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THE JEWISH PEOPLE POLICY INSTITUTE

Annual Assessment of the Jewish People 2025 | 5785



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1 Foreword

The Jewish People Policy Institute's Annual Assessment is both a rear-view mirror and a forward-looking compass. It takes stock of the year that was, measures the trajectory of the Jewish people in Israel and the Diaspora, and asks whether the trends shaping our future will strengthen or weaken us. Traditionally presented to the Government of Israel, it offers policymakers a clear-eyed, policy-driven analysis across six pillars of Jewish well-being: geopolitics, cohesion, resilience, identity, demography, and the critical Israel-U.S. relationship.

Nearly two years after the October 7 massacre shattered Israel's sense of security, the country is still living in its long shadow. What began as a murderous Hamas assault has evolved into the most complex multi-front war in Israel's history.

In 2024-2025, the IDF fought in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and even deep inside Iran, achieving dramatic battlefield victories: dismantling Hezbollah's offensive arsenal, driving its forces from southern Lebanon, triggering the Syrian opposition into action that led to the swift downfall of Bashar al-Assad's regime in Damascus, and – in an unprecedented joint operation with the United States – striking at the heart of Iran's nuclear program. Collectively, these operations have shifted the regional balance of power in Israel's favor and dramatically weakened Iran and its proxy network.

And yet, the central war aims remain unmet. Hamas's grip on parts of Gaza endures. At the time of this writing, dozens of hostages are still in captivity, and the territory lies in ruins without a

credible plan for reconstruction or governance by someone other than Hamas. The government's refusal to present a viable "day after" strategy – according to some, being done in part to preserve the coalition – has deepened international frustration and eroded public trust at home.

International frustration expresses itself in increasing recognition of Palestinian statehood, which is symbolic but deepens the sense among those like Mahmoud Abbas that Palestinians will be granted a state rather than having to earn it.

And, even in the United States, the searing images coming out of Gaza risk producing a tipping point in terms of public support for Israel with a majority no longer favoring it – and this includes Republicans and evangelicals between the ages of 18 and 26.

Domestically in Israel, the political arena has been consumed by battles over the war's direction, the fate of the hostages, and the prime minister's motives. Critics accuse him of putting political survival ahead of strategic clarity; supporters hail him for seizing a historic chance to reshape the region's security architecture. Militarily, Israel is stronger than it has been in decades; diplomatically, it finds itself closer than ever to a supportive White House under Donald Trump, yet increasingly isolated in Europe and under mounting legal and political attack abroad.

Israel now stands at a crossroads. The blows dealt to Hezbollah, the fall of Assad, and the damage inflicted on Iran's nuclear ambitions have created an opening to forge a new regional order – one that could align key Sunni states with Jerusalem against a weakened Shiite axis. But without a political horizon for Gaza, there is a risk that short-term military success will harden into long-term strategic isolation.

Domestically, the country faces one of the deepest social and political crises in its history – and perhaps an equally rare chance to address it. Public trust in the government is low. Polarization is hardening. Long-standing disputes over Israel's identity, its system of governance, and the distribution of civic burdens remain unresolved. The trauma of October 7 briefly united Israelis against a common enemy, but the war's length and intensity have reopened old wounds: disputes over judicial reform, the rules of the political game, and the sweeping exemptions from military service granted to the fast-growing Haredi population.

Israel can choose to confront these challenges now – through pragmatic constitutional reform, renewed political legitimacy, and a fairer distribution of responsibilities – or risk slipping into a cycle of crises that no military victory can break.

Around the world, the threat to Jews is of growing concern as portrayals of Jews as enemies of humanity are gaining traction, no longer fringe rhetoric. In Europe, individuals with documented antisemitic records are ascending to positions of political authority, while Jewish visibility retreats under sustained pressure. In the United States, Jewish representation in elite academic institutions is steadily diminishing, and

identification with Israel among young Americans – particularly within the Democratic Party – is declining precipitously.

And yet there are reasons for hope. The global Jewish population is growing, driven by gains both in Israel and in many Diaspora communities. And while, for the first time in years, Israel's migration balance has turned negative, with more citizens leaving than arriving – the emerging Israeli diaspora has the potential to serve as a living bridge to Jewish communities worldwide, strengthening bonds and revitalizing aging populations abroad.

Regionally, the Abraham Accords have endured the upheaval of war. When the Gaza conflict ends, there may be a unique opportunity to expand and deepen these alliances with countries like Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and others.

Perhaps most encouraging is the renewed sense of solidarity within the Jewish world. The shock of October 7 drew even disengaged communities back into active connection with Israel. Across continents, Jews rallied – politically, financially, and communally – in a demonstration of unity rarely seen in recent decades. In Israel and abroad, the crisis has prompted a rethinking of what Jewish peoplehood means in the 21st century. Younger Diaspora Jews are re-engaging, and leaders have a rare chance to turn this wartime togetherness into something lasting.

If seized now, through joint educational initiatives, expanded exchanges, and honest, sometimes difficult dialogue, this moment could transform shared grief and danger into a more resilient, globally connected Jewish future. That is the challenge – and the opportunity – at the heart of this year's assessment.

Stuart E. Eizenstat and Dennis Ross, Co-Chairs

Yedidia Stern, President

2 Key Recommendations

Define a clear political goal for the "day after" the war; establish a consensus-based strategy for Gaza's reconstruction, determine the identity of its governing authority, and set measures to restore Israel's international legitimacy.

Curb extremist rhetoric within the government and publicly condemn and halt statements about expulsion, starvation, and total destruction to prevent further damage to Israel's international image.

Launch an offensive diplomacy initiative to strengthen ties with key states in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, while presenting a new regional vision that leverages Iran's weakness and opportunities for normalization.

Bring the perspective of Diaspora Jews into Israel's decision-making processes. The most suitable forum for this is the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and the Knesset Committee on Immigration, Absorption, and Diaspora Affairs. It is recommended that discussions be held there twice a year with the participation of representatives from the Jewish Diaspora.

Israel cannot limit itself to addressing security challenges without also tackling issues that weigh on it as a society and risk leading to an internal crisis whose consequences could be no less severe than those of an external one. Taking the time to reassess the necessary coalition framework, to review and update the governing arrangements it requires, and to properly address its main internal challenges (such as the Haredi issue) could – no less than the necessary security updates – serve as a foundation for an Israeli renewal that would lead the country out of crisis.

Adopt a "Thin Constitution" that would provide an agreed-upon and stable framework for managing disagreements. There is a real possibility of reaching broad agreement on the criteria for such a constitution, since these would not deal with the values at the heart of the culture war.

Given the unfortunate increase in emigration from Israel, it is important to maintain connections with Israelis abroad. This population has the potential to revitalize existing Jewish communities and provide professional networks for Israelis seeking to work with or for companies overseas. As this population is often not affiliated with the established Jewish community, it is important to cultivate direct ties with them. This is probably best achieved via non-governmental and third-sector organizations, as they tend to be somewhat skeptical of official interventions.

Tailor absorption services to better serve immigrants from Western countries. From 2022 to 2024, there was a particularly large wave of immigration from Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. The needs of those immigrants differ greatly from those of the current flow, predominantly from Western countries. As rising antisemitism is leading many young people to consider Aliyah out of concern for their future safety in their home countries, there should be greater investment in school and college programs for young people.

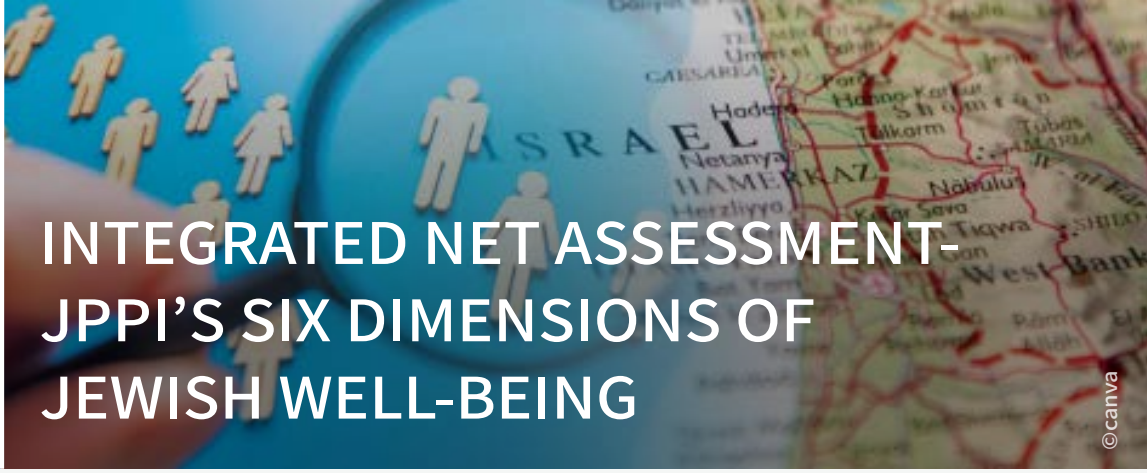
Establish an Israeli National Strategic Plan to combat antisemitism. Israel, the most structured and resourceful Jewish entity, has a role to play in the coordinated effort to ensure the safety and well-being of Jewish communities around the world in the face of rising antisemitism. There is an urgent need for a unified and multi-pronged approach to confront this resurgent threat. The fight against antisemitism is important not only in order to protect Diaspora Jewry, but also to safeguard the vital interests of the State of Israel itself, which is threatened by antisemitism that could also influence the attitudes of world governments and international organizations toward Israel.

Establish premier U.S.-recognized academic degrees at Israeli universities. Given the challenges of antisemitism on college campuses worldwide and the hesitance of many Diaspora Jews to enroll in leading universities, there is a compelling opportunity for Israeli universities to develop and expand top-tier, U.S.-recognized academic programs conducted in English.

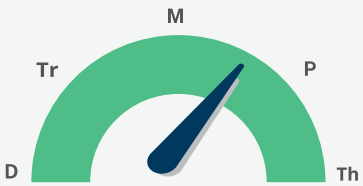
The data included in this year's Annual Assessment is taken from JPPI's monthly Voice of the Jewish People and Israeli Society Index surveys. The Voice of the Jewish People respondent panel is composed of American Jews with relatively strong connections to the Jewish community, Israel, and Jewish identity. The Israeli Society Index surveys analyze data collected from a representative sample of Jewish and non-Jewish Israelis, and are administered by themadad.com and Afkar Research.

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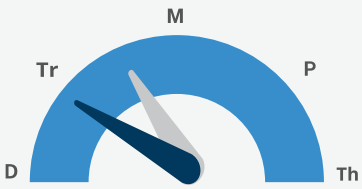
INTEGRATED NET ASSESSMENT- JPPI'S SIX DIMENSIONS OF JEWISH WELL-BEING



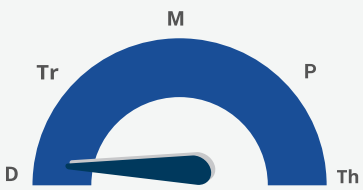
Key Drivers Affecting the Jewish People in 2024-2025



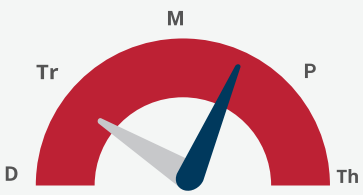
Demography



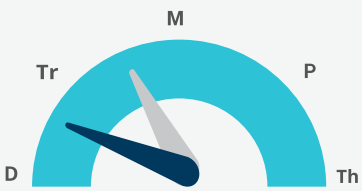
Cohesion



Geopolitics



Israel-U.S. Relationship



Resilience



Identity

D - Decline **Tr** - Troubled **M** - Maintaining **P** - Prospering **Th** - Thriving

Geopolitics

The 2024-2025 period was among the most challenging in Israel's history in terms of security and diplomacy. The heavy shadow of October 7 continues to define reality, with the war in Gaza dragging on and no clear political endgame in sight. The hostage crisis, high casualty toll, and the burden on a relatively small segment of the population have eroded public morale. Internationally, Israel's standing has shifted from early sympathy to harsh criticism and accusations of human rights violations, fueled by the scale of destruction and the absence of a convincing political narrative. Controversial government measures and far-right rhetoric have deepened diplomatic isolation, while moves toward international recognition of a Palestinian state threaten to weaken Israel in global forums. The United States remains Israel's most reliable ally, yet even this support shows signs of fragility. Antisemitism in the West has risen sharply, and the gap between military strength and diplomatic weakness is widening. Despite a historic opportunity to reshape the Middle East, Israel continues to operate without a coherent geopolitical vision.

In light of the mixed situation – improved overall security but stagnation in Gaza and diminished diplomatic standing – the gauge remains unchanged this year.

Identity

The October 7 attack and the ensuing war have strengthened ties between Israel and the organized Jewish mainstream in the Diaspora, reflected in record fundraising, volunteering, and public expressions of solidarity. At the same time, alienation among progressive and younger Jews has deepened, with some embracing increasingly critical or openly anti-Zionist positions. In Israel, the trauma has diminished the "New Jew" self-image and increased identification with Diaspora communities, but it has also revealed tensions between Israel's majority status and the Diaspora's minority experience – tensions amplified by far-right political alliances and inflammatory rhetoric from ministers. The result has been a simultaneous amplification of solidarity and estrangement, reinforcing existing bonds for some while widening divisions for others.

October 7 and the ensuing war deepened mainstream Diaspora Jews' ties to Israel while fueling anti-Zionist currents on the left. Israel's "New Jew" secular identity has weakened, identification with Diaspora Jews has increased, and tensions have been exposed between Israel's ethno-nationalist majority and its diasporic counterpart, which is an ethno-religious minority.

As a result, the Identity gauge has moved in a negative direction.

Resilience

Since October 7, Israel has faced two rapidly intensifying external challenges: a surge in antisemitism and an expanding lawfare campaign. In Europe and North America, antisemitism has reached levels unseen in decades – manifesting in verbal harassment, social exclusion, vandalism, and physical attacks, often targeting any Jew perceived as supportive of Israel. University campuses, cultural venues, and online platforms have become major arenas for this hostility, where criticism of Israeli policy often crosses into classic antisemitic tropes. In parallel, Israel has become the target of a determined legal offensive. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, while growing international recognition of a Palestinian state could bolster claims of ICC jurisdiction over alleged war crimes. This could expose Israeli leaders, senior officers, and civilians to arrest abroad, travel bans, asset freezes, and diplomatic boycotts.

The combination of rising antisemitism and intensifying lawfare threatens not only Israel's international legitimacy but also the security, mobility, and freedom of action of Israelis worldwide.

As a result, the Resilience gauge has moved in a negative direction this year.

Cohesion

The October 7 attack and the subsequent war have laid bare and deepened Israel's political instability. Initial unity quickly gave way to renewed polarization over the war's management, the handling of hostage negotiations, and the absence of a coherent political horizon. The Haredi draft exemption has become one of the most divisive issues, fueling resentment as ultra-Orthodox parties seek to entrench non-participation even during a national crisis. These disputes are compounded by the failure to settle the balance of power among government authorities, leaving major national disagreements to be resolved through raw political power rather than stable institutions. Without structural reform and mechanisms for consensus-building, political fragmentation, sectoral privilege, and weak constitutional safeguards threaten the country's long-term governance and resilience.

In light of this deepening social crisis, the Cohesion gauge has moved in a negative direction this year.

Demography

The global Jewish population continues to grow, both in Israel and in many communities abroad. Between April 2024 and April 2025, however, Israel experienced a negative migration balance, with more people leaving than arriving. While the absolute numbers remain small and the length of stay abroad is often uncertain, emigrants tend to differ from the general population. Historically, those leaving Israel have been disproportionately young, secular, and left-leaning – a trend likely reflected in the current wave given the ongoing situation.

In some communities, such as in the Netherlands and South Africa, Israeli immigrants have reversed or slowed demographic decline. These migration flows can strengthen global Jewish ties, as Israeli expatriates maintain close connections with Israel and follow its political and cultural life from afar. Yet they also create a distinct Israeli diaspora that overlaps with, but is not identical to, the established Jewish Diaspora.

In light of the above, the Demography gauge remains stable and positive this year.

Israel-U.S. Relationship

The U.S.-Israel alliance in the wake of October 7 and the 12-day Iran war in 2025 has combined unprecedented cooperation with growing volatility. Shared values and strategic interests continue to anchor bipartisan support, but polarization in both countries renders it fragile. Israel's military achievements and technological advances have benefited the U.S., yet uncertainty over President Trump's future policy direction and the rise of anti-Israel sentiment from both far-left and far-right factions underscore the alliance's vulnerability.

Republican backing remains generally strong but is fractured by isolationist and extremist elements; Democrats are split among pro-Israel voices, conditional supporters, and an emboldened anti-Zionist wing, energized by campus activism. Without proactive bipartisan engagement and sustained efforts to counter antisemitism and anti-Zionism across the political spectrum, U.S. support for Israel risks erosion as hostile narratives gain traction among future political leaders. Although tenuous, ties between the countries and particularly their governments are strong, as demonstrated by the June joint operation against Iran.

As a result, the Israel-U.S. Relationship gauge has moved in a positive direction this year.

4 Selected Indicators of World Jewry

Country/ Region	Core Jewish Population		GDP per capita, PPP, US $[1]	Index of Human Development – World Rank[2]	Aliyah[3]
	1970[4]	2025[5]	2023	2023	2024
World	12,633,000	17,226,000	-	-	32,161[6]
Israel	2,582,000	7,380,000	53,434.0	27	-
North America	5,686,000	7,954,000	-	-	3,590
United States	5,400,000	7,550,000	81,695.2	17	3,201
Canada	286,000	404,000	61,582.3	16	389
Europe (non-FSU)	1,331,000	1,128,000	-	-	4,055
France	530,000	438,000	61,156.8	26	2,145
UK	390,000	313,000	58,906.2	13	676
Germany	30,000	119,000	69,338.3	5	177
Hungary	70,000	46,000	45,942.2	46	28
Netherlands	30,000	35,000	78,215.1	8	73
Belgium	41,000	30,000	70,456.0	10	86
Other countries[7]	281,000	147,000	-	-	870
Latin America	514,000	366,000	-	-	1,150
Argentina	282,000	175,000	28,362.7	47	430
Brazil	90,000	90,000	20,584.4	84	255
Mexico	35,000	40,000	25,601.6	81	133
Other countries	107,000	61,000	-	-	332
FSU	2,151,000	182,000	-	-	22,469
Russian Federation	808,000	130,000	44,103.5	64	19,474
Ukraine[8]	777,000	31,000	18,007.5	87	1,002
FSU (rest) [9]	566,000	21,000	-	-	1,993
Asia (rest)[10]	104,000	35,600	-	-	288
Oceania	70,000	125,000	-	-	190
Australia	65,000	118,000	69,114.7	7	182
Other countries	5,000	7,000	-	-	8
Africa	195,000	55,600	-	-	432
South Africa	118,000	51,000	15,847.4	106	295
Other countries	77,000	4,600	-	-	137

1 World Bank https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD

2 United Nations Development Program, https://hdr.undp.org/en/content/latest-human-development-index-ranking

3 Ministry of Aliyah and Integration https://www.gov.il/he/pages/aliyah-data-2024

4 Division of Demography and Statistics, The A. Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

5 January 1

6 Including country not specified

7 Includes Baltic States

8 The war in Ukraine makes it very difficult to make an accurate assessment

9 Excludes Baltic States

10 Includes Turkey



GEOPOLITICS

5 The Geopolitical Landscape – 2025

Nearly two years after the October 7 massacre, a dark shadow continues to loom over Israel's security and strategic situation. Developments that began with Hamas's murderous attack have shaken Israel and the entire Middle East. They set off a series of dramatic events that included the first direct war between Israel and Iran, a severe Israeli-American strike on Iran's nuclear program, and a resounding military defeat of Hezbollah in Lebanon. Notably, these events also led, indirectly, to the collapse of the Assad regime in Syria, nearly 14 years after its civil war began.

A new regional power alignment is now taking shape. There can be no doubt that the radical Shi'ite axis led by Iran has lost stature, but this is not yet a decisive victory, nor are there any signs of regime collapse in Tehran, despite the harsh and unexpected blow it suffered. The complementary developments American and Israeli leaders were hoping for – a reinforcement of the strategic alliance between Israel and several conservative Sunni states, first and foremost Saudi Arabia – have not yet been realized.

One clear change has occurred in Israel's policy: unlike in the past, Israel no longer waits for a threat to materialize near its borders but strikes almost immediately, making clear that it will not tolerate new threats. Signs of this approach could be seen over the last year on the Syrian and Lebanese borders – after a ceasefire with Hezbollah was announced and after the regime change in Damascus.

But no less significant is the hard fact that the Gaza situation remains unresolved. As of this writing, in September 2025, Israel has not achieved its two primary declared objectives in the Gaza war: the return of all the hostages taken on October 7

(living or dead); and the toppling of Hamas rule in the Strip. The bloody war in Gaza – the longest in Israel's history – continues to stir fierce debate within Israeli society, along with growing criticism of the government's performance and positions. The prolonged delay in returning the hostages has become a deep social wound, driving intensifying discord over government policy. At the same time, Israel's extensive use of force, accompanied by massive civilian casualties and a large-scale humanitarian disaster in Gaza, has led to unprecedented international isolation.

After the success in Iran, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attempted to launch a new narrative. He now claims that in the early days following the massacre, he vowed to establish a new regional order that would reshape the Middle East (such things were said, according to an official statement by the Prime Minister's Office, in a telephone conversation with local council heads in southern Israel shortly after the war began). What happened later was, ostensibly, part of a well-planned strategic game plan. Netanyahu cleared, piece by piece, the geopolitical chessboard, with each victory and each achievement (Hamas-Hezbollah-Syria-Iran) portrayed as part of a sophisticated strategy aimed at total defeat of the enemy and the creation of a new regional reality.

Netanyahu avoided, throughout the war, any substantial discussion of "the day after"

Politically, the government survived the second year after the disaster, contrary to many early forecasts, and despite Netanyahu's significant unpopularity and the coalition's weakness. A growing majority of polls have shown that the Israeli public disagrees with the government on three key issues: the return of all the hostages, ending the war, and establishing a state commission of inquiry.

At times, it has seemed that Netanyahu was taking a "the ends justify the means" approach, subordinating all war management decisions to one central goal – the continued survival of his government and the holding of the next Knesset elections as close as possible to their scheduled time, October 2026.

Within this framework, he acceded to the demand of the two far-right factions in the government, Religious Zionism and Otzma Yehudit, to resume fighting after the completion of Phase 1 of the hostage deal signed in January 2025. He also avoided, throughout the war, holding any substantial discussion on "the day after" in Gaza and the West Bank, fearing that such a discussion would spark a crisis with his far-right partners. Arab states have conditioned any future Gaza scenario on the Palestinian Authority (PA) taking a central role there.

By contrast, there was a major improvement this year, from the government's perspective, regarding one international issue – Israel's relations with the United States. Netanyahu and Trump have enjoyed a second honeymoon since

the latter's election for a second term, after four years out of office. The first 15 and a half months of the war were difficult for Netanyahu under the Biden administration. Biden expressed shock at the Hamas massacre, declared his public support for Israel, and was quick to send significant military aid. He warned Iran not to get involved (his famous mid-October "Don't" speech). However, disagreements between him and Netanyahu deepened as the war dragged on. In May 2024, Netanyahu ignored Biden's demand not to invade Rafah. The U.S. responded by imposing a de facto embargo on supplying the Israeli Air Force with heavy aerial munitions, as well as selling large Caterpillar (D9) bulldozers to the IDF, arguing that they cause disproportionate destruction of homes. Netanyahu did not hide the fact that he was waiting for his friend Trump's return to power.

The War in Gaza

In July 2024, 12 children were killed by a Hezbollah rocket in the Druze town of Majdal Shams in the Golan Heights. Apparently aimed at the nearby Hermon outpost, the attack turned out to be a colossal mistake by the Shi'ite organization. The grave incident and subsequent public outrage resolved a months-long dispute between Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi (both of whom were later dismissed by Netanyahu, mainly because they refused to support a draft law in the form he demanded), and other high-ranking IDF personnel. Since April/May, Gallant and the IDF had been trying to wrap up the Gaza campaign, to reach a comprehensive hostage deal, and to shift the military effort to Lebanon. Netanyahu had opposed these efforts and imposed his own will. In May, he also ordered the IDF to enter Rafah despite American objections.

The deadly rocket fire on the Golan instantly shifted the war priorities. The cabinet added victory over Hezbollah in Lebanon, and improving security along the northern border to the list of war objectives. Accordingly, the IDF gradually shifted the main weight of its operations to the northern front, as the primary arena, with Gaza once again becoming secondary (see below). This shift was reflected in the transfer of operational focus and, later, the redeployment of a large segment of the frontline brigades, both regular and reserves, from Gaza to the Lebanese border, and then into Lebanon itself.

Mainly reserve brigades remained in Gaza, with fewer troops and a narrowed scope of military activity. That activity focused on attempts to destroy Hamas weapons production and defensive infrastructure (tunnels and bunkers) throughout the Strip. After the fall of Rafah, Hamas ceased functioning as a "terrorist army" in battalion and brigade frameworks, and instead operated as a loose network of local guerrilla groups, with its senior leadership weakened in influence. The thousands of fighters killed (about 20,000, per IDF estimate) were soon replaced by youths aged 16-18 for the most part, with only basic training in weapons operation, who were sent to harass the Israeli forces through sniper attacks, close-

range RPG fire, and IEDs. Some of these explosives were assembled from unexploded Israeli bombs dropped by the air force. These small-scale guerrilla actions regularly inflicted casualties on IDF units, often catching them static and exposed. The prolonged deployment of both regular and reserve troops – in what was already the longest campaign in IDF history – also led to a relatively high number of fatal operational accidents, causing numerous deaths and injuries.

Although Palestinian resistance in Rafah gradually collapsed, the IDF continued operations there, mainly in search of the leader of Hamas in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, whom intelligence reasonably suspected to be hiding in the area. In October 2024, a force of trainee IDF squad commanders ultimately found him, by chance, in the Philadelphi Corridor near the Egyptian border in Rafah. Targeted assassinations also killed two other Hamas senior military leaders, Yahya Sinwar's brother Mohammed Sinwar, and the veteran terrorist Mohammed Deif. But even before this, in late August, a tragic event had occurred in the same area. After a series of operations in which the IDF and Yamam (Israel's National Counter-Terrorism Unit) had succeeded in freeing hostages from Hamas captivity, Hamas placed the remaining hostages under stricter guard, ordering their murder in any instance where a rescue operation was suspected. Six hostages, who had been forced to serve as "human shields" for Hamas leaders, were brutally murdered by their guards, shortly after detecting IDF movement above the tunnel where they were held.

The bodies of the six were discovered, sparking widespread public outrage

The bodies of the six were discovered the next day by an IDF unit, sparking widespread public outrage. Across the country, large spontaneous public demonstrations broke out after months in which the hostage protest movement's activity had diminished. Netanyahu now found himself in a bind: he opposed a deal under the terms demanded by Hamas, and sought to avoid ending the war for fear of his coalition collapsing. This was the background for the leak of classified documents involving aides from his office. The documents, based on intelligence obtained by Aman (the Military Intelligence Directorate) about Hamas activity, were leaked to the German newspaper Bild, attempting to show that it was Hamas that was deliberately stalling the agreement, drawing motivation from the pressure exerted by the hostage families via the protest command center advocating their release. The report was treated with distrust by the Israeli media, which exposed the involvement of the Prime Minister's Office in the affair. Subsequently, a Shin Bet and police investigation led to the arrest of two Netanyahu aides; one has already been indicted.

This scandal overlapped with another affair that further entangled Netanyahu and his associates. It was revealed that at least three of his spokespersons had extensive business dealings with Qatar, some during the war itself. Although

Qatar is not formally an enemy state, and is also a mediator in the hostage negotiations, the Doha regime is highly unpopular with the Israeli public in light of revelations about its extensive financial assistance to Hamas, which also used the money for terrorism. The investigation in this case is still underway, but it has deepened public skepticism about Netanyahu's conduct and provoked harsh criticism of his circle of associates, who allegedly continued to receive money from Qatar at a time when Qatari funds were indirectly financing the killing of Israelis.

Nevertheless, Netanyahu continued to insist on avoiding a final hostage deal, despite various proposals put forward by the mediators – the U.S., Egypt, and Qatar. Circumstances changed only after Trump's victory in early November. The incoming president maintained coordination with the outgoing administration on one major issue – the hostages. Trump frequently emphasized the urgent need to end the hostage saga and publicly expressed identification with their suffering. Trump even appointed his confidant, Steve Witkoff, as his special envoy on this issue (later asking Witkoff to also mediate on the Iranian nuclear issue, the Russia-Ukraine war, and other matters).

While Netanyahu repeatedly delayed the talks, he somehow managed to persuade the Biden administration to "absolve" him and attribute responsibility for the obstruction to Hamas, contrary to the professional opinion of most of the Israeli negotiating team and the intelligence officials. During those months, from September 2024 to January 2025, the fighting continued mainly in northern Gaza. The IDF conducted large-scale operations in Jabalia, Beit Hanoun, and Beit Lahia, leaving massive destruction in their wake. Most of the Palestinian civilian population fled.

Trump acted differently from Biden. Witkoff was sent to Doha to help the Biden team close a deal, and then forced Netanyahu to meet with him on Shabbat in Jerusalem, pressing Netanyahu to sign a deal on the eve of Trump's inauguration. Over the next two months, Hamas returned 30 live hostages to Israel, including two who had been held for a decade, as well as eight bodies of fallen soldiers. In exchange, the Palestinians received hundreds of security prisoners held by Israel, including dozens serving life sentences. The IDF, per the agreement, withdrew from some areas it had occupied in Gaza.

On March 18, Netanyahu decided to resume the war and break the ceasefire, citing Hamas violations regarding the pace and manner of implementing the agreement. The Israeli assault began with massive air strikes that killed nearly 400 Palestinians, most of them civilians. Among the dead were high-ranking officials in Hamas's political bureau. The operation, which later evolved into a campaign named "Gideon's Chariots," exerted heavy military pressure on Hamas, and led to Israel's occupation of more than 70% of Gaza's territory. The Palestinian population was pushed into three enclaves, in Gaza City, refugee camps in central Gaza, and the Al Mawasi area on the southern coast.

In May 2025, Israel took another step: it halted the transfer of humanitarian aid to Gaza via the UN and various international agencies, placing oversight instead into the hands of an Israeli-American foundation. The official rationale was that under the previous system Hamas had seized some of the supplies and resold them for profit.

The decision proved catastrophic. Between mid-March and late July, 50 IDF soldiers were killed in Gaza and hundreds were wounded. The number of Palestinian fatalities rose to over 60,000, according to Hamas figures. The IDF inflicted immense damage across the Strip. Perhaps worse – by late July, a severe humanitarian crisis had unfolded, with growing international allegations that Israel was deliberately starving the population. The aid foundation proved unable to manage the vast project. Aid entering Gaza did not match the needs, and chaos at distribution centers prevented many civilians from receiving food. In addition, there were repeated incidents in which IDF soldiers shot and killed civilians who had come to collect supplies. By the end of July, under mounting international pressure, Netanyahu was forced to reverse course. Israel allowed the UN to resume food provision, opened corridors for aid trucks, declared humanitarian pauses for aid distribution, and even air-dropped food itself for the first time.

The international diplomatic fallout was not long in coming. France was the first to announce its intention to recognize a Palestinian state, and soon after other countries joined, including Britain, Canada, Australia, and others. The combination of Hamas's starvation campaign and Israel's ongoing fighting in Gaza without any political horizon caused enormous damage to Israel's international standing.

In early August, Israel once again faced the same dilemma that had repeatedly preoccupied Jerusalem throughout the war: Should it move forward with a hostage deal, despite the political risks to Netanyahu and the fear that without a total defeat of Hamas, some danger would remain for Israel's southern border communities? Or should it continue trying to decisively defeat Hamas, at the cost of potentially losing any chance of rescuing hostages alive, more IDF casualties, re-establishing full military rule across the Strip – and the grave international isolation such a course could bring?

The most pressing challenge remains the question of "the day after." With some 70 percent of the Gaza Strip destroyed, there is deep uncertainty about its ability to be rehabilitated, requiring reconstruction on a massive scale. Throughout the war, Israel has refrained from presenting or clarifying any "day after" political plans, most of which had been formulated in various Arab capitals and Washington.

Trump at one point dramatically unveiled his "Gaza Riviera" plan, but it never advanced beyond declarations – despite enthusiastic reception among extreme elements in the Israeli coalition.

In Israel, three main scenarios for the "day after" have been discussed:

1. Continued military rule by the IDF – not only in terms of security but also civilian administration. Such a situation would allow for tight civilian supervision over everything related to reconstruction and prevent Hamas from being able to rebuild itself.

2. Investment in local militias in Gaza that could counter Hamas. One such group, Abu Shabab, is presented as a potential force to confront Hamas and block its return to power. Israel has worked with this faction, which operates mainly in Rafah, and reportedly has provided it with equipment and arms. Yet this is seen as a short-sighted plan that is unlikely to anchor long-term stability in the bloodied Gaza Strip.

3. Establishing a new governing body in Gaza, led by technocrats and Palestinian Authority (PA) officials, while preserving IDF operational freedom – similar to the current situation in the West Bank, where Israel does not handle civilian administration in Areas A and B, but conducts military operations as it sees fit. The problem with this plan, supported by Israel's Arab partners, is that Netanyahu's coalition partners have rejected it outright, refusing to allow any PA foothold in Gaza's future.

The War in Lebanon

Israel responded to the Hezbollah killing of Druze children in the Golan with two dramatic moves: the assassination in Beirut of Fuad Shukr (known as Haj Mohsen), Nasrallah's chief military adviser, and on the same night, the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, while he was staying at a government guesthouse in Tehran.

From there, the war evolved into a patient peeling away of Hezbollah's defensive and offensive capabilities. Israel gradually escalated its operations but did so cautiously and without unnecessary boasting. Secretary-General Nasrallah, who Iran and its radical axis partners considered to be the leading expert on Israeli policy and society, completely misread the situation this time. Although some of his aides warned him to act more forcefully and launch heavy missile barrages at the Tel Aviv area, Nasrallah chose to "communicate" with Israel through limited, measured strikes – a policy Military Intelligence dubbed the "beacon method."

In this case, Hezbollah behaved exactly as its Israeli adversaries had hoped. The measured exchanges allowed the Israeli Air Force to gradually escalate its strikes, knocking out more and more of Hezbollah's systems. A series of blows delivered throughout September 2024 brought the organization to decisive defeat, at least this time around.

In mid-September, Mossad and the IDF launched "Operation Beepers" – a coordinated detonation of thousands of pagers held by Hezbollah operatives, after the organization had acquired them in a sophisticated Mossad sting operation. Dozens of operatives were killed and thousands were injured, but the main impact was psychological: Hezbollah was caught utterly

unprepared. International media marveled at the sophistication and lethality of the Israeli operation, a sort of reversal of the reactions to the massacre on October 7 a year earlier.

Nasrallah himself sank into deep depression, withdrew into his bunkers, and avoided taking initiative. He clung to his measured-response doctrine, as Israel tightened the noose around him and killed many other senior figures, including Ali Karaki, Ibrahim Aqil, and the entire top echelon of the organization's Radwan commando force. Nasrallah died still clutching his measured strategy. Israeli bombs hit the underground bunker where he was hiding in Dahiyeh, in Beirut's Shiite quarter, in late September. Hezbollah failed to mount a significant retaliatory strike on Tel Aviv. Days later, large IDF ground forces invaded southern Lebanon. Hezbollah struggled to fight back. By this point, 60-70% of the organization's firepower had already been destroyed – medium-range missiles, short-range rockets, drones, and air defense systems – and the new leadership, headed by Nasrallah's drab deputy, Sheikh Naim Qassem, proved unable to rally the organization. Only about 10% of Hezbollah's reservists reported for duty; most, sensing impending military failure, stayed home.

Only about 10% of Hezbollah's reservists reported for duty

By the end of October, the IDF had cleared most of southern Lebanon, south of the Litani River. Hezbollah fighters abandoned the area, as did most of the civilian population. Israeli ground forces uncovered and destroyed bunkers, tunnels, weapons depots and production facilities. Overall, on the Lebanese front of the post-October 7 war, 84 IDF soldiers and 46 Israeli civilians were killed, as were more than 5,150 Lebanese, about 4,000 of whom were Hezbollah operatives, according to IDF estimates. Another 9,000 were wounded. Israeli intelligence assessed that more than a third of Hezbollah's standing force was rendered inoperative (killed or severely injured). The damage to Hezbollah capabilities closely matched prewar Israeli estimates.

During the war, about 1.6 million Lebanese civilians – mostly Shiites – were displaced from their homes in the south, the Bekaa Valley, and Beirut. The Dahieh suburb in the south of Beirut was completely emptied, with about 300 buildings destroyed by Israeli bombings. Afterward, many residents returned to their homes north of the Litani River, but the belt of villages within 5 kilometers of the Israeli border remained largely destroyed and deserted. For comparison, by late July, 74% of Israeli residents evacuated from communities within 3.5 kilometers of the northern border had returned home. According to Israeli intelligence, morale in Hezbollah's ranks remains low, the commitment of reservists weak, and Qassem is still struggling to step into the shoes of Nasrallah, who ruled Hezbollah with an iron fist for 32 years.

A ceasefire was achieved under American mediation at the end of November last year.

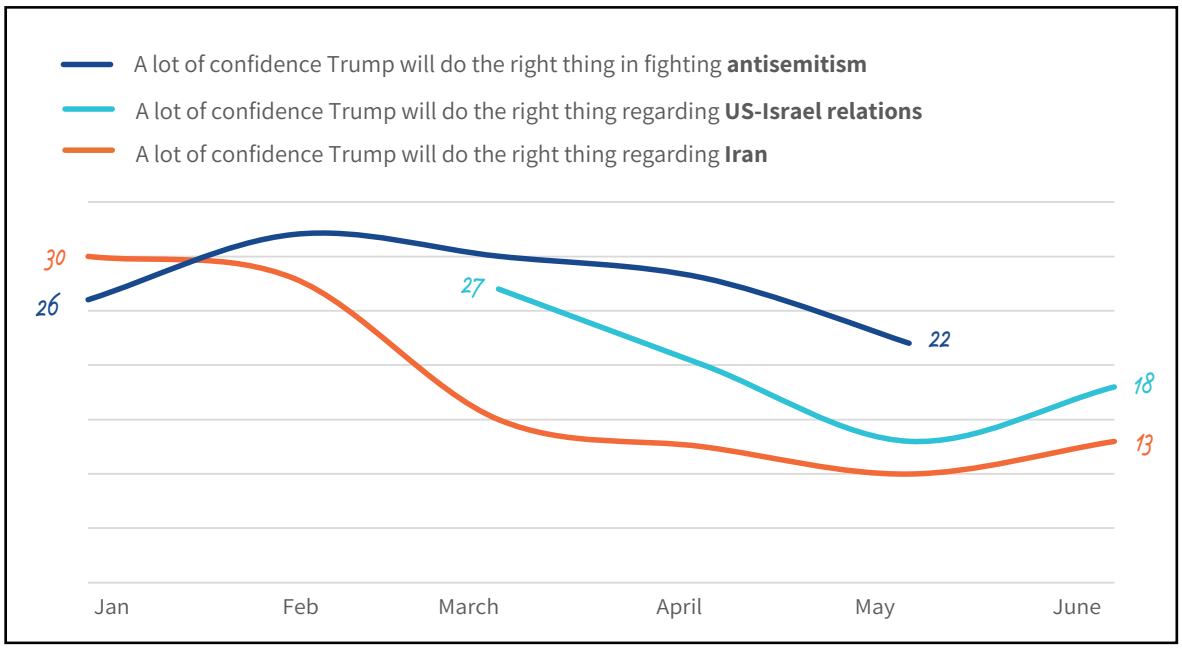
Hezbollah retained hundreds of rockets capable of reaching central Israel and several thousand covering the north, but its firepower, command, and control systems remained crippled. Israel had accused Hezbollah of thousands of ceasefire violations, launched about 500 aerial strikes into Lebanon since the agreement, and killed about 230 Hezbollah operatives by the end of July 2025. But, in this entire period, Hezbollah fired only once into Israeli territory, at Mount Dov, two days after the ceasefire, which appeared to be a token gesture before full compliance.

