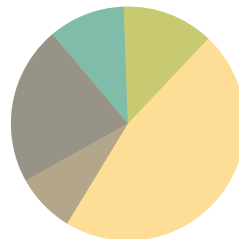




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The 2017 Israeli Foreign Policy Index of the Mitvim Institute

November 2017



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MITVIM
The Israeli Institute for
Regional Foreign Policies

**FRIEDRICH
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The 2017 Israeli Foreign Policy Index

Findings of the Mitvim Institute Poll

The annual public opinion of the Mitvim Institute on Israel's foreign policy was conducted, for the fifth consecutive year in mid-September 2017. 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 (600 men and women, Jews and Arabs, aged 18 and above). The poll's margin of error is 4%. This report includes the poll findings, grouped under five categories: The state of Israel's foreign policy, Israel among the nations, foreign policy priorities and bilateral relations, regional cooperation, and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Key Findings

A. The State of Israel's Foreign Policy

- The Israeli public thinks that the **government's handling of foreign policy** is mediocre (5.05 out of 10). 20% describe it as good.
- The preferred candidate for the **position of Foreign Minister** is Yair Lapid, followed by Tzipi Livni, Benjamin Netanyahu, Avigdor Lieberman and Naftali Bennett.
- The public is not very satisfied with the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA) fulfillment of its mission** (4.81 out of 10). Only 13% describe it as good.
- The public believes that in order to **strengthen the MFA**, there is a need to formulate a coherent foreign policy approach (ranked first), and to appoint a full-time Foreign Minister/restore authority to the ministry (ranked second).
- Half of the public (50% vs. 39%) thinks that Israel should take into account, to a moderate or large extent, the implications of its policies on **Diaspora Jews**.

B. Israel among the Nations

- The public thinks that **Israel's global standing** is mediocre (5.49 out of 10). 17% describe it as good.
- The public is divided as to whether **Israel belongs more** to Europe (28%), the Middle East (26%), or equally to both (25%).
- A majority thinks that **international criticism against Israel** stems from a basic hostility towards Israel (59%), and not from disagreement with its policies (34%).
- Most Israelis (55% vs. 31%) think that advancing **laws perceived as weakening Israeli democracy** undermines Israel's global standing to a large or moderate extent.
- The Israeli public is **interested in knowing more** about (in descending order): Israel's cooperation with Arab states, the activities of the MFA, cooperation in the Mediterranean region, international peace initiatives, and Israel-EU relations.

C. Policy Priorities and Bilateral Relations

- Israelis think that their country's foreign policy should prioritize improving **relations with moderate Arab states**, followed by advancing the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and struggling against the BDS movement.

- A majority (52%) thinks that the **nuclear deal with Iran** did not affect the level of Iranian nuclear threat to Israel. However, more respondents think that the threat has increased following the agreement (28%) than decreased (10%).
- The Israeli public is moderately satisfied by the **state of relations between Israel and the US** (6.88 out of 10). 41% describe the relations as good.
- According to the Israeli public, **the country with highest importance** to Israel, besides the US, is Russia, followed by Germany, Great Britain, China, France, and Egypt.
- A majority thinks that **Russian President Vladimir Putin** (52%) has a bigger influence on events in the Middle East than US President Donald Trump (15%).
- The Israeli public is divided as to whether it is better for Israel that the **EU becomes stronger (38%) or weaker (37%)**.

D. Regional Cooperation

- A vast majority (70% vs. 23%; larger than in previous polls) thinks that **regional cooperation** between Israel and Middle Eastern countries is possible.
- 48% of the public think that Israel can achieve a **breakthrough with Arab states** even without progress in the peace process with Palestinians. 39% think that such a breakthrough will be possible only after progress is made with the Palestinians.
- The Israeli public believes that **cooperation with Middle Eastern countries** can benefit Israel the most in the fields of security and economy.
- A plurality (46% vs. 39%) thinks that Israel should seek coordination with neighboring Arab states before taking steps related to the **Temple Mount/Al-Aqsa Mosque**.
- A majority (61%) thinks that **Israel-Turkey relations** have remained unchanged since the two countries signed the reconciliation agreement in June 2016.

