

Mitvim Experts' Responses

to the Findings of
the Annual Foreign Policy
Index - 2026



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June 2026

"When day comes we step out of the shade,
afame and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it."

(Amanda Gorman)

The 14th annual public opinion survey of the Mitvim Institute on Israel's foreign policy was conducted in early June 2026. The survey was carried out by the Rafi Smith Institute, in collaboration with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation^{1*}

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Overview of Israel's Foreign Relations



Dr. Nimrod Goren,
President and Founder of the
Mitvim Institute, and Executive
Board Member at Diplomeds:

The Mitvim Institute's annual Foreign Policy Index for 2026 was conducted at the start of a decisive election campaign. As such, it offers the various candidates and parties a glimpse into public sentiment on diplomatic affairs, and its findings can assist in shaping platforms, campaigns, and messaging. The public opinion data indicate that the Israeli public is returning to a relative comfort zone in the realm of foreign relations after three turbulent and traumatic years. Yet this trend is not as positive as it may sound. It reflects the public's habituation to a problematic situation more than an actual improvement in Israel's foreign relations. While most of the public is concerned about the erosion of Israel's standing in the world, there is insufficient recognition that this erosion is, in fact, worsening. Public satisfaction with Israel's global standing and with the government's performance in foreign policy rose this year. Though it is still at a medium-low level, rankings have returned to approximately those measured before October 7, 2023. Also worrisome is the public preference to continue key policies of the Netanyahu government: annexation over the two-state solution; active warfare against Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas; and preserving military presence inside Syria and Lebanon. This, coupled with the continued negative image of the EU and the decline in the importance attributed to key European countries – Germany, the UK, and France – points to the consolidation of the foreign and security paradigms advanced by the current government. This is

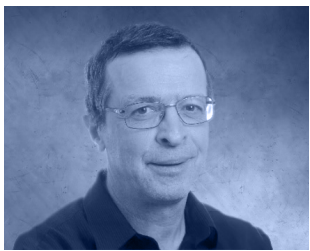
a dangerous trend, as reality provides abundant evidence that Israel's current actions damage national interests. Opposition parties should give priority to challenging public attitudes on foreign policy issues ahead of the upcoming elections, and mobilizing towards alternative approaches. While doing so, they should pay attention to the Mitvim poll's findings regarding Israel's ties with Jordan, Turkey, and the UAE. The Israeli public attaches great importance to improving relations with Jordan, prefers dialogue and coordination with Turkey over viewing it as a hostile state, and attributes growing centrality to the UAE. It was the Lapid-Bennett government of 2021-2022 that improved ties with these three countries. Doing so again, as the public expects, also necessitates a moderate government, which will spell out a pathway for Israeli-Palestinian peace, and which will balance the use of military might with skilled diplomacy and constructive regional engagement.



Amb. (ret.) Daniel Shek,
Mitvim Board Member:

Mitvim's Foreign Policy Index presents an unexplained contradiction between the large share of Israelis who are concerned about Israel's deterioration into the status of a "pariah state" and the significant rise in the overall score for its standing in the world compared with the previous three years. One encouraging finding is that despite the current government's deliberate and planned distancing of Israel from the liberal-democratic camp, and despite placing all its hopes in allies from the populist and illiberal camp, an overwhelming majority of the public (71%) is convinced that this camp is our natural home. It seems that Israelis do not feel comfortable in the company of authoritarian leaders who are aggressive toward democratic values, even if those leaders express positive positions toward Israel and its current government. The most troubling finding is actually hidden in the responses to one

of the final questions in the survey, regarding the strategic objective that should guide Israel on the Palestinian issue. It is bad enough that among Jewish respondents a much larger number – one and a half times more – prefer annexation and the application of sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza to the two-state solution. But no fewer than 26% of all respondents have no opinion on the issue. In other words, the issue of the territories – the issue that has shaped Israeli reality in almost every sphere for nearly 60 years – leaves one-quarter of the Israeli public indifferent. This can be seen as a major achievement for the annexationist-settler camp: not only do 46% of respondents with an opinion identify with its strategic objective, but it has also succeeded in normalizing the existing situation in the eyes of one-quarter of the public to such an extent that they do not feel the need to take seriously the question of how to exit the thicket of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



Prof. Arie M. Kacowicz, Policy and Research Fellow:

