovereignty.
 - Jewish neighborhoods of Jerusalem will come under Israeli sovereignty and Arab neighborhoods under Palestinian sovereignty.
 - The Old City within the walls will be without sovereignty and will be jointly administered by the United States, Israel and the Palestinians. The Holy Places will be under the same religious supervision as current arrangements (for example, the Kotel will be under Israeli supervision and responsibility).
- B. The level of willingness to support the agreement if several improvements from the Israeli perspective were added to it.
- C. The main factors that motivate an opposition to the agreement.
- D. What is the relationship between MK positions and the positions of their voters regarding support for the agreement?

The poll findings are based on the responses of the following:

97 percent of the MKs and ministers¹ (since not all 120 MKs were interviewed, the data analysis included a correction to represent the various parties polled).

730 people as a representative sample of the adult population of Israel.

¹ The heads of the four largest parties fell outside the designated poll of interviewees because they may be the ones heading the negotiations. Most or all (70%-100%) MKs of all parties provided interviews, except one party whose MKs gave interviews on the first day and then refused to interview further across the board.

Summary of Poll Findings

A. Support levels of the agreement: A basic agreement that includes the six above-mentioned principles, and the basic agreement with the additional improvements.

	MKs		General Public (In Parenthesis: Jews Only)	
	Basic Agreement	Basic Agreement + Improvements	Basic Agreement	Basic Agreement + Improvements
Support	46%	48%	67% (63%)	84% (82%)
Oppose	53%	51%	29% (32%)	15% (17%)
Did not answer	1%	1%	4% (5%)	1% (1%)
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Following is a breakdown of the support levels in the agreement based on the various improvements:

	MKs	General Public (In Parenthesis: Jews Only)
Basic Agreement (6 Principles)	46%	67% (63%)
In addition, US security guarantee and assurances to its Jewish character	46%	73% (70%)
In addition, a strong security fence along the borderline	46%	77% (74%)
In addition, implementation conditioned on dismantling of Hamas's military capabilities	47%	82% (79%)
In addition, a mutual US-Israeli defense treaty that includes assurances regarding Arab fulfillment of obligations	48%	83% (81%)
In addition, allowing Israelis to reside in Judea and Samaria under Palestinian sovereignty while maintaining their Israeli citizenship	48%	84% (82%)

B. The gap between MKs and the public they represent

Except for the Labor party, Meretz, and United Torah Judaism, support level among the parties' supporters in the general public are higher than the support level among their respective MKs. Regarding the Labor party and UTJ, support levels among the MKs are slightly higher than their voters. Support levels between Meretz voters and MKs are identical. As mentioned below, the largest gap between MKs support level and their voters is in the Likud:

	Likud MKs	Likud Voters
Support	27%	50%
Oppose	73%	45%
Did not answer	--	4%
Total	100%	100%

C. Main motivation for opposing the agreement

- 1) The main factor that causes opposition by MKs: (numbers refer to those MKs who opposed the agreement; numbers in parenthesis refer to the entire poll)

Condition	Entire Poll
Jerusalem must remain in its entirety under exclusive Israeli sovereignty	44% (23%)
The agreement threatens Israel's security	22% (12%)
I believe in Greater Israel	19% (10%)
I do not believe the Palestinians will live up to their commitments	7% (4%)

- 2) The main factor that causes opposition by the general public (numbers refer to those MKs who opposed the agreement; numbers in parenthesis refer to the entire poll)

Condition	Entire Sample	All Jews	Veterans	New Immigrants	Arabs
I do not believe the Palestinians will live up to their commitments	37% (12%)	39% (14%)	33%	68%	10% (1%)
I ideologically oppose the creation of a Palestinian State under any conditions	24% (8%)	25% (9%)	27%	16%	10% (1%)
Jerusalem must remain in its entirety under exclusive Israeli sovereignty	11% (4%)	12% (4%)	14%	3%	10% (1%)
I believe in Greater Israel	10% (3%)	11% (4%)	12%	7%	0%

The above data demonstrates inconsistencies between MKs and the general public regarding opposition to the agreement. While most MKs mention Jerusalem as their reason for opposition, the general public's disbelief in the Palestinians ability to fulfill its commitments is the leading cause for opposition.

