

JPPI's Israeli Society Index Annual Report

2026



Hope Index



Proximity Index



Consensus Index

Jewish People Policy Institute

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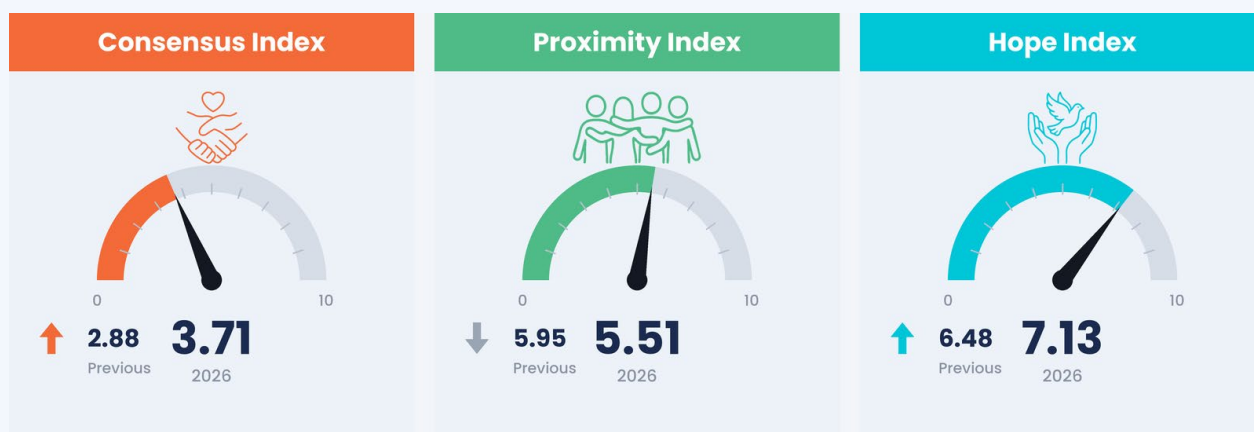
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Original graphic design and layout: Maya Hesser

ISBN: 978-965-7880-02-9

English edition prepared from the Hebrew print report and the supplied English draft translation.



Report Highlights

- The Consensus Index is higher on “universal” questions and lower on “particularistic” questions.
- Israelis agree more on democracy and equality, and less on Palestinians and on the Jewish character of the state.
- There has been a decline in the share of Jews who believe that democracy means both majority rule and human rights.
- The Hope Index has risen, indicating greater optimism among Israelis than in the previous year.
- The Proximity Index has declined, indicating increased polarization and tension among different groups in Israel.
- The war did not significantly change the level of polarization in Israel.
- Political and camp-based perspectives strongly dominate a wide range of public issues.
- Feelings of Israeli strength and optimism about the future rise as one moves toward the right and toward the religious pole.
- Throughout the war, the sense that Israel was winning the campaign grew stronger when public attention was focused on the Iranian arena rather than on Gaza.
- There is growing recognition of a fundamental change in relations with the United States and of reputational erosion worldwide.
- About half of secular Jews are not convinced that Israel is the right place for their children and grandchildren to live.

Report Structure

This report consists of three main parts.

- **The first** presents the three fixed annual indices: the Consensus, Proximity, and Hope indices.
- **The second** presents chapters addressing the central questions that had a significant impact on Israeli society this year. Some are fixed questions, suitable for every year and therefore likely to appear in the report annually, such as a question about the level of trust in the government. Others are time-specific questions that stood out this year, such as the question concerning the need to establish a state commission of inquiry to examine the events of October 7. Naturally, a central portion of this year's report is devoted to matters related to Israel's security, as this was a year of war. Alongside these, however, the report also reflects major social and political issues: this was a year in which Israeli discourse was marked by prominent disputes, some real and some not, and a year that brings Israel closer to an election campaign that many regard as one of the most important in the country's history. The thematic chapters, which draw on research conducted throughout the entire year, address security and foreign policy, cohesion and polarization, the economy, religion and state, the critical relationship with the United States, and the critical relationship with world Jewry.
- **The third part** provides a methodological appendix detailing the way in which the main indices of the annual report are calculated.

This report is based on analyses of JPPI's monthly Israeli Society Index surveys, as well as additional JPPI surveys conducted over the past year and a half to examine specific topics mentioned in the report. The Israeli Society Index team includes JPPI fellows Shmuel Rosner, Noah Slepko, and Yael Levinovsky. Statistical consulting: Prof. David Steinberg, Tel Aviv University.

Contents

Part 1 – The State of Israeli Society, 5786..... 7

The Year in Review: Consensus, Proximity, Hope..... 7

Consensus Index: Attitudes..... 11

Proximity Index: Feelings 16

Hope Index: Beliefs..... 22

Part 2 – Expanded Chapters on Current Issues28

War and Security 29

Cohesion and Polarization in Israel..... 49

The Economic Situation and Economic Behavior 64

Questions of Religion and State 74

Israelis and the United States..... 85

Antisemitism and the Relationship with the Diaspora 96

Part 3 – Appendices 113

Appendix A: The Meaning of the Indices and How They Are Calculated 114

Appendix B: Agreement Rates on Different Questions among Different Groups 118

Appendix C: Ideological Camps in Israel..... 120

Appendix D: Surveys Used in Preparing the Report..... 122

PART 1

The State of Israeli Society, 5786

The year in review: consensus, proximity, and hope

Part A: The State of Israeli Society, 5786

The Year in Review: Consensus, Proximity, Hope

In the wake of its 78th Independence Day, Israeli society remains under the shadow of a long war, whose most recent peak was an ambitious, combined Israeli-American strike on Iran. The impact of this war on Israel's security and diplomatic situation, as well as the imprint it will leave on the attitudes of the Israeli public and the ways it will shape public perceptions, will become clearer in the coming months and may also influence the election campaign scheduled for this year.

Over the course of the year, and before the spring 2026 strike on Iran, Israeli society could be described as polarized and worried, but also largely optimistic. It is a society displaying many signs of distress regarding the future that awaits it, but alongside them also signals of determination and strength. It is a society that has undergone severe trauma over three years, most of them marked by war, and the war itself unfolded alongside, and sometimes in the shadow of, a turbulent political storm. In the past four years, the president of the state has warned of an internal civil war, while the prime minister has reiterated that Israel is embroiled in an external war of existence. Under such circumstances, one can hardly expect data suggesting calm and ease. Indeed, it may even be appropriate to take some encouragement from the fact that, despite the major challenges Israel faces, many state institutions continue to function at a high level, as became clear in recent months during the war with Iran, and Israeli society remains vibrant and engaged.

If we distill the story of the past year and outline its characteristics along several axes, we find that it was a year of strategic transformation, ongoing and perhaps intensifying camp-based conflict, and also of pragmatic accommodation to a complex and changing reality.

The Strategic Axis: From Gaza to Iran

The most dramatic change this year concerns the shift in the center of gravity of Israel's confrontation with its security challenge. After many months of bloody and at times frustrating fighting in the Gaza Strip, Israel moved over the past year, especially since Operation Rising Lion in Iran and the entry into force of a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, from a campaign with a local focus to a much broader regional campaign. This transition, which peaked in spring 2026 with the combined Israeli and American strike on Iran, Operation Roaring Lion, changed (temporarily) the way Israelis assess their situation. The data tell the story clearly: in March 2026, 56% of Israelis felt that Israel was winning or had already won the war, the highest result recorded in the past year. However, within two months, because the stated objectives had not been achieved, the story changed. By May, there was parity between the proportion of Israelis who believe that Israel is winning and those who believe that Israel is losing the battle.

As will be evident in the expanded chapter on Israelis' security-related attitudes, when attention turns to more distant arenas such as Lebanon and Iran, Israelis have a greater sense of achievement. The strike on Iran initially had the support of 72% of all Israelis and 85% among Jewish Israelis. It also propelled trust in the senior command of the IDF to a record high. In the earlier years of the war, trust in the IDF, in its capabilities and in its senior command, though never in its soldiers, was a focal point of camp-based dispute and contention.

None of this applies to the same extent to the nearer arena, the one that detonated the war years: the Gaza Strip. With regard to Gaza, the year was characterized by a sobering realization that for many Israelis was bitter. There were promises of “total victory”, and there was hope among a large majority of Israelis that Hamas rule in the Strip would disappear and a new era would begin. These hopes, however, met the wall of a complex reality that is still developing. Most Israelis now believe that Hamas rule will continue to exist in one form or another. Most believe that Israel has no choice but to adhere to the complex process underlying the Trump Plan for Gaza, even though in recent months, after the initial move that ended the war in this arena and returned all the hostages, the plan has not produced the hoped-for results, such as the disarmament of Hamas and a significant reconstruction process.

This is a striking gap. In the last year, Israel has drawn encouragement and a sense of strength from the projection of its power in more distant circles, while precisely in the closest circle it learned to lower expectations and accommodate an ambiguous reality.

The Cohesion Axis: Everything Is Politics

Existential anxiety alongside hope: this is a persistent Israeli condition. As will be seen in detail below, the share of Israelis who express hope for a better Israeli future rose this year. A majority of Israelis state that they are optimistic about the country's future, and most assume that their acquaintances and relatives will continue to live here. Yet beneath the surface of this optimism lie concerns. When Israelis are asked what challenge is most dangerous to the state, 55% point to polarization and internal disagreement, far more than point to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (18%) or even to the Iranian nuclear threat (23%). Warnings by public figures about civil war are not dismissed out of hand as baseless. On the contrary, they resonate with the public: about six in ten Israelis agree that there is a real danger of internal bloodshed.

These concerns are especially visible in the political center and left, and among the secular public. While supporters of the coalition, many of whom belong to religious and Haredi groups, feel that Israel is strong and that its future is bright, a high share of Israelis who belong to the secular public, the largest group among Jews, are wrestling with the future and with the place of the next generation. So much so that about half of secular Jews are not convinced that Israel is the right place for their children and grandchildren to live. This insecurity is not merely theoretical. It affects personal and family decisions, such as willingness to invest in Israel for the long term, which declines as pessimism increases.

If there is one conclusion that cuts across all chapters of the report, it is the strong dominance of political and camp-based perspectives across a variety of issues. The Proximity Index, described below, which measures how groups feel toward other groups, tells the following story: beyond the national question, Jews and Arabs, what makes it difficult for Israelis to feel close to one another is first and foremost belonging to a politically labeled camp. A partial exception to this rule is Haredi society. The line of conflict that opened between most of Israeli society and Haredi society, which of course contains many shades, although its political leadership generally presents a united front, was highly prominent in public discourse this year. More than any other front, it illustrated the gap between clear coalition supporters and most of its opponents.

In an election year, which will likely sharpen the camp-based tone for at least several months ahead of a renewed contest over Israel's leadership, the sense of camp belonging, commitment to the camp, closeness

to it, and suspicion of those who are not part of it, roughly divided between “right” and “center-left”, shapes almost every perception of reality. Is the Israeli economy strong? In principle, this is a question that requires an impartial reading of reality. In practice, the answer is first and foremost given according to camp affiliation. Supporters of the right give the economy a score of 4.0 out of 5, while supporters of the left give it a score of 1.4. Not long before this writing, the government passed its annual state budget. Was the budget designed substantively, in order to improve Israel's condition? Arab respondents and respondents among government opponents see the budget as an act of distributing political spoils. Government supporters are much more forgiving. The camps are characterized by different attitudes toward government decisions; they have different levels of trust in state institutions, different perceptions of appropriate resource allocation, and different understandings of value-laden and moral questions. The question of whether Israel should strictly adhere to The Spirit of the Israel Defense Forces (essentially the IDF's code of ethics) or give precedence to the advancement of interests even when it means sacrificing morality in combat is divided along a political fault line. The question of who is responsible or to blame for the ongoing surge in crime in the Arab sector is also answered in ways that clearly correlate with political affiliation. This is true for questions of values and policy, but not exclusively: Israel in 2026 is a society in which facts are subject to interpretation based on ideological orientation.

The Alliance Axis: America and the Jews

The past year strongly underscored long-term transformations in the critically important triangular relationship among Israel, the United States, and American Jewry, and more broadly, the Jewish Diaspora as a whole. The transition from the Biden administration to the Trump administration changed the rules of the game in relations between the United States and the rest of the world, including Israel. Even before his election to this term, Trump was perceived by most Israelis as the preferred candidate, and today a large majority of Israelis accept the claim that Trump is the most Israel-friendly American president ever. At the same time, they recognize the implications of Trump's personality, his aggressive style in managing U.S. foreign relations, and Israel's level of dependence on American support. This is occurring at a time when there has been substantial erosion in American public support for Israel, and when in the rest of the world recent years have brought an even more significant deterioration in Israel's image and in its ability to rely on countries other than the United States. All of these developments significantly alter the balance of power between the two countries, a balance that was unequal to begin with.

The result is, on the one hand, deep appreciation for President Trump and his administration, and on the other, an acceptance of the possibility that the United States will impose moves on Israel that Israel will be powerless to resist. When Israel was required to accept the Trump framework for ending the war in Gaza, 55% of Israelis believed Israel had acted appropriately “because there was no choice.” Many Israelis, including supporters of the governing coalition, occasionally feel that Israel acts “too much” in accordance with American positions.

At the same time, antisemitism was ever more evident this year in various places around the world, and reached a crescendo with the murderous attack in Sydney, Australia. It forces Israelis to look directly at the complex reality of existing in a challenging world. This past year saw a growing sobriety among Israelis regarding antisemitism that originates not on the radical left, which was highlighted by the clamorous post-October 7 demonstrations, but among right-wing groups. Half of Israelis are concerned about antisemitism

coming from “both sides of the political map” in the United States, and this during an era in which the president who anchors the American right enjoys very high popularity in Israel.

At the top of JPPI's Annual Israeli Society Index are three fixed metrics intended to reflect Israel's condition in aspects critical to its flourishing. The Consensus Index (attitudes) examines whether and to what extent Israelis agree on foundational questions concerning Israel's future, such as the meaning of democracy, the meaning of the state's Jewishness, the aspiration for civil rights, and the way to resolve the conflict with the Palestinians. The Proximity Index (feelings) seeks to quantify, in a way that can be tracked in future years, how Israelis feel toward one another and the capacity of Israel's different identity groups to live together with mutual respect. The Hope Index (beliefs) examines whether Israelis still believe that their state has a promising future of prosperity and security.

Each index is built from components that will be presented in detail so that their meaning can be assessed. Generally speaking, this year, one can say the following: there is considerable agreement in Israeli society on several key principles, despite major disagreements on other issues. There is a considerable sense of proximity (closeness) in Israeli society, despite the polarization that has had troubling and ugly manifestations in the public arena. Israelis have hope that the future will be better. Most want to live in Israel. Most believe that Israel is the best place for their children and grandchildren.

All this is said not to obscure the challenges and difficulties that stand as impediments along Israel's path to the desired flourishing, but to place them in the proper context. The noise of everyday life and the tumult of the public arena sometimes make an equanimous examination of the true data on Israel's condition difficult. This report seeks to help overcome that difficulty. Once a year, JPPI takes stock of data collected over an entire year, examines it anew, and tries to attend carefully to its meaning apart from the day-to-day headline.



Consensus Index: Attitudes

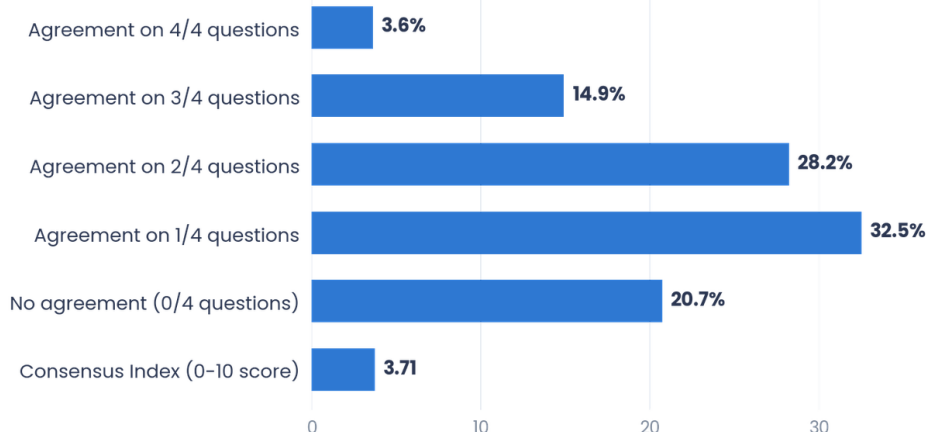
On what do Israelis agree, and on what do they agree less? The Consensus Index addresses Israelis' attitudes on various issues, and it exists in the shadow of an apparent contradiction in Israelis' own positions and feelings. On the one hand, most agree with the proposition that "on most important issues, most Israelis agree with one another." About one-fifth strongly agree with the proposition, and another third agree to a considerable extent. At the same time, Israelis also agree that "in Israel, there are major disagreements between ideological blocs that cannot be bridged." One-third agree, and another third somewhat agree. In other words, there is both agreement on most important issues and unbridgeable disagreements on others. Is this a contradiction? Not necessarily. A very large majority fully agrees that Israel should be a democracy. Most agree that Israel should be a Jewish state. At the same time, the major disagreements can be found scattered throughout the chapters of the report. Do Jewish settlements deep in the territories of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) contribute to security or harm it? Israelis do not agree in their answer to this question, and by extension, they also do not agree on other questions on the same subject. They do not agree on the Israeli policy that should be pursued in Judea and Samaria. They do not agree on whether Israel is "not Jewish enough" (30%) or "too Jewish" (29%). This disagreement, too, naturally has important policy implications, whether in education, rules of conduct in the public sphere, legislation on religion and state, and so forth.

As noted, Israelis agree more than they disagree on the need for democracy and on the general meaning of democracy. They agree more than they disagree on the need for equal rights, as formulated in Israel's Declaration of Independence. But they agree less on the question of the proper policy for the future of relations with the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria, and they agree slightly less still on the question of whether Israel is as Jewish a state as it ought to be, or more or less Jewish than it ought to be. In fact, and this is a finding that may surprise many, according to this examination of agreements and disagreements, Israelis display higher agreement on the meaning of the state's universal values, such as democracy and human rights, and lower agreement on particularistic issues concerning the state: those connected to relations with the Palestinian neighbor and adversary, and those concerning Israel's distinctive identity as a Jewish state.

Numerically, the Consensus Index stands this year at 3.71 out of 10. The Consensus Index among Jews, who constitute about four-fifths of the total population, is higher: 4.18. The Consensus Index among Arab Israelis is lower: 3.41. This index expresses agreement or disagreement among all Israelis on four questions, each of which represents a significant layer of the state's identity: democracy, the Jewishness of the state, equal rights under the law, and relations with the Palestinians. Among all Israelis, only a few agree on all four questions. About 20% of Israelis agree on three or four of the four questions. Nearly half agree on two or more of the four questions. Slightly more than half of Israelis agree on fewer than two of the four questions. They agree on only one question, or they do not agree on any of them. A detailed explanation of how the Consensus Index is calculated can be found in the report's appendix. This year's Consensus Index is higher

than for previous years. In 2024, the Consensus Index stood at 2.88, but this figure should be treated with caution because of the calculation method (see appendices).

Consensus Index: Attitudes



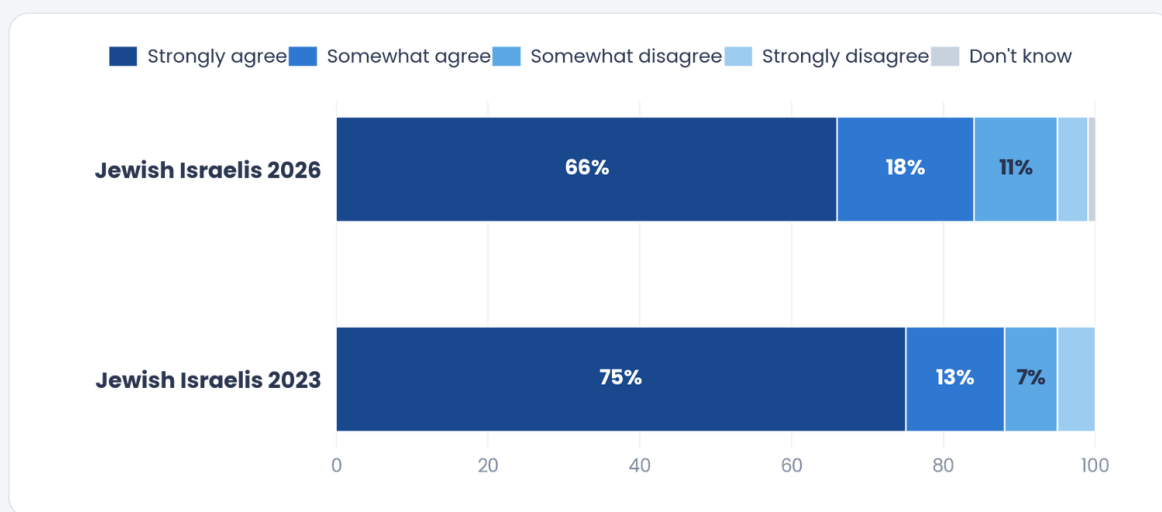
The question that receives the highest level of agreement among the four questions concerns the essence of the regime we call democracy: 59% of Israelis agree that the meaning of a democratic state is one that “has free elections, the right to vote, and majority rule” and also has core “values of tolerance and protection of human rights.” This is a relatively high level of agreement, although among Jewish Israelis, 63% of whom express agreement that the meaning of democracy includes both elements, this figure represents a significant decline compared with the situation three years ago, when 80% of respondents chose “both” as their answer.

Thus, a central finding of this report is that fewer Jews today think democracy has a meaning that includes both components mentioned in the question, majority rule and human rights. One may assume that this decline is connected to the ongoing debate in Israel over the weight that should be given to the positions of the majority as expressed through the political system, as compared with the weight that should be given to constitutional principles expressed in decisions of the judicial system, especially the Supreme Court. Still, overall, the democracy question has a relatively high agreement level of 45%. That is, 45 out of 100 Israelis give the same answer on the democracy question. Moshe and Ahmad agree that democracy means “both.” Yael and Hedva agree that democracy is mainly majority rule. Natalie and Amir “don’t know” (this too counts as agreement), and so on.

The next question that received a relatively high level of agreement concerns equal rights. The question states: “The Declaration of Independence says: The State of Israel will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, or sex. To what extent do you agree?” Sixty percent of Israelis strongly agree and another 18% somewhat agree with this statement on the need for complete equality of social and political rights for all Israeli citizens regardless of religion, race, or sex. Eighty-

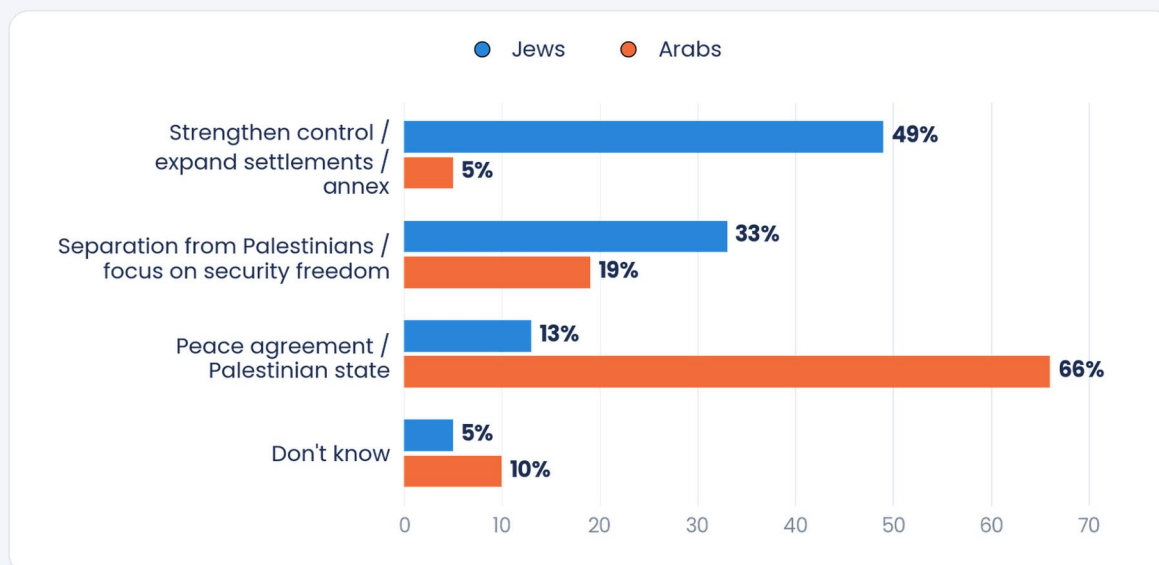
eight percent of Jews agree with the statement (strongly or somewhat), representing a certain decline compared with an identical question posed in 2023, a decline visible in the share who strongly agree, from 75% three years ago to 66% this year. The agreement rate on this question is about 42% among all Israelis; among Arab Israelis, it is lower (24%). It is possible that Arab respondents, whose answers might have been expected to show high agreement with the need for equal rights, are also referring to the gap, in their view, between the declaration and the actual situation, and that this is why their agreement is lower; alternatively, they may be responding to the fact that the sentence is from the Declaration of Independence, which may have reduced their level of expressed agreement.

Declaration of Independence equality statement: level of agreement



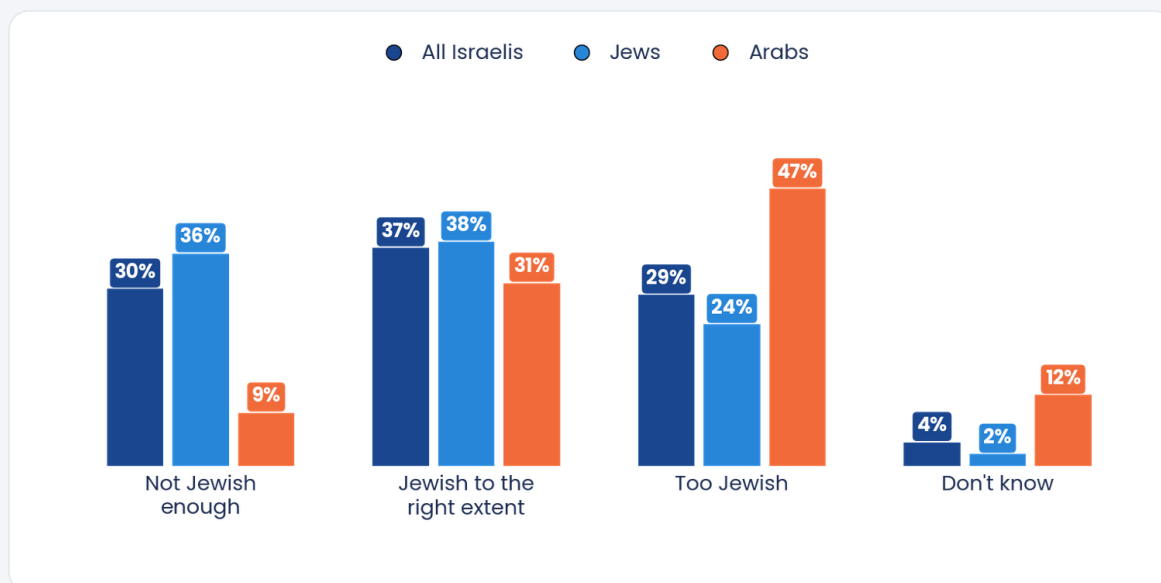
The two issues for which the level of agreement is lower are, as noted, the questions that are more specific to the Israeli situation. While questions about the meaning of democracy or the importance of equal rights for all are suitable to any society and any state, the questions about the desired degree of Jewishness in Israel, whether it is too Jewish, not Jewish enough, or about as Jewish as it should be, and about the policy required in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) are uniquely Israeli. In JPPI's March 2026 Israeli Society Index, the response that stood out relative to previous surveys was Jewish Israelis' preference for deepening Israeli control in the territories: "Israel should strengthen its control over the Palestinians, expand the settlements, consider dismantling the Palestinian Authority, and perhaps annex Judea and Samaria." Forty-nine percent of Jewish Israelis chose this response option, the highest level measured in recent years. The previous high was in November 2023, when 46% of Jews chose the same response. As might be expected, this question reveals a very large gap between Jews and Arabs, most of whom (66%) choose the option: "Israel should try to reach a peace agreement with moderate Palestinians and allow the establishment of a Palestinian state that will live in peace alongside the State of Israel." As noted, this question did not elicit as high a level of agreement as the questions on democracy and equal rights. The rate of agreement among Israelis on this question is 31% among all Israelis and 34% among all Jewish Israelis.

Question wording: You will be shown three statements representing different worldviews. Please mark the statement closest to your view, even if not fully.



The question with the lowest level of agreement concerns the Jewish character of the state, with an agreement rate nearly identical to that of the Palestinian question: 31%. Nearly one-third of all Israelis, and 36% of Jewish Israelis, believe that Israel is not Jewish enough. This answer is especially prominent among Haredi respondents (91%) and religious (Dati) Jewish respondents (64%). It was also especially pronounced among right-wing respondents, a majority of whom believe Israel is not Jewish enough (56%). Among center-right respondents, the share is roughly one-quarter (23%), and in the other ideological cohorts, the share believing that Israel is not Jewish enough is very low. Among secular Jews, 42% believe Israel is too Jewish, which is also the dominant position among Arab Israelis (47%). In the two traditionalist (Masorti) groups, the predominant position is that Israel is Jewish to the right extent. There has been no significant change in recent years. In JPPI's 2021 Israeli Society Index, 37% of Jewish Israelis wanted the state to be more Jewish, a figure that holds in this year's data: 36% who believe the state is not Jewish enough. In the same 2021 survey, 24% of Jewish Israelis wanted a less Jewish or non-Jewish state, identical to the 24% who expressed this position in March 2026.

Israel is defined in the Declaration of Independence as a Jewish state. In your view, is the State of Israel today...



Of the four questions included in the Consensus Index, the highest correlation between answers was found between the questions regarding the Palestinians and the Jewishness of the state, but even this correlation (0.19) is not particularly high. In other words, one cannot clearly deduce from a respondent's answer to any one of the questions what his or her answer to the other three will be. This shows that the questions are largely independent, each expressing a different dimension of respondents' attitudes rather than the same dimension in a different form. One conclusion arising from this examination is that Israel is far from containing just two relatively uniform camps. The range of views is much more diverse than it appears, with considerable differences of opinion evident within groups and sectors, and within ideological camps.

Examining the level of agreement by group, one can identify a very high level of agreement among Jews who identify with the left (8.29, including complete agreement on four of four questions among 43% of respondents). In other words, this is a relatively homogeneous group in its positions. Yet homogeneity is achieved relatively easily in this case, because the group is very small, about 5% of Jewish Israelis. The lowest level of internal agreement is found in the center-right, reflecting this group as something of a pivotal bloc on many issues (see Appendix B for details on the agreement rates within different identity groups in Israel).

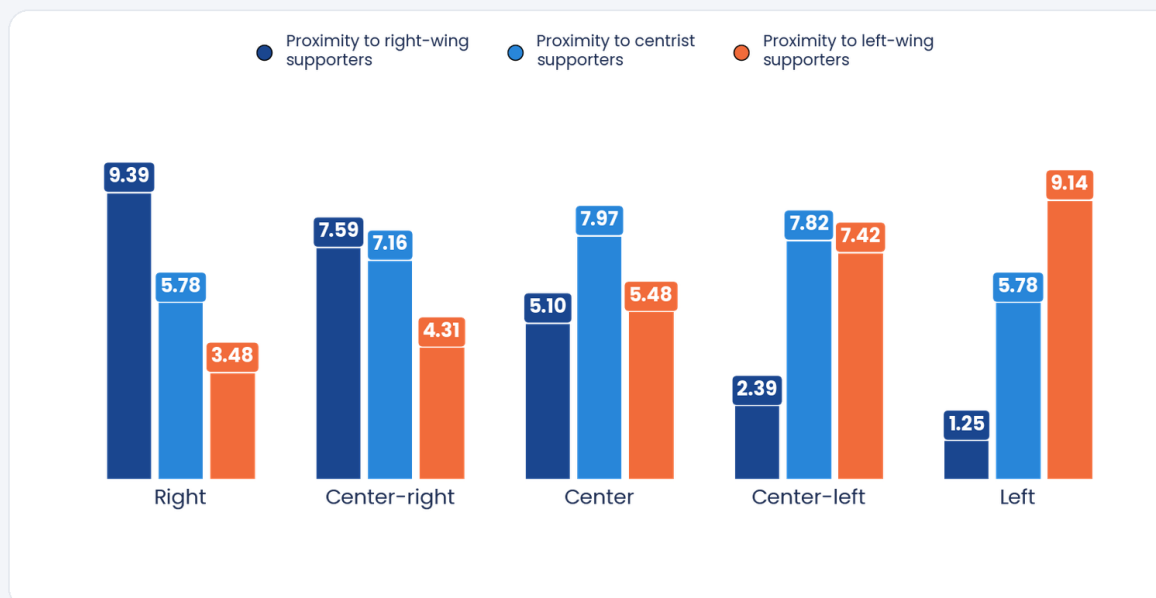


Proximity Index: Feelings

The Israeli Proximity Index gauges relations among Israeli groups across ideological, national, and religious dimensions. It measures how close or distant Jews and Arabs feel from one another, how religious and secular Jews feel, how supporters of the center and supporters of the right feel, and so on. This year, across all ratings examined, one can identify the clear influence of political polarization on the average proximity of these groups to one another. This is true when examining ratings by national background (Jews and Arabs, with the Druze as an exception), by ideological key (right–left), and by religiosity among Jews. Put simply, what makes it harder for Israelis to feel close to one another is, first and foremost, according to their own testimony, the gap in political positions, or more precisely, belonging to a political camp. As we saw in the Consensus Index, positions alone do not coherently explain any one of the ideological groups.

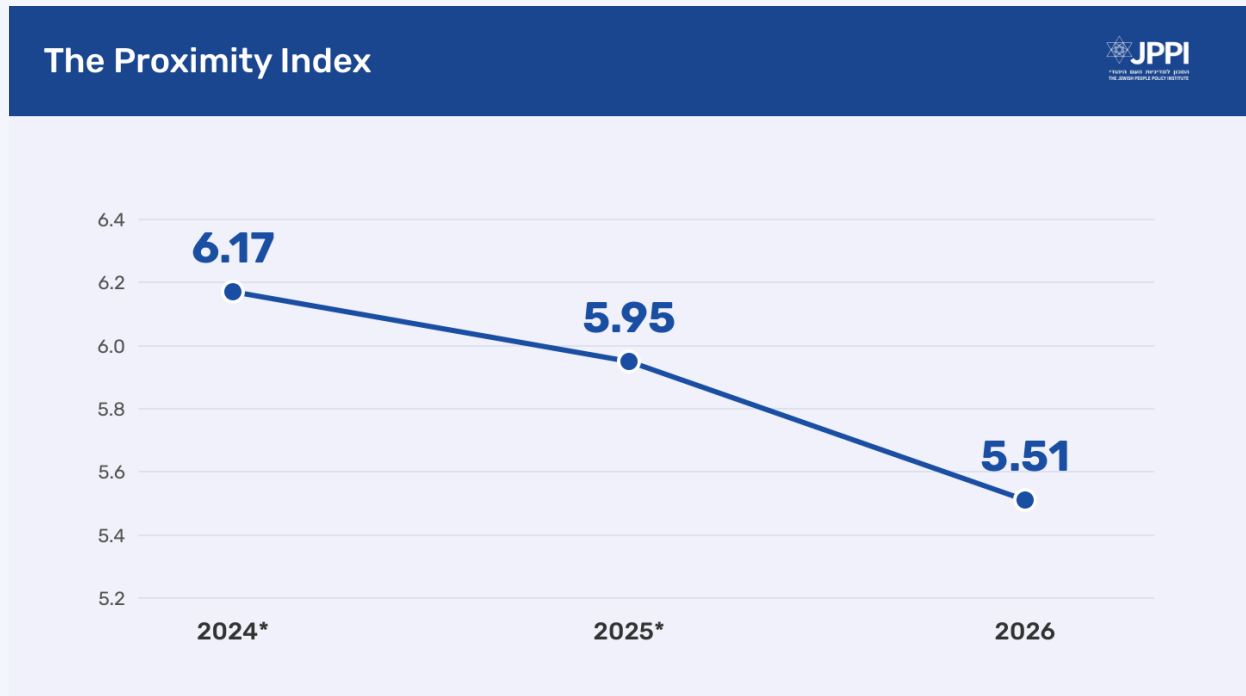
For example, when examining how supporters of the right, center, and left are rated by respondents who defined themselves in advance as identifying with one of the five groups between the right and left poles, the degree of proximity changes markedly according to the location of both respondents and rated groups on the table. Those who place themselves on the right feel closer to right-wing groups; those who place themselves in the center feel closer to Israelis with centrist positions; and so forth.

How right, center, and left supporters are rated (average proximity score)



The Israeli Proximity Index stands this year at 5.51. This reflects a certain decline compared with last year, subject to the necessary caveat: last year's data was analyzed with a slightly less precise method (see the methodological appendix). The Proximity Index examines Israelis' sense of closeness toward ten population

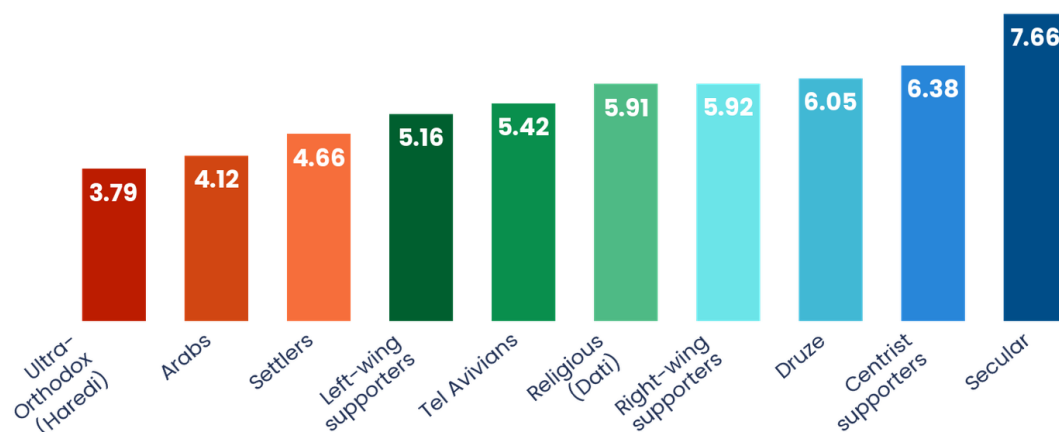
groups. The level of proximity toward each group is measured separately, and the average proximity toward all groups is presented here as the Israeli average.



*Estimated

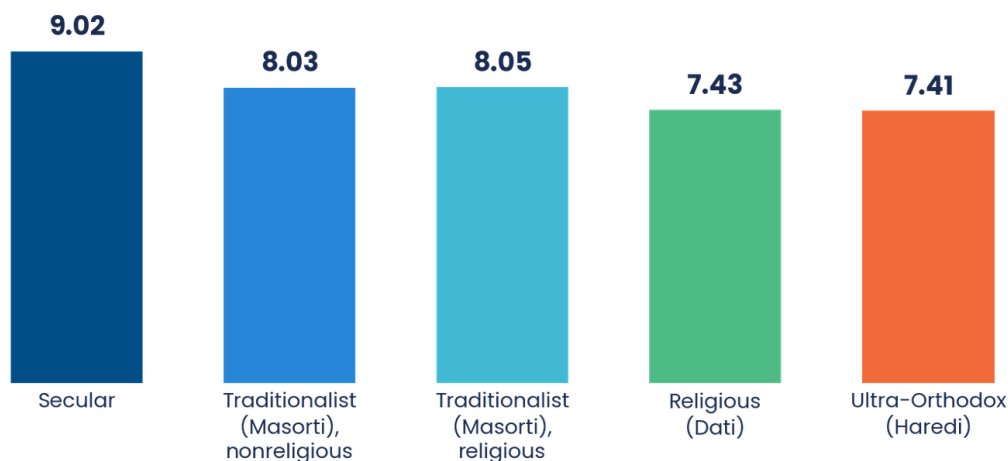
For each group we ask: "How close or distant do you feel from the following groups?" Respondents can choose one of five degrees of closeness or distance. This question largely parallels similar questions used in surveys around the world, including surveys conducted in recent years by JPPI, whose aim is to examine warmth or coolness toward different groups, or sympathy or antipathy toward them. In the years preceding the Israeli Society Index surveys, JPPI examined the image of different population groups each year by asking about their contribution to the prosperity of the State of Israel. Last year, attitudes toward different groups were examined through a question that allowed respondents to choose from a range of positive and negative feelings as the principal feeling defining their attitude toward the group.