On the one hand, most of the public is troubled and concerned by Israel's standing in the world and is dissatisfied with its foreign policy. Most of the public – more than 70% – also agrees on the importance of the State of Israel remaining and belonging to the liberal-democratic camp in the Western world, and on the importance of restoring relations with Jordan. On the other hand, the public is divided regarding President Trump's contribution to advancing Israel's long-term national interests, and there is also no consensus regarding the implications of the war in Gaza for the future of relations with Arab states. While among the Jewish sector there is a widespread view that the war with Iran increased the desire for normalization with Israel among the Arab countries, most respondents also oppose normalization with Saudi Arabia if it is linked to a regional arrangement that would lead to the establishment of a

demilitarized Palestinian State alongside Israel. Two and a half years of war since October 7, 2023 have produced a trend of radicalization and hawkishness in the attitudes of the Jewish public in Israel as a result of a national trauma: a majority – though not a large one – supports a return to war with Iran until the regime is toppled; support for the security zone in southern Lebanon; defeating Hamas by military means; and even annexing the Palestinian territories and extending Israeli sovereignty in the West Bank (40%, compared with 27% who still believe in the two-state solution). The operational conclusion is that a thorough and in-depth work is needed to depict the facts and develop rational and convincing arguments that argue that the only possible way to improve Israel's standing in the world and its foreign policy is to adopt a different strategy, one that combines security and required military actions with the pursuit of political-diplomatic agreements, in contrast to the catastrophic failure of the current Israeli government.



Dr. Gabi Mitchell, Policy and Research Fellow:

As in past iterations of Mitvim's Foreign Policy Index, Israeli public opinion on foreign affairs is predictably organized by religious self identification and voting intention. Satisfaction with the government's execution of Israeli foreign policy ranges higher for Haredi and right-wing voters and lower amongst those aligned with the opposition. Even Trump has become a fault line rather than common ground between Israelis. The image is not that of a society wrestling with a new formula upon which to build consensus, rather there are two publics who appear to no longer share enough common ground to constructively disagree. More troubling than data showing a polarized Israeli electorate, is the fact that Israeli public perception of the country's global standing has actually improved over the past year – the average score rose from 4.39 to

5.18 – even as other markers of international isolation have increased. The EU is viewed as an adversary by 72% of Jewish respondents, a number that cuts across party lines and has barely moved in the last year. **Israelis have adopted a broadly adversarial view of the world while simultaneously feeling better about Israel’s position in it.** What explains that gap is the more compelling question raised by this index. Divided societies often generate political disruption, and there remains a significant audience for something different. The 40% who declined to name a preferred foreign minister aren’t indifferent to foreign policy issues – they are simply unconvinced by the available options. The opposition has articulated the costs of the current course. The real challenge is that a substantial portion of the public doesn’t recognize those costs as real. Offering an alternative theory of Israel’s place in the world may matter less than explaining why the world Israelis think they’re living in is not the one looking back at them.

Electoral Breakdown



Dr. Gil Murciano,
CEO of the Mitvim Institute:

Voters for the opposition’s right-wing and centrist parties are sometimes described as an incoherent collection of voters united only by their aversion to Netanyahu – “Anyone but Netanyahu.” The 2026 Foreign Policy Index shows that this group holds a clear set of positions aimed at reversing the Netanyahu government’s policies and advancing a meaningful political-diplomatic alternative, both on the Palestinian issue and in Israel’s regional relations. The survey presents the core constituency of a potential “change government” – namely supporters of Yashar, Yahad, and, to some extent, Yisrael Beiteinu, as a pragmatic-moderate public with a surprising willingness to compromise. This public broadly supports (about two-thirds of respondents) establishing a demilitarized Palestinian state as part of a regional normalization process that includes removing Hamas from power in Gaza. It also supports Trump’s 20-point plan, Gaza’s reconstruction, cooperation with the Palestinian Authority on ongoing issues, and political alternatives to weaken Hamas. Even on the charged question of the preferred solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we find that a two-state solution within a regional framework is the leading option among Yahad and Yashar voters, supported by half of them, compared with fewer than one-fifth who support annexation of the territories. Eisenkot and Lapid’s sweeping aversion – addressing the Palestinian issue stems at least partly from the assumption that talking about peace will only cause electoral damage and drive voters toward the Netanyahu-Smotrich camp. Yet an analysis of the views held by the core center-right and right-wing electorate within the opposition shows that it is