Israel's continued strikes, with full American backing, reflect the new balance of power. Israel, seeking to capitalize on its victory and establish a deterrence equation in which it alone attacks in response to Hezbollah activity south of the Litani River, without Hezbollah daring to retaliate. For now, the formula is working. The success lies not only from the decisive results achieved by the IDF and the Mossad, but also in the agreement forged afterward. The ceasefire agreement almost completely removes the UN's UNIFIL force from the equation while granting the United States an unusual role: an American general and his team were stationed in Beirut to help enforce the agreement.

This U.S. backing emboldened Lebanon's new president and chief of staff to take a tougher stance against Hezbollah. Unlike after UN Security Council Resolution 1701 ended the Second Lebanon War in 2006, this time the agreement is being strictly enforced by the authorities in Beirut, with American support. The Lebanese government, coordinating behind the scenes with Israel, is aiming to limit Hezbollah's role, even pushing toward its complete disarmament. At the same time, Lebanese security forces are fighting to stop weapon smuggling from Syria and Iranian attempts to resupply Hezbollah through the Beirut airport. Several Iranian aircraft have been turned back after suspicions of smuggling arose. The general attitude toward Hezbollah, especially among Lebanon's non-Shiite communities, has become more hostile, and there is growing support for disarming the organization – the last militia left to do so under the Taif Agreement that ended Lebanon's civil war in 1989.

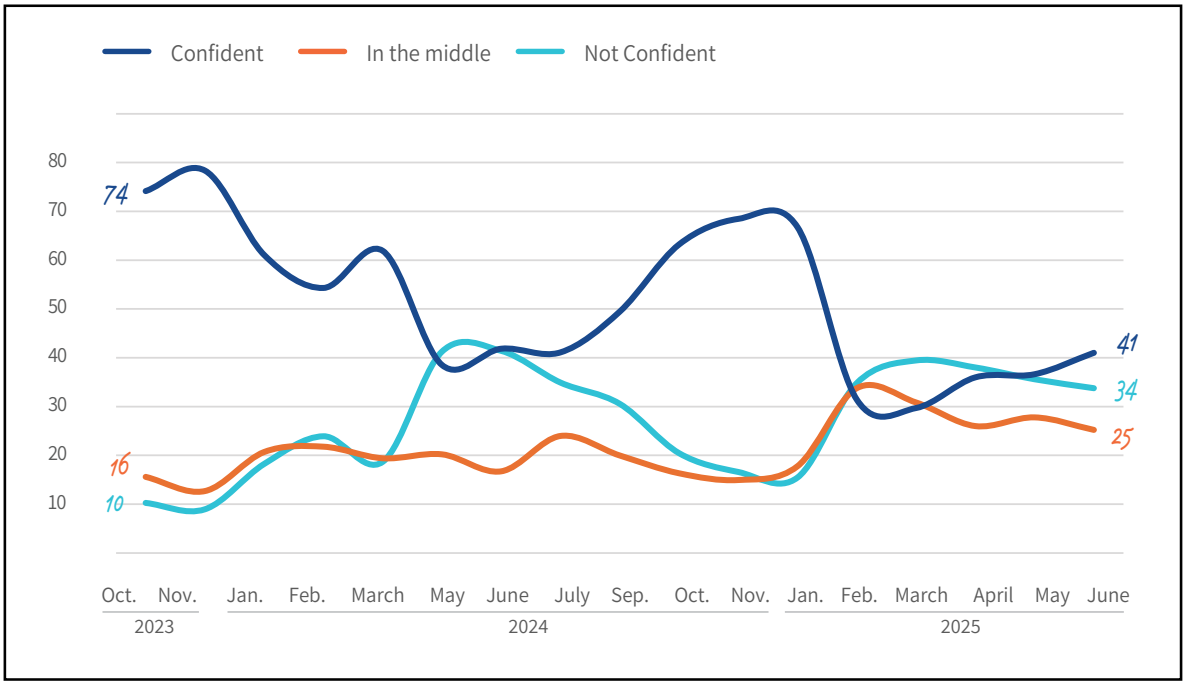
As for Israel, it currently maintains five manned military outposts inside southern Lebanon, at strategic points near the border. Hezbollah has so far refrained from approaching these contact lines. Senior IDF officers believe the current operational model serves Israel's interests and restrains Hezbollah's activity. Further, some explicitly argue that the model could be applied to Gaza: if it works against Hezbollah, a far stronger organization than Hamas, it could work against Hamas too.

Confidence in Trump among American Jews (%)



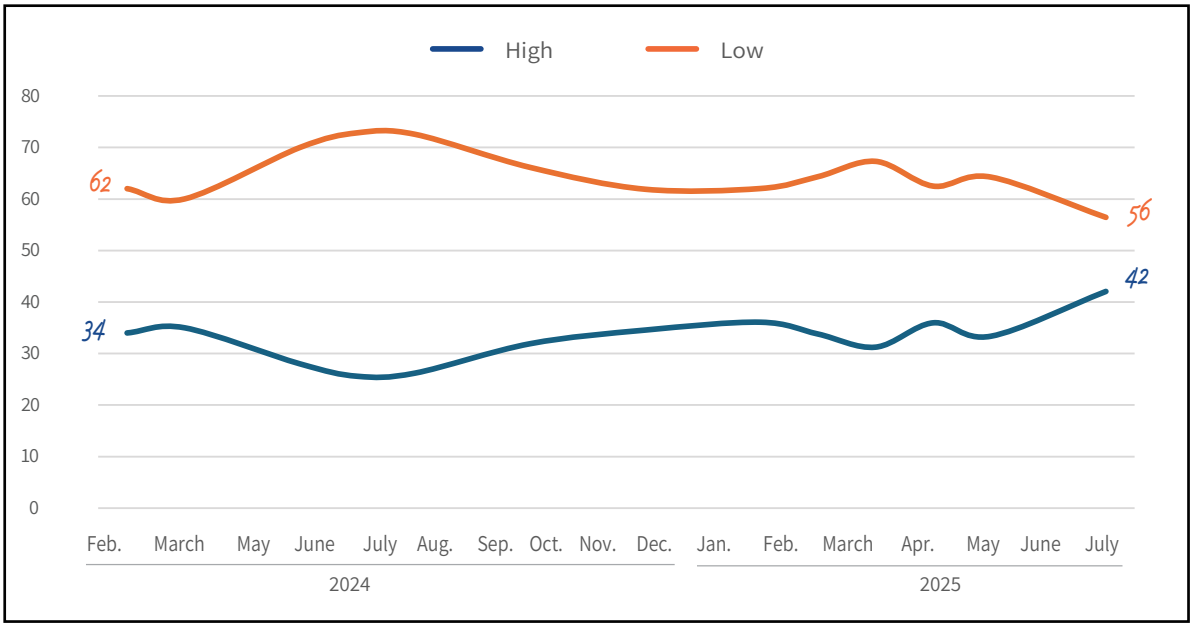
JPPI Voice of the Jewish People Survey, January to June 2025

Israeli Jews Confidence in Winning the War (%)



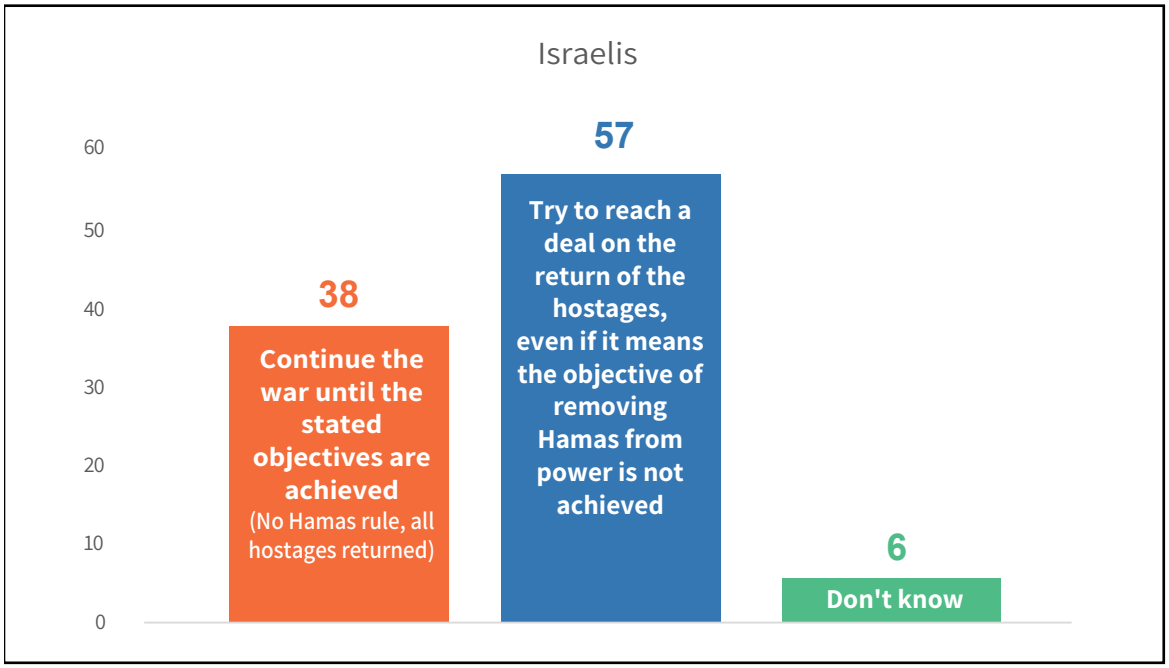
JPPI Voice of the Jewish People Survey, October 2023 to June 2025

Trust in Government Among Jewish Israelis (%)



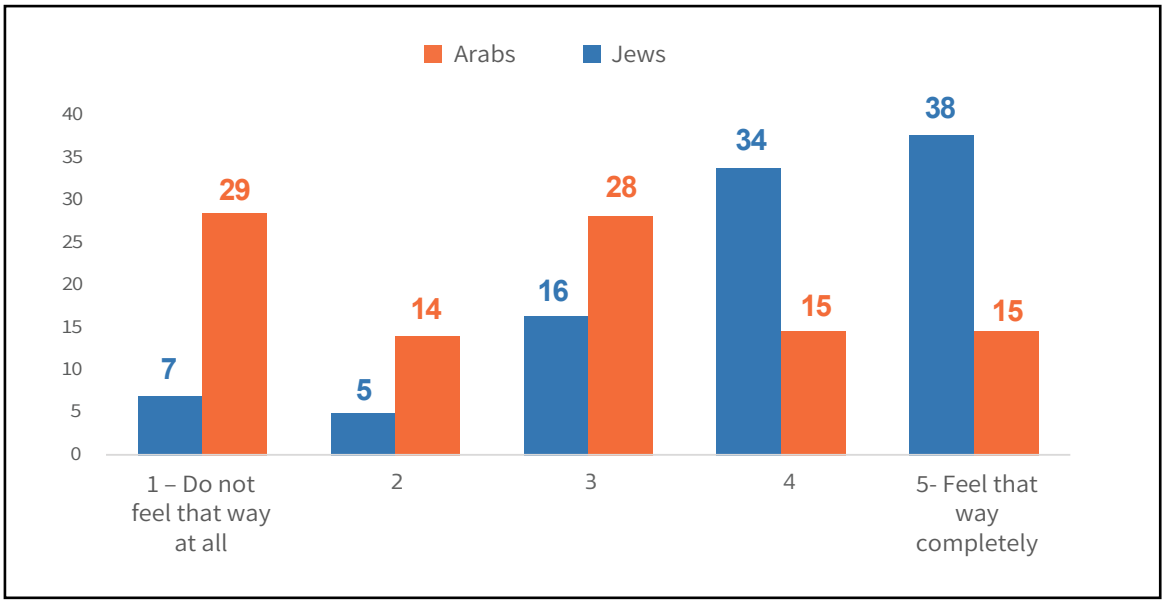
JPPI Voice of the Jewish People Survey, February 2024 to July 2025

Of the following options, what do you think is the right thing to do now in the Gaza Strip? (%)



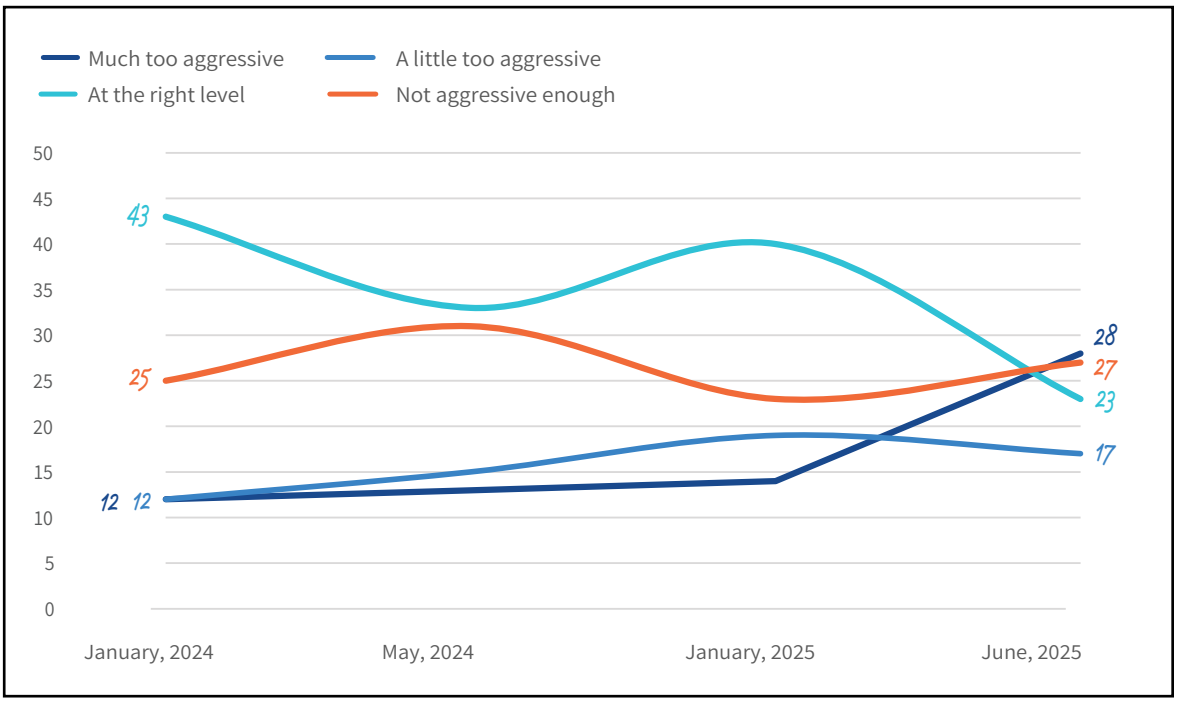
JPPI Voice of the Jewish People Survey, July 2025

Please rate from 1 to 5 (1 is "not at all" and 5 is "completely") to what extent you believe that Israel is winning and/or has won the campaign in Iran? (%)



JPPI Israeli Society Index survey, July 2025

How American Jews feel about Israel's actions in Gaza (%)



JPPI Voice of the Jewish People Survey, January 2024 to June 2025

Syria

The fall of the Assad regime in Syria was one of the most significant regional events this year, alongside Israel's wars on various fronts. In this case, Israel's role was indirect, but one could argue that IDF operations acted as a kind of detonator that triggered the chain of events.

According to senior Turkish intelligence officials in contact with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (the umbrella organization of Sunni rebels), the rebels had long been waiting for a ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon. Once the ceasefire was reached, they analyzed its terms and concluded that Hezbollah's willingness to accept such harsh conditions reflected its dire state and inability to fight. And thus, they assumed that Hezbollah would be unable to send forces to defend the Assad regime if they acted against it.

The rebel advance, which began in Idlib, faced almost no resistance. Within 11 days, the whole of Syria had been conquered, except for small Alawite enclaves in the northwest (which were later taken as well). The Syrian army collapsed, and President Bashar al-Assad fled to Moscow, where he received Russian protection. What was not achieved in almost 13 years of civil war was decided in less than two weeks. The rebels also quickly took control of southern Syria, adjacent to the Israeli border.

The IDF operated vigorously during this period. Initially, it targeted – mainly from the air – military camps and heavy weapons depots, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the new regime. The IDF destroyed dozens of aircraft, helicopters, and drones, as well as missile stockpiles and numerous air defense batteries (which would serve it well later in its breakthrough attack on Iran).

In addition, the army seized, without resistance, a buffer zone in Syrian territory in the Golan and Hermon, 7 to 15 kilometers from the border. Israel continues to hold nine outposts in Syria, the largest and most remote of which is the Syrian Hermon outpost. The new Syrian regime, led by former jihadist Ahmed al-Sharaa (also known by his nom de guerre, Abu Mohammad al-Julani), has publicly protested this several times, but has avoided direct military confrontation with Israeli forces. By contrast, Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yisrael Katz have repeatedly threatened Syria and, in several cases, ordered punitive strikes, for various reasons, against the new regime's military camps and convoys.

Within 11 days, the whole of Syria had been conquered, except for small Alawite enclaves

In mid-July, tensions escalated sharply following a massacre carried out by regime-backed Sunni Bedouin militias against Druze residents of the town of Sweida, about 80 kilometers east of the border with Israel. Some 1,400 people were killed, and many Druze women were abducted and raped. Israel bombed regime and militia convoys, and its intervention brought the fighting

to a halt, but Druze expectations for Israeli protection remain high. As in Lebanon, Israel is taking steps to enforce the new balance of power with an aggressive, uncompromising approach – very different from its past behavior. It almost welcomed every opportunity to respond to violations militarily, unconcerned about potential complications, due both to its military advantage and the lessons of October 7.

Relations with the new regime remain complicated. The Trump administration hoped to bring Syria into the Abraham Accords and present this as a diplomatic achievement, but al-Sharaa struggled to deliver, given Israel's continued presence in Syrian territory, not to mention Israel's control of the Golan Heights since 1967. For its part, Israel is deeply suspicious of the new regime's ties to Sunni fundamentalism and continues to regard the new president as a "jihadist in a suit."

Yet, for Israel, the most significant development in Syria was the blow to the radical Shiite axis led by Iran. Not only have Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas been battered militarily over the past year, but the most critical piece of the "Shiite Crescent" – the geographic corridor through which Iran had projected power across Iraq and Syria into Lebanon – lost its central piece: Syria itself. This effectively cut off the smuggling route Iran had used for years to arm Hezbollah, greatly reducing the threat against Israel.

Iran

The most dramatic strategic development of the year occurred in Iran. What is astonishing is that within weeks, the international community seemed to have all but forgotten about it; once the fighting stopped, global media attention shifted away. For nearly 20 years, Israel had prepared for – and Netanyahu had often spoken of – the possibility of striking Iran's nuclear facilities. Many doubted it would ever happen, with some dismissing Netanyahu as either arrogant or gutless. But the prime minister saw in the course of the Gaza war an opportunity to realize his long-held vision, recognizing that Trump's return to office opened doors no previous U.S. president – not Biden, not Obama, not Clinton – had been willing to open. (There was no overlap between the terms of office of Netanyahu and George W. Bush).

Israel and Iran had already exchanged blows twice in 2024, as the Israel– Hezbollah–Hamas conflict escalated. In April of that year, Iran launched hundreds of ballistic missiles, drones, and cruise missiles at Israel. Most were intercepted by the U.S.-led regional defense initiative, with the participation of American, British, Jordanian, and Gulf forces. Israel retaliated by striking a strategic radar site in Iran's air defense system. Another round followed in October when Iran again launched hundreds of projectiles, causing somewhat more damage but no fatalities. Israel's counterstrikes again hit Iran's radar and air defense systems.

These earlier strikes paved the way for what followed. Like the gradual dismantling of Hezbollah's systems, Iran's air defenses were peeled away in preparation for the decisive assault. Behind the scenes, Israel had been preparing for

months. In January 2025, with Trump's return to the White House, Netanyahu ordered the defense establishment to accelerate preparations for a direct Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear sites. The plans were upgraded and refined, with the conclusion that a large-scale campaign led by the Air Force would be more effective than a Mossad-directed sabotage and assassination strategy. The Mossad capabilities were incorporated, but it was clear that the IDF would take the lead.

On June 9, in a secure transatlantic call, Netanyahu finally obtained Trump's approval. The U.S. president gave Israel the green light. The IDF chief of staff, Eyal Zamir, had already assured the cabinet that the plan was ready and likely to succeed – but emphasized that implementation depended on American consent. With Trump's agreement, the operation was launched just before midnight on June 12–13.

It quickly became clear that this was not a one-off raid, but a sustained campaign. As Air Force Commander Maj. Gen. Tomer Bar had told planners months earlier –pilots needed to operate in Iran "as if it were the first circle, not the third," meaning to attack freely and repeatedly despite the 1,000-plus kilometer range.

The operation succeeded beyond expectations. Its key achievement, according to planners, was the attainment of air superiority. The Air Force simply "carved out," as Zamir put it, a threat-free corridor through the skies over Syria, Iraq, and Iran. All potentially dangerous air defense batteries were destroyed, enabling hours of largely unimpeded operations over Iran. Instead of "stand-off" strikes from a distance or the airspace of a neighboring country, Israeli jets and drones operated in "stand-in" mode for an extended period, even over Tehran itself. This was made possible by decades of painstaking intelligence-gathering operations. Israel knew exactly where Iran's critical weak points lay – and struck them.

Over 12 days of fighting, Israel hit Iran's key nuclear sites at Natanz and Isfahan, destroyed air defense systems, missile stockpiles and launchers, and killed most of the country's military and security leadership (except the supreme leader and the president) along with dozens of top nuclear scientists.

The Air Force "carved out" a threat-free corridor through the skies over Syria, Iraq, and Iran

On June 22, Trump escalated further, ordering the deployment of B-2 strategic bombers that dropped 13-ton "bunker busters" on the underground Fordow facility. Israel had long acknowledged that it could not penetrate the site's depths, 80-90 meters underground, with its own munitions. The alternative would have been a risky ground attack that could have been lengthy, complicated, and extremely costly. Trump, seizing on Israel's success, opted for U.S. involvement. The bombers caused heavy damage to the Fordow site (according to Trump's claim, an exaggeration, it was "completely obliterated" and, with it, the entire nuclear program). A day later, a ceasefire was reached and the 12-day war ended,

giving Israel a clear advantage on this front as well, although not a decisive victory.

Trump also reasserted the geopolitical chain of command in ordering Netanyahu to recall Israeli aircraft already en route to Iran for further strikes hours after the ceasefire was announced and after the Iranians had already violated it with a missile launch of their own. But Israel had achieved two of Netanyahu's most ambitious goals – a powerful strike on Iran's nuclear program with U.S. backing, and later even active American participation.

After the campaign, a debate soon erupted over whether such a campaign had been truly necessary. Was the sword really at Israel's throat, as the former Mossad chief, the late Meir Dagan, put it a decade ago when debating such an attack? Netanyahu, Zamir, and Mossad chief David Barnea argued that it was unavoidable: Iran had amassed a stockpile of highly (60%) enriched uranium, resumed their work on weaponization (adapting ballistic missiles to accommodate nuclear warheads), and planned to produce about 8,000 ballistic missiles by 2028. In their view, there was an urgent need to act. But in truth, this also fits into the rare window of opportunity Netanyahu created, thanks to Trump, during the war. Out of the chaos, an opportunity emerged, and political and military leadership could not pass it up, despite the quagmire in Gaza and the debate over how to end the war there.

During the campaign, Iran launched more than 500 ballistic missiles and about 1,000 drones at Israel. All the drones were intercepted, except one that hit a house in Beit She'an but caused no casualties. Roughly 10% of the missiles were not intercepted and landed in Tel Aviv, Petah Tikva, Holon, Bat Yam, Haifa, Beersheva, and in the vicinity of various Air Force bases. Key facilities – including the Weizmann Institute, Bazan oil refinery in Haifa, and a defense facility in the Galilee – suffered heavy damage. Thirty people were killed in Israel, and more than 3,000 were hospitalized with injuries. The damage wreaked on hundreds of buildings was worse than Israel had ever experienced. Still, the effort on the home front was seen as a huge success – with the number of casualties less than 10% of the lowest early projection the IDF presented to the cabinet. The public's overwhelming compliance with Home Front Command instructions, along with the long warning time (10–12 minutes), saved many civilian lives. Like Hezbollah before it, Iran struggled to launch large, coordinated barrages after its command and control capacities were disrupted. And the fact that Hezbollah, still reeling from its own defeat, refrained from joining the Iranian attack, contrary to Tehran's long-held strategy, eased the pressure on the Israeli home front.

Experts remain divided over the extent of the damage inflicted on Iran's nuclear sites, and the degree to which Tehran's program was set back. There is a plausible scenario that the surviving Iranian leaders might now accelerate efforts to produce a nuclear weapon, by any means necessary and despite Trump's threats, believing it the only insurance policy for the threatened regime. Neither Israel nor the U.S. really sought to

overthrow the regime during the short campaign, although some experts supported it. There is also concern that the divided Iranian public will rally more closely around the regime, given the heightened external threat.

In July, Trump threatened to resume strikes if Iran did not respond to his pressure to abandon its nuclear program and sign a new agreement. The president ignored another remaining problem: the mystery surrounding the whereabouts of more than 400 kilograms of highly enriched uranium – enough, after further enrichment, to produce around ten nuclear bombs. It appears that the regime managed to hide the uranium before the attack.

In any event, Israel's impressive military and intelligence achievements boosted its regional status. Many Sunni states, long fearful of Iran, welcomed the blow it suffered. They also admired the extraordinary capabilities of Israel's defense system, and its ability to obtain American support. Less impressed were the Houthi rebels in Yemen. They have continued to launch missiles and drones at Israel about twice a week since the summer of 2024, both in solidarity with Gaza and in coordination with Iran. Even so, it seems that the Houthi threat no longer preoccupies the Israeli public – many have stopped heeding the sirens, after having endured the far greater danger of Iran's ballistic missile strikes.

Summary

This has been a dramatic, turbulent, and deeply unsettling year for Israel's security and international standing. Only the shock of the horrific October 7 massacre, now approaching its two-year anniversary, left a deeper mark. The heavy shadow of that day continues to loom over Israel's strategic reality, and it seems the country has yet to truly recover.

The government's inability – and especially its unwillingness – to chart a way out of the ongoing war in Gaza, the never-ending hostage saga, the heavy toll of fallen IDF soldiers, and the physical and emotional exhaustion of the small group of civilians bearing the burden – all of these have led to a severe erosion of public morale and an unbearable sense of paralysis. The Israeli public, only beginning to process the trauma of the massacre, finds itself mired in a prolonged campaign with no endgame in sight.

In the international arena, Israel's situation has worsened. Although it initially aroused empathy and a fragile legitimacy as the victim of a terror attack, this evaporated quickly as the war dragged on and the destruction in Gaza mounted. The high Palestinian death toll – even if many were Hamas combatants – led to accusations of deliberate ethnic cleansing, based on the leveling of tens of thousands of homes and enormous civilian casualties, without the IDF providing satisfactory explanations. The situation was exacerbated by the racist and inflammatory rhetoric of ministers and Knesset members, who openly called for

Gaza's erasure.

Added to this were problematic strategies – which emerged both from the right-wing parties in the coalition and some former senior officers – proposing siege, starvation, and even expulsion of the civilian population. The most extreme government factions did not hide their desire to bring about "voluntary emigration" of Gaza's residents, even at the cost of a direct confrontation with Egypt in Sinai. These notions were dressed in softer language – economic development ("Gaza Riviera") and international aid programs, but the international community did not buy it.

The peak of Israel's political isolation came in July. The Israeli move to establish an independent body to distribute humanitarian aid in Gaza – as an alternative to the UN – collapsed. At the same time, mounting reports and images of hunger in Gaza spurred a fresh wave of condemnations and punitive measures against Israel. Twenty-eight Western countries – including France, Canada, Australia, and Italy – issued a rare joint statement demanding an immediate end to the fighting. They charged that Israel's aid distribution model was "dangerous," "fueling instability," and undermining the human dignity of Gazans.

If the momentum toward recognizing a Palestinian state continues without an agreement with Israel, little may change on the ground – but Israeli diplomacy will suffer a serious blow. Countries that recognize Palestine will have to reassess their agreements with Israel to avoid violating their commitments to a Palestinian state. This could involve Palestine's territorial integrity, as well as political, economic, cultural, and civil relations – and even lead to the cessation of trade with Israel.

The question of state recognition could also affect during discussions on the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC), whose chief prosecutor has already issued arrest warrants against the prime minister and former defense minister. Germany and Britain, for example, have refused to acknowledge the ICC's jurisdiction in the territories and Gaza, partly because they did not recognize Palestine as a state. Wider recognition in Europe could change this stance.

Despite their recognition of a Palestinian state, it is important to note that Britain and France played a role in defending Israel from Iranian attacks last year. This situation is complex: Israel is becoming diplomatically distanced from its historical allies, and the prime minister is increasingly treated as a persona non grata.

The bottom line is that even if Israeli ministers stop visiting European capitals, Israel is becoming increasingly marginalized and could become an isolated, pariah state in the international arena. We are not there yet, but the slope has never been more slippery.

Above all this, the fundamental strategic problem looms: the lack of a clear political goal. The Israeli government claims that its war objectives are the return of the hostages and the destruction of Hamas – but it does not present a plan for the reconstruction of Gaza, does not talk about who will govern it the day after, and does not try

to formulate a practical vision that will soften the growing international opposition. Into this vacuum enters the incitement of the extreme right – calls for starvation, deportation, indiscriminate bombing – which intensifies the gap between unbridled military power and increasingly eroding political legitimacy.

And here, against the backdrop of all this, America remains Israel's only support. But under the new Trump administration this, too, may well become unstable. His regional policy is unpredictable, and his emotional zigzags create uncertainty instead of stability. The successes of Israel's security establishment – mainly in other areas, such as eliminating senior Hezbollah commanders or preventing Iranian entrenchment – fail to change the overall image: Israel may be stronger militarily, but it is weaker diplomatically.

And at the same time, antisemitism is on the rise in the Western world. Jews and Israelis have been subjected to harassment and sometimes even physical attacks – mainly in Europe and North America – for supporting Israel or simply for being Jews. This wave of hatred erupted immediately after October 7, and although it erupted in response to the massacre, it quickly took root among those who believe that Israel is committing genocide.

In short, there is a troubling dissonance between Israel's impressive upgrade in security capabilities and determined actions in the face of external threats, and its deteriorating international status and the deepening distrust among its closest allies. The fact that the government continues to promote ideas of annexation, expulsion, and damage to the democratic fabric within the Green Line only adds fuel to the fire.

There is no doubt that Israel now faces a historic opportunity to reshape the Middle East: Iran has been weakened, Assad is gone, and Lebanon has a pro-Western government with which it may be possible to reach a normalization agreement. But to seize the opportunity, Israel must choose between continuing a grueling, never-ending war or embracing a comprehensive strategic initiative to establish a new regional order. At this moment, Israel may be stronger and more secure militarily, but it is also isolated, divided, and lacking the clear vision needed to bring the longest war in its history to an end.



COHESION

6 The State of Israeli Cohesion: Between Crisis and Opportunity

Israel is enmeshed in a deep social and political crisis that has persisted for several years. A majority of the Israeli public (79%) is understandably concerned about the prevailing social situation. In JPPI's April 2025 Israeli Society Index survey, about a quarter (27%) of Israelis agreed with the assessment that Israel "is very close to civil war." A third (33%) felt the assessment was an exaggeration but still believed that "the danger is real." The overall sentiment expressed by the public is that of a desire to strengthen cohesion; at the same time, Israelis' willingness to compromise on their positions in order to reinforce cohesion has declined this year compared to last year. This state of affairs may result from the fading shock of the October 7 onslaught, which evinced, at least temporarily, a sense of unity in the face of a common external enemy.

The roots of the social crisis can be traced back to various times depending on one's perspective. The rise of the Netanyahu government in 2022 undoubtedly intensified the crisis. But its presence had been felt at least since the start of the period in which Israel underwent several repeated and closely spaced inconclusive election cycles (2018-2022). Myriad explanations address the deep underlying causes of this state of affairs, and there is a clear connection between the situation in Israel and similar developments in countries around the world. Polarization in Israeli society has been fueled by substantive and fundamental disagreements, including disputes over Israel's identity; interest-driven factionalism among diverse identity groups characterized by differing degrees of traditional practice and attitudes toward Western values. These social factions compete for influence and dominance via collective and personal identification with leaders and political parties, which is partly driven by cultural gaps rooted in education and income disparities. All this is, of course, amplified by social and mass media, which exploit a polarized version of reality for the sake of ratings and profits.

At the onset of the Israel-Hamas war in October 2023, there was reason to hope that the strength required to face the external enemy would enable a kind of social reboot. In this state of crisis, Israeli society tapped into deep reserves of commitment and solidarity, and a spirit of volunteerism and

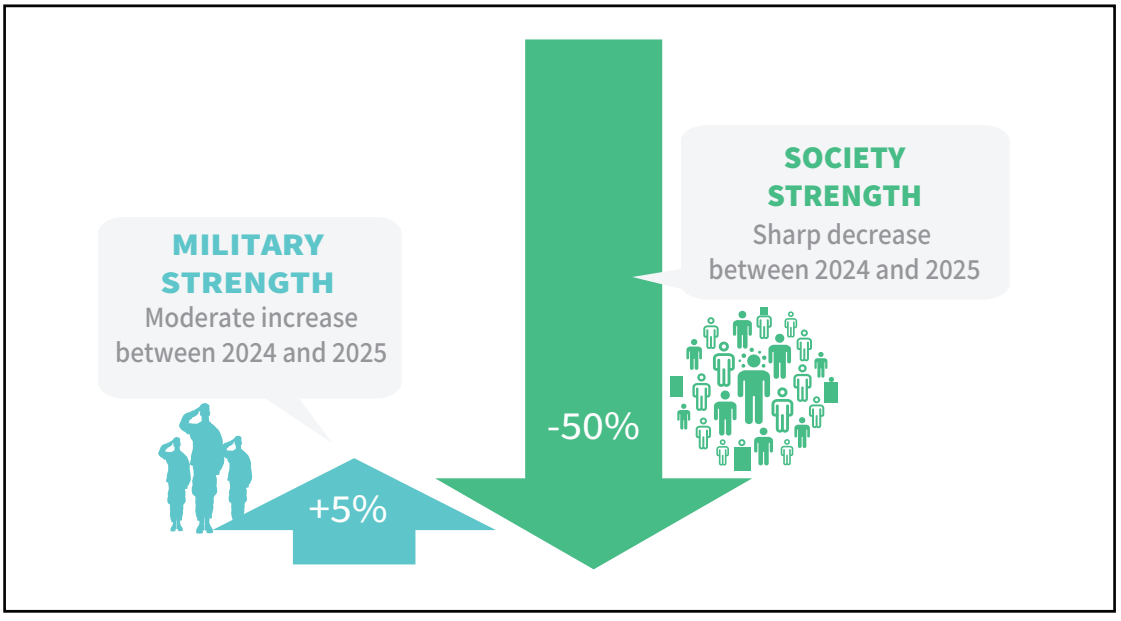
sacrifice. It is no coincidence that Israel ranks near the top of many international indices of personal and communal satisfaction. JPPI's July 2025 Israeli Society Index found that Jewish Israelis (though not Israel's Arab minority) have high levels of interpersonal trust, and especially trust in other Israelis of a similar ilk. Here, too, Israel is near the top of international rankings of interpersonal trust.

There is a broad Israeli consensus on many issues, however deep the ideological divide may appear to be – and at least some Israelis seem aware of this fact: In JPPI's July Israeli Society Index, 57% of respondents agreed ("completely" or "somewhat") with the statement: "On most important issues, most Israelis agree with each other." Some 61% of Jews agreed with this statement, as did a majority across ideological cohorts except the relatively small "left-wing" respondent group. Indeed, it is not hard to find areas where Israeli consensus exists. For example, a large majority of Jewish Israelis support the idea that Israel should be a Jewish state. A very large majority of Israelis, Jews and Arabs, attach importance to Israel being a democratic state. In both cases, there is also a majority of Israelis who interpret the terms "Jewish" and "democratic" in ways that reflect complexity (for instance, agreeing that a "democratic" state means a state characterized by both majority rule and the safeguarding of human rights).

Nevertheless, strong communal currents are not the same as overall social cohesion. Perhaps this is because Israelis tend to forget how widespread their agreement is and focus instead on issues where disputation prevails. As a result, Israeli society mobilized for the war as though there were no social crisis and allowed it to persist as though there were no war. In certain areas, the crisis may have even worsened due to the war, as the ideological confrontation between Israeli "camps" over the right path for the country to take became more acute in light of the great risks and sacrifices required for victory. Disagreements over certain issues not directly related to the war (such as the authority of the Supreme Court) have not abated, and new sharp disputes related to the war have emerged (who bears responsibility, under what conditions should the war end, what price should be paid for the hostages' return, and so on).

As noted, the social crisis stems from many sources and has implications across various spheres. This chapter examines three main aspects of the crisis and how they should be addressed. The first is the political dimension, and the implications of the crisis for Israel's next elections and the government that will be formed after. The second is Israel's handling of the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) challenge – especially the issue of military service for young Haredi men. Third and most important is the difficulty of stabilizing Israeli system of governance in a way that prevents recurring social crises. Regarding this last issue, JPPI is working on drafting an agreed-upon "thin constitution," whose urgency has become even more apparent this year than in previous years.

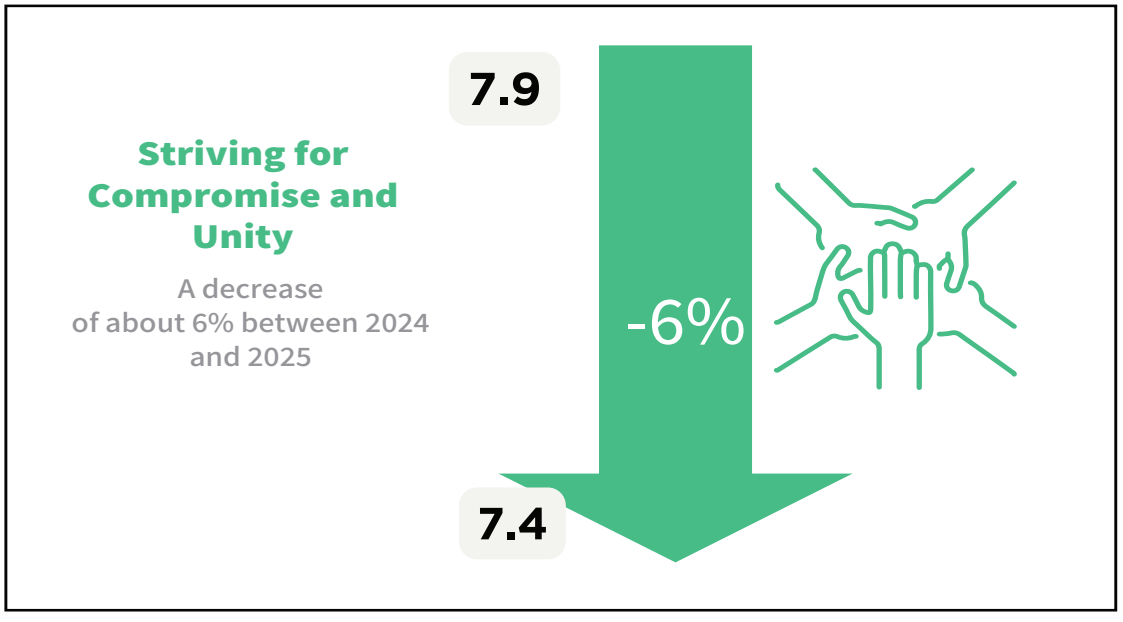
Israel Military and Society Strength (2024 – 2025)



Respondents were asked to rate the strength of Israel's society and military on a scale from -5 to 5. The numbers displayed here are the percentage changes from 2024 to 2025".

