

האגודה לזכויות האזרח בישראל  
جمعية حقوق المواطن في إسرائيل  
The Association for Civil Rights in Israel



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June 2011

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Survey  
Israeli Public  
opinion:  
*The Jordan  
Valley*

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The Association for Civil  
Rights in Israel (ACRI)

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A SURVEY CONDUCTED FOR ACRI SHOWS:  
**The Vast Majority of the Israeli Public  
Has Wrong Ideas about the Jordan Valley**

**JUNE 2011**

Below (see appendix on page 4) are the results of a public opinion poll authored and analyzed by public opinion specialist Dahlia Scheindlin. The data were collected by the New Wave Studies Institute. The survey was conducted through telephone interviews with 500 adult, Hebrew-speaking Jews, on 31 May and 1 June 2011. Margin of error is 4.5%.

**Survey Findings**

- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of the Jewish-Israeli public are **not aware of the fact that the Jordan Valley is an occupied territory** in which Israel is not sovereign. It is possible that people do not fully comprehend the term "sovereignty" and it stands to reason that many respondents think it means that Israel "dominates" the Jordan Valley. Only 18% answered correctly, that the Jordan Valley is a territory that Israel had occupied; while some 19% did not know the precise status of the Jordan Valley.
- More than 80% of Jewish-Israelis are either **wrong or ignorant about the composition of the Jordan Valley population**. In actual fact, the population of the area comprises some 65,000 Palestinians and 10,000 Jews. A relative majority of the respondents, however, believes that the majority of Jordan Valley residents are Jewish. Another 10% of the respondents believe that *only* Israelis live there, while 12% think the two populations are equal in size. Namely, more than half of the Jewish Israelis (57%) are wrong about the population composition of the Jordan Valley, and another 25% admitted they had no idea. Only 17% of the Jewish population in Israel had a clear picture of the population composition of the Jordan Valley.
- Nearly 40% of Jewish-Israelis **never visited the Jordan Valley over the past decade**, while 28% visited it once or twice during that period. This means that some two-thirds of Israelis barely visit the region. Another 30% stated that they visit the region once a year (14%) or more (16%).
- The findings show that Jewish-Israelis associatively believe that the Jordan Valley is part of the State of Israel, but in practice they are mostly ignorant about it and it is clearly not part of the vast majority's life.

**Demographic Analysis**

Generally, no particular differences were detected when the data were analyzed demographically, but there were several groups that stood out:

Relatively, more **religious Jews** (80%) believe that the Jordan Valley is sovereign Israeli territory, compared to 59% of **secular Jews**. Only 13% of religious Jews were aware of the fact that the Jordan Valley is an occupied territory, as compared with 22% of secular Jews. The differences between the two groups may indicate that ideologies impact the perception of facts. At the same time, the difference between the numbers of religious and secular Jews who visit the Jordan Valley was minute (37% and 29%, respectively).

A larger number of **older respondents** (aged 55 and up) knew the Jordan Valley was an occupied territory. Nearly one-quarter of them chose this correct answer, as compared with only 14% of those aged 18-55. This was the case despite the fact that some 74% of the respondents never or rarely visit the Jordan Valley, while only 24% visited it once or more in the past decade.

When segmented by **areas of residence**, it appeared that Jewish residents of Jerusalem and of the West Bank visit the Jordan Valley more frequently than others, but even they are not the majority (45%) of those who do that, while 48% of them do not often tour the Jordan Valley region.

**Level of education** does not indicate the level of knowledge. Some 71% of the respondents who had an academic education and 63% of those who had high school-level education chose a wrong answer regarding Israel's sovereignty over the Jordan Valley. In both these population groups, the number of people who came up with a correct answer was nearly the same (16%). Some 20% of the academics said they did not know, as compared with 13% of the high-school graduates who chose this answer.

### **Interpretation**

- The fact that Israelis wrongly believe that the Jordan Valley is part of the sovereign State of Israel and is mostly occupied by Israelis probably enhances the emotional support for the position that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has presented – that the Jordan Valley is essential for Israel's security.
- The Jordan Valley is not part of the respondents' daily lives.
- Due to the fact that the knowledge of Jewish-Israelis about the Jordan Valley is quite inadequate, they tend to accept the image dictated by authorities without criticism. This is why it is so easy for decision-makers to shape Israeli public opinion regarding the Jordan Valley.