Average proximity toward groups



Of the ten groups examined this year, the group receiving the highest average proximity score is “secular Jews”. This is not surprising, since it is a relatively large group, depending on the precise definition, between one-third and one-half of Israeli Jews, and therefore has a large influence on the rating. Secular Jews rate their proximity to secular Jews at 9.02. Examination of the detailed ratings also shows that this group receives a relatively high score from all groups. In other words, there are only a few Israelis who do not feel close to it. The exceptions are Arab Muslim respondents, but they rate almost all Jewish groups in the survey at low scores.

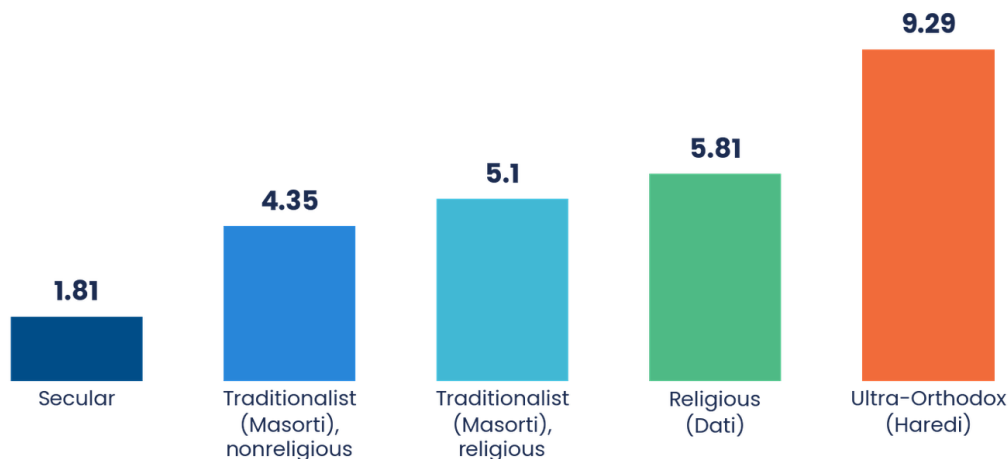
Rating of secular Jews, by Jewish respondents' level of religiosity



The group that receives the lowest average proximity score is the Haredim (3.79). This fact is presumably inseparable from the timing of the Proximity survey, which was conducted as the Knesset was debating whether, and what kind of, exemption-from-service law should be passed. The exemption law under discussion was unacceptable to most of the public. Beyond this, it should be noted that in previous years' surveys as well, Haredim received low scores when feelings toward them were examined. Even among groups that in the past gave Haredim a higher score, such as religious Jews, a shift became apparent after the October 7 war broke out, given that Haredim did not join the ranks of those in uniform and also demanded that the previous exemption for yeshiva students be legislated anew, after that law had been struck down by the Supreme Court.

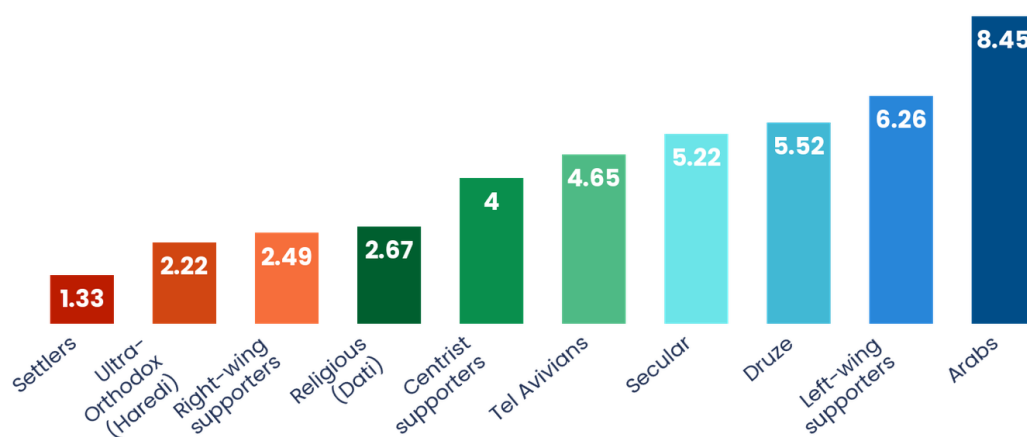
Haredim do not receive a high proximity score from any group other than themselves; Haredim rate their proximity to Haredim at 9.29. Unlike secular Jews, Haredim receive a low score from almost every group. No group on the ideological or religious scale, other than Haredim themselves, gives them an average score reaching 6. The average proximity of those identifying as right-wing toward Haredim, most of whom also identify as right-wing and thereby affect the higher score, is 5.88. Secular Jews rate Haredim lower than they rate all other groups: 1.81. Religious Jews rate Haredim at an average of 5.81. Incidentally, Haredim rate "religious Jews" much higher: 9.46 on average.

Rating of Haredim, by Jewish respondents' level of religiosity



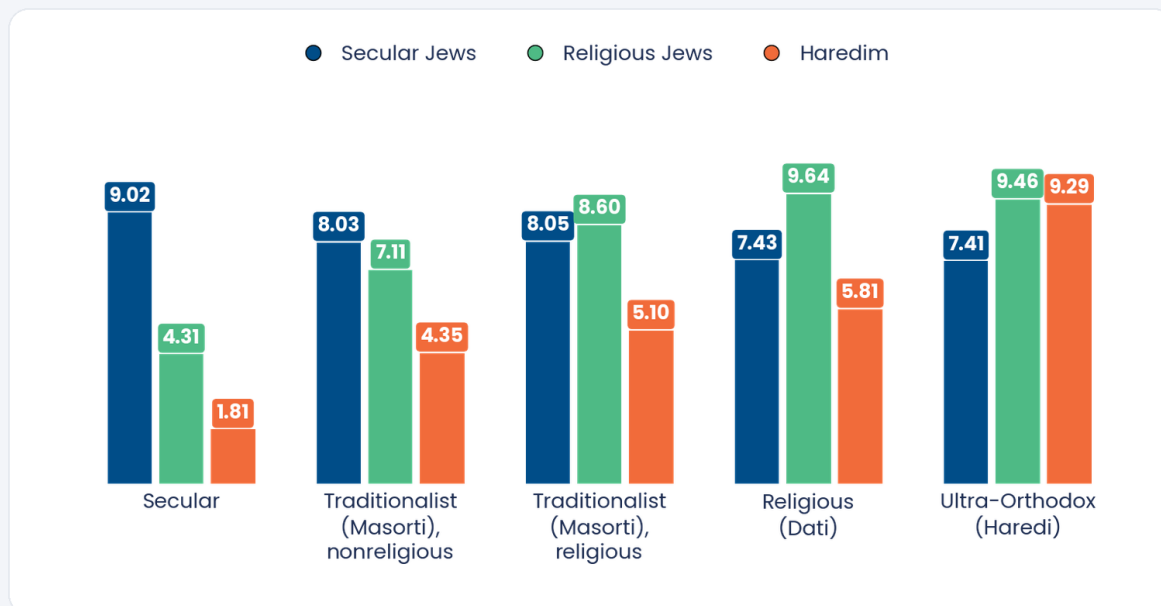
The overall proximity rating among Arabs (4.28) is considerably lower on average than among Jews (5.8). This gap stems largely from the fact that Arab Israelis rate their closeness to all Jewish groups relatively low. At the same time, Jewish Israelis rate their closeness to Arabs at a relatively low 3.04.

Arab respondents' rating of the ten groups



As noted, political polarization is the factor with the greatest influence on the Proximity Index this year. It affects especially, of course, groups that have at least a perceived political association, such as “settlers” or even “Tel Avivians.” Center-left supporters rate settlers at a much lower degree of proximity than do center-right supporters. Left-wing supporters rate Tel Avivians at a much higher degree of proximity than do right-wing supporters. This fact only strengthens the recognition that when one examines the breakdowns in depth, the political-ideological factor appears to influence the rating more than any other factor. Consider, for example, the rating of Jews by religiosity. Here, although there is a direct connection between level of religiosity and ideology and politics, the ratings of different groups are much less unequivocal and polarized than in the rating by ideological key. All groups except Haredim rate Haredim at a relatively low level of proximity. All rate secular Jews at a relatively high level of proximity. The place where the political context seems most clearly evident is in the relatively low rating secular Jews give to religious Jews. In fact, “religious Jews” are rated by secular Jews at a level roughly midway between the rating of “right-wing supporters” and the rating of “settlers.” Additional and detailed data on intergroup relations in Israel are presented in the chapter on cohesion and polarization in Part 2 of the report.

Ratings by Jewish respondents' level of religiosity



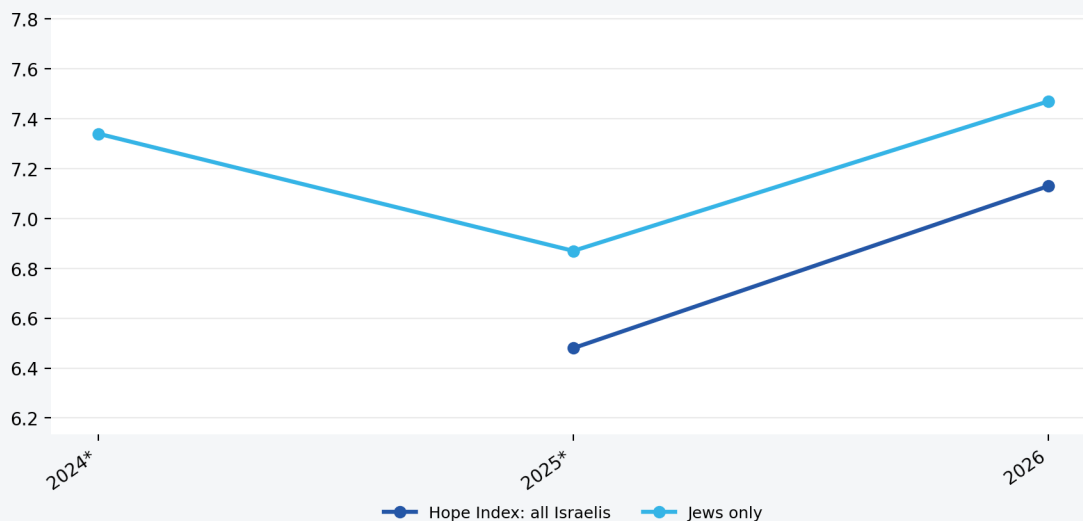


Hope Index: Beliefs

The Hope Index of Israeli citizens examines attitudes toward the future: whether they think things will be better here, and whether they want to remain here. Many international indices document each year that Israelis, relative to citizens of other countries, generally feel optimistic about the future, even under circumstances that can seem strange. This year, we documented that Israelis place high trust in other Israelis. Trust, community, family, and high patriotism all help explain how, even during a period of war and polarization, Israelis maintain a notable level of optimism.

The Hope Index for this year stands at 7.13 out of 10. This is a considerable increase compared with last year, although once again a caveat is required: last year's data were calculated less precisely and on the basis of fewer questions (see the methodological appendix). The Hope Index of Jewish Israelis stands at 7.46. The Hope Index of Arabs is significantly lower, at 5.79. Examination of this index reveals the notable influence of ideological positions and identity-group affiliation in Israeli society. The index is strongly affected by respondents' level of religiosity and by their political choices.

The Hope Index



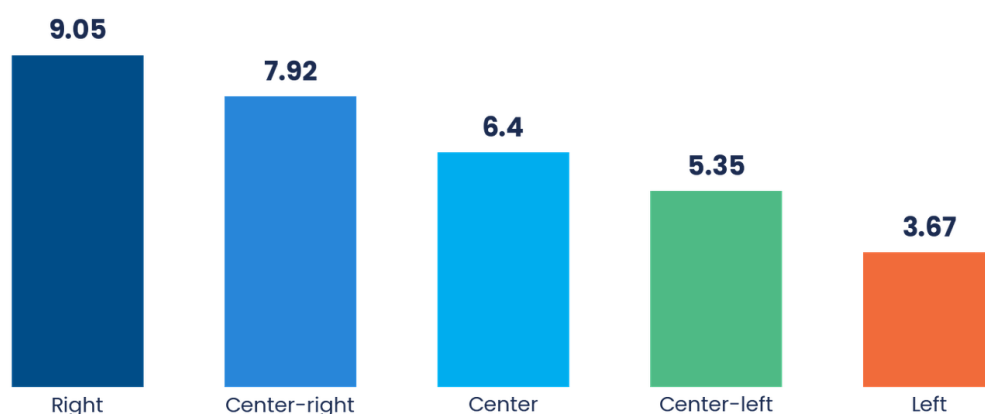
*Estimated only

In general, the meaning of the differences is easy to identify: Israelis who support the incumbent government and the parties that compose it rank much higher on the Hope Index than Israelis who oppose the incumbent government and support parties that are not part of it. Accordingly, the March 2026 survey found that among those seeking political change in Israel, a relatively high share say that a different election outcome,

namely continued rule by the incumbent coalition, would be an “intolerable” situation in their view. About one-quarter of Jews say this, including about half of coalition opponents.

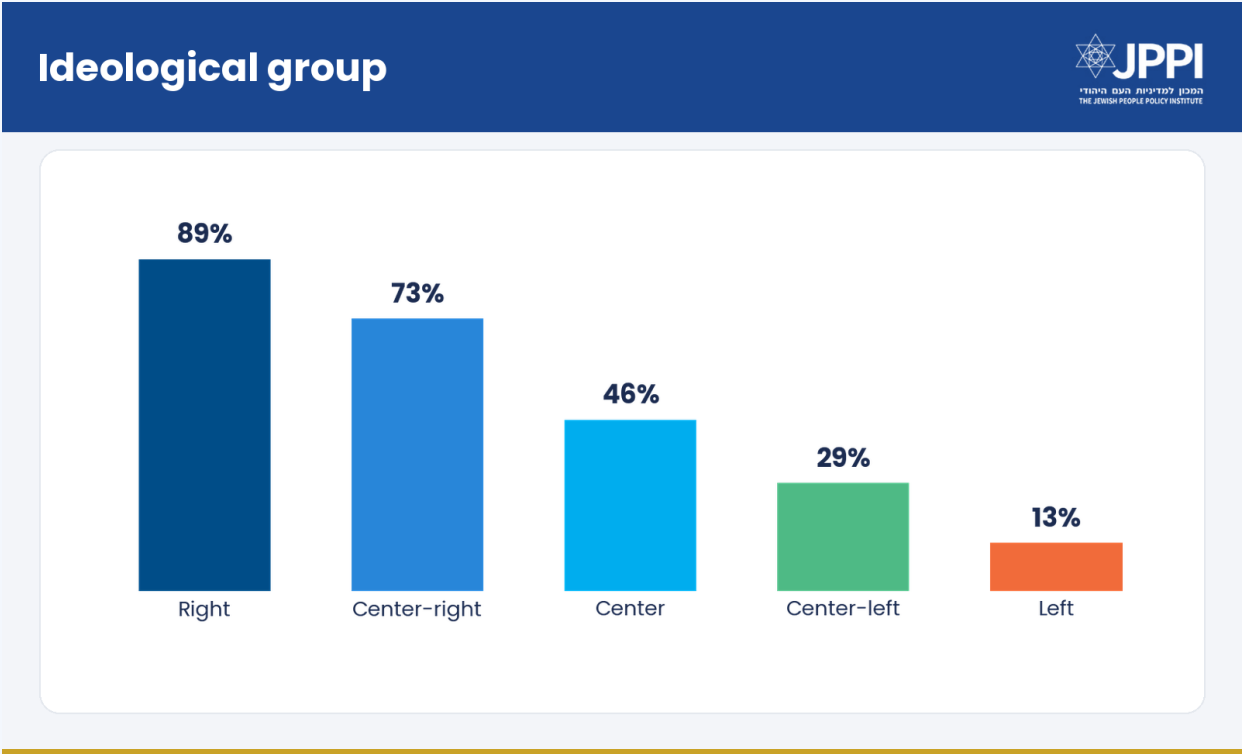
Thus, in the election year in which we are currently situated, the Hope rating reflects both the confidence of one political camp and the anxiety of another. It is common to say of election campaigns, from one election to the next, that they are “especially fateful”. Yet in the case of Israel's 2026 election campaign, this statement seems to carry special force, elevating it above most election campaigns in the history of the State of Israel. Its results will determine to a large extent whether Israelis' Hope Index remains sufficiently balanced, so that most Israelis, in most population groups, retain enough optimism about the future of the state to remain caring, active, and contributing citizens.

Hope Index: Beliefs



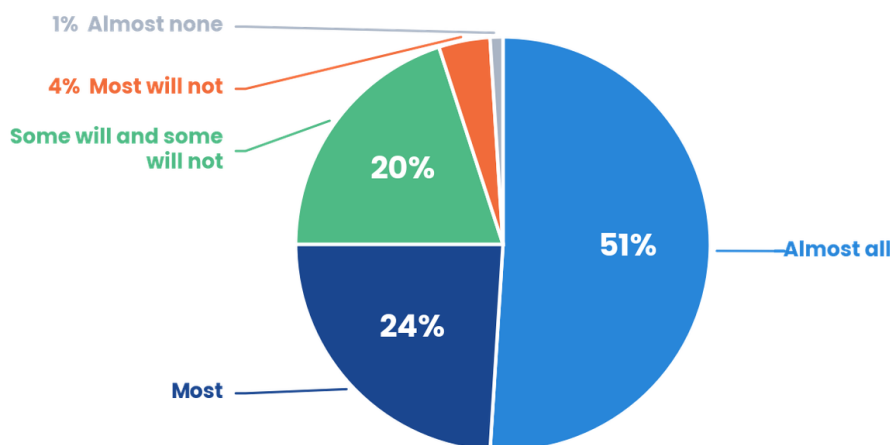
The Hope Index is based on four components that are weighted together to produce the score shown in the index: optimism regarding the future of the State of Israel; confidence that family and close acquaintances will remain in Israel; the assumption that Israel is the place where it is worthwhile for the next generation to live; and the assumption that Israel is a place where it is worthwhile to invest. Four questions examining Israelis' views on these matters are combined into the overall Hope Index score. These four questions can, of course, also be presented separately.

Sixty percent of Israelis are very (35%) or somewhat (25%) optimistic about the future of the State of Israel. Thirty-two percent are somewhat or very pessimistic. Eight percent answer “neither optimistic nor pessimistic”. The share of optimists among Jews is higher than among Arabs (63% versus 48%). As with all questions included in the Hope Index, ideological, political, and religious affiliation strongly affect the level of optimism, creating a clear scale of decline as one moves from right to left. When examined by religiosity, there is a very large gap between secular Israelis in the Jewish sector and Israelis from other groups along the traditional-religious spectrum. Among Arabs, there is a large gap between Druze, a very large majority of whom are optimistic, and Muslims and Christians, most of whom are pessimistic.



A large majority of Israelis assume that almost all or most of their close acquaintances, meaning family, friends, and their children, will continue to live in Israel (75%). The gaps visible in the optimism question are visible in the same way on this question. A significant difference nonetheless worth noting is that among Christians in Israel, about half (47%) of respondents said that “some will remain and some will not”, an exceptional figure relative both to other Arabs and to most Jewish groups. It should be noted that the share of Christian respondents in the survey is relatively small, which may affect the level of confidence in the result.

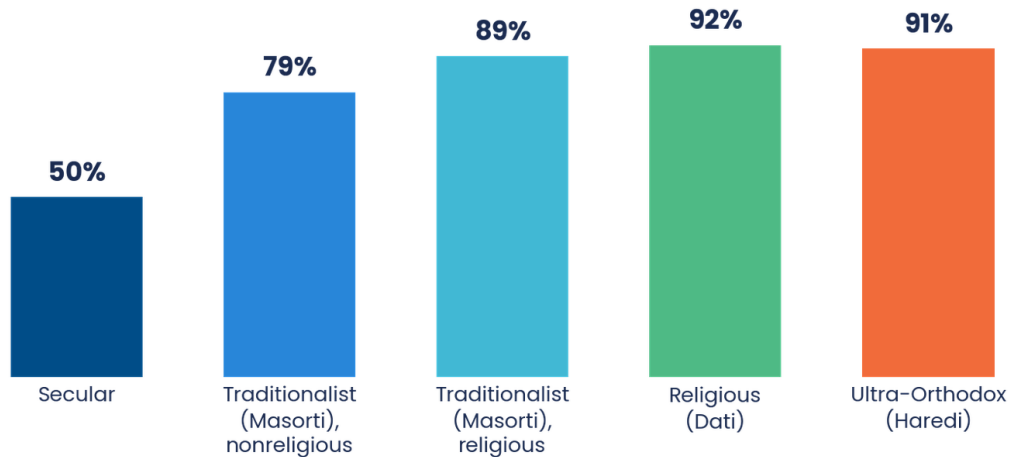
When you think about your close circle of family and friends, how many of them and their children do you think will continue to live in Israel?



About two-thirds of Israelis (65%) believe that Israel is the place where it is worthwhile for their children and grandchildren to live. About one-fifth say “maybe yes and maybe no”, and the presence of this response is especially prominent among Israelis located from the center leftward on the political scale, which may indicate a kind of waiting position, perhaps also in connection with the elections to be held this year. Among Arabs, about half believe that it is worthwhile for their children and grandchildren to live in Israel (49%). Here too, Christian Arabs stand out, with a very high share saying that it is not certain that Israel is the right place for the next generation of their descendants to live (71%).

Again, when examining the answers on the religiosity scale, secular Israelis, who are the largest group among Jews, are the exceptional group in their answer to the next-generation question. About one-third of them (31%) say that “maybe yes and maybe no” it is worthwhile for their children and grandchildren to live in Israel. Another approximately one-fifth say that it is not worthwhile for them to live in Israel (19%, combining “think not” and “certainly not”). In other words, among those identifying as “secular”, who constitute about four in ten Jews, the largest group of all groups but not a majority group, about half of respondents are not convinced that Israel is the right place for their children and grandchildren to live. Compared with findings from two years ago, a few months after the beginning of the war, the data are quite similar. The wording of the question was different then, but the finding is similar: 53% of secular Jews said that it was “worthwhile for children/grandchildren to live in Israel”; the rest gave either a clear answer favoring life outside Israel or answered ‘don’t know’.

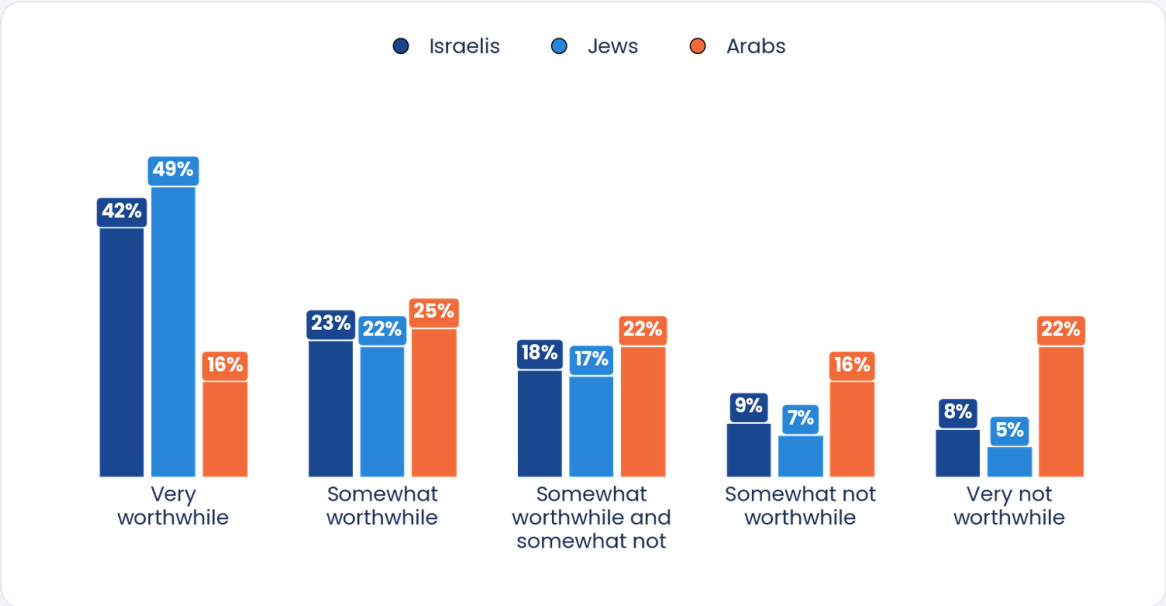
When you think about your close circle of family and friends, how many of them and their children do you think will continue to live in Israel?



The final question included among the Hope Index questions differs somewhat from the previous ones, and seeks to examine whether Israelis think Israel is a good place in which to invest. The working assumption underlying the decision to include such a question is that statements seemingly related to a non-ideological field, where it is worthwhile to invest economically, can reveal people's level of trust in countries, cities, companies, or anything else. In general, the answer to this question is not significantly different from the other questions included in the index. About two-thirds of Israelis think it is very worthwhile (42%) or somewhat worthwhile (23%) to invest in Israel, compared with slightly less than one-fifth who think it is not worthwhile (17%). As a rule, there is a high correspondence between those who are optimistic about Israel, those who believe Israel is a good place for their children to live, and those who believe it is worthwhile to invest in Israel for the long term.

When you think about long-term economic investment, is Israel, in your view, a place in which it is worthwhile to invest?

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As noted, the overall Hope score for Israelis this year is 7.13. It is based on the four questions detailed above, with the overall score lowest on the optimism question and highest on the question of remaining in the country, almost 8 out of 10. Of course, it should be borne in mind that the question of remaining is connected, among other things, to an assessment of whether close acquaintances and friends even have the possibility of leaving, or a practical feasibility of doing so, which may certainly increase the share of Israelis who assume their acquaintances will live in Israel, whether or not they are optimistic about its future.

When you think about long-term economic investment, is Israel, in your view, a place in which it is worthwhile to invest?

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PART 2

Expanded Chapters on Current Issues

Survey findings and expert responses



War and Security

- A stronger sense of victory among Israelis regarding Iran and Hezbollah, and a weaker one with respect to Gaza

- Skepticism about achievements and disagreement over objectives regarding the future of the Gaza arena

- High trust in the senior military leadership since the change of command at the high echelons of the IDF

- A decline in the importance ascribed to morality during wartime following October 7 and the war that followed

Sense of Victory

The security reality has been the principal backdrop for any analysis of the state of Israeli society since the October 7, 2023 Hamas onslaught. This has been the case throughout the two and a half years of multi-front war that followed, through the partial end of the war in Gaza, the signing of the ceasefire agreement, the return of the hostages, and the security situation prevailing in Israel at the time of writing. Over the course of the war, whose end remains unclear, Israelis' confidence in the possibility of victory – or their sense that Israel has won the war – has risen and fallen depending on events in an evolving reality.

In the most recent Israeli Society Index (March 2026), 56% of Israelis felt that Israel is winning or has won the war with a high degree of confidence (a rating of 4 or 5 on a 1–5 scale).

Over the past year, since April 2025, four main periods can be identified when examining the sense of confidence in victory.

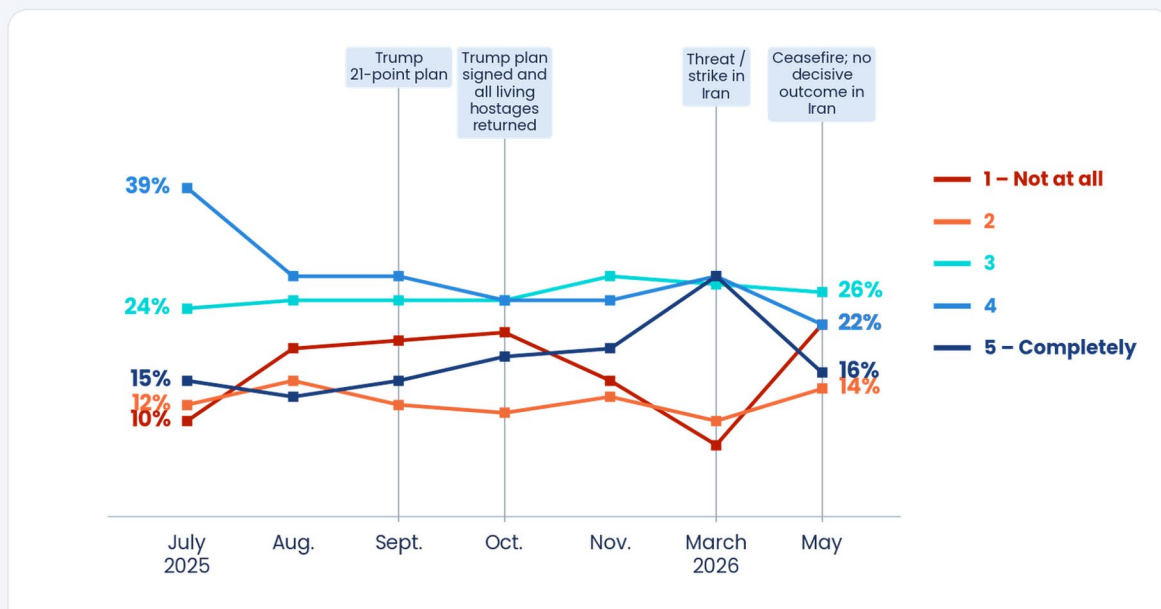
The first phase, prior to the June 2025 Operation Rising Lion in Iran: a period marked by a significant decline in the sense of military achievement, compared to a marked rise in this feeling in autumn 2024 on the heels of IDF achievements in Lebanon.

The second phase, following Operation Rising Lion, which saw a sharp but temporary increase in the sense of military achievement (July 2025).

The third phase, which followed the signing of the ceasefire agreement and the completion of the hostage deal, continued through winter 2026. In this phase, roughly four in ten Israelis rated the war's achievements as victorious; about one-third believed that Israel was neither winning nor had won (a rating of 1 or 2); and about one-quarter rated Israel's achievements as moderate (3 out of 5).

In the fourth phase, which effectively began in February 2026, the focus shifted back to Iran – to negotiations and to the possibility of a U.S. and Israeli strike in that country – and, on the last day of the month, to the strike itself.

Overall, to what extent do you feel that Israel is winning or has won the war?

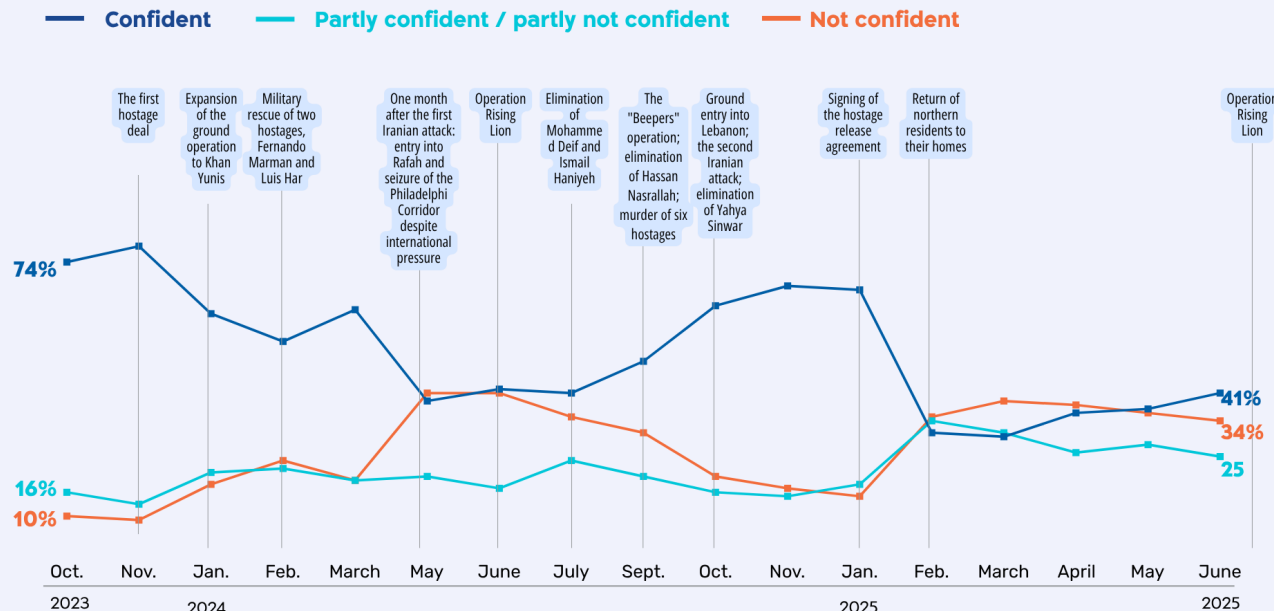


Looking across the entire war period (excluding the initial months of upheaval), a general – though not fully consistent – trend can be discerned, expressed in two main patterns: when public opinion was focused on Gaza – the hostages, the ceasefire, governance the day after, and the feasibility of disarming Hamas and ending its rule – Israelis' sense of achievement in the war tended to decline. By contrast, when attention shifted to other arenas, especially IDF attacks in Lebanon (summer and autumn 2024) and Iran (spring 2025, winter 2026), Israelis' sense of achievement tended to rise.

As can be seen throughout this report, ideological orientation – and especially support for, or opposition to, the governing coalition – has had a significant effect on attitudes relating to the war. Even against this political backdrop, however, the gap in attitudes on Gaza is far larger than the gap in other arenas (Lebanon and Iran). That is, when attention is directed to the non-Gaza arenas, opponents of the coalition recognize significant achievements to a similar extent as coalition supporters. But when attention is directed to Gaza, the gaps between ideological camps widen – both because achievements in Gaza are less clear-cut than those in other arenas, and because at least some of the achievements in Gaza are bound up with substantive,

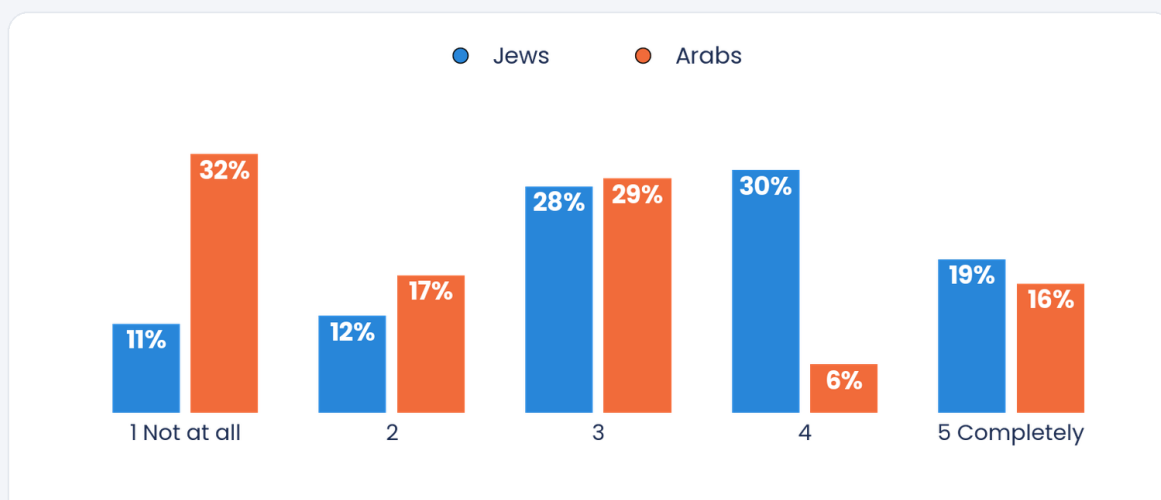
contested issues (occupation, military rule, relations with the Palestinian Authority, the priority given to freeing hostages, and so forth).

Confidence that Israel Is Winning or has Won the War



Throughout the war, and even at its ostensible end, a significant gap was evident not only between ideological camps within Israel's Jewish majority, but also between Jews and Arabs in their assessments of the war's achievements. This gap persisted even after the announcement of a ceasefire, the return of all hostages, and the transition to deliberations on the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. In November 2025, about half of Jewish Israelis felt that Israel had won or was winning the war (levels 4–5), whereas about one-fifth of Arab Israelis felt so (22%), and nearly half felt that Israel had neither won nor was winning the war (49%, ratings 1–2).

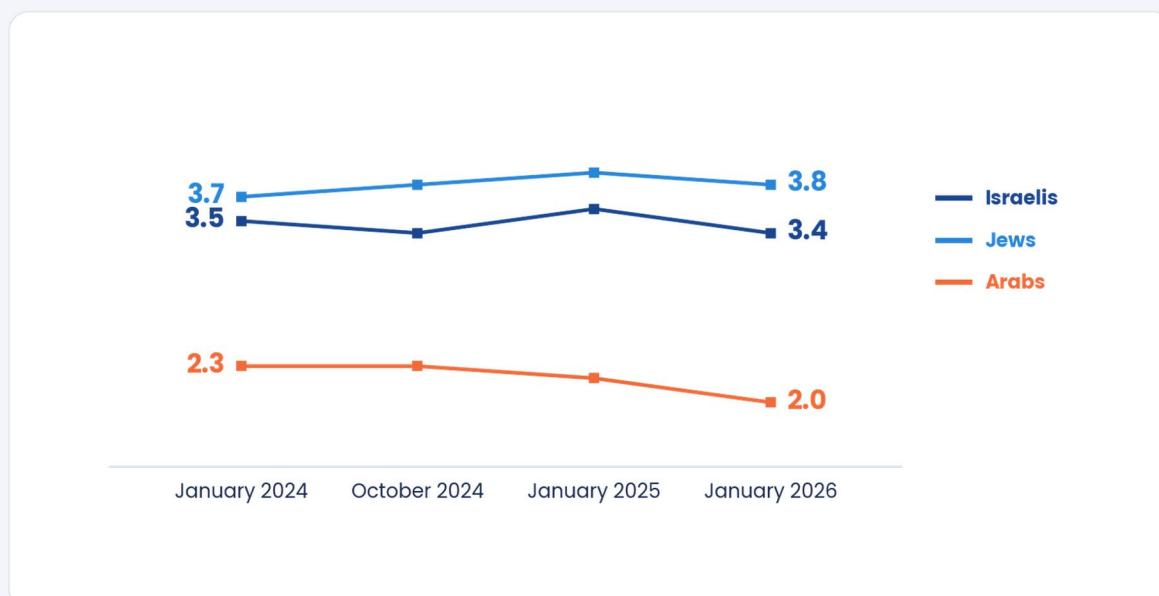
Overall, to what extent do you feel that Israel is winning and/or has won the war? – Nov. 2025



Strength and Trust

Assessments of Israel's military strength did not change significantly over the duration of the war. In fact, Israelis' assessment of their state's strength in January 2024 – only a few months after the October 7 massacre and the outbreak of war – is very similar to their assessment after two and a half years of war, and after the IDF demonstrated formidable capabilities against enemies across diverse arenas, near and far.

Israel's military strength (on a scale from -5 to +5)



Assessments of strength are not uniform across different groups in Israel. Arabs rate Israel's military strength lower than Jews do. Among Jews there is a correlation with ideological orientation, with groups on the political "right" rating Israel's military strength more highly. Indeed, the small left-wing group is an outlier with a lower strength rating (2.8), while the average for the much larger right-wing group is 4.3. The middle groups – center-right, center, and center-left – which together constitute nearly two-thirds of Jewish Israeli society, rate Israel's strength fairly similarly, from 3.4 among the center-left to 3.8 among the center-right.

Perceived strength is, of course, related to trust in the capabilities of the IDF and its senior command. Examining public trust in the senior command over the course of the war reveals fluctuations and gaps over time and across society (trust in regular soldiers and junior officers was very high across all groups throughout the war). As the data indicates, a turning point in public trust in the IDF's senior command occurred following the replacement of the command leadership that had been in office during the October 7 attack. For many months, public trust in the senior command was shaped by both the shadow of October 7 and the tension between the political leadership and the senior military leadership – reflected in particularly low trust ratings among supporters of the coalition parties. Eighteen months into the war, more than one-third of Jewish Israelis agreed with the claim that the war was dragging on because "the IDF's top leadership is not determined enough to achieve a rapid victory." Again, this view was especially pronounced among

coalition supporters: in May 2025, 73% of right-wing respondents thought the IDF's top leadership was "not determined enough."

