

Poll: Large Majority of Israelis Don't Trust Kerry on Security

Some 64 percent of Israelis do not trust U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry to take Israel's security into account as a "crucial factor" in the framework peace proposal he is attempting to formulate, a new poll published this week found.

The monthly Peace Index poll of the Israel Democracy Institute and Tel Aviv University found that the lack of trust in Kerry was prevalent both among Israeli Jews (66 percent) and Israeli Arabs (53 percent).

According to the poll, 74 percent of Israeli Jews believe the U.S. is putting more pressure on Israel than the Palestinians to accept the framework proposal.

This survey, conducted on March 3-4, included 603 respondents who constitute a representative sample of the adult population of Israel. The margin of error was 4.1 percent.

At a Likud faction meeting on Tuesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Palestinian obstinacy is diminishing the prospects for a peace agreement.

Netanyahu said that in light of recent Palestinian statements, "we are farther away from an agreement, because of the Palestinians. They said this week that they will never recognize a Jewish state and will never give up on the right of return."

"I want to make clear that I won't bring forth a deal that does not negate the right of return and does not require Palestinian recognition of a Jewish state. For the State of Israel, these are fundamental conditions that are legitimate

and essential,” Netanyahu said.

“The Palestinians are not showing any signs of willingness to enter a practical and fair agreement.”

Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman also said on Tuesday that the Palestinians were preventing progress in the peace negotiations.

“As always, the Palestinian side is the rejectionist one that torpedoed negotiations, and when it comes the moment of truth, the Palestinians say no and refuse to reach an agreement,” Lieberman said.

Lieberman stated that he and other Yisrael Beytenu ministers would vote against releasing Israeli Arab terrorists from prison if such a proposal was brought to the cabinet for a vote.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is scheduled to meet U.S. President Barack Obama in Washington next week. Israel is expecting Obama and European nations to pressure Abbas to show more flexibility and agree to a one-year extension of the peace negotiations.

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