# Appendix

## Survey Data

New Wave Studies

Below are the findings of an Omnibus survey  
Representative sample: 500 Jewish Israelis  
Conducted on 1 June 2011

**Please consider the Jordan Valley:  
As far as you know, the JRV\* is -**

	Total
Total	500
	100.0%
Sovereign Israeli territory	63.5%
Territory conquered by Israel, which is not sovereign there	17.7%
Don't know/would not answer	18.8%

**As far as you know, the JRV residents are:**

	Total
Total	500
	100.0%
All Palestinians	2.5%
Mostly Palestinians, few Israelis	17.1%
Mostly Israelis, few Palestinians	34.6%
All Israelis	9.6%
Palestinians & Israelis - equally	11.8%
Don't know	24.2%

**How often did you visit JRF over the past decade?**

	Total
Total	500
	100.0%
Never	39.0%
Once or twice	27.7%
Once a year	13.7%
More than once a year	15.6%

Don't know/would not answer

4.1%

**On another matter: As far as you know, the JRV is:**

		Sovereign Israeli territory	A territory occupied by Israel, which is not sovereign there	Don't know/would not answer	Total	
Total		63.5%	17.7%	18.8%	500	100.0%
Gender	Male	68.3%	18.9%	12.8%	249	100.0%
	Female	58.8%	16.5%	24.7%	251	100.0%
Age	18-34	68.3%	14.9%	16.8%	169	100.0%
	35-54	69.2%	13.4%	17.4%	163	100.0%
	55+	53.9%	25.2%	20.8%	148	100.0%
	No age given	47.7%	20.0%	32.3%	20	100.0%
Religiosity level	Ultra-Orthodox	61.0%	6.5%	32.5%	39	100.0%
	Religious	80.3%	12.8%	6.9%	43	100.0%
	Observant	65.8%	14.9%	19.2%	189	100.0%
	Secular	58.8%	22.2%	19.0%	213	100.0%
	Would not say	60.3%	29.2%	10.5%	16	100.0%
Education level	High-school or less	36.6%	27.8%	35.6%	39	100.0%
	High school	63.1%	16.8%	20.2%	168	100.0%
	College	60.5%	20.4%	19.1%	89	100.0%
	University	70.6%	16.4%	13.0%	182	100.0%
	Would not/gave no answer	69.2%	5.5%	25.3%	22	100.0%
Income level	Below average	63.3%	15.1%	21.6%	150	100.0%
	Average	70.9%	14.0%	15.1%	118	100.0%
	Above average	63.7%	20.1%	16.1%	111	100.0%
	Don't know/would not answer	56.6%	22.0%	21.4%	121	100.0%
Area of residence	Jerusalem	57.8%	18.4%	23.8%	50	100.0%
	North	61.3%	27.8%	10.9%	50	100.0%
	Haifa	74.9%	12.2%	13.0%	62	100.0%
	Center	69.0%	9.1%	21.8%	126	100.0%
	Tel Aviv	53.5%	23.7%	22.8%	112	100.0%
	South	63.9%	19.0%	17.1%	82	100.0%
	West Bank settlers	69.2%	22.1%	8.7%	19	100.0%

