



Support for both a two state solution and a comprehensive two state peace plan rose among Palestinians, but fell among Israelis over the last half year. However, policy incentives can be added to the two-state agreement that bring support up to a strong majority on both sides. Obstacles to support for two states are low perceptions of feasibility, low trust, and high portions who think the other side aims to destroy them.

1 August, 2017 ----- A nearly-equal majority of both Israelis (53%) and Palestinians (52%) support the concept of a two state solution. Support among Palestinians has risen eight points from December 2016, while Israeli support for this approach fell two points – this represents an incremental but steady decline in Israeli support since June 2016 for both the two state concept and the comprehensive package of implementation. Israeli Arabs show the highest support; over 80% support both the principle and the implementation package.

Additional policy incentives were effective at changing the minds of those who were opposed to a detailed two-state plan, and generating majority support. Measures such as the other side recognizing each side's own attachment to the land and historic narrative; for Palestinians, the release of Palestinian prisoners, and for Jews, if Palestinians changed textbooks and removed incitement, cause between one-third to over half of those originally opposed to change their minds. When added to the original supporters, they raise total support to a majority.

However, large portions on both sides believe that settlements have expanded so much that the two state solution is no longer viable; this perceived lack of feasibility is closely connected to opposition to the plan. Mutual suspicions have increased slightly from one year ago, and a majority on each side believe the other side holds a maximalist goal of territorial takeover and harm to their own population.

These are the findings of the new Palestinian-Israeli Pulse: A Joint Poll, published today by the [Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research \(TSC\)](#), [Tel Aviv University](#) and the [Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research \(PSR\)](#) in Ramallah, with funding from the [European Union \(EU\)](#), and the Netherland Representative Office in Ramallah.

The poll was conducted in June and early July 2017 among representative samples of 1,200 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and 900 Israelis, with oversamples of settlers and Arab citizens. The margin of error is +/-3% for both. The survey tested the details of a permanent peace agreement, incentives for those who are opposed; perceptions of the other, and alternate scenarios to the two state solution, including both equal and unequal versions of one state, and a confederation of two states. *The following summary has been drafted by Dr. Khalil Shikaki and Walid Ladadwa from PSR, and Dr. Dahlia Scheindlin, with the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research and its director, Dr. Ephraim Lavie.*

Detailed Findings: When presented with a **peace agreement package** based on previous rounds of negotiations, Israeli Jewish support declined nine points from December (from 41% to 32% at present). One year ago, 46% of all Israelis supported the package, while at present 41% support it. On the Palestinian side, support for the implementation package rose from 39% last June to 43% one year later. The rise is due mainly to growing support in Gaza, where half of all respondents support the detailed plan for implementation. The plan included a de-militarized Palestinian state, and Israeli withdrawal to

pre-June 1967 lines with equal territorial exchange, family unification in Israel of 100,000 Palestinian refugees, West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine (the Old City divided among the two sides), and the end of the conflict and claims.

However, testing **additional incentives** to convince those who were opposed revealed significant potential to increase support, and indicates that for many, opposition is conditional, not absolute. The most effective incentives included:

- For Palestinians, release of all Palestinian prisoners caused 56% of Palestinians who were initially opposed to the comprehensive agreement to support it; total support in that case rises to nearly three-quarters of all Palestinians (73%)
- For Israeli Jews, Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state, recognizing the Jewish historic and religious ties to the region caused 43% of those who were opposed to change their mind. This brings total Israeli Jewish support up to 58%. Among Palestinians, a very similar incentive in which Israel recognizes the Arab and Islamic character of a Palestinian state causes 42% to change their mind from opposition to support.
- Roughly one-third of both Palestinians and Israelis responded that if the other side would change their education textbooks to remove incitement against them, they would support an agreement.

Separately, all Israeli Jews were asked about cultural and economic boycott – about one-third of these respondents said that if such boycotts worsen, Israel should change its policy and work towards a two state solution.

Reasons for doubts. At present large portions do not believe the two state solution is **feasible**. A small majority of Palestinians (52%) and nearly half of Israelis (44%, with little difference between Jews and Arabs in Israel) believe that the two state solution is no longer viable due to settlement expansion. When asked if they would support or oppose **evacuating the minimum estimated number of settlers** that would have to move in a two state agreement, 54% of Jews are opposed – the plurality, 41%, were intensely opposed, and another 13% “somewhat.” Among settlers, 84% are opposed.

The second main reason involves **lack of trust and perceptions of maximalist destructive goals** of the other side. Less than one-fifth of Israeli Jews trust Palestinians and only 13% of Palestinians trust Jews. Further, 78% of Palestinians in total believe that Israel has maximalist aspirations: 21% believe Israel seeks to annex the West Bank and deny Palestinian rights, while 57% think Israel wants to take over all the land and expel the Palestinians. Among Israeli Jews, 62% believe that Palestinians wish to take over all the land (24%), or take the land and destroy the Jewish population (38%). However, on each side only a minority believes its society holds these extremist aspirations (1/3 among Jews and 1/4 of Palestinians).

Alternatives. To understand the preferred scenarios among those who do not support a two state solution, three alternatives were tested: (1) One equal state, (2) one unequal state (apartheid), and (3) an extreme scenario in which one side expels the other. Once those who support a two-state solution are separated from the analysis, the maximum number who support each of these alternatives ranges between 10% and 15%, from each population. When asked separately about a confederation between two states, Israel and Palestine, 37% of Palestinians and 32% of all Israelis support it– with a large gap between Israeli Jews (26%) and Israeli Arabs (61%).

Complete poll summary attached. For more information or interviews: contact Roy Yellin, TSC’s spokesperson, at ryellin@gmail.com or 0544654431 (Hebrew and English speakers and reporters in Israel) or Hamada Jaber, PSR Administrator, at hamada.jaber@pcpsr.org or 059-947-4310 (Arabic and English speakers or those located in the Palestinian territories).