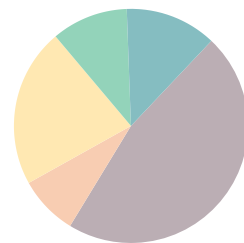
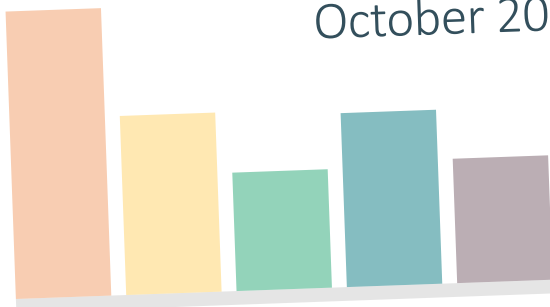


The 2020 Israeli Foreign Policy Index of the Mitvim Institute

October 2020



MITVIM
The Israeli Institute for
Regional Foreign Policies

**FRIEDRICH
EBERT
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The 2020 Israeli Foreign Policy Index

Findings of the Mitvim Institute Poll

The eighth annual public opinion poll of the Mitvim Institute on Israel's foreign policy was conducted in September 2020. It was carried out by the Rafi Smith Institute and in cooperation with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, among a representative sample of Israel's adult population (700 men and women, Jews and Arabs) and with a margin of error of 3.5%. This report presents the poll's key findings, grouped under four categories: Israel's Foreign Service, Israel's foreign relations, Israel and its surrounding regions, and Israel and the Palestinians.

Key Findings

A. Israel's Foreign Relations

- Israelis rank their **government's handling of foreign policy** at 6.05 out of 10. This ranking has been improving every year since 2015.
- Israelis rank the status of the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA)** at 5.69 out of 10, higher than in 2019.
- 48% of Israelis think that under **Gabi Ashkenazi's tenure as Foreign Minister**, there is no change in the status of the MFA (48%). 11% think the status is improving and 11% think it is worsening.
- 46% of Israelis think that if **Miri Regev becomes Foreign Minister** next year, in accordance with the coalition agreement, the status of the MFA will worsen. 18% think that the status will remain unchanged and 16% think it will improve.
- 48% of Israelis **support the appointment of Arab diplomats** as Israeli ambassadors abroad, compared with 21% who oppose it.
- 61% of Israelis think that the **diffusion of power and lack of coordination in Israel's Foreign Service** damages Israeli foreign policy to a large or very large extent.
- 51% of Israelis think that professional diplomats, and not security personnel (28%), should **lead negotiations** between Israel and its neighbors.

B. Israel's Foreign Relations

- Israelis rank their country's **global standing** at 5.63 out of 10. This ranking is lower than in 2019 (6.10) and interrupts an upward trend since 2015.
- Israelis rank the state of **Israel-US relations** at 8.05 out of 10. This ranking has been on the rise since 2015.
- 50% of Israelis want **Donald Trump to be elected as US President**, compared to 21% who support Joe Biden.
- Israelis see **Russia as the most important country** for Israel besides the US, followed (in decreasing order of importance) by Germany, China, Great Britain, Egypt and France. The importance attributed to Russia is lower than in 2019 (35%, compared to 48%).
- The Israeli public considers **promoting Israeli-Palestinian peace (5.83 out of 10) to be less important** than improving relations with Arab countries (6.8), improving relations with the Mediterranean countries (6.69), improving relations with Europe (6.66) and strengthening the Foreign Ministry (6.66).
- The Israeli public prefers that **Israel invest in developing relations with democracies** that do not support Israel's policy on the Palestinian issue (40%) over non-democracies that support Israel's policy on the Palestinian issue (32%).
- A majority prefers that Israel will **focus only on dealing with COVID-19 in Israel** (63%), rather than also helping other countries deal with the pandemic (28%).

