

## --Press Release--

10 December, 2002      **Contact:** PIPA – Steven Kull, 202 -232-7500; SFCG - Gil Kulick, 202-777-2227

### **NEW POLL: Large Israeli and Palestinian Majorities Indicate Readiness for Two-State Solution Based on 1967 Borders, but Constrained by Mistrust of Other Side**

**Less than One in Five Palestinians Aspire to State on all of Historic Palestine;  
Less than One in Five Israelis Demand a Greater Israel**

*Jerusalem, 10 December, 2002* - Search for Common Ground (SFCG), the world's largest non-governmental conflict-resolution organization, today released the results of a second survey it commissioned, conducted by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) of the University of Maryland, to determine attitudes of the Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli publics on the potential for nonviolent methods in the Palestinian Intifada.

The poll found that 72% of the Palestinians indicate readiness to move beyond the cycle of violence if Israel will agree to a settlement that includes the establishment of a Palestinian state based on 1967 borders. However, many in this majority express a lack of faith that Israel would ever really make the necessary concessions. This mistrust blocks the formation of a clear majority ready to renounce violence. At the same time, fewer than one in five Palestinians favor pursuing a violent struggle with the goal of gaining all of historic Palestine.

Seventy-two percent of the Jewish-Israeli public also indicates readiness to agree to a Palestinian state based on 1967 borders if the Palestinians will refrain from violence for an extended period. However, many in this majority express a lack of faith that Palestinians would really give up violence. As on the Palestinian side, fewer than one in five support a maximalist ideology, in this case holding on to the Occupied Territories permanently.

"This survey clearly demonstrates that the gap between Israelis and Palestinians is not ideological," said Susan Collin Marks, SFCG Executive Vice President. "Mistrust blocks a basic underlying willingness to stop the violence and move towards a settlement based on the 1967 borders. The challenge for peacemakers is to build bridges across this divide. It's striking how much the two sides mirror each other."

Steven Kull, the principal investigator for the study commented, "The key dynamic here is that so many people on both sides do not believe the other side is willing to come to a settlement based on 1967 borders, and thus they do not want to appear too eager. Thus, initially only around half on each side said they would be ready to support such a settlement. But in a follow-on question it became clear that among those who said they were not ready to make the deal, many were taking this position because they did not believe that the other side would make the deal, not because they had some greater territorial aspiration. Implicitly they were saying that if the other side would be willing to make the deal, so would they."

The poll also explored further the potential for a nonviolent intifada.

?? 72% of Palestinians regard nonviolent demonstration as at least as effective as violent methods, if conducted on large scale.

?? 72% of Israelis see that if Palestinians emphasize nonviolent forms of protest, the international community will put more pressure on Israel to make compromises.

Eighty percent of the Palestinians followed the recent nonviolent demonstrations and the mass violation of the Israeli-imposed curfew. Among those who indicated demonstrations occurred in their town, 54% said they

participated in them. Overall 51% said they would be willing to participate in such actions, and some 34% would support others' doing so.

Ninety percent of the Israelis have little or no awareness of the recent nonviolent demonstrations in violation of the curfew. Some 45% tend to interpret them negatively as a challenge to Israeli authority rather than as the emergence of a nonviolent movement. Though Israelis show very strong doubt that a genuine nonviolent movement will emerge, 65% support the idea of Israel's showing restraint in relation to nonviolent demonstrations, as a means to encourage such trends.

On the Palestinian side, support for nonviolent methods is very high and higher than suicide bombing, but a very strong majority continues to express support for the use of violent methods as well. Ninety-one percent of the Palestinians regard the Palestinians killed by the IDF in nonviolent actions as martyrs.

On the Israeli side, there is an erosion of confidence in the IDF crackdown: While 82% somewhat approve of the IDF actions in the past few months, confidence in the IDF crackdown seems to be eroding. Sixty-four percent believe that IDF actions actually increase the Palestinian violence against Israelis.

**Methodology:** The Jerusalem Media and Communications Center (JMCC), a Palestinian polling organization, carried out the poll of 599 Palestinians through face-to-face interviews from November 17-21. The B.L. and Lucille Cohen Institute for Public Opinion Research of Tel Aviv University, an Israeli polling organization, carried out the poll of 508 Israeli Jews by telephone interviews from November 24-26. The margin of error in the Palestinian survey is  $\pm 4\%$  and in the Israeli survey  $\pm 4.5\%$

**For the full report, please see the SFCG website: <http://www.sfcg.org/News/Dec2002PollReport-English.pdf> or the PIPA website: <http://www.pipa.org>**

**Search for Common Ground (SFCG)** was founded in 1982 and is a Washington- and Brussels-based NGO, with offices in 13 countries. SFCG has worked in the Middle East for the past 11 years. Its activities include the Common Ground News Service, the *Bulletin of Regional Cooperation in the Middle East*, and scores of meetings to promote dialogue and joint action among specialists from across the region involved in the fields of security, media, civil society, and conflict resolution.

**The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA)** is a joint program of the Center on Policy Attitudes (COPA) and the Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM) School of Public Affairs, University of Maryland. PIPA was created to help bridge the gap between various publics and policymaking communities on international issues. PIPA researchers analyze the patterns of majority opinion, looking to identify the potential for public consensus on international policy issues.

**The Jerusalem Media and Communications Center (JMCC)** is the first institution in the Arab world to conduct public opinion surveys methodologically and continuously. The main aim of those regular opinion polls is to enhance public participation in the decision-making process by making the results available to decision makers.

**The B.L. & Lucille Cohen Institute for Public Opinion Research** is the only public-opinion research institute located in a university setting in Israel. As such, it is charged with the task of pursuing theoretical and methodological capabilities that contribute to the study of attitudes and opinions in Israeli society. Its objectives are to develop a survey program on attitudes concerning Israeli polity and society.