

JMCC Public Opinion Poll No. 24

On Palestinian and Israeli Attitudes Towards the Peace Process - December 1997

in cooperation with Tami Steinmetz Centre for Peace Research Tel-Aviv University

- [Introduction](#)
- [Methodology](#)
- [Sample distribution](#) (only for Palestinians)
- [Occupation of respondents](#) (only for Palestinians)
- [Results](#)

Introduction

For the first time, a joint Israeli - Palestinian public opinion survey on the peace process has been carried out jointly by a Palestinian research institute JMCC (Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre) and an Israeli research institute (the Tami Steinmetz Centre for Peace Research at Tel-Aviv University). The poll has been funded by Norway and the CRB Foundation as part of the people-to-people program. The survey, conducted in late November and early December 1997, used an identical questionnaire that researches from the two institutes elaborated and wrote together.

The questionnaire focused on the following topics:

- Attitudes toward the peace process.
- Effects of the Process thus far;
- Expectations with regard to peace;
- Assessing the other sides intentions;
- Interrelations and mutual perceptions;
- Optimism/pessimism concerning the future in general.

Main Findings:

- A majority of both population groups support the Oslo process; although the level of support among the Israelis 59% is lower than among the Palestinians 68%.
- Similarly, most Palestinian 59% and Israelis 62.5% are optimistic about the prospects of Israel and the Arab concluding a peace accord.
- The two peoples differed slightly in their evaluations of the interim phase. While the Palestinians are equally divided between those who consider this phase as conducive to confidence-building and those who deem it harmful to confidence (43% and 45% respectively) the proportion of Israelis who consider this phase harmful to confidence is markedly higher 41% than those who consider it confidence-building 33%.
- A vast difference between Palestinians and Israelis is evident in their sense of personal security. Most Palestinians 64% sense an improvement in this regard since the process began; only 12% feel that their situation has worsened. Among the Israelis a small minority 9% feel an improvement in personal security, as against 35% who feel less secure. A majority of respondents 55% sense no change.
- Only a small minority of respondents in each group feel that their personal economic situation has improved since the process began 17% of Palestinian, 7% of Israelis.

Among all respondents the feeling of deterioration is stronger at the collective level than at the personal level 59% of Palestinians, 40% of Israelis.

- Large majorities of Palestinian 65% and of Israelis 77% believe that in order to strengthen support for peace, relations between peoples should be intensified in all fields. Yet both peoples hold very similar views on the need to establish a closed, clearly demarcated border between the two entities in order to keep them apart. 63% of Palestinian and 81% of Israelis favour such a separation. Support of stronger relations and support of separation seem mutually exclusive at first glance, but in fact there is no contradiction.
- 89% Palestinian believe that the Government of Israel does not truly want peace, whereas the Israelis are of two minds concerning the Palestinian Authority 56% believing that the Authority is truly interested in peace, 40% believing to the contrary.
- 56% of Israelis believe that the Palestinian people truly desires peace, 40% Israelis do not.
- It transpires that few members of either people actually interrelate, at the personal level or for business, with members of the other people; 22% of Palestinians and 32% of Israelis reported having had such relationship. Among those who so reported, majorities among both groups reported that the relations were generally pleasant. However the majority is smaller among Palestinians 53% than among Israelis 72%.
- Despite the asymmetry in the two peoples situations and the differences we found in their attitudes toward various matters, a large majority of Israelis 70% and Palestinians 73% deem themselves very optimistic or optimistic concerning the future generally.

Methodology

The surveys included representative samples of both population groups - Israelis (Jews and Arabs) and Palestinians.

The Palestinian sample included 1,185 respondents aged 18 and over (769 of whom lived in the West Bank including East Jerusalem and 416 in the Gaza Strip). The interviews were conducted in randomly selected homes, and the subjects inside each home were also selected randomly according to Kish tables. The interviews were conducted in 60 sampling points chosen randomly according to population.

The Israeli sample included 1,002 respondents aged 18 and over, half Jews and half Arabs. (Notably, the Arab population in this age cohort accounts for only 11% of the Israeli population: we had to use a disproportionately large sample in order correctly to analyze this population / group by its subgroups. Obviously, when data for the total population were computed, the Arab population was weighted in accordance with its correct proportion. The Jewish respondents were interviewed by telephone; the Arab respondents were interviewed face-to-face, as in the Palestinian survey.

