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FUTURE**

30% of West Bank Settlers Would Evacuate Voluntarily Before an Agreement in Exchange for Compensation New Survey Finds

Conference Call Briefing/Q&A, TODAY, March 17, 11 AM ET, 5 PM, Israel

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TEL AVIV, ISRAEL, March 17 – Some 30 percent of the approximately 100,000 residents of settlements in the West Bank east of the security barrier and outside the major blocs would voluntarily evacuate even in the absence of an agreement with the Palestinians. This is the major finding of a recent comprehensive survey for the non-partisan Israeli organization [Blue White Future](#) (BWF).

“Imagine the impact if the Israeli government enacted a voluntary evacuation and compensation law for these settlers and 10-20-30,000 moved into Israel proper,” BWF co-chairman Gilead Sher noted. “This would unequivocally demonstrate that Israel is serious about seeking a two-state solution. It would also begin to create a reality of two states while the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations continue and, in fact, increase the chances of the negotiation track succeeding. It could also encourage Palestinians to reciprocate with their own constructive, independent steps.”

The survey also found that nearly 50 percent of the 100,000 settlers would voluntarily evacuate after an agreement, while 40 percent said they would not. A survey booklet providing exact numbers, additional information and charts, is attached. (A conference call briefing will take place **TODAY**, March 17, 11 AM ET, 5 PM in Israel; call-in numbers are below.)

“What make these findings especially powerful is that there is no agreement on the table, and most Israelis believe there will not be,” BWF co-chairman Orni Petruschka pointed out. “What’s more, the survey was done in the most extreme settlements -- beyond the barrier. And let’s not forget that before Sharon announced the Gaza disengagement in 2005, the majority of the public opposed the idea. Once he announced it, the vast majority supported it”

Of those settlers willing to evacuate voluntarily absent an agreement, nearly three-quarters preferred to relocate to within the “green line” (pre-1967 borders), and one-quarter to the settlement blocs that would be annexed pursuant to an agreement. For those willing to evacuate after an agreement, preferences were somewhat flipped: 55 percent chose the settlement blocs; 45 percent to within the pre-1967 borders.

“Every border that will be determined will require the evacuation of settlements including tens of thousands of settlers, while maintaining the major blocs where the overwhelming majority of the settlers currently reside,” Sher said. “We must provide solutions to those settlers who are willing to evacuate voluntarily. The time has come that they will be able to do so.

“The survey tells us that the State of Israel must begin its preparations for this undertaking now,” he continued. “It is a necessary condition to both the promotion of a bilateral agreement and to our ability to provide these settlers with adequate solutions.”

The survey examined many other aspects of these settlers’ preferences and motivations. For example, the age group of settlers most willing to relocate voluntarily before an agreement in exchange for compensation is 50-59, with nearly half saying they would. The age group least willing is 18-29, with just over 10 percent saying they would.

It also identified the three primary motivation factors for settlers’ willingness to evacuate: financial compensation (42.6 percent), employment or vocational training (35.6 percent) and a sustainable peace agreement (31.6 percent).

According to Dr. Roby Nathanson, CEO of the Macro Center, which conducted the survey and analyzed the data, “the survey proves that the settlers’ ambitions are similar to those for the general population of Israel. For most of them, issues such as employment, social security, housing and communal integrity are prioritized higher than ideology. Therefore, the solution of voluntary evacuation, even prior to the conclusion of a negotiated agreement, is feasible as long as their ambitions will be adequately met.”

“If Israel moves independently to allow voluntary settler relocation in the West Bank by implementing an evacuation and compensation law,” Sher pointed out, “it will create a trend in the right direction toward a two-state solution, which remains the only way to secure Israel as Jewish democracy and to have a viable Palestinian state alongside it, without coerced evacuation. But there would be proper advance planning for their future absorption into Israel proper.”

Ami Ayalon, the third BWF co-founder, noted that “those settlers were sent by all of Israel’s governments – both right-wing and left-wing – as pioneers, based on the perception of Zionist settlement meaning security. That Zionism won. The Arab League’s decision of 2002 recognizing Israel’s existence is a victory, which belongs first and foremost to those settlers. Many of them have decided, and rightfully so, that their mission is over. That is one of the messages this survey carries. None of us has the moral authority to prevent them from coming back, if they want to.”

This survey was conducted in August 2013 among a representative sample of 501 men and women and has a 4.5% sampling error. It is the last in a series of three surveys. The first (2008) sampled 698 individuals, with a 3.9% sampling error; the second (2012) sampled 1,007 individuals, with a 3.1% sampling error, and three focus groups were conducted. Survey questions were formulated by Macro Center staff, and data collection for this survey was

conducted by telephone by Midgam, led by Dr. Mina Tzemach. The Macro Center provided the data analysis. Findings from all three surveys are virtually identical.

Ami Ayalon, Gilead Sher and Orni Petruschka, co-founders of Blue White Future, and Dr. Roby Nathanson, CEO of the Macro Center, will be available for questions during a conference call briefing/Q&A TODAY, March 17, 11 AM ET, 5 PM in Israel.

Dial-in information (toll-free):

Conference name: Survey of West Bank settlers

Passcode 445 340	
Participants in the US/Canada dial:	877-819-1882
Participants in Israel dial:	1-809-493989
Participants in the United Kingdom dial:	0-800-048-8922
Participants in France dial:	0805-080071
Participants in Germany dial:	0800-189-0365

Blue White Future (BWF) is a non-partisan Israeli political founded in 2009 by Ami Ayalon, former director of the Israeli security agency Shin Beth; Gilead Sher, head of Israel's Institute for National Security Studies' Center for Negotiations, former chief of staff for Prime Minister Ehud Barak and head of the Israeli delegation to negotiations with the Palestinians; and Orni Petruschka, a high-tech entrepreneur. It seeks to help resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of a "two states for two peoples" solution through a negotiated, bilateral agreement and by facilitating the relocation of settlers so that all Israel's citizens reside within secure permanent borders that guarantee a Jewish majority. BWF encourages both sides to take independent measures to promote a two-state reality.

The Macro Center for Political Economics is an independent research institute, publishing research shaping Israel's socio-economic policies since 1995. It specializes in social and economic analysis of contemporary issues on the public agenda.