This situation changed with the change of high-echelon personnel and the appointment of a new Chief of Staff by the incumbent government. Even in the period after the personnel changes – during Operation Rising Lion in Iran, the end of war in Gaza, and the return of the hostages – substantial gaps in trust in the IDF's senior command remained between supporters of the coalition and the opposition. In December 2025, 58% of right-wing respondents said they trusted the IDF leadership, compared with 76% of the center-right cohort and 80% of the centrist group. Nevertheless, the increase in trust in the IDF's senior command is apparent in the full data, and the shift persisted over a substantial period, even though tension between the political and military echelons largely remained in place, even after the change of chief of staff.

The Iranian Threat

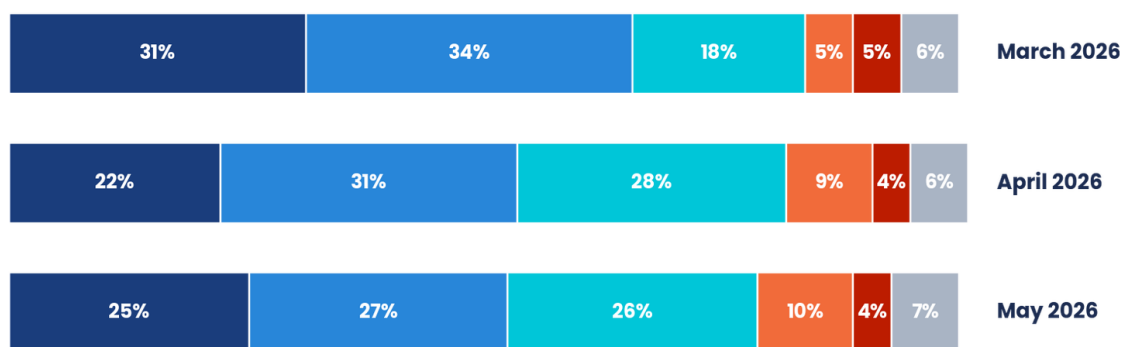
At the time of writing this report, Israeli and international attention is acutely directed at Iran, whose salience in the public consciousness has risen and fallen in waves during the war years. Iran has been at the center of Israel's security consciousness for many years; however, with the outbreak of the war in Gaza attention shifted away from it for a time, until Iran began to demonstrate active involvement in the fighting – first through missile attacks, which were met with Israeli strikes (in 2024), then during the 12-day campaign in June 2025, and later in winter 2025 and early spring 2026, when the United States visibly assumed the lead in the Iranian arena, following the brutal suppression of protests against the regime in Tehran and in the wake of a promise by the U.S. President, Donald Trump, that "help is on the way."

When the campaign against Iran opened in March 2026, a very large majority of Israelis supported it. Overall, 72% believed Israel had acted correctly in striking Iran, including 85% of Jews. Every Jewish ideological group except the left contained a substantial majority in support. Even on the left, only about one-quarter opposed the operation (26%), while about half supported it and another quarter said it was too early to know. At the outset, a large majority also believed that the campaign would improve the Middle East over the long term. Confidence in that positive effect eroded in April and May as a prolonged ceasefire continued before the objectives had been achieved. At the time of writing, the Iranian arena remains open, and the eventual outcome will largely determine Israelis' final judgment of the decision to enter the war and of the decisions made during it.

Will the war change the situation in the Middle East over the long term?

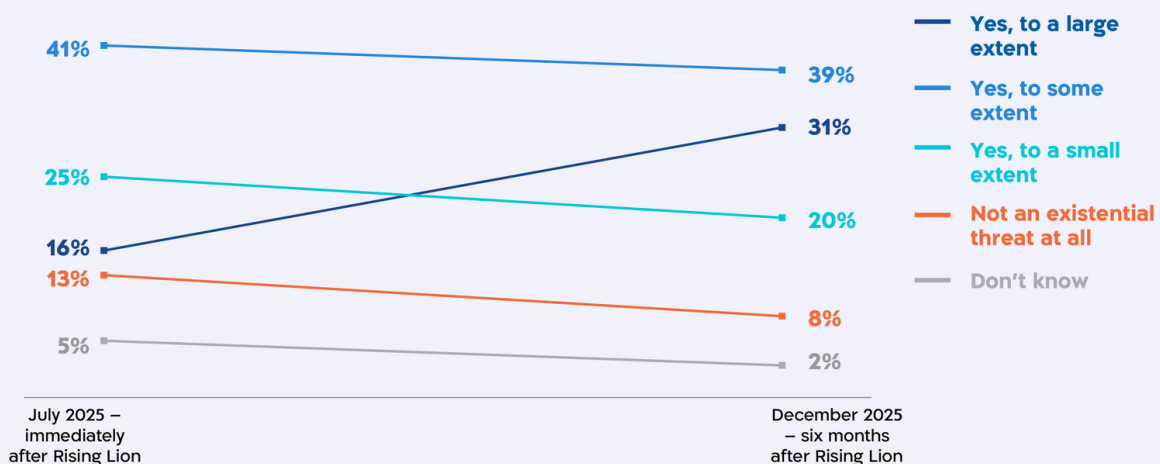


- Certainly improve the situation
- Probably improve
- Uncertain whether improve or worsen
- Probably worsen
- Certainly worsen
- Don't know



Nearly a year ago, Iran moved back to the center of attention, in light of Operation Rising Lion, which concluded with a short but significant U.S. strike that destroyed Iran's main nuclear facilities. A large majority of Jewish Israelis – and a certain share, though not a majority, among Arab Israelis – said about a year ago, prior to the 12-day campaign against Iran, that the country posed an “existential threat” to Israel. Sixty-seven percent of Jewish Israelis overall believed that before the Israel-Hamas war, Iran had, to a large extent, been an existential threat; another 24% believed it had been an existential threat to some extent. After the 12-day June campaign, the share who regarded Iran as an existential threat declined substantially. In other words, after Operation Rising Lion, a significant portion of Israelis believed that the campaign had achieved its objective, at least partially, and had shifted Iran from an existential threat to a non-existential threat (or, in some cases, from an existential threat to a large extent to an existential threat to some extent). While Iran was perceived as an existential threat before Operation Rising Lion (to a large or some extent) by 91% of Jewish Israelis, after the campaign, the share dropped precipitously to 63%.

Is Iran an existential threat? (%)



However, six months after the 12-day operation, it became apparent that despite the sense of military achievement, a substantial share of Israelis returned to their baseline positions that Iran posed a significant threat, even though many continued to believe that the threat level had decreased somewhat after the campaign. Similar to the question asked immediately after the campaign in July, in December 2025, we asked Israelis whether, before the war, Iran had or had not been an existential threat to Israel and whether it remained so. The responses indicated that although Iran's nuclear program was damaged in Operation Rising Lion, most Israelis still viewed Iran as an existential threat to Israel. Specifically, one-third (31%) of Israelis thought Iran was an existential threat to a large extent, and another 38% regarded it as an existential threat to some extent. That is, most of the public believed that the existential threat persisted even after Operation Rising Lion. One-fifth (20%) of Israelis said Iran was an existential threat to a small extent, and 8% said Iran did not pose an existential threat at all. Among Jewish Israelis, the perceived level of threat was higher: 34% assessed that the existential threat still existed to a large extent, and 41% thought it existed to some extent. Three percent said there was no existential threat at all. Conversely, among Arab Israelis, the perceived threat was lower: about half (53%) believed that after the campaign against Iran the threat was small or non-existent.

By December 2025, compared with the July data in the immediate wake of the campaign, there was a significant increase – both among Jews (from 16% to 34%) and among Arabs (from 16% to 19%) – in describing the Iranian threat as existential to a large extent. This upward trend naturally continued as Iran took a more prominent place in the public discourse and as the prospect of another campaign against it intensified. The data indicates that, notwithstanding the strong sense of achievement in Israel after Operation Rising Lion, the perceived threat from Iran remained high after the operation. This, in turn, generated substantial public support for the possibility of an additional campaign to remove the threat, or at a minimum, mitigate it considerably (an option that became even more prominent in Israeli public opinion when coupled with U.S. leadership).

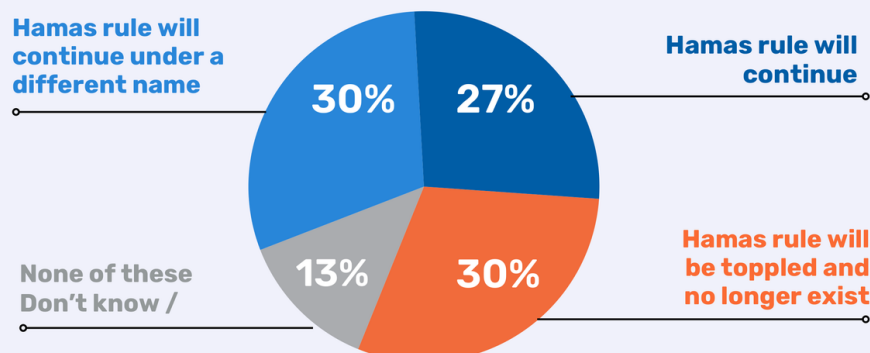
The Future of Gaza

In the second half of 2025 and the start of 2026, the focus on Gaza shifted away from the fighting and attempts to reach a hostage deal – which had also been accompanied by an internal dispute over the priority of such a deal and the price Israel should pay to secure it – toward debate over the “day after” in Gaza. Led by President Trump – at times accompanied by diplomatic pressure on Israel as well – the fighting in the Strip ceased without Hamas being disarmed, while Hamas continued to control areas where the IDF was not present. All hostages, living and dead, were returned to Israel, and a gradual plan for a return to routine was agreed, including reconstruction of the Strip.

As with most questions relating to Gaza, responses to survey questions on the day after do not reflect full consensus among the Israeli public. The fact that the ceasefire and the management of the reconstruction process are being led by President Trump – who is extremely popular in Israel and perceived as truly understanding Israel’s security challenges (see a separate chapter on Israel–U.S. relations) – largely neutralizes the capacity of internal disputes to derail progress along an externally set reconstruction track. Both the government and the public tend to agree that Israel has a strong need to operate within the Trump framework, even in cases where his position does not fully align with Israel’s. At the same time, responses regarding Gaza’s expected future indicate both a high degree of Israeli skepticism about the prospect of reaching an arrangement that satisfies all of Israel’s objectives and a number of issues on which substantial disagreement remains in Israel regarding Gaza in the medium- and long-term.

This skepticism is shared by a considerable proportion of the public, albeit at varying levels. Confronted with a reality in which Hamas remains in control of areas of Gaza where the IDF does not maintain a presence, and the ongoing assertion by both the Israeli government and the U.S. administration that Hamas will be required to disarm, the Israeli public has relatively low confidence in the ability to complete the mission. In practice, most Israelis believe that Hamas rule will continue in Gaza going forward. Some believe it will continue in its current form, while others believe it will persist under a different name or in a different configuration. When responses are broken down by political and ideological orientation, it is apparent that those who believe Hamas rule will cease – that is, those who accept the Israeli and U.S. position as one that can be practically implemented – are mainly proponents of the current governing coalition. The gap between their view and that of other Israelis reflects both their greater trust in the government and their greater willingness to accept its assurances, and the fact that they are not deterred by, and in many cases even support, additional actions that may be required to achieve the goal of disarming Hamas and ending its rule.

Which of the following do you think will be true after the maneuver in Gaza... – June 2025 (%)

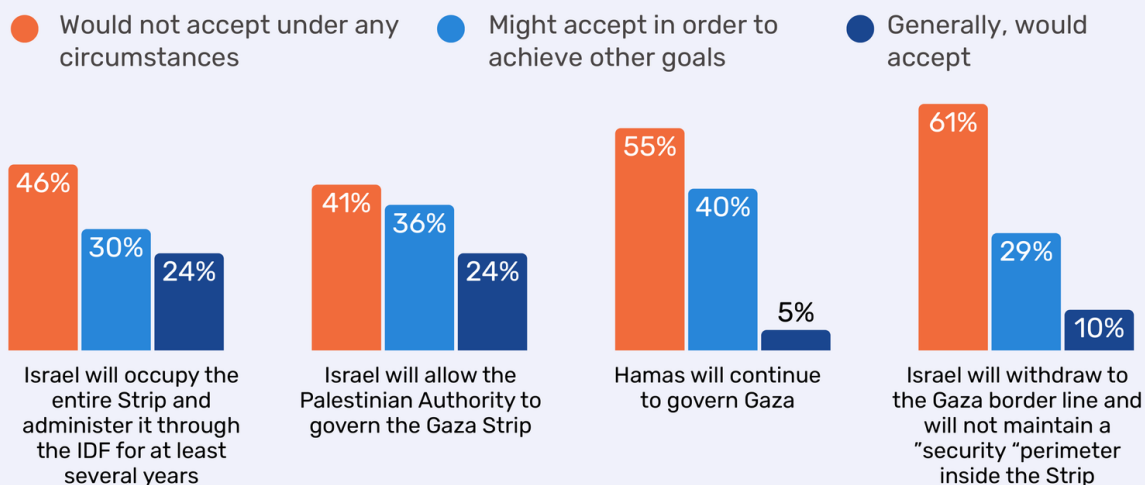


Data from June 2025

In September 2025, when several possible future scenarios for the Gaza Strip were examined, gaps emerged in Israelis' willingness to accept different developments in Gaza. An important example is the question of Israeli occupation and administration of the entire Gaza Strip (via the IDF) for several years. Looking at those who support this option (about one-quarter of respondents), as well as those willing to accept it to achieve other goals (about one-third), one can identify substantial overlap with those who believe that Hamas rule in Gaza will indeed end, as the Israeli government is seeking. That is, these Israelis' belief that the goal will be realized stems in part from their willingness to realize it even if it proves necessary to do so through a further large-scale IDF operation to fully occupy additional areas of the Strip and impose several years of military rule. Roughly half of the Israeli public (46%) opposes such action and is more skeptical about the feasibility of achieving the goal of ending Hamas rule (as many Israelis believe that ending Hamas rule without fully occupying the Strip and imposing Israeli rule would be difficult).

A similar divide can also be found with respect to another option presented: "Hamas will continue to govern Gaza." As expected, very few Israelis view this outcome as desirable. The remaining respondents split between two positions: those who would not accept such an outcome under any circumstances – most of whom (though not all) are coalition supporters – and those who would accept continued Hamas rule in order to achieve other goals. Around four in ten Israelis do not regard Hamas rule in Gaza as desirable but say they would accept it to achieve other goals (one of which is avoiding the need for Israel to impose a military occupation over the entire Gaza Strip).

Which of the following do you think will be true after the maneuver in Gaza... – June 2025 (%)



Data from September 2025

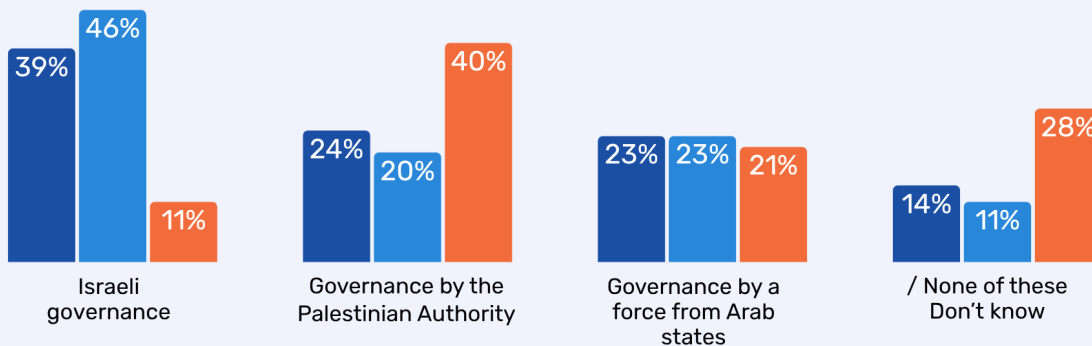
In practice, the principal disagreement among the Israeli public regarding Gaza governance "the day after" can be divided into two main categories. The first concerns how unacceptable Hamas rule is, and the price Israelis are willing to pay to ensure that Hamas does not remain in power. The second assumes that Hamas rule has ended and asks who would govern Gaza in its stead. Israelis were asked this second question several times in the last year in varying forms, and their preference often changed depending on the options presented in each survey. Generally, Israelis support three main options: (1) Israeli governance (not only as a last resort, but as the preferred outcome); (2) governance by the Palestinian Authority; and (3) governance by an external force – Arab states and other countries willing to participate in the policing force proposed under Trump's plan.

When these three options are presented to Israelis – without additional options such as a "local Palestinian force" or other alternatives that currently do not appear significant – the results point to a dispute with two main cleavages: a large gap between Jewish and Arab Israelis, and a large gap between Jewish supporters of the government and Jewish opponents of the government. Among Israelis overall, about half choose governance by the Palestinian Authority or by a force from Arab states. Four in ten prefer Israeli governance over Gaza. A further 14% (and one-quarter of Arab respondents) said they didn't know. The leading preference among Jews – though not the preference of a majority – is Israeli governance; support for this option comes primarily from supporters of the current government. The leading preference among Arab Israelis is governance by the Palestinian Authority.

Who would you like to govern Gaza in the coming years?



● All Israelis ● Jews ● Arabs



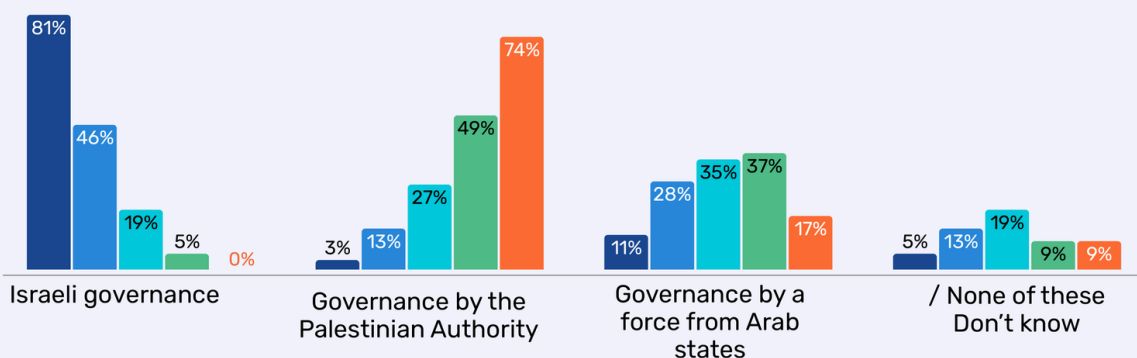
Data from January 2026

A breakdown by ideological orientation among Jewish Israelis – from the left pole of the political spectrum (a small group of about 5%) through the right pole (the largest group of Jewish Israelis, almost all of whom support the coalition), shows that most on the political right and close to half of those who self-identify as center-right – together constituting all coalition supporters – prefer Israeli governance of Gaza. The share preferring governance by an external force (from Arab states) increases as one moves leftward along the political spectrum scale followed by an increase in the share preferring governance by the Palestinian Authority (under Trump's plan, this is the endpoint of the reconstruction process, but it is contingent on many steps along the way).

Who would you like to govern Gaza in the coming years? Jan. 2026 (%)



● Right ● Center-right ● Center ● Center-left ● Left



Data from January 2026

The question of Gaza governance includes a range of additional underlying issues and objectives – such as establishing Jewish communities in the Strip, encouraging Palestinian emigration from the Strip, among others. About a third of Jewish Israelis support, in principle, establishing Jewish communities in the Gaza Strip (some support re-establishing communities in the heart of the Strip, while others support establishing

communities only in the northern Strip, as a buffer between the Palestinian area and Israel's border). About a quarter of Jewish Israelis believe this objective is attainable in the coming years. Among Arab Israelis, an even higher share believes Israel will establish Jewish communities in the Strip (46%), and a very large majority opposes it. A smaller share (27%) believes that within the next few years, a substantial portion of Gaza's residents will emigrate to other countries.

Which of the following do you think will be true after the war in Gaza... (Jews only, June 2025)



Within two to three years, a majority / a substantial share of Gaza residents will leave

37%

Within two to three years, Israel will establish communities near the border / deeper inside the Strip

28%

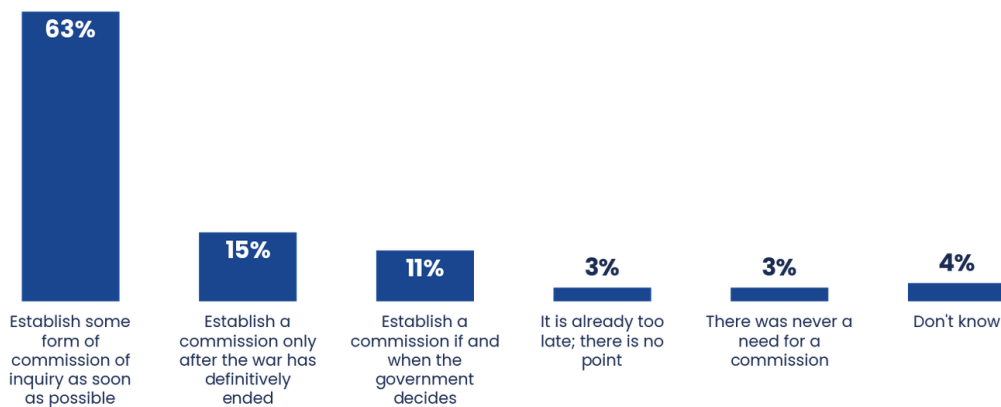
Commission of Inquiry

The question of whether to establish a commission of inquiry to examine the circumstances that led to the October 7 massacre and the ensuing war lies at the center of an ongoing public debate. The governing coalition is unwilling to establish a State Commission of Inquiry, and over the past year, it has proposed alternative commission frameworks, which the opposition has rejected. In practice, the dispute over establishing such a commission parallels the dispute over the powers of the Supreme Court. Groups that have greater trust in the Supreme Court and reject the coalition's attempts to substantially erode its authority also demand a State Commission of Inquiry as laid out in Israeli law, whereby the chief justice of the Supreme Court appoints the commission's members. Groups whose trust in the Supreme Court is lower, and who support a significant diminution of its power, prefer the coalition's proposal to establish a commission based on political affiliation, with the coalition selecting half of the members and the opposition selecting the other half.

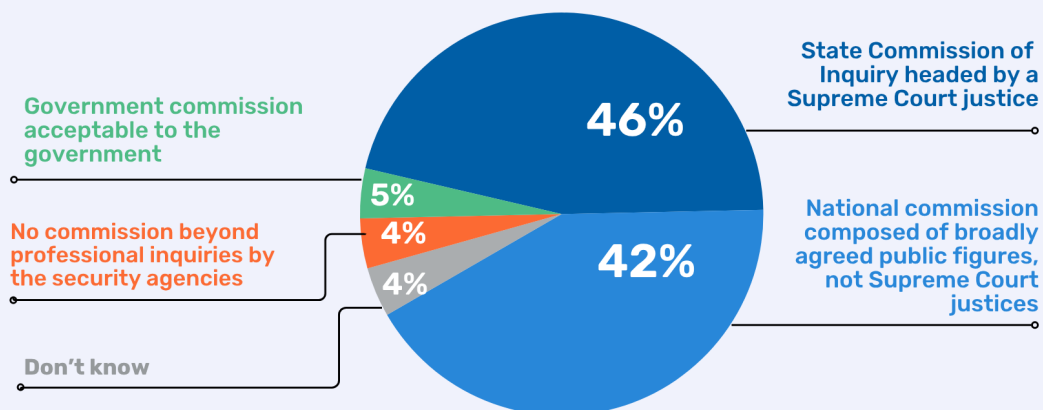
These positions resurfaced when survey questions were posed over the past year about the establishment of a commission, which yielded two main conclusions. First, a large majority of the public believes that an official inquiry is necessary. Second, the public does not agree on the appropriate way to conduct such an inquiry. Toward the end of 2025, a question was presented that included a compromise proposal advanced by President Isaac Herzog: appointing a commission jointly by two judges – Supreme Court Chief Justice Isaac Amit, and his deputy, Noam Solberg (in common public perception, the former is seen as a "liberal"

judge and the latter as a “conservative” judge). Among those who support establishing a commission appointed by the Supreme Court, there was substantial willingness (more than half of respondents) to accept such a compromise. By contrast, most of those who oppose a commission whose appointment involves the Supreme Court did not accept even this proposal and remained supportive of establishing a commission appointed by the political echelon in various formats.

Which position is closest to yours regarding an inquiry into the events of October 7? (May 2026)



What type of commission of inquiry should be established? (May 2026)



Data from May 2026

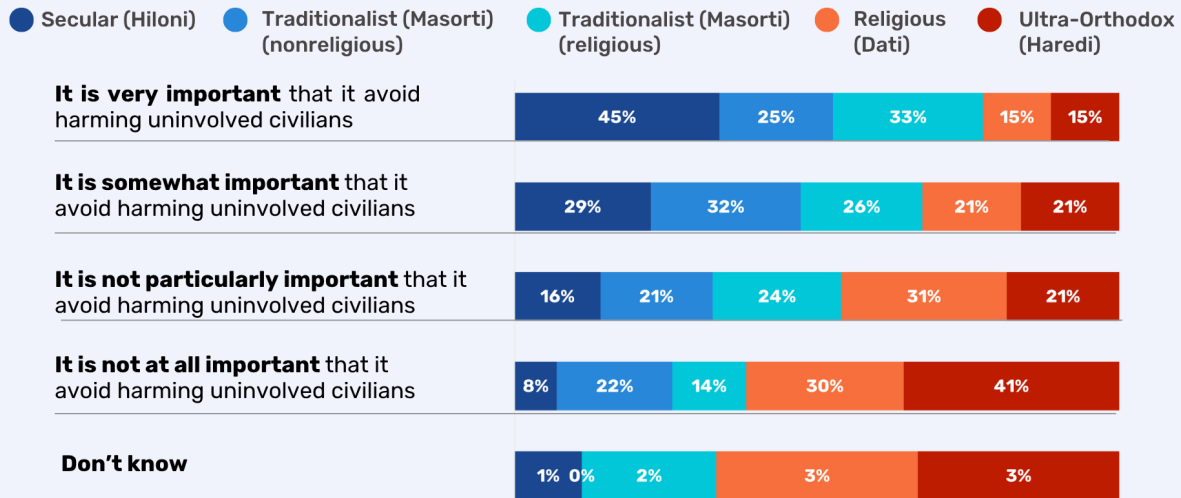
When examining the second option by ideological orientation, substantial gaps are evident, very similar to those of the first option. On the left and center-left, there is an almost unanimous preference for appointment by the Supreme Court: over 90% in both groups prefer that the commission be appointed either by Chief Justice Amit alone or by Amit and Deputy Chief Justice Solberg jointly. In the center, there is a clear preference for appointment by the Supreme Court (75%), but some support for political balancing mechanisms also emerges. In the center-right and the right, the greatest support is for the coalition-opposition model: 37% in the center-right and 55% on the right support this option. The right – the largest group – is the only one with meaningful support for appointment by the government or the Knesset (12% and 15%, respectively).

Combat and Morality

Previous surveys have repeatedly found that Jewish Israelis believe that the country conducts itself morally and expresses trust in the IDF's morality. In a 2022 JPPI survey, conducted a year before the war, only 16% of respondents – almost all of whom identified as "left" – said Israel was "not very" or "not at all" moral. Among center-left respondents, roughly equal shares said Israel was "very" or "quite" moral and that it was "about as moral as the world average." Among the center and right (center, center-right, and right) – the majority of Israelis – the country was perceived as more moral than average, and in both right-wing groups, a majority thought it was very moral.

The morality of the IDF was rated more highly than that of the state in general. In 2022, three in four Jewish Israelis agreed with the statement "the IDF is the most moral army in the world," and almost half said this statement was "very true" (47%). These findings resemble those collected in previous years with similar questions, indicating that negative incidents that occur from time to time, and raise criticism of the IDF's conduct, do not undermine the Jewish public's confidence in its morality. The majority of the public, though not all, believes that the IDF's ethical conduct during combat is the appropriate standard for Israel. This view is especially prevalent among secular and traditionalist Jews and among Arabs. Among religious and Haredi respondents, an indifference to the extent of IDF harm to uninvolved civilians in Gaza is the more common view. One may conjecture that this view is related to the fact that the Gaza war followed a massacre that included heinous acts against Israelis, as well as widespread reports that there was broad support for Hamas and the massacre among Gazans.

When Israel operates in Gaza... (Among Jews)



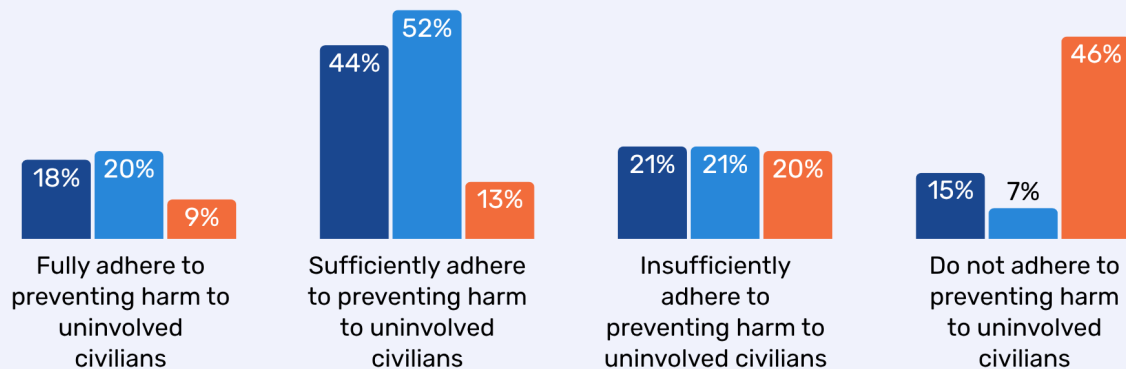
Data from June 2025

The prolonged war – especially in Gaza – has retested public attitudes and again revealed that views on this issue are held with a firmness that sharply underscores the gap between Israel's image among certain critics elsewhere in the world and the way Israelis perceive their own state. In many countries, Israel's image and attitudes toward its actions are increasingly negative. Against international reporting accusing Israel of operating in the Gaza Strip in ways that do not conform to moral standards – through unnecessary killing of civilians or through starvation – a large majority of Israelis assessed the IDF's actions as sufficiently moral. Arab Israelis, on the other hand, believed Israel does not sufficiently adhere to a policy of avoiding harm to civilians. On the question of the accuracy of reports of famine in Gaza, about half of the public did not believe them, and about two-thirds of Jews did not. About half of Israelis said they were concerned by reports of famine in Gaza. However, among Arab Israelis, an overwhelming majority were concerned because Israel must not bring about famine, while among Jewish Israelis, most of those concerned (about half of Jews) said they were concerned about famine because it may make things harder for Israel – that is, not a principled objection to actions that lead to famine, but rather a pragmatic consideration related to achieving Israel's war aims.

In your view, Israeli operations in Gaza



● All Israelis ● Jews ● Arabs



Data from June 2025

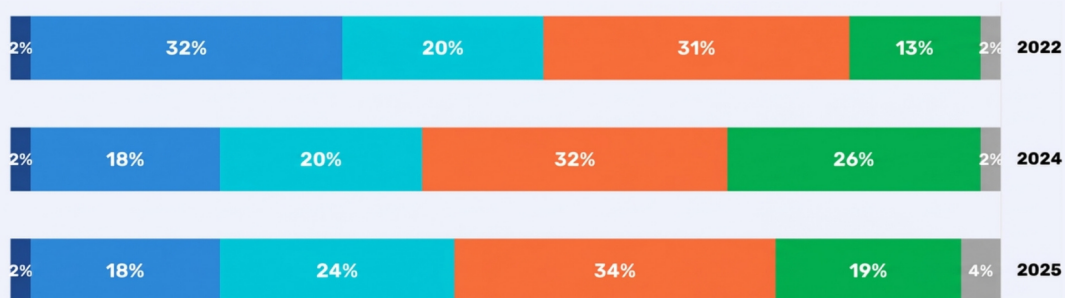
The war has changed how Israelis respond when presented with the (largely artificial) binary between morality and interests in foreign and security policy.

Respondents' general principled position – both before and after the war – is that Israel's interests should be the primary foundational consideration, and that moral considerations should be added, when possible. However, a significant change can be observed in Jewish public attitudes concerning the appropriate balance during wartime. Whereas before the war roughly one-third of the public leaned toward a moral policy with exceptions when vital interests were severely harmed, in wartime, support for this position declined markedly. By contrast, the share of respondents who believe that moral considerations should not factor into Israel's foreign and security policy increased substantially.

Some say Israel's foreign and security policy should be primarily moral, while others say it should primarily safeguard the interests of the State of Israel. In this matter, which of the following positions is closest to your view? (Jews only)



■ Foreign and security policy should be based only on moral considerations ■ Policy should be moral, with exceptions in cases of severe harm to interests ■ Moral considerations and interests should be balanced roughly equally ■ Policy should be based on interests, with exceptions in cases of severe harm to morality ■ Policy should be based only on Israel's interests ■ Don't know



The response scale for the principled question of balancing interests and values aligns with the familiar distribution in Israel, both along the axis of religiosity/tradition (from secular to Haredi) and along the axis of political ideology (from left to right). In both cases, moving in a more religious-right direction increases the weight assigned to interests relative to morality. In an analysis JPPI conducted to determine which of the two scales is more consequential in this context (religiosity/tradition or ideology), the ideological scale emerged as the more important. Accordingly, even when examining secular respondents only, the same gradations of attitudinal change from left to right were identified when broken down by ideology. Nearly all of those who think policy should be based solely on interests are identified with the right, 35% of whom gave this response in a 2025 survey. This position is also held by half (49%) of respondents who identified as “hard right” (a subgroup within the overall right).

EXPERT RESPONSE

Yaakov Katz**Security Confidence and Strategic Skepticism**

Israel is living through one of the most complex periods in its history – a period in which Israeli society is required to contend simultaneously with a multi-front war, profound internal upheaval, and an ongoing debate over questions of leadership, responsibility, and morality in warfare. Despite this complexity, the findings of JPPI's annual report on the state of Israeli society present an intriguing picture: alongside a relatively strong sense of security capability, there is also significant skepticism regarding the achievements of the war and the strategic future of some of its arenas. In other words, Israelis feel neither defeated nor fully victorious.

The reason lies in the reality on the ground: in Gaza, Hamas controls roughly half of the territory and has managed to rebuild itself and its forces. In Lebanon, when the government presented the November 2024 ceasefire to the Israeli public as a victory, that characterization was inaccurate. And with respect to Iran, in June 2025 Netanyahu spoke of a “victory for generations”; but if it was indeed such a victory, how is it possible that less than a year later Israel again finds itself at war?

One of the central insights emerging from the data is that assessments of the war's achievements vary markedly according to the arena on which public debate is focused. When attention is directed toward arenas in which clear military achievements were perceived – such as Lebanon or Iran – the sense of achievement rises. By contrast, when the public debate focuses on Gaza, especially on questions such as the hostages, the ceasefire, or “the day after,” the sense of achievement declines substantially.

This dynamic is not accidental. It reflects the fact that the campaign in Gaza is perceived by the Israeli public as more complex, less unequivocal in terms of achievements, and above all as entailing higher moral, political, and strategic costs. Unlike other arenas, in which it is possible to point to defined military achievements – targeted killings, damage to infrastructure, or deterrence – in Gaza the central questions concern governance, regional stability, and the ability to prevent Hamas from reconstituting itself. These are questions that still lack clear answers even after years of fighting.

At the same time, the data show that Israelis' sense of the country's military strength has remained fairly stable throughout the war years. This is a familiar phenomenon in Israeli society: the distinction between criticism of the system and basic confidence in the state's ability to defend itself. Even when the public criticizes the political leadership or the army's performance at the beginning of the war, its assessment of Israel's security strength remains high.

Yet behind this sense of strength lies another layer of complexity: public confidence in the senior military leadership underwent sharp fluctuations during the war. At the outset, after the events of October, trust in the IDF's senior command was relatively low, in part because of the perceived failure that enabled the attack.

Following changes in the top military leadership, however, and against the backdrop of military achievements in several arenas, public confidence rose significantly.

This phenomenon demonstrates the degree to which questions of responsibility and leadership were central in shaping public opinion during the war. The Israeli public continues to believe in the IDF as an institution, but it also expects renewal and the drawing of lessons at the senior command levels.

One arena in which especially broad public support is evident is the Iranian arena. The data show that a very large majority of Israelis supported the strike on Iran and believed that it could have a positive long-term effect on the Middle East. Iran is perceived in Israel as a central strategic threat – at times even an existential one. Therefore, when Israel acts directly against Iran or against its regional capabilities, the public tends to view this as an offensive action that restores Israel's strategic initiative. Even after Operation Rising Lion, and despite a certain decline in the perceived threat, most Israelis still regarded Iran as a significant threat.

The reason is that if Israelis have learned anything over the past two and a half years, it is that Israel cannot continue fighting only the arms of the octopus – Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Iran's other regional proxies – but must also act against the source itself, the head of the octopus: Iran. The conception that Iran is the center that activates and finances its network of regional proxies has in recent years become a central element of Israel's strategic discourse.

This is why a very large majority of Israelis supported the war against Iran. From their perspective, it represents an opportunity not only to address a specific threat, but also to change the strategic reality of the Middle East more profoundly by striking the source of power that drives the entire regional system. By contrast, the data regarding Gaza's future reveal deep public skepticism. Most Israelis do not believe that Hamas rule will disappear completely, even after the war. Many expect the organization to continue controlling the Strip – whether openly or indirectly.

This skepticism reflects a broad public understanding that the problem in Gaza is not only military but also political and structural. Even if Hamas's military capabilities have been damaged, the question of who will govern the Strip and what the future security reality there will look like remains unresolved. As a result, there is also deep public disagreement over the various alternatives – Israeli rule, Palestinian Authority rule, or an international or Arab force. Nearly equal numbers of Israelis support Israeli administration of Gaza and administration of the Strip by the Palestinian Authority.

The gaps in public attitudes are not limited to strategic questions. They also reflect Israel's political and social polarization. The data show significant gaps between Jews and Arabs, as well as among different ideological groups within Jewish society. In many cases, security-related attitudes are also shaped by levels of trust in the government or in state institutions.

Finally, one of the chapter's most interesting findings concerns the relationship between a sense of strength and a sense of hope. The data show that while Israelis continue to see their country as strong in security, economic, and technological terms, their level of optimism about the future is somewhat lower, especially among the left-wing camp and the Arab sector.

This gap may prove to be one of the defining features of Israeli society after the war. On the one hand, there is a strong sense of capability – a belief in Israel's ability to confront regional threats. On the other hand, there is skepticism regarding the internal condition of society, particularly its social and political cohesion.

Perhaps all of this reflects a mature understanding within Israeli society: although there is confidence in military power and in the state's capacity to cope with regional threats, the public understands at the same time that the war has not resolved the strategic problems Israel faced.

Yaakov Katz is head of the JPPI Glazer Information and Consulting Center at the Jewish People Policy Institute.



Cohesion and Polarization in Israel

Key Findings

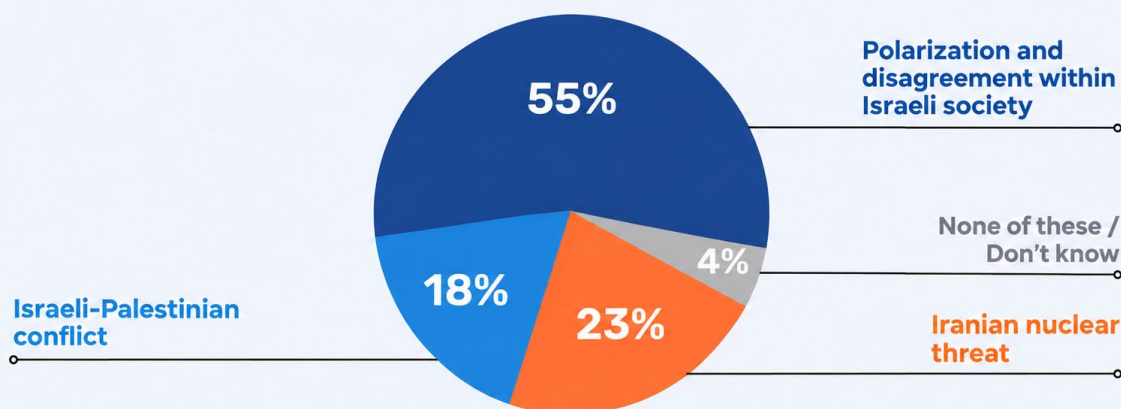
- Israel's principal social challenge did not originate in the war, but in the period that preceded it.
- Emotional polarization persists even when Israelis believe that there is broad agreement on many issues.
- The principal tension within Jewish society stems from political polarization grounded in camp affiliation.
- Jewish–Arab polarization is shaped both by the war and by rising crime in Arab society.