Sample Distribution

- 58.0% of the respondents were from the West Bank
- 35.1% from the Gaza Strip
- 6.9% from Jerusalem

- 36.0% said they live in villages
- 21.3% in refugee camps
- 42.7% in towns/cities
- 47.5% were male
- 52.5% were female
- 67.6% were married
- 23.1% were single
- 4.2% were widowed
- 1.5% were divorced
- 3.6% No answer
- The average of age of the respondents was 34 years.

Occupation respondents

- Students 9.4%
 - Waged labourers 12.1%
 - Housewives 40.0%
 - Employees eg. secretaries/teachers/nurses/municipal employees 15.8%
 - Businessmen/private business 8.3%
 - Farmers/fishermen 2.1%
 - Craftsmen 1.8%
 - Professionals - eg. doctors/lawyers/pharmacists/engineers 1.1%
 - Unemployed 6.5%
 - Retired 2.0%
 - No answer 0.9%
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Results

**Q.1 To what extent do you feel optimistic or pessimistic regarding the future in general?
Would you say that you are very optimistic, optimistic, pessimistic or very pessimistic?**

		Palestinian Area			Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total	Jews	Arab
Very optimistic	6.4%	5.6%	7.9%	18.6%	19.5%	11.4%
Optimistic	66.1%	64.8%	68.5%	51.0%	50.4%	55.4%
Pessimistic	20.8%	21.6%	19.2%	19.8%	19.0%	26.7%
Very Pessimistic	5.4%	6.4%	3.6%	7.1%	7.4%	4.3%
No answer	1.3%	1.6%	0.8%	3.5%	3.7%	2.2%

Q.2 How optimistic or pessimistic are you about reaching a peaceful Arab-Israeli settlement?
Would you say you are:

		Palestinian Area			Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total	Jews	Arab
Very optimistic	4.6%	3.9%	5.8%	13.7%	14.0%	11.1%
Optimistic	54.5%	55.8%	52.2%	48.3%	48.5%	50.6%
Pessimistic	27.8%	25.9%	31.3%	23.8%	22.5%	28.8%
Very Pessimistic	11.0%	11.8%	9.4%	8.7%	9.0%	6.0%
No answer	2.1%	2.6%	1.3%	5.5%	6.0%	3.5%

Q.3 What do you think about the Oslo formula, would you say you strongly support it, support it, oppose it or strongly oppose it?

		Palestinian Area			Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total	Jews	Arab
Strongly support	7.8%	6.8%	9.9%	25.6%	23.3%	34.6%
Support	60.3%	59.2%	62.3%	33.3%	33.1%	34.9%
Oppose	18.0%	19.0%	16.1%	12.7%	13.0%	9.9%
Strongly oppose	6.7%	6.1%	7.7%	20.1%	21.7%	17.6%
No answer	7.2%	8.9%	4.0%	8.3%	8.9%	3.0%

Q. 4 What is your opinion about the transitional period? Would you say that it builds confidence or destroys confidence between the two peoples?

		Palestinian Area			Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total	Jews	Arab
Builds confidence	43.4%	41.5%	46.9%	33.0%	31.2%	47.5%
Destroys confidence	45.5%	47.1%	42.5%	40.6%	41.2%	36.0%
No answer	11.1%	11.4%	10.6%	26.4%	27.6%	16.5%

Q. 5 And now after the elapse of sometime since the peace process started, would you say that your sense of personal security is better than before the peace process, about the same or worse?

		Palestinian Area			Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total	Jews	Arab
Better	64.2%	60.9%	70.4%	9.0%	8.4%	14.2%
Same	21.9%	24.7%	16.8%	54.5%	54.4%	55.7%
Worse	11.8%	12.6%	10.3%	34.6%	35.6%	26.4%
No answer	2.1%	1.8%	2.5%	1.9%	1.6%	3.7%

Q. 6 How about your own personal economic situation since the peace process started, would you say that it is better than before the peace process, about the same or worse?

		Palestinian Area			Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total	Jews	Arab
Better	16.9%	16.5%	17.5%	6.6%	6.2%	10.0%
Same	38.1%	43.2%	28.8%	72.1%	73.8%	58.3%
Worse	43.7%	39.1%	52.2%	17.8%	16.5%	28.3%
No answer	1.3%	1.2%	1.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.4%

Q. 7 And how about our economy in general, since the peace process started, would you say that is better than before the peace proces, about the same or worse?