JPPI Israeli Society Index survey, January 2024 and January 2025

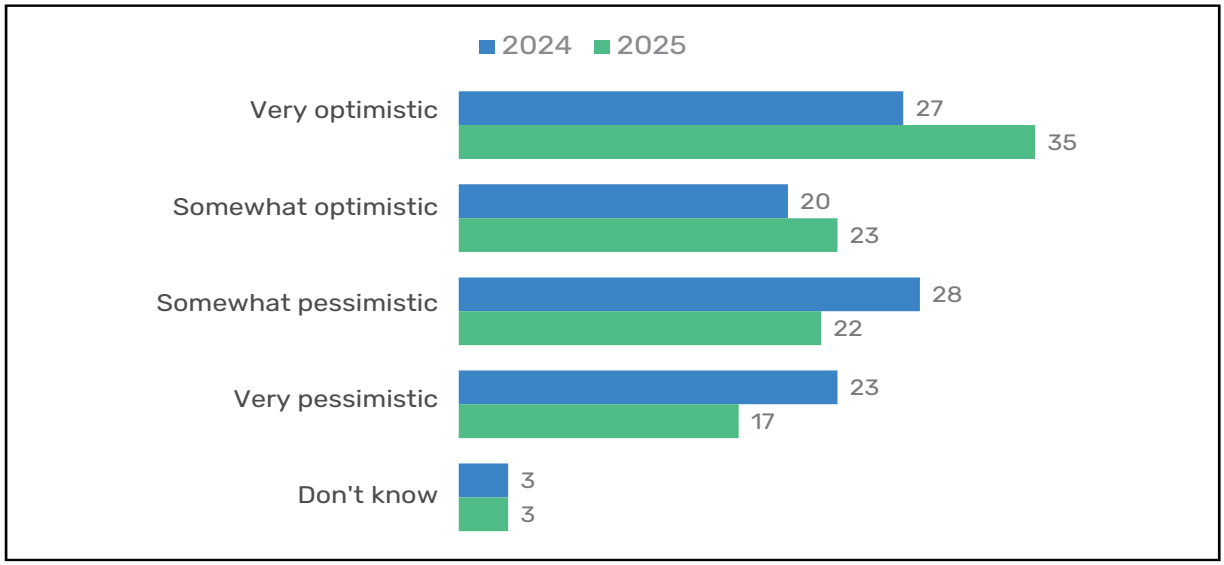
How important to you is striving for compromise and unity?



Respondents rated the level of importance on a scale from 0 to 10; figures show the change from 2024 to 2025

JPPI Israeli Society Index survey, June 2024 and June 2025

Optimism about Israel's Future (%)



JPPI Israeli Society Index survey, July 2024 and July 2025

The Political System: Fateful Elections

Israeli elections are currently scheduled for October 2026, which means they will come after the publication of JPPI's next Annual Assessment. However, within the political establishment, the expectation is that Knesset elections will be held during the coming year, bringing an end to one of the most turbulent and dramatic terms of any Israeli government.

The sitting government enjoys a fairly stable Knesset majority, having expanded to 68 seats. Nevertheless, it does not enjoy significant public trust. Indicators that have been assessing the government since the last elections show a large gap between the formal support its electoral victory demonstrated and the level of public support it has now. For most of its term, confidence in the government has hovered just above 30%. This figure emerged almost immediately after the government was established, coincident with the public outcry that erupted over its proposed "judicial reform" – and did not significantly change in the wake of the October 7 attack, or during the long months of war that followed. An uptick of public confidence in the government occurred only toward the summer of 2025, in the wake of the Iran campaign (Rising Lion). Yet even this shift left only a minority of Israelis reporting confidence in the government and the prime minister.

A situation in which a government operates with a stable parliamentary majority but does not enjoy public trust is far from ideal. It results in many governmental actions being perceived as contrary to the public's wishes. The government becomes frustrated by the lack of public support even when

achieving successes, while the public becomes increasingly frustrated that the parliamentary majority seems desensitized and indifferent to public sentiment. In many cases, the majority of the public believes that government actions are driven by the desire to preserve its parliamentary majority, rather than a commitment to improving the country's situation.

This fact was especially evident during the period of large-scale protests against the judicial reform, when polls repeatedly showed that the government lacked the support of most Israelis (including a share of the public that, in principle, did support some of the government's proposals, but opposed the way the government conducted itself and was concerned about the cost to Israeli society). This was replicated during the public debate over priorities in the prosecution of the Gaza war (put simply: whether it was more important to bring the hostages home or to topple Hamas). Here, too, the government took steps that most Israelis opposed. The gap between the government's positions and the views of most of the public is also, of course, highly conspicuous in the debate over the conscription of young Haredi men into the IDF. In this case, a coalition majority is working to enact arrangements not supported by a large majority of the public – while the public feels that these arrangements are motivated by a desire to maintain the parliamentary majority, even if this undermines the best interests of the state and of Israeli society.

Certainly, a government need not make all of its decisions based on public opinion, but it should define national objectives and strive to realize them even when it faces public opposition. Still, an ongoing gap between how the government conducts itself and public sentiment exacerbates societal tensions, makes it hard to debate important issues effectively, and undermines the overall stability of the political system. This situation is one of the reasons why a majority of the Israeli public has long been calling for early elections, and why a sizeable group of Israelis feel that the continuation of the current government under the conditions that have emerged – especially since the outbreak of the war – is illegitimate.

Against the backdrop of the tumultuous tenure of the current government, the grievous failure to prevent the October 7 attack, the deep social crisis, and the gravity of the issues on the national agenda, there is a widespread belief among the Israeli public that the next elections will be fateful for Israel in two interlinked respects:

1. Whether the election results will allow the formation of a government that enjoys the confidence and trust of a broader segment of the public, and that represents what can reasonably be considered as the majority view of Israelis on key national issues.

2. Whether, in the wake of the elections, it will be possible to gradually ease social tensions and to reduce polarization. Such outcomes are necessary for stabilizing the system; without them, the social crisis will likely intensify into a dangerous rupture. A reduction in tension

and polarization may also facilitate a codified regulatory apparatus for the Israeli political system that could prevent recurring crises of the kind Israel is now experiencing.

The Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) Challenge: A New Opportunity

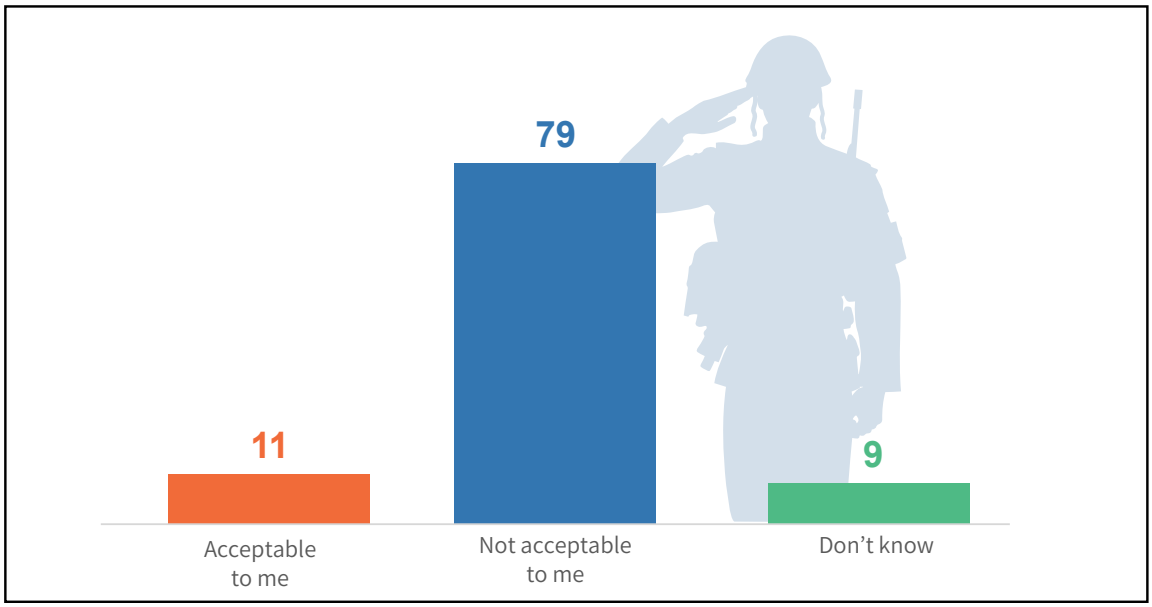
The summer of 2025 brought the controversy over the IDF conscription of Haredi youth back into sharp focus. The governing coalition sought to legislate a Haredi draft exemption capable of withstanding judicial review (Israel's Supreme Court struck down a different law two years earlier) and to block the imposition of economic sanctions on draft-eligible men who fail to enlist. At the same time, agreeing over legislation of this kind in wartime encountered difficulty, given the forceful and vocal opposition of hundreds of thousands of soldiers and their families to an arrangement that would perpetuate the IDF draft exemption for tens of thousands of Haredi men.

Most ultra-Orthodox Israelis: the war will not lead to greater Haredi integration into the broader Israeli society

The crisis ensued following two major developments. The first was a Supreme Court ruling that nullified the torato umanuto ("Torah study as profession") arrangement that had been in place in Israel. The second was the outbreak of the war and its heavy toll on Israeli society. In the war's early weeks, there was widespread hope and speculation that, given the severity of the security crisis, the Haredi community's attitude toward the IDF service obligation would shift. But no such shift occurred. The Haredi leadership did not budge from their oppositional stance to the conscription of a large majority of young yeshiva students. In December 2024, a broad JPPI survey of the Israeli society found that even the Haredi public itself had not changed its views. An overwhelming majority – 93% – objected to Haredi men being subject to the compulsory conscription that applies to Israel's other Jewish subgroups. Only 1% of Haredi respondents said that mandatory enlistment was acceptable to them. More than 85% of the ultra-Orthodox sector, across all its factions, opposed full Haredi military service.

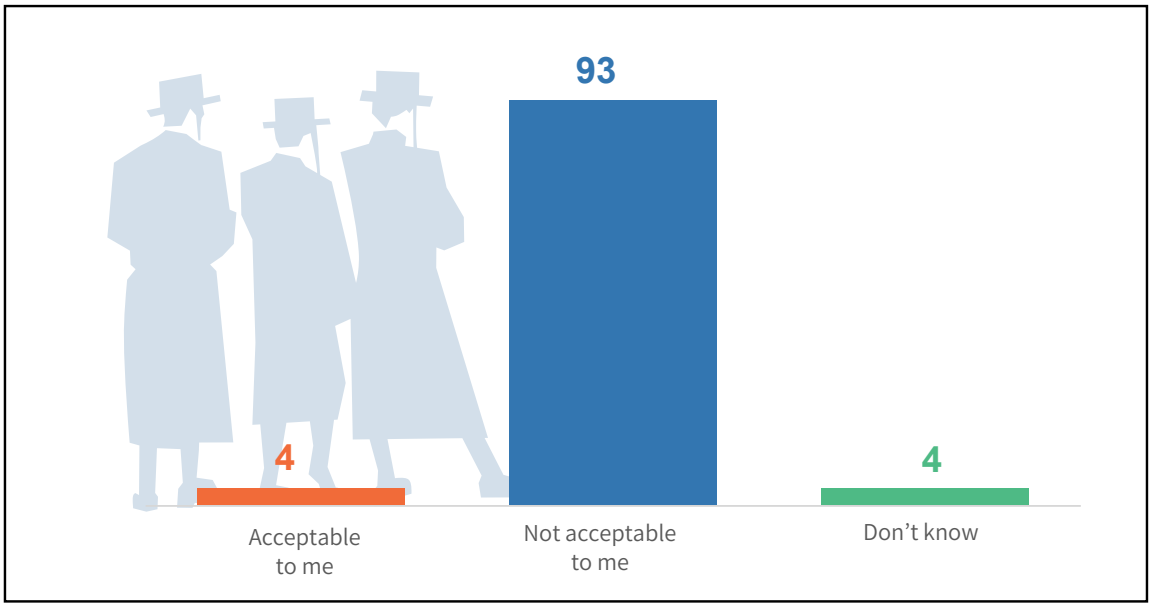
Further, 79% of the Haredi public opposed military service even in units tailored to their way of life. Civilian national service in Haredi frameworks, such as ZAKA and United Hatzalah, was also rejected. The Haredi public's confidence in the IDF senior command is very low, which fuels their refusal to serve in any security-related state framework. Most ultra-Orthodox Israelis feel that the war will not lead to greater Haredi integration into the broader Israeli society.

Full compulsory conscription of all young Haredim if they serve in units adapted to the Haredi way of life, is… (%)



JPPI Israeli Society Index survey, November 2024

Full compulsory conscription of all young Haredim, similar to conscription for the rest of the Jewish population, is… (%)



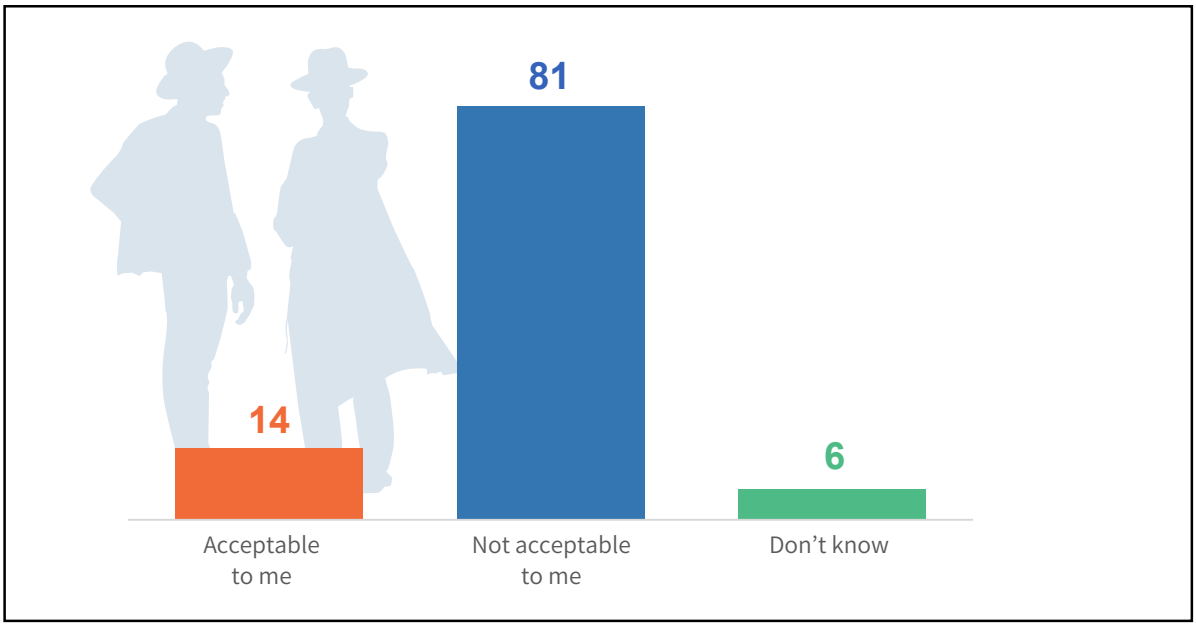
JPPI Israeli Society Index survey, November 2024

If the Knesset attempts to enact a law exempting young Haredi men from IDF service, which of the following options would you find most acceptable? (%)

	A law that would exempt Haredim from conscription, as was the practice until recently	A law that would exempt Haredim studying in yeshiva from conscription and draft those who do not regardless of how many there are	A law that would lead to the conscription of about a quarter of Haredim	A law that would lead to the conscription of about half of Haredim	A law that will lead to the conscription of most Haredim	A law that would lead to the conscription of all Haredim with a few exceptions	None of these/ don't know
Secular	0	19	2	4	22	50	4
Traditionalist (Masorti) non-religious	1	40	2	6	21	20	10
Traditionalist (Masorti) religious	5	33	7	2	21	24	7
Religious (Datiim)	2	36	2	8	21	23	7

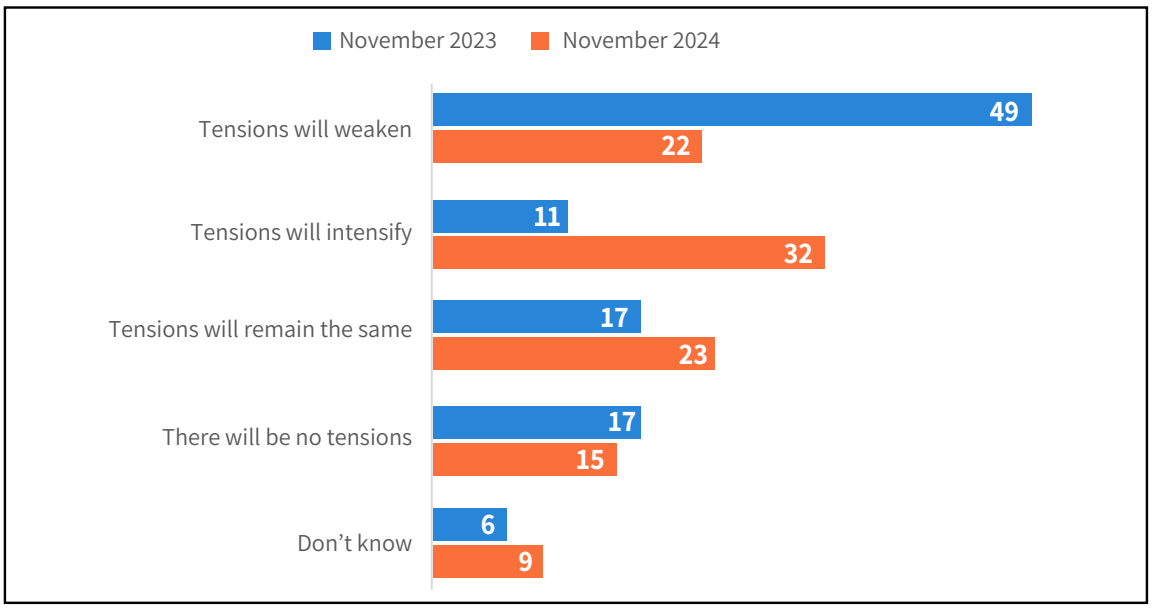
JPPI Israeli Society Index survey, June 2025

Conscription of the majority of young Haredim, if there is an exemption for a few thousand "prodigies" who would remain in yeshiva, is… (%)



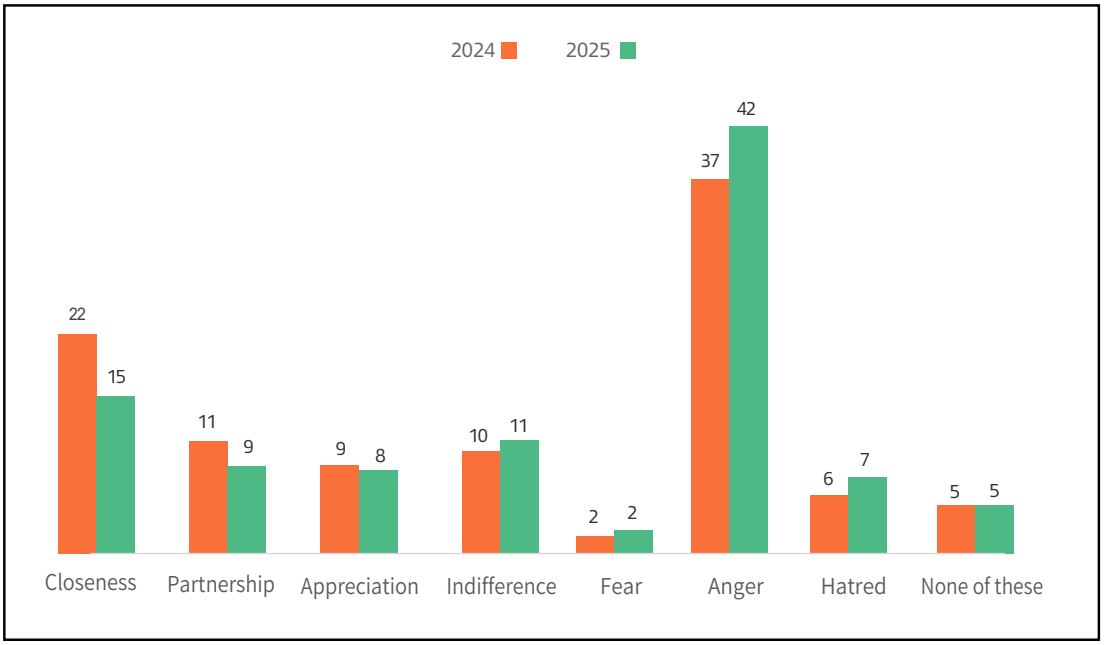
JPPI Israeli Society Index survey, November 2024

Before and during the war, there have been tensions between Haredi society and other groups in the population. Following the war, do you expect that... (%)



JPPI Israeli Society Index survey, November 2023 and November 2024

Jewish Sentiment toward the Ultra-Orthodox (%)



JPPI Israeli Society Index survey, February 2024 and February 2025

Demographics and Strategic Pressure

At the end of 2024, Israel's ultra-Orthodox numbered 1.39 million – 13.9% of the country's population. This group has the highest demographic growth rate in the West: 4% per year, compared to 1.4% among the general Jewish population. The Haredi fertility rate is high (6.4 children per woman) – and the community's population is therefore very young – half are under the age of 16. If these trends persist, in 2030 the ultra-Orthodox will constitute 16% of Israel's population, and in 2065 they will constitute 32% of the population, and 40% of all Jewish Israelis.

IDF representatives have, over the past year, repeatedly conveyed the army's immediate needs for maintaining national security. The IDF requires an additional 10,000 combat soldiers. Given the Haredi sector's rapid growth, and the large number of draft-eligible men who do not enlist, non-Haredi Israelis are forced to bear a heavy burden of regular service and reserve duty. Already today, there are some 15,000 young Haredi men in every conscription cycle – about 10% of each cycle. The number of 18-26-year-olds eligible for the exemption has surged to over 70,000. These figures are quickly rising at a time when the IDF and the State of Israel are working to significantly expand the military in order to prevent another October 7-style attack. As a result, the Haredi conscription debate has shifted from civic equality and burden sharing to urgent national security needs.

This explains the major shift in Israeli public opinion on Haredi conscription. While many Israelis once tolerated the inequality in security burden sharing and tended to believe that increasing the number of Haredi IDF recruits should be effectuated through dialogue and consensus, today the majority of Israelis are unable and unwilling to accept the status quo. And as the debate over Haredi conscription deepens, public awareness of other national challenges posed by the unique character of this community grows – particularly in the socioeconomic sphere. State budgets have provided substantial support for the Haredi way of life – men who do not work, schools that do not equip young people for the modern job market, and dependence on state transfer payments. In essence, the Haredi sector has been subsidized by the tax burden levied on non-Haredi Israelis, which in turn erodes the state's ability to improve or even maintain the level of services it provides to the Israeli citizenry writ large, in areas such as healthcare, education, and public-use infrastructure.

According to forecasts by economists and social scientists from across the ideological spectrum, if Israel continues along its current trajectory, its standard of living will be comparable to that of the Third World in just two or three decades. Public services will deteriorate, infrastructure will crumble, and it will be hard to maintain the costly and sophisticated security apparatus Israel needs to face military threats.

Since the Tal Law was enacted in 2002, which enabled the continuation of the Haredi draft exemption under certain conditions temporarily (to be revisited every five years), all Israeli

governments have tried, by various means, to address the issue of ultra-Orthodox conscription – without success. The Haredi leadership has consistently employed tactics of delay and symbolic compliance to maintain the status quo. Successive governing coalitions allowed this situation to persist in the interest of short-term political calculations. A 2017 Supreme Court ruling nullifying the Tal Law, but no meaningful change followed. For seven years, the Knesset failed to enact an alternative law, and the Supreme Court ultimately determined that in the absence of a valid law, there was no legal justification for maintaining the draft exemption or the continued state funding of yeshivas. The IDF began preparing to draft Haredi recruits – but without legislative backing, and in the face of repeated political obstruction, the effort yielded no meaningful results.

A Window of Opportunity

In the summer of 2025, an opportunity emerged to redefine relations between the state and the Haredi sector. The Haredi community understandably fears for its collective identity – a legitimate concern that should be addressed by designing specialized service frameworks that minimize contact between Haredi draftees and the IDF's "mainstream." In light of current circumstances, the Knesset must rise above short-term politics and recognize the strategic importance of the Haredi challenge and the opportunity to initiate a long-needed process to address that challenge.

A Thin Constitution: Regulation Without Illusions

David Ben-Gurion, the architect of the State of Israel, designed its governmental structure with considerable attention to the foundational elements necessary for its success under the circumstances of the time. But he and his contemporaries did not provide the constitutional underpinnings of the state. The Declaration of Independence promised that the State of Israel would establish a constitution almost immediately, but this was not done. Historians of the era have concluded that Ben-Gurion deliberately refrained from establishing a constitution out of the – correct – understanding that a constitutional system would erode his power as prime minister, something he sought to prevent.

Nations typically establish constitutions when a "constitutional moment" has arrived – a unique time in the life of a nation, when most of its people and their representatives prioritize the collective interest over the interests of individual identity groups. Experience shows that such moments usually occur at a nation's founding or in response to dramatic – often tragic – events that lead to a broad realization of the need to act for the sake of the common good. Ben-Gurion chose not to take advantage of the constitutional moment that attended Israel's founding. In place of a constitution, Israel relies on 13 "Basic Laws," which are not a true constitution, both because they only address a narrow range of constitutional issues, and because they are not "entrenched" – meaning a simple Knesset majority can amend or repeal

them at will. Over the years, many attempts have been made, inside and outside the Knesset, to rectify the situation and provide Israel with a full, entrenched constitutional text. But these initiatives all failed, apparently because Israel had not yet reached the requisite constitutional moment.

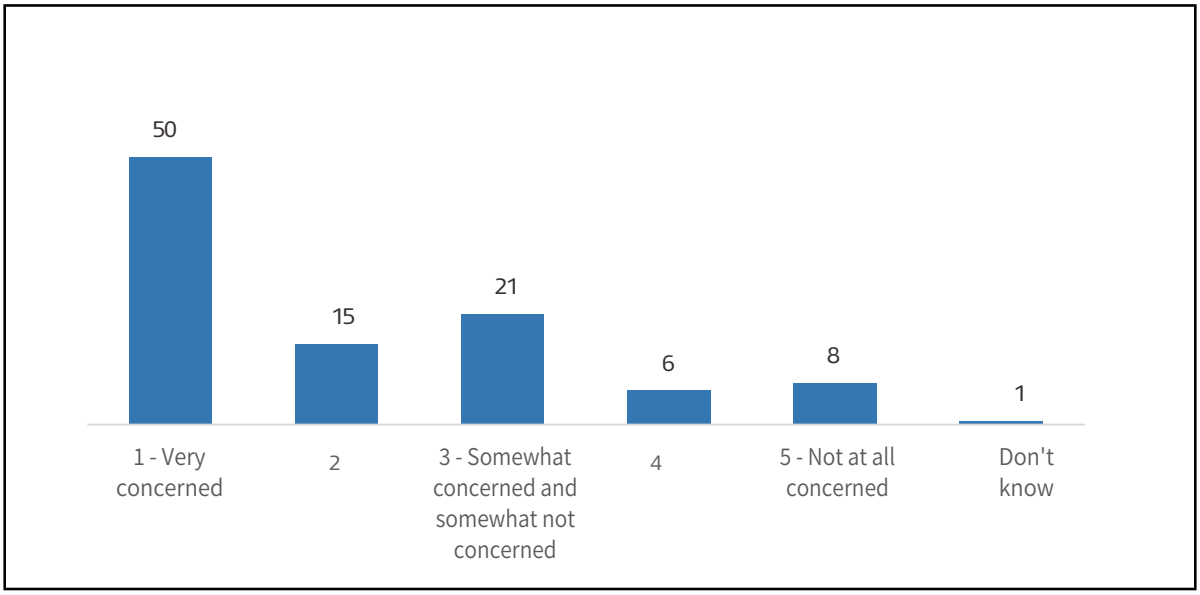
Has the current crisis brought us to such a moment? Should we attempt yet another effort to establish a constitution during the present crisis? The Jewish People Policy Institute offers a cautiously affirmative answer.

We should distinguish between two types of constitution:

The first, more common type, is the **"full constitution."** A full constitution usually has three parts: (A) an identity section that defines the character of the state; (B) a rights section, including a bill of human rights; and (C) a governmental section that regulates the activity of the branches of government and the relationships among them.

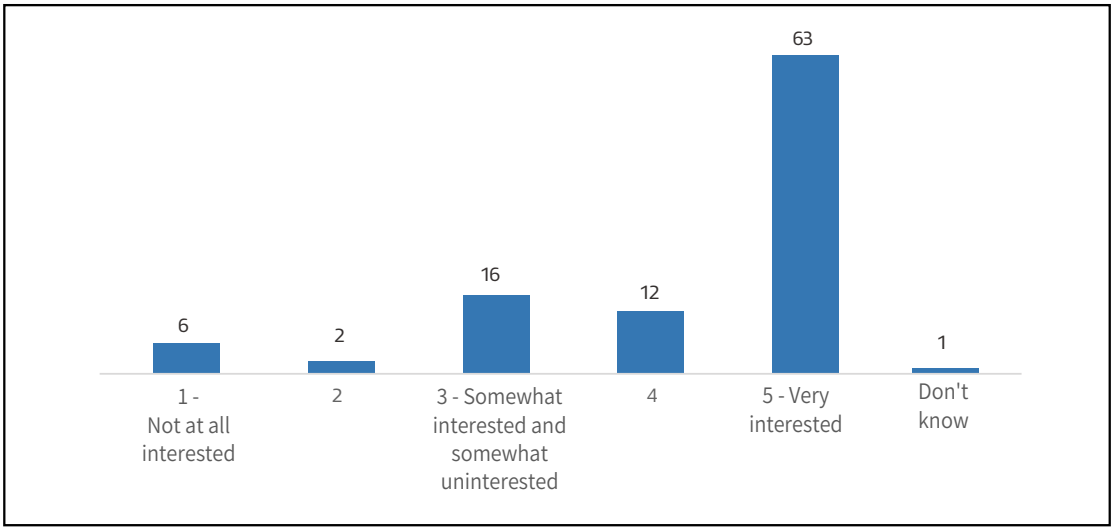
The second type of constitution, which is less common (though it does exist – in Australia, for instance), is the **"thin constitution."** A thin constitution regulates the powers and functioning of government authorities and sets the rules of the political game – it is governance-related rather than ideological or rights-based and does not include an identity component or a bill of human rights.

In general, to what extent are you concerned or not concerned about the social situation in Israel? (Israelis, %)



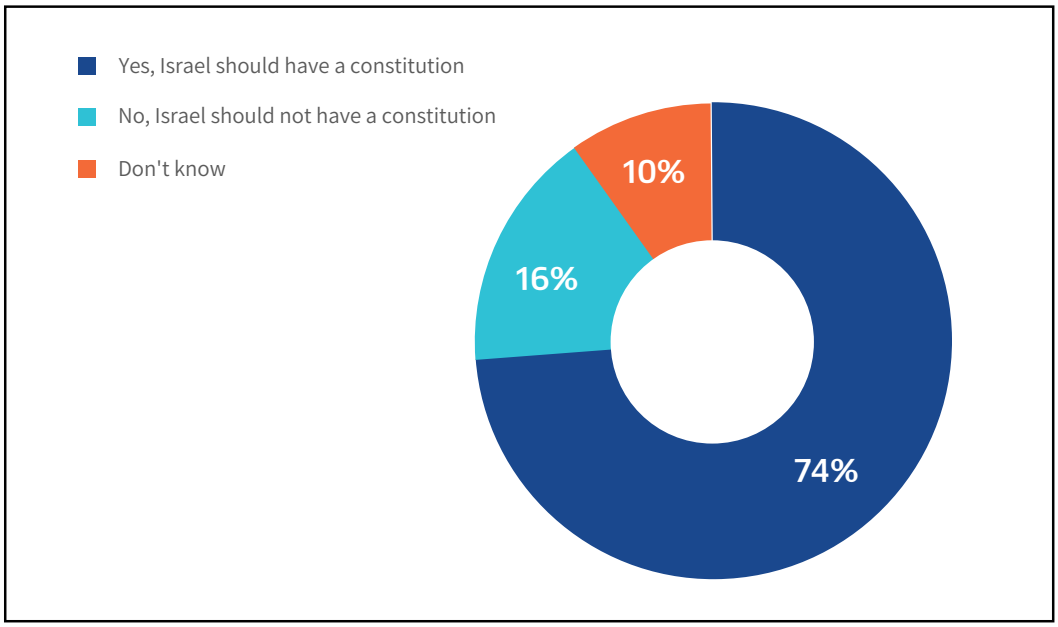
JPPI Thin Constitution Survey, April 2025

To what extent are you interested or not interested in the issue of Israel's political structure (meaning, things like the system of government, separation of powers, judicial review)? (Israelis, %)



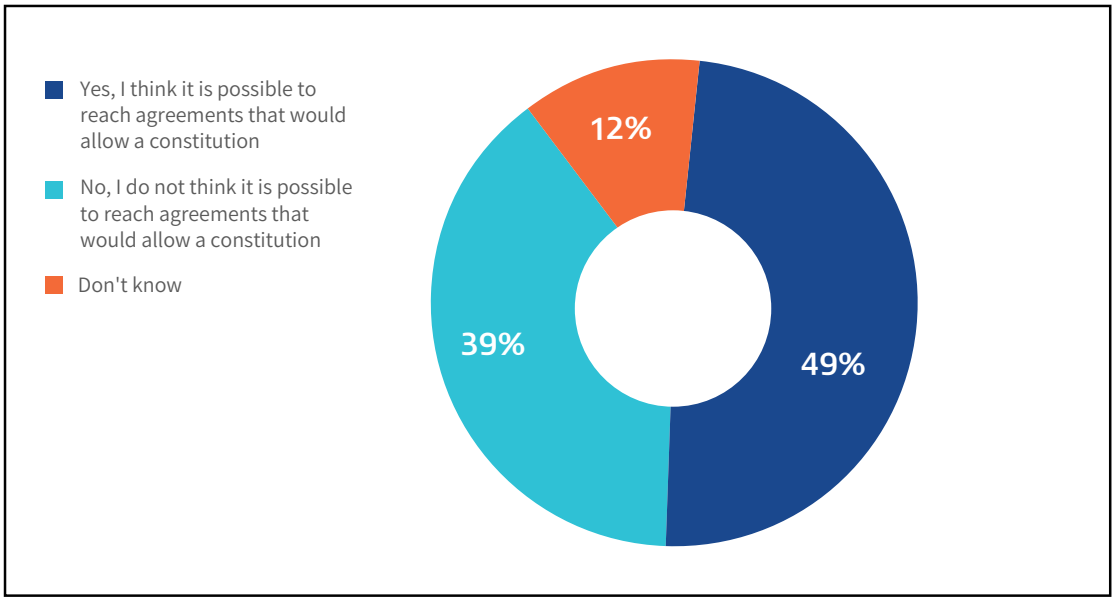
JPPI Thin Constitution Survey, April 2025

In general, do you think Israel should have a constitution (meaning a permanent constitution, beyond the Basic Laws that can be changed in the Knesset by a simple majority)? (%)



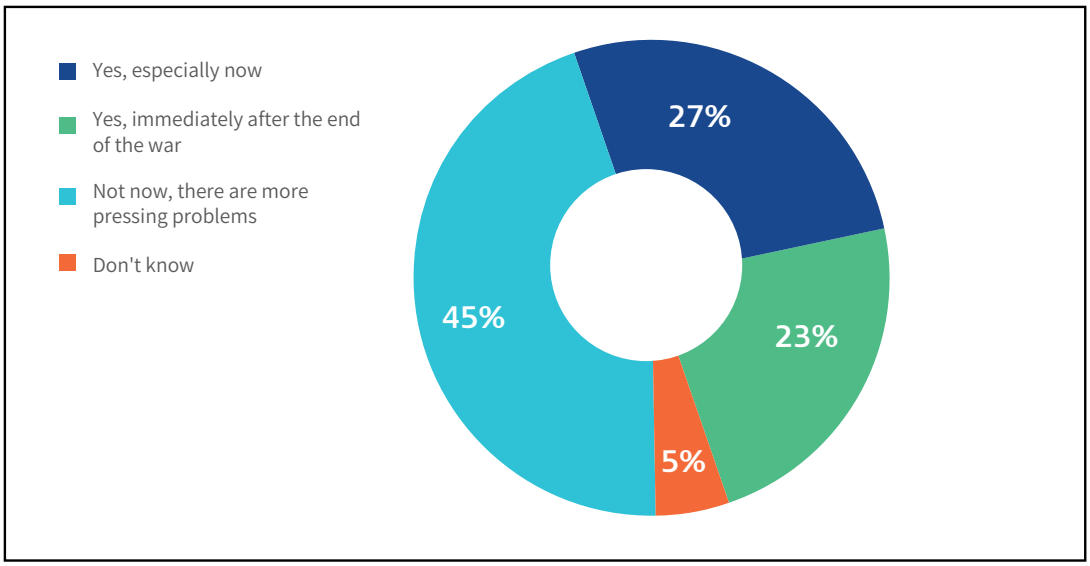
JPPI Thin Constitution Survey, April 2025

Do you think it is possible to reach agreements that would allow Israel to have a constitution? (%)



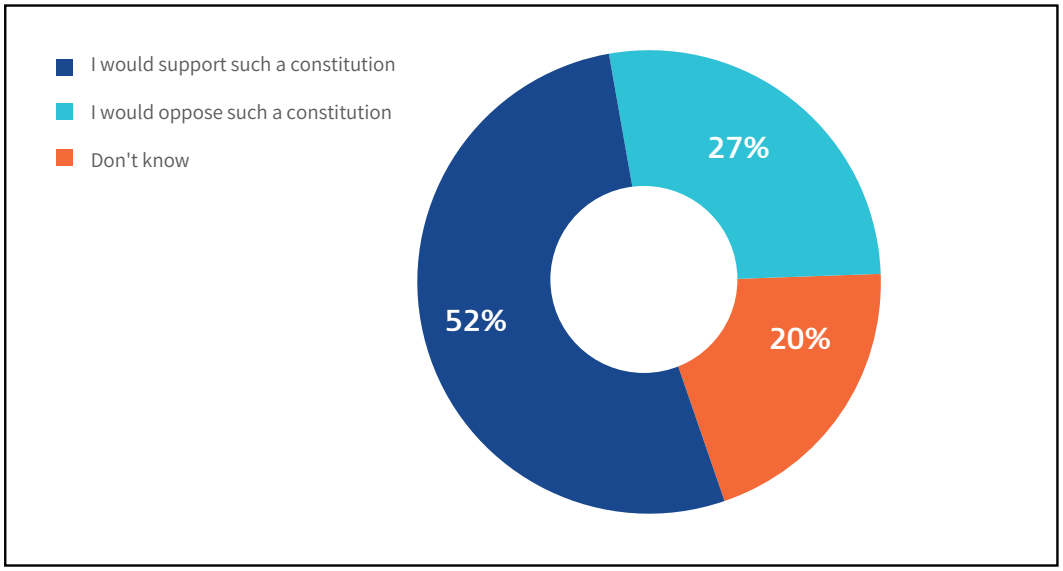
JPPI Thin Constitution Survey, April 2025

Do you think now is a suitable time for a public debate on a constitution? (%)



JPPI Thin Constitution Survey, April 2025

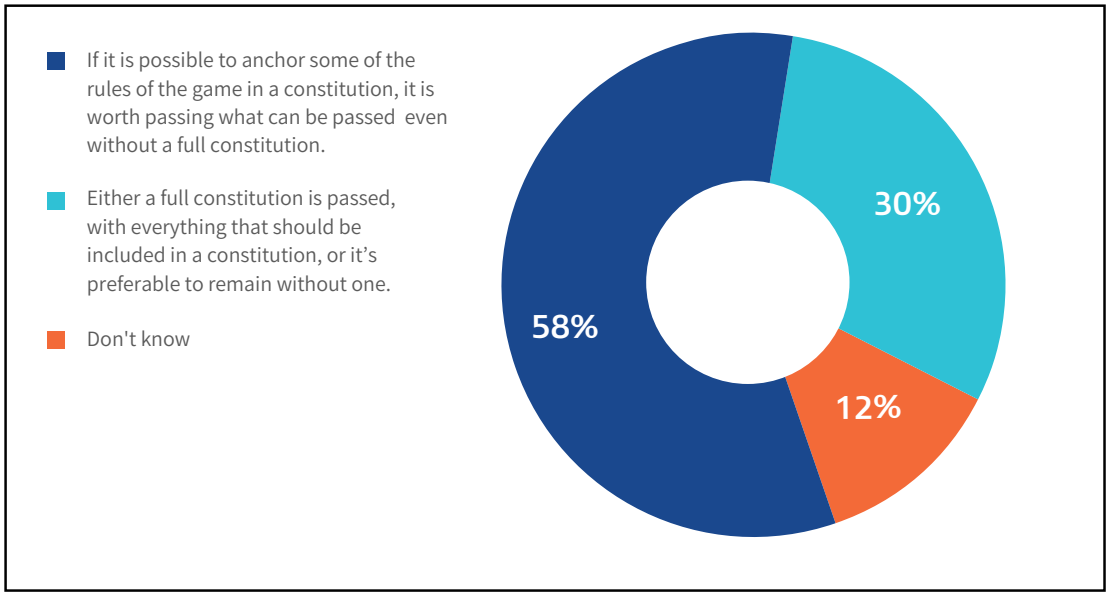
Would you support or oppose passing a constitution that only contained these articles?* (%)



***Such a constitution would include rules to protect basic human rights, regulate the powers of the government, define the authority of the judiciary, anchor the fact that Israel is a Jewish state, regulate the status of religion in the country, regulate the powers of the Knesset, establish full equality among all citizens, and codify how elections are conducted and representatives are chosen.**

JPPI Thin Constitution Survey, April 2025

Here are two statements. Please mark which one is closer to your position (even if it is not exactly the same) (%)



JPPI Thin Constitution Survey, April 2025

As explained below, contemporary Israel lacks the feasibility of broad consensus regarding the state's identity and its commitment to a detailed bill of human rights – as normative for a full constitution. However, in JPPI's view, there is the potential for agreement on regulating the governmental framework of the national system. This would represent a modest constitutional arrangement – hence the term "thin constitution."