precisely this public that supports change and diplomatic initiatives, and that has shown a willingness — surprising, some would say — to make far-reaching compromises in pursuit of peace with the Palestinians. These voters' opposition to Netanyahu's "peace through strength" doctrine is not limited to the Palestinian issue. It is also reflected in a clear desire among this group's voters to rebalance Israel's use of military force and diplomatic action. More than two-thirds of the opposition's core center-right voters view diplomatic options — strengthening the Lebanese government and increasing international-regional pressure — as the most effective policy for disarming Hezbollah, compared with fewer than one-quarter who support continued Israeli military pressure as the central strategy. More than half of Yahad and Yashar voters believe, in retrospect, that withdrawing from the Iran nuclear agreement was a mistake, compared with fewer than one-fifth who believe it was the right move. Moreover, voters in this core group assign significantly greater importance to Israel's relations with the Arab World than coalition voters do. More than 60% of this core group supports offering practical compromises on the Palestinian issue, such as dismantling outposts in the West Bank, in order to advance normalization with Saudi Arabia. In all these respects, the opposition's core center-right voters differ sharply and consistently from their counterparts among coalition voters, whose positions on these issues are almost the mirror image. In this way, the 2026 Index sharpens the trend identified in our previous survey eight months ago: it demonstrates a substantive change in the meaning of what we use to refer to as "right wing" in the political-diplomatic reality of Israel in 2026. It highlights the clear difference in views between the "super-Spartans" — supporters of Netanyahu and his policies — and the rest of the public, including those who define themselves as right-wing or center-right. When Democratic voters are added to the picture, the electorate of a potential government of change appears ready for a significant diplomatic move on the Israeli-Palestinian front, whatever the government's eventual composition. It also appears ready for a shift in thinking about the role of diplomacy in Israel's strategic conduct. Together, these voters could provide the next

government with a clear mandate to pursue such a course and become not only a government of electoral change, but also one of meaningful policy change.



Reef Itzhaki, Director of Impact at the Mitvim Institute:

While the coalition parties are working to reduce the political presence of Arab parties, and most Zionist opposition parties show a clear reluctance to join forces with them, the Mitvim Institute's 2026 survey reveals a deep process taking place beneath the public radar: the formation of a consistent diplomatic-regional outlook among Israel's Arab-Palestinian citizens. The foreign policy outlook of Arab society is indeed heavily influenced by its connection to Palestinian identity and regional belonging, but it also includes a broad view of the welfare of all Israeli citizens, based on deep concern over the deterioration of Israel's international standing and an understanding that long-term security will not be achieved by force alone but through a political-diplomatic process. Most respondents with an opinion in Israel are concerned about the possibility that the country will become a "pariah state" in the international arena, but the concern among the Arab public is significantly higher (78%) than among the Jewish public (64%). Despite the consensus regarding the deep crisis in which Israel finds itself, substantial differences emerge between the Jewish public and Arab society regarding the preferred way to repair the situation. Thus, for example, while most of the Jewish public prefers to try to defeat Hamas militarily (43%) and more than half oppose a regional arrangement that includes a demilitarized Palestinian state, most of Arab society presents the opposite view: 43% support advancing the Trump plan in order to create an alternative government to Hamas, and about 80% support resolving the conflict through a comprehensive regional package.

About 61% of Arab society respondents are attentive to messages coming from Middle Eastern states and are convinced, at a much higher rate than the Jewish public, that continuing the war in Gaza may run Israel's relations with the region aground. The bottom line is that, in contrast to the hesitant and reactivity and lack of initiative among parts of the Zionist opposition, Arab society presents an alternative vision: a proactive foreign policy based on regional connectivity and an aspiration to resolve the conflict through a political-diplomatic framework that includes both the Palestinian arena and the Arab world.

