

Voice of the Jewish People

American Jews on the War in Lebanon and Gaza, the Iranian Threat, Harris and Trump

» Main Findings

- Most survey respondents believe that Israel is operating in Lebanon appropriately or too moderately in response to Hezbollah's attacks.
- Most respondents believe that Iran is a grave threat to the State of Israel. A quarter believe that it is also a grave threat to the United States.
- Since the entrance of Vice President Kamala Harris into the presidential race, assessment of her support for Israel has grown more positive.
- There is a moderate but steady rise in the share of liberals who think Israel's response to the October 7 Hamas onslaught has been overly aggressive.
- Over half of survey respondents, from all streams except the ultra-Orthodox, expressed low confidence in Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.
- Over half say that their trust of the Israeli government is low. Among ultra-Orthodox respondents, 46% feel this way.
- The closer a group is to conservative views (political and religious), the greater their optimism regarding the future of the Jewish people.

A general remark on survey timing: data was collected from August 15-20, as dramatic events were unfolding. The survey was conducted during the Doha negotiations on the return of hostages from Gaza and a ceasefire, the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, and a visit by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to Israel. The survey was conducted after President Biden withdrew from the presidential race and was replaced on the Democratic Party ticket by Kamala Harris, and after the announcement of Tim Walz as her running mate. In the time that passed between the July survey and the current one, Prime Minister Netanyahu visited Washington and spoke before a joint session of Congress, Hamas Political Bureau chairman Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated in Teheran, and one of Hezbollah’s most senior commanders, Fuad Shukr, was assassinated in Lebanon. In the wake of the assassinations Israel was placed on high alert due to the fear of an Iranian attack, a Hezbollah offensive, or a joint reprisal. The US dispatched additional military forces to the region.

The Iranian Threat

This month, tensions with Iran peaked following the assassination of the Hamas Bureau chairman, Ismail Haniyeh, in Teheran. After the assassination, senior Iranian figures voiced explicit threats against Israel, promising a rapid and painful response. Israel reacted by declaring a state of high alert, stoked by waves of rumor and disinformation. Following the assassination of senior Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukr in Lebanon, and Hezbollah response threats, the possibility arose of a joint attack by Iran and Hezbollah on Israel and the eruption of a regional war. As the days passed, it emerged that Iran was not hastening to respond to the Israeli assassination on its territory, due to, among other things, American and European pressure, accompanied by a substantial increase of American military presence in the region. In light of these events, the Voice of the Jewish People panel respondents were presented with a series of questions about the Iranian threat. Most respondents feel that Iran constitutes a grave threat to the State of Israel. The threat level assessed by respondents increases as one progresses along the scale from liberal to conservative.

Iran is a grave threat to Israel (in percentages)

	I agree	I somewhat agree	I somewhat disagree	I disagree	I don't know
Strong liberal	71	19	4	3	3
Leaning liberal	88	10	1	1	0
Centrist	95	4	0	1	0
Leaning conservative	97	3	0	0	0
Strong conservative	97	3	0	0	0

However, when respondents were asked whether Iran is a threat to the Jewish people as a whole, the results were different. The percentage of respondents who regard Iran as a grave threat is lower. Still, the trend embodied in the liberal-to-conservative axis persists – conservatives regard the threat as more serious than liberals.

Iran is a grave threat to all Jews (in percentages)					
	I agree	I somewhat agree	I somewhat disagree	I disagree	I don't know
Strong liberal	39	31	10	18	2
Leaning liberal	60	31	8	2	0
Centrist	81	15	2	2	0
Leaning conservative	82	13	3	1	0
Strong conservative	88	11	1	0	0

As expected, the data obtained on the liberal-conservative axis comported with the data pertaining to Jewish support for Harris and Trump. The percentage of Jewish panel respondents who are Trump voters and who agree with the statement “Iran constitutes a grave threat to all Jews” is significantly higher than the percentage of Harris voters who think this. However, over half of the supporters of both candidates feel that Iran is a significant threat to all Jews.