For several years, Israel has been marked by an atmosphere of political and social polarization that manifests itself in many ways. This atmosphere rests, at least in part, on a paradox. On the one hand, Israelis say that they aspire to greater cohesion, and many also believe that there is public agreement on a large share of the issues on the national agenda. On the other hand, Israelis are deeply worried about the social situation and regard it as a phenomenon that could have apocalyptic consequences.

This social condition has prevailed for several years. It is not a product of the past year or of the upheaval Israel experienced during the war after the October 7 massacre. It developed gradually during the period in which Israel held five elections in a relatively short time. It then intensified sharply soon after the formation of the coalition that has governed since fall 2022 and the announcement of a proposed “judicial reform,” which would have substantially altered the relationship between the executive and judicial branches. The imprint of that episode survived the traumatic period after the massacre and the long war. The experience of polarization is not a result of the war, but of what came before it. The war nevertheless deepened it to some extent and added new layers of meaning, even if it did not fundamentally change its causes or undermine its foundations.

The Israeli public understands the dangers of social polarization so clearly that most Israelis regard it as the most dangerous challenge facing the country. Even at the end of a difficult war that reminded the public of the severity of the external threats to Israel's security and survival, most respondents said that "polarization and disagreement" posed a greater danger than security threats such as Iran's nuclear program or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Among Jewish Israelis, six in ten ranked polarization as the country's most dangerous challenge.

Which of the following challenges is most dangerous to Israel? (December 2025)



Most Israelis say that they are worried about Israel's social situation: 38% are "very worried" and 42% are "fairly worried." Among non-Haredi Jews, the "social challenge" ranked second in importance this year, after the security challenge, among nine issues. This concern is not unique to the present year. It can be traced back with particular force to the struggle over the judicial reform before the war. Compared with the previous year, when the war was still underway, the level of concern remained similar.

How do you feel about Israel's social situation?

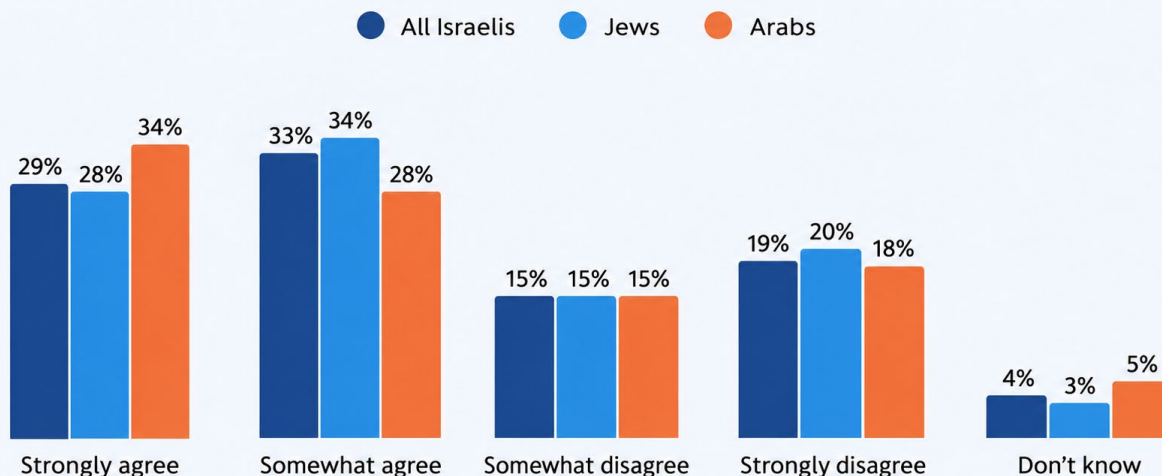


One expression of the growing fear of social polarization has been repeated warnings by present and former public figures about the possibility of a severe confrontation, a constitutional crisis, or even civil war. President Isaac Herzog warned of such a possibility before the war. This year, former Supreme Court president Aharon Barak said, "We are heading toward bloodshed and civil war." At the time, 27% of Israelis said Barak was right; another 33% said he had exaggerated somewhat but that the danger was real; one-fifth said he had greatly exaggerated; and one-sixth said there was no possibility of civil war in Israel. Altogether, six in ten Israelis agreed that a danger of civil war exists.

This picture should be balanced by additional findings. Israel has substantive disagreements over important matters of principle, some of which concern the state's future and vision. Yet polarization in Israeli society is largely emotional: the distance between groups is measured not only by policy disagreements but by the intensity of negative feelings toward other groups. This shifts public discourse away from a substantive examination of solutions and alternatives and toward a confrontation among "identities," characterized by profound suspicion and an erosion of trust in other groups and in state institutions. The ability to conduct an informed public discussion of disagreements is weakened; compromise is perceived as surrender; and every attempt at mediation encounters structural distrust.

Against these polarizing processes, many Israelis believe that Israeli society can reach agreements. They think there is a broad "field of agreement" on fundamental issues and that emotional polarization obscures points of contact and common interests that still bind the parts of society together. In fact, a majority of the public believes that on most important issues, most Israelis agree with one another, compared with four in ten who reject that proposition. This annual report identifies several areas in which there is indeed broad agreement among Israelis who appear to stand on opposite sides of the social divide.

"On most important issues, most Israelis agree with one another" (March 2026)



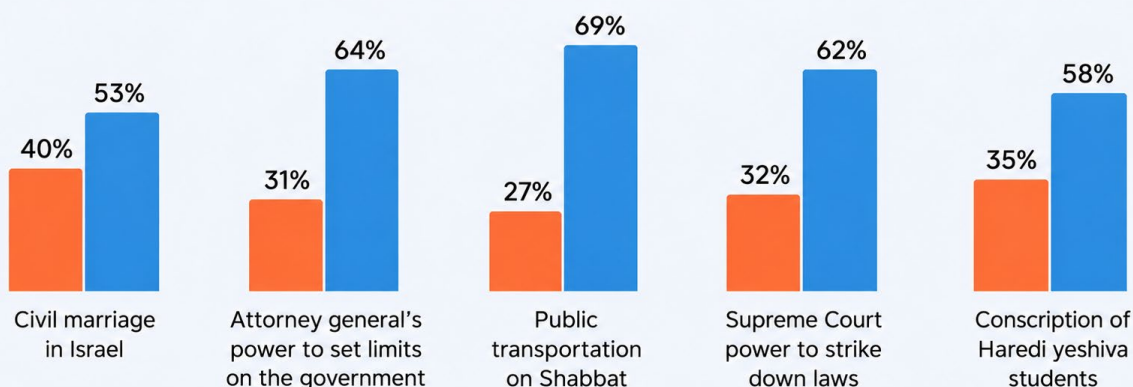
In one of JPPI's surveys this year, respondents were asked separately about a series of familiar Israeli disputes and whether they believed that a compromise acceptable to a significant majority could be reached. The general conclusion was that most Israelis – though not an overwhelming majority – think compromise is possible in most public disputes. The sectoral breakdown did not reveal a consistent tendency by any one group to view compromise differently from the others, with one exception: the Haredim. On every religion-and-state issue, a large majority of Haredi respondents with an opinion assumed that no compromise could be found "that a significant majority of the public would be satisfied with." They may, of course, have meant that the "significant majority" accepting the compromise would not include their own community.

The finding is especially notable on religion-and-state questions often portrayed in public discourse as insoluble. The public does not think this is necessarily so with regard to public transportation on Shabbat, civil marriage, and even the conscription of yeshiva students – although on conscription the belief that compromise is possible is less decisive. As noted, most Haredi respondents, whose community is at the center of the dispute, believed that no compromise could be reached. A large majority of Haredim strongly oppose any conscription and understand that the rest of the Jewish public will not accept that position.

Can a compromise be reached on the following disputes? (April 2025; excluding “don’t know”)

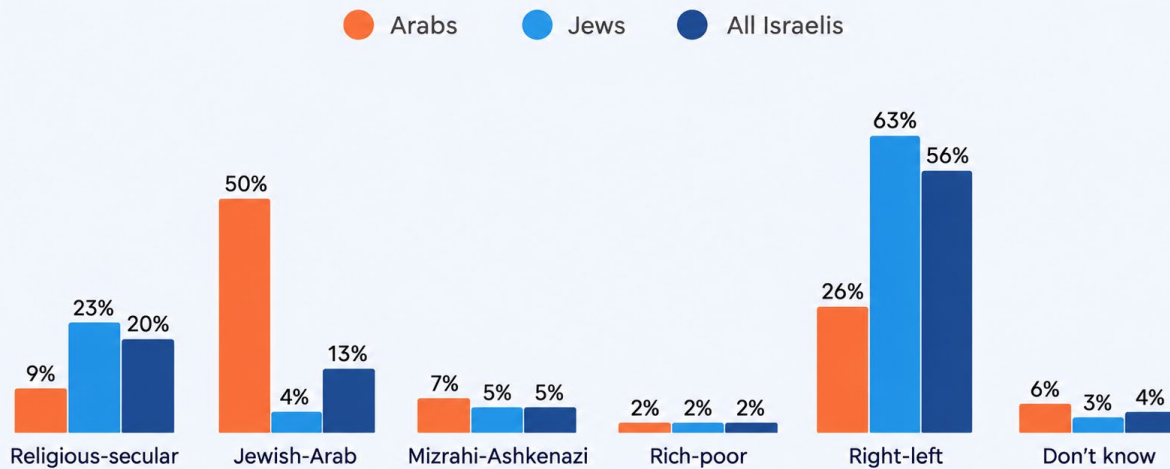


● Compromise impossible ● Compromise possible



The principal division among Israeli groups that have difficulty reaching agreement – even when agreement appears achievable on the substance – is political polarization. In both June 2024 and June 2025, most Israelis with an opinion said that the right–left tension had the greatest impact on social cohesion. It was selected by a wide margin over other options, except among Arabs, most of whom considered Jewish–Arab tension more important. It should be emphasized that for many respondents, the labels “right” and “left” refer more to social, ethnic, and religious belonging than to a clearly defined cluster of positions on key issues. Indeed, most Jewish coalition supporters identify as “right,” but about half of the Jewish opponents of the coalition also identify with the right, usually the center-right. Most coalition opponents identify as right or center rather than left; the numerical size of the left remains relatively small even when the left and center-left are combined.

Which tension has the greatest impact on social cohesion? (April 2025)



Trust in the Government

As noted at the beginning of this report, political-camp affiliation largely determined respondents' attitudes and feelings across a wide range of subjects this year, as it did in previous years, and was the principal key to identifying centers of polarization. A central component of that affiliation was the attitude toward the government that has held office since November 2022. The government has a stable Knesset majority, but throughout almost all of its tenure it has not enjoyed a high level of public trust. During the entire measurement period, it never won the trust of a majority of the Israeli public; in March 2026, 45% expressed trust. Only in spring 2026 did it win the trust of half of Jewish Israelis (50%), while the other half continued not to trust it.

This is particularly striking because the government has led Israeli policy throughout a prolonged war. The election to be held this year will allow any government and coalition that emerge to reset the relationship between the government and the public as a whole, and perhaps to restore public trust in the governing system. Such a reset will be complex and may be impeded by political, camp-based, personal, and ideological considerations. Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine a substantial reduction in polarization without a parallel rise in public trust in elected officials.

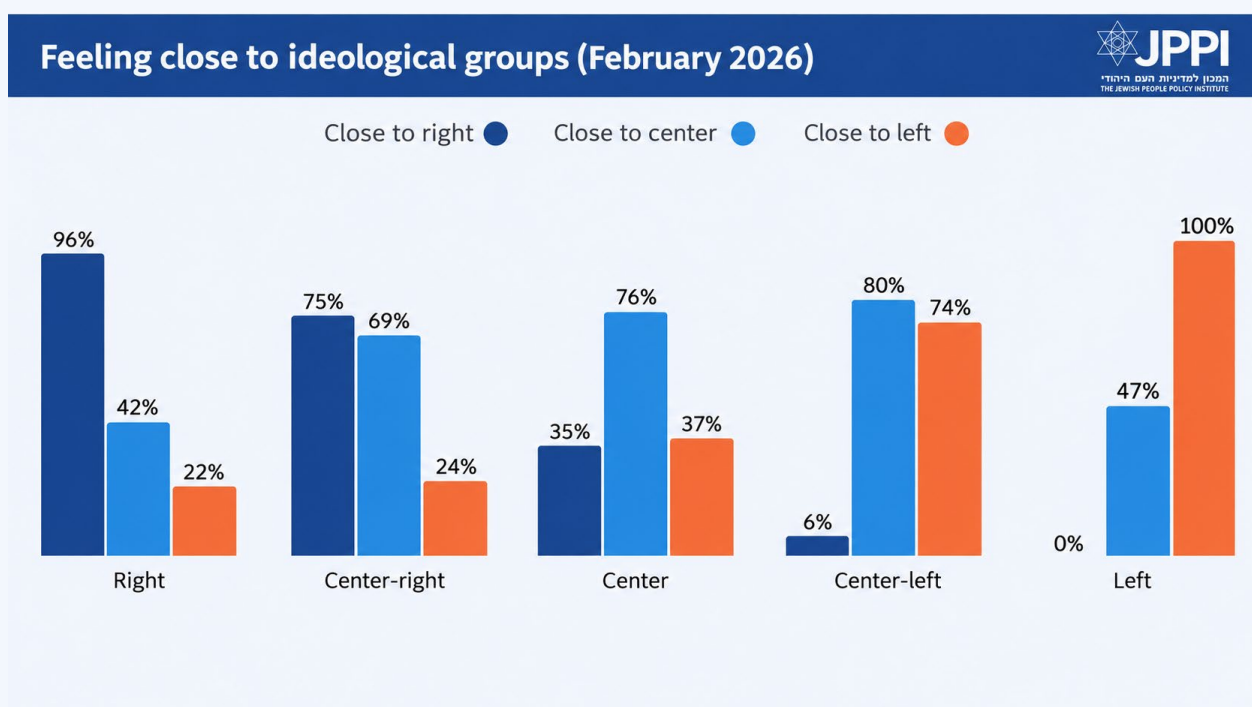
Trust in the Government, February 2024–March 2026

The survey series shows consistently low trust, with sharp fluctuations around major events: the Supreme Court's invalidation of the reasonableness-law amendment; the lapse of the framework allowing non-conscription of Haredim; local elections; Operation Arnon; the dissolution of the emergency government; the pager operation and the killing of Hassan Nasrallah; the murder of six hostages; the dismissal of Defense Minister Yoav Gallant; the Hamas-Israel agreement and phased hostage releases; the continuation of the hostage deal and ceasefire; the dismissal proceedings against the attorney general; Operation Rising Lion; the government's approval of the attorney general's dismissal; the release of all living hostages and President

Trump's visit; and the opening of Operation Roaring Lion. By March 2026, among Jewish Israelis, 49% reported low trust, 50% high trust, and 1% did not know.

Relations among Groups in Israel

In relations among Jewish groups, the political tension between "right" and "left," as perceived by the public, plays the principal role. This tension is reflected at the emotional level no less – and at times more – than in positions on ideological questions. As every year, JPPI measured the degree of closeness Israelis from different groups feel toward other groups. Emotional estrangement is especially visible when proximity is broken down by ideological group. Respondents were asked about their closeness to the right, center, and left; the analysis in the introduction shows how five ideological groups rated these three categories. Estrangement from the left is pronounced among right-wing supporters, and estrangement from the right is even greater among supporters of the left.



A closer examination of the specific groups measured reveals several additional dimensions of closeness and distance.

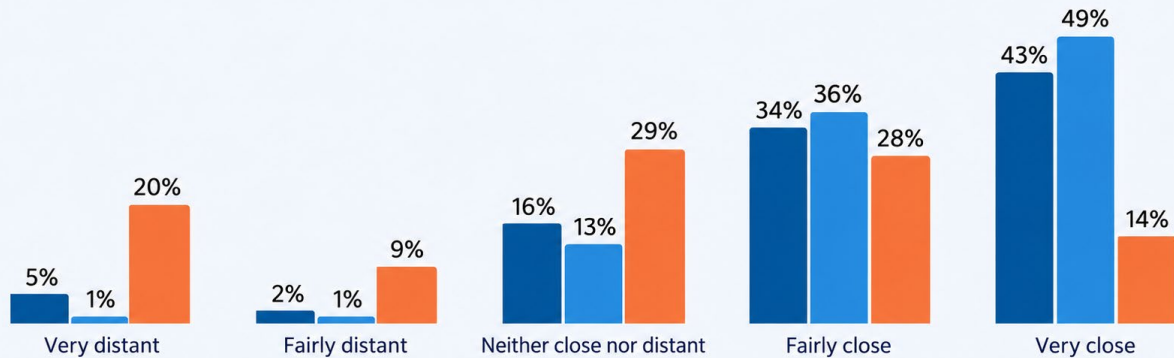
Secular Jews

The level of closeness to secular Jews is relatively high. By religiosity, the least-close groups are religious and Haredi Jews, but even among them a majority rates the relationship positively, especially as "fairly close." Arabs rate secular Jews above every other Jewish group except left-wing supporters. The cumulative result is a positive rating and the absence of a deep tension based on the group's secular character. This reinforces the argument that the main source of social tension is not religiosity itself, but ideological-group membership, even though religiosity and ideology overlap substantially among Israeli Jews.

Secular Jews



Arabs ● Jews ● All Israelis ●



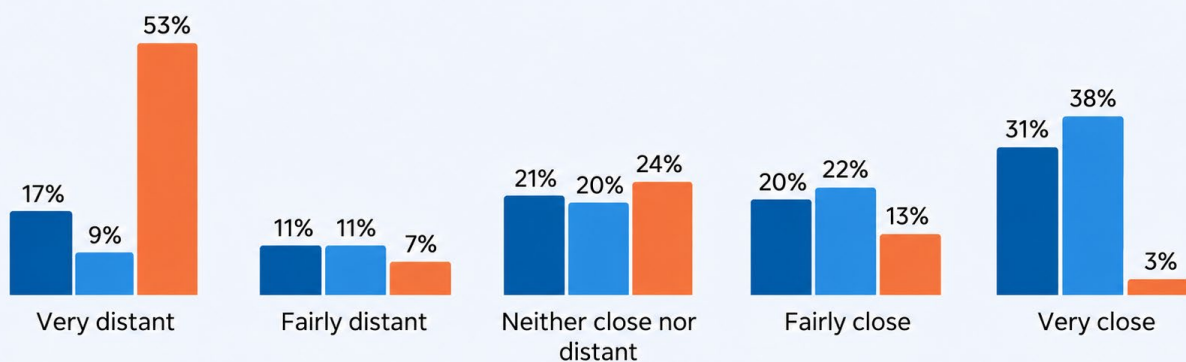
Religious Jews

Secular Jews' estrangement from religious Jews is substantially greater than religious Jews' estrangement from secular Jews. This may reflect the fact that religious Jews are a smaller, more distinct, and more politically identified group. Only 25% of secular Jews say that they feel fairly or very close to religious Jews, while 41% express distance. The same estrangement is visible in the ideological breakdown: among left-wing groups, a majority express distance from religious Jews. There is no parallel pattern of right-wing groups distancing themselves from secular Jews.

Religious Jews



All Israelis ● Jews ● Arabs ●



Settlers

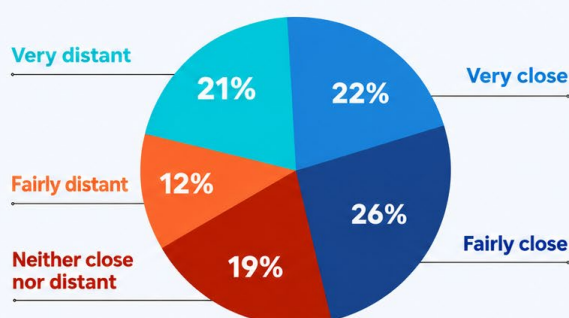
Although settlers are formally defined by geographic residence, public attitudes toward them plainly refer to an image and identity rather than merely to location. Ideological polarization is especially clear. Among right-wing respondents, 88% feel close to settlers and only 6% feel distant. At the center-right, 60% feel close; among centrists, the distribution is mixed; among the center-left, 54% feel very distant; and among the left, 88% feel very distant.

The pattern of closeness to settlers broadly echoes, though does not perfectly overlap, attitudes toward the settlement enterprise. Overall, 33% of Jews feel fairly or very distant from settlers, while 35% believe that settlements are a burden on Israel's security. Similarly, 30% reject the claim that settlements contribute to security. There is substantial overlap between those who feel distant from settlers and those who are critical of the settlement enterprise, and meaningful – though not identical – overlap between supporters of settlements and those who feel close to settlers.

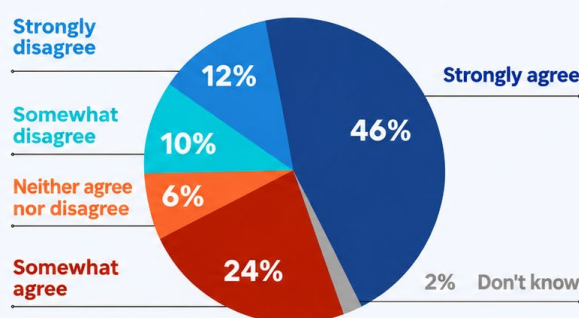
Settlers



Feeling toward settlers



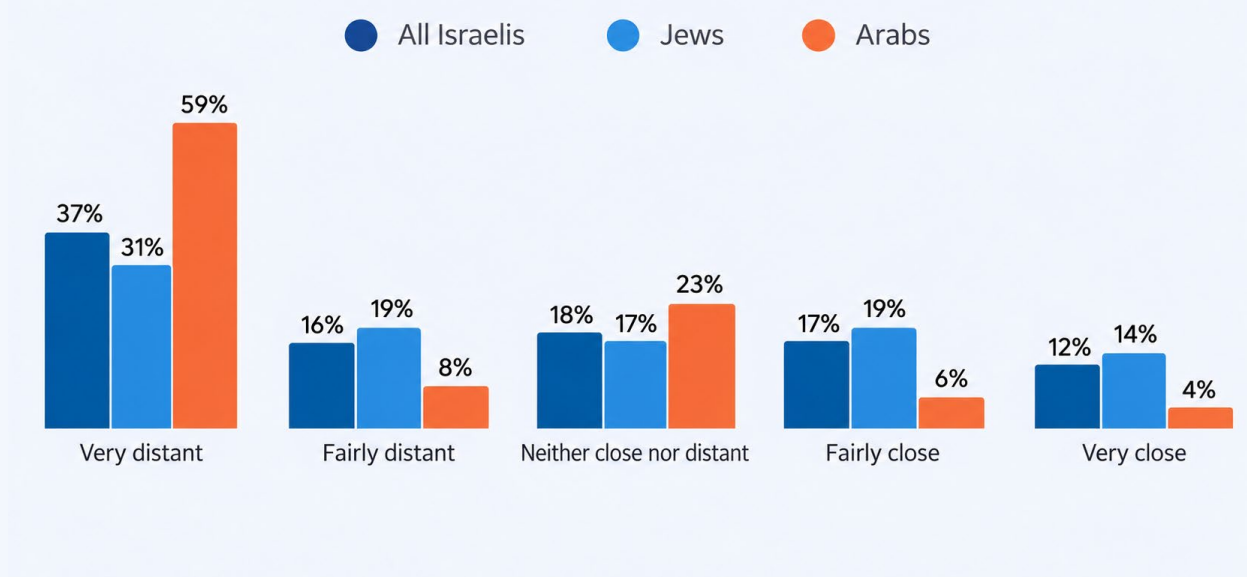
"Settlements contribute to security"



Haredim

As noted in the opening chapter, Haredim do not receive a high proximity rating from any group other than themselves. A meaningful sense of closeness is found only among religious Jews and traditional Jews who are somewhat religious. In the two largest Jewish groups – secular and traditional non-religious Jews – and among Arabs, the share expressing closeness to Haredim is very low.

Haredim

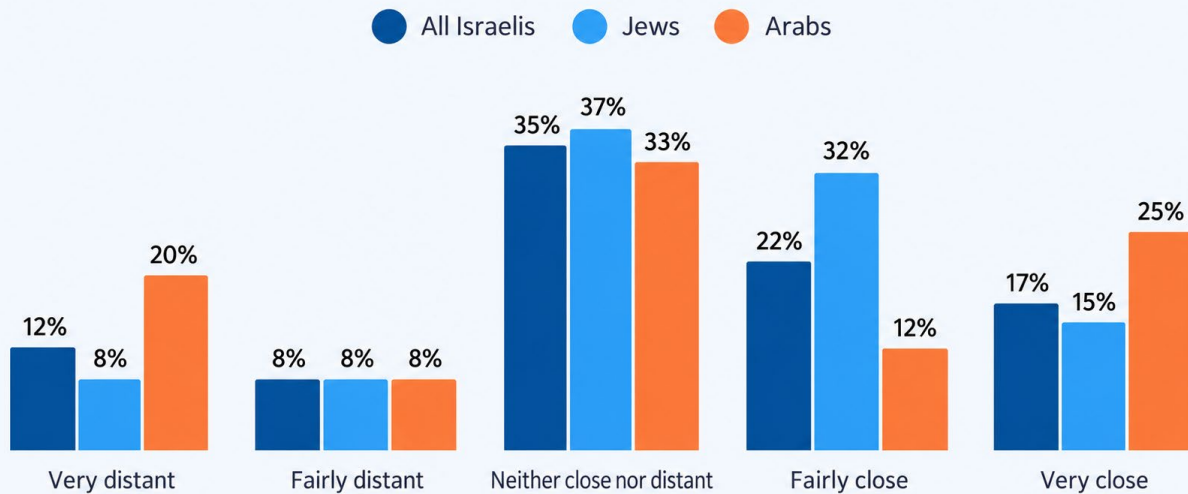


Haredim themselves report much greater closeness to most groups, with the exception of Arabs, than those groups report toward Haredim. Yet answers to other questions reveal feelings of frustration and alienation from other Israeli groups. One example is the very widespread Haredi belief that they suffer discrimination compared with other communities: 86% of Haredi respondents agreed that there is discrimination against Haredim in Israel; 11% somewhat agreed; 2% somewhat disagreed; and 1% disagreed. The Haredi survey was conducted by Askaria for JPPI in March 2026.

Druze

As in previous years, attitudes toward Druze are positive or neutral across all Israeli groups. Few Israelis report meaningful distance. The most notable exception is among Muslim Arabs, about one-quarter of whom say they feel “very distant” from the Druze. Among Jews, the combined share expressing moderate or strong closeness is about half, while the other dominant response is neutrality. There are no large differences by ideology or religiosity.

Druze



Similarity and Difference

When attitudes toward all ten groups are examined together, very high correlations emerge in the way respondents rate groups such as religious Jews and settlers, right-wing supporters and settlers, and religious Jews and right-wing supporters. The correlations decline across other pairings. The groups that produce the greatest divergence in ratings are the political poles – right and left – followed by groups seen as culturally opposed, such as Haredim and Tel Avivians, and then, in descending order, left-wing supporters and settlers, religious Jews and left-wing supporters, and so forth. In other words, political and cultural identities structure not only proximity to single groups, but the entire pattern by which Israelis evaluate social groups.

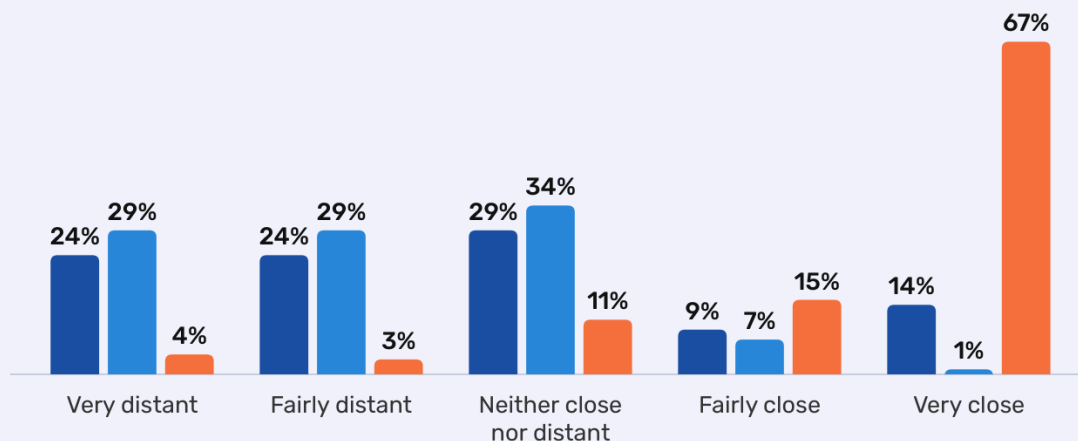
Jewish–Arab Tension

About one-quarter of Israelis feel close to Arabs, but almost all of them are Arabs. Only 8% of Jews report closeness to Arabs, and only 1% say they feel very close. There is therefore a strong asymmetry in Jewish–Arab proximity: the share of Arabs who say they feel close to various Jewish groups is considerably higher than the share of those Jewish groups who say they feel close to Arabs. For example, 43% of Arabs report closeness to secular Jews, compared with 10% of secular Jews who report closeness to Arabs. The Jewish ideological group that expresses the greatest closeness to Arabs is the left, at 31%.

Jewish–Arab Tension



● All Israelis ● Jews ● Arabs



Arabs identify Jewish–Arab tension as the principal tension in Israeli society, while only 4% of Jews do so – itself evidence of polarized perceptions of reality. Two major processes have shaped this tension in recent years. The first is the war in Gaza and in other arenas, regarding which Arab and Jewish attitudes differ sharply. The second is the high rate of crime in Arab society, which periodically returns to the headlines and occupies a central place in the political discourse and priorities of the Arab sector.

Differences over the war appear in almost every question concerning operations in Gaza, the desired postwar arrangement, the Israeli government's priorities, the humanitarian situation in combat zones, and related issues. Under these circumstances, it is understandable that Jews and Arabs view one another as holding "extreme" positions. In fact, similar majorities of Jews and Arabs say that "many" or "most" members of the other group are extremists.

EXPERT RESPONSE

Yedidia Stern**Cohesion in an Age of Polarization**

The forces that divide us are numerous.

The most central among them is the dispute over the identity and purpose of the state. Is it a nation-state (secular Jews); a religious state (Haredim); a national and religious state (religious Jews); or a neutral state (Arabs)? A large share of the questions preoccupying Israeli politics and society can be understood through this dispute. Each of these identity preferences entails different answers to the questions at the center of Israel's public agenda. Thus, for example, it would not be possible today to enact the Declaration of Independence in the Knesset, because the Declaration offers a visionary compromise, and the various parties today are not prepared to accept it.

The ideological dispute is also chronic. In general terms, the Israeli right is also more religious, poorer, marked by a certain ethnic profile, and more likely to reside in the periphery. The cleavages largely overlap: nationality, religion, society, and economy.

The ideological dispute is intensified by the political deadlock that has accompanied us over the past decade. As a result, large and disproportionate political power is allocated to minorities, some of them extremist. Each of the two large political camps needs its periphery, even when that periphery holds extreme positions, and each seeks to entice it into joining its camp.

The ideological and political dispute is also becoming a culture war among segments of society, amplified by social media networks. This, of course, is an issue that preoccupies the entire world, but in Israel it assumes a distinctive form because it rests on the background of the chronic dispute. Could the culture war lead to civil war? A majority of Israelis (60%) believe that such a danger exists.

The State of Israel is strong militarily (a regional power), economically (with GDP per capita close to the OECD average), scientifically (as reflected in global university rankings), and technologically (third in the world in companies traded on NASDAQ, after the superpowers of the United States and China, and first relative to population size). Against this background, Israel's weakness in the social sphere stands out negatively, rising to the level of a significant threat to national resilience. Indeed, according to the index, when Israelis are asked to rank the "greatest danger" to the state, only a minority rank the bloody conflict with the Palestinians or the existential threat posed by Iran's nuclear program first (18% and 23%, respectively). By contrast, the share ranking polarization as the most severe danger is far larger (55%).

To this one must add the fact that Israel functions as a democracy without a constitution. That is, we lack stable rules of the game, clearly established in advance, within which disagreement is supposed to be conducted. This is a serious danger, because fundamental matters – human rights, minority rights, the character of the state, and relations among the branches of government (the struggle between the Knesset

and the government on one side and the judiciary on the other) – are not protected from infringement if an incidental Knesset majority decides that such infringement serves its immediate interests.

The index teaches us an important lesson about the nature of Israeli polarization: the findings indicate that the core of our disagreements does not revolve around discrete questions – even important ones, such as religion and state – but is emotional in character. It is a struggle among identity groups. Therefore, even if most Israelis believe that agreement can be reached on most important issues, this fact does not translate into a substantive action plan aimed at realizing those agreements. An identity struggle places differentiation from others above agreement with them, and thus the culture war continues to deepen.

It is especially painful to discover the extent of Israelis' distance from the Haredim and the absence of closeness between Jews and Arab citizens of Israel. These two groups – Arabs and Haredim – indeed pose different challenges to Israeli cohesion, but the overall picture is that together they constitute roughly one-third of all Israelis and stand at separate, opposing poles of our public sphere.

While the polarization among us originates in disagreement over the “covenant of destiny” – over the vision, identity, and purpose of the shared Zionist enterprise – another important force strengthens Israeli cohesion: the “covenant of fate.” External forces – global antisemitism and regional enemies – do not distinguish among us, and we stand together against them. A striking example was the dramatic reversal we experienced between the period before October 7, when even calls for “gray refusal” to serve were heard, and the period after it, when we witnessed exemplary mobilization by all parts of Israeli society, both in the army and in civil society.

Nevertheless, it is clear that relying on our enemies as the basis for internal cohesion is insufficient. What possible remedies can preserve an appropriate degree of cohesion in an age of disagreement?

The leaders of Zionism in the pre-state period expected that with the transition of the Jewish people from exile to statehood, a cohesive society would develop in Israel around a single language, shared institutions, a hegemonic culture, agreed-upon symbols, and more. They were wrong. In the eighth decade of the State of Israel, it is clear that the state does not represent an identity resolution. On the contrary: whereas in the Diaspora the struggle among identity groups was not direct and did not require a decision, once we gathered in a shared public space controlled by Jews, the disagreements sharpened and intensified because we had to decide who would govern that space and how. Questions that in the Diaspora were regarded as theoretical became practical in Israel. Whereas in exile the dispute was mainly intellectual and ideological, in the Jewish state it is translated into “politics,” “power,” “legal decision,” and the like.

Realistically, one should not expect the dispute over the identity and purpose of the state to subside in the next generation. Some even see its existence as an advantage: it makes this precious place alive, vibrant, vital, and productive. Yet action is clearly required to allow the disagreements to continue without society fragmenting into tribes and, Heaven forbid, deteriorating – as many fear – into the worst possibility of all: civil war.

Two immediate moves are required. The first: in view of the abyss of internal danger opening before us, public leaders must demonstrate responsibility and find a way to establish a broad coalition after the next elections. JPPI's Israeli Society Index shows that there is a sufficiently broad field of substantive agreement

on important issues on which a stable government can be built, one whose overarching purpose should be social rehabilitation.

The second move – which in my view would be the most important task of such a broad coalition if it is established – is to entrench for generations the “rules of the game” for managing disagreement. The Knesset should enact a “thin constitution” that would not seek to decide the great ideological questions but would define the boundaries of what is permitted and forbidden in the political game. The thin constitution concerns governance: how power should be allocated among the branches of government fairly and effectively so that the balance among them is preserved. The dispute over these matters – especially the tension between the government and the Knesset on one side and the Court on the other – is fueling Israeli polarization, which may soon reach a boiling point.

Each of Israel's identity groups may find itself in a minority position at a given moment, and each should fear the excessive power of a majority that could be deployed against it in the absence of constitutional restraints. The thin constitution is therefore an all-Israeli interest that does not depend on any particular identity group. It is the best prescription for preserving social cohesion in an age of ideological polarization.

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The Economic Situation and Economic Behavior

- On the one hand, there is broad agreement that the Israeli economy is fairly strong.

- On the other hand, criticism of the government's economic management is widespread.

- Whether Israelis regard investment in Israel as worthwhile depends heavily on their level of optimism.

- Groups in which off-the-books cash transactions are more common are also more likely to say that paying without an invoice raises no moral problem.

The Economic Situation

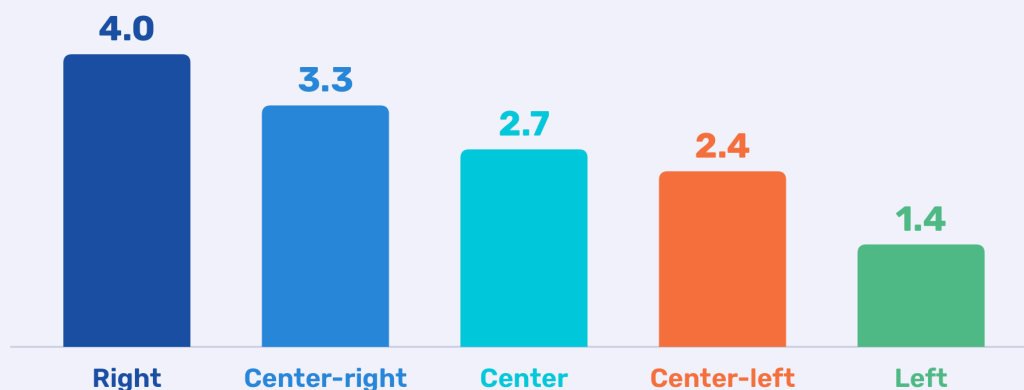
Israelis assess the country's economic strength positively. On a scale from -5 (weak) to +5 (strong), the Israeli average is 2.8 – a favorable score, though lower than the assessment of Israel's military strength (3.4). Jews rate Israel's economic strength more highly than Arabs do (3.3 compared with 1.2). Compared with the previous year, perceptions rose among both Jews and Arabs; compared with January 2024, however, the assessment changed little, apart from a slight decline among Arabs.

As with most questions concerning Israel's condition, political orientation has a profound effect on how economic reality is read. Supporters of the incumbent government tend to assess the economy more positively, while its opponents tend to assess it more negatively. Israelis who identify with the right gave the economy an average score of 4.0, while those identifying with the center and left gave substantially lower scores. The pattern in 2026 closely resembles that of the previous two years.

Israel's economic strength, by Jewish ideological group



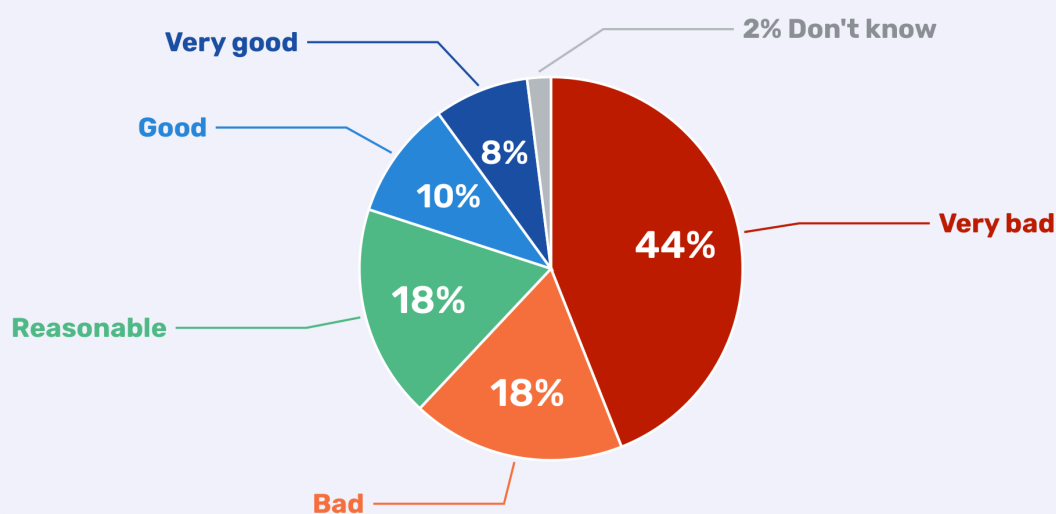
Average score on a scale from -5 (weak) to +5 (strong)



Data from January 2026

This relatively positive assessment of Israel's economy coexists with a much less favorable assessment of the government's handling of economic affairs. Even among government supporters, fewer than half rated its management as good or very good in 2025; about one-third called it reasonable, and slightly more than one-quarter rated it bad or very bad. Among groups that do not support the government, eight or more out of ten respondents gave a negative rating. Eighty percent of Arab respondents likewise said the government's economic management was not good. The 2024 and 2025 results were almost unchanged: in both years, just under one-fifth rated the government's handling as good or very good, while slightly more than 60% rated it bad or very bad.