The Palestinian Arena



Dr. Maya Sion-Tzidkiyahu,
Director of the Israel-Europe
Relations Program:

Compared with previous years, fewer Jews support sanctions against violent settlers. Only 34% of the Jewish public in Israel supports them, while 46% oppose them (20% expressed no opinion). The dividing line between supporters and opponents within the Jewish public runs between those intending to vote for opposition parties in the upcoming elections and supporters of the coalition. This is, of course, unsurprising when it comes to voters for Religious Zionism and Otzma Yehudit, whose leaders advocate racism, systematic violence, and violations of the rights of Arab civilians, whether in Israel or in the territories. Opposition to sanctions against violent settlers and organizations that encourage them is also unsurprising when it comes from the Haredi sector. For these publics, “love your neighbor as yourself” does not apply to gentiles, and certainly not to Arabs. And in the Likud? There is 66% opposition to sanctions and only 11% support, with the rest having no opinion. In the Likud, too, liberal values that uphold human rights have disappeared, certainly when Arabs are concerned. Even when the question touches voters’ wallets and entails an economic cost for all residents of Israel, support for the settlements remains at 69% among Likud voters, and only 31% are willing for banks to cease operations in the settlements in order to avoid economic harm to all Israeli citizens. It should be recalled that only 5% of Israel’s citizens live beyond the Green Line. The surprises come precisely from the opposition. Among those intending to vote for “Beyachad” led by Naftali Bennett in the upcoming elections, 66% support sanctions on violent settlers and on the organizations that support them. Bennett, who served as chair of

the Yesha Council and wrote the “Stability Initiative” for the annexation of Area C, has indeed sharply condemned settler violence and stressed that “we did not establish a Jewish state so that violent phalanges would operate in it.” Only 21% of those intending to vote for Bennett oppose these sanctions. Eisenkot supporters are divided in a similar way. Among voters for the Democrats lies the moral majority: 92% support these sanctions, and only 3% oppose them. In other words, when choosing between Sparta and Athens, coalition voters choose Sparta, and opposition voters choose Athens. Although Bennett is identified with the security-oriented right and with the settlement enterprise, those currently intending to vote for the “Beyachad!” party hold distinctly liberal positions. They support targeted punishment of settler violence and are willing to distinguish between protecting the Israeli economy and continued support for the settlements. Eisenkot voters are somewhat more cautious. As long as the Bennett-Lapid connection holds, it blurs the distinction between right and left and strengthens the distinction between liberal democrats who believe in the rule of law and the anti-democratic coalition. Whether Bennett will be the one to represent their positions if given the opportunity remains an open question.



Bar Rapoport, Head of the Climate Diplomacy Program:

The terrible reality in Gaza requires action: a severe humanitarian crisis, the absence of a political horizon, and continued Hamas rule sustained by living conditions that encourage radicalization and by the lack of a political horizon offering an alternative government. According to Mitvim’s annual survey, most of the Israeli public recognizes this and understands that something must be done regarding the humanitarian crisis and reconstruction needs in Gaza. About 40% of survey

respondents say Israel should support reconstruction efforts without taking an active role. Another 20% say Israel should even take an active role, and more than that, should make reconstruction a central goal in rebuilding its relations with regional states and the Palestinians. Those 20% correctly identify the potential inherent in the reconstruction effort: the opportunity to use the resources invested in reconstruction to build a different political reality. The purpose of reconstruction is not to return to October 6, but to Build Forward Better and create a sustainable reality that provides security. Israel should use reconstruction efforts to build an alternative government to Hamas in Gaza and weaken its civilian power; to strengthen ties with Egypt, with all regional states, and with international institutions and organizations; to advance a comprehensive peace process with the Palestinians; to improve its international standing; and even begin restoring its moral identity. Israel should take an active role in the reconstruction process and in shaping it together with the Palestinians and the world, in order to realize the potential inherent in reconstruction and achieve its objectives.

Israel-Europe Relations



Dr. Maya Sion-Tzidkiyahu,
Director of the Israel-Europe
Relations Program:

Two-thirds of Israelis (67%) see the European Union as an adversary, and only one in seven (14%) see it as a friend – exactly as in last year’s survey. On this issue, there is agreement between coalition voters and opposition voters among the Jewish public. The European Union was never beloved by the Israeli right, but over the past two years it has also lost large parts of the center and the left. If these attitudes persist, this represents a broad collapse of the EU’s image as a political partner in the eyes of the Jewish public in Israel. This year, a similar question was asked about Germany, and the results there are the opposite: two-thirds of Israelis (64%) see Germany as a friend, and only 18% as an adversary. Israelis clearly recognize the special relationship between Israel and Germany, and the support of Chancellor Merz and Foreign Minister Wadepful for Israel, despite the criticism both have directed at the government, and even despite the arms embargo imposed by the chancellor at the end of 2025. The clear conclusion is that not all of Europe is an adversary of Israel. Israel also has friends on the continent, who work to prevent measures against Israel led by other European governments – for example, preventing the suspension of the Association Agreement, on which Israel-EU relations are based. Suspending it would cause significant damage to Israel’s economy, agriculture, tourism, research and innovation, and a range of cooperation frameworks in higher education and many other fields. Israelis should remember that Europe is a strategic economic partner of Israel and should act to preserve the relationship and devote efforts to improving it after the elections. Germany is also the country that the