Iran is a grave threat to all Jews (in percentages)					
	I agree	I somewhat agree	I somewhat disagree	I disagree	I don't know
I'll definitely vote for Kamala Harris	50	30	9	10	1
I'll likely vote for Kamala Harris	67	21	5	7	0
I'll definitely vote for Donald Trump	88	10	1	1	0
I'll likely vote for Donald Trump	89	7	2	2	0
I'll likely vote for another candidate	75	19	6	0	0
I don't intend to vote	60	27	0	7	7
I don't know	75	22	3	0	0

The Voice of the Jewish People respondent panel was also asked about the Iranian threat to the United States. Over a quarter of respondents answered that Iran constitutes a grave threat to their country. If we combine those who responded “agree” and “somewhat agree,” over half of all respondents agree with this statement. For this question as well, the regular disparity between liberal and conservative threat assessments persists. To compare: In a February 2024 Gallup poll representative of the entire American population, 77% of respondents said that Iran’s development of a nuclear weapon is a “serious threat” to the United States. This finding has not changed substantially in recent years, and here, as well, there is a 20% disparity in threat assessment between conservative-leaning and liberal-leaning Americans.

Iran is a grave threat to my country (US) (in percentages)					
	I agree	I somewhat agree	I somewhat disagree	I disagree	I don't know
Strong liberal	27	34	13	24	2
Leaning liberal	48	37	11	5	0
Centrist	63	29	5	4	0
Leaning conservative	75	19	1	4	0
Strong conservative	85	14	0	1	0

The Fighting in Gaza and Lebanon

Between July and August there was some erosion in the respondent panel’s assessment of Israeli military activity in Gaza. The percentage of liberals who agree with the pro-Palestinian claim that Israel is carrying out a genocide remains low. However, the growth trajectory of liberals who believe that Israeli activity in Gaza is “too aggressive” continues. The percentage of Harris supporters who agree with this claim has also remained higher than the percentage of Trump supporters who do so.

Israel has been accused of genocide by pro-Palestinian activists. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? (in percentages)

	I strongly agree – August	I strongly agree – June
Strong liberal	12	8
Leaning liberal	1	1
Centrist	1	2
Leaning conservative	3	1
Strong conservative	1	2
I'll definitely vote for Kamala Harris	7	2
I'll likely vote for Kamala Harris	7	2
I'll definitely vote for Donald Trump	3	2
I'll likely vote Donald Trump	0	2
I'll likely vote for another candidate	0	8
I don't intend to vote	7	19
I don't know	0	6

In Voice of the Jewish People surveys over the last several months we can detect a slow but steady upward trend in the share of liberals who maintain that Israeli activity in Gaza is too aggressive. The opposite is true for conservatives – as time passes, the percentage of conservatives who feel that Israeli activity in Gaza is too aggressive has decreased to near zero.

Israel’s actions in Gaza are too aggressive (a little or a lot too aggressive) (in percentages)

	August	May	March	February
Strong liberal	69	66	60	56
Leaning liberal	44	36	37	39
Centrist	14	12	20	13
Leaning conservative	4	4	8	3
Strong conservative	0	1	1	6

We can also see a slow but steady rise in the share of liberals who think Israel’s reaction to the October 7 Hamas onslaught has been much too aggressive. This may indicate an ongoing failure of Israeli public messaging, compounded by Palestinian media success. At present, a significant majority of the liberal public believes that Israel is too aggressive, a view that is driving empathy for the Palestinians.

Do you think the way Israel is carrying out its response to the Hamas Oct. 7 attack is much too aggressive, a little too aggressive, not aggressive enough, or at the right level? (Liberal only) (in percentages)

	August	May	March	February	January
Much too aggressive	45	43	43	37	34
A little too aggressive	24	23	17	19	17
At the right level	22	20	27	27	29
Not aggressive enough	4	7	6	5	10
Not sure	5	6	7	10	10

When the respondent panel was asked to respond to a similar question about the fighting on the northern front, responses were different. Most respondents, liberal and conservative, said that Israel’s actions in Lebanon are appropriately or insufficiently aggressive. Among conservatives and Trump supporters, only a negligible percentage believe that Israeli military action in Lebanon has been overly aggressive. It should be noted that the questions were posed before the round of fighting that began on August 25.