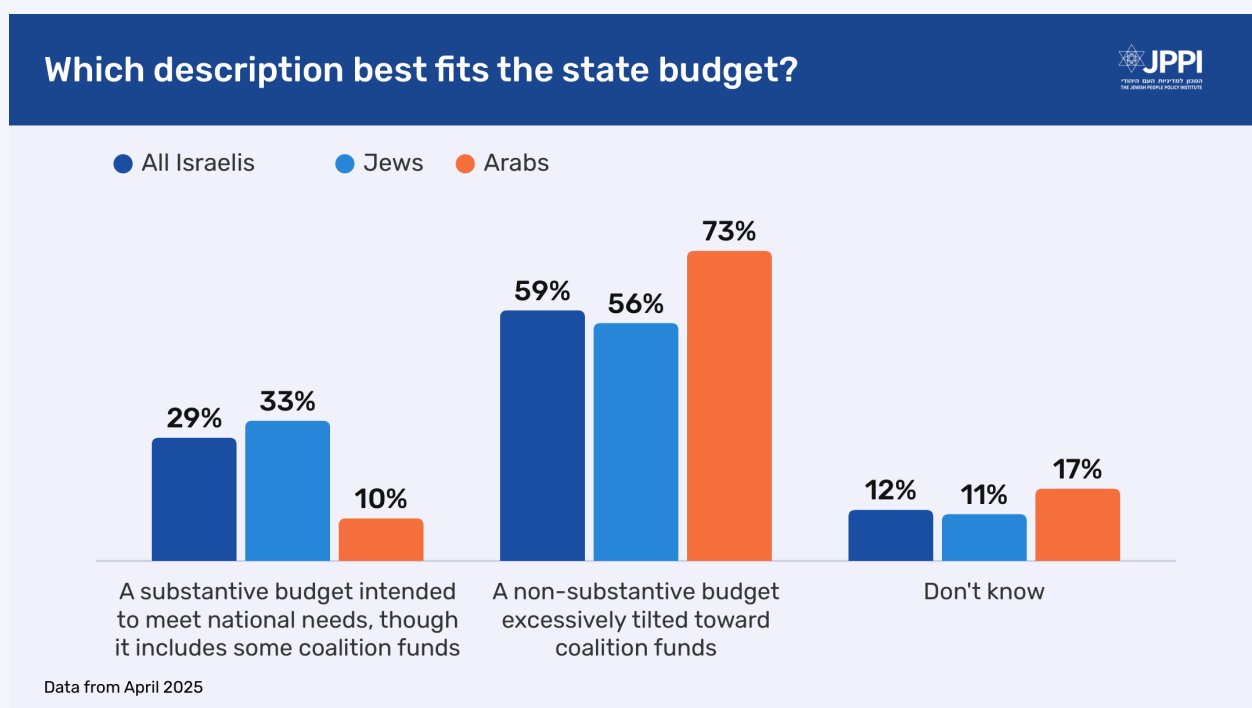
How is the government handling Israel's economy?



Data from May 2025

Survey questions asked throughout the year help identify what lies behind these poor ratings. Public attitudes toward the state budget, for example, reveal a widespread belief that it is not substantively designed around national needs and is excessively tilted toward coalition funds. In other words, many Israelis believe that the government is using public money disproportionately to preserve political support in the Knesset rather than to improve citizens' quality of life. Regarding the 2025 budget, about two-thirds of respondents with an opinion said it was not substantive. This judgment was strongly affected by political affiliation and was a minority view among the government's most committed supporters. Even so, 25% of right-wing respondents and 57% of center-right respondents said the budget contained too many coalition funds. Criticism was especially widespread among Arab respondents, whose preferred parties are outside the coalition and therefore do not receive coalition allocations.

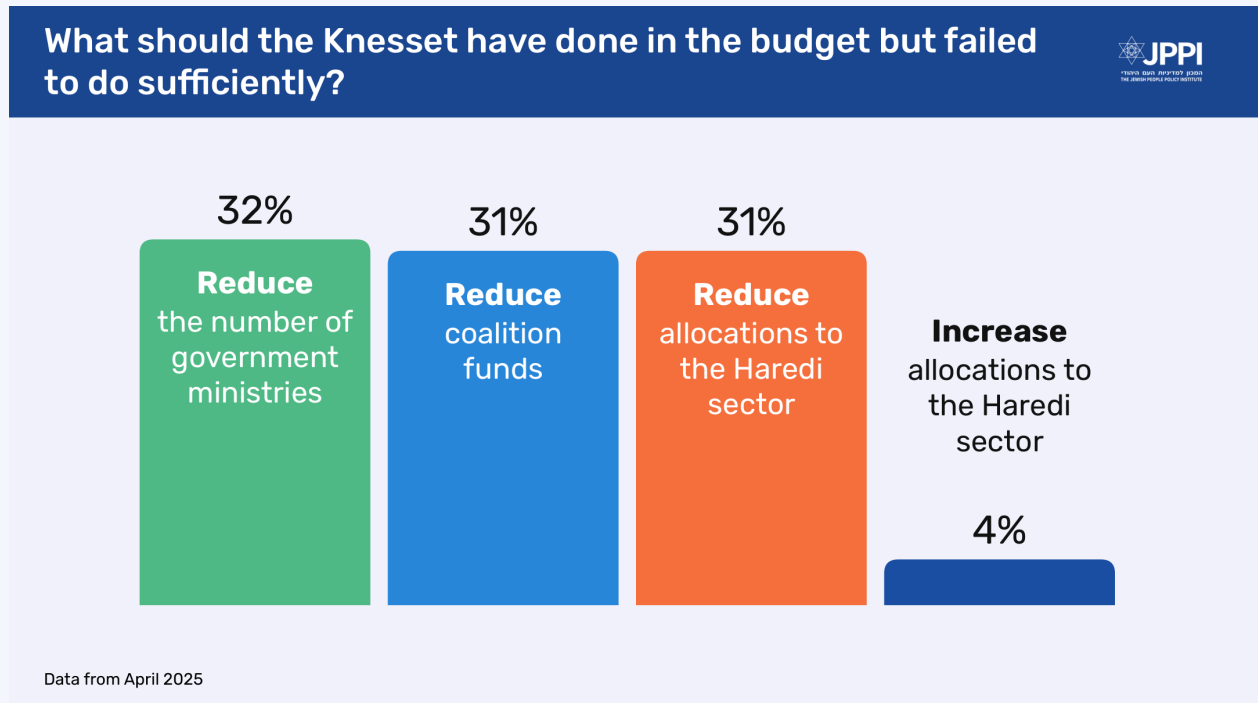
When the 2025 budget was approved, 63% of Israelis said they were dissatisfied with it, compared with 23% who were satisfied; the remainder did not know. Even among supporters of the coalition that passed the budget, no majority expressed satisfaction – about 40% did so, while a large share declined to give an opinion.



When the results are broken down by religiosity, Haredim were the only group in which a majority said they were fairly or very satisfied with the budget (59%). This points to one prominent source of the wider public's dissatisfaction: the feeling that, for coalition reasons, the Haredi sector receives more than its proportional share of the state budget.

That concern was expressed directly when Israelis were asked what the Knesset should have done in the budget but did not do, or did not do sufficiently. Three items stood out: reducing the number of government ministries, reducing coalition funds, and reducing allocations to the Haredi sector. Thirty-one percent of all Israelis chose the third item; among non-Haredi Jews, nearly half did so. The only especially prominent item not connected to coalition allocations was additional funding for rehabilitating Israel's north and south.

The survey offered respondents both an increase and a reduction in funding for the Haredi sector. Reducing that funding was one of the three most frequently selected options. By contrast, no group other than Haredim themselves showed substantial support for increasing it. Twenty-three percent of Haredim favored an increase, compared with 0% of secular Jews and 5% of religious Jews.



Investment in Israel

Israelis regard their country's economy as fairly strong, while simultaneously believing that its leaders are managing it poorly. Under these circumstances, is long-term investment in Israel still worthwhile? The public's answer is fairly positive, though not without reservations.

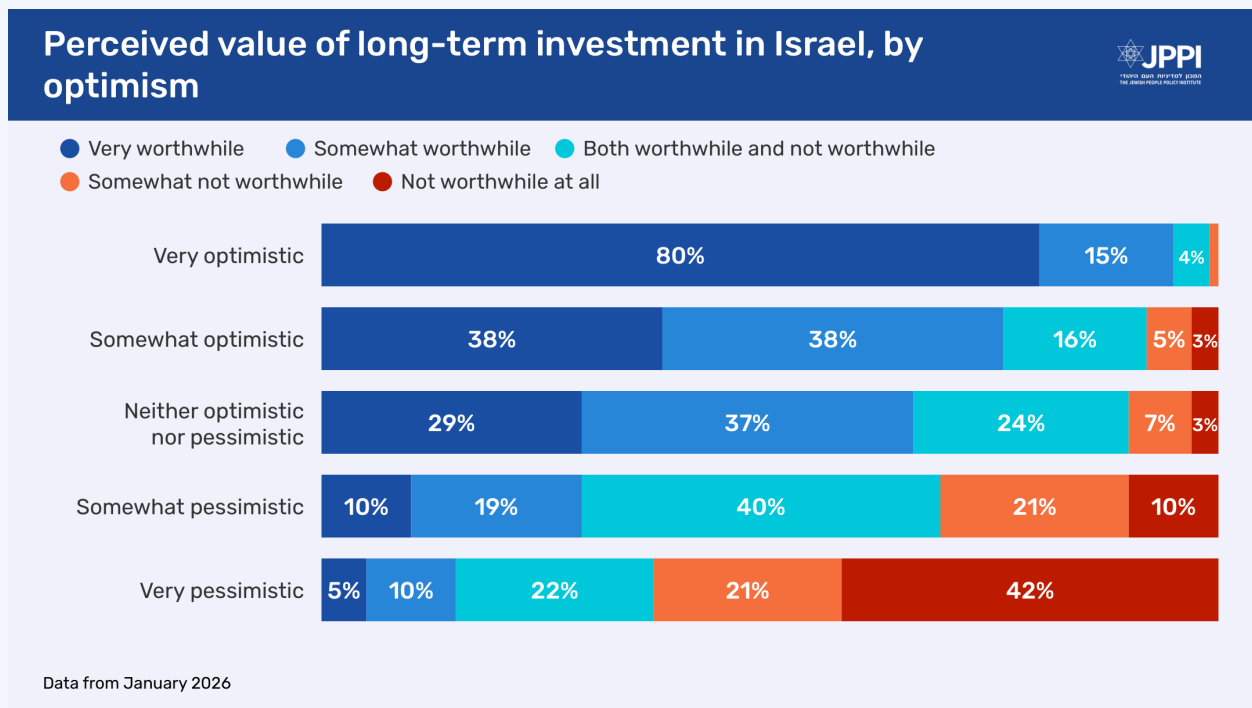
Nearly two-thirds of Israelis (65%) say it is very or somewhat worthwhile to invest in Israel over the long term; 42% say it is very worthwhile. Seventeen percent say it is not worthwhile, and 18% say it is worthwhile in some respects but not in others. Arab respondents are three times as likely as Jewish respondents to say that long-term investment in Israel is not worthwhile (38% compared with 12%). There are also substantial ideological gaps. Among the center-left and left, which together constitute about one-fifth of the Jewish public, only slightly more than one-third say long-term investment is worthwhile; about one-third say it is not, and nearly another third give the mixed answer.

The clearest correlate of willingness to invest is optimism or pessimism about Israel's future. JPPI surveys measure both personal optimism – about the individual's own future – and national optimism – about the country's future. Jews and Arabs alike are more optimistic about their personal future than about Israel's. Nonetheless, national optimism rose over the past year. On the –5 to +5 scale, the overall Israeli average rose from 1.20 in September 2024 to 1.61 in early 2026. Among Jews it rose from 1.70 to 2.06; among Arabs, from –0.84 to 0.30.

National optimism rises steadily from left to right. Ideological gaps are much larger regarding the country's future than regarding respondents' personal future: the gap between the ideological poles was 2.81 points

on personal optimism and 5.48 points on national optimism. This reflects, among other things, the strongly pessimistic assessment of Israel's future among the small group at the left pole (–1.65).

Cross-tabulating optimism and investment yields the expected result: confidence in investment is highest among the very optimistic and declines steadily as optimism about the country's future falls. Political camp, optimism, and confidence in investment reinforce one another in a recurring chain.



Economic Behavior

Alongside questions about Israel's economy and government policy, JPPI examined several questions about Israelis' social and economic behavior, including whether gambling is moral and whether paying cash without an invoice or receipt is moral.

The two questions produced different patterns along the traditional–religious spectrum. At the less religious end – secular and traditional non-religious Jews – gambling is regarded as immoral more often than moral, yet sizable minorities consider it moral: 38% of secular Jews and 31% of traditional non-religious Jews. Among traditional-religious, religious, and Haredi Jews, fewer than one-fifth say gambling is moral.

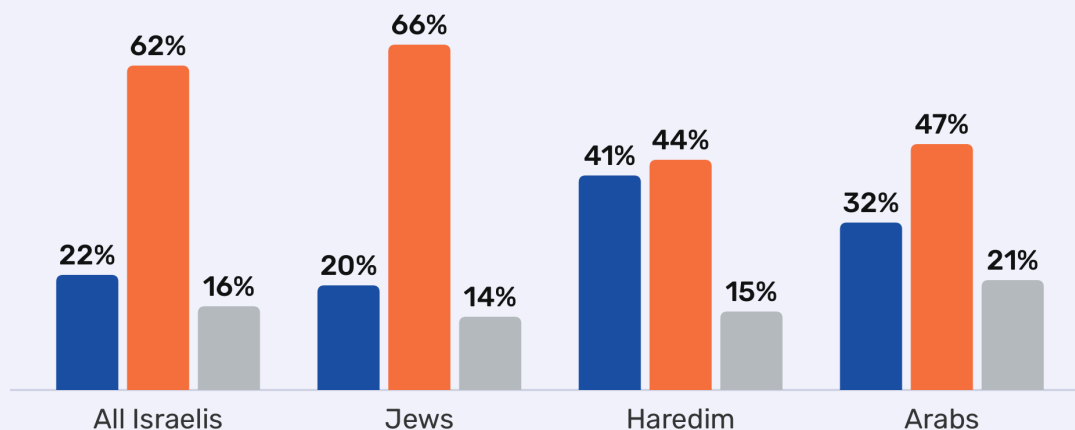
The question about cash payment without an invoice produced an especially revealing result. Two groups were comparatively likely to say that such a payment is moral: Haredim and Arabs – the same groups in which, according to various reports, this legally prohibited practice is more common.

Among all Israelis, 22% say that paying cash without an invoice or receipt is moral. Twenty percent of Jews say so, compared with 32% of Arabs, among whom 21% decline to answer. Among Jewish groups, Haredim stand out: 41% call the practice moral, nearly equal to the 44% who call it immoral. In every other Jewish group, one-fifth or fewer regard it as moral.

Is paying cash without an invoice or receipt moral?



● Moral ● Immoral ● Don't know

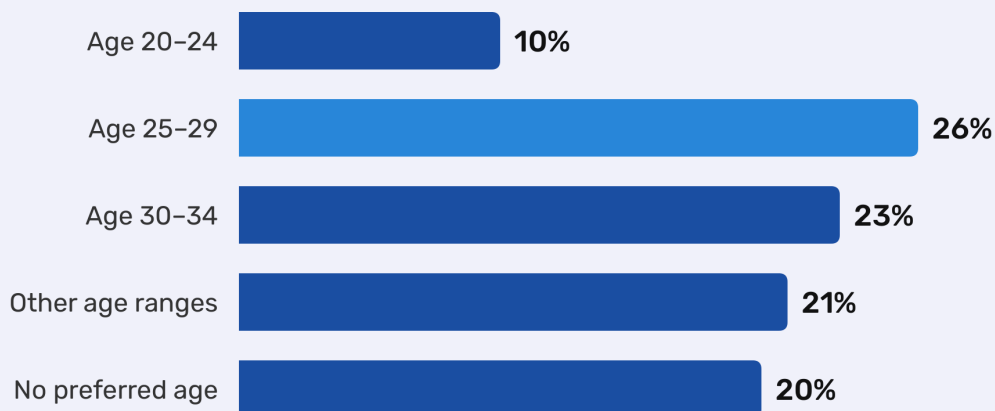


Data from August 2025

Two further questions asked at what age Israelis think it is best to reach major life milestones, including buying a first home and retiring. The findings were compared with an identical Pew Research Center survey in other countries.

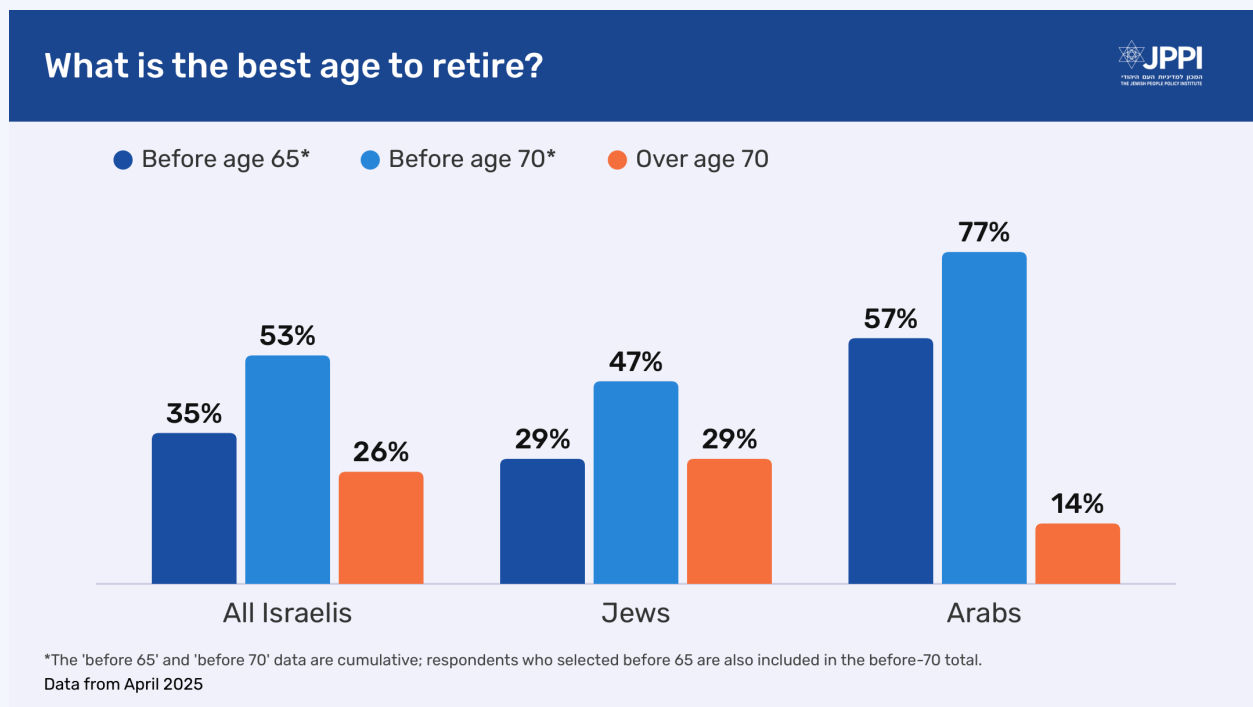
One-quarter of Israelis (26%) say the best age to buy a first home is 25–29; another 23% choose 30–34. One in five says there is no preferred age, and one in ten chooses 20–24. Among Arab Israelis, one in five selects 20–24. Pew's comparison included 18 countries, most in the developing world. Israel is among the three countries with the youngest preferred average age for purchasing a first home. Among Israeli Jews, the average was 28.23, similar to Mexico and Sri Lanka.

What is the best age to buy a first home?



Data from April 2025

Regarding retirement, 35% of Israelis say the best age is before 65; 53% say before 70; and 26% say over 70. The “before 65” and “before 70” figures are cumulative. Arabs prefer a substantially earlier retirement age than Jews: 57% of Arabs say before 65, and 77% say before 70, compared with 29% and 47%, respectively, among Jews. Fourteen percent of Arabs choose over 70, compared with 29% of Jews.



*The “before 65” and “before 70” data are cumulative; respondents who selected before 65 are also included in the before-70 total.

Retirement preferences also differ by religiosity. Moving from the more liberal to the more conservative end of the Jewish religious scale, the share choosing retirement after age 70 rises. Most secular and traditional non-religious Jews prefer retirement before 70. The same is true of half of traditional-religious Jews, 41% of religious Jews, and about one-quarter of Haredim. Nearly half of Haredim and one-third of religious Jews say the best retirement age is over 70.

Compared with countries in the Pew survey, Israel ranks second highest in the average recommended retirement age (66.1). The only country with a higher average is Nigeria (66.9).

EXPERT RESPONSE

Alona Bar-On**What Can the Survey Teach Us about the Economy?**

JPPI's survey of public perceptions of the Israeli economy can be read as a satisfaction survey regarding the economic situation and economic policy, but such a reading would be too narrow. The picture that emerges from it is much broader: through their answers about their perception of the economy, respondents reflect their levels of optimism about the country's future, their political identity, and the interpretive framework through which they read reality. This is not only a survey about the economy; it is also a survey about trust, identity, and interpretation. Embedded within the survey's many numbers are several fascinating and non-obvious insights.

1. The central and clearest finding is that Israelis perceive the Israeli economy as relatively strong. The average score respondents gave was 2.8 on a scale from -5 to +5, where zero represents a neutral midpoint and positive values indicate a positive assessment. In a rough linear translation to a 0-to-10 scale, this amounts to 7.8. This is not a score of euphoria, but it is a clear expression of confidence in the economy's resilience. The picture is similar on the question of long-term investment: 65% of Israelis believe that it is worthwhile to invest in Israel, while only 17% believe that it is not. These are data from a public that feels resilience.

2. Yet the broad distribution of perceived resilience reveals how deep the interpretive gap is among ideological groups when facing a single economic reality. Among those who identify with the right, the strength of the economy receives an average score of 4.0; in the center it falls to 2.7; on the left to 1.4. In Arab society the score is 1.2. As an aside, it is interesting to see that the center here is a "center" in the literal sense: an exact numerical midpoint between the right and the left. The same pattern is evident in the question of long-term investment in Israel: 91% of respondents who identify with the right believe that it is worthwhile to invest in Israel, compared with 56% of those who identify with the center and only about 30% of those who identify with the left.

3. It is not self-evident that even among the more critical groups there is no sharp move into negative territory. The left and Arab society do not describe the economy as genuinely weak; they simply rate it much lower than the right does. In other words, the disagreement is not necessarily over the very existence of resilience, but over its degree and meaning.

4. Alongside this, one of the most interesting and surprising findings is that respondents who identify with the left are less optimistic even than respondents in Arab society on the question of investment in Israel: whereas 41% of respondents in Arab society believe it is worthwhile to invest in Israel over the long term, only 30% of respondents who identify with the left think so. Here too, the question is not what the economy looks like, but who has confidence in the direction in which the state is moving. This finding unsettles the

intuitive reading according to which political distance from the state necessarily translates into greater economic pessimism.

5. Comparing survey trends over time reinforces this interpretation even further. In January 2026, the perception of the economy was very similar to its level at the beginning of 2024. Yet in the middle of the period, in October 2024 and January 2025, there was a sharp decline to levels of 2.2 and 2.1. Thus, the result is not a straight line, but a movement of sharp decline followed by recovery, which itself was not distributed equally among the groups. The right is the only identity group in which perceived economic resilience increased over the period – from 3.8 in January 2024 to 4.0 in January 2026. On the left, by contrast, it declined from 2.6 to 1.4. This is therefore not a uniform movement of “decline and then rise,” but entirely different trajectories of perceived reality among political groups.

6. This becomes even more interesting when that trend is placed alongside a prominent market indicator such as the TA-35 Index. Between January 2024 and October 2024, while the perceived strength of the economy fell by about 30%, the TA-35 Index actually rose by about 20%. Already at that point, it appears that public perception of the economy does not necessarily move in tandem with one of the market's most prominent performance indicators.

7. Over the period as a whole, while the TA-35 Index rose by about 140%, the right's perception of the economy rose by about 5%, whereas the left's perception of the economy fell by about 47%. This finding alone does not prove that perceptions of the economy are detached from economic reality, and in any case, a stock-market index is not equivalent to the entire economy. But it does reinforce the understanding that the public does not necessarily respond to market data, but also – and perhaps primarily – to public mood, trust, and political positions.

8. Another finding worth pausing over is not the gap between right and left itself, but the pace at which that gap has grown. In January 2024, the gap in perceived economic strength between right and left was 1.2 points. By January 2026, it had already reached 2.6 points – more than double. This is one of the survey's most important findings, because it clearly indicates the speed and scale at which the shared ground that can be called “reality” at all is eroding.

9. This picture becomes still stronger when one compares confidence in the economy itself with confidence in those responsible for managing it. In another JPPI survey, conducted in May 2025, only 18% of Israelis thought that the handling of the economy was good, compared with 61% who thought it was not good. Even if this measurement was taken at a different time, the gap between the two types of evaluation is striking: the public gives the economy itself more credit than it gives those who manage it.

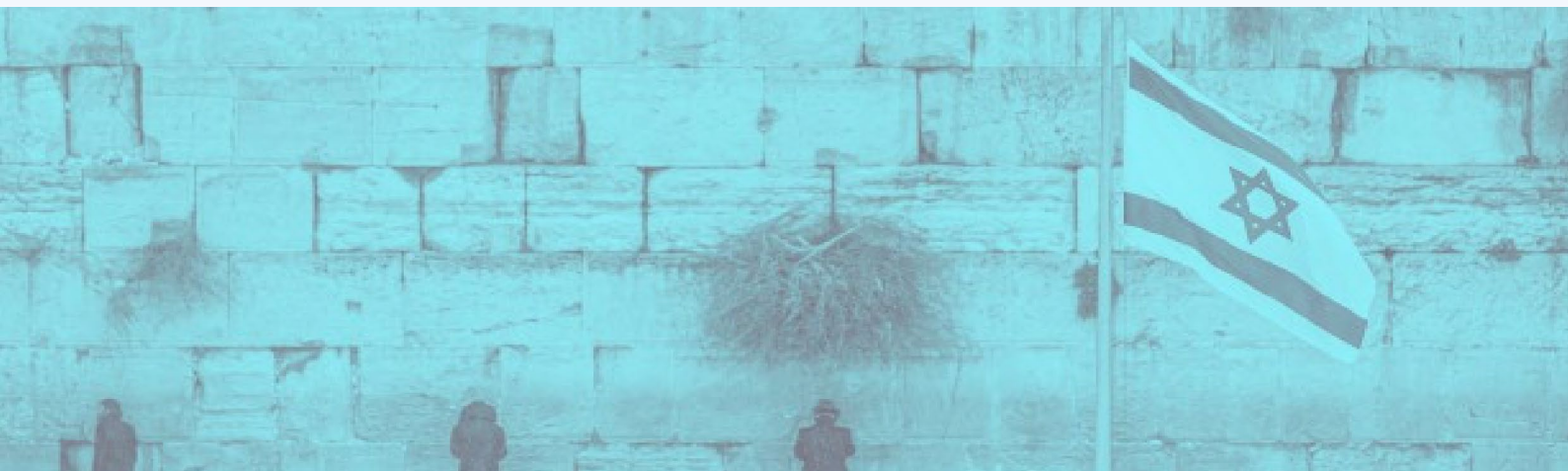
10. Here too, the ideological gaps are sharp: only 2% of respondents who identify with the left believe that the handling of the economy is good, compared with 42% of respondents who identify with the right.

11. By contrast, when the question shifts from the elected level to the senior professional bureaucracy of the Ministry of Finance, the gaps between right and left narrow considerably: 41% of the left and 39% of the right express high trust in Finance Ministry officials. At least on this point, then, the dispute appears to be less a disagreement over professionalism and more a disagreement over leadership, responsibility, and direction.

12. Perhaps, therefore, the most interesting finding in this survey is not how optimistic or pessimistic the public is about the Israeli economy, but how impossible it has become to speak of “the Israeli public.” The same economy, the same indicators, the same state – and yet an enormous and deepening gap in perceived reality. This gap, which has more than doubled within two years, illustrates how deeply Israel's ability to agree even on the framework within which the economy's performance, like any other issue, is interpreted has been eroded.

13. After all this, as someone who works in Israel's economic press, I find it difficult not to ask about the quality of the mediation of economic reality. When different groups read the same reality in increasingly divergent ways, the media framing through which that reality is consumed cannot be removed from the equation. The public, after all, does not live inside Excel spreadsheets, but within an economic story told to it every day: headlines, interpretations, the selection of topics, the highlighting of risks, and sometimes the consistent foregrounding of crisis. JPPI's survey does not prove that the press created public perception, and it would be wrong to claim that. But it can remind us of the power of mediation and invite the question of whether that power is being directed in the right ways.

Alona Bar-On is the publisher of the economic daily Globes.



Questions of Religion and State

- Jewish society has become more traditional in the wake of the war – and also more polarized over tradition.

- Among coalition supporters, a tension was evident between their principled position and their political preference.

- The dispute over exempting yeshiva students from military service placed the coalition in opposition to public opinion.

- Public transportation on Shabbat is expanding with substantial public support.

Observance of Tradition

A cautious examination of traditionalism in Israeli society – conducted during the interval between the end of the Gaza war and the renewal of the war with Iran – suggests that the war produced, on average, an increase in traditional observance and belief in God. These trends are especially pronounced among young Jews. The increase is concentrated among those who already regarded themselves as at least somewhat traditional; it does not appear among secular Jews. Indeed, among secular Jews – the largest group in the Jewish public, about four in ten – the level of traditionalism declined slightly after the war.

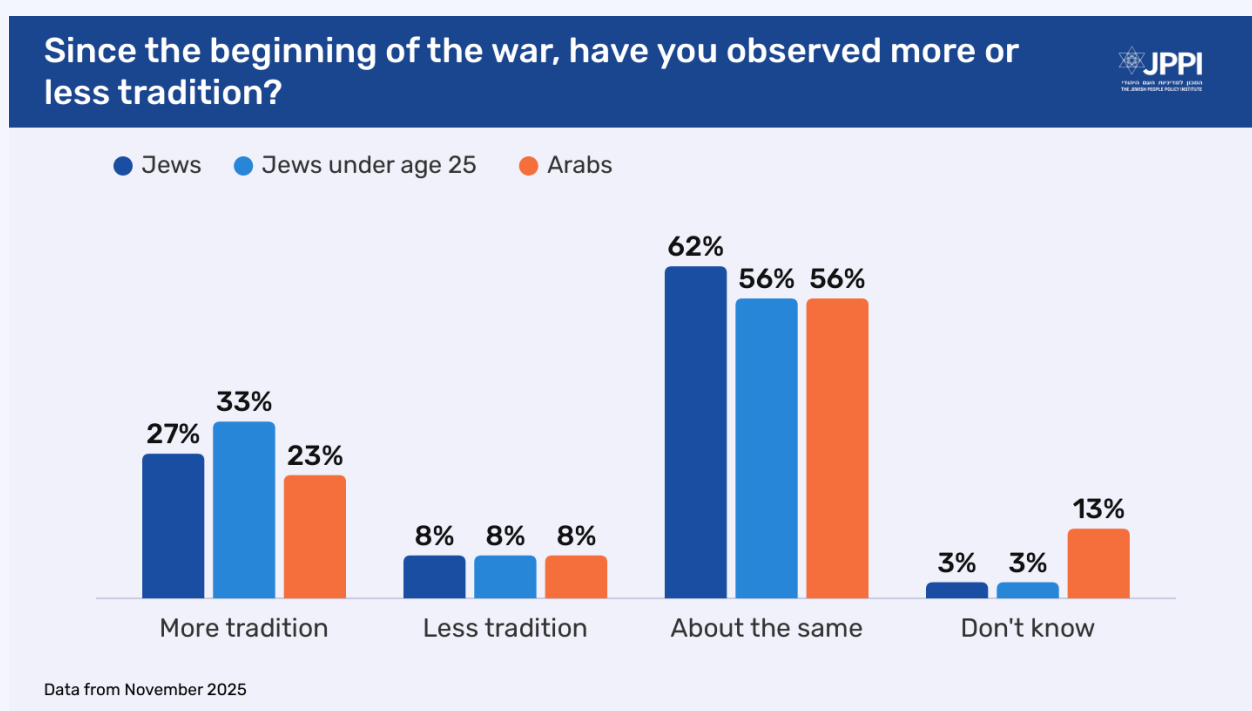
Israel is therefore not moving in one direction that might make society more homogeneous and ease social tension. It is moving in two opposite directions, increasing the likelihood that tensions over tradition will grow. Among Jews, religious–secular relations are the second most frequently cited axis of tension, after right–left relations. Secular Jews, most of whom continue to say that religious coercion exists in Israel, will feel that the country around them is becoming more traditional. Other groups will also perceive strengthening traditionalism and may view it as legitimizing measures that anchor that trend in public life.

The findings require caution for two reasons. First, the war was not over when the research was conducted, and it is too early to know whether the changes will have long-term consequences or are a temporary

response to a turbulent period. Second, many questions rely on respondents' retrospective comparison between their present and former situation. Their description of the past may partly express a desire to emphasize change, even when their actual behavior changed less.

For most respondents, strengthening tradition does not mean becoming fully observant. It generally means greater use of traditional symbols and more frequent performance of rituals, without accepting comprehensive halakhic obligation – except among those who were already religious.

In a general question, 62% of Jews say they observe Jewish tradition to about the same extent as before the war, 27% say they observe more, and 8% say they observe less. The rise is more pronounced among Jews under age 25: one-third (33%) say they observe more tradition than before. Among Arabs, 23% report greater observance of tradition during the war. After subtracting those who report a decline, the net increase is roughly one-fifth to one-quarter among Jews and Arabs.



The reported increase is concentrated among people who already identified as traditional or religious. Fewer than one in ten secular respondents say they intensified their observance, while nearly 15% say they reduced it – a small net decline. Every other Jewish religiosity group shows a net increase. The most socially visible change is among traditional Jews, especially those who define themselves as traditional but not religious.

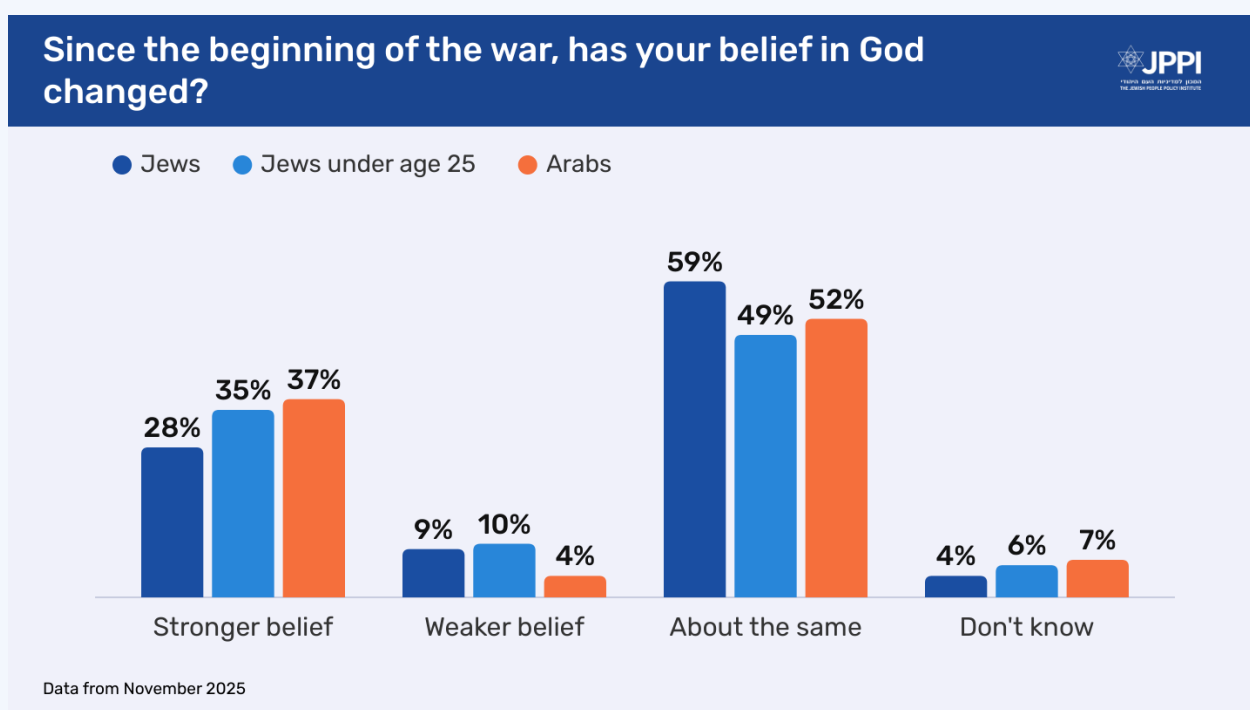
The pattern is even sharper among Jews under age 25. Young secular Jews show a small net decline of about five percentage points. Among young traditional non-religious Jews, the net increase in observance is approximately one-third; among young traditional-religious Jews, about 40 percentage points.

When respondents were asked about specific practices, 31% of Jews said they pray more than before the war and 20% said they read more from the Bible or Psalms. Eleven percent attend synagogue more often, 11% light Shabbat candles more often, 9% put on tefillin more often, and 9% dress more modestly. Among young Jews, 38% pray more, 26% read more from the Bible, and 14% report increases in synagogue attendance, Shabbat-candle lighting, and modest dress. Arabs report similar increases in prayer (32%), modest dress (12%), and attendance at a church or mosque (10%).

These findings describe respondents' perceptions of change, not necessarily verified behavioral change. A June 2025 survey by the Roshink Institute, which measured actual regular and occasional synagogue attendance, found little change from Central Bureau of Statistics data collected more than a decade earlier. Saying "I attend synagogue more" does not necessarily indicate a large increase in actual attendance.

Belief in God

Several surveys indicate that the overall share of believers in Israel did not change because of the war. JPPI therefore asked not whether respondents believe, but whether they feel their faith has changed. Twenty-eight percent of Jews and 37% of Arabs say their faith in God has strengthened; much smaller shares report a decline – 9% of Jews and 4% of Arabs. The effect is stronger among Jews under 25 than among Jews overall.



Here too, the reported strengthening grows as one moves from secular to religious groups. Among young secular Jews, only 6% report stronger belief while 20% report weaker belief. The share reporting weaker faith declines steadily with rising religiosity. The principal process is thus the strengthening of existing belief, not a transition from nonbelief to belief.

Respondents were also asked what they thought had happened to the faith of relatives and friends around them. Half of Jews (49%) think their social circle became more believing to some degree; 35% think it remained unchanged and only 9% perceive weakening. Among young Jews, 58% perceive strengthening and 25% no change. Among Arabs, 52% perceive greater faith in their surroundings, including 42% who perceive a substantial strengthening.

Even secular respondents perceive their surroundings as becoming more religious. This perception may reflect public discourse about a strengthening of faith, or the greater visibility of signs of strengthening compared with signs of weakening.

Religious Self-Definition

In addition to the five-category religiosity scale used by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, Jewish respondents placed themselves on a more detailed seven-category scale previously used in JPPI research on Israeli Judaism. They were asked to describe themselves before the war and today.

At the aggregate level, changes are very small. Thirty-four percent say they were completely secular before the war and 33% say they are completely secular today; the other categories likewise changed only marginally. Among Arabs, using a five-category scale, the share identifying as very religious rose from 9% to 13%, while the share identifying as traditional declined from 37% to 34%.

A transition matrix reveals more movement within categories, although shifts in small groups should be treated cautiously. Most Jews report stable identification. Among those who were completely secular before the war, 91% remain so and 6% now define themselves as secular with some tradition. Among those who were secular with some tradition, 81% remain in that category, 11% now identify as traditional, and 5% as completely secular. Among those who were traditional, 75% remain traditional, 11% now identify as liberal religious, 5% as Torah-observant religious, and smaller shares move elsewhere. Among Haredim, 84% retain that identity.

Young Jews show more movement, perhaps because their identities are still taking shape and perhaps because the war affected them more intensely. Among those who were completely secular, 86% remain so and 10% now identify as secular with some tradition. Among those formerly secular with some tradition, 14% now identify as traditional and 3% as liberal religious. Among those formerly traditional, 19% now identify as liberal religious and 10% as Torah-observant religious.