C. Israel and its Surrounding Regions

- The Israeli public is divided as to whether **Israel belongs** more to the Middle East (29%), the Mediterranean (25%) or to Europe (24%).
- A vast majority of Israelis (74%) think that **regional cooperation** between Israel and Middle Eastern countries is possible. 14% think it is not.
- Saudi Arabia (24%), Egypt (12%), and the UAE (11%) are the Arab countries with which Israelis see the **most importance in cooperating**. Jordan is ranked next, with 4%. 28% think that Israel should not develop cooperation with Arab countries.
- The UAE is the **Arab country that Israelis are most interested** in visiting (23%), followed by Lebanon (7%) and Egypt (6%). 42% are not interested in visiting Arab countries.
- The Israeli public thinks it is most important for Israel to promote **cooperation with the UAE** in the economic field (44%), and then in the security (24%), political (16%) and civilian (5%) fields.
- 45% of Israelis think that **the EU** is currently more of a foe to Israel than a friend. 29% see the EU as more of a friend.
- 44% of Israelis think that Israel should remain neutral in the **conflict between Turkey, Greece and Cyprus**. 23% think that Israel should support Greece and Cyprus, 19% think it should help resolve the conflict and 3% think it should support Turkey.
- A majority of Israelis (56% vs. 32%) think that Israel should try to improve its **relations with Turkey**.

D. Israel and the Palestinians

- 34% of Israelis think that the **Israel-UAE agreement increases the prospects of achieving Israeli-Palestinian peace**, compared to 12% who think it decreases the chances. 40% think that the agreement does not make a difference.
- Following the Israel-UAE agreement, the majority of Israelis (61%) prefer that Israel try to reach **similar agreements with other Arab countries**, rather than try to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (24%).
- 46% of Israelis think that the fact that **annexation in the West Bank is no longer on the agenda at this stage** is good for Israel. 21% think it is bad for Israel.
- Israelis are divided on how to **avoid another war in Gaza**. 28% think it can be done through strengthening Israeli deterrence, 15% think it can be done through Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and 12% think it can be done through international mediation. 33% think that another war in Gaza is inevitable.
- If Joe Biden is elected president of the US, 39% of the population prefers that he **continues to promote the Trump plan** and 28% prefers that he abandon it and present a new outline for Israeli-Palestinian peace.
- If Israel is presented with a **coordinated international package of positive incentives to advance peace** with the Palestinians, 47% of the public indicates that this would strengthen to a very large or large extent their support for the promotion of Israeli-Palestinian peace, compared to 36% whose support would be strengthened minimally or very minimally.

Trends over Time

Average rankings on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high)

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Israel's global standing	5.63	6.10	5.82	5.49	5.01	3.96	5.12
The government's performance on foreign policy	6.05	5.99	5.22	5.05	4.55	4.00	5.29
The status of the MFA*	5.69	5.37	5.01	4.81	4.31	4.03	4.80
The current state of Israel-US relations	8.05	7.75	7.75	6.88	5.56	5.01	6.09

* From 2014-2018, the question about the state of the Foreign Ministry was formulated differently.

Sample Breakdown

Sample size: 700

Gender: 50% male, 50% female.

Arabs constitute about 15% of the total sample.

Russian immigrants constitute about 15% of the Jewish sample.

Age	Total
18-29	30%
30-49	41%
50+	29%

Level of Religiosity (within the Jewish sample)	Total
Religious	20%
Traditional	32%
Secular	48%

Political Point of View (within the Jewish sample)	Total
Right & Far Right	47%
Center-Right	21%
Center	19%
Center-Left	7%
Left & Far Left	6%

Level of Education	Total
High school or below	33%
High school graduate	23%
Academic degree	44%

Level of Income	Total
Below average	50%
Average	20%
Above average	30%

* Among 88% who responded

A. Israel's Foreign Relations

1. To what extent are you satisfied with the government's conduct in the realm of foreign policy?

On a scale of 1 to 10; 1 is bad, 10 is very good

	Total
1- Bad	6.7%
2	3.3%
3	7.0%
4	8.8%
5	11.4%
6	13.8%
7	17.0%
8	18.3%
9	6.7%
10 - Very good	7.0%
Average score between 1-10	6.05
Percentage who responded	92%

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Poor (1-3)	17%	15%	28%
Rather poor (4-5)	20%	20%	23%
Rather good (6-7)	31%	32%	23%
Good (8-10)	32%	33%	26%
Average	6.05	6.16	5.40