largest number of Israelis rank as the most important after the United States, for the second consecutive year. Nevertheless, its ranking has declined, as have the rankings of the two other important European countries – the United Kingdom and France – compared with the previous two years. This decline reflects the perception that Europe is also weak and at times irrelevant to Israel's security challenges, whether vis-à-vis Iran or Hezbollah and Hamas. Even if Europe has the power of the purse – as the largest funder of humanitarian aid to Gaza and the actor sustaining the Palestinian Authority so that it does not collapse under the economic strangulation imposed on it by the Israeli government – Europe does not wield the sword. Today, that is the kind of power Israelis value and focus on. Europe's weakness as an actor is also reflected in the political-diplomatic arena and in its inability to lead the parties toward adopting agreed solutions, which are the basis of Israel's long-term security.

Regional Strategy



Eitan Ishai, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Program:

Last year's survey findings pointed to the strengthening of a "peace through strength" perception - the belief that military power is the key to shaping the region's geopolitical environment. This year as well, it is evident that the Israeli public continues to view force as an essential component of national security. Alongside this, however, a subtle but significant shift is emerging: more and more Israelis recognize that military force alone is not enough. Thus, while 35% of those expressing an opinion believe that the disarmament of Hezbollah should be based primarily on continued Israeli military pressure, 47% prefer diplomatic tools - regional and international pressure or efforts to strengthen the Lebanese government and armed forces. Similarly, 47% support advancing political arrangements with Syria, compared to 37% who prefer to continue the current military-oriented approach. Only 16% believe that Israel should act to topple the Syrian regime, a decline of ten percentage points from last year. In the Turkish context as well, a solid majority of 66% supports diplomatic efforts to improve relations with Ankara. The data do not suggest an abandonment of the logic of force, but rather a growing recognition of its limitations. The Israeli public appears to be increasingly aware that the real challenge is not only to prevail militarily, but also to translate security achievements into political arrangements, strengthen state institutions and actors, and help shape a more stable regional order. In a rapidly changing Middle East, this may be one of the most significant developments in Israeli public opinion.



Amb. (ret.) Michael Harari, Policy and Research Fellow:

Recent weeks have revealed the dynamics of the Lebanese arena, and even more so during the short, direct round between Israel and Iran at the beginning of the month. Israel has failed in the Lebanese arena on two fronts: it neither disconnected Lebanon from the Iranian arena nor translated the Lebanese government's willingness to oppose Hezbollah and enter direct talks with Israel—even under fire and amid an IDF presence in southern Lebanon—into diplomatic-strategic gains. Public attitudes regarding the means of disarming Hezbollah are perhaps expected, but they also indicate that the government has room for maneuver to adopt a wiser diplomatic path out of the dead end in which Israel finds itself. It is not surprising that a relatively high share of the Jewish public (39%) prefers continued military pressure on Hezbollah. What is more interesting is that 19% support strengthening the Lebanese government and army, 28% support regional and international pressure on Hezbollah, and 18% even argue that disarming Hezbollah is not a realistic goal in the near term. This shows that the government need not hide behind the argument that it cannot afford to strengthen the Lebanese government and adopt a policy whose results will take some time, because doing so would leave the arena at Hezbollah's mercy. **The Israeli government can and must adopt a realistic and prudent policy in order to make the most of the important developments in Lebanon regarding Israel and the possibility of agreements with it, as well as the growing internal criticism of Hezbollah.** Disconnecting the Lebanese arena from the Iranian one is admittedly not possible in the immediate term, mainly because President Trump accepts it as part of the negotiations he is conducting with Tehran. However, a creative, wise, and realistic policy that harnesses the Lebanese government's willingness to move along the path of negotiations – and the interview

President Aoun gave to CNN on June 5th illustrated this well – would better serve the Israeli interest. In other words: the approaching elections are a good opportunity for politicians from across the political arena to push for and demand a different policy in Lebanon.