The Israeli Context

In the state's early years, efforts were made to suppress disputes between different segments of Israeli society. The hegemonic group sought to shape Israeli identity with a social "melting pot" approach. Even after the fire under the melting pot cooled, Israel continued, for decades, to operate as a "consensual democracy" in which, despite the existence of disputes, the country's central ethos was broadly accepted by most citizens. Due to the urgency of other issues, foundational questions were pushed aside, chiefly the **tension between** Israel's particularistic Jewish character and its universalist-democratic character.

In recent decades, however, the identity-based rift between different social groups in Israel has been a basic fact of life that can no longer be ignored. Consensual democracy has been replaced by a "crisis democracy," where identity politics dominate the main axes of disagreement, based on religion, national lineage, ethnicity, and even geographic location. The fissures in Israeli society have proven chronic and hard to bridge. Israel has found itself in a culture war.

Social tensions dangerously erupted in the wake of the November 2022 elections, when the Minister of Justice Yariv Levin announced a judicial reform that some regarded as a "coup," fearing that its goal was to settle the culture war in favor of certain of the country's identity groups – those that form the current coalition.

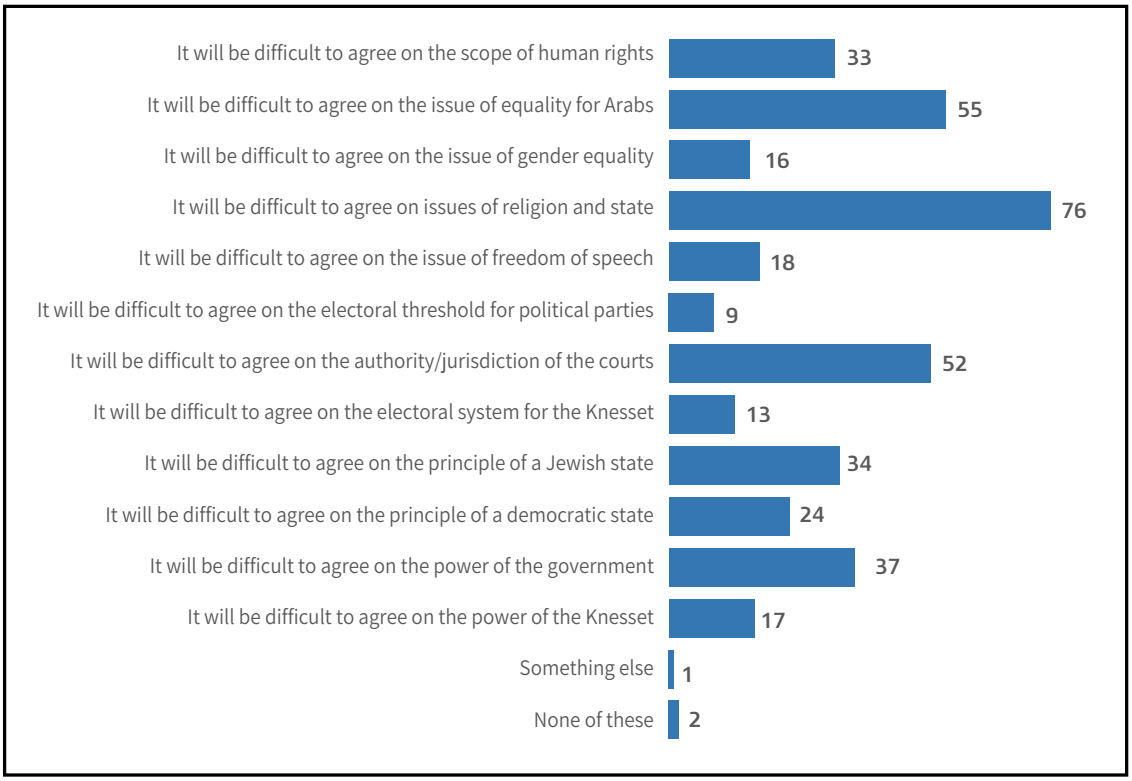
The far-reaching principles of Levin's proposal, and the aggressive manner in which it was promoted, led to a crisis. As mentioned earlier, the Israel-Hamas war that erupted in October 2023 refocused national attention, for a time, on security issues, but the fundamental questions regarding Israel's governance still loom in the background and threaten to erupt once again into a full-fledged crisis.

Proposals for Addressing the Crisis

The fear of a decisive outcome in the culture war – one that would result in the defeat of certain identity groups – has fueled a public debate that has generated various proposals for addressing the crisis.

Some advocate for the establishment of a full constitution. They aim to create a "new social order" anchored in a binding and entrenched constitutional document. Such a constitution would define the nature of the Israeli partnership for generations to come. It would ensure that fringe groups seeking to amplify the state's Jewish-tribal identity (in its religious and/or national form) or its universalist identity (diluting the nation-state's particularist character) would be prevented from achieving their aims. A full constitution, defining

Whether you support or oppose a constitution, which of the following do you think would be the main challenge to passing one? (You can mark up to 5 issues that you think are the most important) (%)



JPPI Thin Constitution Survey, April 2025

the state's identity and ensuring human rights and equality, would draw boundaries for how far radical forces could push their desired change.

Others have proposed different models, including the establishment of a federation. According to this idea, Israel would be reshaped as a system of autonomies, each tailored to one identity group. These autonomous units would cooperate within a federative framework. Each group would manage its affairs according to its preferences in predefined areas, and bear responsibility for its own decisions. This vision would have the Israeli partnership reduced to the minimum necessities, such as collective defense against external threats, without requiring values-based national consensus.

These two proposals represent opposite strategies for responding to Israel's culture war. A full constitution seeks to consolidate society under a shared framework, while the cantonal approach seeks to acknowledge and institutionalize

separation. One is in the spirit of, "All Israel are brothers," while the other espouses, "Each to their own tent, O Israel." Still, the proposals have one thing in common: both are highly impractical, and efforts to implement either of them could further inflame the national crisis.

A full constitution is a noble ideal. But amid deep polarization and essential disagreement over the state's identity, it is hard to envision broad Israeli agreement on such a document. Pursuing this as a political goal could aggravate the social system and push it to a boiling point.

Cantonization, on the other hand, is a bad idea. It would give normative backing and political/institutional legitimacy to Israel's identity-based division. Instead of managing conflict, it would intensify and institutionalize it. If Israel were to become a "state of all its tribes," we may assume that the centrifugal forces currently pulling identity groups away from one another would accelerate dramatically. The utopian hope of all the tribes living peacefully side by side under autonomous conditions would shatter in a reality where each tribe is organized independently and legally backed. The resulting competition over control, influence, and ideological narrative would only fortify and extend the barriers already separating Israeli identity groups – ultimately crippling their ability to cooperate in achieving broad national objectives.

Instead of aiming for either a full, unifying constitution or a disuniting cantonization, we ought to work toward a modest but relatively feasible solution: a "thin constitution."

The Procedural Option

Some of the irrelevant issues are already addressed in existing (some good, some less so) Basic Laws, while other critical issues, such as the legislative process, judicial review, the procedure for appointing judges, and the Supreme Court's powers – are governed by "ordinary" legislation. However, both approaches (i.e., Israel's entire governmental-political framework) are on shaky legal ground. Basic Laws can be enacted and amended with a simple Knesset majority, just like ordinary laws, with no special procedural requirements. This is a serious flaw, which puts Israeli democracy on a slippery slope. What is supposed to function as Israel's de facto constitution is effectively "clay in the hands of the potter" – the Knesset. Basic Laws are easy prey for the whims of any governing coalition that aims to impose sweeping changes – from attenuating the Supreme Court's authority to limiting the voting rights of certain citizens, to altering the Jewish or democratic character of the state.

Although in recent years the Supreme Court asserted its authority to conduct judicial review of Basic Laws, this was done with the slimmest possible majority, which no longer exists since the panel of justices changed in the past year. If the argument that the Supreme Court lacks a sufficient source of authority to conduct judicial review gains traction (as it likely will), there will be no legal obstacle to a Knesset majority determined to transform Israel at will.

This is not a theoretical concern. All recent Israeli prime ministers, from across the political

spectrum, chose to amend the Basic Laws for the sake of their immediate political interests (see also: "rotation government"). Just in the past decade, the Knesset has introduced more modifications to Basic Laws than all the amendments made to the U.S. Constitution since its enactment in 1789. We are treading on thin ice, with no assurance that our political reality will not shift dramatically as a result of a partisan maneuver. The consequences include instability in our public life, intense clashes between the governmental authorities, erosion of public trust in institutions, deepening social polarization that brings the country to the brink of civil war, and an overall diminution of Israeli democracy.

Outside of Israel, in every constitutional democracy, the rules of the game cannot be changed so casually as to only require a simple majority. Due to their importance, the rules are codified in entrenched constitutions, and their modification is subject to strict requirements – e.g., a parliamentary supermajority; approval (in bicameral legislatures) by both legislative houses; approval (in federations) by all or most member states; public referenda; or other stringent means. Further, most countries adhere to a constitutional culture that discourages changing foundational rules for momentary political convenience.

Thin Constitution – A Viable Option

Israel's social and ideological divides prevent a resolution of the ongoing culture war. However, it does not prevent us from adopting a thin constitution that would provide a stable and agreed-upon framework for managing our disputes.

There is a realistic chance that a broad consensus – say, 75 Knesset members – can be reached on the terms of a thin constitution, precisely because it avoids the values-laden issues at the heart of the culture war.

Currently, the Knesset is perceived as more attuned to the Jewish character of the state, while the judiciary is regarded as more attuned to the state's liberal values. This is why the present (non-liberal) coalition seeks to transfer the judiciary's powers to the political branches. But this is a shortsighted calculation, as today's political conditions are not immutable.

No one can predict who will win the next round of elections or form the next governing coalition. Therefore, all sides have an interest in optimally stabilizing the system, from a collective perspective, since any camp could potentially find itself in the opposition. Rules of the game entrenched in a thin constitution would protect each side.

This is also the case regarding the composition of the Supreme Court. While most of its justices were once classified as liberal, the balance of power is now changing, with half of the bench considered conservative. If the current method for selecting the Supreme Court's chief justice remains unchanged, in a few years a conservative judge will head that august body. A relevant analogy can be seen in the U.S. Supreme Court, which has transformed dramatically in recent years to

become a stronghold of American conservatism. There is no reason to assume that something of the kind could not occur in Israel.

This uncertainty offers an excellent basis for reaching contemporary constitutional agreements on entrenched rules of the game free of a priori ideological preferences. Behind a "veil of ignorance," to use John Rawls's term, the issue of separation of powers and the complex dynamics between the branches bears no relation to the views of the opposing parties in the culture war. It would benefit everyone, across the political and cultural divides, if entrenched rules of the game were entrenched to properly balance government authorities. We all have a common interest in shoring up the institutional structures of governance, which will serve as a safe harbor when we inevitably find ourselves in the minority.

It is important to note that even a full constitution is "only" a social document. It cannot in and of itself, dictate social outcomes for a society unwilling to accept the agreements and values enshrined within it. Yet, despite its limitations, there is no better instrument in the democratic toolbox for regulating governance than a constitution.

That said, insisting on a full constitution that is unattainable at this time could prove dangerous. Those who demand "all or nothing" risk forfeiting the option of a thin constitution: a modest option relative to what is desirable, but an ambitious one relative to the current situation. A thin constitution would define, for generations, the rules of the game for sane conduct in an era of polarization, in the midst of a culture war, without descending into civil war.

In line with this assessment, JPPI has invested considerable effort over the past two years in formulating a thin constitution to represent a broad consensus. This work is set to conclude in late 2025 and will be presented as a foundation for constitutional agreements on entrenched rules of the game free from ideological bias.

Conclusion

The past three years have been emotionally, economically, and militarily difficult for Israelis. Nevertheless, the convergence of crises – in the political, social, and security spheres –also presents a rare opportunity to fundamentally change a number of entrenched norms. Just as Israel must now reassess its military structure, budget, size, and mission scope, it must also tackle the non-military domestic challenges that vex it as a society and threaten its internal cohesion are no less grave than external threats. Reevaluating Israel's coalition framework, revisiting its constitutional structure, and addressing its daunting social challenges, most notably the Haredi question, are equally critical for Israel's renewal and its emergence from crisis.



DEMOGRAPHY

7 Immigration to Israel Post-October 7

For Israel, immigration, or ***aliyah*** (ascent), is a central pillar of Zionism and a governmental and budgetary priority. Conversely, emigration, traditionally termed ***yerida*** (descent), has been a cause for national concern, with leaders from Ben-Gurion to Rabin expressing themselves in the strongest terms on the issue. The significance of migration is particularly apparent in times of war. Streams of Israelis rushing to return home in wartime are taken as a sign of national solidarity, while emigration due to ongoing conflict makes the headlines.

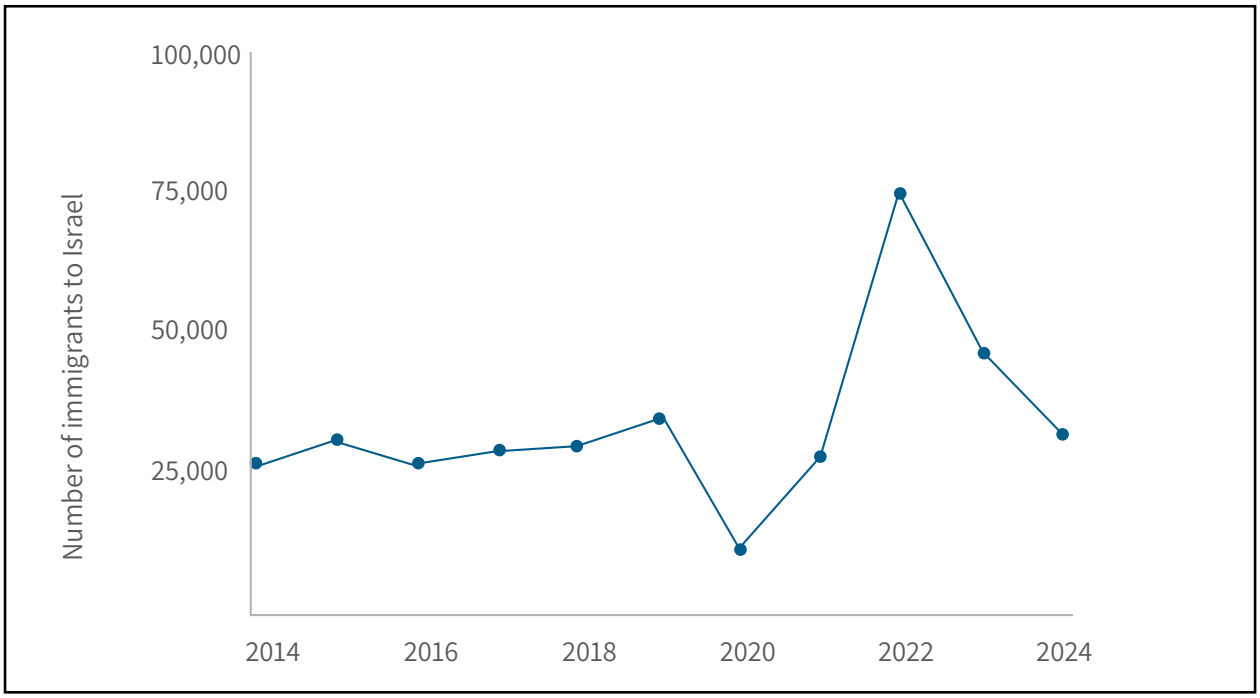
Israel's history has been shaped by immigration, both in the pre- and post-state eras. Notwithstanding the national narrative, the timing and flow of migration into Israel has been primarily determined by push factors in the country of origin, rather than developments in Israel. Most recently, this effect has been seen in the sharp rise in the number of immigrants from Ukraine in the wake of its war with Russia. However, over the years, there have been smaller increases in the aliyah rate, such as following the Six-Day War, prompted by events inside Israel.

The Current Conflict and Immigration to Israel

This chapter analyzes the impact of the current conflict on rates of immigration to Israel. Has there been an increase in immigration to Israel following the outbreak of hostilities on October 7, or is Israel now perceived as too dangerous, resulting in lower immigration rates? Emigration from Israel is much harder to measure with any degree of accuracy, as it does not require an official change of status and, therefore, will not be included in this analysis.

An initial look at the overall number of new immigrants arriving in Israel in the last few years would suggest that the war that ensued after the events of October 7 had a huge negative impact on immigration. The number of immigrants halved between 2022 and 2024. In 2024, only 32,161 immigrants came to live in Israel, compared to 46,590 in 2023 (the year war broke out) and 74,474 in 2022. However, on closer inspection, it becomes clear that the war was not the determining factor of this admittedly dramatic drop, as most of the decline occurred before the war broke out

Immigration to Israel 2014-2024

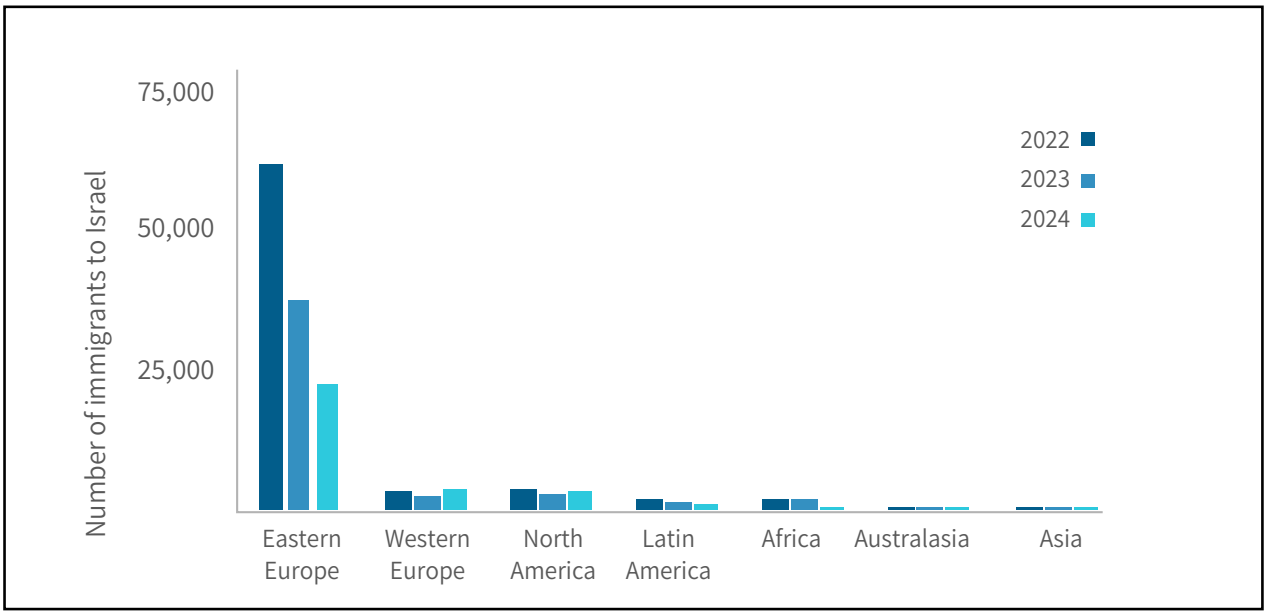


in October 2023. In fact, the high immigration numbers of 2022 and 2023 are the true outliers; the 2024 figures are closer to the average for the last decade. These higher numbers are likely due to a combination of post-pandemic effects and the Russia-Ukraine war.

Looking more closely at the data by immigrants' region of origin is more instructive. By far the largest number of immigrants in the period 2022-24 came from Eastern Europe, specifically Russia and Ukraine. Shifting migration patterns among this group are primarily responsible for the changes illustrated in the graph of overall migration rates. Fluctuations in migration are more attributable to developments in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war than to events in Israel. Further, the data indicate that migration patterns to Israel vary significantly by region, each of which must be analyzed separately to isolate the effects of the Israel-Hamas war on migration to Israel.

As the graph shows, the pattern found for migration from Eastern Europe is not replicated in Western Europe and North America, where there was a decline in migration to Israel in 2023, but levels recovered or even outpaced the 2022 rate in 2024. This may be the result of planned migration from the last few months of 2023 being delayed until 2024 or from a shift in migration patterns. Closer inspection of migration data will show which it is.

Immigration to Israel by Year and Region of Origin



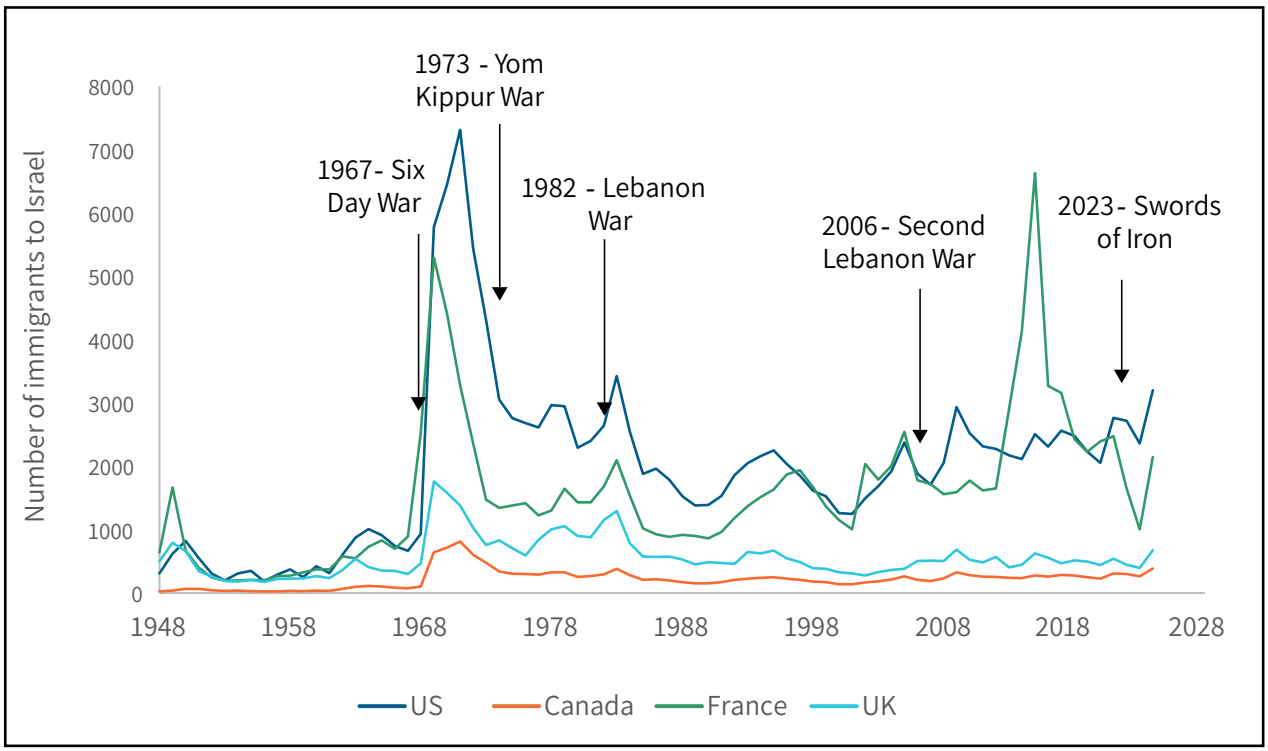
Immigration from Latin America and Africa followed a pattern similar to that of Eastern Europe, declining in 2024 and in some cases also in 2023. It appears that the war deterred migration only among those seeking to improve their quality of life. Thus, immigration from Western Europe and North America recovered quickly as the migration calculus was not affected by the war because their impetus for moving to Israel was not to improve living standards. However, for those in Africa and Latin America, it appears that Israel has become a less attractive destination due to the conflict. Migration from Eastern Europe may have been affected by similar concerns but seems mostly determined by developments in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

War and Migration to Israel

There are precedents for increased migration to Israel from Western Europe and North America after a war. The most marked and well-known example of this is the sharp increase of migration to Israel from Western countries in the years following the Six-Day War. This pattern was repeated after the Lebanon War in 1982, but not after the Yom Kippur War or the Second Lebanon War.

There was a clear increase in migration from the United States, Canada, France, and the UK following the outbreak of the current conflict. Not only are these countries representative of trends in Jewish communities in Western Europe, they are home to the four largest concentrations of Jews outside of Israel and together constitute almost

The impact of war in Israel on migration from Western countries

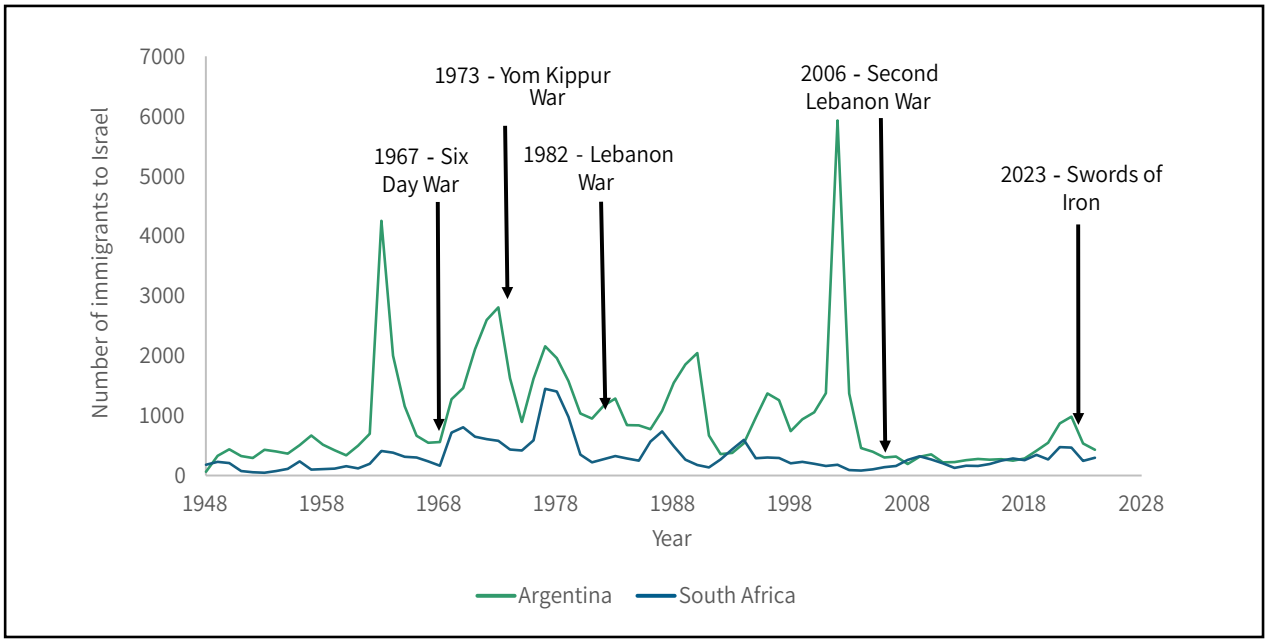


nine-tenths of the Jewish Diaspora population.

The response to the post-October 7 conflict is an increased desire to live in Israel. As in the past, when Israel faces acute danger, some Jews in Western countries feel the need to uproot themselves and move to Israel. It may also be that the spike in antisemitism in the aftermath of the October 7 attacks led many to reconsider their place in their home societies and decide to relocate to Israel. Certainly, it appears that the uptick in migration to Israel is greatest for France, the community that has traditionally seen sharp increases in aliyah rates due to the increasing incidence of antisemitism.

The relationship between war in Israel and migration to Israel from other regions looks quite different. War in Israel does not have a sharp positive impact on their migration rates. There are signs of increased immigration after the Six-Day War, although this effect is somewhat delayed and so may be attributable to other causes. There was a small increase in migration to Israel from South Africa in 2024, which may be due to the war or may just be indicative of the kind of fluctuation seen every year, whereas Argentina saw fewer people move to Israel in 2024 than in the previous year. Migration flows appear to be primarily determined by local events and the desire to leave their own country, rather than by a sense of heightened solidarity as a result of the outbreak of war in Israel.

War does not have the same effect on migration to Israel from non-Western countries



Eastern European countries are not included in this graph as for most of the period, emigration was tightly restricted by the authorities. Data from the last two years suggest that the current conflict has decreased migration across Eastern Europe, except for more affluent states such as Czechia and Lithuania. This reinforces the notion that for those living in countries with a strong economy and a high standard of living, migration to Israel is not motivated by the desire for a better life that characterizes much of global migration patterns. Rather, it is generally a result of ideological motivations that lead people to want to live in Israel, although it may also be a response to antisemitic sentiment in their home country.

The decrease in migration to Israel from Argentina in 2024 is mirrored across Latin America. Previous research has documented the alignment of peaks in immigration from Argentina with periods of economic instability, providing further support for the notion that migration from the region is primarily economic in motivation, although the choice of Israel as a destination may be influenced by ideological as well as practical concerns, such as ease of gaining citizenship and generous economic benefits for immigrants. As South Africa is by far the largest Jewish community in Africa, it is hard to generalize trends across the continent. For instance, Ethiopia contains the other large concentration of Jews in Africa, but rates of migration to Israel reflect Israeli governmental policy, rather than the preferences of individual Ethiopian Jews. However, the general trend of reduced migration to Israel after October 7 can be seen across Latin America, the Former Soviet

Union, South Africa, and the poorer East European states, in sharp contrast to trends for North America, more affluent European countries, and Australia, where migration to Israel increased.

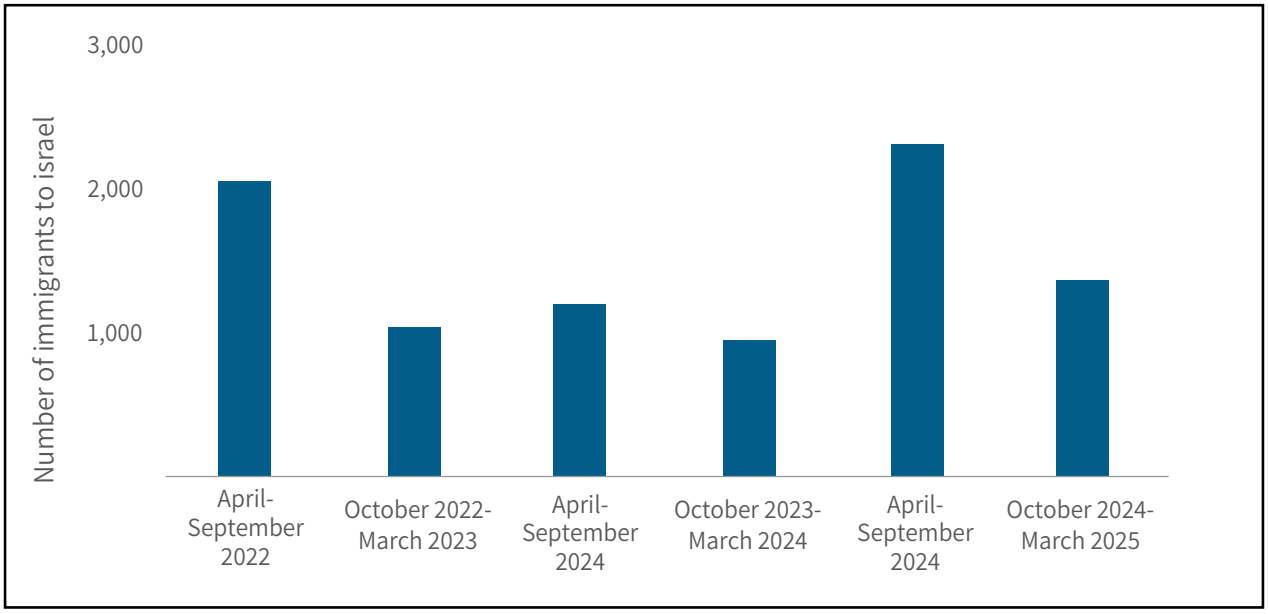
In sum, migration to Israel from affluent countries is generally ideologically motivated, rather than by a desire to improve standard of living and avoid crises and conflicts. Therefore, war in Israel increases immigration to Israel. However, immigration from Latin America, Africa, and much of Eastern Europe appears to be primarily driven by a desire to escape difficult economic and security conditions. As a result, conflict in Israel has a negative effect on the aliyah rate from these regions.

Delayed Migration

Focusing more narrowly on migration from Western Europe and North America, it is possible that the apparent increase in migration to Israel after October 7 is really just delayed migration, i.e., people who planned to move to Israel in the last few months of 2023 but postponed their aliyah and arrived in 2024. Is the impact of the war limited to the timing of migration to Israel from the West, or does it reflect a real increase in response to events in Israel?

Given that war broke out in October, and there is generally less migration to Israel from Western countries in the last quarter of the year, it is unlikely that postponed migration explains the spike in immigration in 2024. However, it is possible to check the data by breaking it down into six-month increments to compare migration in the months April – September 2022, October 2022 – March 2023, April 2023 – September 2023, October 2023 – March 2024, April 2024 – September 2024,

Immigration to Israel from Western Europe 2022-2025



and October 2024 – March 2025. This analysis will establish the effects of the war on migration beyond the initial shock and technical difficulties, which may have led to a decline in immigration in late 2023 and a bounce back in 2024.

There are some important things to note. First, the lower rate of immigration in 2023 was not due to the outbreak of war. Immigration was much lower in the period between April and September 2023 than it had been in the previous year. This may be because the 2022 rate reflects an unusually high number, including much postponed migration that resulted from the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. Alternatively, it may have been a response to the political crisis in Israel.

Second, the huge increase in immigration rates in the interval between April 2024 and March 2025 suggests a real change in attitudes, rather than just the fulfillment of postponed migration. Further, the rate of immigration from Western Europe in the period October 2023 to March 2024 was similar to that recorded in the same period a year earlier, despite the lower migration rate in the six months prior, suggesting that delayed migration is not a significant factor and that the rising rates of migration to Israel in this period reflect a post-war spike in immigration, similar to those that were seen in the past after the Six-Day War and other conflicts.

Conclusion

The impact of the Israel-Hamas war on migration to Israel has been significant. For those living in affluent states in North America, Europe, and Australasia, the war has led to a spike in migration to Israel. Whether this is due to an increased sense of solidarity with Israel, enhanced Jewish identity, or the rise in antisemitism seen since October 7 cannot be deduced from the available data. On the other hand, the war seems to have depressed immigration rates from poorer countries, where migration decisions are primarily related to escaping poverty and instability. For them, Israel in wartime is seen as a less desirable place to live.



JEWISH IDENTITY

8 Post-October 7 Jewish Identity and Its Impacts on Israel-Diaspora Relations

Generally, the October 7 Hamas onslaught and the resulting war, including the Hezbollah and Iran fronts, have strengthened ties between Diaspora communities and Israel. This applies to the mainstream Diaspora groups, especially those that constitute the organized Jewish community (federations, synagogues and religious denominational movements), national advocacy organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the American Jewish Committee (AJC), as well as to important Israeli groups who have increased their identification with the Diaspora. Yet this effect has not been unidirectional. It has also increased the distancing from and criticism of Israel among certain Diaspora groups who are disconnected from Israel and/or Zionism. It also seems to have slightly *decreased* identification among certain Israeli groups who had previously strongly identified with the Diaspora. Further, it has surfaced tensions between the parts of the ruling government in Israel who represent a nationalist majority position, and leading Diaspora Jewish organizations, including those who are traditionally very pro-Israel and pro-Zionist.

The October 7 attacks and the war that followed can thus be better described as having had a general galvanizing and dynamic effect on the diaspora's relationship with Israel. For the most part, they intensified the previously existing relationship of attachment or estrangement, respectively, and in a few cases, slightly changed the direction of the relationship or exposed inherent tensions within it. In no case was the relationship between the Diaspora and Israel unaffected.

Relationship of Diaspora Jews to Israel

1. The organized Jewish community and communally engaged Diaspora Jews

This mainstream segment of the Jewish community considers the Jewish people to be a "Community of Fate" with a shared Jewish destiny that unites Diaspora and Israeli Jews everywhere.

Officially, of course, Jewish identity in the Western democracies consists of a privatized religious identity. In practice, it contains a strong ethno-national component, which expresses itself in transnational Jewish solidarity (We are One!) and promotes Jewish economic, political, social, and cultural flourishing. This orientation has the earmarks of a Jewish civil religion, and like all civil religions, has a sacred aspect to it. Thus, it has been described as consisting of "sacred ethnicity" and promoting "sacred survival."[1]

While some observers have commented that this orientation has thinned out over the years, it received a new lease on life after October 7. As the Hamas butchery became known, Diaspora communities extended massive support to Israel. Diaspora communities around the world raised $1.4 billion for Israel right after October 7. Half of this was raised by the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA). In addition, federations and organizations in North America raised funding separate from the JFNA drive. UJA-Federation of New York raised $73 million, and the Chicago and Toronto Federations raised a combined $50 million. Another $91 million was raised by crowdfunding (reported on by AMI in coordination with the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism).[2]

Additionally, some 58,000 volunteers came to Israel to support the towns and kibbutzim in the Gaza envelope that had been attacked, and the evacuees. Many Diaspora Jews took part in pro-Israel demonstrations, events, and gatherings of various sorts.

The effects of the October 7 attacks were also reflected in survey data. According to a spring 2024 American Jewish Committee (AJC) survey, 45% of American Jews said the events of October 7 had strengthened their connection to Israel; (21% said the events had very much strengthened their connection.) A June 2024 JPPI Voice of the Jewish People survey (these surveys generally reflect the attitudes and opinions of more engaged American Jews) found that 66% of Jews who feel connected to Israel (which to a certain extent overlaps with engaged Jews and those affiliated with the organized Jewish community) felt closer to Israel as a result of Oct. 7. Forty-one percent said that these events increased the chances that they will visit Israel, and 82% donated to Israel. Eighty-nine percent of these connected Jews said they closely follow the Israel-Hamas war and identify with Israel's public messages concerning it. A significant percentage of this population also supports Israel's prosecution of the war; 89% strongly disagree that Israel is committing genocide.

2. Liberal/Progressive Diaspora Jews

Jews who are affiliated with the organized Jewish community and strongly connected to Israel constitute the dominant Diaspora group. But it is not the only group. Another group is becoming increasingly prominent among younger Jews for whom Israel is not an essential element of what being Jewish means to them. According to a 2020 Pew Research survey, about 16% of American Jews hold this position. However, according to the 2022 AJC survey, 43% of American Jewish

millennials (25-40) hold this view. Those who say that Israel is not important to their Jewishness have a greater tendency to self-identify as liberals and/or Democrats. According to Pew and AJC surveys from 2021-23, those who identify as liberals or Democrats are much more likely to say that Israel is not important to their Jewish identity and/or that they do not have a strong emotional attachment to Israel.

According to JPPI Voice of the Jewish People surveys from 2024-25, among those who reported not feeling connected to Israel, 92% said that they grew more distant as a result of Oct. 7 and the war. Eighty-eight percent said that they hadn't donated to Israel since Oct. 7. Ideological orientation appears to directly correlate with one's connection or lack of connection. Generally, those positioned at the more conservative end of the ideological spectrum reported feeling closer to Israel as a result of the events of the last two years. Trump voters reported a 50% increase in interest in visiting Israel post-Oct. 7.