Do you think the way Israel is carrying out military operations in Lebanon is much too aggressive, a little too aggressive, not aggressive enough, or at the right level? (in percentages)

	Much too aggressive	A little too aggressive	At the right level	Not aggressive enough	Not sure
Strong liberal	14	11	45	14	16
Leaning liberal	4	6	42	35	13
Centrist	1	2	32	59	6
Leaning conservative	0	0	15	73	12
Strong conservative	0	0	14	81	5
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I'll definitely vote for Kamala Harris	8	9	50	20	13
I'll likely vote for Kamala Harris	10	2	29	48	12
I'll definitely vote for Donald Trump	0	0	12	81	7
I'll likely vote Donald Trump	0	0	9	84	7
I'll likely vote for another candidate	0	0	25	56	19
I don't intend to vote	13	0	7	73	7
I don't know	0	0	25	62	12

Trust in the Israeli Government

In this month’s survey, we examined respondent confidence in Prime Minister Netanyahu, by asking a question similar to one posed to Israeli citizens nearly every month (JPPI’s Israeli Society Index). The findings indicate that over half of the respondents have low confidence in Netanyahu. These findings are true of Jews from all religious streams except the ultra-Orthodox. However, when the data is broken down by political affiliation, Jews who self-identify as “conservative” or “strong conservative” express a high degree of confidence in Netanyahu. Confidence in Netanyahu among liberal US respondents is similar to that of Israeli Arabs.

What is your level of confidence in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu?

(in percentages)

	Very high	Somewhat high	Somewhat low	Very low	I don't know
Weighted Results	8	13	26	47	6
Israelis in total	13	14	14	57	1
Israeli Jews	16	16	13	54	1
Israeli Arabs	2	6	19	69	4
Strong liberal	1	3	10	86	0
Leaning liberal	1	4	24	68	3
Centrist	11	15	28	38	8
Leaning conservative	19	43	28	6	3
Strong conservative	49	40	8	0	3
Reform	6	9	23	56	5
Conservative	11	11	23	54	2
Modern Orthodox	20	26	26	28	0
Ultra-Orthodox	15	54	15	8	8
Other	19	9	7	60	5
No stream	11	32	12	44	2

Respondents' trust in the Israeli government is similar to the degree of their confidence in Netanyahu. Those of all religious streams, except for the ultra-Orthodox, say their trust in the government ministers is low. Among the ultra-Orthodox, 46% feel this way. A fifth of Trump voters attest to low trust. Two-thirds of liberals and more than half of centrists say they place low trust in the Israeli government. When broken down by political affiliation, trust in the government among conservatives and Trump voters is relatively high (though not "very high"). The percentage of "strong conservative" respondents who say they have "high trust" in the government is 12%, while among the other groups, very few say the same.

What is your level of trust in Israel's government ministers? (in percentages)

	Very high	Somewhat high	Somewhat low	Very low	I don't know
Strong liberal	1	7	25	59	8
Leaning liberal	0	10	33	43	14
Centrist	3	14	38	28	17
Leaning conservative	3	42	30	9	16
Strong conservative	12	56	14	4	14
Reform	1	18	32	32	18
Conservative	6	13	28	40	13
Modern Orthodox	4	36	38	16	5
Ultra-Orthodox	8	31	38	8	15
Other	1	17	19	49	14
No stream	3	27	23	36	11
I'll definitely vote for Kamala Harris	0	7	30	53	10
I'll likely vote for Kamala Harris	2	5	40	40	12
I'll definitely vote for Donald Trump	11	56	18	3	13
I'll likely vote for Donald Trump	5	32	23	16	25
I'll likely vote for another candidate	6	19	25	12	38
I don't intend to vote	0	20	33	33	13
I don't know	0	22	44	22	12