Political-Climate Sustainability



Bar Rapoport, Head of the Climate Diplomacy Program:

The Mitvim survey shows that 78% of the Israeli public believes that, in light of the climate crisis, it is important to establish a regional framework in the Middle East to address climate change. This broad support reflects two forms of recognition: recognition of the importance and urgency of addressing the climate crisis and its consequences, and recognition that in the face of the major challenges confronting Israel's citizens, deep and institutionalized regional cooperation is required. The recognition that regional challenges require cooperative regional action is becoming more firmly established, extending beyond Israeli citizens and beyond the climate crisis. In recent years, a process of building a new regional architecture has advanced: the **IMEC** project (the India-Middle East-Europe trade corridor), the Negev Summit process, the regional gas forum, and the promotion of connectivity in communications and electricity infrastructure are only a few key examples. Israel should act wisely, and with a preference for cooperation over regional isolation, in order to take part in these regional frameworks and in those that will follow. These frameworks are what will ensure our water, energy, and food security, our supply chains, and, yes, our diplomatic security as well. The region is awaiting Israel's next government, in the hope that it will have the wisdom to bring active war fronts to a close and launch the political and diplomatic processes needed to sustain that shift. The Israeli public, as the survey shows, will support this.

Foreign Relations and Democracy



**Dr. Ehud Eiran, Mitvim
Board Member:**

An encouraging finding for those who support a liberal-democratic Israel is that 71% of respondents with an opinion believe it is important for Israel to be part of the Western liberal-democratic camp. Although the Zionist movement chose democracy from its very beginning, the international context has always played an important role in the internal dynamics surrounding this issue. The desire to be part of the democratic camp influenced the shaping of the Declaration of Independence in this direction, and proximity to the United States strengthened the liberal dimension in Israel, especially from the 1980s onward. Conversely, the weakening of liberal democracy in the United States is now empowering opponents of this component of Israeli identity. Therefore, the fact that most Israelis still prefer belonging to the liberal-democratic camp creates an important foundation for the struggle to preserve this aspect of Israel's character. At the same time, and perhaps somewhat contradictorily, one of the report's most interesting findings is the list of countries Israelis consider important to Israel (besides the United States). Germany still ranks first (45%), but compared with previous years there is a sharp decline in the importance attributed to the key European countries – Germany, the United Kingdom, and France. At the same time, there is a notable rise in the importance attributed to China and the United Arab Emirates. These two countries are neither Western nor democratic. The finding shows that although the Israeli public wants to continue belonging to the Western camp in terms of values and identity, it increasingly identifies centers of power, opportunity, and influence outside the traditional West.

Israel-U.S. Relations



Dr. Ilai Saltzman, Mitvim
Board Member:

It appears that the Israeli public continues to hold fairly critical views regarding the current government's conduct in the international arena. Although there are many areas in which the data point to failures in foreign policy, alongside security policy, one of the gravest issues identified by the survey concerns the State of Israel's international standing. In this respect, the survey data point to a growing fear that Israel may become a pariah state. In fact, the data show an increase of about 10 percentage points compared with the previous two years, while the share of respondents who are not concerned about this trend has fallen by about 10 percentage points. The question of Israel's isolation is especially important given that the Israeli public is quite divided regarding the contribution of the Trump administration – the administration friendliest toward Israel, and perhaps the only one still maintaining such close relations with it – to Israeli interests. This question becomes sharper against a picture in which most respondents believe that the American administration's actions ultimately harm the Israeli interest. **Israel, then, is caught between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, it is becoming increasingly isolated in the international system; on the other, it is dependent on Trump's United States, which is perceived as undermining the Israeli interest through its actions.** These dynamics are reflected on the ground, as President Trump has in effect taken control of Israel's foreign and security policy in the Iranian and Lebanese arenas, and to a large extent also in the Gaza context. The near-total dependence on Trump and on American military and diplomatic support has made Israel far less independent and left it at

the mercy of the president of the United States. More than once, it was Trump who prevented the Israeli government and its leader from escalating the crisis on each of these fronts. Yet that same president does not demonstrate sufficient strategic thinking to lead Israel and its regional adversaries from war toward a political and diplomatic process that could eventually produce a regional peace agreement.