Objective and Process of the Poll

1. Objective of Poll

The purpose of the poll was to examine among the general public and among the Members of Knesset the following points:

- A. The level of willingness to support an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement based on the following principles:
 - Two states: Israel the state of the Jewish people and Palestine the state of the Palestinian people.
 - Palestinian refugees will have a right to return only to the state of Palestine.
 - The Palestinian state will be demilitarized, without an army.
 - Borders will be based on the 1967 lines and will include land swaps equal in size that will take into consideration Israel's security needs and will maintain the large settlement blocks under Israeli sovereignty.
 - Jewish neighborhoods of Jerusalem will come under Israeli sovereignty and Arab neighborhoods under Palestinian sovereignty.
 - The Old City within the walls will be without sovereignty and will be jointly administered by the United States, Israel and the Palestinians. The Holy Places will be under the same religious supervision as current arrangements (for example, the Kotel will be under Israeli supervision and responsibility).
- B. The level of willingness to support the agreement if several improvements from the Israeli perspective were added to it.
- C. The main factors that motivate an opposition to the agreement.
- D. What is the relationship between MK positions and the positions of their voters regarding support for the agreement?

2. Development of Poll

A. Population of poll and interviewees

1. Members of Knesset

The population of Members of Knesset for the poll was categorized as "all Members of Knesset excluding the heads of the four major parties²". From this pool 97 MK's and ministers were interviewed (Most or all, 70%-100%, MKs of all parties provided interviews, except one party whose MKs gave interviews on the first day and then refused to interview further across the board).

² These leaders fell outside the designated poll of interviewees because they may be the ones heading the negotiations

2. General Public

The definition of the population was “the entire adult population in Israel.” From this population a representative sample of 730 people were interviewed. The sample was conducted in layers, the criteria for the definition of layers was the following: sector in the population (immigrants from the 90s CIS, haredim, settlers, kibbutz members, remaining Jews), dwelling place (geographic area and type of community, according to the division of the central bureau of statistics).

B. Data Collection

1. Members of Knesset

Most of the interviews were conducted by phone. A few were conducted face to face. The interviewees were promised full confidentiality and that the data, if published, would be presented reflecting the entire sample of interviewees or regarding the entire MKs of a specific party. In order to guarantee confidentiality most of the interviews were conducted by the research editor. A few of the interviews were conducted by a pollster but only in cases where the interviewees said they didn't care about the confidentiality of their answers. The interviews were conducted from mid-December 2009 till the first week in January 2010.

2. General Public

The collection of data was conducted by phone interviews during the first week of January 2010.

C. Data Analysis

1. Members of Knesset

Because not all 120 members of Knesset were interviewed, in the data analysis for all the MKs there was an adjusted calculation of the standard deviation in representing the different parties in the survey. The adjusted calculation was conducted according to each party's portion in the Knesset. This data analysis was conducted for the entire sample and according to the party that each MK represents.

2. General Public

An adjusted calculation was conducted according to the interviewees' report on their pattern of voting for the 2009 Knesset. The data analysis was conducted for the entire sample according to the list voted upon in the 2009 elections and according to population sector: all Jews, immigrants from the 90s and onward (to be referred to as “immigrants”), other Jews (to be referred to as “veterans”), Arabs.

Findings

1. Positions on a peace agreement, if achieved between Israel and the Palestinians

The question that was posed to all interviewees - Members of Knesset and the general public – was:

This questionnaire is designed to gain your view on an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement whose principles are listed below and whose implementation would take place only after the Palestinians would fulfill all their commitments with an emphasis on fighting terror, and the implementation would be monitored and verified by the United States. The principles of the agreement are:

- Two states: Israel the state of the Jewish people and Palestine the state of the Palestinian people.
- Palestinian refugees will have a right to return only to the state of Palestine.
- The Palestinian state will be demilitarized, without an army.
- Borders will be based on the 1967 lines and will include land swaps equal in size that will take into consideration Israel's security needs and will maintain the large settlement blocks under Israeli sovereignty.
- Jewish neighborhoods of Jerusalem will come under Israeli sovereignty and Arab neighborhoods under Palestinian sovereignty.
- The Old City within the walls will be without sovereignty and will be jointly administered by the United States, Israel and the Palestinians. The Holy Places will be under the same religious supervision as current arrangements (for example, the Kotel will be under Israeli supervision and responsibility).