* Among 92% who responded

Trends over time:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Average	6.05	5.99	5.22	5.05	4.55	4.00	5.29

2. What is your assessment of the current status of Israel's MFA?

On a scale from 1 to 10; 1 is bad, 10 is very good

	Total
1- Bad	5.6%
2	3.5%
3	8.0%
4	11.2%
5	13.3%
6	19.0%
7	19.2%
8	12.7%
9	3.5%
10 - Very good	4.0%
Average score between 1-10	5.69
Percentage who responded	88%

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Poor (1-3)	17%	16%	22%
Rather poor (4-5)	25%	23%	36%
Rather good (6-7)	38%	41%	20%
Good (8-10)	20%	20%	22%
Average	5.69	5.75	5.34

* Among 88% who responded

Trends over time:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Average	5.69	5.37	5.01	4.81	4.31	4.03	4.80

3. Do you think that during Gabi Ashkenazi's tenure as Foreign Minister, the status of the Israeli MFA is:

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Improving	11%	12%	7%
Worsening	11%	10%	17%
Remains unchanged	48%	50%	34%
No opinion	30%	28%	42%
<i>The gap between "improving" and "worsening"</i>	0	+2%	-10%

4. Per the coalition agreement, Miri Regev is set to become Israel's Foreign Minister in November 2021. If that takes place, do you think that the status of the Israeli MFA under Minister Regev will:

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Improve	16%	18%	4%
Worsen	46%	46%	45%
Remain unchanged	18%	18%	21%
No opinion	20%	18%	30%
<i>The gap between "improve" and "worsen"</i>	30%-	-28%	-41%

5. Israel recently appointed Ishmael Khaldi as ambassador to Eritrea. Are you in favor or against the appointment of Arab diplomats as Israeli ambassadors?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
In favor	48%	46%	54%
Against	21%	22%	20%
No opinion	31%	32%	26%
<i>The gap between "In favor" and "Against"</i>	+27%	+24%	+26%

6. The State Comptroller published a report this year on Israel's Foreign Service, and found that 35 different government agencies work on foreign policy issues without a centralized agency coordinating between them. To what extent do you believe, if at all, that this distribution of power harms Israeli foreign policy?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
To a very large extent	28%	29%	24%
To a large extent	33%	35%	19%
To a small extent	14%	13%	19%
Almost no harm or no harm at all	4%	3%	8%
<i>No opinion</i>	21%	20%	30%

7. Who do you think should lead negotiations between Israel and its neighbors, MFA diplomats or security personnel?

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2014
Professional diplomats	51%	51%	52%	48%
Security personnel	28%	31%	14%	26%
No opinion	21%	18%	34%	8%

* In 2014, 18% responded "both," an option that did not appear in 2020

B. Israel's Foreign Relations

8. What is your general feeling about Israel's standing in the world today?

On a scale from 1 to 10; 1 is bad, 10 is very good

	Total
1- Bad	5.9%
2	3.1%
3	9.0%
4	10.7%
5	15.4%
6	17.2%
7	19.6%
8	11.9%
9	3.2%
10 - Very good	4.0%
Average score between 1-10	5.63
Percentage who responded	97%

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Poor (1-3)	18%	16%	33%
Rather poor (4-5)	26%	26%	25%
Rather good (6-7)	37%	39%	24%
Good (8-10)	19%	19%	18%
Average	5.63	5.73	5.00

* Among 97% who responded

Trends over time:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Average	5.63	6.10	5.82	5.49	5.01	3.96	5.12

9. What is your assessment of the current state of relations between Israel and the US?

On a scale from 1 to 10; 1 is bad, 10 is very good

	Total
1- Bad	0.5%
2	0.5%
3	1.1%
4	1.4%
5	3.7%
6	7.1%
7	18.5%
8	24.6%
9	19.4%
10 - Very good	23.2%
Average score between 1-10	8.05
Percentage who responded	97%

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Poor (1-3)	2%	1%	8%
Rather poor (4-5)	5%	4%	9%
Rather good (6-7)	26%	26%	23%
Good (8-10)	67%	68%	61%
Average	8.05	8.11	7.61