Regarding the actual prosecution of the war, 32% of respondents self-identifying as strong liberals considered the Israeli response to October 7 too aggressive. By contrast, 50% of those who identified as conservatives felt it was not aggressive enough. Forty-two percent of respondents in the under-35 cohorts said that Israel's military response to October 7 is "unacceptable." Among respondents "not connected" to Israel, about half agree that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza.

In surveys of the general U.S. Jewish population conducted by the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and JTA, between 22% and 30% believe that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. Fifty-seven percent of Jewish Democrats are in favor of an immediate ceasefire in Gaza; the figure is 50% among the general Jewish population. American Jews, like other Americans, have become more sympathetic of the Palestinians in recent years. But only a small (if vocal) minority actually endorses the pro-Palestinian position. Thus, according to Pew Research from April 2024, 40% of American Jews have a favorable view of Palestinians (50% in the general population). With all that, only 10% of American Jews support BDS against Israel.[3]

Despite their claim that Israel is not central to their Jewish identity, 86% of Jews who said that they were not connected to Israel also said they followed the war very closely; among the connected, 89% said so.

This pattern of left-wing, liberal, or progressive political affiliation with disassociation from Israel and Zionism has a number of roots in Jewish intellectual and religious history. One of these sources is the idea that the Jews have a mission to the world that justifies continued Jewish existence. One of the most common ways of describing this mission is through the notion of ethical monotheism (Hermann Cohen) and the quest for social justice. Today, in liberal Reform and Reconstructionist circles, this is interpreted as the commitment to *Tikkun Olam* – universal values of human rights and pluralism. "Jewish values" in this context means commitment to human rights and equality (including gender and LGBTQ+ equality).

Another social justice tradition derives from early 20th-century Eastern Europe. Zionism was adopted in Eastern Europe as a solution to the suffering of the Jews as a result of antisemitism and persecution, but other solutions were also formulated and offered. Some of these attributed the persecution of the Jews to class factors and argued that with the establishment of a socialist or communist society, hatred of the Jews would disappear. These movements had many adherents among the Jewish immigrants to the United States and other countries (Canada, Argentina) in the first part of the 20th century. These movements were indifferent or hostile to Zionism and the establishment of a Jewish state.

Thus, we have a number of narrative traditions of Jewish identity that place social justice and human rights at the center of "Jewish values" and see themselves as belonging to liberal or left-wing organizations of the United States and other Diaspora countries. While the majority of non-Orthodox Jews combine a liberal political orientation with support for Israel, a combination that has become somewhat more difficult to sustain post-Oct. 7, a significant number have adopted non-Zionist or anti-Israel positions.

In recent years, especially after October 7, the rhetoric branding Israel as a "settler-colonial" society that oppresses Palestinians and practices apartheid and even genocide, has been adopted by some progressive and left-wing Jews and Jewish organizations. They have withdrawn support for Israel and in addition to criticizing its policies have begun to question its very existence. Jewish participation in pro-Palestinian demonstrations after October 7, although small, was highlighted by demonstration organizers and the media. Hence, the attitudes revealed in survey data are also reflected in Jewish organizational life.

Distancing from Israel and non-identification with it is also reflected in Jewish intellectual and cultural life. Intellectual criticism of Zionism and throwing the very existence of Israel into doubt has moved from the fringes of Jewish cultural life to become a fashionable cultural and intellectual theme as evidenced by the publication of anti-Zionist books by leading Jewish scholars and intellectuals such as Daniel Boyarin, Shaul Maggid, Peter Beinart, and Judith Butler. Similarly, anti-Zionist periodicals (e.g., *Jewish Currents)* have been given prominence and promoted by the mainstream media, such as the *New York Times.* These varied publications advocate a "Diasporist" (or Galuti) version of Jewish identity, saying that Jewish minority existence and even "powerlessness" is the fulfillment of Jewish life and awards Jews the moral authority to pursue social justice. Judith Butler has even affirmed that "Jewishness" is "the displacement of identity," that is, it requires the self-annulment or erasure of one's own identity. [4] Some of these publications have published aggressively anti-Israel articles.

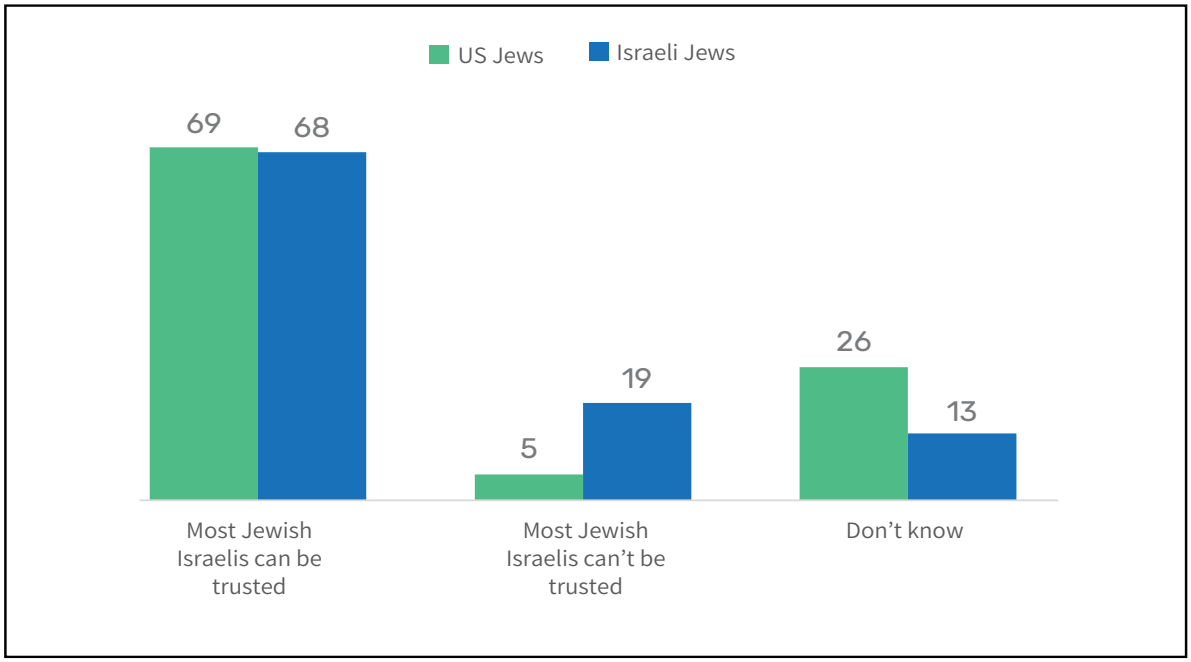
How important to you is the Jewish character of the state? (%)



The average of respondents; asked on a scale of 0 to 10

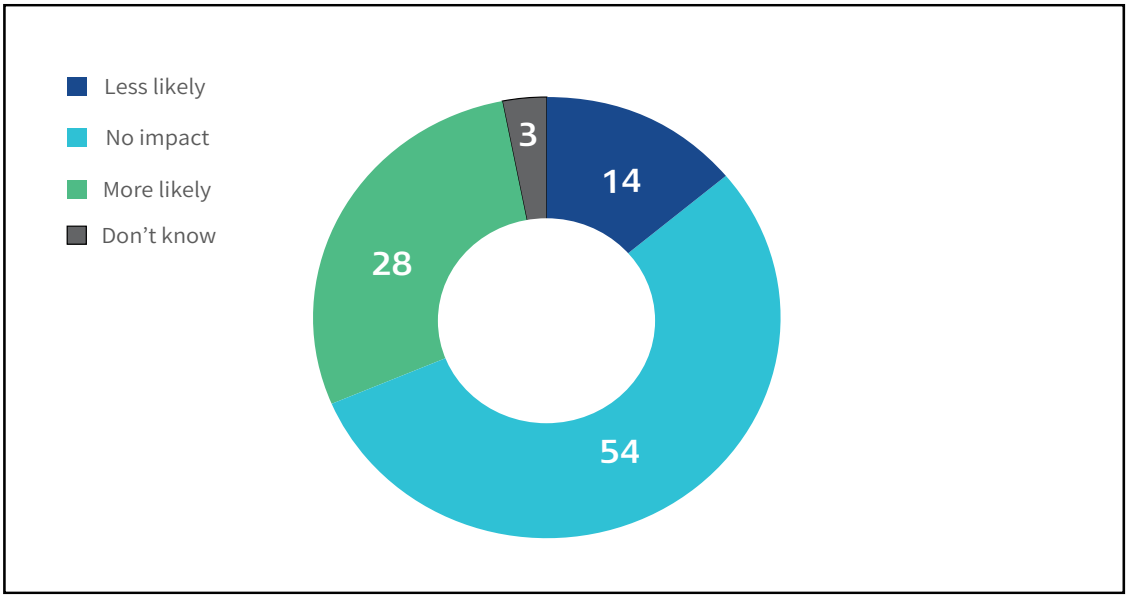
JPPI Israeli Society Index survey, January 2024 and January 2025

Can Most Jewish Israelis be trusted? (%)



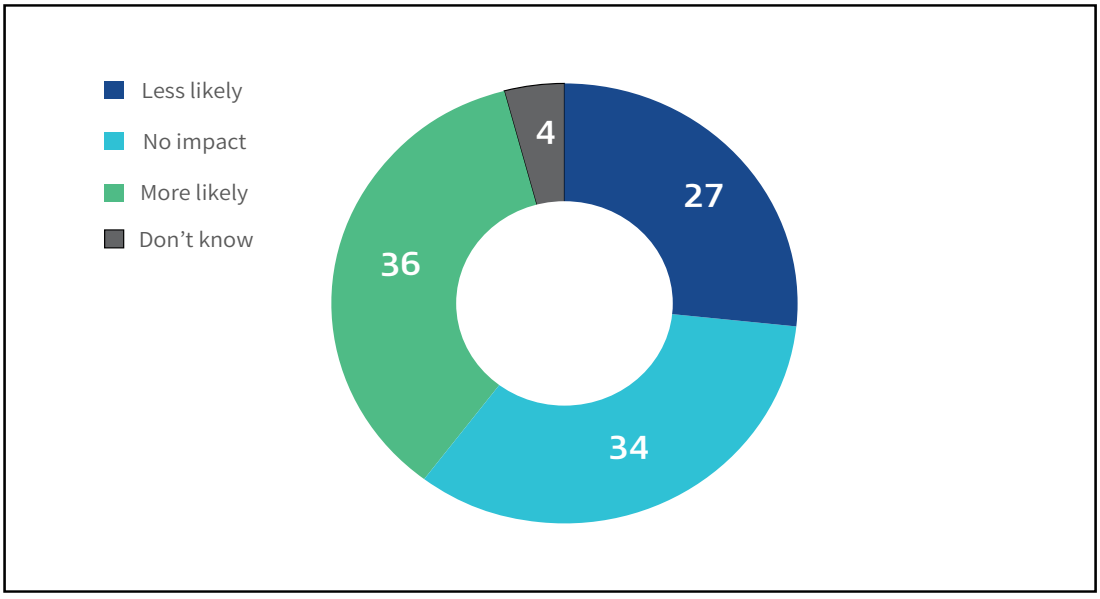
JPPI Israeli Society Index survey and Voice of the Jewish People surveys, July 2025

Does the current situation make you less likely or more likely to attend public 'Jewish events' (such as Jewish celebrations, synagogue services, community festivals, etc.)? (Weighted Results, %)



JPPI Voice of the Jewish People Survey, June 2025

Does the current situation make you less likely or more likely to attend public events connected to Israel (such as Israeli festivals, rallies for Israel, prayer gatherings for Israel, etc.)? (Weighted Results, %)



JPPI Voice of the Jewish People Survey, June 2025

Who is a Zionist? (%)

	I am a Zionist		I am somewhat Zionist		I am not a Zionist		I am anti-Zionist		Don't know	
	June '24	June '25	June '24	June '25	June '24	June '25	June '24	June '25	June '24	June '25
Weighted Results	79	73	12	13	5	8	2	2	2	3

JPPI Voice of the Jewish People Survey, June 2024 and June 2025

Israeli Jews and their Relation to the Diaspora

3. The Israeli "New Jew"

This group emphasizes Israeli sovereignty and self-reliance, (as well as economic productivity) while categorizing itself as a break from the "old Diaspora (Galuti) Jew," who is viewed as weak, passive, and overly religious/separate. It contends that a Jewish nation-state is needed to be like everyone else and fit in with the global landscape, without needing to rely on others to protect or fight for them. This stream comprises in large part secular Israelis. Those who identify with this narrative often self-identify as first and foremost "Israeli" (36% – Pew), signaling a break with the old Galuti Jewish identity.[5]

The New Jew narrative was severely upset by the October 7 invasion and attack. The massacre, according to this narrative, was precisely what Zionism and Israel, with its armed forces, was established to prevent. October 7 called into question the entire Zionist enterprise, which was expressed in a variety of ways. One common expression of this was the use of the word "pogrom" to describe the October 7 onslaught. This word, with its connotations of the exile and Jewish helplessness, conveyed that October 7 was a regression to a pre-Zionist condition of Jewish misery. The popular (2014-2024) Israeli TV comedy series *HaYehudim Baim* (The Jews are Coming), which satirized episodes from Jewish history, included a sketch that framed Oct. 7 as part of a chain of Jewish catastrophes, including the destruction of the Temple and the infamous 1903 Kishinev pogrom.

The assimilation of Oct. 7 into the Galut experience was also conveyed in Holocaust comparisons and tropes, especially (Israeli) Jews hiding or being hidden by non-Jews. This shift squares with the feeling of closeness to Diaspora Jews reported by Israeli Jews in the wake of Oct. 7.

According to the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs January 2023 Diaspora Index measuring the ties of Israeli Jews to the Diaspora, 63% of Israeli Jews felt that Diaspora Jews were their brethren;

by February 2025 ,this figure had risen to 71%. After Oct. 7, the overall Diaspora Index rose to its highest level ever 5.92 – out of 10 (the year before, it had registered 5.46). The most dramatic change was detected among the Hilonim (secular Jews), those who traditionally carried the "New Jew" orientation; the percentage who felt that Diaspora Jews were their brethren shifted from 36% in October 2020 to 56% in February 2025 – a 20-point shift upward. Perhaps this increased feeling of closeness to the Diaspora was informed by the fact that Israeli Jews, especially the Hilonim, became more circumspect in their view of themselves as superior, transformed "New Jews," finding themselves in the "same boat" as Diaspora Jews, that is, as a vulnerable minority.

The paradox at the center of the relationship between Israeli Hilonim-New Jews and Diaspora Jews is that while there is ideological distance between them – the Israeli Jews regard themselves (mostly implicitly, even unconsciously) as a superior elite vanguard – the two groups resemble each other demographically and sociologically. Diaspora Jews (especially those in North America) and Israeli Hiloni New Jews are largely Ashkenazic, possess university-level educations, and are middle to upper-middle class. The ideological or symbolic distance between them decreased post-Oct. 7.

Israeli self-regard was somewhat restored by the phenomenally successful military campaigns against Hezbollah and Iran.

4. Israeli Ethno-Religious Nationalism

This narrative is represented by supporters of Israel's current governing coalition and especially Likud voters. It thinks of Israel largely as a continuation of traditional ethno-religious Jewish communities and identity, empowered by military prowess and the mechanisms of state. It self-identifies first and foremost as "Jewish" (45% – Pew).[6] Though, unlike traditional ethno-national and religious Jewish identity, it understands itself as a **dominant majority,** not a persecuted minority. It regards Orthodox Judaism as authoritative and authentic, though many of its adherents are not observant in the rigorous Orthodox sense. Among this group, Masorti (traditionalist) Jews are prominent, especially those of Middle Eastern and North African origins (Mizrahim).

This identity narrative suffered as a result of October 7 insofar as its representatives were in power at the time of the onslaught and held governing responsibility. It turned out that it was not as reliable as it had claimed to be in the area of security. The national loss of confidence in the current coalition can be measured by public opinion surveys, which have found (at least as of this writing) that it is likely to garner 44-48 Knesset representatives in the next elections as opposed to the 64-68 it has held since the government was formed in January 2023.

Despite the overall support that Diaspora Jews grant Israel, tensions have entered into the relationship between Diaspora Jewish leaders and

organizations and the Likud representatives of the ethno-national stream in the Israeli government. This is due to the different positions of the two communities. In Israel, the Jews constitute an **ethno-national majority** that dominates the country. The ethno-religious nationalists who currently control the government place the interests of the Jewish ethno-national group above those of all other ethic and national groups in the country. They see themselves as aligned with other dominant ethno-national groups such as the Poles and the Hungarians. Further, they also see themselves aligned with other right-wing nationalist and populist governments. Many of these governments publicly support Israel, and Likud and Religious Zionism ministers (see below) therefore regard them as international allies who provide much-needed international support.

Diaspora Jews are an **ethno-national minority** in their countries of residence. In their historical memory, they suffered at the hands of ethno-national majorities, especially in Eastern Europe. This includes during the Holocaust, when local populations participated in the extermination of the Jews. They are especially wary of ethno-national majority political parties with a history of antisemitism.

These tensions reached an inflection point in March 2025 when the minister of Diaspora affairs and combating antisemitism, Amichai Chikli, convened the International Conference on Combatting Antisemitism. Far-right European politicians, such as Jordan Bardella of France's National Rally party, were invited to speak at the conference, much to the chagrin of liberal Jews in Israel and abroad. Some of these politicians support Israel but are affiliated with historically antisemitic political parties, some of which continue to traffic in antisemitic tropes and language. The National Rally party, for example, under its former name, the National Front, was explicitly antisemitic and held admiration for the French Vichy regime, which had participated in the Holocaust.

Many Diaspora leaders condemned these invitations, saying that they were incompatible with combating antisemitism. In protest, several Diaspora leaders and organizations, including those dedicated to combating antisemitism, withdrew from the conference and/or called for its boycott. These included the AJC, the ADL, the World Jewish Congress, the European Jewish Congress, and the Conference of European Rabbis. Prominent Diaspora leaders who withdrew included Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mervis of the UK, the philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy, ADL head Jonathan Greenblatt, and others.

5. The Haredi Narrative

The Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) Jewish identity narrative differs significantly from other Jewish identity narratives. It views itself as the "remnant of Israel." That is, the part of the Jewish people that remained loyal to authentic Torah observance and has not been corrupted or contaminated by modernity. The most important aspect of its identity narrative is that it has separated itself from the Jewish mainstream. The Haredim

maintain separate but parallel Jewish communal institutions, synagogues, schools, free loan societies, etc.

In Israel, the Haredi sector has developed along two contradictory paths. First, it has restricted, at least officially, its male population to Torah study exclusively. In so doing, they do not participate in the two most important activities of Israeli men – the military and the workforce. At the same time, the political parties representing them have become important partners in right-wing governments headed by the ethno-religious nationalist Likud.

With the Israel-Hamas war, they have entered into a paradoxical position. Despite the IDF's growing manpower needs, the Haredim have laid out a vision of principled non-participation in the war effort. In fact, they have redoubled their efforts to obtain a blanket draft exemption for their population of 80,000 young men who could be candidates for military service. They have leveraged their importance to the survival of the current right-wing government by pushing for a law that would grant their otherwise conscription-aged men a permanent exemption from military service, Torah scholars or not. Israel's other population sectors, including some coalition partners, have not cooperated with this aim and have even opposed it. In a survey taken in November 2024 by the Israel Democracy Institute **84.5%** of the non-Haredi population favor Haredi conscription. (Likud voters shifted from 52% in favor before the war to 74% after Oct. 7, and Religious Zionism voters shifted from 51% to 79%.)

The IDF has been sending out conscription notices to draft-eligible Haredi men declaring that it will enforce "deserter" penalties on those who don't comply.[7] Faced with such opposition, the Haredim have engaged in disruptive street demonstrations (at least 16 large-scale protests since Oct. 7) and efforts to defend their ideology, while demanding strict adherence to it within the Haredi community.

The Haredi Jewish identity narrative has, to some extent, come under attack. In response, the Haredi leadership has attempted to shore it up, at least internally. Nevertheless, there are also reports of change within the Haredi community because of young men who have ventured from the fold and joined the IDF. A portion of the Haredi community now has personal ties to the Israeli military. It remains to be seen how substantial the change turns out to be.

In June 2025, two ministers from the Agudath Israel party resigned from the government in protest against the non-enactment of the law relieving Haredi males from military service. A month later, both the Degel HaTorah party and the Agudath Israel party (which together make up the United Torah Judaism alliance) left the governing coalition, and the Shas party announced that it too is leaving the coalition but would continue to support the government from outside the coalition.

The Haredim were the one group reporting *less* identification with Diaspora Jews. Perhaps this reflects an increased consciousness of their

sectarian position and their apartness from the mainstream of the Jewish people, caused in part by the controversy surrounding their military conscription.

6. The Israeli Religious Zionists

Even though there are many sub-streams of Religious Zionism in Israel, its mainstream identity narrative (as understood through messaging in their sectorial educational system and media) is one of religiously inspired integral nationalism, in which the individual is rooted in the national collective and the national collective is considered to be rooted in the land and national territory. The ultimate aim of the Zionist enterprise, according to this ideological system, is to fully embed divine or Torah ideals in the national life of the Jewish state. The national territory – the Land of Israel, (including the West Bank and Gaza) is the necessary material sub-structure that enables this. The national collectivity (the People of Israel) and the national territory (the Land of Israel) are regarded by Religious Zionists as unitary entities. Hence, the Land of Israel cannot be forfeited or divided, and individuals are rooted to the national collectivity in their very being. Religious Zionists (along with other right-wing elements in Israel) do not recognize that Palestinians have any legal or moral right to the Land of Israel. The presence of Palestinians does not constitute a moral issue or dilemma, but rather poses a practical security threat.

One practical outcome of the individual's sense of rootedness in the collective is their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the achievement of collective goals – in the Israel-Hamas war. Religious Zionists, who constitute 16-17% of the general population, are over represented in combat units relative to their population share. This is especially true in elite units and in the combat officer corps, where they make up between 30 and 40%. While there are no official figures regarding the religious or political identity of those killed or wounded in the war, most observers are under the impression that, here too, their casualty rates are higher than their share of the population.

Their high combat participation rate has certainly earned Religious Zionists a certain amount of admiration and prestige. Still, their attitudes regarding certain important national questions differ significantly from other sectors of the Israeli population and other voices in the public discourse. One key issue concerns the hostages abducted on Oct. 7. While the families of many of the hostages and a substantial and vocal portion of the Israeli public and media endorse a deal to free the remaining hostages even if it means ending the war, many Religious Zionists, including the sector's political leadership, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and Minister of National Security Itamar Ben Gvir, actively oppose such a deal. This attitude, too, is based upon their understanding that individuals must subordinate themselves to collective needs. By contrast, those endorsing a hostage deal cite the social contract between individuals and the state: In exchange for mobilizing for the collective good, the state will safeguard the individual's interests, even at

the state's expense. These groups argue that the social solidarity that would be expressed by a hostage deal is one of Israel's greatest assets.

The Jewish Israeli public seems to be evenly split on this issue. Around half say they would support such a deal even if it means leaving Hamas in power; the other half would reject such a deal [8]

There is much less agreement around the Religious Zionists' war aims. Ministers Smotrich and Ben-Gvir openly say they want to impose IDF military rule on Gaza, annex it, and renew Jewish settlement there. Among those who voted for the right-wing ruling coalition, 60% support such a policy. It is estimated that among Religious Zionists, a similar number supports it. However, among the entire population, such a policy is supported by only 22-33% (42% among all Jewish Israelis).

The Religious Zionist sector is ideologically committed to ties with the Jewish Diaspora, as it views the global Jewish population in traditional terms – as a single ethno-religious-national entity. While in recent years such religious thinkers such as Diaspora Rabbis Joseph B. Soloveichick and Lord Jonathan Sacks have gained followings among Israeli Religious Zionists, for the most part, they tend to view Diaspora Jews as a manpower reservoir for Aliyah and settlement projects. October 7 and the ensuing War have not substantially affected their identification with Diaspora Jews.

Public statements by political leaders of the "Religious Zionist" parties on the war and the future of Gaza, such as Smotrich's calls for the forced expulsion of the Gazan population, the utter destruction of their cities (echoing the biblical call for the destruction of Amalek), and starving the population until the hostages are returned, have caused Diaspora Jews extreme discomfort. As a result, major Jewish organizations like the Council of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations have condemned Smotrich and Ben-Gvir and disavowed their inflammatory statements. These organizations have called on Jewish communities to boycott Smotrich and deny him a platform from which to speak. Ben-Gvir's April 2025 U.S. visit sparked angry protests at Yale, at the Capitol, and in New York. These incidents, too, exacerbated tensions between the attitudes of Israeli nationalist politicians and Diaspora Jewish leaders.

The events of October 7, 2023 and the Israel-Hamas war that followed have certainly had a galvanizing effect on the relationships of Diaspora Jews and Israel. But this effect was not unidirectional. In the Diaspora, it strengthened the ties to Israel of the mainstream Jewish Diaspora communities, but it also helped propel the anti-Zionist narratives of certain progressive and left-wing groups. In Israel, it weakened the "New Jew" identity narrative of the Israeli Sabra Hilonim, resulting in enhanced identification with Diaspora Jews. At the same time, it brought out the tensions between a majority ethno-nationalist identity and a minority Diasporic ethno-religious identity. These tensions were thrown into sharp relief by the May 2025 International Conference on Combatting Antisemitism held in Jerusalem and

sponsored by Diaspora Affairs Minister Amichai Chikli. The extremist statements by the "Religious Zionist" Ministers further sharpened and amplified these tensions, resulting in unprecedented calls by Diaspora Jewish organizations to boycott Israeli government ministers.

Policy Recommendations

1. The "Diaspora perspective" should be better represented in Israeli decision-making. The best avenue for this is the Diaspora Affairs Ministry and the Knesset Diaspora Affairs Committee. Formal committee hearings in this regard should be held twice a year with representatives from the Diaspora attending.

2. The Ministry of Diaspora Affairs should establish a permanent position of Diaspora Adviser to the Minister, mandated by legislation. The legislation should also specify the issues on which the Diaspora Adviser must be consulted. The position should be held (appointment process to be determined) by a leading Diaspora figure.

Endnotes

1 Jonathan Woocher, *Sacred Survival: The Civil Religion of American Jews* (1987). JPPI, *Annual Assessment 2013-2014.* P.94-95.

2 "Mapping Out the Contribution of Diaspora Jewry During the "Swords of Iron" War, AMI (Am Israel Chai), April 2024, https://jppi.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/AMI-English-Report-A4-002-1-1.pdf

3 "How US Jews are Experiencing the Israel-Hamas War", Pew Research Center, April 2, 2024. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/04/02/how-us-jews-are-experiencing-the-israel-hamas-war/

4 "Is Zionism Judaism".

5 Pew Research Center, Israel's Religiously Divided Society. (2016). Rosner and Fuchs asked two questions with similar results – Jewish (46%) or Israeli (35%) first? And "which best describes your identity – Jewish (51%) or Israeli (41%)?" Shmuel Rosner and Camil Fuchs, *Israeli Judaism: Portrait of a Cultural Revolution* (Jerusalem: Jewish People Policy Institute, 2019), 77. See also Oz Almog, *The Sabra: Creation of the New Jew.* (Los Angeles and Berkeley, 2000.)

6 Pew Research Center, *Israel's Religiously Divided Society,* (2016)

7 https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sjgwufdsxg *Ynet* 6.7.25 "מהלכי אכיפה חסרי תקדים"

8 JPPI, Isreali Society Index survey, July 2025.


ZIONISM IS RACISM
FREE
PALESTINE
REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST GROUP
FREEDOM for PALESTINE
الحرية لفلسطين

RESILIENCE

9 The Assault on Jewish Resilience

Resilience is more than the ability to withstand adversity. It is the enduring capacity of the Jewish people – in Israel and throughout the Diaspora – to secure physical safety, ensure material prosperity, and uphold a shared sense of collective destiny. That resilience is being tested today as never before.

The threats facing the Jewish people in 2025 are neither abstract nor distant. They are present, coordinated, and intensifying. They strike at both poles of Jewish existence. On one hand, Jews around the world face a resurgence of antisemitism that is deeper, ideologically driven, and more socially acceptable than at any time since the Holocaust. On the other, the State of Israel – the central pillar of Jewish sovereignty and security – finds itself the target of an escalating campaign of legal delegitimization in the international arena. These two developments may appear separate, but in reality they are intertwined as mutually reinforcing assaults on the very idea that the Jewish people deserve to live securely, visibly, and with dignity in the world.

This chapter explores these twin threats to Jewish resilience. The first section examines the global spike in antisemitism. a phenomenon that has moved from the margins of society into its mainstream institutions. JPPI's 2025 Antisemitism Index documents the erosion of liberal democratic norms that once protected Jewish life, the dramatic rise in antisemitic violence and harassment, and the recasting of Jewish identity as a moral stain rather than a historical victimhood. The second section analyzes how international legal institutions – including the International Criminal Court (ICC) and International Court of Justice (ICJ) – are being weaponized in an unprecedented campaign to

criminalize Israel's defensive war against Hamas and to strip its legitimacy in the eyes of the world.

Both phenomena share a common pattern: the inversion of Jewish identity from vulnerable to villainous, from endangered to endangering. The October 7 massacre by Hamas – the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust – did not produce the global solidarity it should have. Instead, it triggered a wave of moral inversion, particularly in elite Western discourse. On campuses and cultural institutions, Jews were told they could not grieve unless they condemned Israel. Across political arenas, Israel was reframed not as the victim of terror, but as the perpetrator of genocide. Today's trope replaces the "Christ killer" with the "Palestinian child killer."

In both cases, the Jew is seen as the obstacle to redemption.

This is not simply rhetoric. In the Diaspora, the consequences are deeply personal: Jewish students harassed or excluded on campuses; synagogues vandalized; individuals assaulted or even killed in ideologically motivated attacks. Visibility itself has become a liability, with many Jews in Europe and North America hiding symbols of Jewish identity or contemplating emigration. What was once unthinkable – the fading permanence of Jewish life in the West – is now openly discussed.

In Israel, the assault is juridical but no less existential. International legal mechanisms are being marshaled against it in a way previously reserved for rogue states and genocidal regimes. The ICC's 2024 decision to issue arrest warrants against Israel's elected leaders for alleged war crimes marks a profound rupture in the post-Holocaust legal order. So too does the ICJ's willingness to entertain charges of genocide brought by South Africa, a nation that has adopted the rhetoric of Hamas and Iran.

These proceedings do more than put Israeli leaders at risk of arrest. They erode Israel's legitimacy as a sovereign state with the right to self-defense. They embolden its enemies, undermine its alliances, and constrain its ability to operate militarily in the face of terror threats. They also sap the internal cohesion and moral confidence of Israeli society, which has long prided itself on balancing military necessity with legal and ethical accountability.

What connects the assault on Diaspora Jews and the legal assault on Israel is not only their ideological content, but their ultimate objective: to sever the link between Jewish peoplehood and legitimacy. Whether through antisemitic exclusion or international criminal prosecution, the underlying message is the same – that Jews, alone among the nations, do not have the right to defend themselves, to govern themselves, or to exist on their own terms.

To defend their resilience, the Jewish people must recognize that the battle is not confined to physical threats, but extends into the moral and legal imagination of the world. We must fight not only for safety, but also for legal legitimacy.

This chapter offers a framework for doing so. The first section presents new data and analysis

on the global antisemitism crisis, highlighting the ideological shifts, institutional failures, and generational divides that are transforming the landscape of Jewish life in the West. The second section analyzes Israel's mounting legal challenges, explaining how lawfare operates, what its consequences are, and how Israel and its allies can respond. Together, these two sections illuminate the evolving threat to Jewish resilience – and the imperative for a unified, strategic response.

2025 Integrated Three-Dimensional Antisemitism Index

Antisemitism continues to rise, year after year, despite sustained efforts to stop it. At the same time, emerging responses suggest the need – and the opportunity – for a sharper, more coordinated strategy.

The ongoing war in Gaza has transmuted perceptions of Israel globally and, by extension, of Jews. Israel is increasingly perceived as a symbol of oppression and colonial power. Consequently, Jews who express support for Israel are often characterized as morally complicit in perceived injustices. Across the public discourse, particularly among younger people, the equation "Jew = Zionist = oppressor" has gained widespread traction.

This ideological shift has normalized antisemitic expression in spaces once considered off-limits – including universities, cultural institutions, and parts of the political establishment – where Jewish identity is increasingly linked to collective guilt for Israeli actions. As anti-Zionist rhetoric intensifies, Jews face growing harassment, intimidation, and exclusion, particularly in academic settings where this pattern is well documented. Although anti-Zionist activists may not explicitly endorse hostility toward Jews, data from 14,000 students across more than 140 campuses suggests otherwise: when BDS-style activism swells, Jewish students report increased fear, identity concealment, and disengagement from campus life.[1] In the United States, historically regarded as a secure and hospitable society for Jews, Jewish institutions now operate under unprecedented pressure. The liberal democratic framework that once guaranteed a stable Jewish presence is showing signs of erosion. For the first time in decades, maintaining a visible Jewish identity in democratic societies has begun to carry tangible personal and social risk.

Political positions once considered fringe now occupy space within mainstream discourse

In New York City, Zohran Mamdani, the Democratic candidate for mayor, has openly endorsed the BDS movement and has refused to condemn inflammatory slogans such as "globalize the intifada." Political positions once considered fringe now occupy space within mainstream discourse, signaling a fundamental shift in the boundaries of political rhetoric regarding Jews and Israel.

These dynamics have been playing out in Europe for more than two decades. The resurgence of antisemitism there has emerged from a convergence of far-left postcolonial narratives, rising far-right populism, and mass immigration from regions where anti-Israel hostility is deeply entrenched. Even Jews who explicitly distance themselves from Israel are often regarded with suspicion or hostility. Twenty-eight Western Nations issued a joint, unprecedentedly harsh statement on July 21, decrying Israel's conduct in Gaza.

A majority of Western European Jews have experienced antisemitism directly and avoid public displays of Jewish identity. Many are seriously considering emigration. In the United States, younger Jews face increasing social exclusion and ideological polarization. Some respond by drawing closer to Jewish life and community, while others feel isolated or progressively decenter Israel in their Jewish identity – sometimes becoming vocal critics of the Jewish state.

This report highlights developments that threaten to undermine the long-term vitality of Jewish life worldwide. Accusations of genocide leveled against Israel are increasingly heard without meaningful pushback, and portrayals of Jews as enemies of humanity are gaining traction. In Europe, individuals with documented antisemitic records are ascending to positions of political power, while Jewish visibility retreats under sustained pressure. In the United States, Jewish representation in elite academic institutions has diminished as a result of the collapse of meritocratic admissions and the rise of diversity frameworks that effectively penalize high-achieving groups labeled as privileged, including.[2] Identification with Israel among young Americans – particularly but not exclusively

LEVEL OF ANTISEMITISM IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

BASED ON PERCEIVED DISCOMFORT AMONG JEWS (Compiled by JPPI)

	USA	UK	Germany	France	Russia	Hungary	Sweden
Level of severity in 2025	C	HC	VHC	C	C	C	VHC
Level of severity in 2017	L	C	IC	HC	C	C	VHC

Low Concern | Concern | Increasing Concern | High Concern | Very High Concern | Community in Danger

within the Democratic Party – is also declining precipitously. These converging trends reflect a shifting social and political landscape that requires a fundamental reassessment of the strategies employed to confront contemporary antisemitism.

Notable Developments

The golden age of American Jewry may be drawing to a close.[3] Antisemitism now emanates from both political extremes: **conspiracy-driven narratives on the right and accusations of privilege and oppression on the left**. **Although ideologically distinct, these two forms increasingly converge in casting Jews as corrupt actors undermining society – whether through global manipulation or systemic injustice.** The result is a shared delegitimization of Jewish identity, especially when linked to Israel. For decades, Jews flourished in liberal democratic frameworks anchored in pluralism, meritocracy, and human rights. That foundation is now under pressure from two opposing yet increasingly convergent forces that challenge Jewish belonging in American society:

The nationalist right repurposes classic antisemitic tropes to fit contemporary frameworks: globalist conspiracies, allegations of media and financial control, portrayal of immigration as a Jewish-orchestrated demographic replacement strategy and claims of systematic cultural subversion.

The progressive intersectional left recasts Jews as privileged White actors who are inherently complicit in systems of oppression – with their perceived connection to Israel serving as evidence of this complicity.

Critically, antisemitic discourse has become significantly more permissible in mainstream politics across the spectrum. It operates through layers of moral relativism and ideological posturing that largely immunize it from mainstream accountability. On university campuses, in the media, and even within Congress, anti-Israel rhetoric increasingly draws upon centuries-old antisemitic motifs.

Jewish individuals across the country are now navigating a widening gulf between themselves and the cultural and intellectual spaces they once inhabited with confidence. The antisemitic impulse, long constrained by the norms and taboos of postwar liberalism, has reignited.

The Collapse of Moral Legitimacy. In the United States, this shift is especially stark. Support for Israel is collapsing among Democrats, particularly the young. According to Gallup, 2023 marked the first year in which more Democrats sympathized with Palestinians than with Israelis. This shift is most pronounced among younger age cohorts, creating a generational divide that continues to widen. Within progressive institutions and on university campuses, Zionism is increasingly viewed not as a legitimate national movement, but as an embodiment of Western colonialism and oppression.

This ideological reframing has softened the social and political guardrails that once contained antisemitic expression, reducing the social cost

of targeting Jews verbally, institutionally, and potentially physically.

Jews Recast as Enemies of Humanity. The October 7 Hamas massacre – the deadliest anti-Jewish attack since World War II – failed to generate the expected wave of solidarity. Instead, it triggered a mimetic explosion of antisemitic rhetoric across Western societies. In far-left and intersectional spaces, Israel has been tarred as genocidal, and Jews are considered morally complicit until proven otherwise.

"From the river to the sea" – often whitewashed as a call for liberation – implies the excision of Jewish sovereignty from the region

At protests from London to Berlin, from Los Angeles to New York, Jewish voices were systematically excluded, shouted down, or worse. Jewish students were told they could not grieve their losses without simultaneously condemning Israel.

The Dangerous Equation. A reductive and dangerous formula has entered mainstream discourse: **Zionism = Genocide**. The Zionist narrative – that Jewish sovereignty represents a legitimate response to historical vulnerability – is not merely challenged, it is rejected as morally illegitimate.

This shift has been intensified by the ongoing Gaza conflict, where devastating images of Palestinian civilian casualties have flooded the global consciousness. As these images accumulate, the very existence of the Jewish state is increasingly framed as an unacceptable moral cost. If the price of a Jewish homeland is endless war, then, according to this logic, the world is better off without it.

The slogan "From the river to the sea" – often whitewashed as a call for liberation – implies the excision of Jewish sovereignty from the region. In a narrative where Jews are increasingly seen as obstacles to peace and morality, this rhetoric becomes redemptive: violence against them is not merely justified – it is virtuous.

From Rhetoric to Violence: A Predictable Escalation. Once a group is defined as morally toxic, the progression from symbolic exclusion to physical violence becomes predictable. Moral accusation creates a moral permission structure that eventually transforms into moral obligation.

Early warning signs of this escalation have been discernable in the U.S. for the better part of a decade: from almost weekly reports of vandalism, arson, and assault to the targeted killings in Pittsburg, Los Angeles, and, most recently, Boulder, Colorado, and Washington, D.C. Though not yet systematic, they demonstrate how ideological hostility can turn lethal.

In Europe, warnings of future pogroms – against Jewish schools, shops, or communal institutions – are no longer confined to fiction. In political discourse and media coverage, such scenarios are now evoked openly, and in some cases, matter-of-factly. The unimaginable is becoming thinkable.

The Loss of Generational Support. What makes this danger particularly acute is the rapid erosion of social solidarity with Jews, especially among the young. Israel has fundamentally lost the support an entire generation. Young people globally, particularly in academic and activist environments, increasingly align with radical pro-Palestinian positions.