US-Israel Relations

With the approach of the US presidential elections, we have been looking at respondent attitudes toward the candidates' views on Israel for the past several months. This month, like last month, we asked whether the presidential candidates are "pro-Israel" or not. The responses obtained this month indicate that Kamala Harris's entrance into the presidential race has sparked a change in how her support for Israel is perceived. Before she entered the race (when she was Biden's running mate), the percentage of respondents who considered her pro-Israel was lower than the percentage who feel this way now that she is the Democratic Party's presidential candidate. This change in assessment of her position is most striking among liberal respondents, although we also detect a rise among those who self-identify as "centrist."

	Harris is pro-Israel – August	Harris is pro-Israel – July
	%	%
Strong liberal	82	75
Leaning liberal	61	44
Centrist	23	17
Leaning conservative	1	6
Strong conservative	0	3
Reform	55	46
Conservative	47	34
Modern Orthodox	19	17
Ultra-Orthodox	0	3
Other	51	56
No stream	30	38

By contrast, when we compare the share of respondents who last month indicated that Trump is pro-Israel with the share who said so this month, there appears to have been no change attributable to the presidential-race dynamic.

	Trump is pro-Israel – August	Trump is pro-Israel – July
	%	%
Strong liberal	27	25
Leaning liberal	40	34
Centrist	53	60
Leaning conservative	88	91
Strong conservative	93	93
Reform	45	44
Conservative	54	58
Modern Orthodox	69	64
Ultra-Orthodox	92	87
Other	49	38
No stream	47	52

In the August survey we also asked about support for Israel on the part of two other heads of government – Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer. We found that very few respondents felt they knew enough about these leaders to answer the question. This is particularly true of liberal-leaning Jews; by contrast, conservative-leaning Jews hold more definitive opinions. In both cases, respondents show a more negative than positive view; of those who did express an opinion, a (relatively) large share felt that Trudeau and Starmer cannot be called “pro-Israel.”

Would you define Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as “pro-Israel”?

(in percentages)

	I would define him as pro-Israel	I would not define him as pro-Israel	I don't know
Strong liberal	22	11	66
Leaning liberal	12	30	58
Centrist	5	63	32
Leaning conservative	4	76	19
Strong conservative	4	86	10

Would you define British Prime Minister Keir Starmer as “pro-Israel”

(in percentages)

	I would define him as pro-Israel	I would not define him as pro-Israel	I don't know
Strong liberal	32	8	60
Leaning liberal	16	21	62
Centrist	19	47	34
Leaning conservative	4	63	33
Strong conservative	5	62	33

Last month, during Prime Minister Netanyahu’s visit to the United States, there was a tense meeting between him and President Biden. In July, members of Israel’s governing coalition expressed criticism of the Biden administration and its level of support for Israel. However, due to the tensions with Iran, the United States sent more aircraft carriers and warships to the region this month, clearly signaling that it will stand by Israel in the case of a potential conflagration. Further to our surveys of the past few months, in which we looked at US support for Israel, this month, too, a steady discrepancy is evident between respondents at the liberal and conservative ends of the political spectrum in their assessments of US support for Israel.

The United States does not support Israel enough (in percentages)

	August	July	June	May	April	March	February	January
Strong liberal	17	20	21	27	20	23	24	24
Leaning liberal	39	51	42	46	43	51	43	32
Centrist	69	75	82	70	74	70	67	55
Leaning conservative	90	95	95	87	92	88	85	74
Strong conservative	99	96	99	95	93	96	92	88

The United States supports Israel too much (in percentages)

	August	July	June	May	April	March	February	January
Strong liberal	29	25	24	19	23	27	18	22
Leaning liberal	9	6	3	5	7	6	4	2
Centrist	2	0	1	1	1	2	1	0
Leaning conservative	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Strong conservative	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1

The US Presidential Race

This month’s Voice of the Jewish People survey was the first to be conducted after Biden withdrew from the presidential race, and Kamala Harris was tapped to replace him. This change led to a slight increase in the percentage of respondents who think they will definitely vote for the Democratic candidate. This Democratic Party development was also followed by a slight rise in the share of conservative respondents who will definitely vote for Trump.