Haredi Conscription

Of all the issues in Israel's complex religion–state relationship, one dominated public debate this year: military service for Haredim and the proposed exemption from it. The controversy has social, political, legal, and economic dimensions. According to JPPI surveys, the Knesset's course was for much of the year at odds with public opinion.

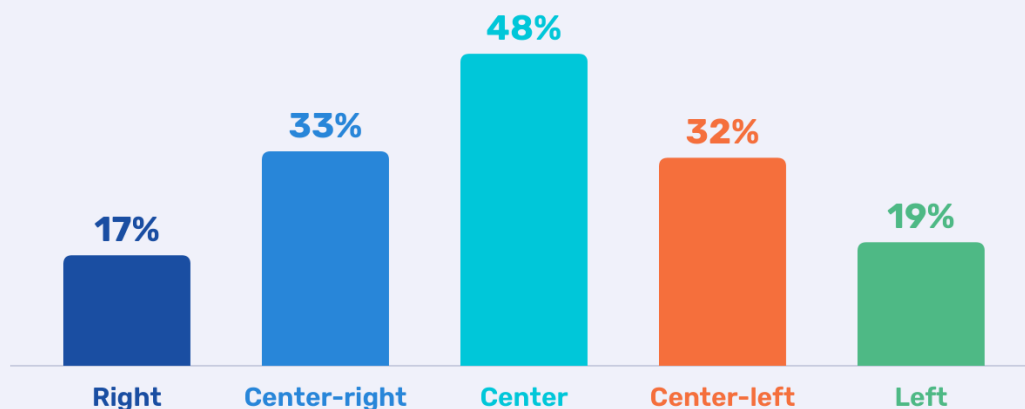
A distinction is necessary between the principled question and the political one. On the principle – whether the state should seek to enlist Haredim – there is very broad agreement among Israelis, except in Haredi society and, to some degree, among Arabs. The political question is more complicated: how to recruit, at what pace, which enforcement measures to use, and how much coalition stability should be risked. Some Israelis regard the issue as urgent enough to justify rapid and forceful action even at the price of coalition stability. Others support the objective but reject haste and are unwilling to destabilize the government to achieve it.

About one-quarter of Israelis rank Haredi conscription among the three issues most important to their vote: 5% call it their most important issue, 10% their second most important, and 11% their third most important, out of a list of ten issues. The issue is especially salient among centrist Jews. Nearly half of self-identified centrists rank it among their top three issues, compared with 75% who rank replacing the government among their top three and 35% who rank combating crime and violence.

Importance of Haredi conscription to voting in the next election



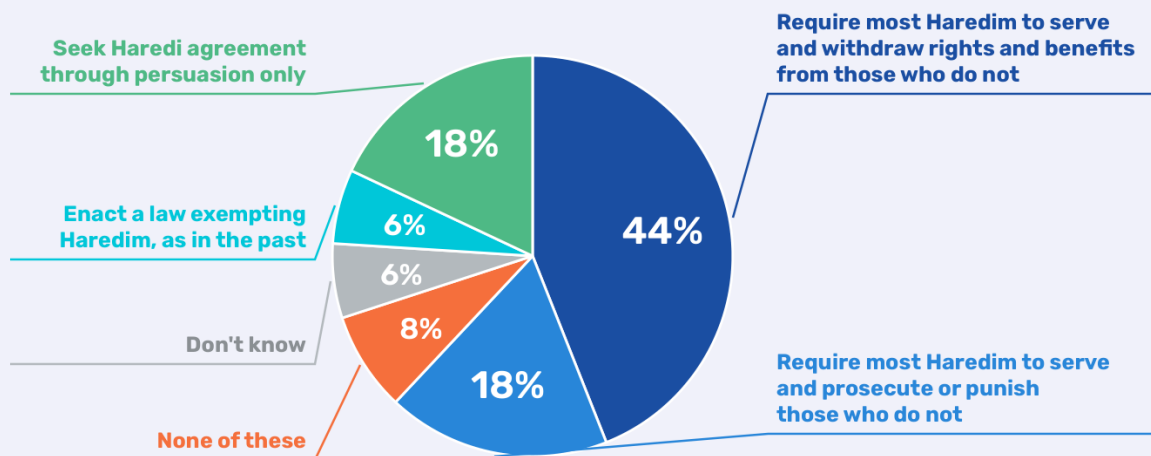
Share ranking Haredi conscription among the three most important issues for their vote



Data from February 2026

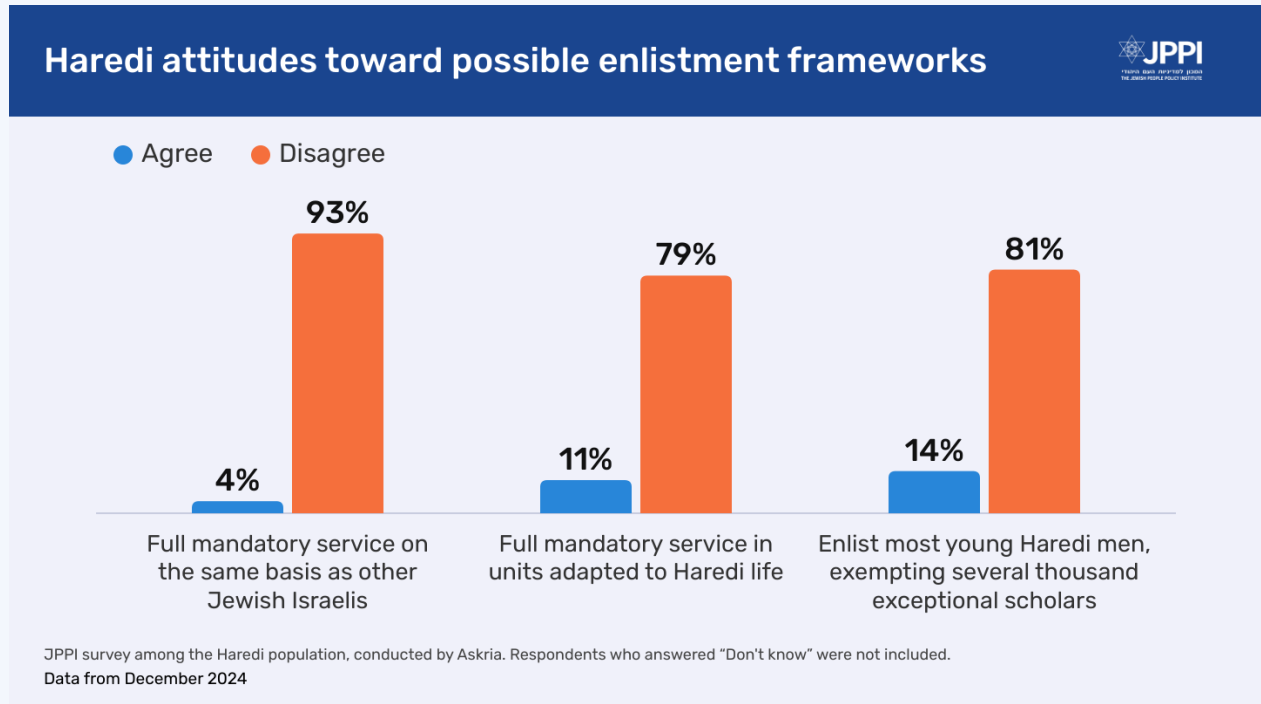
In October 2025, 80% of respondents supported Haredi service in principle. Some favored persuasion and incentives; others favored sanctions and legal coercion. Only a small minority supported restoring a blanket statutory exemption like the one invalidated by the Supreme Court.

What should the Knesset do regarding Haredi service in the IDF?



Data from October 2025

The only public that has expressed sustained and broad opposition to significant Haredi enlistment over the past two years is the Haredi public itself. In a December 2024 JPPI survey of Haredi society, 93% rejected full mandatory enlistment on the same basis as the rest of the Jewish population. Seventy-nine percent rejected it even if service took place in units adapted to Haredi life. Eighty-one percent rejected enlistment of most young Haredi men even if several thousand exceptional Torah scholars were exempted.



Beyond the principle of service, Israelis disagree over who should serve, how extensive enlistment should be, and what enforcement should be used. A sizable group is prepared to exempt those who study Torah "seriously," either because of the value of Torah study or as a pragmatic compromise that would produce some enlistment. A survey framed explicitly as a compromise found that about one-third of Jews would accept enlisting only those who do not study seriously. In November 2024, 27% of Jews supported a law exempting serious Torah students and enlisting the rest. In June 2025, 29% of all Israelis and 32% of Jews supported the same principle regardless of how many fell into either category; about 5% additionally supported exempting everyone.

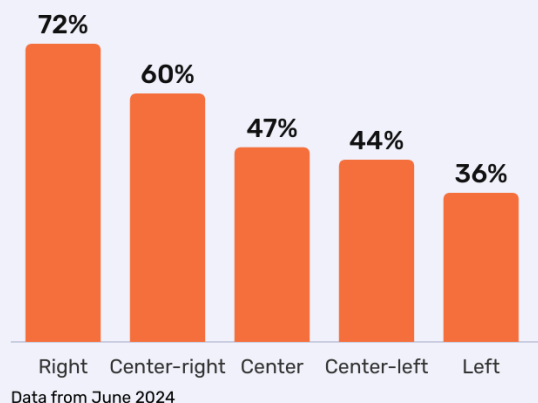
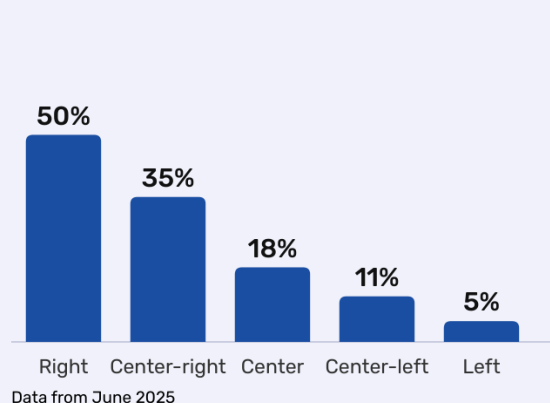
The framing matters. As an abstract principle, exempting all serious students receives limited support even among right-wing voters. Presented as a compromise, it wins substantial support in opposition groups as well.

Support for exempting serious Torah students and enlisting the rest



● Support as a general law

● Support when presented as a compromise



The question of enforcement sharply distinguishes supporters of the coalition, which depends on Haredi parties, from the rest of the public. It also divides non-religious and religious Jews. When asked whether the low response to draft summons demonstrated that coercion cannot work and dialogue should resume, or instead that sanctions should be intensified, secular and traditional non-religious Jews clearly favored stronger sanctions. Traditional-religious and religious Jews were divided.

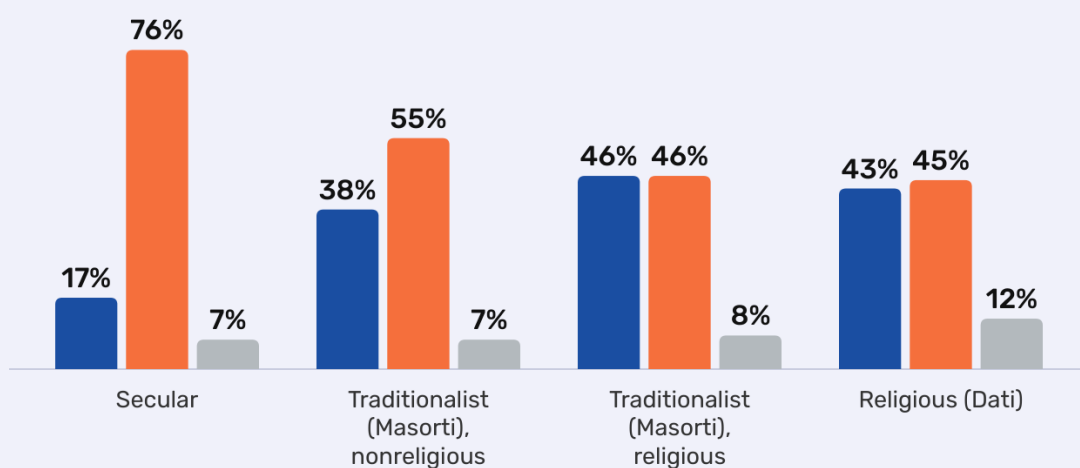
Few summoned Haredi men reported to the recruitment office. What follows?



● Return to dialogue because coercion cannot work

● Intensify sanctions

● Don't know



These differences may reflect attitudes toward Haredim, but they may also reflect political considerations: most traditional-religious and religious Jews support a coalition dependent on Haredi parties.

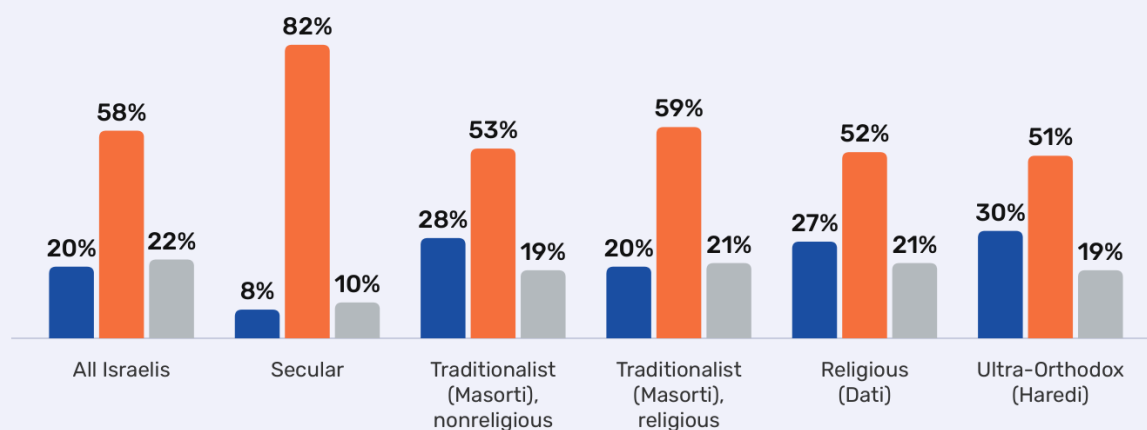
The public assigns little credibility to coalition leaders' claim that their primary objective in the exemption/conscription legislation is to produce a substantial rise in Haredi enlistment. Even among groups

opposed to harsher sanctions, most say the leadership's main motive is political – preserving the coalition and government – rather than meeting an urgent security need or correcting inequality in the burden of service.

What is the government's main motive in advancing a Haredi exemption/conscription law?



● Security needs / equality of service ● Coalition survival ● Other / don't know



Data from March 2025

Public skepticism appeared whenever political motives required interpretation. In summer 2025, the coalition removed MK Yuli Edelstein as chair of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and replaced him with MK Boaz Bismuth after negotiations over the bill stalled. Haredi parties said Edelstein had reneged on understandings reached before the Iran war; coalition leaders said the appointment of Bismuth would facilitate a law beginning a genuine enlistment process. Edelstein argued that the Haredi objective was a law that would not motivate young Haredi men to serve. Whatever the merits of the competing accounts, the public interpreted the move as political: only 20% believed Edelstein had been removed in order to formulate a bill that would enlist more Haredim.

EXPERT RESPONSE

Shuki Friedman**A Traditional and Democratic State**

Israeli society is changing its face. The data in the chapter on religion and state, especially those dealing with Jewish society – which is also the focus of this essay – express a process of religious strengthening. This is something that can be observed even without exposure to the data. Since the war, it has been clear that Jewish-Israeli society is undergoing a process of turning toward tradition. At the same time, the question of relations between religion and state divides Israeli society. The question therefore arises: will “religious strengthening,” of the kind reflected in these surveys, change Israel's character? The overall picture emerging from this chapter, as well as from other sources, suggests that this is not necessarily the case. It appears that a more pronounced Jewish identity does not produce an aspiration for more pronounced Jewishness in the public sphere. While Israel is experiencing trends of “drawing closer” to tradition and faith, most of the Israeli public does not view this change as a commitment to the Orthodox ethos of Jewish public life, and it shows clear opposition to the separatist ethos of the Haredi sector.

The Traditional Dimension: Personal Strengthening, Not Institutional Strengthening

The data indicate that the war led to an increase in belief in God and in observance of commandments among much of the Jewish public. About 27% of Jews report increased adherence to religious practices, a trend especially prominent among young people up to age 25, among whom 33% report religious strengthening. Yet an examination of the character of this “strengthening” points to a shift whose features are more traditional than strictly religious.

The religiosity reflected in these surveys is selective. It is not “returning to religion” in the institutional sense of accepting the full yoke of the commandments. The public turns to prayer (31%) and the recitation of Psalms (20%) – practices that do not require extensive religious commitment and are easier to implement. They are also practices identified as tools of personal resilience in times of crisis.

Nevertheless, personal strengthening is also reflected in a sense of “strengthening” in one's surroundings. Half of Jews (49%) believe that their friends and relatives have become stronger in their faith, even if they themselves have not changed their patterns of behavior. The general impression within society is one of “strengthening,” a perception that can influence public discourse and expectations regarding the conduct of the public sphere.

Yet the data dealing with the institutional and regulatory aspects of state life point in a different direction. The public dispute over religion and state revolves around several issues, some of which concern the Jewish expression of the state in the public sphere. Another issue, adjacent to these questions and carrying substantial social and constitutional implications, is the conscription of Haredim. The survey questions concerning these issues indicate that there is not necessarily a correlation between trends of strengthened

tradition and influence over the Jewish character of the state, or over the resolution of issues that a religious-Haredi worldview identifies as its own.

The Public Sphere: Bottom-Up Development versus Top-Down Stasis

One of the oldest and most contested regulatory questions concerning the Jewish character of the Israeli public sphere is the character of Shabbat in public life. The current government, with its pronounced religious-Haredi character, did not act to promote pluralism on these issues; to the extent that it advanced change, it did so in an Orthodox direction. By contrast, for years there has been a gap on these issues between the positions of the broader public – including the traditional public, some of which supports the government but seeks change – and the political reality. One prominent issue in this context is the operation of public transportation on Shabbat. As is well known, Israel has no public transportation on Shabbat. In the view of many, this constitutes a significant infringement on the freedom of movement of those who do not observe Shabbat according to halakhah. Because of the Haredi veto over changes in matters of religion and state, the likelihood of changing the situation at the national level is low. Accordingly, several local authorities have established public transportation services for the benefit of their residents. It is estimated that one and a half million Israelis live in local authorities that operate such a service on Shabbat.

One of the questions examined by the annual survey was support for operating public transportation on Shabbat. The findings show that among the Jewish public as a whole there is substantial support – 73% – for full or partial operation of public transportation on Shabbat. Only 14% believe that the existing situation, in which public transportation is available only in exceptional cases, should continue. Only a small minority of 13% opposes the operation of any public transportation at all. Other surveys conducted in recent years also show that the traditional public and a significant share of the religious public support public transportation and permission for limited economic activity on Shabbat. The implication is that there is no necessary link – though this should be examined over time – between traditional-religious strengthening and attitudes toward regulatory questions concerning the public sphere, or toward other issues.

Conscription: From Sectoral Tension to a Test of Civic Statehood

The question of Haredi conscription to the army has stood at the heart of public controversy for many years. Haredim argue that Judaism, according to their interpretation, requires them to prefer Torah study and withdrawal into a protected ghetto. They believe that the Jewish state must allow them to do so. Thus, 93% of them oppose full mandatory conscription, even under conditions adapted to the Haredi way of life.

By contrast, even within the religious camp, and certainly outside it, the willingness to support this claim – normatively and practically – is very limited. Only a small share of non-Haredi Israelis is prepared to accept the current situation. About 80% of Jews support Haredi service in the IDF. This support crosses political camps, with the exception of the Haredi public itself. Moreover, a majority of the public (62%) believes that economic or criminal sanctions should be imposed on those who do not enlist.

This gap indicates that the Israeli public, including those who define themselves as believers, finds it difficult to accept Haredi religiosity as a justification for exemption from basic civic duties in wartime. Thus, in this context as well, the process of traditionalization that the Israeli public is undergoing does not predict empathy toward Haredim or a greater willingness to accept their interpretation of Judaism on this matter.

Accordingly, the processes described in the JPPI report appear to point to a deeper phenomenon: Israelis in 2026 seek a Judaism that does not contradict civic statehood, and a more pluralistic and inclusive Jewish identity. Faith and tradition are becoming central components of personal and national identity, but they are not translated into acceptance of the existing religious establishment, nor even into a willingness to accept the existing status quo in the regulatory aspects of religion-state relations.

The Israeli public rejects the Orthodox-Haredi model that seeks to combine exemption from civic obligations with control over the public sphere. The average Israeli may feel closer to Judaism during a crisis, but he or she demands that every citizen share the burden and that the public sphere allow freedom of movement and choice.

Dr. Shuki Friedman is Director-General of the Jewish People Policy Institute.



Israelis and Relations with the United States

- Israelis attach great importance to relations with the United States, yet they do not accept U.S. dictates.

- Trust in the relationship increased markedly with Donald Trump's return to the White House.

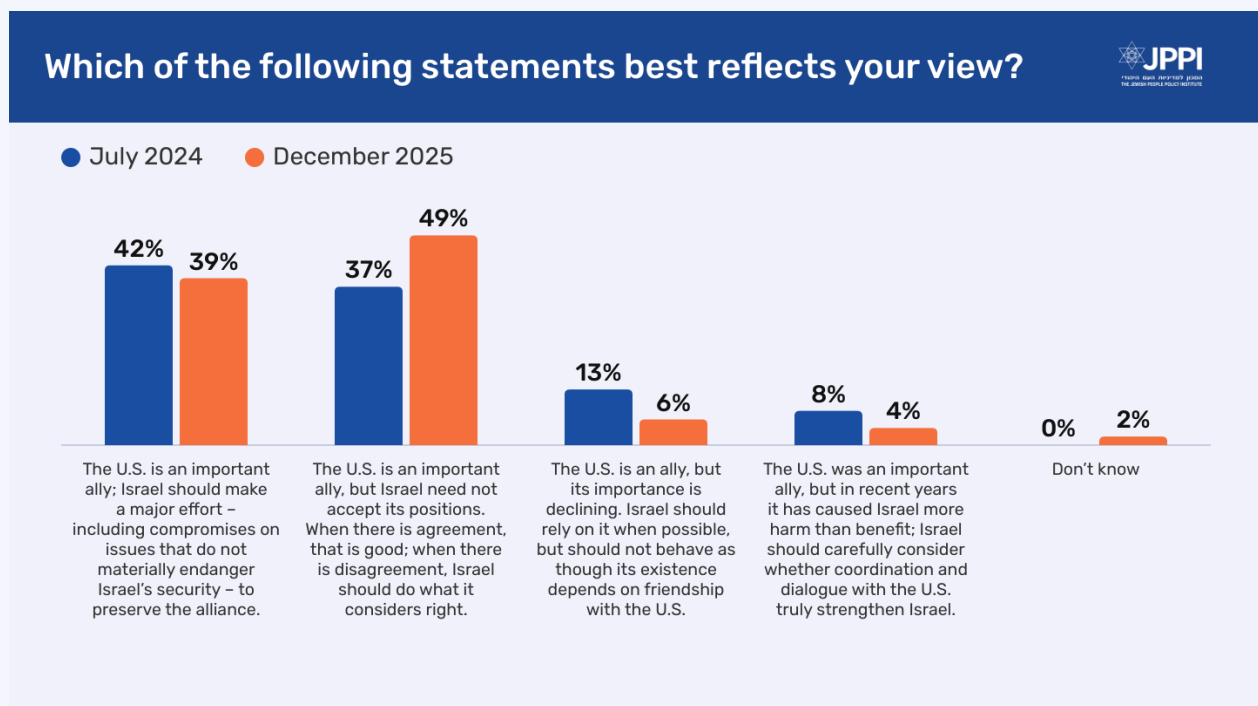
- Attitudes toward Trump combine deep appreciation with some concern regarding the possibility of confrontation.

The Importance of the United States

Israel-U.S. relations are conducted first and foremost in the diplomatic arena, and the influence of public opinion on them is limited. Nevertheless, in both countries, policy is made by politicians who must consider public sentiments and attitudes. This makes it worthwhile to monitor public opinion in this arena as well – an arena that is of critical importance for Israel.

To what extent do Israelis recognize this importance, and are they willing to compromise to preserve good relations with the U.S. administration? In December 2025, the share of Israelis who believed that Israel should make a “major effort, including compromises,” to maintain the alliance with the United States stood at 39%. At the same time, 49% believed that Israel need not always accept U.S. positions and that, in cases of disagreement, Israel should do “what it considers right.” Only a small minority thought that the United States is an ally whose importance is declining, and an even smaller share believed that the United States has caused Israel more harm than benefit in recent years. Most Israelis who in 2022 voted for the parties that constitute the governing coalition view the United States as an important ally, but also believe that when there is a disagreement, Israel should do what it considers right.

As with many other issues touching on Israel-U.S. relations, responses to this question changed relative to the previous administration. The 2024 election of Donald Trump to a second term as U.S. president produced a pronounced shift in Israeli public opinion regarding the perceived importance of the alliance with the United States. It was also met with an increase in the trust Israelis place in the American leadership. As the data shows, during the Democratic Biden administration, nearly a quarter of Israelis thought that the United States was an ally whose importance was declining, or that it harmed Israel. This figure fell sharply after the Republican Trump took office, as a substantial share of Israelis who had held that view (particularly right-wing respondents and supporters of the governing coalition) shifted toward the view that the United States is an important ally – though they did not necessarily agree that Israel should routinely accept U.S. positions and compromise in cases of disagreement.

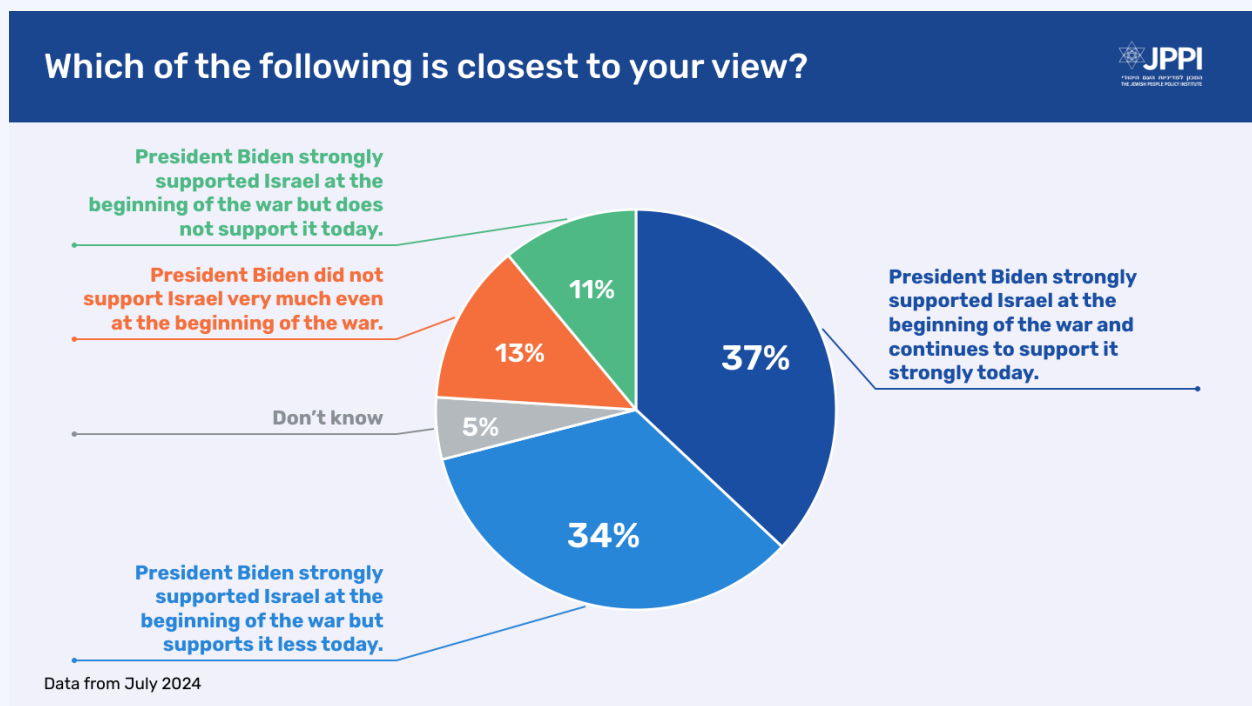


Trust in the U.S. Administration

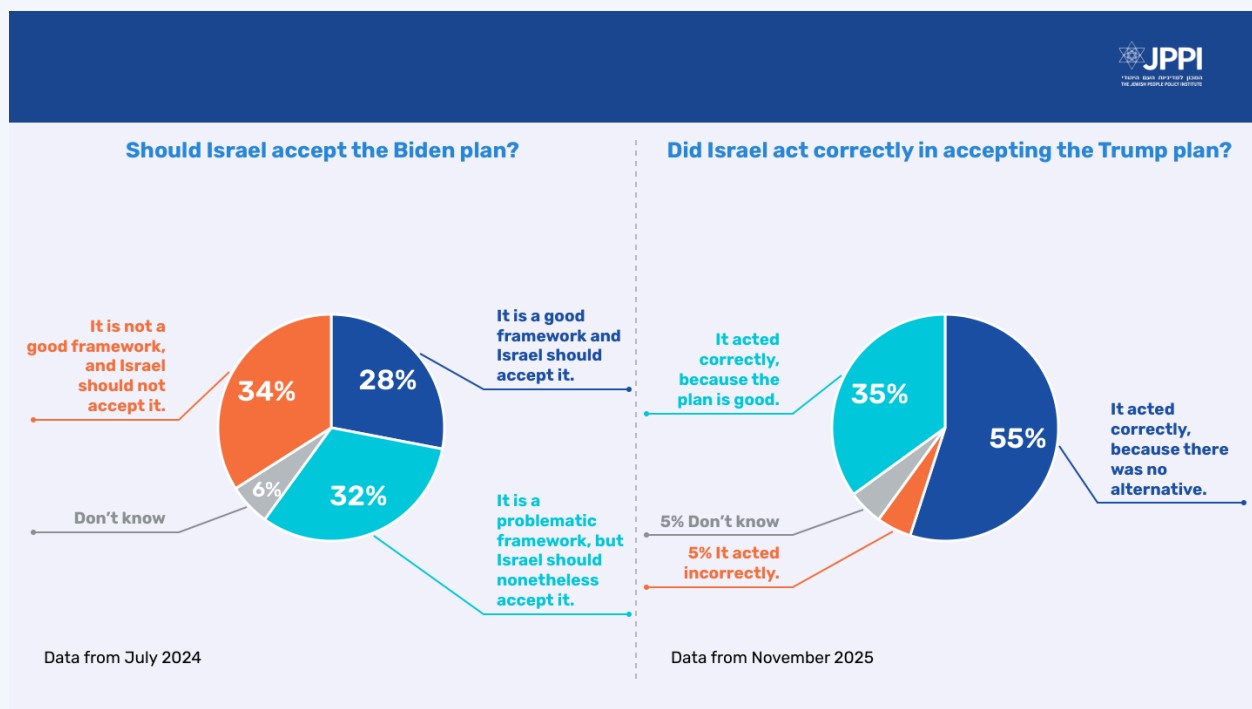
How Israelis regard the U.S. administration is largely shaped by who occupies the White House and by the nature of that president's relations with the Israeli government. Former President Joe Biden stood by Israel immediately after the October 7 attack, visited Israel, and stated that his administration would assist Israel in its war against Hamas. However, in the months that followed, signs of disagreement between the administration and the Israeli government appeared across a range of issues. According to many reports, the United States, to some extent, constrained Israel in the management of the war, through its control over the supply of munitions and by exerting pressure on operational and humanitarian questions (whether or not to enter Rafah, whether or not to strike in Lebanon, and so on). During Iran's initial attacks on Israel, the United States made a considerable effort to help Israel deal – relatively successfully – with attempts to harm it. After the attacks, however, the U.S. position was that Israel should limit its response, given that Iran had not succeeded in inflicting material damage on Israel.

In light of reports of these events, the Israeli public's trust in the U.S. administration rapidly eroded. In the beginning stages of the war, Israelis recognized the United States' alignment with Israel and expressed

gratitude for it, but as the campaign continued, many concluded that U.S. support was insufficient. In July 2024, shortly before President Biden withdrew his candidacy for a second term, a significant majority of Israelis (58%) believed that President Biden was not supporting Israel satisfactorily. This stance was especially pronounced among coalition supporters, who were attuned to the frictions between the Biden administration and the Israeli government and tended to side with the government's position. Accordingly, already at that time – both in light of the critical view of Biden and most Israelis' positive memories of Trump's first term (during which the U.S. Embassy was moved to Jerusalem) – a clear Israeli majority preferred a change of administration in Washington.



Both Biden (in summer 2024) and Trump (in summer 2025) presented Israel with a plan aimed at ending the fighting in Gaza and returning the hostages, while also initiating a process of rehabilitating the Strip. The Israeli government refused to accept Biden's plan, but agreed to accept the Trump plan. Comparing Israeli public attitudes toward these two plans is instructive. In the case of the Biden plan – when, as noted, trust in Biden was lower – only about a quarter of the public thought the framework was “good” and should therefore be accepted, and roughly a third (32%) said the framework was “problematic” but “should be accepted.” In other words, 60% of the public supported accepting the framework (among Jewish respondents: 54%). Support for the Trump framework was higher (35% thought the framework was good), and support for accepting it “because there was no alternative” was far higher – 55%. Thus, 90% of Israelis thought Israel acted correctly in accepting the Trump framework.

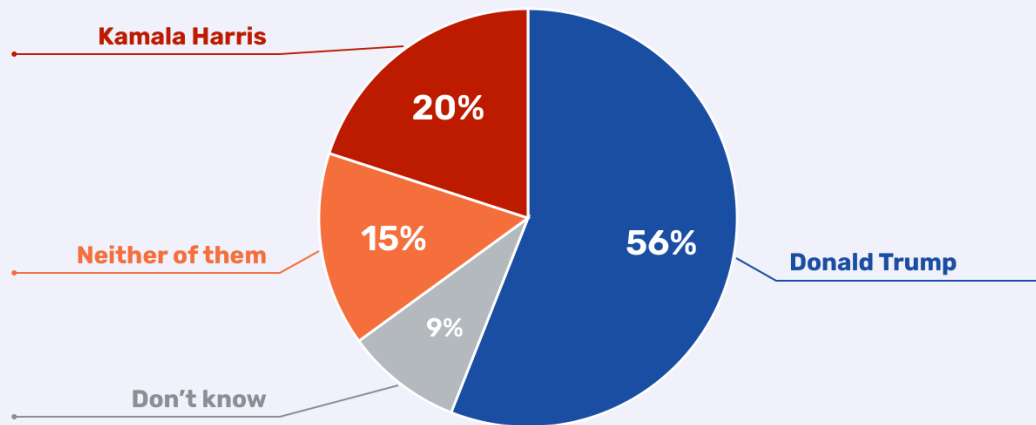


The data indicates that the switch from the Biden framework to the Trump framework did not substantially alter the share of respondents who judged the plan to be good for Israel. However, the perceived necessity of accepting the plan changed markedly in the transition from Biden to Trump. This may point to one of two possibilities: either Israelis, out of appreciation for Trump and gratitude for his support, believed it was incumbent upon them to accept his plan even if it was not especially beneficial; or a substantial share of Israelis, aware of the differences in temperament and style between Biden and Trump, believed that while one could say “no” to Biden without bearing severe consequences, that option does not exist in Trump’s case.

Attitudes toward Trump

As noted, on the eve of the November 2024 U.S. presidential elections, Israeli public preference for a Trump victory (over the Democratic candidate, Kamala Harris) was clear, though not uniform. Among right-wing and centrist groups, a very substantial majority favored Trump, whereas among the center-left and left cohorts (around one-fifth of Jewish Israelis) there was a clear preference for Harris. Among Arab respondents, there was a slight preference for Trump, but with very high shares of “don’t know” and “neither of them.”

In the U.S. presidential elections to be held in a few days, who do you think is the better candidate from Israel's perspective?



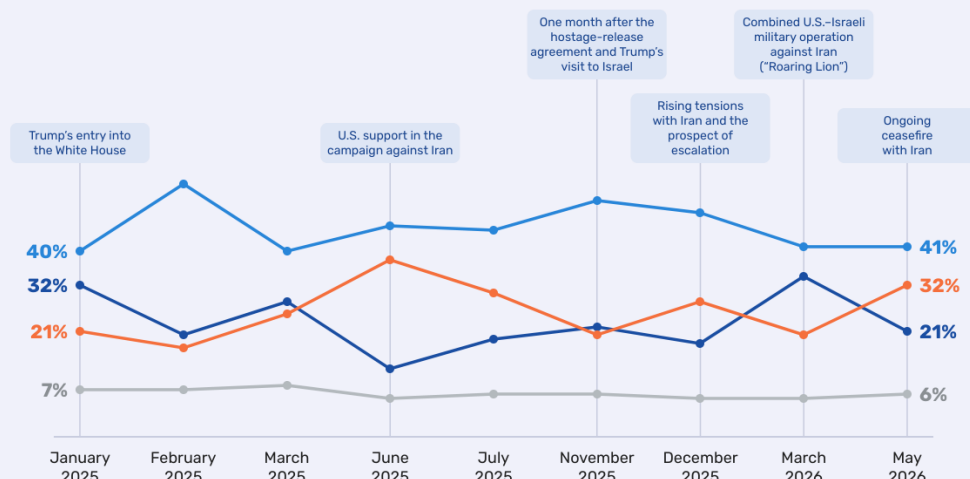
Data from November 2024

At the same time, a meaningful distinction concerning Trump could be identified among Israelis: even when most believed that Trump would be the better president from Israel's perspective, that assessment did not necessarily carry over into their overall evaluation of him. When Israelis were asked who would be a "better president for the United States" and who would be a "better president for Israel," it was evident that most respondents' support for Trump did not lead them to ignore his controversial persona and policies within the United States. On the eve of the election, Israelis were evenly divided over whether Trump or Harris would be better for the United States, but with respect to Israel Trump held a significant advantage.

How much do you trust Donald Trump to "do the right thing" regarding U.S.-Israel relations?

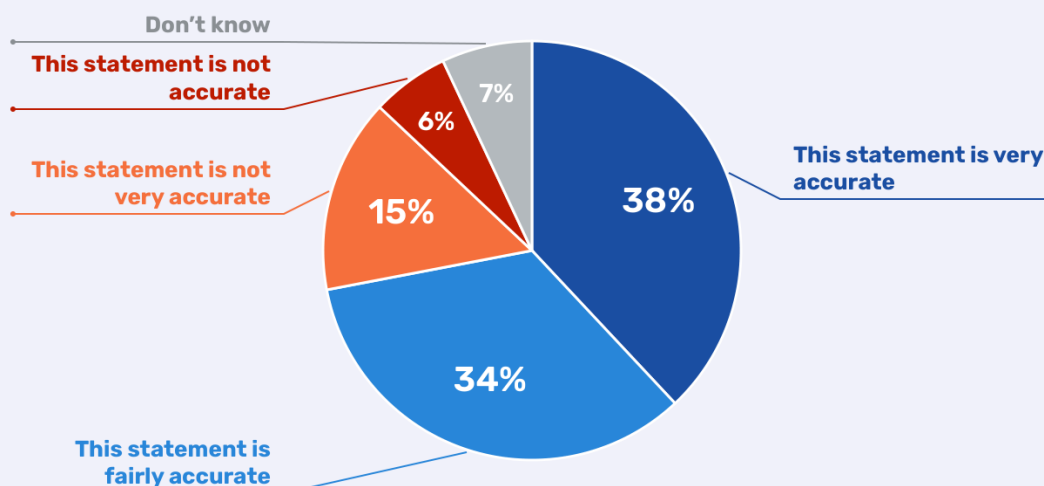


- A great deal of trust
- Some trust
- No trust
- Don't know



Toward the end of 2025, after the United States participated in an attack in the Israeli military campaign against Iran, and after it helped bring about a ceasefire in Gaza and the return of the remaining hostages, a large majority of Israelis accepted the frequently voiced claim that Trump was “the most pro-Israel American president ever.” This was the majority view across all Jewish ideological groups except the left (5% of Jewish respondents), and also among Arab respondents. But just as support for the war in Iran eroded after it failed to achieve the hoped-for results (at least as of this writing), so too did Israelis' confidence that Trump would “do the right thing” with respect to Iran. The ceasefire that Trump effectively forced on Israel in both Iran and Lebanon, in April-May 2026, once again raised Israelis' skepticism toward him.