		Palestinian Area		Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Jews	Arab
Better	16.6%	16.1%	17.5%	11.1%	9.1%
Same	21.1%	22.9%	17.8%	40.2%	37.7%
Worse	58.6%	56.3%	62.7%	39.5%	48.1%
No answer	3.7%	4.7%	2.0%	9.2%	5.1%

Q. 8 In your opinion what is the most important obstacle facing the peace process:

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Settlements	16.8%	15.2%	19.7%
Jerusalem	6.4%	5.9%	7.5%
Israel (Stubbornness)	27.4%	26.7%	28.8%
Netanyahu (Likud)	10.0%	9.8%	10.6%

Economy	1.8%	1.3%	2.6%
Closure	1.4%	0.8%	2.6%
Israeli people	1.4%	1.8%	0.7%
Prisoners	1.0%	0.9%	1.2%
Jews	2.4%	3.0%	1.2%
No understanding between the two sides	1.5%	1.6%	1.4%
Suicidal operations	2.0%	2.1%	1.9%
Other obstacles	13.1%	11.2%	6.7%
Do not know / no opinion	9.6%	14.7%	10.1%
No answer	5.2%	5.0%	5.0%

Q. 9 In your opinion what is the most important obstacle facing the peace process:

	Jewish Sample	Arab Sample
	Total	Total
Both Sides:		
Extremism, mutual hostility and racism	3.7%	4.7%
Mistrust and miscommunication	11.0%	6.9%
Political malperformance	2.5%	2.6%
Israeli Side:		
Israeli government and prime minister	27.1%	36.5%
Israeli radical right	3.5%	2.5%
Israeli radical left	4.5%	0.0%
Internal cleavage	4.8%	0.0%
Occupation, lands & Settlements	0.0%	6.8%
Jewish mentality & attitudes towards Arabs	0.0%	3.6%
Jerusalem	0.6%	4.2%
Arab Side:		
Political leadership	0.8%	0.4%
Arab hostility and terror	8.6%	4.9%
Arab attitudes and mentality	9.0%	0.7%
Arab excessive claims	2.7%	0.0%
Other	9.2%	10.3%
Don't know	12.0%	15.9%

Q. 10 How genuine, do you think the present Israeli government (Palestinian Authority) is about reaching peace with the Palestinians (Israelis). Would you say that it is...

		Palestinian Area			Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total	Jews	Arab
Very genuine	0.8%	0.5%	1.4%	16.2%	14.4%	30.7%
Genuine	8.0%	6.9%	10.1%	40.0%	37.9%	56.8%
Not genuine	44.8%	47.2%	40.4%	20.5%	22.1%	7.9%
Not genuine at all	44.2%	42.8%	46.9%	19.4%	21.7%	1.2%
No answer	2.2%	2.6%	1.2%	3.9%	3.9%	3.4%

Q. 11 How genuine do you think the Israeli (Palestinian) people are about reaching peace with the Palestinians (Israelis). Would you say you are

		Palestinian Area			Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total	Jews	Arab
Very genuine	3.3%	3.3%	3.4%	15.9%	14.7%	25.5%
Genuine	47.3%	49.2%	44.0%	39.6%	38.0%	52.3%
Not genuine	33.1%	30.9%	37.0%	19.4%	19.9%	15.8%
Not genuine at all	12.4%	12.2%	12.7%	20.1%	22.1%	3.5%
No answer	3.9%	4.4%	2.9%	5.0%	5.3%	2.9%

Q. 12 Would you mind an Israeli (Palestinian) to be your personal friend?

		Palestinian Area		Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Jews	Arab
Yes	50.8%	44.9%	61.8%	22.6%	0.0%
No	46.7%	52.4%	36.1%	73.9%	0.0%
No answer	2.5%	2.7%	2.1%	3.5%	0.0%

Q. 13 If a peace settlement is reached between the Israelis and the Palestinians in the future, would you still have a problem taking an Israeli (Palestinians) as a friend?

		Palestinian Area		Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Jews	Arab
Yes	75.7%	78.0%	72.8%	83.2%	0.0%
No	20.4%	17.7%	24.1%	11.5%	0.0%
No answer	3.9%	4.3%	3.1%	5.3%	0.0%

Q. 14 What is your opinion about the following statement: In order to strengthen the support for peace among the Israelis and Palestinians the relationships between the two people should be depended in all areas.

		Palestinian Area			Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total	Jews	Arab
Strongly agree	9.9%	7.0%	15.1%	38.3%	40.2%	23.2%
Agree	55.4%	58.8%	49.3%	38.7%	37.0%	52.2%
Disagree	21.7%	22.1%	20.9%	11.5%	11.2%	14.1%
Strongly disagree	9.1%	7.2%	12.7%	6.3%	6.7%	2.7%
No answer	3.9%	4.9%	2.0%	5.2%	4.9%	7.8%

Q. 15 What about if a Palestinian state is established, would you still say that the relationship between the two peoples should not be strengthened?