* Among 97% who responded

Trends over time:

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Average	8.05	7.75	7.75	6.88	5.56	5.01	6.09

10. Who would you prefer to win the US presidential elections this November?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Donald Trump	50%	57%	11%
Joe Biden	21%	17%	41%
No opinion	29%	26%	48%

11. The relations with which countries (not including the US) are the most important for Israel today?

Open question; The table only shows countries that received 5% or more; The results add up to more than 100% in each column since three answers could be specified

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Russia	35%	38%	19%	48%	42%	51%	45%	41%	33%
Germany	31%	34%	18%	28%	34%	34%	32%	31%	32%
China	20%	22%	8%	24%	23%	25%	21%	20%	20%
Great Britain	20%	22%	9%	26%	29%	26%	30%	19%	27%
Egypt	14%	15%	7%	16%	12%	12%	18%	21%	27%
France	13%	14%	11%	17%	22%	20%	25%	14%	16%
UAE	8%	8%	7%	5>	5>	5>	<5	<5	<5
Saudi Arabia	8%	8%	8%	5>	5>	5>	<5	<5	<5
Jordan	7%	7%	7%	7%	6%	7%	5%	10%	3%

The country ranked as most important:

	Total
Russia	18%
Germany	12%
Britain	6%
Egypt	6%
Japan	5%

12. How important it is for Israel's government to?

On a scale from 1 to 10; 1 is not important at all and 10 is very important

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2019
Improve relations with Arab countries	6.80	6.97	5.83	7.12
Improve relations with countries in the Mediterranean, such as Greece, Cyprus, Turkey	6.69	6.83	5.89	6.96
Strengthen Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs	6.66	6.87	5.49	7.41
Improve relations with the EU	6.66	6.80	5.90	7.26
Advance peace with the Palestinians	5.83	5.75	6.26	6.18

13. With which type of countries is it more important for Israel to develop relations?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Democratic countries that do not support Israel on the Palestinian issue	40%	41%	38%
Non-democratic countries that do support Israel on the Palestinian issue	32%	34%	22%
No opinion	28%	26%	40%

14. In the fight against COVID-19, some countries provide aid to others, and some countries use all their resources to contain the spread of the disease domestically. In your opinion, what should Israel do?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
It should provide aid to other countries to fight COVID-19	28%	28%	28%
It should invest only in fighting COVID-19 in Israel	63%	66%	48%
No opinion	9%	6%	24%

C. Israel and its Surrounding Regions

15. Where do you think Israel belongs?

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2018	2019
More in the Middle East	29%	31%	20%	32%	28%
More in the Mediterranean	25%	25%	20%	21%	22%
More in Europe	24%	24%	26%	27%	23%
None of the above	10%	9%	11%	7%	10%
No opinion	12%	11%	23%	13%	17%

16. Do you believe that regional cooperation between Israel and other countries in the Middle East is possible?

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Yes, it is possible	74%	77%	58%	68%	69%	70%	64%	59%	69%
No, it is not possible	14%	13%	22%	20%	19%	23%	26%	36%	28%
No opinion	12%	10%	20%	12%	12%	7%	10%	5%	3%
<i>The gap between "yes" and "no"</i>	+60%	+64%	+36%	+48%	+50%	+47%	+38%	+23%	+41%

17. With which Arab country do you think it is the most important for Israel to try to develop cooperation in various fields?

The table only includes countries receiving 3% and more

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2019	2018
Saudi Arabia	24%	25%	20%	25%	23%
Egypt	12%	13%	4%	19%	24%
UAE	11%	12%	1%	1%	2%
Jordan	4%	5%	0%	3%	8%
No Arab country	28%	23%	54%	34%	28%
No opinion	5%	5%	4%	3%	4%

18. Given normal ties between Israel and its neighbors, which Arab country would you like to visit most?

The table only includes countries receiving 3% and more

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2018
UAE	23%	27%	6%	13%
Lebanon	7%	5%	14%	6%
Egypt	6%	8%	0%	12%
Saudi Arabia	4%	2%	11%	6%
Jordan	3%	3%	0%	8%
No Arab country	42%	41%	46%	41%
No opinion	1%	1%	1%	2%