Case Study: France as Microcosm

The Paradox of Vitality Under Siege. French Jewry presents a striking paradox: Jewish life has never been more vibrant, yet it exists under unprecedented threat. Synagogues are full, study halls multiply, kosher restaurants thrive, and Jewish schools expand. But this vitality operates under siege conditions.[4]

The Statistical Reality. The numbers tell a sobering story:

- Since 2019, one in five French Jews reports having been being physically assaulted for being Jewish[5]
- 91% of Jewish students have experienced antisemitism since October 7, 2023[6]
- Muslims now outnumber Jews by a factor of 20, dramatically reshaping the political landscape[7]
- 21.5% of newborns in 2023 were given Muslim-Arabic names[8]
- 67% of French Muslims believe Jews treat Palestinians like Nazis treated Jews[9]
- 37% express support for the Muslim Brotherhood[10]

Institutional Abandonment. One after another, French cities are freezing sister-city relationships with Israeli municipalities while establishing new partnerships with Palestinian towns. Antisemitic crime remains under-prosecuted and under-sentenced,[11] police acknowledge their limitations, and politicians increasingly adopt pro-Palestinian narratives to preserve electoral viability.[12]

The Electoral Calculation. As the 2027 presidential election approaches, the danger intensifies. Whether far-right or far-left forces prevail, many fear the next government will seek accommodation with Islamist actors to maintain social peace – with Jews serving as the likely concession. For growing numbers of French Jews, emigration is no longer a question of if, but when.

The Broader European Pattern. Similar dynamics are unfolding across Europe. In Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, and even the United Kingdom, Jews face mounting hostility, political isolation, and a creeping sense of exclusion from national life. The pattern is consistent: initial ideological delegitimization followed by social ostracism, institutional abandonment, and the gradual normalization of anti-Jewish sentiment.

The Silent Boycott

A silent, informal boycott is spreading across academia, business, and finance – targeting Israeli institutions and, increasingly, Jewish-linked individuals and networks. Unlike traditional

antisemitic acts, this trend often operates through institutional ambiguity, social pressure, and external funding leverage.

Israel's Academic Sector

- A 66% increase of academic boycott incidents since October 2023.[13]
- A 21% decrease in international research partnerships; a 50% decrease in foreign student enrollment.[14]
- In Spain, Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland: multiple universities have frozen institutional cooperation.[15]

Business and Financial Sector

- Reports of Israeli and Jewish founders being quietly excluded from deals, shortlists, or funding rounds – especially in tech, venture capital, and media.
- Advertising agencies and sponsors have withdrawn from collaborations with Jewish public figures after pro-Israel statements.
- Gulf influence: conditional donations, notably from **Qatar**, shape institutional decisions.[16]

Cyber, AI, and Military – The Exceptions

- Israeli cyber and AI firms maintain strong international demand.
- Military cooperation with Israel has expanded post-October 7, especially among NATO countries and defense-tech sectors.
- These sectors remain insulated from boycott dynamics due to strategic prioritization.

Notable Positive Prospects

Amid rising global antisemitism, 2024–2025 witnessed a series of responses – some symbolic, others enforceable – marking a transition from moral outrage to policy implementation.

Possible Backlash Against Progressive Ideologies. A convergent backlash against progressive ideologies has emerged among populist-conservatives and intellectual-liberals, demonstrating a measurable political and academic realignment. On the electoral front, far-right parties secured approximately 25% of votes in the 2024 EU elections,[17] with Austria's Freedom Party topping polls for the first time and Germany's AfD winning almost a third in Thuringia – the first far-right state victory since WWII.[18] These movements explicitly promote a return to traditional European norms and values associated with conservative-populist currents, including those championed during the Trump administration – with institutional responses including Germany's classification of BDS as a "proven extremist endeavor hostile to the constitution."[19]

Simultaneously, academic research has generated intellectual criticism of progressive frameworks within liberal institutions. A 2024 study by Ontario academic David Haskell found that DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) training often exacerbates workplace tensions, and produces minimal effects in academia, which decrease as academic rigor increases.[20] **Corporate America, responding in part to pressure from the Trump**

administration, has demonstrated measurable retreat: Google, Boeing, Disney, and Walmart scaled back or ended DEI programs in 2024-2025,[21] while Iowa banned DEI offices at public colleges effective July 2025.

Stronger Legal Accountability. In the U.S., the Pittsburgh synagogue shooter received the death penalty, and a New York attacker was sentenced to 5.5 years in prison. In Australia, the perpetrator of the Melbourne synagogue arson faces up to 25 years behind bars, and a separate hate speech case led to charges under new laws (maximum three years imprisonment). By contrast, comparable penalties remain rare in Europe, where such crimes often go under-prosecuted or under-sentenced.

U.S. Budget Cuts to Universities Tolerating Antisemitism. In 2025, the Trump administration imposed federal funding cuts on universities, such as Harvard ($700 million in research funding lost, $3.2 billion in federal contracts frozen) and Columbia ($400 million in grants revoked) for failing to address antisemitic harassment, particularly involving anti-Israel extremism.[22] The University of Virginia also faced pressure that led to its president's resignation.[23]

These actions followed Title VI civil rights investigations into campus environments deemed hostile to Jewish students. The result was swift: new protest regulations, disciplinary reforms, and oversight mechanisms. The policy demonstrates how budgetary leverage can produce concrete institutional change when antisemitism is treated as a governance and compliance issue.

United Nations Action Plan. The United Nations' January 2025 Action Plan to Enhance Monitoring and Response to Antisemitism is a meaningful symbolic step in the international recognition of antisemitism as a unique and enduring form of hatred. By promoting staff training, Holocaust education, cooperation with Jewish organizations, and digital hate monitoring, it sends a strong normative message and includes a call for "zero tolerance" of antisemitism across all member states.[24]

Nonetheless, four key criticisms have emerged.[25] First, the plan does not adopt the IHRA working definition, weakening its clarity on anti-Israel rhetoric. Second, it avoids naming Islamist or radical anti-Zionist antisemitism, despite their central role in recent global incidents. Third, the plan's credibility is undermined by ongoing institutional bias against Israel in UN bodies such as the Human Rights Council. Fourth, the plan is non-binding and lacks mechanisms for enforcement or accountability.[26] Overall, while the plan plays a valuable symbolic role, its impact will depend on whether these gaps are addressed in future implementation.

It is worth noting that in her most recent report (A/HRC/59/63), the special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance called on the United Nations to take concrete action, urging that: "The United Nations should implement effectively its Action Plan to Enhance

Monitoring and Response to Antisemitism." (§ 109).

European Union Strategy. The EU's antisemitism strategy includes over 90 actions across its 27 member states–ranging from Holocaust education and site protection to national action plans.[27] It offers a rare example of regional coordination with timelines and benchmarks. However, critics point to uneven implementation and the absence of binding mechanisms or sanctions, which limit its capacity to ensure compliance. Still, its structural scope and integration within broader democratic frameworks make it a promising institutional model.

Israel's "Voice of the People" Initiative. Launched by President Isaac Herzog, this consultative forum brings together 150 Jewish leaders from six continents to define shared priorities. Its first declaration named antisemitism as the central concern. Though non-binding, the initiative marks a breakthrough – Israeli decision-makers now recognize that Israel's foreign policy profoundly impacts Jewish communities worldwide, requiring attention to their voice in decision-making processes. While largely symbolic, it establishes an important foundation for future development.[28]

Ontario's Holocaust Curriculum Reform. In 2024, Ontario became the first Canadian province to mandate Holocaust education from Grade 6, supported by NGOs such as Liberation75. What makes the program unique is its comprehensive approach – integrating curriculum development, educator training, and community partnerships to foster early awareness and civic responsibility. It provides a replicable model for education-based prevention.[29]

JPPI's integrated Antisemitism Index encompasses three interconnected dimensions: attitudes toward Jews, antisemitic incidents, and perceptions among Jews. Examining these complementary indicators offers a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and assists in identifying effective intervention strategies.

Antisemitism in Western Europe and the United States

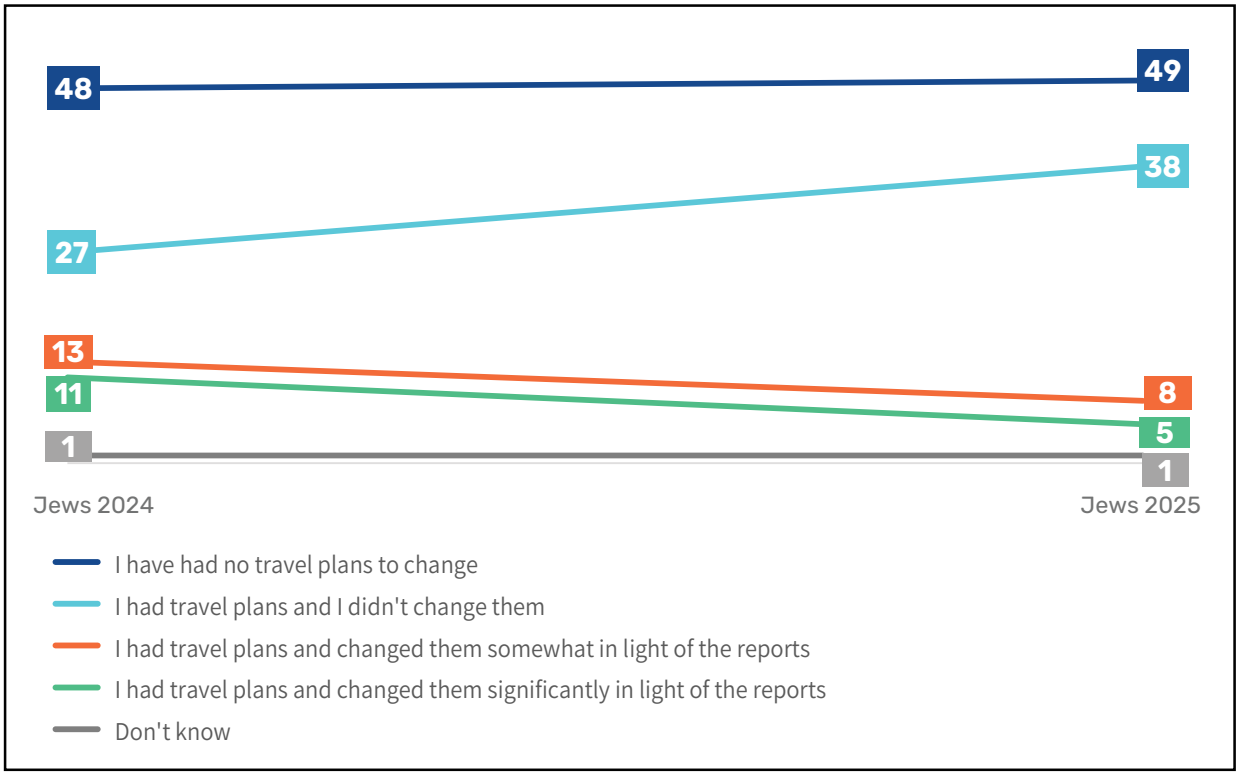
Data Point	Trend	U.S.	France	UK	Germany
Hold antisemitic views (%)	↑	24[a] (20)	34[c] (15)	10[d] (11)	12[e] (15)
Antisemitic Behavior					
Violent assaults	↑	196[a] (+21.7%)	106[e] (+24.7%)	201[d] (-24.4%)	272[e] (+100%)
Total incidents (extreme violence, assaults, damage, desecration, threats)	↑	9,354[b] [7,523]	1,570[e] [1,676]	3,528[d] [4,103]	8,614[e] [3,614]
Change from 2022	↑	+103%	-6.3%	-18.0%	+76.6%
Rate of incidents per 10,000 Jews	↑	13	39	59	195
Antisemitism as Perceived by Jews (%)					
Think antisemitism is a very serious or fairly serious problem	↑	90[b] (76)	93[c] (85)	92[d] (80)	90[f] (80)
Over the past 12 months, have been themselves the target of an antisemitic remark in person	↑	24[b]	68[c] (53)	24[d]	24[f]
Avoid displaying visible signs of their Judaism in public	↑	42[h] (22)	61[c] (41)	69[d] (46)	80[f] (40)
Considered emigrating because they do not feel safe in their countries	↑	9[h]	52[c] (46)	48[d] (33)	44[g] (25)
Avoid places in their neighborhood because they do not feel safe there as Jews	↑	17[a] (8)	66[c] (45)	68[d] (37)	65[g] (33)

Notes:

- Numbers without parentheses are for 2024. Numbers in square brackets are from 2023, while those in parentheses are the most recent prior figures available. 'N/A' = not available.
- The reason why Britain has the highest number of incidents per Jewish inhabitant is due to the more effective reporting process in the country compared to others.

a. ADL, Audit of Antisemitic Incidents, 2024: https://www.adl.org/resources/report/audit-antisemitic-incidents-2024
b. ADL, Audit of antisemitic Incidents in the USA 2022.
c. Ifop-Crif Le regard des Français sur le conflit israélo-palestinien et ses conséquences en France – Vague 3, April 2024; Ifop-AJC-Fondapol Radiographie de l'antisémitisme en 2024, April 2024
d. CST, Antisemitic Incidents Report, 2024: https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2024/02/01/antisemitic-incidents-report-2024
e. Antisemitism Worldwide Report 2024, Tel Aviv University, May 2025.
f. RIAS, Antisemitic Incidents in Germany, 2024: https://report-antisemitism.de/en
g. Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights' (FRA), December 2018.
h. 2024 Survey of American Jewish Opinion, AJC, May 2024.

In light of reports of growing antisemitism in various places around the world, have you changed your plans to travel abroad this year? (%)



JPPI Israeli Society Index survey, June 2024 and June 2025

PART 2 – Unresolved Questions in Shaping the Jewish Response

In interpreting the findings outlined above, several strategic dilemmas emerge that are critical to shaping effective responses. These dilemmas reflect the complex ideological landscape within which antisemitism now operates – and the equally complex perceptual environment facing Jewish communities, their allies, and their adversaries.

1. The Trump Paradox and Liberal Jewish Alienation

A striking paradox shapes American Jewish discourse: while the Trump administration took unprecedented steps to combat antisemitism in academia and international forums, many American Jews – especially liberals – remain deeply alienated from the political and cultural values associated with his MAGA (Make America Great Again) movement. This disconnect has resulted in the rejection of initiatives that may objectively advance Jewish safety and legitimacy. Any recommendation framework must account for this tension and build bridges that allow liberal Jews to support antisemitism measures without compromising their ethical and political convictions.

2. Engaging the Silent Majority

Most Americans – and Western citizens – are not antisemitic. Yet the discourse is increasingly dominated by vocal extremes. Jewish communities must develop strategies that speak to the moral instincts of the silent majority: emphasizing that antisemitism is not merely a Jewish issue, but a threat to the foundation of liberal democratic society. Framing antisemitism as a litmus test for democratic health – akin to racism, misogyny, or authoritarianism – can help activate latent support.

3. Preserving the Moral Gravity of the Antisemitism Accusation

Israeli officials and representatives of leading Jewish institutions argue that anti-Zionism – the denial of the Jewish people's right to national sovereignty – constitutes a form of antisemitism. They maintain that accepting the right of all peoples to self-determination while denying that same right to Jews in their ancestral homeland reflects a discriminatory double standard rooted in anti-Jewish bias. This view, reflected in the IHRA working definition, rests on the understanding that Jewish identity is not merely a private religious affiliation but a multidimensional peoplehood – grounded in shared ancestry, collective memory, language, law, and historical connection to the Land of Israel. Reducing Judaism to a theological identity erases these ethnic and national dimensions and misrepresents the empirical basis of Jewish continuity.

While this framework responds to real threats, it does not enjoy universal consensus, particularly among younger and progressive audiences. In the United States, 27% of Jewish Democratic voters supported candidates who advocate for a civic, non-Zionist vision of Israel – a state defined not as Jewish, but as neutral and universally inclusive. Many in this group view the rejection of Jewish nationhood not as antisemitism, but as a commitment to civic equality and post-national ideals. This shift presents a strategic dilemma: labeling all forms of anti-Zionism as antisemitic risks alienating potential allies and diminishing the normative force of the accusation. Preserving its moral gravity requires careful distinction between expressions of Jew-hatred and legitimate ideological dissent. A credible antisemitism strategy must defend Jewish dignity without conflating political critique with prejudice.

4. Fighting Antisemitism in Anti-Israel Environments

This conceptual dilemma becomes especially acute in elite, academic, and activist environments – particularly in North America and Western Europe – where the State of Israel is increasingly framed as a symbol of oppression. Within such spaces, Jewish individuals are often pressured to repudiate Israel as a precondition for social legitimacy. Antisemitism policy must therefore include a practical toolkit for advocacy in ideologically hostile ecosystems. This includes developing language frameworks that defend Jewish dignity, pluralism, and identity without relying on the legitimacy of Israeli policies. To build bridges with these communities, it is essential to distinguish between antisemitism and

political critique of Israel, while ensuring that this distinction does not excuse or normalize hatred targeting Jews under moral or political pretexts.

5. Avoiding the Victimhood Trap

While it is essential to document and respond forcefully to rising antisemitism, Jewish institutions must also avoid projecting a constant narrative of victimhood. Overemphasizing Jewish vulnerability – particularly in democratic societies – can backfire by reinforcing perceptions of separateness, disempowerment, or exceptional pleading.

Strategically, a victim-only posture limits coalition-building and may alienate younger Jews who seek agency, resilience, and universal moral alignment. Instead, the Jewish response should combine clear-eyed threat assessment with confidence, civic contribution, and moral leadership. Antisemitism must be confronted not through fear alone, but through a proactive vision of Jewish life as integral to the democratic and pluralistic future of society.

PART 3 – Policy Recommendations – Diaspora Communities:

After several decades of relative quiet following the Holocaust, antisemitism has alarmingly returned and been normalized. Sadly, it appears there is no sanctuary on Earth where Jews can truly feel secure. Facing this harsh reality, Jewish communities must recognize that animosity toward them will not simply disappear. It is essential to take responsibility for the personal security of Jews and actively strive to safeguard their well-being.

This involves pressing governments to develop strategic plans and pass legislation to combat antisemitism, advocating for robust anti-hate laws and their effective enforcement, exerting influence on online platforms to crack down on hate speech, actively combating Holocaust denial, and promoting education to foster acceptance by others. All these efforts should be prioritized and coordinated.

Coordinate Donor Advocacy against Foreign Influence in Academia: Mobilize pro-democracy and pro-Israel donors to investigate Qatari and other sources of anti-Israel funding in academia. Coordinate efforts to pressure educational institutions for transparency. Launch awareness campaigns about foreign influence. Lobby for government investigations into international funding sources and their impacts. Leverage alumni networks to amplify the call for accountability in higher education. Through these actions, combat anti-Zionist bias and preserve academic integrity.

Ensure Safe Learning Environments – Establishing National Centers to Combat Antisemitism in Educational Institutions: Establish in each country, a national center that collaborates closely with university and K-12 administrators. These centers should promote a culture of zero tolerance for antisemitism while fostering environments grounded in civic education, democratic values, and evidence-based inquiry. They should serve as a hub for collecting complaints

and intervening proactively with administrators. Additionally, these centers would empower Jewish students by equipping them with necessary skills and support networks to advocate effectively on campus and in the wider society.

Enhance Security in Vulnerable Jewish Communities: Implement a comprehensive strategy to protect ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods and other conspicuously Jewish communities by augmenting physical security measures, engaging with Jewish leaders to build political support, taking antisemitic attack complaints seriously, imposing severe punishments on perpetrators, establishing clear goals to combat such attacks, and improving policing and education in high-risk areas.

Combat Online Antisemitism: Exert pressure on online platforms to commit to inhibiting the spread of antisemitism. Support steps to ban China/Russia/Iran ownership of media and social media **as enacted in the 2024 TikTok legislation, which withstood Supreme Court scrutiny but has so far been ignored by the Trump administration.** Address the internet's role in fostering negative attitudes toward Jews and challenge the social media platforms' commercial incentives to permit fake news and hateful messages. International, governmental, and public pressure is required. In the United States, **acknowledge the constraints posed by First Amendment protections of free speech**, which complicate direct regulatory action

Policy Recommendations – Government of Israel:

- **Ensure Security of Diaspora Jewish Communities:** Israel must act to ensure the security of Diaspora Jews facing antisemitic threats when local authorities cannot. While authorities within each country have primary responsibility, Israel should assist Diaspora communities unable to eliminate serious antisemitic risks through training, information sharing, and emergency planning when required. Proactive measures are crucial for the security of world Jewry. This includes three complementary elements:
  - Offer security training to community members.
  - Monitor online threats against communities and share intelligence with them and local authorities for better protection.

Israel must act to ensure the security of Diaspora Jews facing antisemitic threats

- Prepare evacuation plans for distressed communities in volatile situations. Update contingency plans covering evacuation logistics and absorption in Israel (transport, employment, social integration etc.)
- **Establish an Israeli National Strategic Plan:** Israel, under Article 6 of the Nation-State Law, has a role to play in the coordinated effort to ensure the safety and well-being of Jewish communities around the world in the face of rising antisemitism. There is an urgent need

for a unified and multi-pronged approach to confront this resurgent threat. To advance this issue, the Institute established a steering committee headed by Natan Sharansky, tasked with preparing a strategic plan for the State of Israel to combat antisemitism.

- **Establish Premier US-Recognized Academic Degrees at Israeli Universities**: Given the challenges of antisemitism on college campuses worldwide and the hesitance of some Diaspora Jews to enroll in leading universities, there is a compelling opportunity for Israeli universities to develop and expand top-tier, US-recognized academic programs conducted in English. These initiatives would create an antisemitism-free academic environment attractive to foreign students. Additionally, ramping up training on combating antisemitism in gap-year programs could further enhance these academic offerings. These efforts would not only bolster educational excellence but could also foster stronger Israel-Diaspora relations.

Israel in the International Legal Arena in the Wake of the War in Gaza: Mounting Risk

Introduction

Since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7, 2023, the State of Israel has faced unprecedented challenges in the international legal arena. Amid the ongoing fighting with Hamas, Israel has encountered growing international criticism and, at times, grave allegations of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. Proceedings are currently underway in international courts, primarily the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and potentially also in foreign legal systems invoking universal jurisdiction. These developments pose a first-rate strategic threat to Israel, and affect not only Israel's political and military leadership, but also its ability to sell – and especially to purchase – weapons in many other countries. They also impact the economy, foreign relations, international support, and the overall legitimacy of the State of Israel.

This chapter analyzes Israel's status in the international legal arena in light of the war. It will also discuss the main sources of threat, review the legal arguments made against Israel and the international frameworks in which they are being addressed, and propose possible directions for legal, diplomatic and public advocacy responses.

Israel's Steadfast Commitment to the Laws of War

In recent years, and particularly since the horrors of October 7, some voices in Israel have called for the abandonment of the country's longstanding commitment to international humanitarian law. Nevertheless, from the first day of the fighting, and certainly since Israel began its coordinated effort to defend its borders, the IDF and other security bodies have acted within the bounds of international law. Their actions have been guided by the professional oversight of a robust legal apparatus – senior legal experts in the IDF and Israel's legal advisory system (the equivalent of the Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAG) in the U.S.

These operations have been monitored, even in pitched battle, by Israel's Supreme Court, in its capacity as the High Court of Justice, which heard numerous petitions regarding Israel's actions in Gaza.

When concerns have arisen that a specific military action might not align with international law, raising suspicion of war crimes, the IDF's investigative authorities, in tandem with relevant enforcement agencies, have scrutinized the incident, sometimes even in the face of domestic Israeli criticism of the enforcement operations.

In some cases, despite the proven strength and independence of Israel's legal system, and despite the fact that it acts to uphold the principle of "complementarity" – which stipulates that external courts (international or foreign national) should not intervene when a state conducts its own enforcement against alleged violations of international law – numerous legal proceedings have been initiated against Israel around the world. These developments pose an unprecedented legal and political challenge.

Below is a brief overview of the main legal threats against Israel: the investigation of a series of offenses by the International Criminal Court (ICC); charges of genocide brought before the International Court of Justice (ICJ); and enforcement actions pursued by various countries under the principle of universal jurisdiction. We also outline possible responses to each.

The war has provided momentum for the Palestinian-led "lawfare" campaign

It should be noted that the legal proceedings against Israel, in all the channels mentioned, are part of a sophisticated and, in some cases, coordinated legal campaign led by the Palestinians together with hostile or enemy states. This anti-Israel campaign has been underway for over two decades, but the current war has significantly intensified it and provided momentum for the Palestinian-led "lawfare" campaign.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) and the War in Gaza

Israel is not a party to the Rome Statute, which established the jurisdiction of the ICC. Accordingly, Israel has consistently argued that the ICC has no authority to adjudicate matters involving

Israel. Moreover, from Israel's perspective, the Palestinian Authority (PA) is not a "state" capable of acceding to the Rome Statute, and in any case the Palestinian Authority is limited to the jurisdiction granted it by the Interim Agreements, and therefore cannot delegate authority to the ICC over matters beyond its legal control.

Nevertheless, the PA joined the Rome Statute in January 2015, and retroactively "authorized" the ICC to adjudicate claims regarding crimes allegedly committed during Operation Protective Edge in July 2014. In 2021, the ICC found that it has jurisdiction over the territories of the "State of Palestine," including East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. This opened the door for an ongoing systematic inquiry into the actions of the IDF and Israeli leadership during military operations in "the State of Palestine", and more recently, the ongoing war in Gaza.

As a result, when the current war began, the ICC expanded its investigations to include Israel's actions in the present conflict. The investigation led ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan to request (May 2024) that arrest warrants be issued for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and then-Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant. In November 2024, the three judges in the pre-trial chamber approved Khan's request and issued the warrants. This was an unprecedented measure against a democratic Western state and reflects a significant deterioration in how the international legal community perceives Israel's wartime conduct.

The issuance of arrest warrants against Israeli officials places Israel in serious legal jeopardy internationally. This may affect diplomatic relations, international legitimacy, and how Israel conducts future military operations.

In his petition for the warrants, Prosecutor Khan and his team accused Israel of crimes, such as "the intentional starvation of a civilian population," "deliberate harm to civilians," and the "disproportionate use of force." Khan argued that Israel's "siege on Gaza," the large-scale air strikes, and the control over aid crossings constitute violations of international humanitarian law. At the same time, he accused Hamas of bearing responsibility for the massacre of civilians, systematic rape, hostage-taking, and the use of civilians as human shields – all of which are considered severe crimes under the Rome Statute. Arrest warrants were also issued for senior Hamas leaders Yahya Sinwar, Mohammed Deif, and Ismail Haniyeh, who were subsequently killed by Israel.

What distinguishes the current proceedings is that, for the first time, the ICC prosecutor has placed Israel and Hamas – a democratic entity and an Islamist terrorist organization – on the same legal footing. This move has sparked fierce criticism from the Israeli government, Western leaders, and legal experts who argue that it represents a fundamental moral imbalance. This is also the first time arrest warrants have been issued for serving Israeli leaders, obliging – at least in theory – the more than 100 state signatories to the Rome Statute to arrest Gallant or Netanyahu if they are in their jurisdiction.

Although the ICC lacks independent enforcement power for its warrants, their mere existence

restricts the movements of the prime minister and the former defense minister, exposes other senior Israeli figures to legal risk, undermines Israel's status as a legitimate democratic state, and could set a precedent for future legal action against IDF commanders or defense officials.

Impact on the Political, Military, and Legal Leadership: One of the most troubling aspects of the ICC proceedings is the risk that Israeli politicians, soldiers, officers, generals, and even legal advisers and military prosecutors currently face or could be subject to in future investigations. It is also possible that other arrest warrants have already been issued, under seal, against military officials. Further, Israel's internal oversight system, which includes the High Court of Justice and the Military Advocate General's Corps, which in the past served as a legal shield against foreign legal claims (complementarity) may lose its efficacy. Allegations that the Israeli system does not act in good faith, or that its internal oversight mechanisms are ineffective could deepen the risk that other states will seek to invoke "universal jurisdiction" to prosecute Israeli officers and legal personnel, as detailed below.

Diplomatic and Political Consequences: The mere existence of an international criminal proceeding against Israel's leadership sets a dangerous precedent. It fuels campaigns to portray Israel as a rogue state that violates international law, contributes to Israel's international isolation, and provides ammunition to BDS and other anti-Israel organizations. Some Western countries have already announced that they will honor the ICC arrest warrants. Additionally, this process encourages other countries and organizations, such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ), to take similar action in the international arena – for example, by promoting adverse legal opinions on Israel's occupation of the West Bank.

The Strategic Challenge and Israel's Response: Israel's response includes both diplomatic and legal efforts. On the legal front, for the first time, and contrary to its initial stance not to officially cooperate, Israel appeared directly before the ICC to challenge the arrest warrants. On the strategic front, Israel mobilized the Biden administration and later the Trump administration. President Biden declared that equating Israel to Hamas was an "outrage." Upon his return to office, President Trump imposed sanctions on the ICC prosecutor and later also on the judges involved in the proceedings against Israel, as well as anyone assisting them. However, the ability to halt or cancel the proceedings is a matter of the independence of the ICC Prosecutor's Office, which is largely, but not entirely, insulated from political pressure.

The mere existence of an international criminal proceeding against Israel's leadership sets a dangerous precedent

In the legal arena, Israel emphasizes its efforts to distinguish between combatants and civilians, its internal oversight mechanisms, and the fact that Hamas uses civilians as human shields. However, as the war drags on and the number of civilian

casualties rises, it becomes increasingly difficult to convince the world of the validity of Israel's position.

The Legal Proceedings Against Israel in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over Allegations of Genocide in the Gaza Strip

On December 29, 2023, South Africa filed a suit at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against the State of Israel, claiming that Israel was in breach of its obligations under the Genocide Convention for its actions in Gaza since October 7, 2023. South Africa alleged that Israel is committing genocide – the systematic destruction of a significant portion of the Palestinian people, or at least attempting to do so – through military and economic means, and that public statements indicate genocidal intent.

Since this case was filed, several other countries have intervened in support of South Africa. Israel has rejected the allegations outright, arguing that they are a complete distortion of reality and a cynical exploitation of international legal mechanisms for political purposes.

This case is considered one of the most dramatic legal events in the international arena since the establishment of the State of Israel, placing it under unprecedented legal and moral scrutiny.

Cause of Action: Violation of the Genocide Convention

South Africa's legal argument is based on the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which Israel helped to draft, and ratified in 1950. Under the Convention, member states are obligated not only to refrain from committing genocide, but also to prevent it and punish its perpetrators.

South Africa claimed that:

1. **Genocidal intent** is evidenced by Israel's pattern of conduct in Gaza, including mass killing of civilians, destruction of civilian infrastructure, denial of humanitarian aid, and cutting off water, food, and electricity supplies. That is, South Africa has accused Israel of deliberately inflicting conditions of life intended to destroy Palestinians in Gaza. In this regard, they view the continued warnings and evacuations of Palestinians in different areas as intended to harm, rather than protect.

2. **Public statements by senior Israeli figures**, including statements by ministers, Knesset members, and even by the prime minister, also indicate genocidal intent.

3. **Failure to prevent and punish incitement to genocide** – that is, even if no actual genocide has occurred, Israel has failed to prevent it or punish those who, through their public statements, seem to advocate it.

4. **Continued actions despite warnings** – More of a supporting note than a central claim, Israel is alleged to persist with its policies

despite international warnings and calls for a ceasefire.

Israel, for its part, has rejected these claims, maintaining that its objective is not to destroy the Palestinian people, but to fight Hamas – a terrorist organization that carried out the deadliest attack in Israel's history. Israel highlighted its efforts to distinguish between combatants and civilians, its opening of humanitarian crossings, its warnings to the civilian population before airstrikes, and the fact that Hamas uses civilians as human shields.

ICJ Proceedings – Key Stages

Application for a provisional order (interim relief): In the first phase, South Africa submitted an application for **provisional relief** – i.e., urgent Court orders even before deciding the case. Among the measures requested: immediate cessation of military operations in Gaza, ensuring the supply of water, food, and electricity, opening humanitarian crossings, and refraining from statements that incite to genocide. On January 26, 2024, the ICJ accepted some of the requests. The Court did not order a ceasefire but did require Israel to take all measures necessary to **prevent genocide, prevent, and punish incitement to genocide, preserve evidence** related to its actions in Gaza, and **report to the Court within a month** on the measures taken.

This ruling did **not** determine that genocide is occurring in Gaza, but it affirmed South Africa's position that there is an "immediate risk" of genocide and that it is plausible that genocide is already underway, and that preventive measures are therefore justified. It is important to note that the legal threshold that South Africa had to meet for provisional measures was very low, and the Court's interim ruling is not indicative of the decision in the main proceedings.

Main Proceedings

Following the provisional measures, the main case will proceed. The Court will be left to determine whether Israel has indeed violated its obligations under the Genocide Convention. This process is expected to **take years** and will involve submission of legal briefs, evidence, expert witness testimony, and public hearings. Both sides will have the opportunity to present their positions in full.

A substantive ruling against Israel could be devastating – not only in the legal arena, but more significantly in terms of reputation and moral standing. A determination by this authoritative international judicial body that Israel has committed genocide would likely tarnish Israel's name for generations, encourage boycotts, and make the country the target of widespread condemnation, sanctions, and other consequences imposed by signatory states of the Genocide Convention.

The ongoing ICJ proceedings and the potential for severe rulings against Israel further bolster the Palestinian narrative in the international arena. Already, many countries have come out in support of South Africa's position, and some have even sought to intervene in support of its case against Israel.

Criticism of the Proceedings

In Israel and allied countries, there is pushback against the suit having been filed in the first place. Some see it as a cynical manipulation of international law, politicized by South Africa to exploit a legal system meant to protect vulnerable populations to attack a democratic state responding to a devastating terrorist attack. Critics have also noted that the proceedings ignore the context of October 7 – the slaughter, rape, and abduction Hamas visited on Israel – while portraying Gaza as a passive victim. Israel also contends that the case undermines the laws of armed conflict, under which it operates, and that it goes to extraordinary lengths – far beyond legal requirements – to minimize harm to civilians, while Hamas deliberately violates humanitarian law and uses civilians as human shields.

Summary

The case currently being pursued against Israel in the ICJ under the Genocide Convention poses a grave legal and reputational threat to Israel. Although the Court has not ruled that genocide has been committed, its willingness to hear the case and its issuance of provisional measures cast a heavy pall over Israel, damaging its image and triggering broad international repercussions. This is a long-term legal and strategic challenge. It will require Israel to mount comprehensive legal, public-advocacy, and diplomatic efforts to defend its reputation, safeguard its international legitimacy, and circumvent a dangerous precedent that could constrain future counterterrorism operations.

The ICJ Advisory Opinion on Israeli Control over the Territories – Background, Substance, and Implications

One of the key strategies pursued by the Palestinians and hostile states involves exploiting Israel's relative diplomatic isolation and the automatic majority against it in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and other UN bodies. On December 30, 2022, UNGA passed a dramatic resolution requesting an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding the legality of Israel's "prolonged occupation" of the West Bank (Judea and Samaria), East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

This was not the first time that the "advisory opinion" mechanism had been used against Israel. Notably, two decades ago, the ICJ issued an advisory opinion regarding the legality of the separation barrier Israel erected in response to the Second Intifada. This legal tool makes it possible to bypass the UN Security Council, where the U.S. veto usually shields Israel from hostile resolutions. Although ICJ advisory opinions are not legally binding, they carry significant weight due to the Court's status, and can significantly affect Israel's the legitimacy of Israeli policy, its diplomatic relations, and even future legal proceedings in other forums such as the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Questions Posed to the ICJ

UNGA's 2022 resolution asked the ICJ to answer two central questions:

1. What are the legal consequences of Israel's continued occupation, settlement activity, and de facto annexation of the Palestinian territories since 1967, including legislative and enforcement measures taken by Israel, especially in East Jerusalem?
2. How does Israeli policy affect the legal status of the occupation, and what are the legal implications of this for all states and for the UN?

In essence, UNGA requested that the ICJ examine the legality of the occupation itself, not just specific violations committed within it.

Israel's Position

Unlike the genocide case, Israel chose not to appear before the ICJ in the course of these proceedings, and categorically rejected the request for an advisory opinion, arguing that it constituted **a politicization of international law**. Israel contended that the petition was an attempt to bypass direct negotiations as stipulated in the Oslo Accords, and to produce a legal ruling designed to apply unilateral pressure.

Israel also asserted that the occupation resulted from a defensive war in 1967, not an act of aggression; that the status of the territories is "subject to negotiation" under the Oslo Accords; and that unilateral decisions by international bodies do not alter the substantive legal framework.

The ICJ Decision

After a nearly two-year process, the ICJ delivered its advisory opinion in July 2024. From Israel's perspective, the opinion was exceptionally harsh and problematic.

The ICJ reaffirmed its earlier finding that Judea, Samaria, Gaza (despite the 2005 disengagement), and East Jerusalem are occupied territories. It added that while a prolonged occupation is not inherently illegal under international law, the "occupying power" must meet all obligations under international law, foremost among them that a military occupation is temporary by nature. Thus, the Oslo Accords do not diminish Israel's obligations under international law, including the duty to end the occupation.

After a nearly two-year process, the ICJ delivered its advisory opinion in July 2024

The Court further ruled that Israel's practices, particularly the settlement enterprise, constitute a breach of Israel's obligations under international law and amount to "de facto annexation" of large portions of these territories.

Even more severe, the ICJ did not determine that Israel is merely violating the Palestinian right of self-determination, but that Israel was committing race-based discrimination in the West Bank – a claim that plays directly into accusations of "apartheid" leveled at Israel. Additionally, the

advisory opinion alleged a long list of violations of international humanitarian law, including home demolitions, restrictions on movement, exploitation of natural resources (water, land), and the imposition of Israeli law on occupied territories.

As a result, the advisory opinion concluded that Israel's continued presence in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem is "illegal" and that Israel must end its presence in the territories "as soon as possible," including halting all settlement activity and dismantling all existing Jewish enclaves. Furthermore, Israel must pay reparations for the damage it has caused.

As if this were not enough, the Court ruled that all countries, international organizations, and the United Nations are obligated not to recognize the "legality of the occupation," or to assist in its continuation. It went on to advise the UN General Assembly and Security Council to consider steps they must take to put an end to the Israeli occupation.

Legal and Policy Implications

Although, as noted, the ICJ advisory opinion is non-binding, it does carry serious potential consequences for Israel that are difficult to fully assess at this stage. These include:

- **Impact on bilateral relations and international organizations, especially the European Union** – The advisory opinion's categorical and harsh language places even Israel's closest allies in a highly problematic position. The explicit call for measures to end the "illegal occupation" poses, and will continue to pose, a dilemma for decision-makers in these countries (certainly in light of growing public pressure) concerning the nature and extent of their engagement with Israel – from security cooperation and weapons supply to trade relations and cultural or academic exchanges.
- Among other things, the opinion could spur tougher actions against Israeli settlements and key individuals associated with them and intensify the product boycotts already in play across Europe. Toward the end of the previous U.S. administration, steps were taken against entities and individuals supporting the settlements – and this trend could gain momentum.
- **Expanding ICC investigation of Israeli officials** – Even before the ICJ opinion, Jewish settlement activity in the West Bank was an ICC focal point. The ruling provides significant encouragement for further investigation and additional arrest warrants for high-ranking Israelis.
- Impact on peace prospects and international recognition of a "Palestinian state" – The ICJ opinion reinforces hardline Palestinian positions and could bolster wider international recognition of the "State of Palestine." In summer 2025, Australia, Canada Malta, Portugal, and the United Kingdom announced plans to recognize Palestinian

statehood, joining the more than 140 countries that have already done so.

- This could further complicate the path to resolving the conflict. In light of the ruling, Palestinians may feel no incentive to agree to any compromise that includes "concessions" to Israel. Conversely, Israel will find it increasingly difficult to accept any solution requiring a complete withdrawal from East Jerusalem or the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of Israelis from the West Bank settlements.
- **Economic repercussions** – The advisory opinion may accelerate problematic trends against Israel by commercial entities that wish to avoid association with a state accused of war crimes and other perceived unlawful conduct.

Summary

The ICJ advisory opinion on the legality of Israeli control of the contested territories is a significant inflection point in the legal-diplomatic arena and must be taken seriously. It perpetuates the trend of using international **legal mechanisms to pressure Israel politically,** effectively changing the rules of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although the advisory opinion is non-binding, the opinion could evolve into a foundational document influencing the policies of countries, international institutions, and civil society organizations. As such, it presents legal, diplomatic, and reputational risks that Israel should prepare for – alongside its management of the ongoing political and security conflict.