		Palestinian Area		Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Jews	Arab
Yes	69.3%	66.2%	74.3%	0.0%	53.2%
No	26.8%	29.8%	22.1%	0.0%	46.4%
No answer	3.9%	4.0%	3.6%	0.0%	0.4%

Q. 16 What in your opinion about the following argument: Even if peace agreement is reached, it is preferable for the Palestinians to have a close and clear border with Israel, to maintain full separation between the two entities.

		Palestinian Area			Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total	Jews	Arab
Strongly agree	14.9%	13.1%	18.3%	51.4%	55.4%	19.3%
Agree	47.7%	47.2%	48.6%	30.0%	28.3%	43.6%
Disagree	25.1%	27.4%	20.7%	7.6%	6.1%	19.8%
Strongly disagree	6.3%	5.2%	8.4%	5.6%	5.1%	9.8%
No answer	6.0%	7.1%	4.0%	5.4%	5.1%	7.5%

Q. 17 In your opinion, is it possible that after the signing of peace agreement between Israel and the Arab a "New Middle East" will evolve, similar to the situation in Europe today - no wars, joint economic and political institutions, and borders open to people and goods? Possible immediately following the signing the peace agreement, possible in the near future, possible but in the far future, not possible at all

		Palestinian Area			Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total	Jews	Arab
Possible immediately following the signing the peace agreement	3.2%	1.7%	6.0%	6.8%	5.7%	14.2%
Possible, in the near future	19.4%	18.6%	20.9%	15.9%	15.8%	17.0%
Possible, but in the far future	39.2%	41.6%	34.9%	41.5%	41.6%	40.8%
Not possible at all	33.3%	32.4%	35.1%	30.1%	30.7%	25.1%
No answer	4.9%	5.7%	3.1%	5.7%	6.2%	2.9%

Q. 18 Did you have in the past, or do you have today any personal or business relationships with Israeli (Palestinina) civilians.

		Palestinian Area			Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total	Jews	Arab
Yes	22.1%	23.7%	19.2%	32.0%	27.0%	72.0%
No	77.6%	76.1%	80.3%	67.5%	72.7%	25.0%
No answer	0.3%	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%	3.0%

Q. 19 And how would you describe these relations?

		Palestinian Area			Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total	Jews	Arab
Pleasant relationships	53.4%	51.1%	58.8%	71.7%	73.2%	59.9%
Unpleasant relationships	7.6%	7.1%	8.8%	3.6%	3.3%	6.3%
Sometimes pleasant, sometime unpleasant	37.4%	39.6%	32.4%	22.5%	23.5%	17.7%
No answer	1.6%	2.2%	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%	16.1%

Q. 20 Now I am going to show you a list of characteristics that could be used to describe the Israelis (Palestinians), using the following scale (show scale), please indicate how you describe the Israelis (Palestinians):

- Violent:

		Palestinian Area		Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Jews	Arab
1. Non-Violent	3.5%	3.3%	4.1%	6.5%	16.6%
2.	3.8%	3.1%	5.0%	13.6%	10.7%
3.	14.9%	16.4%	12.3%	41.0%	38.3%
4.	14.3%	13.5%	15.6%	17.0%	15.8%
5. Violent	63.0%	63.6%	62.0%	21.9%	18.6%
No answer	0.5%	0.1%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%

- Honest:

		Palestinian Area		Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Jews	Arab
1. Dishonest	53.4%	54.4%	51.7%	23.2%	19.6%
2.	8.9%	9.8%	7.5%	18.3%	14.8%
3.	17.7%	18.1%	17.1%	37.4%	38.1%
4.	7.8%	6.2%	10.6%	13.1%	20.3%
5. Honest	10.2%	9.9%	10.8%	8.0%	7.1%
No answer	2.0%	1.6%	2.3%	0.0%	0.1%

- Intelligent:

		Palestinian Area		Israel	
	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Jews	Arab
1. Unintelligent	7.8%	7.7%	7.9%	19.0%	7.1%
2.	4.0%	4.3%	3.4%	17.8%	8.9%
3.	16.4%	16.6%	15.9%	43.9%	21.3%
4.	16.6%	17.4%	15.1%	13.1%	22.9%
5. Intelligent	54.3%	53.2%	56.3%	6.1%	39.7%
No answer	0.9%	0.8%	1.4%	0.1%	0.1%