19. In which field do you think it is most important for Israel to develop cooperation with the UAE, following the agreement reached between the two countries?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Economic (tourism, trade, technology)	44%	45%	37%
Security (intelligence, purchase of military equipment, cooperation against Iran)	24%	27%	7%
Political (meeting of representatives, peace initiatives, shared political processes)	16%	17%	12%
Civil (culture, sports, science, education)	5%	3%	14%
No opinion	11%	8%	30%

20. Do you think that the EU is currently more of a friend or a foe to Israel?

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2019	2018
More of a friend to Israel	29%	27%	39%	27%	18%
More of a foe to Israel	43%	48%	19%	45%	55%
No opinion	28%	25%	42%	28%	27%
<i>The gap between "friend" and "foe"</i>	-14%	-21%	+20%	-18%	-37%

21. Regarding the intensifying conflict between Turkey and Greece in the Mediterranean, what do you think Israel should do?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Remain neutral	44%	45%	37%
Support Greece and Cyprus	23%	26%	9%
Try to help resolve the conflict	19%	18%	23%
Support Turkey	3%	2%	8%
No opinion	11%	9%	23%

22. Do you think that Israel should or should not try to improve its relations with Turkey?

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2019	2018
Should try to improve relations	56%	55%	60%	53%	42%
Should not try to improve relations	32%	33%	21%	32%	45%
No opinion	12%	12%	19%	15%	13%
<i>The gap between "should" and "should not"</i>	+24%	+22%	+39%	+21%	-3%

D. Israel and the Palestinians

23. How do you think the agreement reached between Israel and the UAE affects the prospects of achieving Israeli-Palestinian peace?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
It increases the prospects	34%	36%	22%
It decreases the prospects	12%	10%	24%
It does not affect the prospects	40%	41%	30%
No opinion	14%	13%	24%
<i>The gap between "increases" and "decreases"</i>	+22%	+26%	-2%

24. Following the agreement reached between Israel and the UAE, what do you think is more important?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
That Israel try to reach similar agreements with other Arab countries	61%	67%	29%
That Israel try to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict	24%	20%	48%
No opinion	15%	13%	23%

25. In your view, the fact that annexation of territories in the West Bank is no longer on the agenda at this stage is:

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Good for Israel	46%	45%	50%
Bad for Israel	21%	22%	16%
No opinion	33%	33%	34%
<i>The gap between "good" and "bad"</i>	+25%	+23%	+34%

26. Is another war in Gaza inevitable or avoidable?

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2019
Inevitable	33%	36%	17%	32%
Avoidable, via increasing Israeli deterrence	28%	32%	8%	24%
Avoidable, via Israeli-Palestinian negotiations	15%	11%	40%	17%
Avoidable, via international mediation	12%	11%	17%	14%
No opinion	12%	10%	18%	13%

27. If Joe Biden is elected president, what should he do to advance peace between Israel and the Palestinians?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Continue to promote the Trump plan	39%	43%	16%
Abandon the Trump plan and forge a new path	28%	23%	54%
No opinion	33%	34%	30%

28. If various international actors, including the US, were to present a package of incentives to advance peace with the Palestinians, consisting of security guarantees, economic gains, and normalization with countries in the region, would this (and to what extent) strengthen your support for the pursuit of Israeli-Palestinian peace?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
It would very much strengthen my support	17%	15%	30%
It would strengthen my support	30%	30%	26%
It would minimally strengthen my support	23%	24%	20%
It would almost not strengthen my support or not strengthen it at all	13%	14%	8%
I do not support the pursuit of Israeli-Palestinian peace	17%	17%	16%

For Further Information:

Mitvim - The Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies

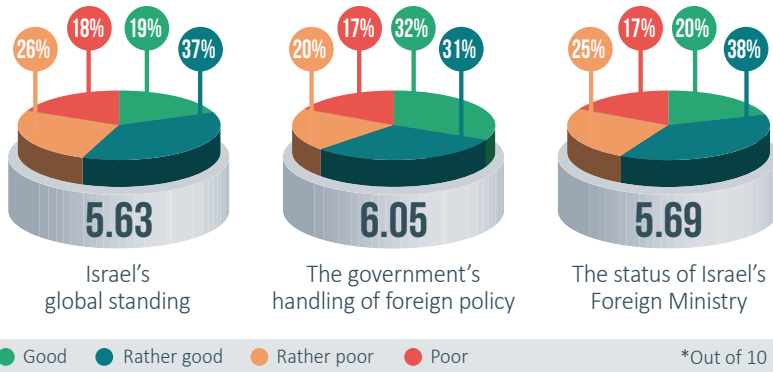
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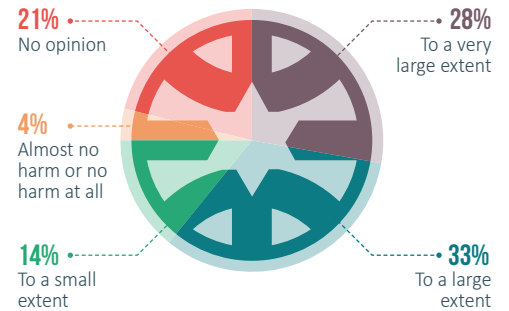
The 2020 Israeli Foreign Policy Index - Key Findings

General Assessments

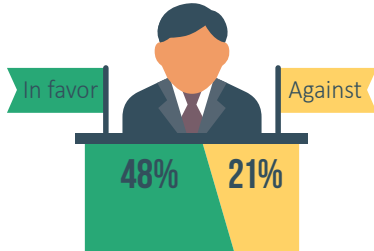
Average ratings on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high)



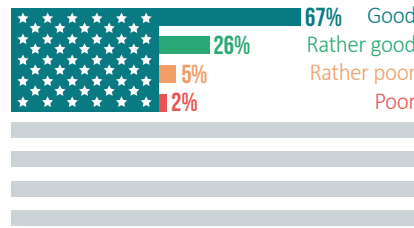
The diffusion of power and lack of coordination in Israel's Foreign Service damages Israeli foreign policy



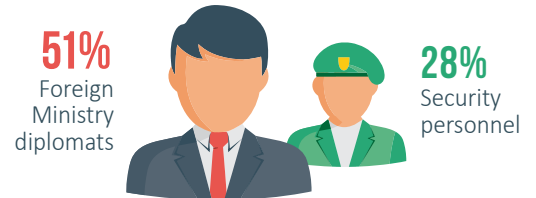
In favor or against the appointment of Arab diplomats as Israeli ambassadors



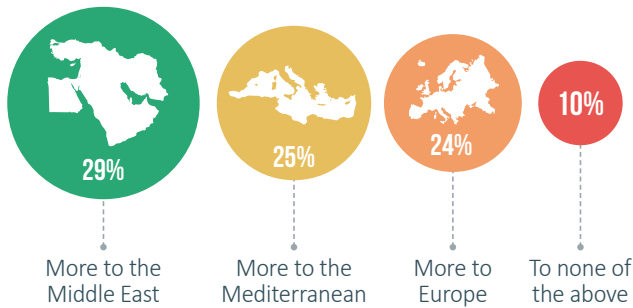
The state of Israel-US relations: 8.05 (Out of 10)



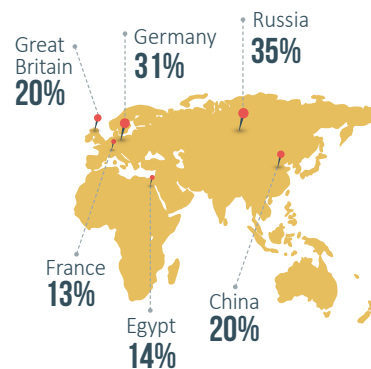
Who should lead Israel's negotiations with its neighbors?



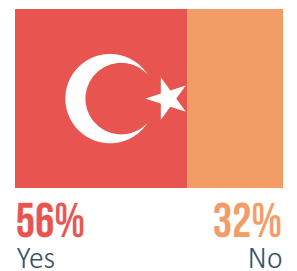
To which region does Israel belong?