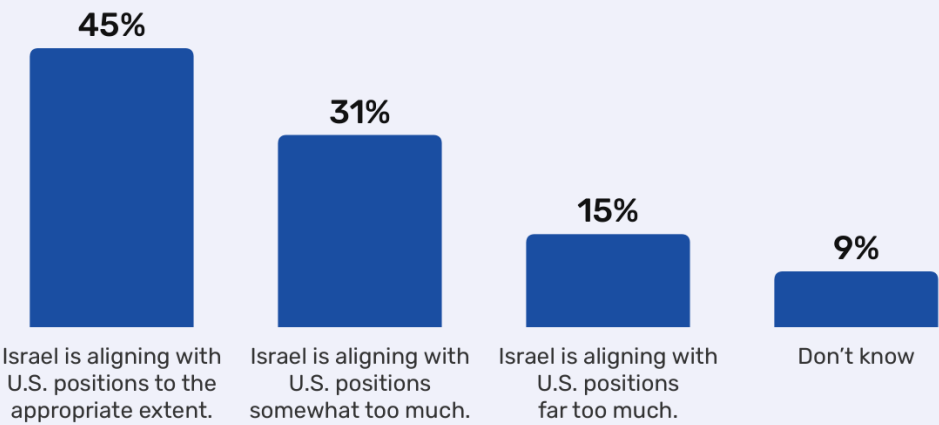
During Trump's most recent visit to Israel, several figures – including the Prime Minister – said he is the most pro-Israel president ever. In your view...



Data from November 2025

As this report was being prepared, the possibility of an additional U.S. strike on Iran was on the agenda, carrying with it the potential to further strengthen Israelis' trust in Trump, but also the potential for disappointment. One salient feature of how Israelis regard the U.S. administration is the speed with which attitudes change and hope turns into disappointment and vice versa. One example from the Gaza arena: After acceptance of the Trump plan (which many Israelis supported because they believed there was no alternative), many Israelis concluded that Israel was operating under American dictates beyond the desired degree. As described in the chapter on security issues, in spring 2025, most Israelis expressed skepticism about the likelihood that Israel's objectives in Gaza – including the disarmament and removal of Hamas from power – would be fully achieved. This skepticism also shapes attitudes toward the level of coordination – and perhaps the acceptance of dictates – with the U.S. administration in this arena. Among government supporters, the majority view is that Israel is aligning itself with the U.S. position more than desirable (among the right, 54% selected “far too much” or “somewhat too much”).

In recent weeks there have been many reports about deep U.S. involvement in managing the ceasefire. Which of the following is closer to your view?



Data from November 2025

EXPERT RESPONSE

Michael Herzog**Israel-U.S. Relations: From the Heights to the Depths**

The “Roaring Lion” war laid bare a profound paradox in the state of Israel-U.S. relations. For the first time in our history, we witnessed an integrated Israeli-American offensive military operation, one that reflected unprecedented cooperation and mutual trust between the political and security leaderships of the two countries. Yet this took place against the backdrop of a significant – and highly dangerous erosion in Israel’s image and standing in American public opinion. This gap casts a heavy shadow over Israel’s ability to sustain the close relations that exist today in the years ahead, and to translate the achievements of the joint operation into new horizons of cooperation.

The degree of Israeli-American integration that occurred during the war was breathtaking. It included joint planning, the sharing of intelligence and operational plans, and coordinated execution through a division of the battlefield, missions, targets, and strike objectives. Officers from the two militaries shared command posts, and American aircraft refueled Israeli Air Force planes on their way to and from strikes in Iran. Israel, whose military was built to fight alone, had never experienced anything of this kind. On the American side, some have drawn an analogy to the Allied coalition in the Second World War. Such cooperation – especially against a regional power such as Iran – is possible only between Israel and the United States, and it testifies in the strongest possible terms to the uniqueness of the relationship.

Security cooperation between Israel and the United States was built over many years. It reached the aforementioned peak thanks to an unconventional president such as Donald Trump; to the substantial weakening of Iran and its regional proxy axis, which Israel achieved in the aftermath of October 7; and to Israel’s transfer into the regional area of responsibility of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM). When Iran attacked Israel directly with extensive barrages of missiles and UAVs – in April and October 2024 – the Biden administration stood by Israel, establishing full defensive integration between the IDF and U.S. Central Command. In the “Rising Lion” war (June 2025), the Trump administration joined Israel in the offensive, though in a separate American action that followed the Israeli one. In the “Roaring Lion” war, we reached full offensive integration.

Set against this upward curve is a downward curve in Israel’s standing in American public opinion and public discourse, which has deteriorated in recent years to unimaginable proportions, as public-opinion surveys consistently show. According to these surveys, more Americans today hold a negative view of Israel than a positive one; and more Americans – as reflected in a Gallup poll on the eve of the “Roaring Lion” war—express sympathy for the Palestinians than for Israel. The erosion began on the left, especially in progressive circles, whose appallingly simplistic division of the world places Israel – and usually American Jews as well – on the “white,” “occupying,” “aggressive,” and “oppressive” side. It then spread into the heart of the Democratic Party, to the point that anyone seeking election within the party now feels a need to distance himself or herself from Israel and from security assistance to it. But it did not stop there. It has also spread

to the right, to the Republican Party, where it flourishes among isolationist circles that advocate “America First” in the sense of minimalist international involvement, and it is increasingly spreading among the younger generation, even among evangelicals. Indeed, the damage to Israel’s image among younger Americans is especially grave, with average levels of support among those aged 18–35 reaching, at best, 30 percent. To all this must be added antisemitism from both right and left, which feeds these trends and is fed by them, and which in recent years has been normalized in American public discourse.

A significant part of the trend under discussion originates in internal processes within American society – demographic, social, cultural, and political – that are unrelated to Israel. These have converged with a long-standing and well-funded anti-Israel delegitimization campaign within American civil society, driven mainly by Islamist and antisemitic actors, a campaign that has been greatly amplified by the echo chamber of social media. It appears that Israeli governments, and most of the established Jewish leadership in America, failed to assign this challenge the weight it deserved and awakened only on October 8, 2023 – when a foul antisemitic current burst forth, one that, in the consciousness of many American Jews, became joined to the trauma of October 7.

At the same time, part of the erosion in Israel’s standing in the United States must also be attributed to developments in Israel and to Israeli actions. A watershed was crossed in the Democratic Party during the confrontation between the Israeli government and the Obama administration over the Iran nuclear agreement (2015), when Israel bypassed the administration and challenged it through the prime minister’s confrontational address to Congress. To this must be added the continuing damage to Israel’s image, particularly among liberal audiences – audiences that prefer a discourse of rights to a discourse of national security – because of what is perceived as the Israeli government’s tendency to actively thwart the possibility of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; violence by Israeli extremists in Judea and Samaria/the West Bank; illiberal trends in Israeli democracy; and more.

The general trend discussed in this essay has worsened sharply in recent years among the broader public because of the prolonged war in Gaza, which flooded screens with harsh images accompanied by highly critical discourse, and subsequently because of the war in Iran. Paradoxically, the just wars that Israel fought created fertile ground for the spread of a negative narrative against it and for a significant intensification of the damage to its image and standing, including among actors friendly to Israel. One of the most serious manifestations of this can be seen in the decline of the public-political support base for American security assistance to Israel. From a positive brand – a success story worthy of emulation, the only democracy in the Middle East and a flourishing start-up nation – Israel has become, in the eyes of many, a negative brand: a warmongering and destabilizing state that, at best, starves a civilian population and kills civilians indiscriminately, and at worst commits genocide. Criticism of Israel in the American mainstream has, in turn, given tailwind to the antisemitic campaign against it, a campaign saturated with blood libels.

We have always taken pride in our special relationship with the United States. From the chair of Israel’s ambassador in Washington, I experienced and witnessed just how broad, deep, and unique these relations truly are. Yet a heavy and threatening shadow hangs over this picture, for all the pillars on which these special relations have rested have been eroded. The “shared values” are clouded by a dispute between differing worldviews, both in Israel and in the United States. The shared interests are less self-evident to growing publics that view Israel more as a burden on the United States than as an asset to it. Israel and its

friends in the United States argue that Israel's achievements in weakening Iran and the Iranian axis demonstrate the extent to which it is a strategic asset, and justify the many years of American investment in Israel's security. But opposite them, a narrative is spreading in the United States according to which Israel dragged America into the war with Iran – a war that, in the eyes of most of the American public, is a war of choice. And while many Israelis wonder whether Israel has lost its freedom of decision vis-à-vis a dominant president such as Trump, many Americans wonder whether it is Trump who was dragged along by Israel. This narrative, in turn, erodes another fundamental and crucial pillar of our relations: that Israel defends itself by itself and does not ask the United States to risk soldiers on its behalf.

Another pillar that has eroded is the special affinity between the peoples. This erosion is felt especially among the younger American generation, which is less connected to history, religion, and the Bible, and which draws much of its information from social media saturated with severe incitement against Israel. It is also reflected in a deepening blow to the broad bipartisan support from which Israel traditionally benefited. Now, not only has Israel become a partisan/political issue – as also evidenced by the Democratic Party's internal report, which attributes Kamala Harris's defeat in the election against Trump to the support President Biden gave Israel in the war in Gaza – but, as noted, a real erosion in Israel's standing is also evident on the Republican right, especially among the younger generation.

Finally, it is worth pointing to the decline in the standing of the Jewish community, which has also long been one of the pillars of the special relationship. A thriving and influential community, one that produced leaders at the national level, has become a community focused on defending itself against the murky wave of antisemitism and hatred of Israel – and this is without yet discussing the phenomena of assimilation and growing distance from Israel. Within the Jewish community, discourse is widespread that its "golden age" on the American continent has come to an end. One of its activists even said to me, painfully: "Like the Black community in its time, the Jewish community today needs a civil rights movement!"

The Israeli public does indeed feel insecure about the stability of U.S. support – as reflected in the surveys presented in this report – but it seems to me that it is not sufficiently aware of the dangerous development described here. This is due, among other things, to the fact that we were fortunate that in recent years two presidents who were fundamentally sympathetic to Israel occupied the White House: Biden the Democrat and Trump the Republican. Both blocked anti-Israel pressures arising from within their own political bases. In this context, I believe that the surveys reflect an incomplete judgment of Biden, one that ignores the important support he gave Israel after October 7 despite the disagreements between our governments.

Israel's exhilaration over the historic joint campaign against Iran must not blind us to the grave challenge before us. This is a threat to an extremely important component of our national security: that the special relations with the greatest of the world's powers may become ordinary relations, within which we will no longer be able to rely on the generous security assistance and the diplomatic-international umbrella provided by that power. The State of Israel must awaken and urgently develop a long-term national strategy for the American arena, the details of which cannot be set out within the limits of this essay. At the same time, Israel must develop a multi-year plan to reduce its dependence on the United States – a deep and troubling dependence that I witnessed at a critical hour of testing for Israel – in everything related to essential assets for the defense of national security. Regarding this tension between independence and

reliance, the words of Hillel the Elder in Pirkei Avot (chapter 1, mishnah 14) are apt: "If I am not for myself, who is for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I?"

The writing is on the wall, and the sooner the better: "And if not now, when?"

Brig. Gen. (res.) Michael Herzog served as Israel's ambassador to Washington from 2021 to 2025.



Antisemitism and the Relationship with the Diaspora

- A consensus of concern: a large majority of Israelis are worried about antisemitism in the United States.

- Stronger identification: anti-Israel protests strengthened Israeli Jews' sense of connection with Diaspora Jewry.

- Worried but still traveling: 2025 set a near-record for Israeli travel abroad despite heightened caution about antisemitism.

- The future is here: most Israelis believe Jews should immigrate to Israel and are pessimistic about the future of Diaspora communities.

The State of Antisemitism

The multiyear rise in global antisemitism continued over the past year. It has affected the consciousness of Jews worldwide, including Jews in Israel. Its impact can be considered in four areas: Israelis' attitudes toward Diaspora Jews and their condition; concern about consequences for Israel and Israelis; interpretation of the phenomenon and its meaning for the Jewish future; and expectations regarding what Israel can do about it.

Reports published over the past year documented increases of hundreds of percent in anti-Jewish hate incidents since the start of the Swords of Iron War. The Anti-Defamation League recorded 9,354 antisemitic incidents in the United States in 2024 – 5% more than in 2023, 344% more than five years earlier, and 893% more than ten years earlier. This was the highest total since the ADL began recording incidents in 1979. Canada and Australia likewise reported steep increases in violence and vandalism in public spaces.

Antisemitism is no longer confined to the ideological fringes. It has entered academic and social mainstreams, blurring the boundary between legitimate criticism of Israeli policy and delegitimization or demonization of the Jewish people. A 2025 report by Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating

Antisemitism described a transformation from a disturbing fringe phenomenon into a normalized and increasingly organized danger receiving support from formal organizations, international institutions, and even governments.

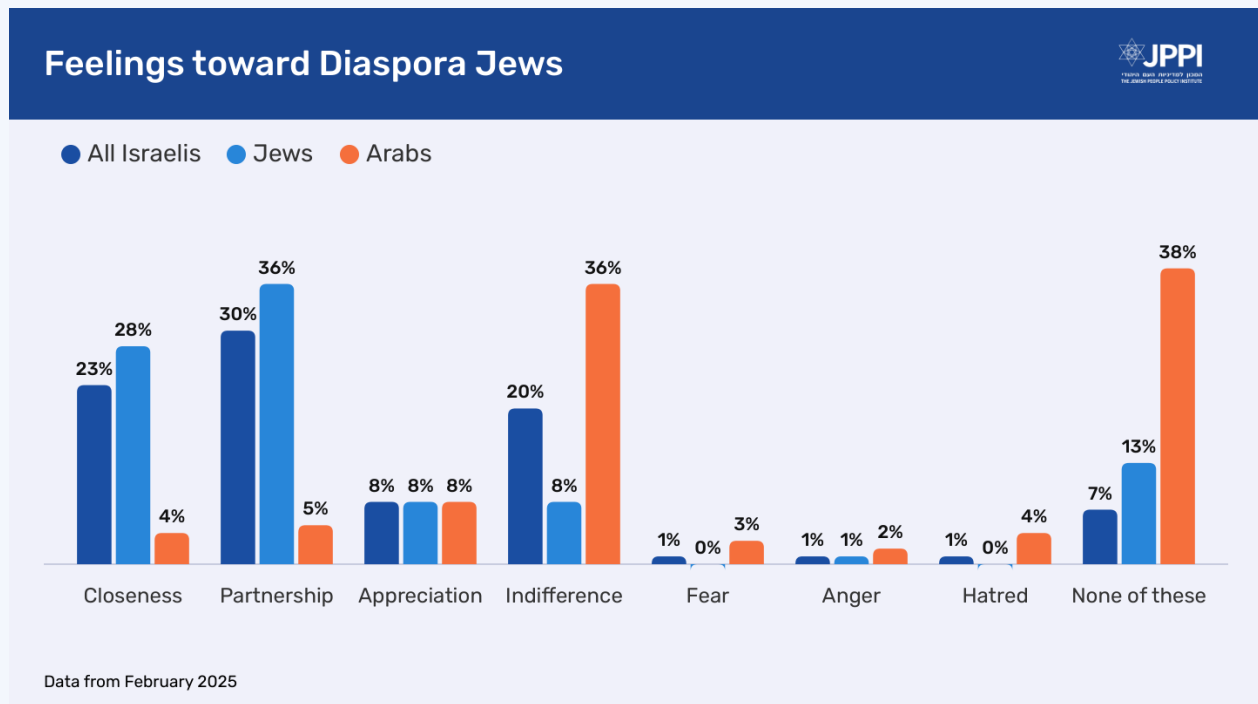
Digital spaces have become a major arena of incitement and have contributed to declining Jewish security. Some Jews conceal Jewish symbols or avoid community events. In JPPI's Voice of the Jewish People panel of connected American Jews, 45% said in June 2025 that they wore no visibly Jewish item, compared with 37% in June 2024.

Israelis' Attitudes toward Diaspora Jewry

The partnership between Israel and Diaspora Jewry is central to the flourishing of the Jewish people. Since October 7 and the two years of war that followed, it has been shaken in ways that both strengthened the alliance and added complexity. Diaspora Jewry mobilized on an extraordinary scale: more than \$1.4 billion was donated during the war's first months for rebuilding the Gaza border region and supporting victims, alongside extensive advocacy and other forms of assistance.

The global rise in antisemitism also forced Israel to reconsider its role as a safety net for Jewish communities. At the same time, the war complicated relations because Jews abroad were harmed as a consequence of Israel's actions, while some criticized those actions and questioned their own relationship with Israel.

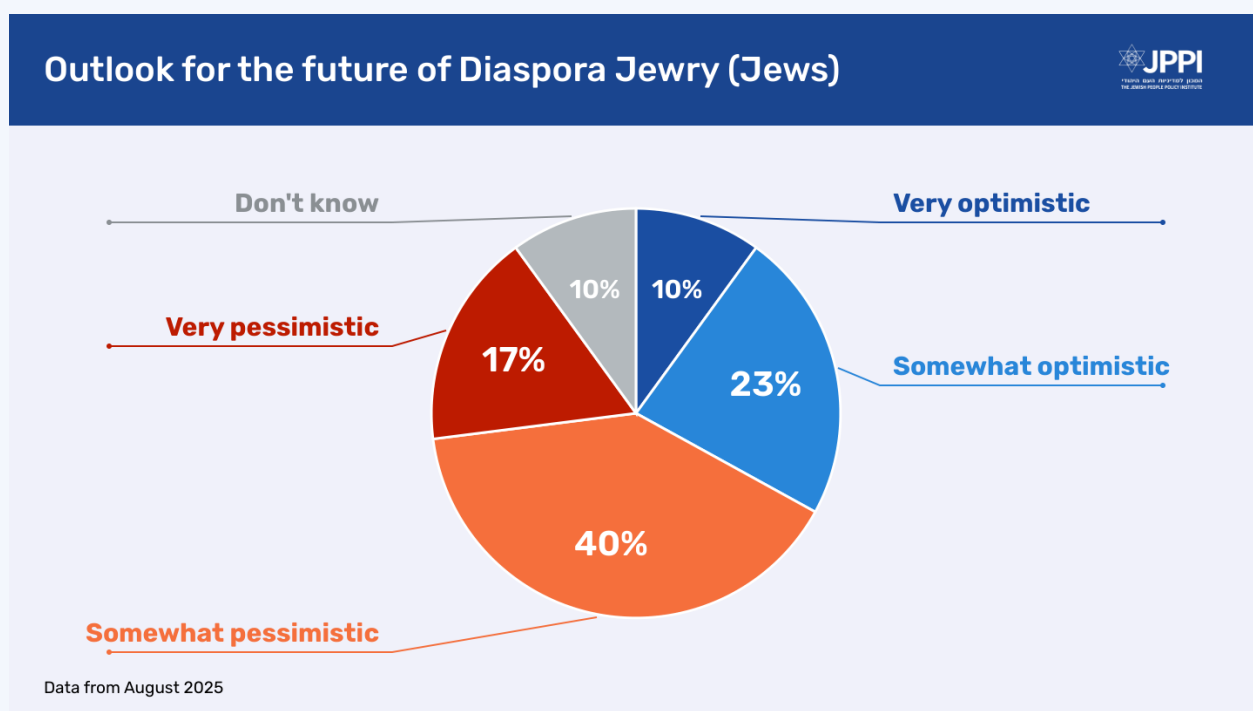
Most Israelis – and an even larger majority of Israeli Jews – express primarily positive feelings toward Diaspora Jews. Partnership, closeness, and appreciation predominate. Among Arabs, indifference and “none of the above” are the leading responses. Positive feelings among Israeli Jews declined somewhat from 2024 to 2025: 75% selected closeness, partnership, or appreciation in 2024, compared with 64% in 2025.



Most Israelis agree that Jews in Israel and the Diaspora share a common future. Among Jews, the proposition receives strongest support from religious respondents and weakest support from secular respondents. In June 2024, 54% strongly agreed and 26% somewhat agreed; by October, 45% strongly agreed and 29% somewhat agreed.

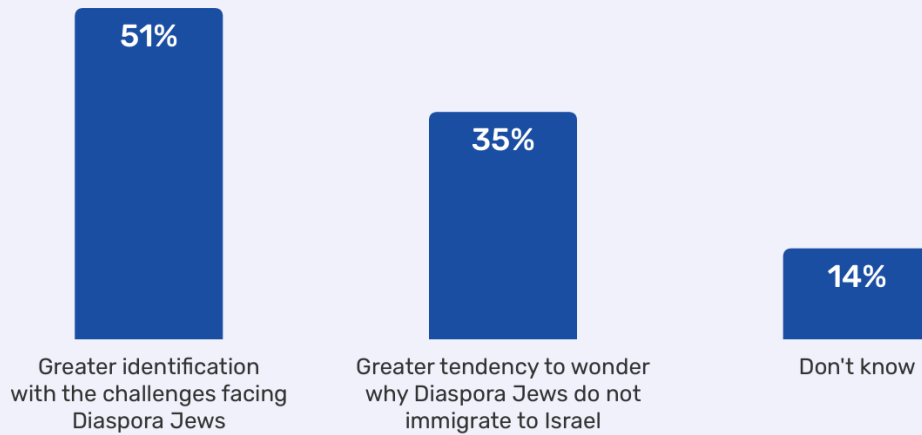
Eighty-seven percent of Israelis are concerned about rising antisemitism in the United States and believe it negatively affects Diaspora communities. Half say that seeing anti-Israel campus protests made them identify more strongly with the challenges facing Diaspora Jews. One-third say the protests made them wonder why more Diaspora Jews do not immigrate to Israel.

This question arises against a background of pessimism about Diaspora Jewry's future. Only 10% of Israeli Jews are very optimistic and 23% somewhat optimistic; 40% are somewhat pessimistic and 17% very pessimistic.



Ideological differences shape the emotional response to campus protests. In every Jewish ideological group except the right, a majority chose stronger identification with Diaspora challenges. Among right-wing Jews, 56% instead said the protests made them wonder why Diaspora Jews did not immigrate to Israel, while 34% reported greater identification. A similar response appears among religious Jews.

Stronger reaction to anti-Israel campus protests



Data from May 2024

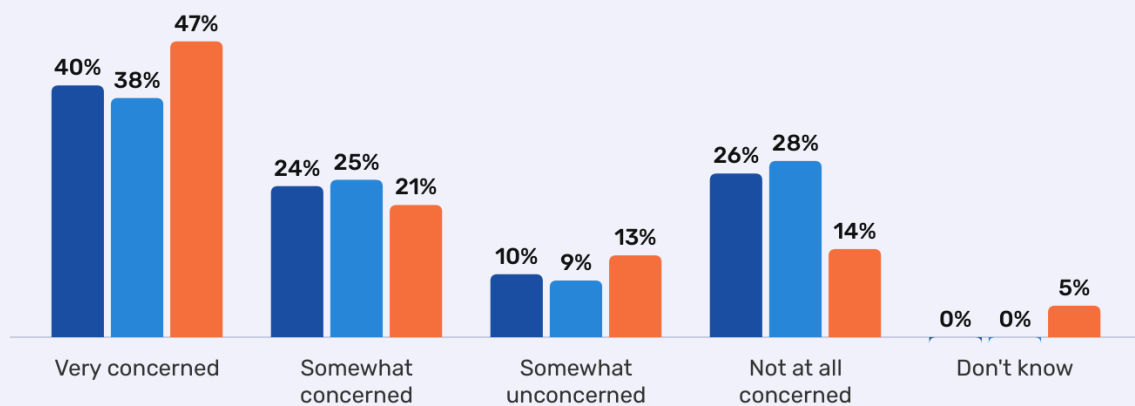
Effects on Israel and Israelis

Antisemitism can make it harder for Israel to achieve diplomatic objectives, generate pressure on foreign leaders to distance themselves from Israel, erode alliances, produce disproportionate criticism, and lead to punitive measures. Two-thirds of Israelis are concerned that Israel may become a pariah state in the West. This concern is not shared by the right-wing group but is evident in every other ideological group and rises steadily from center-right to left.

Concern that Israel may become a pariah state in the West

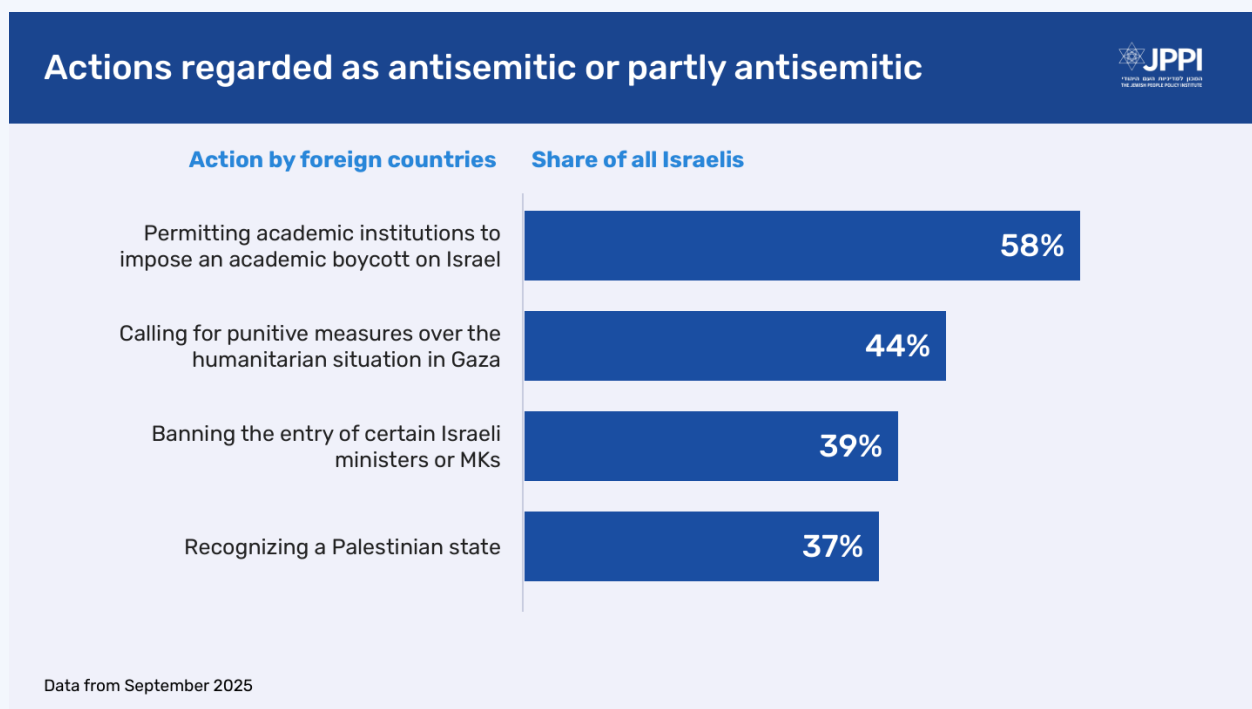


● All Israelis ● Jews ● Arabs



Data from June 2025

Israelis interpret many actions by foreign governments that are described as criticism of Israel as at least partly antisemitic. Fifty-eight percent say countries permitting academic institutions to boycott Israel are acting for antisemitic or partly antisemitic reasons. Forty-four percent say the same about calls to punish Israel over humanitarian conditions in Gaza; 39% about banning entry to certain Israeli ministers or Knesset members; and 37% about recognizing a Palestinian state. Among Jews, right-wing, religious, and Haredi respondents are particularly likely to attribute antisemitic motives.



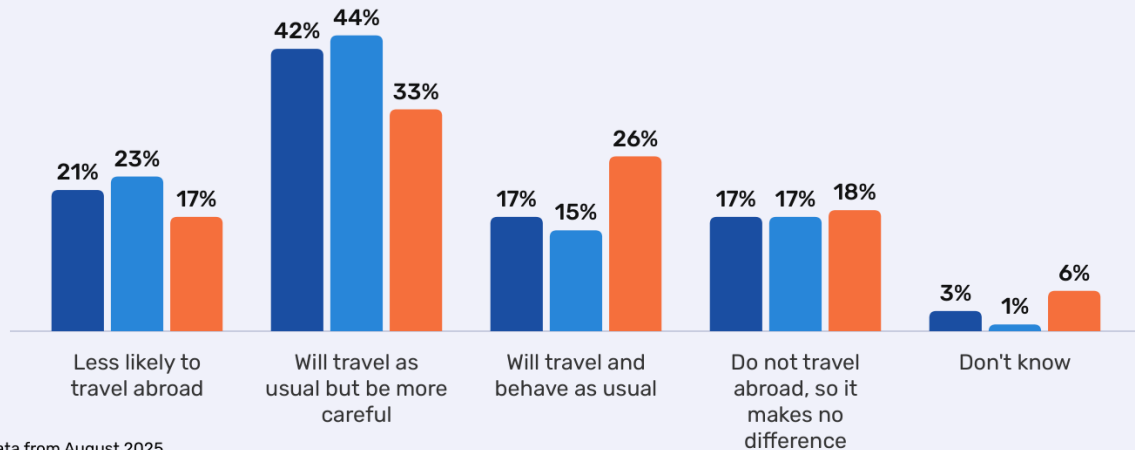
Ratings of countries' friendliness toward Israel fell sharply. Britain's rating dropped by 28 percentage points between November 2024 and October 2025; Germany's by 16 points and France's by 8. India's rose by 7 points. Ratings of China and Russia, already low, did not change materially.

Antisemitism also affects Israelis who travel frequently and are unaccustomed to discrimination or hostility. More than half say they either canceled travel abroad or changed their behavior by selecting different destinations, concealing Jewish or Israeli signs, avoiding Hebrew in public, or checking National Security Council warnings. Yet Israelis did not stop flying. The Central Bureau of Statistics recorded 9.42 million departures abroad in 2025 – 33% more than in 2024 and the second-highest total of the past decade.

In light of harassment or attacks on Israelis traveling abroad...



● All Israelis ● Jews ● Arabs



Israel also experienced unusually high outward migration in 2025. The reasons remain debated: social and political unrest before the war, a reaction to the war itself, or the onward movement of recent immigrants from Russia and Ukraine. Yet intentions to emigrate changed little. In October 2025, 55% strongly rejected the statement “If I had a practical opportunity to emigrate, I would do so,” compared with 52% in November 2024. Nine percent strongly agreed in both surveys.

Nearly half of Israeli Jews say they know Israelis considering relocation abroad. In October 2025, 22% said they knew many such people and 29% knew some; 44% said the statement was not or mostly not true. About one-quarter of Israelis also assume that some people in their close circle will not remain in Israel, a view especially common on the left and center-left.

What Counts as Antisemitism?

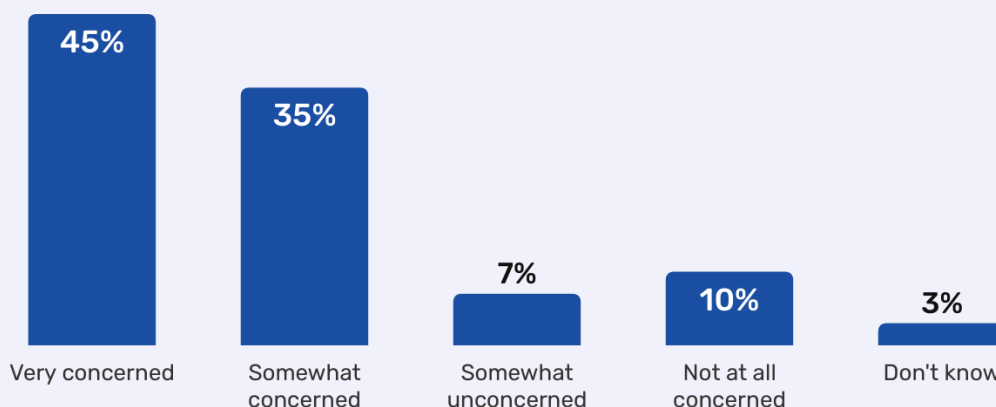
The prominence of Israel in global discourse has made the definition of antisemitism more contested. The boundary between legitimate criticism and antisemitic expression is disputed worldwide and within Israel. The issue was especially visible in the New York mayoral campaign, from Zohran Mamdani's Democratic primary victory through his election. His sharp criticism of Israel provoked intense reactions in Jewish and political circles. His election demonstrated that a politician in a city with a very large Jewish population could speak in a manner many Jews regarded as hostile to Israel and still win.

JPPI's November 2025 Voice of the Jewish People survey found “concern” to be the dominant reaction among American Jews following Mamdani's election, and 67% believed New York Jews would be less safe. Mamdani denies antisemitic intent and distinguishes his views on Israel from his attitude toward Jews.

Campus protests during the Gaza war similarly illustrated the dispute over definitions. In May 2024, 87% of Israeli Jews were concerned about events on U.S. campuses. Among Arab Israelis, 54% identified to some

degree with the protesters' messages. Half of Arabs interpreted the demonstrations as directed against Israel alone, while 20% said they were also directed against Jews; those who perceived an anti-Jewish element tended to oppose them.

Concern about U.S. campus protests (Jews)



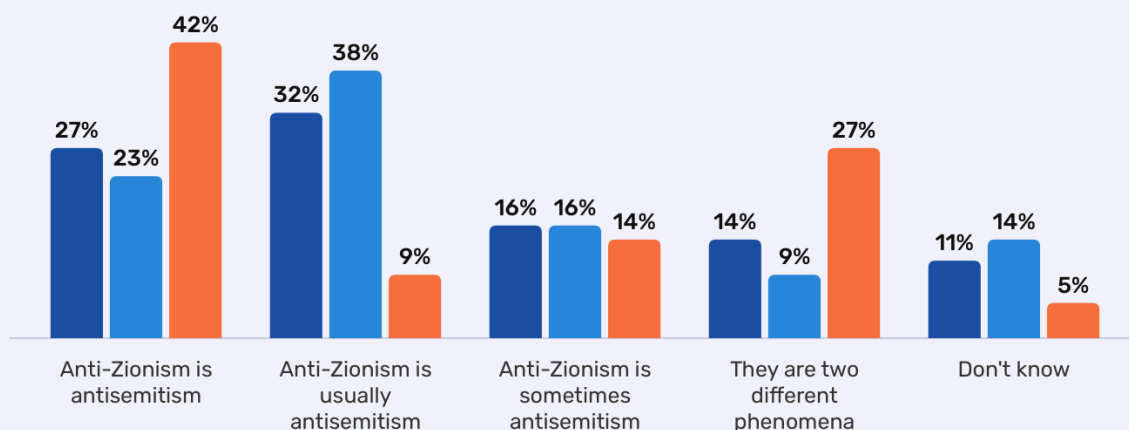
Data from May 2024

Israeli Jews tend to use a broad definition of antisemitism, regarding both policy measures against Israel and anti-Zionist positions as potential manifestations. Fifty years after the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism, most Israelis reject a separation between anti-Zionism and antisemitism. Twenty-seven percent say anti-Zionism is antisemitism; 32% say it is usually antisemitism; and 16% say it is sometimes antisemitism. Only 14% say they are distinct phenomena.

Is anti-Zionism antisemitism?

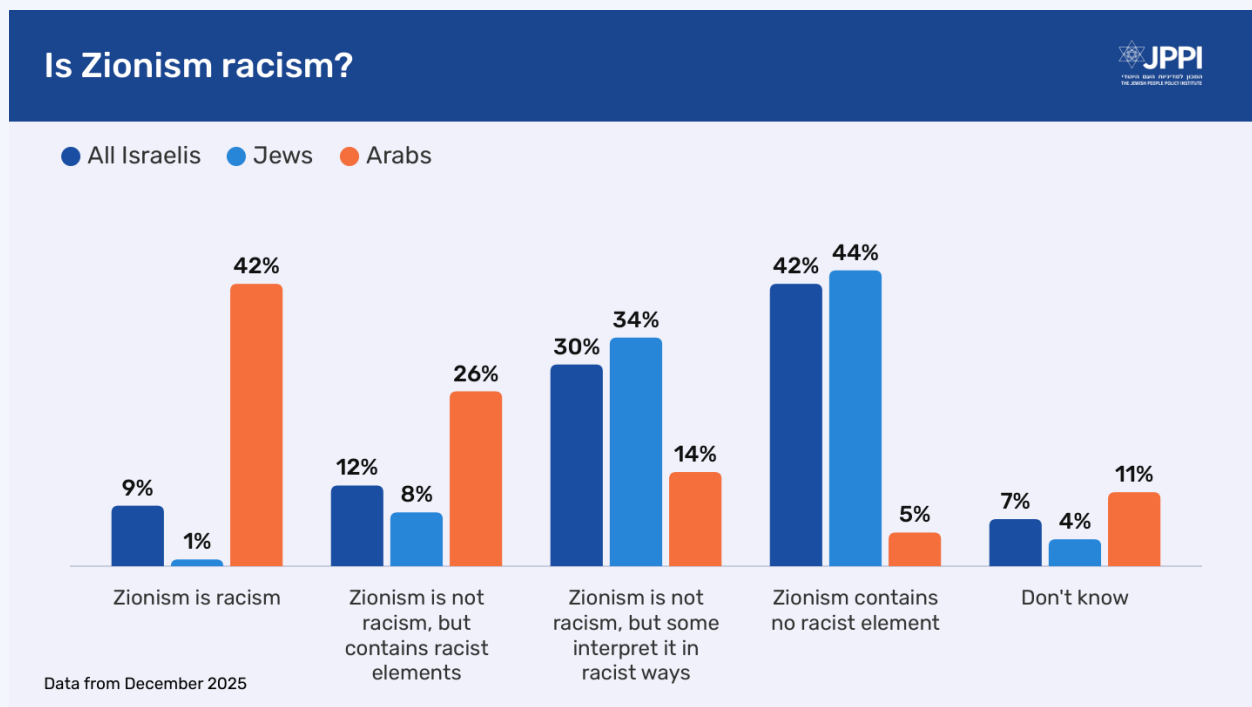


● All Israelis ● Jews ● Arabs



Data from December 2025

A large majority also say Zionism itself contains no racist element, although many distinguish between Zionism and racist interpretations of it. Among all Israelis, 42% say Zionism contains no racism, 30% say it is not racist but is interpreted in racist ways by some, 12% say it is not racism but contains racist elements, and 9% say Zionism is racism.



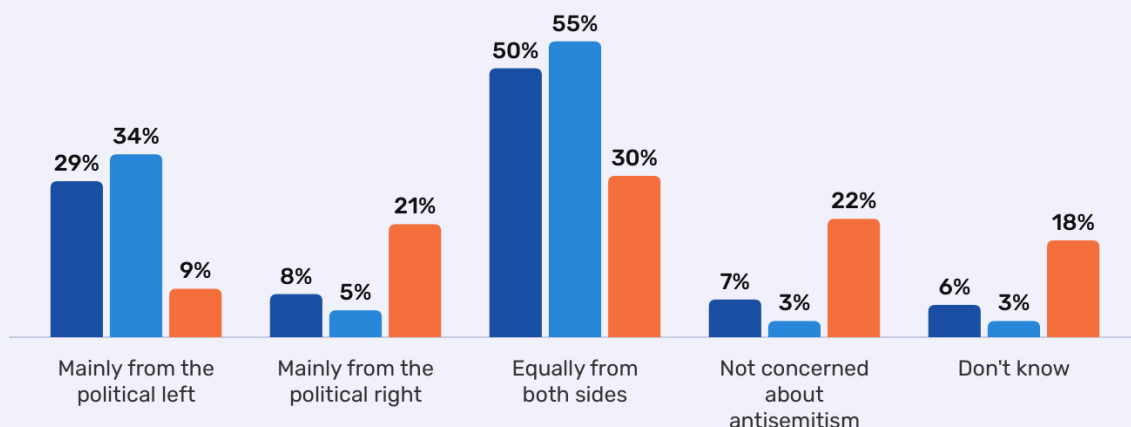
One of the clearest changes this year was the rapid spread of antisemitic discourse in parts of the American right and in circles associated with the Republican Party. In previous years, Israeli concern focused primarily on radical-left groups involved in anti-Israel protests. Over the past year, disturbing statements also came from right-wing figures, including some close to the Trump administration.

American Jews have increasingly recognized antisemitism as a pincer movement from both left and right. Israelis, who long tended to identify the threat almost exclusively with the anti-Israel left and to regard the nationalist right as friendly, began a parallel reassessment. In December 2025, half of Israelis said they were equally concerned about antisemitism from both sides, one-third remained mainly concerned about the left, and about one-tenth mainly about the right.