	I’ll likely vote for Harris -August	I’ll likely vote for Biden -July	I’ll likely vote for Biden -June	I’ll likely vote for Biden -May	I’ll definitely vote for Harris -August	I’ll definitely vote for Biden -July	I’ll definitely vote for Biden -June	I’ll definitely vote for Biden -May
(in percentages)								
Strong liberal	4	7	4	7	92	86	87	82
Leaning liberal	12	12	12	14	73	69	72	67
Centrist	19	18	13	23	35	35	30	23
Leaning conservative	1	1	5	4	1	2	2	3
Strong conservative	0	3	3	0	0	4	0	0

	I'll likely vote for Trump - August	I'll likely vote for Trump - July	I'll likely vote for Trump - June	I'll definitely vote for Trump - August	I'll definitely vote for Trump - July	I'll definitely vote for Trump - June
	(in percentages)					
Strong liberal	0	1	0	1	1	0
Leaning liberal	3	3	2	1	2	0
Centrist	11	12	11	11	12	13
Leaning conservative	33	29	28	45	43	38
Strong conservative	10	10	11	79	71	75

The Fight Against Antisemitism

This month we also repeated our question about the US presidential candidates and the fight against antisemitism. As with the assessment of Harris’s support for Israel, which rose with her ascension to presidential nominee, our question about the fight against antisemitism showed an uptick this month in the share of liberals who believe Harris would better fight antisemitism than Trump. In a breakdown by religious affiliation, most Reform and Conservative respondents believe Harris would make a stronger showing in combating antisemitism, while the Modern Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox hold the opposite view.

Which of the two US presidential candidates would be better in the fight against antisemitism? (in percentages)

	Trump - August	Trump - July	Harris - August	Harris - July
Strong liberal	1	3	92	83
Leaning liberal	5	12	65	53
Centrist	25	37	26	30
Leaning conservative	75	83	1	5
Strong conservative	97	89	0	1
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Reform	18	26	63	54
Conservative	25	33	47	39
Modern Orthodox	50	50	23	33
Ultra-Orthodox	85	87	0	7
Other	23	19	60	59
No stream	39	41	36	39

Following Vice President Kamala Harris’s choice of Tim Walz as her running mate, it was reported that the Jewishness of Pennsylvania governor Josh Shapiro was a factor in his not getting the post. The Voice of the Jewish People survey examined respondents’ views with respect to these reports. The question quoted directly from a New York Times report and asked respondents about their views on that report. According to our findings, Trump voters feel that the decision not to choose Shapiro confirms their concerns about antisemitism on the American left. By contrast, Harris supporters express no uniform view on the matter (and there is a sizeable percentage choosing not to accept the report’s conclusions).

The New York Times reported that for some American Jews “a campaign against” Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro as a VP candidate, “confirmed... simmering fears about antisemitism on the left.” Do you believe that... (in percentages)

	Yes, such a campaign confirmed fears about antisemitism on the left	No, such a campaign did not confirm fears about antisemitism on the left	No, I don't think there was a noteworthy campaign of that sort	I don't know
I'll definitely vote for Kamala Harris	36	22	28	14
I'll likely vote for Kamala Harris	69	14	7	10
I'll definitely vote for Donald Trump	91	0	3	6
I'll likely vote for Donald Trump	84	2	5	9
I'll likely to vote for another candidate	62	12	6	19
I don't intend to vote	67	7	20	7
I don't know	78	6	3	12

We also asked the respondent panel about Trump’s statement decrying Jews who vote for Democratic Party candidates – a statement some viewed as antisemitic. An absolute majority of liberals feel that the remark was offensive, while most conservatives feel that Trump was correct in what he said. Of all the survey respondents (including when the responses are weighted according to religious-stream size), 60% feel that Trump’s statement was offensive, while a third feel that it was correct, either to some degree or completely.