The most important countries for Israel in the world (not including the US)



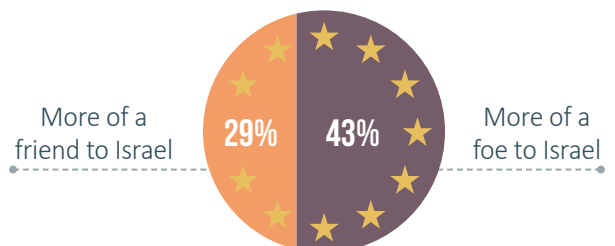
Should Israel try to improve its relations with Turkey?



In the conflict between Turkey, Greece and Cyprus in the Mediterranean, Israel should



The EU is currently



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The 2020 Israeli Foreign Policy Index - Key Findings

With which Arab country is it most important for Israel to develop cooperation?
(28% No Arab country)



Given normal ties between Israel and its neighbors, which Arab country would you most like to visit?
(Countries with 3% and up)



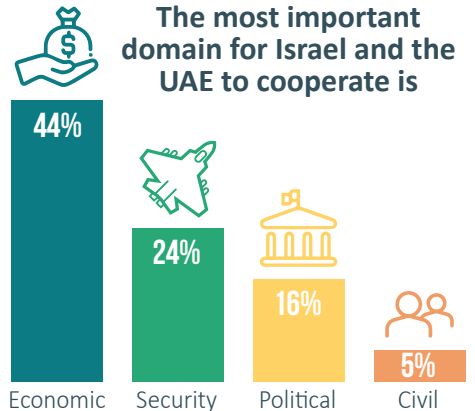
Cooperation with Middle Eastern countries is



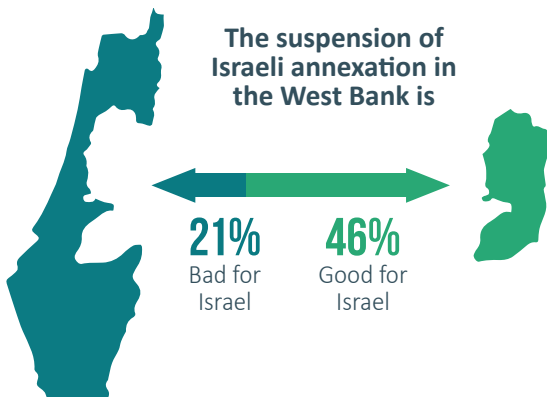
Following the Israel-UAE agreement, Israel should



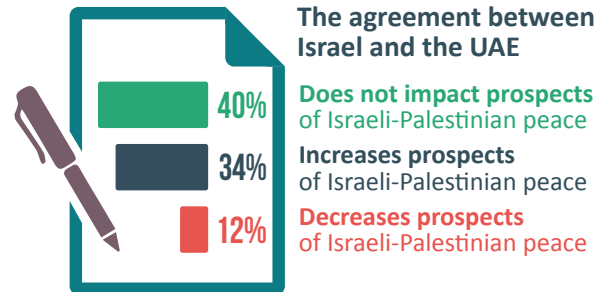
The most important domain for Israel and the UAE to cooperate is



The suspension of Israeli annexation in the West Bank is



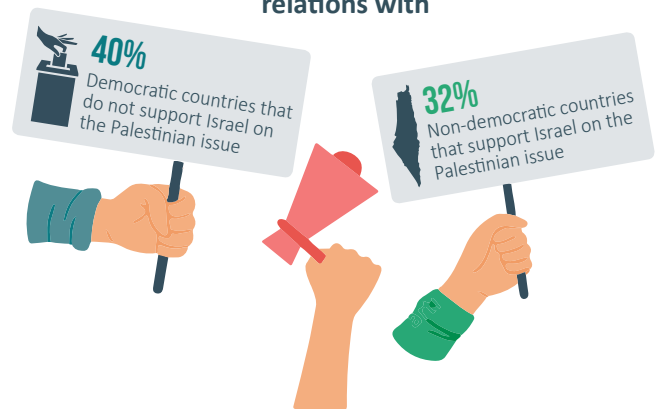
The agreement between Israel and the UAE



If Israel is presented with an international package of positive incentives to promote peace with the Palestinians, how will this affect your support for the pursuit of peace?