**As far as you know, who lives in the JRV?**

		Only Palestinians	Mostly Palestinians and few Israelis	Mainly Israelis and few Palestinians	Only Israelis	Palestinians & Israelis - equally	Don't know	Total	
<b>Total</b>		2.5%	17.1%	34.6%	9.6%	11.8%	24.2%	500	100.0%
Gender	Male	2.3%	21.3%	34.6%	9.9%	13.1%	18.8%	249	100.0%
	Female	2.8%	13.0%	34.7%	9.3%	10.5%	29.7%	251	100.0%
Age	18-34	3.1%	18.5%	33.0%	6.2%	9.3%	29.9%	169	100.0%
	35-54	2.6%	20.2%	38.6%	7.4%	13.4%	19.8%	163	100.0%
	55+	3.7%	12.6%	35.7%	15.5%	12.4%	20.2%	148	100.0%
	No age given	5.6%	14.4%	8.4%	12.4%	16.6%	42.6%	20	100.0%
Religiosity level	Ultra-Orthodox		16.0%	27.0%	4.5%	5.2%	47.2%	39	100.0%
	Religious	3.6%	7.9%	42.5%	13.9%	5.5%	26.6%	43	100.0%
	Observant	3.5%	17.6%	32.7%	8.8%	14.8%	22.6%	189	100.0%
	Secular	2.1%	19.5%	37.0%	9.7%	10.3%	21.4%	213	100.0%
	Would not say		7.8%	23.2%	18.0%	30.8%	20.2%	16	100.0%
Education level	High-school or less	3.7%	11.3%	21.8%	11.2%	22.0%	30.0%	39	100.0%
	High school	3.6%	17.7%	29.7%	11.3%	8.4%	29.2%	168	100.0%
	College	4.5%	17.0%	34.1%	3.6%	12.7%	28.2%	89	100.0%
	University		18.5%	45.3%	8.8%	12.7%	14.7%	182	100.0%
	Would not/gave no answer	5.5%	12.8%	9.4%	23.9%	9.9%	38.5%	22	100.0%
Income level	Below average	6.0%	17.8%	29.7%	11.4%	7.7%	27.4%	150	100.0%
	Average	2.8%	13.3%	39.0%	8.0%	18.6%	20.3%	118	100.0%
	Above average	2.6%	19.5%	42.9%	7.6%	8.7%	20.7%	111	100.0%
	Don't know/would not answer	1.8%	17.9%	29.0%	10.7%	13.3%	27.3%	121	100.0%
Area of residence	Jerusalem		24.1%	30.5%	9.8%	14.4%	21.2%	50	100.0%
	North	1.5%	23.9%	33.6%	8.7%	14.6%	17.7%	50	100.0%
	Haifa	8.6%	16.9%	31.1%	8.8%	8.4%	26.2%	62	100.0%
	Center		15.5%	35.9%	10.1%	11.6%	26.8%	126	100.0%
	Tel Aviv	1.5%	10.7%	38.7%	12.2%	11.0%	25.9%	112	100.0%
	South	6.1%	21.5%	28.8%	8.5%	15.6%	19.6%	82	100.0%
	West Bank settlers		12.0%	52.3%			35.7%	19	100.0%

### How often did you visit the JRV over the past decade?

		Never	Once or twice	Once a year	More than once a year	Don't know/ would not answer	Total	
<b>Total</b>		39.0%	27.7%	13.7%	15.6%	4.1%	500	100.0%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	32.8%	27.6%	14.8%	21.3%	3.5%	249	100.0%
	Female	45.2%	27.7%	12.5%	9.9%	4.7%	251	100.0%
<b>age</b>	18-34	39.1%	29.3%	16.0%	11.3%	4.3%	169	100.0%
	35-54	29.7%	30.4%	13.6%	21.8%	4.6%	163	100.0%
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	No age given	42.1%	8.3%	19.1%	14.4%	16.0%	20	100.0%
<b>Religiosity level</b>	Ultra-Orthodox	32.4%	30.2%	13.1%	16.4%	8.0%	39	100.0%
	Religious	35.6%	23.3%	20.2%	15.8%	5.1%	43	100.0%
	Observant	44.6%	24.7%	12.4%	15.6%	2.7%	189	100.0%
	Secular	35.3%	31.7%	13.8%	14.9%	4.4%	213	100.0%
	Would not say	48.1%	14.6%	10.8%	21.3%	5.3%	16	100.0%
<b>Education level</b>	High-school or less	73.7%	15.0%	2.8%	7.2%	1.3%	39	100.0%
	High school	42.4%	25.3%	14.1%	13.3%	4.8%	168	100.0%
	College	35.8%	27.5%	13.8%	15.2%	7.7%	89	100.0%
	University	27.5%	33.9%	16.8%	19.5%	2.3%	182	100.0%
	Would not/gave no answer	59.9%	17.3%	3.0%	16.0%	3.8%	22	100.0%
<b>Income level</b>	Below average	48.3%	28.0%	8.5%	9.9%	5.3%	150	100.0%
	Average	38.5%	23.4%	21.1%	16.0%	1.0%	118	100.0%
	Above average	26.1%	37.3%	13.3%	19.8%	3.4%	111	100.0%
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	North	35.1%	14.0%	22.1%	23.6%	5.2%	50	100.0%
	Haifa	37.5%	38.1%	7.8%	15.8%	.9%	62	100.0%
	Center	35.7%	27.1%	16.4%	16.2%	4.7%	126	100.0%
	Tel Aviv	51.3%	24.6%	9.8%	10.3%	4.1%	112	100.0%
	South	46.8%	33.7%	7.0%	10.0%	2.3%	82	100.0%
	West Bank settlers	19.2%	25.2%	30.3%	14.3%	11.1%	19	100.0%

[\* JRV = Jordan Valley]