The Legal Risk to Israelis Under the Principle of Universal Jurisdiction

Introduction

The war in Gaza, started by Hamas on October 7, 2023, has sparked significant developments in the international legal arena. Beyond formal legal proceedings and media scrutiny, is the threat of the principle of **universal jurisdiction** being invoked against Israeli public figures, military commanders, soldiers, and legal advisers suspected of war crimes or crimes against humanity.

Under international law, the universal jurisdiction principle allows states to prosecute individuals suspected of particularly heinous crimes (such as war crimes, genocide, and torture), even if the crimes were not committed within their territory or involving their nationals. The principle is grounded in the idea that such crimes harm the entire international community, giving all states a vested interest in prosecuting them.

In recent years, with the strengthening of international law and expanded information access, the risk that the principle will be applied to Israelis has increased, particularly in European countries with appropriate legislation, solid evidence, the presence of the accused inside their territory, and legal entities or human rights organizations ready to initiate proceedings.

Israel's legal exposure in the international arena is growing. High-risk targets include senior

political figures (such as the prime minister and other senior officials), high-ranking IDF officers, military legal advisers, and even rank-and-file soldiers, especially those involved in controversial operations or with significant public visibility. The proceedings are generally initiated by a prosecutor or local judge and usually triggered by reports from human rights organizations or Palestinian diplomatic missions. The legal process encompasses several stages: preliminary examination, investigation, the issuance of arrest warrants, and in some cases, extradition requests. Recently, a number of organizations, the Hind Rajab Foundation (HRF) among them, have begun filing legal complaints against Israeli soldiers and reservists in many different countries, based on information gathered from social media platforms – often due to the unawareness of soldiers that their social media posts or event IDF or media publications about them may carry serious consequences. In a number of instances, Israel received advance information and was able to extricate Israelis from countries where criminal complaints had been filed against them.

The war in Gaza has heightened this risk due to wide media exposure, abundant documentation, and perceptions that Israel uses excessive force. To reduce this exposure, Israel must take legal and diplomatic steps: preserving the independence of its judiciary (under the complementarity principle), thoroughly documenting IDF operations, monitoring travel by senior officials, fostering understandings with friendly countries, and conducting effective international public diplomacy to clarify the difference between legitimate military actions and war crimes, while emphasizing Hamas's use of civilians as human shields.

Summary

The legal risk to Israelis under universal jurisdiction is increasing as the Gaza war continues and the global perception of Israel becomes more critical. Although few actual prosecutions have occurred so far, the legal and political groundwork has been laid.

International Legal Proceedings Against Israel – Toward a Complex Legitimacy Crisis

The international legal system now poses an unprecedented challenge to Israel. In 2024 and 2025 parallel legal processes were initiated – criminal, state-level, and advisory – including at the ICC and the ICJ, as well as the application of universal jurisdiction by several countries. The cumulative effect of these proceedings is not just quantitative but also qualitative – they fuel each other, reinforce negative narratives, and undermine Israel's legitimacy on the international stage. This is not just a legal threat; it is an ongoing campaign of political and reputational delegitimization.

One serious consequence of this is an erosion of the credibility of Israel's legal system, which has in the past served as a protective shield against international proceedings. Today, trust in Israel's legal institutions is waning, especially in light of the ICJ rulings, the ICC's advancing criminal investigation, and the invocation of universal jurisdiction by democratic states. Practical repercussions are already emerging: paralysis among senior officials, fear of international travel, and restrictions on military, legal, and diplomatic activity.

Political, Diplomatic, and Legal Consequences

The legal ramifications are not confined to courtrooms; they extend to the political/diplomatic, economic, and public spheres. In 2024 alone, nine resolutions condemning Israel were passed by the UN General Assembly, most in connection to Israel's actions in Gaza. Colombia, Turkey, and South Africa have called for boycotts of Israeli products, or the cessation of security cooperation with Israel.

European ICC member states may be obligated to enforce warrants if issued. This could restrict the freedom of movement of senior Israeli officials, or even prevent them from attending international summits. Israel is experiencing growing isolation, including restrictions on its participation in international defense exhibitions.

The international legal system now poses an unprecedented challenge to Israel

At the same time, a new academic front has opened: universities, foundations, and scholars around the world are boycotting Israeli institutions and researchers. In a few cases, scientific collaborations have been terminated even after contracts were signed.

The business sector has also been affected: Scandinavian pension funds have announced their divestment from companies active in Israeli settlements, and Israeli tech firms report a decline in the confidence of international investors due to fear of sanctions.

Recommended Courses of Action

In the face of these legal threats, Israel requires a comprehensive, multi-pronged response encompassing law, diplomacy, public advocacy, and internal oversight:

- **Legislation and the establishment of an organizational and legal defense framework for IDF personnel abroad:** The scope of the threat necessitates formulation of a national policy and a protective framework for IDF service members, including preventive measures, such as training on the risks stemming from social media use; monitoring publications that might endanger soldiers; legal action against organizations seeking to harm IDF soldiers, and providing legal protection and financial support for soldiers facing prosecution abroad.
- **Enhancing public diplomacy in the legal arena:** Systematic documentation of all offensives; operational explanations; and the publication of video footage and legal briefs for international audiences.
- **Mobilizing senior international legal experts:** To encourage support for Israel's positions, and the publication of substantiating legal opinions by internationally renowned jurists.
- **Legal action against Hamas:** Gathering testimony and evidence on rape, abduction, and shooting attacks (rockets and bullets); building a counter-narrative in the legal and public diplomacy spheres.
- **Transparent internal oversight:** Publishing independent investigations, including reports by non-governmental public committees, to demonstrate accountability and transparency to the international community.

Overall Summary

Jewish history is rife with attempts to marginalize, delegitimize, or erase our presence from the world. And yet, time and again, the Jewish people has endured these challenges – and thrived. The challenge we face today is no less serious. It demands an understanding that antisemitism and the legal campaign against Israel are not separate battles, but fronts in the same war. A war that is not only against Jews, but against the resilience that sustains us.

The international legal campaign is not new to the State of Israel, but the war in Gaza has amplified and inflamed it. Understanding the legal context, the challenges and risks – alongside building strategic legal and diplomatic response capabilities – is essential to preserving Israel's legitimacy, deterrence, and operational freedom over the medium and long term. This struggle is not only with prosecutors and judges – it is also with public opinion, the media, and international consensus. In this battle, law, policy, and public diplomacy must act as one.

The Legal Dimension in News Coverage of Israel: Trends and Data

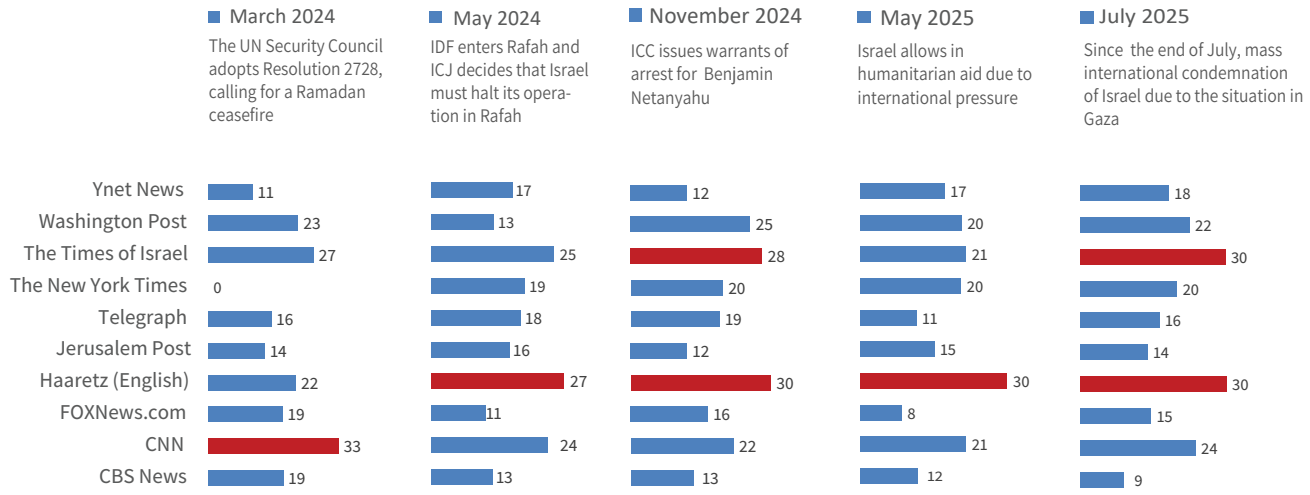
The following graph presents an analysis of the percentage of news coverage about Israel that includes legal-related keywords such as "The Hague," "war crimes," "international law," and others.

The analysis was conducted across major English-language news outlets, both Israeli and international. The findings are presented for periods when legal issues were central, including this past July, when Israel faced an unprecedented wave of international criticism. Key insights from the graph include:

- **Legal topics are common in both international and Israeli media** – In major events, the share of coverage on this topic ranged roughly between 10% and 30%, though this varies greatly from one outlet to another.
- **No major difference between Israeli and international coverage volumes** – In some cases, Israeli media coverage even exceeded international levels. For example, in Haaretz and The Times of Israel, the share reached about 30%.
- **No single peak period identified** – Based on the numbers, there is no clear period when legal-related coverage was at its highest, as the proportion varies widely by outlet. For instance, in The New York Times, the share was around 20% throughout the events.

In conclusion: Terms related to international law appear frequently in both international and Israeli English-language media. Based on the findings, there is no indication of an overall increase in the percentage of coverage containing international law-related keywords in connection with Israel.

Israel-Related articles mentioning ICC/War-Crimes etc., monthly percent by news outlets based on 30,534 articles



Research Summary: The Legality of Israeli and Iranian Actions During Operation Rising Lion (June 12-24, 2025) as Discussed in the Media and Legal Forums

A new Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI) study examined, using artificial intelligence (AI), media outlets with a combined reach of over 2 billion monthly visitors. The findings show that during the 12-day campaign, Operation Rising Lion, there was extensive media engagement with questions concerning the legality of Israel's actions in the fighting, but relatively few concerning the legality of Iran's actions.

The study reviewed 17 leading global news outlets and found that of the hundreds of items addressing Israel's and Iran's adherence to international law during the fighting, 77% of the items published focused on Israel, and only 23% on Iran. This imbalance was even more pronounced in Al Jazeera, where the proportion of references to Israel's actions – mostly critical – reached about 92%.

Background: Why Examine References to "Legality"?

The use of legal rhetoric such as "violation of international law" or "war crimes" helps frame criticism (or support) of one side of the conflict in a manner that lends additional credibility to the critique or endorsement.

It is important to stress that the legal arena has come to occupy an increasingly central role in efforts to delegitimize the State of Israel. By labeling Israel as a "criminal state" – including accusations of "genocide," "apartheid," and similar terms – a negative perception of Israel is becoming entrenched among wide audiences.

Methodology

The study identified 1,348 articles published during Operation Rising Lion on the English-language websites of 17 major global media outlets that reached 2.11 billion people in June 2025 (according to Similarweb). These articles were located using keywords presumed to be linked to issues of legality (e.g., "civilians," "law," "international law," etc.).

Next, using advanced AI tools, the study filtered for articles that actually addressed the legality of actions under international law in the context of the fighting between Iran and Israel.

Finally, with the assistance of these AI tools, a deeper analysis was conducted. This included identifying who was raising the issue of legality – whether Iran, Israel, a third country, or a non-state actor (such as journalists, human rights organizations, legal experts, and the like). The analysis also classified the "tone" of the coverage (critical, supportive, or neutral/unbiased) and broke down the specific legal issues discussed in the publications.

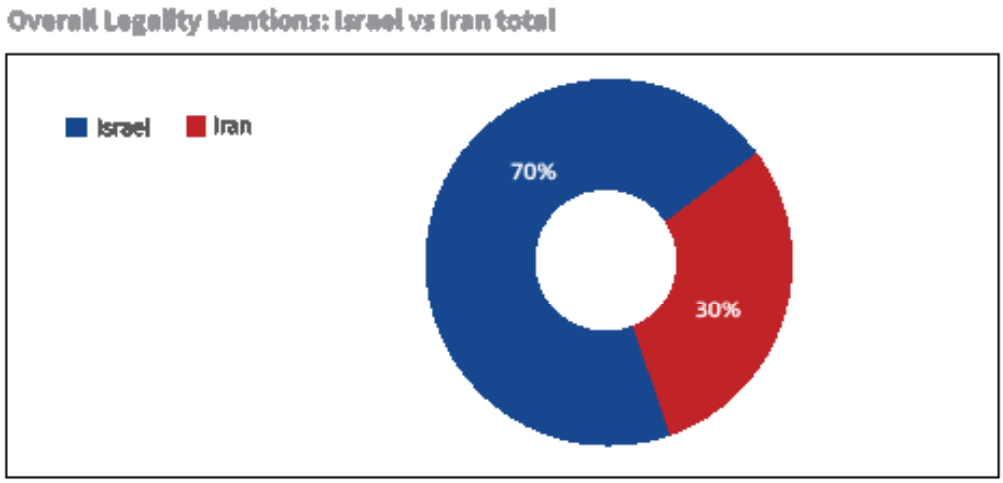
In addition to examining news websites, the study also reviewed leading professional legal forums (blogs) where international law experts – regarded as influential in the Western legal discourse – participate.

Findings

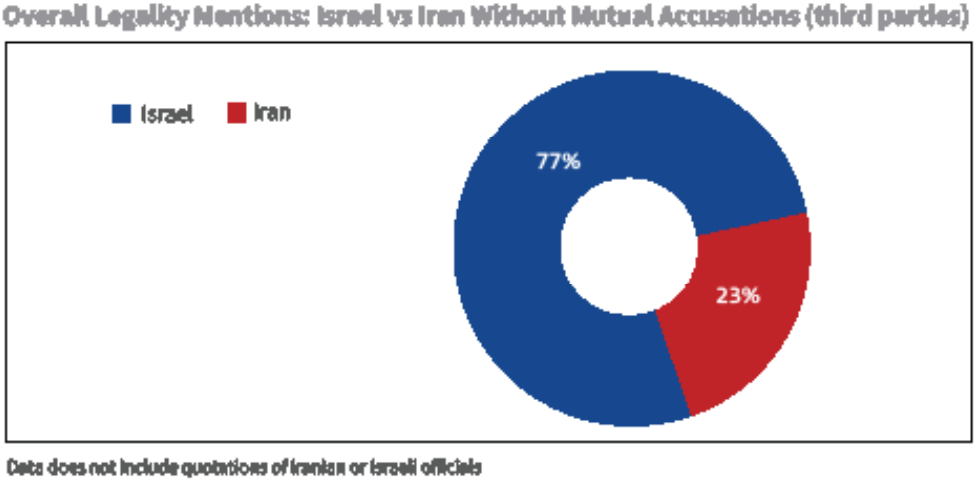
1. Ratio of References to the Legality of Iran's Actions vs. Israel's Actions

Of the 1,348 articles collected from the media outlets listed above, which contained content with a potential connection to "legality," 242 articles explicitly addressed legality in the context of the fighting. Of these:

- 176 articles (about 70%) dealt with the legality of Israel's actions.
- 76 articles (about 30%) dealt with the legality of Iran's actions.



However, this picture is incomplete: A substantial portion of media references to "legality" were merely quotations of official accusations made by either side against the other (e.g., Iranian or Israeli claims that harm to civilians constitutes a war crime), or self-justifications of their own actions (e.g., Iran claiming it acted under the "right to self-defense").



Thus, the real question is: "How does the world – meaning actors other than Israel or Iran – regard the legality of each side's actions?"

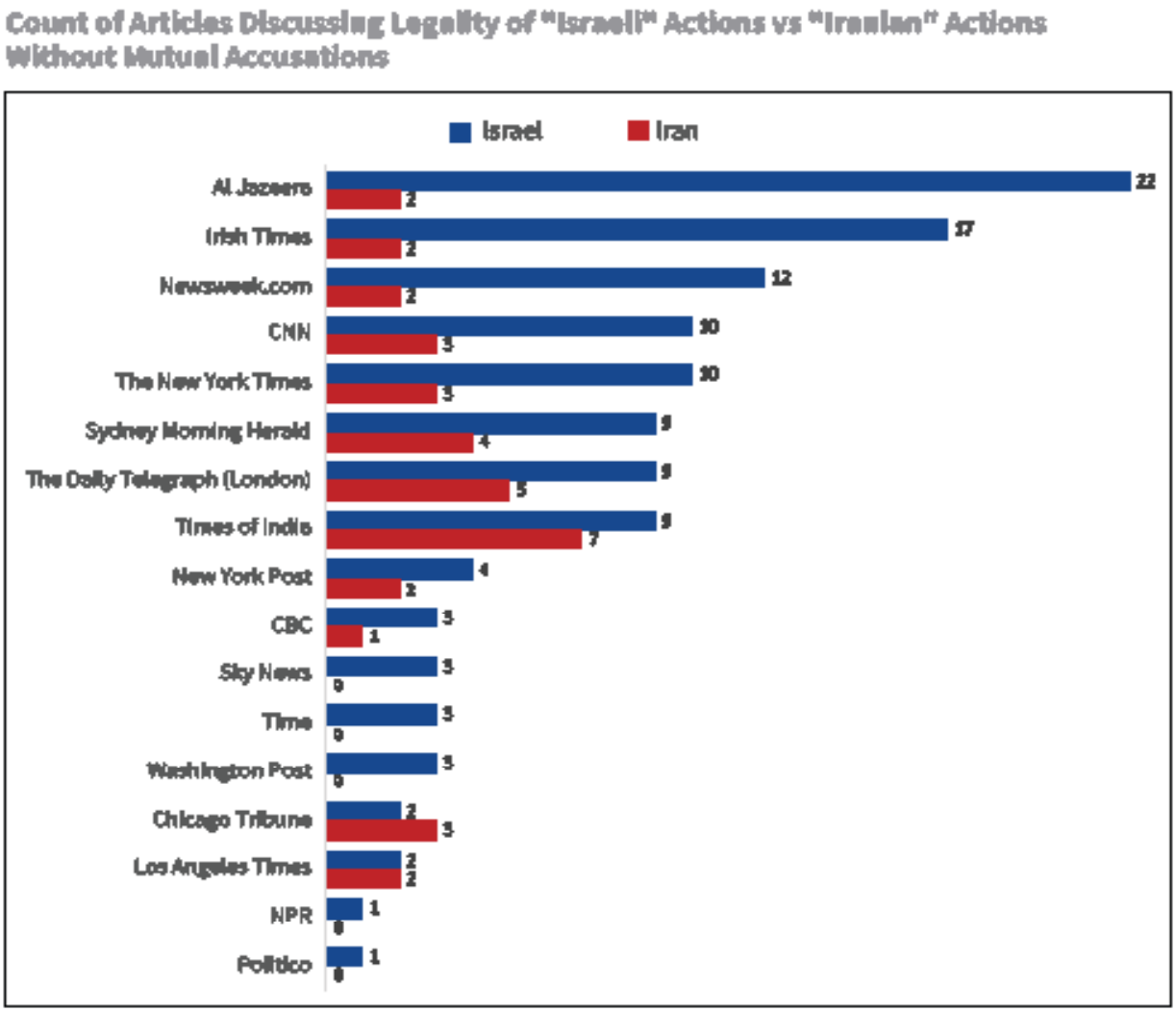
When excluding mutual accusations and self-justifications, and examining only third-party references, the results were:

- 120 references addressed the legality of Israel's actions
- Only 36 references addressed the legality of Iran's actions

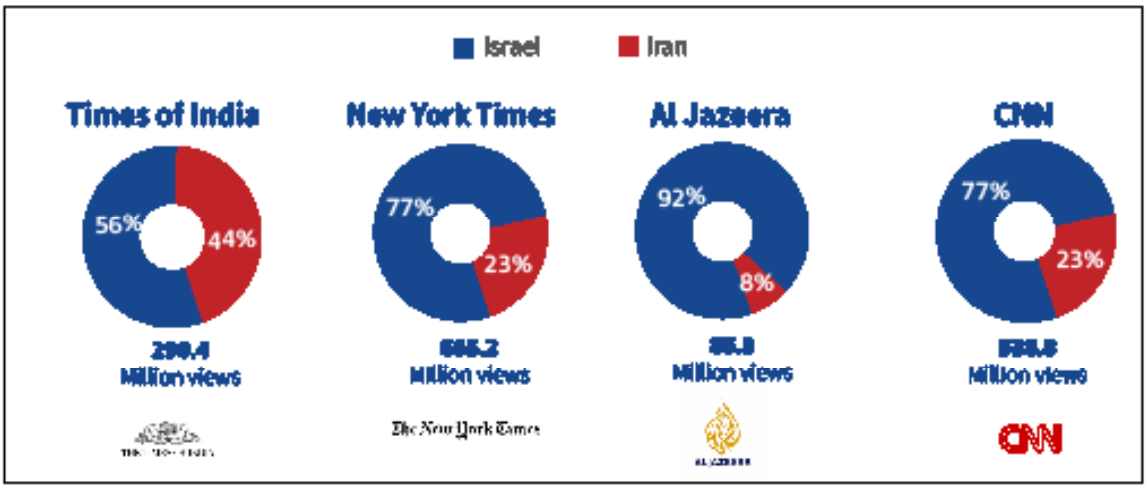
In other words, about 77% of third-party references focused on Israel, while only 23% focused on Iran.

2. Distribution by Media Outlet

The following bar chart illustrates the distribution of references to the legality of Israeli and Iranian actions, excluding articles that consisted solely of "mutual recriminations" or self-justifications by state officials. That is, the chart shows third-party references – such as those made by journalists, experts, NGOs, or others.



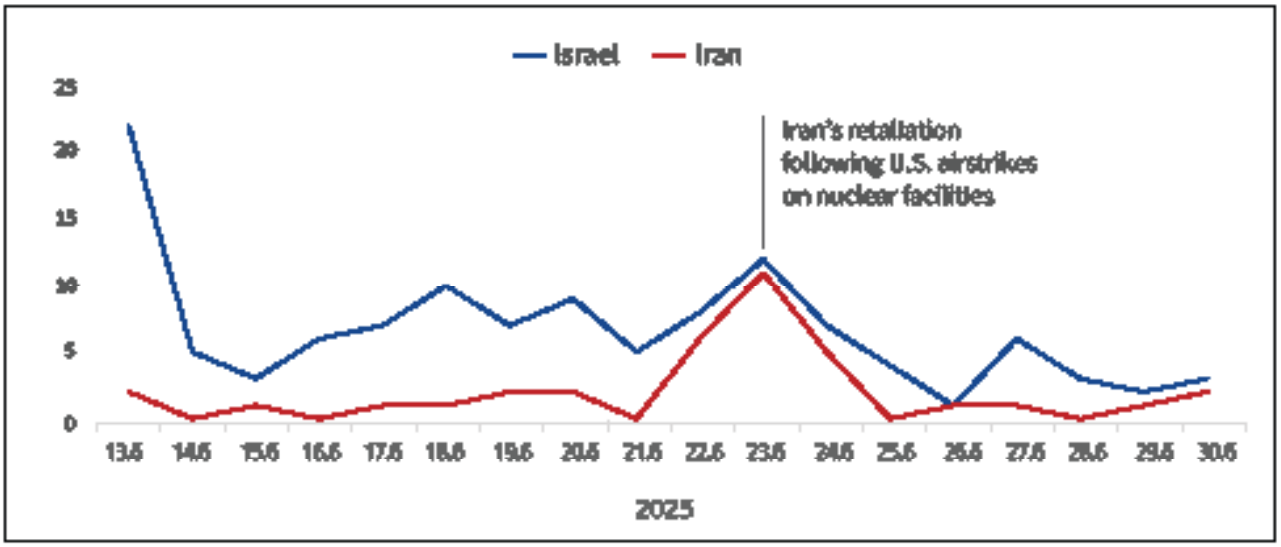
The ratio of media legality references regarding Iranian and Israeli actions during Operation Rising Lion (excluding direct quotations of officials)



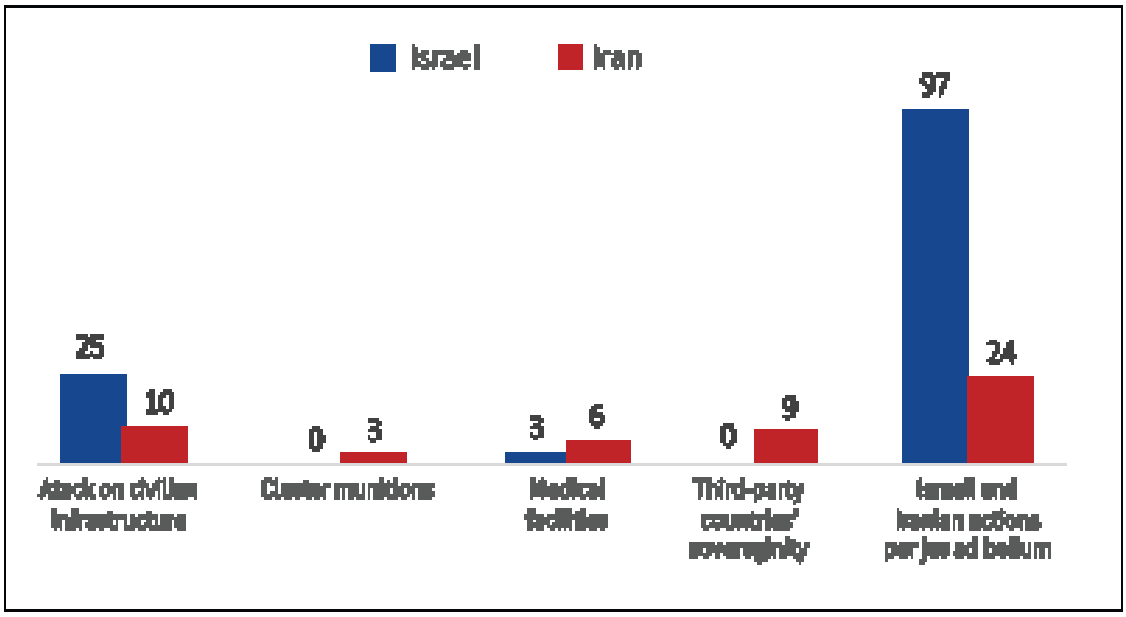
3. Distribution Over the Course of the Fighting

Unsurprisingly, in the opening days of the conflict the discussion focused primarily on the question of Israel's decision to launch Operation Rising Lion. Accordingly, most of the discussion in those days revolved around the legality of Israel's initial strikes. However, as shown in the following graph, throughout almost the entire duration of the fighting, references to the legality of Israel's actions consistently outnumbered those concerning Iran's actions.

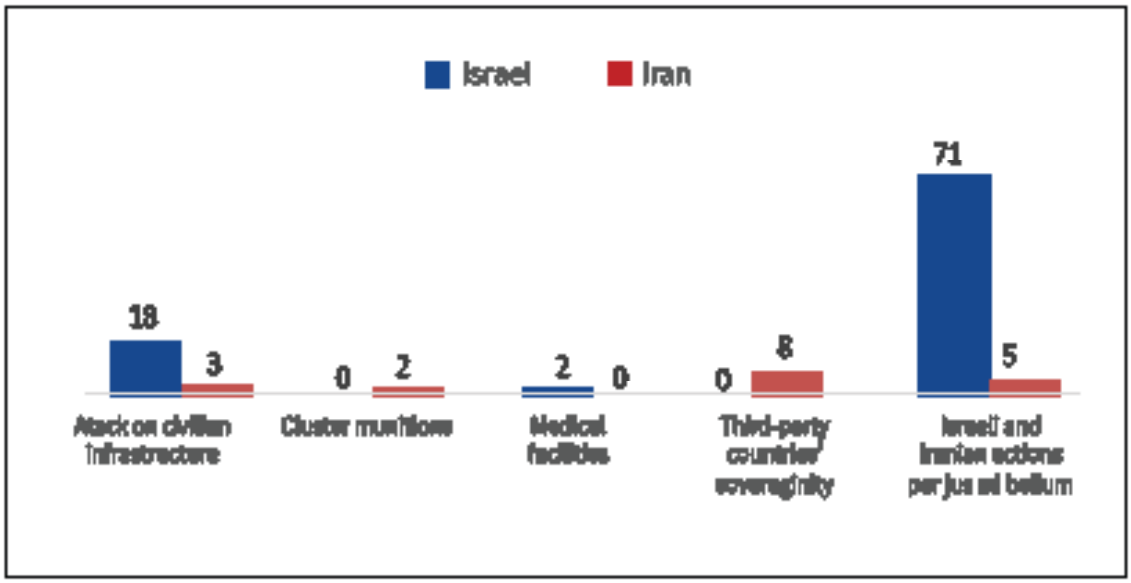
Daily Articles Discussing Legality: Israel vs Iran



True Value Count Comparison for Topics Including Mutual Accusations



True Value Count Comparison for Topics Excluding Mutual Accusations



Blue: References to the legality of Israel's actions

Red: References to the legality of Iran's actions

4. Main Issues Discussed

The study found that the main legal issues debated in the media were as follows:

A. **The law on resorting to the use of force *(Jus ad bellum)*** – The legality of Israel's decision to launch Operation Rising Lion and Iran's subsequent response. For example, claims that Israel violated the UN Charter and that its actions could not be justified under the principle of self-defense, and, conversely, Iranian claims that Iran was entitled to exercise the right to self-defense in response to Israel's attack.

B. **Harm to civilians and to civilian infrastructure** – Coverage of strikes on targets alleged not to be military objects or combatants, such as accusations referring to the targeting of Iranian nuclear scientists.

C. **Attacks on medical facilities and personnel** – Reports of strikes on hospitals and harm to medical staff.

D. **Violation of the sovereignty of other states –** Issues surrounding actions conducted across border without the consent of third countries.

In addition, and for the reasons stated in page, the study also looked for possible references to the legality of the use of cluster munitions.

The following graph depicts the extent of reference to each of these issues during the fighting, including mentions of the mutual recriminations exchanged between Israel and Iran (e.g., Iranian officials accusing Israel of unlawful aggression, or Israeli ministers accusing Iran of unlawful attacks on civilians).

When filtering out mutual accusations and focusing solely on third-party actors, the picture becomes even more one-sided: far greater emphasis was placed on Israel's actions compared to those of Iran.

These findings show more extensive discussion of Israel's actions concerning attacks on civilians, medical personnel, and medical facilities in Iran, than of Iranian attacks on civilians and medical facilities in Israel. In essence, nearly all discussions of "legality" concerning Iranian attacks came from mentions of accusations leveled official Israeli sources.

This is particularly jarring given that, during the conflict, Iran fired 591 missiles with over 50 impact sites in populated areas. These attacks killed 31 Israelis and injured approximately 3,500 (according to the Institute for National Security Studies – INSS).

In some cases, even when Iranian actions were mentioned, they were presented in a way that obscured their full legal implications. For example, after the direct hit on Soroka Medical Center in Be'er Sheva, the media quoted a high-ranking Iranian official claiming that the missile had targeted a site within one kilometer of the hospital. Yet, there was no acknowledgement that firing such a heavy missile (with such a large margin of error) at a densely populated area cannot legally be regarded as a "discriminate attack."

5. Case Study 1 – Israel's use of cluster munitions and their use against Israel

Israel had long faced harsh criticism over its use of cluster munitions in the Second Lebanon War, even before the international process led to the prohibition of cluster munitions in battle (the Dublin Convention – the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)). Over 110 countries have ratified the CCM, although Israel and Iran are not, so far, parties to it.

The issue of cluster munitions use has continued to garner media attention since then. It has come up most recently in the Russia-Ukraine war, with criticisms both of Russia's use of them against Ukrainian civilians, and U.S. provision of such munitions to Ukraine. Outlets like CNN and the New York Times (both included in this study) have addressed the issue.

During Operation Rising Lion, however, coverage of Iran's cluster munition attacks on Israel was extremely limited (as shown in the graph above). In the few instances where it was mentioned, it was in a muted and marginal manner – contrasting sharply with the far more extensive and critical treatment of other issues.

It is worth noting that after the 12-day conflict between Israel and Iran, Amnesty International issued a report accusing Iran of illegally using cluster munitions against Israel. Yet, the organization was silent during the fighting itself.

6. Case Study 2 – The Absence of Discussion on the Legality of Iran's Response

Israel argued that it is engaged in an armed conflict with Iran, which, in its view, entitled it to attack Iran under international law. Consequently, much of the public and legal discourse has revolved around whether Israel's attack on Iran could be justified as "self-defense" under the rules of Jus ad Bellum in international law.

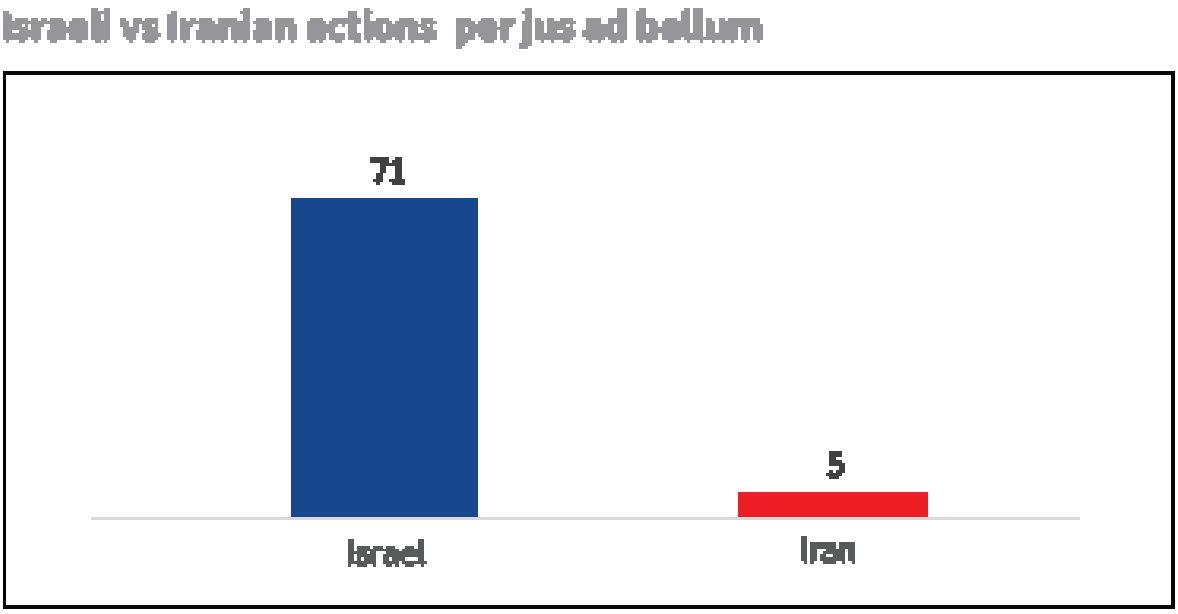
However, international law regulates the use of force by both sides in a conflict. The relevant question is not only whether Israel acted lawfully in launching Operation Rising Lion, the legality of Iran's response should also be scrutinized. Among other things, Iran would need to show that its actions were both "necessary" and "proportional" to repel Israel's armed attack.

Put simply: Can indiscriminate rocket fire on Israeli cities be considered a legitimate act of self-defense?

In past cases, such as the Second Lebanon War, or Israel's response to October 7, there was extensive debate in the legal and public spheres regarding Israel's right to respond, and whether its actions complied with international law.

By contrast, in the case of the 12-day war with Iran, there was very little discussion – either in the media or legal forums – about the legality of Iran's response. Instead, the discourse focused almost exclusively on whether Israel's initiation of the offensive was justified.

The following graph illustrates this imbalance, showing the extensive focus on Israel's decision to launch the campaign versus the minimal attention to the legality of Iran's actions in this context:



7. The Use of Legal Rhetoric as a Tool of Public Diplomacy

As part of this study, researchers examined the extent to which legal rhetoric was used – that is, the degree to which the media quoted statements by Iranian and Israeli officials about their own state's actions on the one hand, and the illegality of the adversary's actions on the other.

The findings revealed a **clear advantage for Iranian legal rhetoric:**

- Iranian officials consistently framed their actions as lawful, presenting Iran as a state that abides by international law.
- At the same time, they worked to depict Israel's actions as violations of international law, even as war crimes.

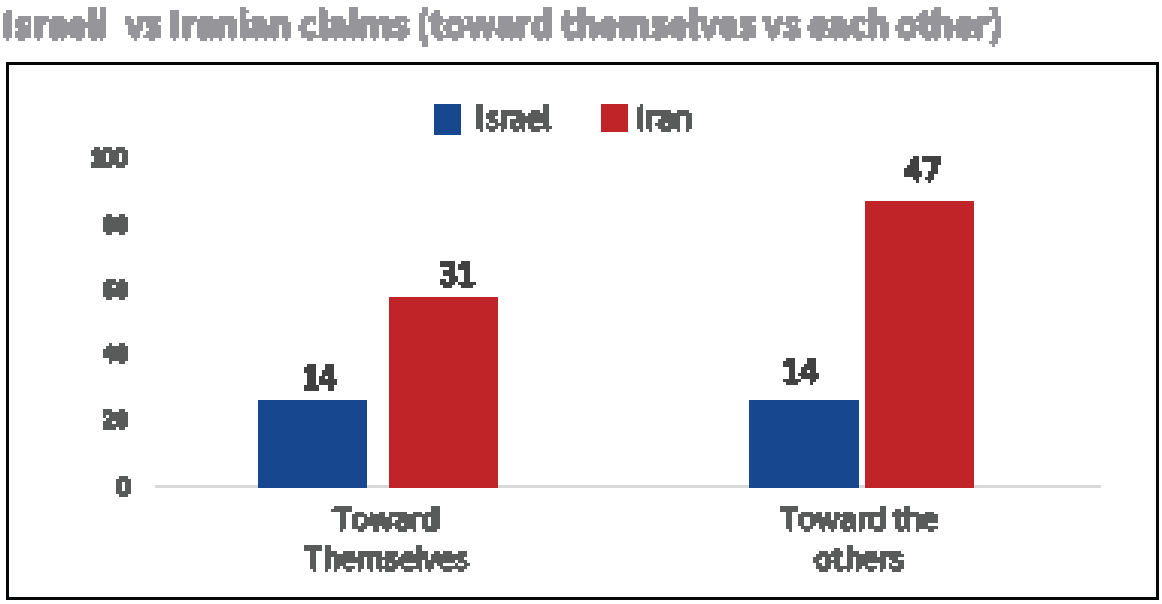
By contrast, Israeli officials were found to use legal language far less frequently in their communications.

(Toward themselves – each country's statements about the legality of its own actions

Toward the other – each country's statements about the legality of the adversary's actions)

It is possible that, as with other aspects of this study, this imbalance partly reflects a pro-Iranian media bias, rather than a true absence of Israeli

legal framing. Yet, a sample review of statements by Israeli officials suggests that, indeed, unlike their Iranian counterparts – who made deliberate, consistent efforts to invoke international law – Israeli officials often refrained from systematically employing such legal rhetoric when addressing Iran's actions.



Recommendations

1. **Timely Publication of Legal Reports** – Israel should publish, both immediately upon the outbreak of hostilities and promptly after they conclude, official reports explaining the legality of its actions while also pointing to the legal violations of its adversary. With respect to Operation Rising Lion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs only released such a report six weeks after the operation ended, which diminished its influence on media discourse or the positions of legal experts.

2. **Greater Use of Legal Rhetoric by Israeli Officials –** Israeli political and public diplomacy figures should employ legal language more consistently. To achieve this, they must receive systematic briefings and recommendations from the relevant legal advisers as an integral part of their preparation for press briefings and conferences.

3. **Leverage Technology and Social Media –** During hot conflicts, Israel should better use technological tools, particularly social media, to "amplify" its narrative, including the legal justification for Israel's actions and its adversary's violations of international law.

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ISRAEL-U.S. RELATIONSHIP

10 Transactional Alliance and/or Shared Destiny? The U.S.-Israel Relationship in a Post-October 7 World

On June 21, 2025, the United States joined Israel in war. That move catapults the U.S.-Israel partnership to unprecedented, yet possibly dangerous, heights. On the bright side, many thought the seamless systems integration achieved during the two Iranian missile attacks of mid-April this year and October 1, 2024, marked the peak of the two countries' cooperation. The fact that in 2024, Joe Biden was president and a year later Donald Trump was president reconfirms an enduring truth: the state of the union between Israel and the U.S. is incredibly strong.