If the government of Israel brought this peace agreement to a referendum would you support or oppose the agreement?

The question posed to the general public included a repeat of all the principles and if there was a need, they were read for a third time.

The question posed to the Members of Knesset didn't include a repeat of the principles. Only at the request of the interviewee were the principles repeated partially or in full.

Table 1 and 2 display the interviewees' answers

Table 1: Positions of MKs on the peace agreement – general sample and according to the parties they represent.

		Support	Oppose	Didn't Respond
	Total MKs	46%	53%	1%
	PARTY			
1.	Kadima	68%	32%	--
2.	Labor	100%	--	--
3.	Likud	27%	73%	--
4.	Shas ³	33%	67%	--
5.	Meretz	100%	--	--
6.	Jewish Home	--	100%	--
7.	National Union	--	100%	--
8.	United Torah Judaism	50%	50%	--
9.	Israel Our Home	17%	83%	--
10.	Hadash	50%	25%	25%
11.	Raam	50%	50%	--
12.	Balad	33%	67%	--

Table 2: Positions of the general public on the peace agreement

A. General sample and according to sector

	Sectors				
	General Sample	All Jews	Veterans	Immigrants	Arabs
Support	67%	63%	65%	50%	85%
Oppose	29%	32%	32%	34%	15%
Did not answer	4%	3%	3%	16%	--
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

³ It is worth noting that all MKs from Shas and UTJ, after providing their personal opinion, stated explicitly that their vote in practice, if we will arrive at such a scenario, will be according to the decision made by their leaders (Rabbi Ovadia Yosef or the Council of Torah Scholars)

B. According to party voted for in 2009 elections

	Party	Support	Oppose	Didn't Respond
1.	Kadima	86%	13%	1%
2.	Labor	88%	5%	7%
3.	Likud	50%	45%	5%
4.	Shas	42%	55%	3%
5.	Meretz	100%	--	--
6.	Jewish Home	31%	61%	8%
7.	National Union	14%	86%	--
8.	United Torah Judaism	35%	65%	--
9.	Israel Our Home	50%	35%	15%
10.	Hadash	76%	24%	25%
11.	Raam	67%	33%	--
12.	Balad	83%	1%	--

Table one and two express the following:

- A. Two thirds (67%) of the general public and a little less than half (46%) of the Members of Knesset say they will support the agreement. Therefore, in regards to the peace agreement discussed, there is a significant gap between the views of the Members of Knesset and the views of the public they represent.
- B. In the general public, taking out of the equation those who voted for Meretz (where there was full support for the agreement), there is no group who support a specific party where there is complete consensus. There is a high level of consensus in support of an agreement among those who voted for Kadima, Labor, Hadash, and Balad (above 75%) and among voters for National Union there is a high level of consensus against the agreement (86%).

The highest level of disagreement among those who voted for a specific party was found among supporters of Likud and Shas.

- C. Among the Members of Knesset four parties were found to have a high level of consensus: Labor and Meretz (100% support the agreement), Jewish Home and National Union (100% oppose the agreement). Also among Israel Our Home there is a high level of consensus (83% oppose the agreement). A lack of consensus is especially evident in Hadash and the Arab parties.

2. What is liable to change the opponents of the agreement to support it

Those who said they would vote against the agreement (both MKs and the general public) were asked the following list of questions:

- A. And if, in addition, the United States would guarantee Israel's security as a Jewish state, would you then support or oppose the agreement?
- B. And if, in addition, a strong security fence were built along the borders that will be based on the 1967 line, would you then support or oppose the agreement?
- C. And if, in addition, the implementation of the agreement were conditioned on the disarming of Hamas and ending its control of the Gaza Strip, would you then support or oppose the agreement?
- D. And if, in addition, the United States signed a defense treaty with Israel under which the United States would guarantee fulfillment of all Arab obligations, would you then support or oppose the agreement?
- E. And if, in addition, the agreement specified that Israelis could continue to reside in the Palestinian state under Palestinian sovereignty while maintaining their Israeli citizenship, would you then support or oppose the agreement?

The following table summarizes the cumulative support in each stage:

	Basic	A	B	C	D	E
Support - MKs	46%	46%	46%	47%	48%	48%
Support - General Public (in brackets – Jews only)	67% (63%)	73% (70%)	77% (74%)	82% (79%)	83% (81%)	84% (82%)