Primary concern about antisemitism in the United States



● All Israelis ● Jews ● Arabs



Data from December 2025

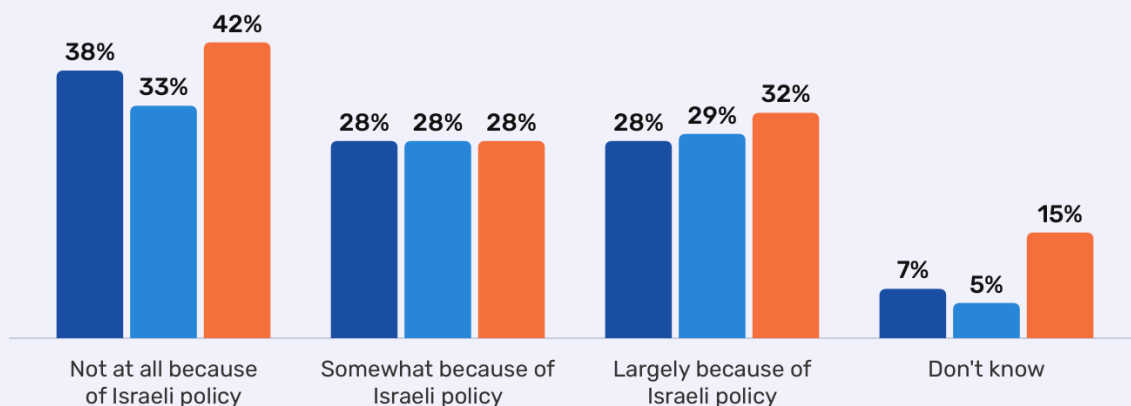
Most Israelis recognize a causal connection between Israeli actions and increases in antisemitic incidents, consistent with evidence that incidents rise sharply during Middle East escalation. In 2023, monthly U.S. incidents rose from the hundreds before October to more than 1,500 per month after the war began. Diaspora Jews are often held responsible for Israeli policy, leading to attacks on community institutions and individuals.

Thirty-eight percent of all Israelis say the rise in antisemitism is not caused by Israeli policy, 28% say it is caused to some extent, and 28% to a great extent. Right-wing, religious, and Haredi groups are more likely to reject the connection; secular and traditional groups more often recognize it.

Is rising antisemitism connected to Israeli policy?



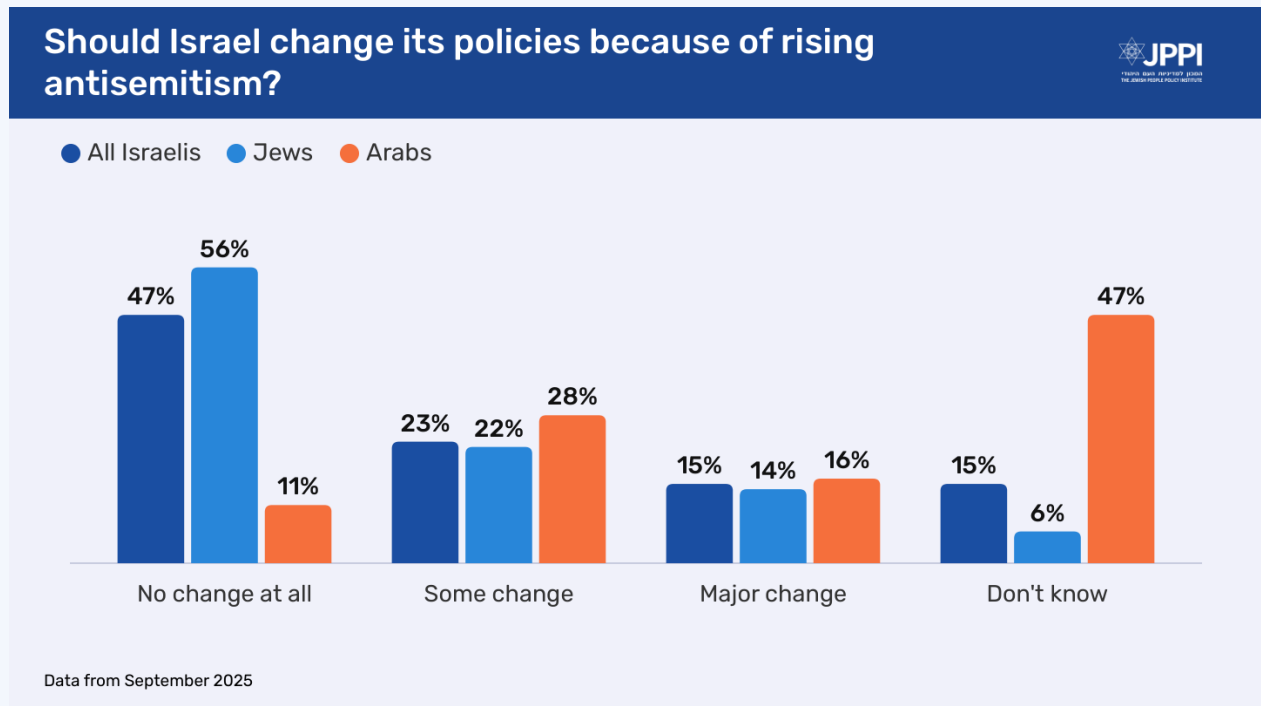
● All Israelis ● Jews ● Arabs



Data from September 2025

What Should Israel Do?

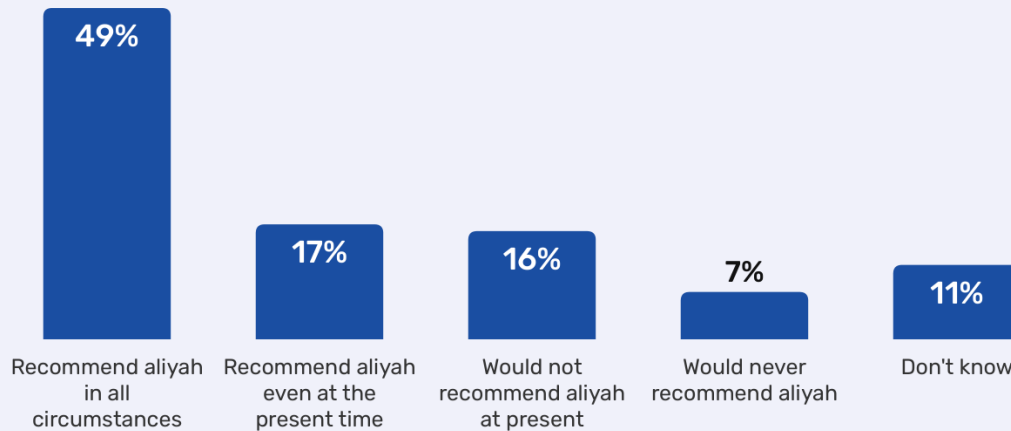
Recognizing a causal link does not mean blaming Israel. Most Israelis believe that generally justified Israeli actions may trigger antisemitism because of wrongful reactions by anti-Israel or antisemitic actors. Nearly half say Israel should not change its policy at all because of rising antisemitism. Twenty-three percent favor some change and 15% major change. Majorities on the right and center-right oppose policy change; majorities in the center and left support at least some change. This overlaps strongly with their general policy preferences, so antisemitism may not be the decisive reason.



When Israelis consider solutions, their principal answer is Israel's standing invitation to Jews worldwide to immigrate. Israeli Jews are pessimistic about the future of Diaspora Jewry and therefore regard Israel – even during war – as the most appropriate and often safest home.

In May 2024, 49% of Israeli Jews said they would recommend aliyah in any circumstances and another 17% would recommend it even at that time during the war. Sixteen percent would not recommend it at that moment, 7% would never recommend it, and 11% did not know. The share recommending aliyah under all circumstances rises from 25% on the left to 71% on the right, and from 38% among secular Jews to 73% among religious Jews.

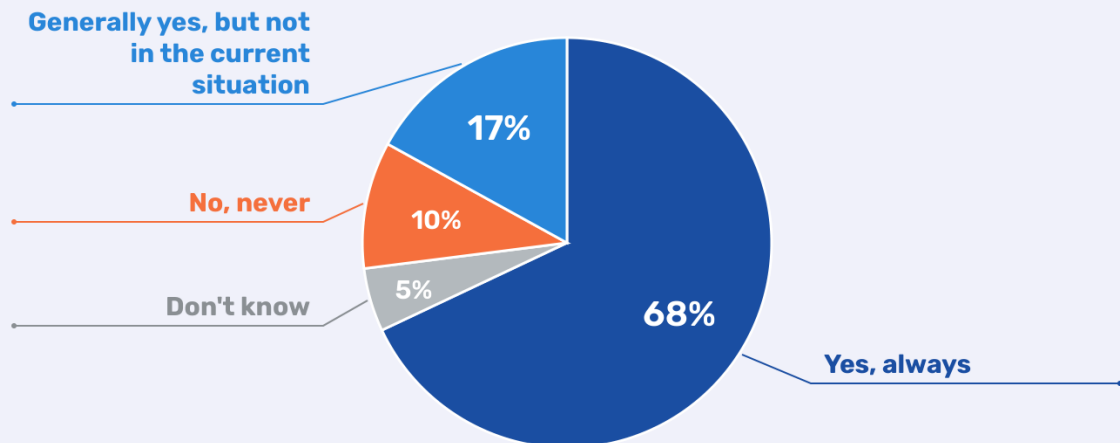
Current view on recommending aliyah (Jews)



Data from May 2024

Seventy percent of Israeli Jews believe the state should actively encourage aliyah at all times; 17% say it generally should, but not during the situation prevailing when the question was asked; 10% say it should never do so. Support for always encouraging aliyah rises from 40% on the left to 87% on the right.

Should Israel actively encourage aliyah? (Jews)



Data from May 2024

Support is more mixed when the question shifts from aliyah to assistance for communities abroad. Forty-four percent say Israel should subsidize university education for non-Israeli Diaspora Jews who study in Israel without immigrating; 42% say this is not Israel's responsibility. By contrast, 59% say Israel should invest in strengthening Jewish identity in the Diaspora, while 31% oppose and 10% do not know.

A small majority also supports Israeli investment in a project enabling every U.S. Jew to attend a Jewish school, even though such a project would cost hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Fifty-one percent

support the idea, 31% oppose, and 18% do not know. It receives majority support in every Jewish religiosity group except the secular group, where support and opposition are both 41%.

EXPERT RESPONSE

Dov Maimon**An Ancient Hatred as an Instrument of Political Power**

Anyone who reads the newspapers knows the numbers. More than 9,300 antisemitic incidents were recorded in the United States in 2024. This represents a 900% increase over ten years. Eighty percent of Germany's Jews avoid openly displaying their Jewishness in public. More than half of French Jews are considering leaving. When the same patterns recur in different countries and on different continents, it is difficult to speak of a momentary reaction to a political crisis; this is a structural change in the environment in which Jews around the world live.

But the numbers reflect only part of the story. Behind them lies a phenomenon that is harder to measure: quiet capitulation. Forty-five percent of the Jews surveyed in JPPI's Voice of the Jewish People survey said they no longer wear a visible Jewish symbol in public, compared with 37% the previous year. One person after another decides to become less visible – not after absorbing the blow, but before it, in order to prevent it.

What distinguishes antisemitism in this period is not only the force of the wave but also who stands behind it. Not everyone who spreads hatred against Jews has the same motive. Russia and China are not traditionally antisemitic. They are states that have decided, through an entirely cold calculation, that antisemitism works: it mobilizes, polarizes, and weakens societies.

According to this conception, the Jew is the ultimate white person, the capitalist, the colonialist, the most convenient symbol of everything that must be brought down. Russia disseminates narratives of “global elites” in which Jews play the familiar role. China amplifies anti-Israel discourse as part of its strategic competition with the United States. Qatar does so through media platforms and academic influence.

More than hatred, this is policy. Moscow and Beijing have understood very well that the use of anti-Jewish imagery helps undermine liberal democracies from within, tear societies apart, and mobilize sympathy among countries of the “Global South.” Jews are the convenient victims of this game.

This policy ultimately encounters the individual: the student who hesitates before entering class with a Star of David around his neck, and his counterpart who discovers that his campus friends have stopped asking how he is and are waiting to hear whether his denunciation of Israel is sufficiently deep. Slogans that a few years ago would have disqualified their speakers from polite society have now been normalized in lectures and demonstrations.

In many academic spaces, an equation has taken hold whose internal logic is horrifying: Jew = Zionist = oppressor = genocidaire = enemy of humanity = target. Each link leads to the next, until the endpoint appears almost inevitable. This is not logic; it is a chain of incitement wearing the costume of morality.

Israelis who travel abroad are part of the picture as well. They are forced to lower their voices in hotel lobbies, and Hebrew is heard less on the streets. Sometimes they conceal their passports. Not out of concrete fear, but out of exhaustion. Eighty-seven percent of Israelis are troubled by rising antisemitism in the United States, and nearly a quarter have reduced their travel abroad. And yet, in 2025 there were 9.42 million departures of Israelis abroad – the second-highest total of the past decade. There is something familiar in this: refusing to surrender, even when there is good reason to do so.

Here lies a truth that is not always comfortable to admit: Israelis and Diaspora Jews are in the same boat – not as a metaphor, but as a fact. Diaspora Jews are attacked as representatives of Israel whether or not they identify with its policies, and Israelis discover that their presence abroad has become a matter requiring judgment. This shared fate exceeds Zionist rhetoric. It is the reality of 2026.

In Europe, what begins as caution becomes a way of life. In France, 61%; in Britain, 69%; and in Germany, 80% conceal their identity in the street. Sixty-eight percent of French Jews reported a direct, face-to-face antisemitic remark in the past year alone. Fifty-two percent considered immigrating to Israel, as did 48% in Britain and 44% in Germany – not out of Zionism, but out of exhaustion. If this trend continues, the coming years will bring a wave of immigration from Western Europe unlike anything we have seen. And the phenomenon is no longer only European: a rise in antisemitism has been documented in Australia, Canada, and Argentina. What once looked like local crises is now a single global dynamic.

Alongside overt violence, a quieter violence, no less effective, is also at work: boycott. Israeli universities – research centers that have contributed to humanity far beyond their size – have become a target. Since October 2023, there have been 66% more incidents of academic boycott, a decline of one-fifth in international collaborations, and a 50% decrease in foreign students in certain frameworks. The purpose of the boycott is not only to harm, but to isolate, silence, and create the feeling that Jews and Israelis have no place in broader human discourse.

And Iran? Iran is a story in itself. Russia and China use hatred as a tool. Iran also believes in it. It produces antisemitism, institutionalizes it, and exports it far beyond the Middle East. Iran is an ideological center for the dissemination of modern antisemitism, a source of inspiration for anti-Israel networks around the world. The combination of belief and interest is what makes it the most dangerous of all.

Contemporary antisemitism is a phenomenon that knows how to assume many faces, sometimes contradictory ones: nationalist conspiracies on the far right, decolonial rhetoric on the radical left, and an instrument of rival powers. It can exist in different ideological camps and adapt itself to different political languages – thereby becoming impossible to label and difficult to combat. Until a few years ago, the central concern in Jewish communities around the world was the far right, from which the most severe attacks came. Today it is clear that antisemitism operates as a pincer movement – from both sides simultaneously. The election of the new mayor of New York, who spoke harshly against Israel and Zionism and nevertheless was elected in the city with the largest Jewish population in the world, signals something disturbing: moderated antisemitic positions are no longer necessarily a political barrier. Half of Israelis said in the December 2025 survey that they are concerned about antisemitism from both sides of the political map. This is a late awakening, but a necessary one.

The waves of antisemitism in the past did not last forever. They rose, dominated – and sometimes collapsed quickly. Today's economy of hatred rests on identifiable engines, Iran foremost among them – not only as a source of funding, but as a center that grants legitimacy to the narrative of annihilation around the world. If the Iranian regime falls, entire infrastructures of incitement will disappear with it, and not only the money: the legitimacy, the networks, the narrative that a sovereign state projects outward. Not immediately, and not completely; the roots of hatred are too deep to be torn out all at once. But it is possible that the intensity of the surge in hatred in recent years is linked, in no small part, to the existence of that center. Its removal would change the equation. Jewish history, more than any other history, knows how to surprise for the better.

Dr. Dov Maimon is a senior fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute.

EXPERT RESPONSE

Tamar Ish-Shalom**The Family in Crisis: Our Turn to Show Up**

Moments of deep crisis can expose cracks in the foundations and weaken relations among communities, but sometimes such moments can also reveal deep bonds lying on the ocean floor of relations – strong and enduring undercurrents that are often forgotten in ordinary times.

October 7 was a turning point in relations between Israeli and Diaspora Jews. Over the past two years, there has been extensive discussion of “October 8 Jews” – American Jews who rediscovered their connection to Israel and to their Jewish identity – and, on the other hand, discussion of data showing that the younger Jewish generation has become even more critical of Israel.

Most of the time, we do not address the other side of the equation: our relationship, as Israelis, to Diaspora Jewry. This reflects a certain one-sidedness in the relationship that has accompanied us for many decades, perhaps since the establishment of the state.

If we are honest with ourselves, Diaspora Jewry has taken a far greater interest in our welfare – the siblings in the Middle East, in the Holy Land – than we as a society have taken in theirs. Israel has been a stronger component of their Jewish identity than they have been of ours. There was, of course, appreciation for their donations and their public and political support for us, but the relationship was one-sided in that respect as well: focused mainly on the question of what they could do for us and on our behalf. This is undoubtedly related to the significant security challenges that have accompanied Israel from decade to decade, but perhaps, just perhaps, it is also related to an excessive Israeli tendency toward self-absorption.

Over the past two and a half years, this equation has changed and become more balanced. Israelis are contending with a difficult and exhausting physical war – rockets landing from Gaza, Lebanon, Iran, and Yemen – while Jews in the Diaspora are contending with a different kind of challenge that erupted in the wake of the war in Israel: rising antisemitism, at an intensity that few of us believed we would see in our lifetimes. The war in Gaza has ended, but antisemitism is still here and only intensifying.

Sixty percent of Israelis believe that the rise in antisemitism is, to some or to a large extent, due to Israel's policies. This does not necessarily express blame, but rather recognition of a causal connection. Israelis today are far more aware than in the past that everything that happens in Israel – a state located thousands of kilometers from Jews in the Diaspora – affects them and their lives profoundly.

The survey data also illustrate how protests against Israel on campuses and in city centers, and the antisemitism with which Diaspora Jews are coping, have led Israelis to feel growing identification with their brothers and sisters outside Israel.

For many months, this trend moved and troubled me at the same time. Are tragedies once again the only things that connect us? Will the existential glue of Jewish identity forever be the hostility of the outside

world? A conversation during the war with Dr. Michal Biton, a scholar and community leader in New York, offered me an encouraging direction. In essence, she asks why everyone is so troubled by the fact that tragedies and periods of difficult struggle connect us as Jews. If each of us looks at our own family history, we will find that moments of crisis and difficulty – sometimes even great tragedies – are what, in retrospect, built our nuclear family, strengthened it, and created a shared story of coping and construction. What is true of our private family story is also true of our broader family story – that of the Jewish people.

This is a comforting statement, but it also contains a heavy responsibility placed on our Israeli shoulders. The question is how we will emerge from this period and how strong the relationship with Diaspora Jewry that we succeed in cultivating will be. The passage of the Kotel Law in a preliminary reading, to take a recent example, is a slap in the face to those who stood by us and a troubling step in the opposite direction. By contrast, President Herzog's visit to Australia after the Bondi Beach attack was a moment of deep connection that was highly meaningful for the Australian Jewish community.

Diaspora Jews stood alongside Israel after October 7 with extraordinary intensity, not only through unprecedented fundraising but also through public and political support and countless delegations of public leaders and private individuals who wanted to be with us in our difficult hour. Under a barrage of rockets, they did not hesitate to volunteer, assist, and feel part of us – doctors who came to hospitals to help, and ordinary Jews who went south to stand and grill hamburgers for soldiers in the Gaza envelope or weed agricultural fields.

When one-third of Israelis see demonstrations against Israel around the world, they do not understand why Diaspora Jews do not immigrate to Israel; and when they assess the situation in Israel and abroad, 67% would recommend aliyah to Diaspora Jews. This is probably a natural Israeli response from a public that, even under a long war, sees the Jewish state as the safest place for Jews, even though the empirical data are of course the opposite: the most dangerous place for Jews in the world over the past two and a half years has been Israel, where the likelihood of being killed or wounded is the highest. But in the eyes of most Israelis there is a significant difference between the two possibilities: in Israel, the fear is that a missile might hit you, but no one is afraid to wear a necklace with a Star of David pendant; there is no fear of identifying as Jewish. The consciousness of the majority in Israel – as opposed to the consciousness of the minority in the Diaspora – creates a sense of security that is hard to rival, even if it does not accord with reality.

Soberly viewed, it is clear that most of the world's Jews will remain in the countries in which they were born and raised and will not move to Israel. It is also worth noting that Jewish existence around the world is of enormous importance to the future of Judaism and the future of Israel, and that it is important to preserve both centers. We must therefore ask ourselves what responsibility we bear at this moment toward our siblings across the sea, in the face of the wave of antisemitism closing in on Jews in a pincer movement from the right and the left, and undergoing accelerated normalization not only on the political margins. This is the hour in which we, as Israelis, bear responsibility to stand alongside our brothers and sisters in the Diaspora and to clarify what we can do to help them – as individuals, as a public, and as a state. The Jewish uncle from America may be wealthy, but he has never needed us more than he does at this very moment.

Tamar Ish-Shalom is a senior fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI).

PART 3

Appendices

Methodology, detailed agreement data, ideological camps, and survey sources

Appendix A: The Meaning of the Indices and How They Are Calculated

The three indices in the Annual Israeli Society Report – the Consensus Index, Proximity Index, and Hope Index – are each calculated as an average of several survey measures, using somewhat different methods. The resulting scores provide a reasonable summary of Israel's condition in the dimension concerned, but their principal value is the ability to track change over months and years. A single year's number is close to arbitrary; a number compared with previous months or years becomes a useful indicator of direction and trend.

All three indices begin with a debatable normative assumption: that it is better for Israel to be more optimistic than pessimistic, more cohesive than polarized, and more consensual than divided. This does not deny the importance of debate, disagreement, the inevitable differences in closeness among groups, or natural differences in outlook. It establishes a general ideal of consensus, cohesion, and hope. Accordingly, a higher score is interpreted as an improvement relative to a lower one.

The Consensus Index

The Consensus Index is based on four questions concerning four core issues in Israeli society: democracy, the Jewish character of the state, equal rights, and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

Democracy

When you think of Israel as a “democratic state,” which of the following is principally important to you?

- A state with free elections, the right to vote, and majority rule
- A state with values of tolerance and protection of human rights
- Both
- Don't know

The Jewish character of the state

Israel is defined in the Declaration of Independence as a Jewish state. In your view, is Israel today...

- Not Jewish enough
- Jewish to about the right extent
- Too Jewish
- Don't know

Equality of rights

The Declaration of Independence states: “The State of Israel will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, or sex.” To what extent do you agree?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Policy toward the Palestinians

You will be shown three statements representing different worldviews. Please mark the statement closest to your view, even if it does not fully reflect it.

- Israel should strengthen its control over the Palestinians, expand the settlements, consider dismantling the Palestinian Authority, and perhaps annex Judea and Samaria.
- Israel should pursue full separation from the Palestinians, dismantle settlements outside the large blocs, and focus on preserving the IDF's freedom of action to prevent terrorist organizations from growing in the territories.
- Israel should try to reach a peace agreement with moderate Palestinians and allow the establishment of a Palestinian state living in peace alongside Israel.
- Don't know

After responses are collected and weighted to represent the Israeli public, each respondent's answer pattern is compared with every other respondent's. If Ariel and Adva give the same answers on two of the four questions but different answers on the other two, their pairwise agreement score is 5 out of 10. A pair agreeing on none receives 0; one question, 2.5; two questions, 5; three questions, 7.5; and all four, 10.

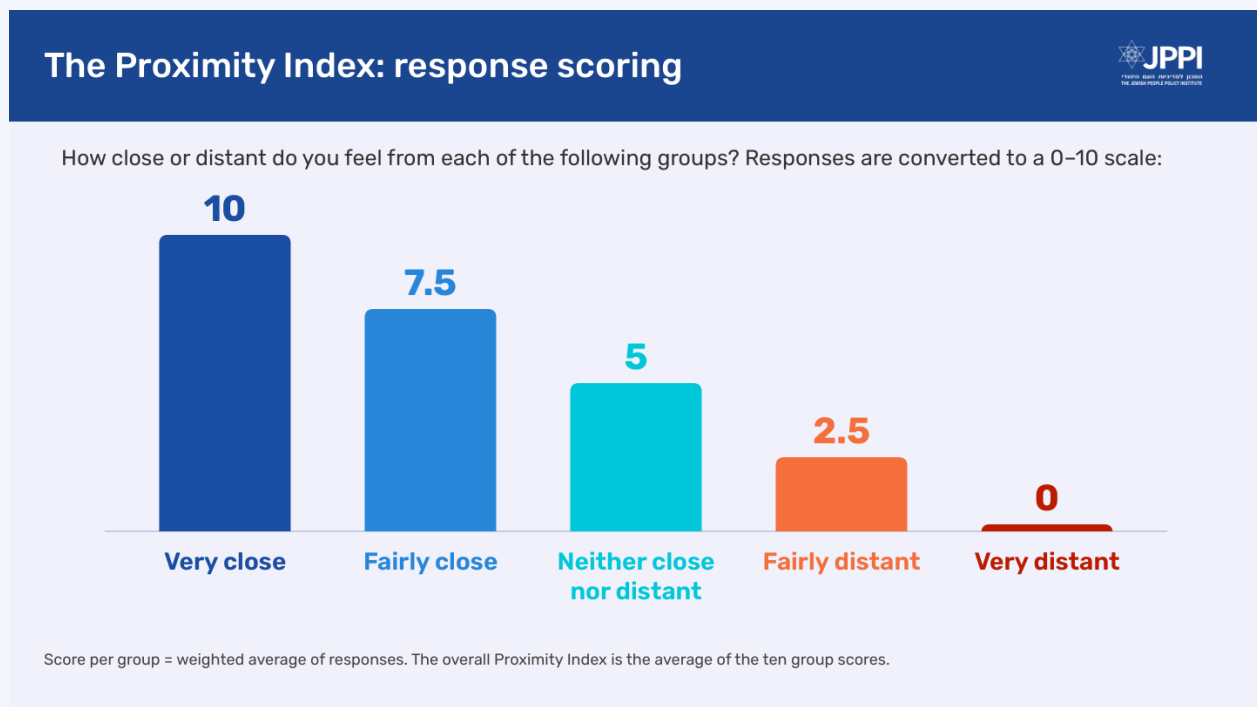
The calculation method, designed by Prof. David Steinberg, compares every respondent with every other respondent and averages all pairwise scores, with weighting by voting behavior and religiosity to ensure that each group receives its proper population weight.

A rise from 3.0 to 3.5 means that, on average, more Israelis agree with more fellow Israelis on the four foundational questions. It does **not** indicate that the substantive opinions have improved or worsened. The index does not decide whether Israel should become more or less Jewish, or which Palestinian policy is preferable. Full agreement on any one answer produces the same consensus score as full agreement on another. The index measures agreement, not the merits of the position agreed upon.

The Proximity Index

The Proximity Index is based on a single repeated question: **How close or distant do you feel from each of the following groups?**

Responses are converted to a 0–10 scale:



The choice of the ten groups matters. Including a generally well-regarded group such as the Druze raises the overall average; including a group that receives low proximity ratings, such as Haredim, lowers it. The report therefore examines both the overall score and the separate score for each group.

For example, suppose 30% say they are very close to the Druze, 30% fairly close, 10% neither close nor distant, 20% fairly distant, and 10% very distant. The weighted components would be 3.0, 2.25, 0.5, 0.5, and 0, yielding a Druze proximity score of 6.25. The overall Proximity Index is the average of the ten group scores.

The Hope Index

The Hope Index is based on four questions:

1. Overall, are you more optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the State of Israel?

- Very optimistic; somewhat optimistic; neither; somewhat pessimistic; very pessimistic

2. Thinking about your close circle of family and friends, how many of them and their children will remain in Israel?

- Almost all; most; some will and some will not; most will not; almost none

3. Thinking about your children and grandchildren, is Israel a place where it will be worthwhile for them to live?

- Definitely yes; think yes; maybe yes and maybe no; think not; definitely not

4. Thinking about long-term economic investment, is Israel a worthwhile place in which to invest?

- Very worthwhile; somewhat worthwhile; both worthwhile and not; somewhat not worthwhile; not worthwhile at all

Each question's five ordered responses are scored 10, 7.5, 5, 2.5, or 0. For example, on the optimism question, if 30% are very optimistic, 45% somewhat optimistic, 10% neutral, 10% somewhat pessimistic, and 5% very pessimistic, the weighted score is 7.125. The four question scores are averaged to produce the overall Hope Index.

A high average may result either from broad moderate optimism or from a polarized distribution in which one group is extremely optimistic and another extremely pessimistic. The report therefore considers both the average and the distribution of responses among groups. As a general interpretive principle, broad-based optimism is preferable to an equally high score produced by sharp polarization.

Comparison with Previous Years

The 2026 data were collected using the methods described above and can be reported with the ordinary caveats attached to survey research. The comparison figures for earlier years are less exact because earlier surveys used different wording and methods. They are included to provide a rough baseline during the first year of the new calculation system.

For the Consensus Index, all four questions had appeared in similar or identical form in earlier JPPI surveys, though not in the same questionnaire. Previous response distributions were mapped schematically onto the detailed 2026 results.

For the Proximity Index, the 2025 estimate was derived from a February 2025 question asking respondents to select their principal feeling toward each group: closeness, partnership, appreciation, indifference, fear, anger, or hatred. For comparison, closeness was mapped to "very close"; partnership and appreciation to "fairly close"; indifference to "neither"; fear to "fairly distant"; and anger and hatred to "very distant." This is necessarily an imprecise comparison. Future years will use identical wording.

For the Hope Index, the previous estimate relied on only two questions rather than four: optimism about the country's future, asked in identical form, and a differently worded question about where children and grandchildren should live. The latter was recoded into positive, negative, and uncertain categories. The resulting figure is only a rough comparison.

Appendix B: Agreement Rates on Different Questions among Different Groups

The following table presents the calculated agreement rate within groups for the four questions composing the Consensus Index.

Group	Palestinian policy	Meaning of democracy	Equality of rights	Jewish character of Israel
All Israelis	31%	44%	42%	31%
Jews	36%	50%	48%	33%
Arabs	48%	30%	25%	34%
Jewish ideology				
Right	76%	51%	36%	47%
Center-right	38%	52%	54%	39%
Center	41%	71%	76%	38%
Center-left	48%	83%	93%	48%
Left	57%	91%	100%	83%
Jewish religiosity				
Secular	33%	62%	73%	39%
Traditionalist (Masorti), nonreligious	40%	48%	44%	39%
Traditionalist (Masorti), religious	39%	46%	55%	39%
Religious (Dati)	71%	51%	33%	52%
Ultra-Orthodox (Haredi)	70%	41%	22%	83%
Arab religion				
Muslim	57%	29%	23%	34%
Christian	34%	27%	48%	37%
Druze	24%	36%	53%	32%

Change in agreement rates over time

Group	Palestinian policy 2024	Palestinian policy 2026	Democracy 2023	Democracy 2026	Equality 2023	Equality 2026	Jewish character 2021	Jewish character 2026
All Israelis	29%	31%	—	44%	—	42%	—	31%
Jews	32%	36%	62%	50%	52%	48%	34%	33%
Arabs	46%	48%	—	30%	—	25%	—	34%
Right	61%	76%	48%	51%	32%	36%	55%	47%
Center-right	36%	38%	66%	52%	49%	54%	38%	39%
Center	47%	41%	78%	71%	68%	76%	38%	38%
Center-left	47%	48%	86%	83%	87%	93%	39%	48%
Left	49%	57%	91%	91%	92%	100%	48%	83%
Secular	37%	33%	78%	62%	70%	73%	40%	39%
Traditionalist (Masorti), nonreligious	31%	40%	58%	48%	51%	44%	37%	39%
Traditionalist (Masorti), religious	35%	39%	68%	46%	50%	55%	—	39%
Religious (Dati)	55%	71%	49%	51%	34%	33%	65%	52%
Ultra-Orthodox (Haredi)	53%	70%	46%	41%	30%	22%	92%	83%
Muslim	52%	57%	—	29%	—	23%	—	34%
Christian	26%	34%	—	27%	—	48%	—	37%
Druze	27%	24%	—	36%	—	53%	—	32%

Appendix C: Ideological Camps in Israel

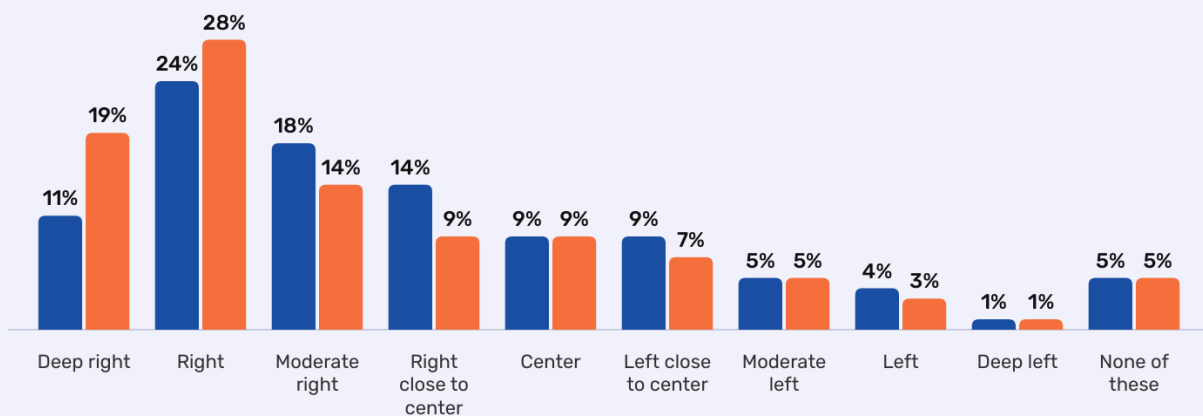
In JPPI surveys, Jewish respondents identify with one of five ideological groups: right, center-right, center, center-left, or left. The size of these groups fluctuates modestly but is generally stable. A more detailed nine-category scale is sometimes used to detect subtler movement.

Respondents' retrospective reports indicate a clear shift to the right since the start of the war, while the Arab public remained stable. Among Jews, the share identifying with the "deep right" rose from 11% before the war to 19% after it, and the share identifying simply as "right" rose from 24% to 28%. The "moderate right" declined from 18% to 14%, and "right close to the center" from 14% to 9%. The center and left also declined slightly. Very small groups, such as the "deep left," are too small for statistically meaningful interpretation.

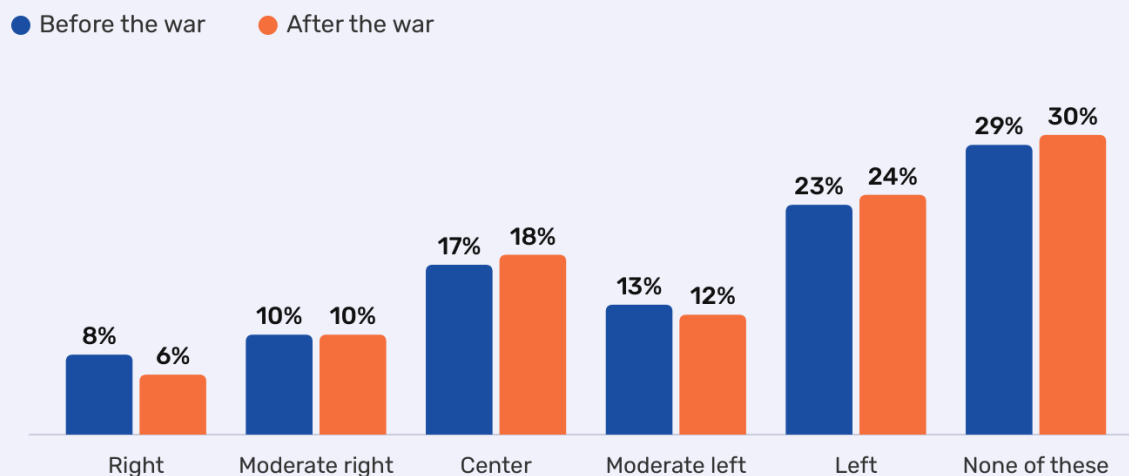
Retrospective ideological self-definition before and after the war (Jews)



● Before the war ● After the war



Retrospective ideological self-definition before and after the war (Arabs)



Position on nine-point scale.

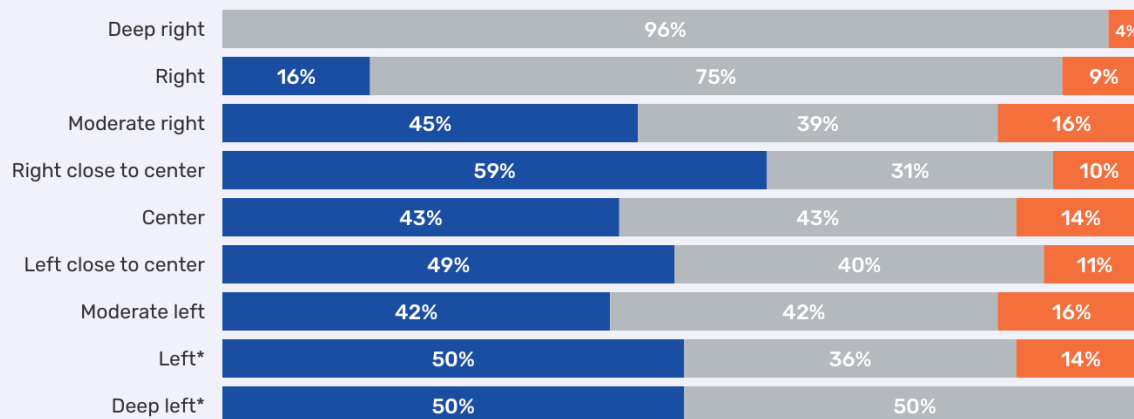
The rightward shift is also visible among Jews under age 25 in almost every former identity group. Forty-five percent of those who say they were formerly moderate right report moving further right, as do 59% of those formerly right close to center. Forty-three percent of former centrists and 49% of those formerly on the left close to center report a rightward shift. Even among the small left and deep-left groups, about half report moving right.

Political movement among Jews under age 25



● More right today ● Same position ● More left today

Self-definition before the war



*Small number of respondents.

Appendix D: Surveys Used in Preparing the Report

Unless otherwise noted, Jewish respondents were surveyed online through JPPI's *The Index* panel. Arab respondents were surveyed by Afkar, approximately half online and half by telephone/digital interviewing. Haredi surveys were conducted by Askaria.

Survey	Total respondents	Composition
January 2024 Israeli Society Index	900	700 Jews; 200 Arabs
February 2024	800	600 Jews; 200 Arabs
March 2024	800	600 Jews; 200 Arabs
April 2024	613	Arabs only
May 2024	847	643 Jews; 204 Arabs
June 2024	803	601 Jews; 202 Arabs
July 2024	816	616 Jews; 200 Arabs
August 2024	1,345	Jews only; roughly half through The Index and half through the Midgam Project panel
September 2024	950	747 Jews; 203 Arabs
October 2024	812	612 Jews; 200 Arabs
November 2024	886	686 Jews; 200 Arabs
December 2024 Haredi survey	501	Haredim, Askaria online panel
January 2025	833	633 Jews; 200 Arabs
February 2025	846	646 Jews; 200 Arabs
March 2025	735	535 Jews; 200 Arabs
April 2025	1,217	1,017 Jews; 200 Arabs
April 2025 Constitution / Thin Constitution survey	919	510 Jews; 200 Haredim; 209 Arabs
May 2025	722	522 Jews; 200 Arabs
June 2025	746	546 Jews; 200 Arabs
July 2025	833	633 Jews; 200 Arabs
August 2025	791	591 Jews; 200 Arabs
September 2025	782	580 Jews; 202 Arabs
October 2025	774	568 Jews; 206 Arabs

Survey	Total respondents	Composition
October 2025 Rabin assassination 30th-anniversary survey	748	548 Jews; 200 Arabs
November 2025	1,257	552 Jews; 500 non-Haredi Jews aged 18–25; 205 Arabs
December 2025	834	634 Jews; 200 Arabs
January 2026	766	566 Jews; 200 Arabs
February 2026	795	588 Jews; 207 Arabs
March 2026	892	591 Jews; 100 Haredim; 201 Arabs
April 2026	743	541 Jews; 202 Arabs
May 2026	749	547 Jews; 202 Arabs