That conclusion defies many premature eulogies lamenting how one Israeli action or another irreparably damaged this partnership. In May 2025, opposition leader Yair Lapid denounced Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying: "relations have never reached such a low point. You lost Trump…."

More concerning, the Iran war forged a growing "horseshoe alliance" of the far left and the far right claiming Israel will drag America into World War III. Then, shortly after greenlighting the Iran attack, Trump forced Israel to turn planes around instead of punishing Iran for violating the ceasefire. That made Israel look like a vassal state. These tensions reveal a second enduring truth: worry over the state of this union is constant and not unreasonable. True, the speed with which the media escalates inevitable agenda differences into "break-up" scenarios makes the two countries' enduring, multi-dimensional bond cemented by overlapping values and interests, sound like a college fling. But, as in healthy marriages, tensions recur, and arguments risk escalation unless both partners keep nurturing the relationship.

This seeming contradiction provides an analytical framework for understanding the past year – and planning for the future. It's essential to understand the fundamentals motivating America's extraordinary support – and the great dividends it reaps. And it's essential to understand the ongoing tensions and warning signs that lead even sober-minded analysts to sound hysterical.

The Fundamentals: Shared Values, Shared Interests, Shared Challenges… and Common Enemies

The AIPAC framing, emphasizing the two countries' "shared values" and "shared interests," still holds. The rhetoric of Ambassador Mike Huckabee and Congressman Ritchie Torres captures much of American sentiment toward Israel, offering a rare bipartisan rallying point in a divided America. Huckabee articulates red state sensibilities, celebrating Israel as "a very special place on Earth," recognizing Jews' biblical "connection to this land," and saying "America has friends. It has allies. It only has one partner. And by partner, I mean the relationship is like a marriage. It is so tight. And that's Israel."[1] Torres roots Israel in blue state values by insisting: "none of us is free until all of us are free. And so I see my freedom as a Black Latino from the Bronx as inextricably bound to the freedom of the Jewish people… I am pro-Israel, not despite my progressive values, but because of my progressive values."[2]

Moreover, during a presidential election campaign when both major party nominees once again vied over who supported Israel the most,[3] both the Republican and Democratic conventions featured tear-stained moments showing broad, wall-to-wall support for Israel's hostages.

When Israel attacked Iran, those "shared interests" were reinforced by "common enemies." Headlines claimed MAGA was fragmenting as Tucker Carlson and Marjorie Taylor Greene united with leftists like Bernie Sanders and Ilhan Omar to oppose American intervention in "Israel's war."

Polls that week, before America's military action, found 57% of Americans supporting Israel's attacks. More than 80% wanted Iran blocked from having nuclear weapons – because they would, given Tehran's constant anti-American rhetoric, threaten America too.[4] And in defiance of the loud MAGA rebels, 83% of Trump voters supported Israel's airstrikes.[5] In short, most Americans agreed with General Michael Kurilla, CENTCOM's commander, that "there has rarely been a time with greater opportunity to protect [our] national interests" in the Middle East.[6]

Simultaneously, Israel and America face "shared challenges," internal crises of political polarization, government dysfunction, cynicism about institutions, and suspicion of others – from different religions, political parties, and ethnic tribes.

These dynamics lead to three important conclusions:

1. Israel's government must not only speak what we could call "Jerusalem language" to "red America" but have representatives who speak "Tel Aviv talk" to blue America too.
2. Leading Jewish organizations must be sensitive to the growing red-blue divisions within the Diaspora, especially within American Jewry, and the need to frame Israel in terms that resonate broadly.
3. Even as politicians dismiss "bipartisanship" as cowardly, American bipartisan support for

Israel remains a gift for Americans too – healthy democracies need some issues on which left and right agree.

A "Transactional Analysis" of Israel's Post-October 7th War

Especially since October 7, both the Democratic and Republican administrations have been extraordinarily generous. Israel receives $3.3 billion in American aid annually via the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program and $500 million for cooperative missile defense programs. Israel must spend most of the money on U.S.-produced military equipment and services. By June 2025, the U.S. had shipped over 90,000 tons of military equipment, delivered via more than 800 air and 140 maritime shipments since October 7. American aid since 1948 exceeds $130 billion. [7] Still, a popular takeaway from the tug-of-war between Biden and Netanyahu over Israel's tactics, is that Israel must re-evaluate its dependence on America, especially regarding ammunition. An expanded Israeli arms industry could give Israel greater – but not complete – independence.

America's growing "neo-isolationists" wonder what America gets in return – besides Arab enmity and the risk of another "forever war." When President Trump returned home from visiting Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates in mid-May, with four trillion dollars in investments, business deals for the Trump family, and a 747-jet gifted by Qatar's rulers, Israel seemed to be on the losing side of this new "transactional" approach to foreign policy. Stunningly, few Jewish or Israeli leaders responded by trumpeting the many dividends America keeps reaping from Israel. *Not knowing them, let alone emphasizing them, is political malpractice.*

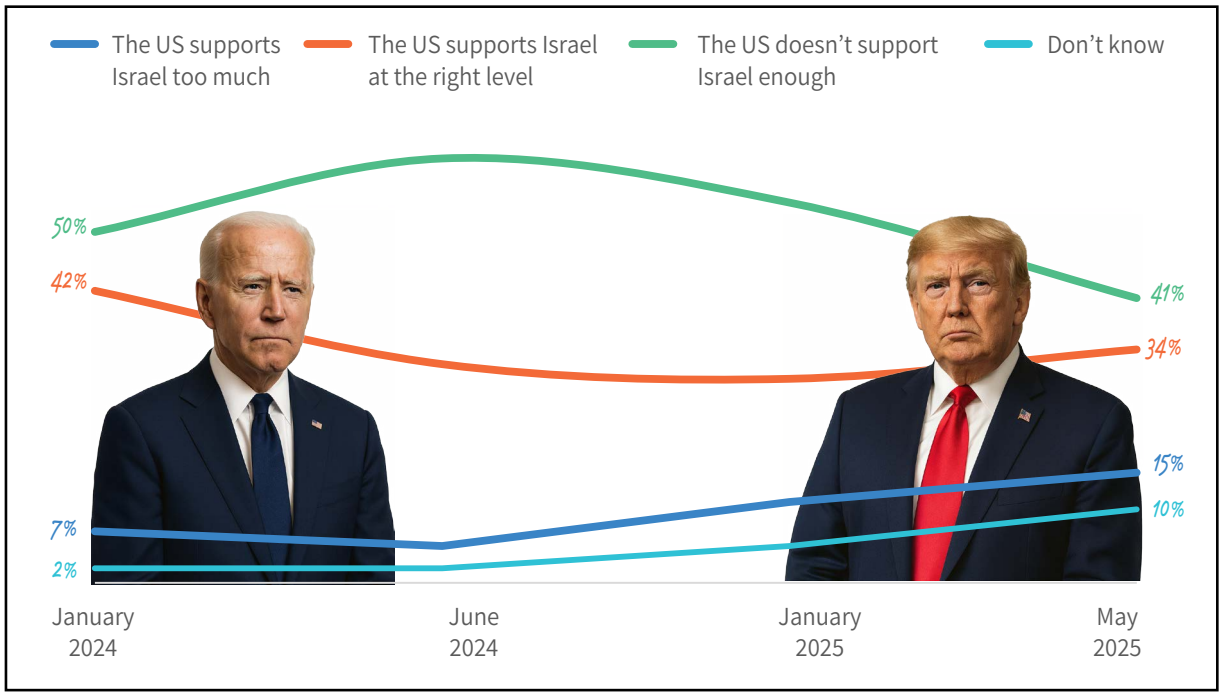
The historical piece is beyond this assessment's scope – but it ranges from the strategic bonanza regarding Soviet weaponry and tactics Israel delivered to America after 1973, to decades of intelligence sharing, to the destruction of nuclear weapons programs in Iraq, Syria, and now, probably Iran. Since October 7, there have been four major categories of war-based gains, beyond generally supporting "Start Up Nation" with all its benefits for humanity: diplomatic gamechangers, military breakthroughs, AI advances, and medical innovations.

America's growing "neo-isolationists" wonder what America gets in return

Diplomatic Gamechangers

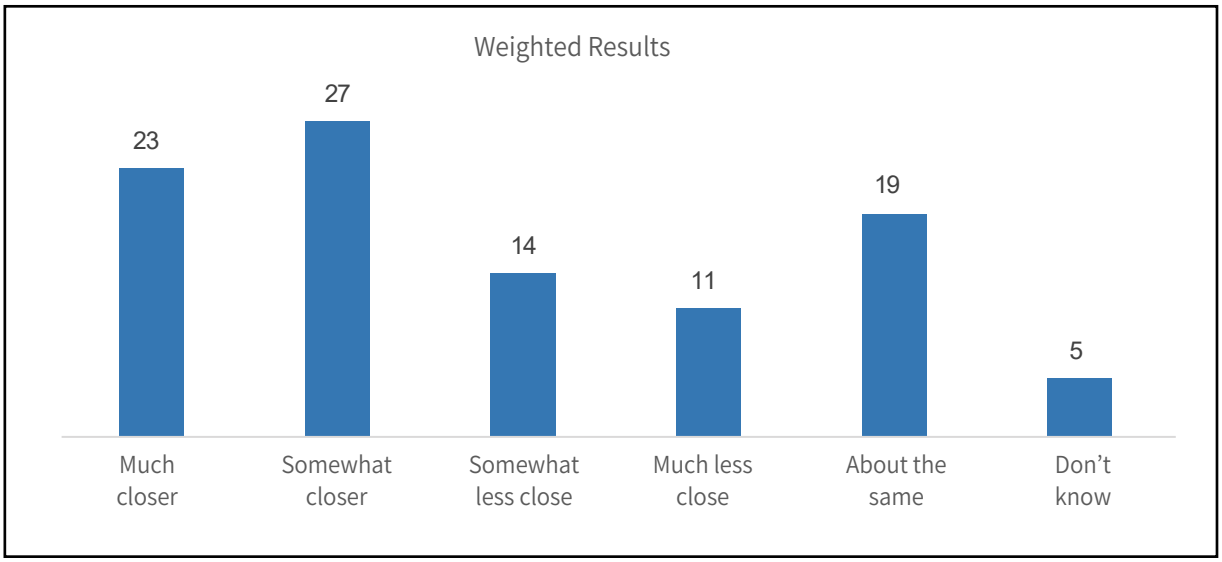
On January 15, 2025, President Joe Biden gave his farewell foreign policy address at the State Department. He boasted that "Iran's air defenses are in shambles. Their main proxy, Hezbollah, is badly wounded…. And if you want more evidence that we've seriously weakened Iran and Russia, just take a look at Syria." Biden did acknowledge in ten words that "Israel did plenty of damage to Iran and its proxies."[8] But Biden told Israel to "take the win" after Iran's April 13 barrage and not eviscerate

How would you describe US policy regarding the war? … (%)



JPPI Voice of the Jewish People survey, January 2024 to May 2025

Do you think US-Israeli relations are closer or less close than before?… (%)



JPPI Voice of the Jewish People survey, July 2025

"Iran's air defenses."[9] Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin reportedly yelled at Defense Minister Yoav Gallant for only giving minimal advance notice of Hassan Nasrallah's assassination. The Jerusalem Post reported: "The U.S. has urged Israel multiple times to act less aggressively or to avoid taking certain actions against Hezbollah to prevent… a regional war."[10]

Six months later, the conventional wisdom explained Israel's successes in Iran – and Trump's willingness to intervene – by linking Israel's success in degrading Hamas, crushing Hezbollah, triggering Assad's collapse, and stripping Iran's air defenses. By exposing the Iranian regime as dangerous, weak, and bent on going nuclear, even if it doesn't collapse, little Israel has done the United States and the world "monumental" favors, to use one of Trump's favorite adjectives.

Military Breakthroughs

Although Israel faced unprecedented battlefield conditions, its innovations are already being adopted by the U.S. and other NATO member state armies. Western troops are likely to face urban warfare, drone warfare, and three-dimensional fighting on land and sea, and in tunnels, while, like the IDF, remaining within the ethical limits all democratic armies respect.

Battlefield breakthroughs include:

- New TTPs (tactics, techniques, procedures) coordinating efforts above and below ground.[11]
- Updating the Trophy Active Protection System (APS), a "layered defense" sensing rocket, anti-tank, and now, thanks to Israel's latest innovations, drone assaults.[12]
- Debuting the Arrow 2 and Arrow 3 missile defense, the C-Dome sea-launched missile defense, the Iron Beam laser defense, and the Maoz or Spike Firefly, a "loitering munition," ideal for urban warfare, the *Jerusalem Post* reports, helping "to strike enemies who might be hiding behind walls or alleys."[13]
- Drone innovations, from repurposing M113 APCs – armored personnel carriers – as unmanned vehicles useful in tunnel warfare, to integrating drones with other weapons, to building
- To building secret drone production lines in Iran to create weapons that can be used to neutralize Iranian surface-to-air missile systems.[14]
- Soldiers from the Cyber Defense Division's Spectrum Warfare Battalion 5114 using electronic warfare to neutralize Iranian drones.[15]

Little Israel has done the United States and the world "monumental" favors

AI Advances

Israel's post-October 7 efforts may be the first Artificial Intelligence (AI) war, using audio recognition, facial recognition, mass language analysis, and other Big Data searches to locate terrorists and their hideouts, coordinate efforts, and save soldiers' lives. Israel's intelligence unit,

8200, established an AI innovation hub, "the Studio." "Where's Daddy?" tracks a target's phones. Ten years ago, "you needed a team of around 20 intelligence officers to work for around 250 days to gather something between 200 to 250 targets," Tal Mimran, a former IDF legal adviser, told *Time*. "Today, the AI will do that in a week."[16]

Medical Breakthroughs

Already, lives are being saved in American hospitals by Israel's battlefield breakthroughs. In Sheba Medical Center-Tel Hashomer alone, 85 start-ups responded to a post-October 7 call for useful innovations, launching many productive partnerships.[17] The Kemtai personal trainer app was repurposed to assess patients' movements with AI to diagnose rehabilitation needs, freeing physiotherapists to work on patients. "Every technology that we talk about is not just valuable for war injuries, but has long-term civilian applications," says Avner Halperin, CEO of Sheba Impact.[18]

Remarkably, some of these innovations contributed to Israel's halving the death rate among wounded soldiers from the Second Lebanon War, to today's 6.7% rate.[19] With so many more wounded soldiers surviving, Israel is improving rehabilitation methods and post-trauma treatment. The *New York Post* marveled in December 2024: "From surgical robots that remove bullets and shrapnel to 3D-printed prosthetics tailored for rapid deployment, to a battlefield burn treatment developed from pineapples, these technologies are redefining modern medicine and saving lives."[20]

Israel's ten-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United States is slated to run out in 2028. It specifies the amount of aid the U.S. provides. The next Congressional election is in 2026, and the next presidential election is in 2028. Potential roadblocks could come from Isolationist Trump-appointees especially and the committed minority of Republican legislators skeptical of military aid overall. Major bones of contention will include the length of the new MOU and the percentage of U.S.-manufactured aid.

The pending negotiations and changing dynamics lead to these conclusions:

- That Israel and the Jewish community must learn, specify, and publicize the many dividends America has received from investing in Israel.
- Start using "transactional" language such as "investment," "dividends," "payoffs," along with traditional "shared values" and "shared interest" and "common enemy" rhetoric.
- With more anti-Israel voices gaining traction in both parties, Israel should consider both hastening the negotiation timetable and extending the MOU to 25 years.

Warning Signs

Saturday, President Trump greenlights bombing Iran. Sunday, he imposes a cease-fire. And Monday, he's already fuming, dropping f-bombs while saying: "I'm not happy with Israel." Israel's aborted bombing run, wherein Netanyahu turned most planes around but launched one symbolic

strike, illustrated Israel's dependence on America – and on its mercurial, vengeful, but generally pro-Israel President.

Meanwhile, few Democratic Senators, including pro-Israel stalwarts like Jacky Rosen and Chuck Schumer, could even praise America's bold and precise strike, let alone the hated Trump. Schumer insisted: "No president should be allowed to unilaterally march this nation into something as consequential as war with erratic threats and no strategy." One pro-Israel Democrat lamented to *Jewish Insider, JI* reported, that "There were notably more Democrats putting out statements cheering anti-Israel activist Mahmoud Khalil being released from immigration detention than those expressing solidarity with Israel in its time of great need."[21]

Finally, rather than being chastened by their hysterical warnings of Iranian retaliation bogging America down in another "forever war," the Yahoo-Wokester alliance felt strengthened. Joe Rogan's influential MAGA podcast welcomed Senator Bernie Sanders to criticize the war. In another warning sign, 62% of college-educated New Yorkers supported an anti-Israel mayoral candidate, Zohran Mamdani with only 38% preferring his pro-Israel opponent Andrew Cuomo.[22] Twenty percent of Jews voting in the primary chose Mamdani and an estimated 30% of New Yorkers found his support of BDS a positive reason to choose him. Mamdani's primary win in the city with the largest Jewish population in the world reflected the long-term effects the "Academic Intifada" will have on Democratic politics: Israel is becoming a polarizing issue even in local elections, with many college-educated Democratic activists simply being knee-jerk anti-Zionists. Future leaders will look back on their anti-Israel activism gratefully as their formative political experience, and, even now, taboos about mainstream politicians calling to "Globalize the Intifada" and bash Israel as "genocidal" are being broken.

Those four days in June explain why, despite such a foundation, a certain volatility haunts the U.S.-Israel relationship too – and panic quickly spreads. Since George W. Bush embraced Israel and many Democrats decided they hated him and therefore must hate Israel too, pro-Israel activists started warning about Israel becoming a wedge issue. The Republican Party emerged as America's unambiguously pro-Israel Party in the 2000s and 2010s. The Democrats, while still mostly pro-Israel, replaced the pre-Ronald Reagan Republican Party as the major party hosting a vocal, influential, anti-Israel and borderline antisemitic wing. The "horseshoe" Yahoo-Wokester alliance, against Trump's bombing, uniting antisemitic anti-Israel Republicans such as Tucker Carlson, Candace Owens, and Marjorie Taylor Greene with antisemitic, anti-Israel Democrats such as Ilhan Omar and Rashid Tlaib, culminated in a new and worrying phenomenon that October 7, the Academic Intifada, and MAGA ideology accelerated. Now, both Parties host powerful anti-Israel voices firmly within their tents.

REPUBLICAN FACTIONS

- The overwhelming majority are **Ronald Reagan Zionists**, including Evangelicals, National Security Hawks, and most Trump voters. They cheer Donald Trump's pro-Israel accomplishments, from recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital to brokering the Abraham Accords, to now, bombing Iran. Calling them "Ronald Reagan Zionists" acknowledging the Republican Party that emerged in the 1980s as an enthusiastically pro-Israel party, while reminding us of Reagan-era clashes over America's AWACS sales to Saudi Arabia, Israel's bombing Iraq's nuclear reactor, and Israel's supposed aggressiveness during the Lebanon War. "Sister democracies" are not twins: some clashes are inevitable, not necessarily catastrophic.

These Republicans especially need to hear more about Israel's military independence

- Some Reagan Zionists, and some Republicans less enthusiastic about Israel, are "**Forever Trumpers**," supporting President Trump no matter what. That occasionally requires the mental gymnastics Vice President JD Vance has mastered. "Forever Trumpers" include "**Only Israelites."** Generally hostile to foreign aid, especially for Ukraine, they have an Israel exception because it's a bulwark against jihadism.

- "**Forever-War Avoiders**" sound increasingly suspicious about bankrolling Israel but are not anti-Israel, just dubious of any foreign war. They heard President Trump's repeated promises to avoid foreign entanglements while ignoring Trump's repeated vows that Iran will never get a nuclear weapon.

Conclusion: *These Republicans especially need to hear more about Israel's military independence and how supporting Israel helps America overall, including avoiding foreign entanglements. Memories of 9/11 and Israel's extraordinary successes against Hamas, Hezbollah, Syria, and Iran before America intervened, can calm some of these skeptics.*

- The small but vocal and influential "**MAGA antisemites"** also resent America's "forever wars," but their orthodox isolationism is often greased with antisemitism. With some, like Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene, an openness to anti-Jewish conspiracy theories fed her isolationism and anti-Zionism. Others, most prominently Tucker Carlson, seem to have become increasingly hostile to Israel and to Jews, the more isolationist they become. Earlier in his career he was neutral. Since Fox fired him in October 2023, he's become more rabid.

Nevertheless, 83% of Trump voters supported Israel over Iran.[23] On June 18, 2025, the Network Contagion Research Institute report, "False Flags and Fake MAGA: How Foreign and Inauthentic Networks Use Fake Speech to Destabilize the Right from Within," warned that "pro-Iran, pro-Kremlin and Iranian state-linked propaganda

nodes" – bots – flooded American social media while masquerading as MAGA loyalists."[24] Abe Greenwald of *Commentary* concluded: "That explains why polls show a strong majority of Republicans supporting the American strikes on Iran, while dominant right-wing X accounts would lead you to believe that MAGA was generally opposed."[25]

DEMOCRATIC FACTIONS

The vitriolic progressive backlash against Israel's war in Gaza, and the surge in anti-Zionist antisemitism has influenced the Democratic Party's base, which increasingly attracts college graduates. The numbers of pro-Israel young people and pro-Israel liberals had been sagging; since October 7, it's cratering.

- Most Democrats remain pro-Israel. Many are **Zionist Liberals**, in the tradition of Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Bill Clinton, are represented by the Democratic Majority for Israel, and stalwarts like John Fetterman and Ritchie Torres. They see the joint values and interlocking interests uniting Israel and the United States.

- More and more Democrats are **Joe Biden Zionists.** They cheered when President Biden supported Israel after October 7. But, like Biden, they grew increasingly frustrated with what they called Israel's stubborn and aggressive approach to the Gaza War. They supported Biden's on-off pressure tactics, and also took credit when Israel smashed Hezbollah, Syria collapsed, and when Israel weakened Iran. These Democrats condemn Israel's hostility to the Palestinians and still believe in a two-state solution. They fear Israel is becoming more "red state" culturally, and believe in "social justice," which to them means universalism, pacifism, and disdain for nationalism, traditionalism, and military service.

Conclusion: *Israel and the Jewish Community must speak the language of "Identity Zionism," justifying Israel's existence as a constructive expression of liberal-democratic nationalism that could speak to "blue state" Jews and non-Jews seeking meaning, community, and rootedness.*

- Clearly, neither Kamala Harris nor Barack Obama were as passionately pro-Israel as Biden. It's a crude mistake to call them "anti-Israel" or "anti-Zionist." They are **Conditional Zionists**. Their support of Israel is contingent on Israel again becoming what Thomas Friedman calls "your grandfather's Israel." They need Israel pursuing peace with the Palestinians and looking more like their stereotype of Tel Aviv, less like their stereotype of Jerusalem. And they are disgusted by "settlers," the "occupation," "settler violence," Ben-Gvir, Smotrich, and the Haredim.

- On the far left, but growing in power ominously, are **anti-Bibi anti-Zionists**. True, some, like Ilhan Omar, Rashid Tlaib, and so many pro-Palestinians, reinforce their anti-Zionism with antisemitism. But many, like Bernie Sanders, use their irrational hatred of Benjamin

Netanyahu to justify their anti-Zionism – and overlook their allies' antisemitism. Some Jews are in this alliance, although their numbers are exaggerated. But they have colonized the Democratic Party and intimidated many Biden Zionists into muting their enthusiasm for the Jewish state.

These factions are fluid and may not prove lasting. Americans are in the middle of two "black swan" events battering Israel's reputation. First, Donald Trump's polarizing presidency makes whatever bipartisan support Israel enjoys anomalous. But Trump's aggressive sledgehammer approach to leadership even has made many pro-Israel Democrats, including Jewish Democrats, abhor his antisemitism initiative – despite being the most proactive presidential assault on Jew-hatred in history. Second, the ongoing slog of a bloody Gaza war led by an Israeli government that even many American Jewish Zionists demonize, has made Israel unpopular. Israel's popularity may bounce back – or a new generation of anti-Zionists may mainstream Israel-bashing. One May 2025 poll had six in ten Republicans seeing Israel's regional role as positive (60%) compared to just three in ten Independents (29%), and just two in ten Democrats (19%).[26] A Pew Research Center poll from the month prior found 69% of Democrats critical of Israel.[27] And a Jerusalem Center of Public Affairs poll in May, 2024, found 51% of American Jews supporting Biden's withholding of arms to Israel and a third believing Israel is committing genocide in Gaza.[28]

When this war ends, or the Abraham Accords expand, or Donald Trump leaves the political scene, or Israel's government changes, Israel's popularity may revive. Gallup polls over the last 30 years reveal more stable support for Israel than volatility, despite the constant barrage of negative headlines. Moreover, Americans' baseline of support for Israel remains greater than the baseline of support among Canadians, the British, or the French.

Additional Conclusions: For the Jewish People (italicized text repeats last year's conclusion):

- *While fighting Jew-hatred boldly, the Jewish community should note how pro-Israel and Jew-positive most Americans are. Jewish leaders should launch a pro-Israel campaign thanking Americans left and right for their ongoing support, still pitching Israel as a rare bipartisan issue in a country desperate for more points of light and fewer flashpoints.*

- *Similarly, we need a political campaign building on the broad American fear of Iran. Desire for a stronger defense posture against Iran, as the weakest link in the chain of evil threatening the world, must be elevated into another bipartisan issue. As with supporting Israel and denouncing antisemitism, the fight against Iran must be framed as Right fighting Wrong, championing American decency, pride, and survival, not another Left-Right divider.* The recent war highlighted the Iranian regime's investment and progress in going nuclear, its

willingness to target civilians, its harshness toward its own citizens, and its under-reported but deadly ballistic missile program. The Islamic Republic of Iran has bombarded Israeli civilians with over 800 ICBMs, a mind-boggling assault on international norms and law. Each of these points should be hammered home publicly.

- *The enduring American support for Israel and disdain for Jew-hatred should embolden the American Jewish community – and the Jewish organizations – to stop talking to itself and do more outreach to the Silenced Majority. The pro-Israel rally of November 2023 should have had 580,000 attendees – each of the 290,000 or so Jewish protesters should have brought a non-Jewish "date."*

- Democratic fury at Donald Trump risks undermining the Jewish community's strong consensus against antisemitism, campus Jew-hatred, and the Iranian dictatorship. Jewish leaders must figure out how to get more Jews – and Americans – focusing on the substance of issues, rather than reasoning backwards and deciding what stance they take based on whether they love or hate Trump. Similarly, pro-Israel Republicans need to address the neo-Isolationist antisemites within their camp – and pro-Israel Democrats need to address the anti-Zionists within their camp.

- The primary win of Zohran Mamdani in New York City proves that the Jewish community has to work harder to fight campus anti-Zionism because it is raising generations of Democratic voters and leaders who either hate Israel, or who don't see hating Israel as disqualifying in a leader. It's the mainstreaming of anti-Zionism within the liberal world.

- The Jewish community needs to speak a new language of Israel support that is more TikTok friendly, more visual and emotional than verbal and logical. And it needs to have more initiatives like the push to free TikTok from Chinese ownership, that examines the many structural ways social media has become a platform for Israel-bashing and Jew-hatred.

- *Finally, the Jewish community should challenge America's leaders to anticipate the next hostage crisis. Despite its rhetoric, America keeps negotiating with terrorists, encouraging more kidnappings. And sifting the victims based on their passports is offensive. Perhaps, in the future, anytime even one American is kidnapped, every fellow hostage should automatically get American citizenship, at least ending that farce.*

Conclusions: For the Israeli Government

- *No Israeli official should underestimate how fraught this period will be for Israel and the U.S.-Israel alliance. It is essential, therefore, that Israel continually thank Republicans and Democrats for their support, celebrate bipartisanship, and avoid making Israel a political football.*

- At the same time, Israel should frame this alliance as embodying shared interests and values, pitching opposition to Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran as good opposing evil in an existential fight for America not just Israel. Speaking to the American people is legitimate – bypassing any administration or disrespecting either party is not.

- Finally, Americans want to see Israel thinking about tomorrow and not stuck in October 7. Israel must be as creative politically and diplomatically at this moment, as it has been militarily and entrepreneurially. For example, replacing the tired phrase "two states for two peoples" – which even Kamala Harris avoided[29] – by calling for "two democracies for two peoples," changes the dynamic, pressuring the Palestinians and the international community, while situating Israel as driving the peace train, not being bullied onto it.

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Is the Golden Age Over?

A Special Article by Elliott Abrams

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What is one to make of a country whose president blesses not only Israel but the IDF after striking at Israel's most dangerous enemy, but days later nominates as the Democratic candidate for mayor of its largest city a Muslim with a long history of extremist rhetoric and action against Israel – and who gets tens of thousands of votes from Jews? Is the relationship between Israel and the United States stronger than ever, or do the B-2 strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities simply reflect the views of Donald Trump? Are American Jews as proud and embracing of Israel as ever, or does the Mamdani phenomenon reflect ruptures in the community and growing risks in the society at large?

As to the latter question, whether the "golden age" for American Jews is over is a question now being seriously debated in the American Jewish community. Were the six or seven decades after World War II the high point for the acceptance and influence of American Jews in U.S. society and for bipartisan support of Israel, as well as the period of least antisemitism?

In many Western democracies, antisemitism is now visible and worrying: Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and France are the best (meaning the worst) examples. The United States seemed immune from the spread of the same disease, but is it beginning to succumb? And are the days of broad support for Israel a thing of the past?

Some dispassion and perspective are needed here. In the first couple of decades after the Second World War there was plenty of antisemitism in the United States of the social variety: clubs, hotels, whole neighborhoods still excluded Jews into the 1960s. But it did indeed

diminish, and Jews – on Wall Street, in Hollywood, in every administration since Kennedy, and indeed all over the country – saw barriers fall. The view of Israel as a burden, indeed an albatross, for U.S. policy in the Middle East also lasted for at least two decades after the Second World War, beginning to reverse only after the smashing Israeli victory in the 1967 Six-Day War. If there was a golden age, it was probably in the half-century after 1967.

Is it over now? Comparing the United States to the other large Diaspora communities, one difference is immediately obvious. In France, Muslims outnumber Jews by about 13 to 1. In the UK, it is closer to 15 to 1. In Australia, 8 to 1. In Canada, 5 to 1. In the United States, Jews may outnumber Muslims by 2 to 1 (7 million to 3.5 million); even more generous estimates of the Muslim population (4 or 4.4 million) show that the Jewish community is significantly larger. This matters because all these Diaspora communities are in democracies whose politics – and whose policy toward Israel – will ultimately reflect what voters want. Moreover, the reluctance to confront antisemitic behavior and even violence toward Jews will be greater when governments fear an electoral backlash from large blocks of Muslim voters.

Perhaps even more important, the United States has a very different tradition when it comes to the respect for and treatment of Jews. The famous 1790 letter from George Washington to the Jews of Newport, Rhode Island was astonishing for that age and set a new tone:

> *"It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it were the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights, for, happily, the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support….May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants – while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid."*

But today, many Jews are afraid. From the 2018 Pittsburgh and 2019 California synagogue attacks to the May 2025 murders in Washington, DC, 18 Jews have been killed in 7 years. Others have been assaulted or, in Colorado in June, burned by attackers. In the United States today, there are no police cars or armed guards outside churches, but there are security measures at every synagogue on Shabbat and on holy days, and at every significant community gathering. Jews in New York City wonder whether, should the first Muslim ever to be the Democratic candidate become the first Muslim mayor, they can count on him to fight antisemitism – or will see him use his office to continue trying to "globalize the intifada."

On the political right, where voices such as that of Tucker Carlson are influential, and on the left, where a significant minority of Democratic elected officials are now vociferously anti-Israel and solicitous of violent demonstrations, antisemitism is newly visible. There is a sewer of antisemitic right-wing websites and podcasts that did not exist ten years ago, not only making old claims about sinister Jewish power but arguing that Christianity has no roots in or relationship with Judaism.

And there is more: most of America's elite campuses have shown themselves after the October 7 massacres to be riddled with antisemitic students, professors, and administrators – to a degree that has shocked most U.S. Jews. Most of the reigning institutions of American culture, not just the elite universities but most of the media, the museums, much of Hollywood, the majority of famous actors and painters and writers, are bitterly anti-Israel now and indifferent to antisemitism.

Are those the views of the average American? No, but they have an influential place now that they did not 50 years ago. Back then, intellectual figures like William F. Buckley Jr. expelled from the conservative movement well-known individuals like Patrick Buchanan for the sin of antisemitism. Today, President Trump welcomes Carlson and many others like him – some of them openly antisemitic – into his "MAGA" movement. And back then, the Ivy League was between one-quarter and one-third Jewish, while admissions policies over more recent decades have reduced that to ten percent or lower. One need not attribute that decline entirely to antisemitism to understand that it means a narrowing of the place of American Jews in America's future elites.

And yet: when those same right-wing antisemites and haters of Israel warned President Trump against striking Iran, he ignored their admonitions and even mocked them. Moreover, opinion polls showed strong support among Republicans and among Trump voters for the strike. The picture is less encouraging on the Democratic side, where support for Israel has broadly declined (and Trump's support for that country makes it even harder for that country to win friends among younger Democrats).

The increase in antisemitism on the far left and far right, and the decline of support for Israel among younger Americans and especially younger Democrats, have been occurring during decades where the strength of the American Jewish community has in many ways also been declining. The intermarriage rate among non-Orthodox Jews is now over 70%, and the statistics clearly demonstrate that many children of such marriages are raised without a strong Jewish identity. Among intermarried American Jews, only 28% are raising their children as Jews by religion (compared to 93% of the children of in-married Jews). Only 68% of those raised as Jews or by at least one Jewish parent now identify as Jewish, meaning that nearly one-third have been lost to the community. Measuring the health

of the community another way, there are in the United States 2.4 million children being raised in a home with one or two Jewish parents. Of them, 1.2 million are being raised exclusively as Jews – half. That portends further fraying of the community in the future. (All these numbers come from the Pew survey "Jewish Americans in 2020.")

Unsurprisingly, when Jewish identity weakens so does closeness to Israel. Only half (48%) of American Jews under age 30 said in 2020 that they were very or somewhat attached to Israel. Taglit/Birthright has sent over 700,000 young American Jews to Israel, but even with that boost only 45% of Americans Jews have ever visited there even once. Only one-third of American Jews under age 30 said in 2020 that caring about Israel is, in their view, essential to being a Jew.

The triangular relationship between the U.S., the American Jewish community, and Israel is obviously under great stress

The triangular relationship between the United States, the American Jewish community, and the State of Israel is, then, obviously under great stress. Among the 97 or 98% of Americans who are not Jewish, support for Israel is in decline. In poll after poll, younger Americans are less supportive of Israel than their parents and grandparents; young Democrats much less so than theirs; young Evangelicals less so than theirs – and sad to say, young Jews also less than theirs. Once an issue of bipartisanship, especially in the Reagan, Clinton, and Bush years, today support for Israel is a matter of hot and divisive debate. The great support for Israel that President Trump has shown is wonderful, but it is also personal and may not be part of the administrations that follow his.

What is to be done? The struggle against antisemitism is both a necessity and a trap. Every time a law (such as those prohibiting violence or face masks in a demonstration or vandalism against a synagogue) is broken, it is essential that the perpetrators be arrested, tried, and punished. Either enforcement of the laws will stop such actions, or they will become more frequent – so Jews must demand proper and energetic policing. It is essential that university regulations that forbid antisemitic speech, and forbid demonstrations that prevent students from moving about freely and accessing the campus fully, result in the expulsion of students – and faculty – who break the rules. It is now obvious that on many campuses, administrators (especially in DEI offices, but also higher up in academic bureaucracies) did nothing to protect Jews and punish antisemitic acts. Jews should join the federal and state governments in demanding that all this change.

Jews should also engage in the American political system, assisting their friends against their enemies. AIPAC's 2021 decision to create political action committees that support pro-Israel candidates directly was a necessary step. American Jews have friends and enemies, and

the rewards and punishments are critical to protecting what is still a minority of under 3% of the U.S. population.

But Jews cannot cure antisemitism. The central task of American Jewry should not be fighting antisemitic acts themselves, nor trying to change the hearts and minds of antisemites, nor even engaging in politics – as important as all those are. The central task must be the strengthening of our own community, by strengthening the Jewish identity of our children, their knowledge of Jewish history, tradition, and religion, and their ties to Israel. Much is done in the American Jewish community to achieve these goals, but it is far from enough. A Times of Israel story on the top dozen philanthropic donors in the U.S. reported that "One thing that stands out about these Jewish philanthropists is that almost none focus giving on the Jewish community." In the aftermath of the October 7 Hamas attacks, the "Jewish Future Promise" campaign is trying to sign up Jews to pledge that at least 50% of their giving will be to Jewish and Israel-related causes. This is a badly needed initiative. Jews in the United States have more to worry about today than symphonies.

No rocket science is required here. There's plenty of data showing that more and better Jewish education, time in the immersive experience of Jewish summer camping, and time in Israel (from short visits to internships, summer and gap year programs, or junior years abroad during college) are powerful generators of strong Jewish identity and commitment. The fate of the American Jewish community lies not in the minds of antisemites, but in the hands of American Jews.

The fate of the American Jewish community lies not in the minds of antisemites, but in the hands of American Jews

And what of the fate of Israel, at least the part affected by the policies of the United States? Here the rise of left- and right-wing antisemitism suggests growing challenges, as does the spread of a semi-isolationist approach to America and the world. Trump himself – as he proved yet again by attacking the Iranian nuclear weapons program – is no isolationist, but many of his supporters are. His administration is full of people from the isolationist NGOs and think tanks funded by Charles Koch and George Soros, and strategists who believe the only serious problem the United States faces in the 21st century is China (such that allocating resources to the Middle East is wasting them). Moreover, the president himself and many around him have adopted an entirely transactional approach to American foreign policy, where neither allies nor ideals are much valued. All that counts is what the other country can do for the United States in material, mostly financial and commercial, terms.

This in itself is worrying, but watching Democrats who used to be considered centrists – Senators Van Hollen, Kaine, and Booker, for example – attack Israel means that distancing from the Jewish state is now common among political elites, especially in the Democratic Party.

Will attacks on "Zionism," unfair assaults on Israel, and fear of antisemitism result in a steady and unending weakening of support among American Jews? I do not believe it. Even Jews with weak Jewish identity and connections to the community recognize the dangerous spread of antisemitism and recognize unfair treatment of Israel when they see it. The efforts to turn the word "Zionist" into a sort of curse since October 7, 2023 may well have strengthened the sense among American Jews that support for Zionism is essential to Jewishness. And the kind of antisemitism that has been so visible on too many campuses is a reminder to Jews that the weakness of their own or their children's Jewish identity will hardly protect them from demonstrators, administrators, or faculty who target all Jews and any support for Israel.

That is not the problem. The dangers are rather that any significant change over time in American demography will leave the Jewish community smaller and less influential in American politics – and that American Christians may come to devalue their own religious debt to Judaism and their support for the Jewish state, adopting instead a modern form of Marcionism that seeks to break the theological and historical connection between the two faiths.

These are, of course, longer-term problems; none are developments of one year, one presidency, or one decade. But all suggest that the Jewish community in the United States must do far more than posting guards outside synagogues. Those are needed, but more essential are actions that guard the identity of our children. Sadly, a vast expansion of aggressive antisemitism can perhaps serve that purpose, but I do not believe that will happen in the United States. Steady erosion of American Jewish identity and U.S. ties to Israel are far more likely than any dramatic rupture.

So, to return to the initial question, is the golden age over? Perhaps the period when antisemitism was in effect non-existent and when both political parties strongly supported Israel is indeed over. But that was also a period when Jewish identity eroded, intermarriage exploded, significant losses in the Jewish community occurred, and the most prestigious universities and cultural institutions slowly became hotbeds of antisemitic and anti-Israel activity. Not so golden, then. The coming years will be more contentious for American Jews, over U.S. relations with Israel and over their own place in American society. What seemed for a while natural and wholly accepted will now require a fight. The good news is that Jews have many allies in this fight, and it can be won. "American exceptionalism" still exists and leads to opportunities for Jews and Israel that barely exist in many other countries. But exceptionalism has limits, and gradations, and enemies. What American Jews took for granted for a generation will now require new thinking, new efforts, and good friends.