Israel should prioritize building relations with



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The Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies

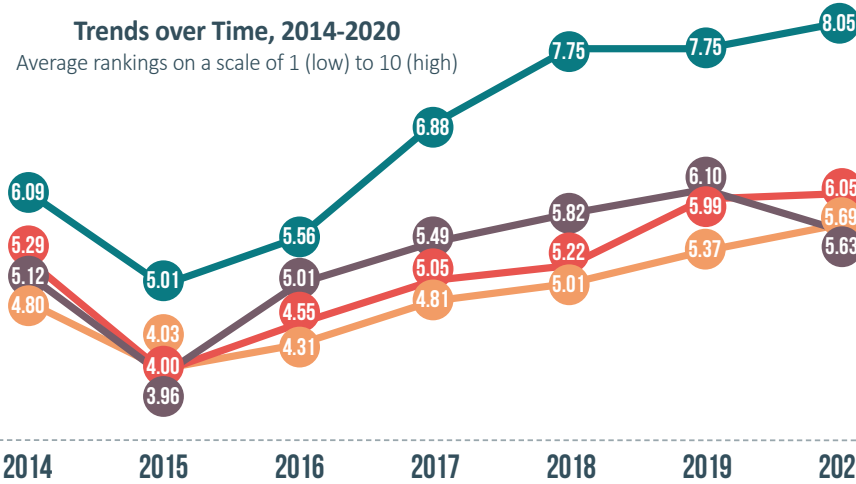
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The 2020 Israeli Foreign Policy Index - Key Findings

Trends over Time, 2014-2020

Average rankings on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high)



The state of Israel-US relations

The government's handling of foreign policy

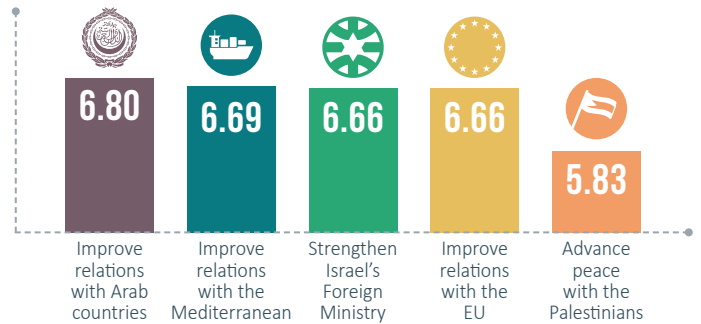
The status of Israel's Foreign Ministry*

Israel's global standing

During Gabi Ashkenazi's tenure as Israel's Foreign Minister, the status of the Foreign Ministry



The Israeli government should (out of 10)



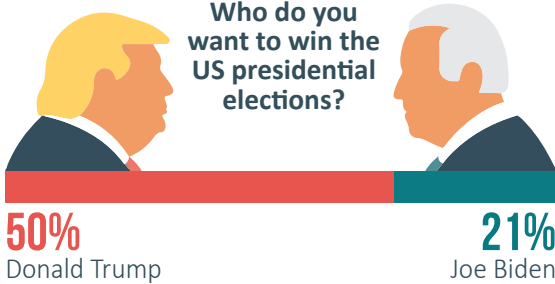
Should Miri Regev serve as Israel's Foreign Minister, as indicated by the coalition agreement, the status of the Foreign Ministry will



Is another war between Israel and Gaza inevitable or avoidable?



Who do you want to win the US presidential elections?

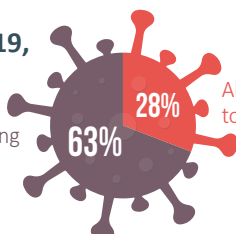


If Joe Biden is elected US president, he should



In the fight against Covid-19, Israel should

Focus only on fighting Covid-19 in Israel



Also help other countries to fight Covid-19



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