Dr. Ehud Eiran, Mitvim Board Member:

The survey findings sharpen a surprising finding regarding U.S. President Donald Trump. For years, Trump enjoyed great popularity in Israel. For example, in an international Pew survey from June 2025, Israelis ranked second worldwide in confidence that Trump would “do the right thing” in foreign affairs. Trump himself recently boasted that “99% of the Israeli public” supports him, and said that after retiring from American politics it might be worthwhile for him to run for prime minister of Israel. The survey, which was conducted after Trump mobilized the U.S. military for a joint war alongside Israel, presents a more complex picture: a fairly large majority of Israelis believe that, on balance, his conduct harms Israel. This also yields an interesting political conclusion: to the extent that Prime Minister Netanyahu boasts of his close relationship with the American president, the president himself is not necessarily an electoral asset in Israel, and in some cases may even become a political liability. This finding suggests that the disappointment in Israel with Trump, following the Iran deal, had earlier roots as the poll was conducted prior to the agreement signed in Versailles.

The “No Opinion” Camp: Insights and Opportunities



Dr. Gil Murciano, CEO of the Mitvim Institute:

We tend to describe Israel’s electoral reality as frozen—relatively rigid, with only limited movement between the blocs that support or oppose the government. Yet one of the most striking findings of the 2026 Index is the large share of respondents who have not yet formed an opinion on key questions concerning Israel’s security and foreign policy. More than one-quarter of the public has not yet developed a clear position on Israel’s preferred strategy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and nearly one-third remain undecided about Trump’s 20-point plan. Almost one-quarter have yet to form an opinion on sanctions against settlements, while a similar share remains undecided on Israel’s policy toward the al-Sharaa regime in Damascus. This may indicate that Israeli society is in the midst of a transition: the public increasingly recognizes the limitations of old paradigms, yet has not fully embraced a new one. At the same time, it suggests that leaders of the change camp still have considerable room to shape public opinion on key issues—both before the elections and after them.



Dr. Roe Kibrik, Director of Research:

Israelis have an opinion about everything: which football team is best, the right way to make pasta, the best way to treat a jellyfish sting, the shortest route to Givatayim, and when is the right time to sell the old car. Yet, frighteningly, the Mitvim Institute survey shows that precisely on the key strategic questions that matter most to their lives, Israelis do not hold a consolidated view. One in five Israelis do not know whether they prefer Israel to be part of the liberal-democratic world or not (18% of respondents), whether they support the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state, the dismantling of Hamas, and normalization with the Arab world (19%), or how the war in Gaza (19%) or in Iran (19%) affected the positions of regional states regarding relations with Israel. One in four Israelis does not know what policy should be adopted toward the al-Sharaa regime in Syria (25%), or whether they support Trump's 20-point plan (29%). One in three Israelis does not know whether, in hindsight, it was right to withdraw from the nuclear agreement, as Netanyahu pushed for (32%), or whether there is a connection between annexation and the regime overhaul (31%). Even on the foundational question of relations with the Palestinians – which defines the identity of the State of Israel and is based on a value choice rather than professional knowledge – 26% of Israelis do not know whether they prefer annexation of the occupied territories, the two-state solution, or continued management of the conflict. **The high percentage of respondents who refrained from expressing an opinion reflects a deep and broad dynamic in Israeli society characterized by avoidance of decision-making and intellectual laziness.** It is a dynamic that seeks to avoid making choices because they require internal confrontation – both at the individual level, between conflicting positions and beliefs, and at the societal level, between the different

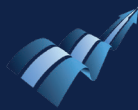
preferences of different groups. It is a dynamic that avoids investing resources in studying important and complex issues and in long-term strategic planning. Public discourse shies away from engaging with the central, long-term, complex, strategic questions because they require serious, complex, and deep discussion that cannot be easily and quickly “sold.” We can see public discourse focusing on the “elimination” of one senior figure after another, on colorful images of fire and smoke that provide immediate excitement and thereby prevent any meaningful public discussion of the consequences and meaning of these actions. One in five or one in four Israelis lacks an opinion grounded in knowledge, a value-based worldview, and public discourse about the future of relations with the Palestinians, the Iranian nuclear program, Israel’s place in the world, and its regional relations is a more significant danger than disagreement or the choice of a mistaken policy. Abandoning the effort to conduct complex public discourse and to decide between alternatives is, in effect, a loss of sovereignty over the shaping of one’s own life. It is no wonder that the question of Israeli sovereignty and independence is today subject to growing doubt.

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