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## **Palestinian-Israeli Pulse: Despite mutual fear, distrust and pessimism regarding the likelihood and feasibility of the two-state solution, a majority of Palestinians and Israelis may support comprehensive peace agreement that ends the conflict if offered additional symbolic or concrete incentives**

February 16, 2017 ----- A majority of Israelis supports the concept of a two state solution (55%), and support among Palestinians stands at 44%. Both sides show a decline in support since June, when 59% of Israelis and 51% of Palestinians supported this approach. Yet far more people prefer the two-state solution relative to one state, or a confederation. Those two alternative options are supported by just 24% or 28% of Israelis, respectively, and just over one-third of Palestinians, and a majority of Arab Israelis.

However, the actual support for a comprehensive two state peace plan based on the terms represented in previous negotiations is lower than support for the broad notion of two states. Just under half of all Israelis and Palestinians would support the detailed peace plan. But a series of incentives designed to convince those opposed to an agreement showed significant potential to change minds, and generate majority support for the comprehensive plan.

So reports 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 \(EU\)](#).

The poll, which was conducted in December 2016 and surveyed representative samples including 1,270 Palestinians and 1207 Israelis, focused on different types of permanent peace agreements, incentives for those who are opposed; and levels of mistrust and fear of the other. The survey also addressed expectations from the new American administration regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, sources of social change from civil society and religious leaders, and interaction with one another.

### **Detailed Findings**

When presented with a **peace agreement package** based on previous rounds of negotiations, **only 42% of Palestinians and 48% of Israelis (41% of Israeli Jews and 88% of Israeli Arabs) said they support such a package**. The plan included a de-militarized Palestinian state, and Israeli withdrawal to the Green Line (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, when those who opposed such an agreement were asked about a range of **additional incentives** to the original package, the findings showed significant potential for greater support. Certain incentives were offered separately to Jewish Israelis, Arab Israelis and Palestinians, and several identical or similar items were asked of all populations.

Of the three nearly identical incentives offered to all those who originally opposed the accord, **a broader regional peace involving the Arab World and Israel** receives similar levels of support from both sides: 30% of Israeli Jews and 28% of Palestinians who opposed the combined package were willing to change their minds and accept a package with this amendment. When those respondents who changed their minds are shifted from the opposition and added to supporters, this incentive of a broader regional peace increases the level of support for the full peace package among Palestinians to 57% and among Israeli Jews to 58%.

Among the separate incentives offered, the survey raised some additional policy ideas not typically considered in the negotiation process. Here are two examples:

- The top incentive among Israeli Jews was the item: *“the Jews who left their homes and property in the Arab countries when they had to leave following the 1948 War and the establishment of the state of Israel will be compensated for the lost assets left behind”* - 40% of Israeli Jews were willing to change their mind and accept the combined package if it included this amendment.
- The top incentive for those Palestinians and Israeli Arabs who were initially opposed were: *“Palestinian laborers can freely work in Israel after the establishment of the Palestinian state”* 44% of Palestinians and 47% of the Israeli Arabs said they would change their mind and accept the combined package if it included this amendment.

Both Palestinians and Israelis are deeply divided by political ideology and religiosity. Among Fatah supporters, nearly two-thirds support the combined two-state package, but just one-fifth (21%) of Hamas supporters. Among Israeli Jews who reported their political ideology, just under one-fifth of right wingers support the package, but nearly 90% of those who described themselves as left-wing support it – and nearly half (47%) of centrists. Among secular Israeli Jews, 61% support an agreement; but just 34% among traditional Jews, and 9% among religious or ultra-orthodox. Similarly, among Palestinians, nearly two-thirds of those who consider themselves “not religious” support the two-state package (64%), 47% of the who “somewhat religious” and just over one-third (35%) of the religious respondents.

**Perception of the Other:** There is little trust between Palestinians and Israelis. Some 86% of Palestinians feel Israeli Jews are untrustworthy, while 71% of Israelis do not trust Palestinians. Further, 51% of Israeli Jews, 48% of Israeli Arabs and 68% of Palestinians agree, “Nothing can be done that’s good for both sides; whatever is good for one side is bad for the other side.” Moreover, among Israeli Jews, 66% feel fear toward the Palestinians; among West Bank settlers this rises to 72%. Nearly half of Israeli Jews fear their fellow Arab citizens of Israel; among West Bank settlers 60% are afraid of Israeli Arabs. Among the Palestinians, under half (43%) say that they fear Israeli Jews in general, and 52% fear soldiers and armed settlers. Most Israeli Arabs (82%) do not feel fear toward Israeli Jews.

**New US Administration.** Both Israelis and Palestinians agree on the general leaning of the new American administration: large majorities among both communities believe Donald Trump’s presidency will side more with Israel on the conflict. Respondents on both sides show little expectation of progress on negotiations: 10% of Palestinians, and slightly over one-quarter of Israelis think that Trump will seek to renew negotiations.

*The polls have a 3% margin of error. The following summary has been drafted by Dr. Khalil Shikaki and Walid Ladadwa from PSR, and Dr. Dahlia Scheindlin together with the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research and its director, Dr. Ephraim Lavie.*

**Complete poll summary attached.**

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