Former President Donald Trump recently stated that “If you love Israel – or if you’re Jewish, because a lot of Jewish people do not like Israel... If you’re Jewish, if you vote for a Democrat, you’re a fool, an absolute fool.” Do you feel that... (in percentages)

	Trump is wrong and the remark was offensive	Trump is wrong and the remark was not offensive	Trump is somewhat right	Trump is right	I don't know
Strong liberal	95	2	3	1	0
Leaning liberal	88	5	5	2	1
Centrist	55	5	21	16	2
Leaning conservative	7	1	37	49	4
Strong conservative	4	1	22	73	0

A Common Jewish Future

Survey data indicates that conservative Jews agree more strongly with the statement that all Jews, in Israel and the Diaspora, have a common future. The same finding is obtained when we move along the religious scale from the more liberal to the more conservative cohorts. Overall, most respondents “totally agree” or “somewhat agree” that all Jews have a common future.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement: All Jews, in Israel and the Diaspora, have a common future? (in percentages)

	I agree	I somewhat agree	I somewhat disagree	I disagree	I don't know
Strong liberal	31	36	17	8	9
Leaning liberal	40	34	13	4	9
Centrist	55	35	4	4	3
Leaning conservative	51	34	10	1	3
Strong conservative	67	22	5	1	4
Reform	34	42	15	5	5
Conservative	44	39	6	3	8
Modern Orthodox	61	23	9	3	4
Ultra-Orthodox	85	8	8	0	0
Other	44	29	13	7	7
No stream	48	26	14	5	8

2024 Paris Olympics

The Paris Olympic Games were held last month. Accordingly, we asked respondents whether, when following reports on the Olympics, they took a special interest in Jewish and Israeli athletes. The data indicates that respondents did have a preference for these athletes.

When watching the Olympics – did you take a special interest in Jewish athletes? (in percentages)		
	Israeli athletes	Jewish athletes
Strong liberal	27	28
Leaning liberal	43	41
Centrist	43	44
Leaning conservative	42	39
Strong conservative	34	38

Survey Data and its Implications

This report is an analysis of a survey administered to 511 American Jews registered for JPPI’s Voice of the Jewish People panel. The report does not provide a representative sample of American Jewry as a whole, but the number of panel respondents who self-identify as belonging to various groups enables us to identify trends, views, and differences between Jews based on religious affiliation, emotional attachment to Israel, political orientation, attachment to Judaism, and more. Roughly speaking, it can be said that this survey tends to reflect the attitudes of US Jews with some connection to the Jewish community, as indicated by a specific question in this regard (which includes data for anyone who stated a connection to some Jewish institution, such as a synagogue, community center, Jewish organization, etc.), as well as Jews with an attachment of some kind to Israel, as reflected in the data on visits to Israel, which are significantly more numerous than the average for all US Jews.

Data on survey participants (see table below): About half self-identify as liberal; the percentage of intermarried respondents is significantly lower than the average for US Jews generally; the share of respondents unaffiliated with any religious stream is substantially lower than for American Jewry in general.

Data on all participants in the August 2024 survey:

	%	#
Reform	25	130
Conservative	28	142
Modern Orthodox	14	74
Ultra-Orthodox	3	13
Other	17	86
No stream	13	66
Strong liberal	31	157
Leaning liberal	20	104
Centrist	22	110
Leaning conservative	13	67
Strong conservative	14	73
Single / divorced / widowed	29	149
Married/in a long-term relationship with a Jewish spouse	55	283
Married/in a long-term relationship with a non-Jewish spouse	15	79
Affiliated	82	418
Non-affiliated	18	93
Never visited Israel	22	111
Visited Israel once	16	80
Visited Israel more than once	46	237
Lived in Israel	16	83
Jewish	94	480
Jewish by birth, other religion (JBNR)	2	12
Other religion	3	13
No religion	1	6