E. The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process

- A majority of the public (58% vs. 10%) thinks that the current Israeli government is distancing **the two-state solution**, rather than bringing it closer to fruition.
- An **international incentive package for peace** that includes normalized relations with the Arab world, security guarantees from the US, and an upgrade of ties with the EU is considered to be the most effective incentive for peace. Among the package's components, normalized relations with the Arab world are viewed as the most attractive.
- A majority of the public (50% vs. 24%) thinks that the continued **internal Palestinian split** between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is preferable to a renewed political unification between the two.
- A majority of the public (59% vs. 26%) agrees that **Arab citizens of Israel** should play a more central role in efforts to advance peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

General comparisons between assessments

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

	2017	2016	2015	2014
Israel's global standing	5.49	5.01	3.96	5.12
The government's performance on foreign policy	5.05	4.55	4.00	5.29
The MFA's fulfillment of its mission	4.81	4.31	4.03	4.80
The current state of Israel-US relations	6.88	5.56	5.01	6.09

Sample Breakdown

50% **Male**; 50% **Female**

83% **Jews**; 17% **Arabs**

15% **Russian immigrants** (within the Jewish sample)

Age	Total
18-29	26%
30-49	37%
50+	37%

Level of Religiosity (within the Jewish sample)	Total
Religious	20%
Traditional	31%
Secular	49%

Political Point of View (within the Jewish sample)	Total
Right & Far Right	40%
Center-Right	21%
Center	19%
Center-Left	13%
Left & Far Left	7%

Level of Education	Total
High school or below	24%
High school graduate	25%
Academic degree	51%

Level of Income	Total
Below average	38%
Average	32%
Above average	30%

* Among 94% who responded

A. The State of Israel's Foreign Policy

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

(On a scale of 1 to 10; 1 is not at all satisfied, 10 is very satisfied)

	Total
Not at all satisfied - 1	13%
2	7%
3	11%
4	10%
5	13%
6	14%
7	12%
8	11%
9	5%
Very satisfied - 10	4%
Average	5.05
Percentage of those who responded	95%

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Not satisfied (1-3)	31%	27%	56%
Not very satisfied (4-5)	23%	23%	24%
Moderately satisfied (6-7)	26%	27%	18%
Satisfied (8-10)	20%	23%	2%
Average	5.05	5.34	3.29

* Among 95% who responded

Comparisons with previous years:

	2017	2016	2015	2014
Average	5.05	4.55	4.00	5.29

2. Who would you like to see as Israel's foreign minister?

(This was an open question. The table only includes those receiving 5% and more)

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Yair Lapid	13%	14%	8%
Tzipi Livni	7%	7%	8%
Benjamin Netanyahu	6%	7%	2%
Avigdor Lieberman	6%	7%	4%
Naftali Bennett	5%	6%	0%
No opinion	39%	37%	51%

3. To what extent are you satisfied with the way in which the Israeli MFA is currently fulfilling its mission?

(On a scale of 1 to 10; 1 is not at all satisfied, 10 is very satisfied)

	Total
Not at all satisfied - 1	13%
2	6%
3	11%
4	12%
5	18%
6	14%
7	13%
8	8%
9	3%
Very satisfied - 10	2%
Average	4.81
Percentage of those who responded	92%

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Not satisfied (1-3)	30%	27%	44%
Not very satisfied (4-5)	30%	30%	34%
Moderately satisfied (6-7)	27%	28%	22%
Satisfied (8-10)	13%	15%	0%
Average	4.81	4.97	3.76

Comparisons with previous years:

	2017	2016	2015	2014
Average	4.81	4.31	4.03	4.80

4. Which move would most significantly strengthen the Israeli MFA?

(Respondents were allowed to provide two answers. This is why the columns exceed 100%)

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Appointing a full-time foreign minister, and restoring authorities to the MFA from other ministries	54%	53%	55%
Formulating clear objectives, goals, and guiding principles for Israeli foreign policy	47%	51%	22%
Sharing more information with the public about the MFA's activities and achievements	25%	24%	31%
Increasing the MFA's influence and involvement in decision-making process	23%	24%	12%
Legislating a bill regulating the status of the MFA, similar to the National Security Council Bill	19%	20%	14%
No opinion	14%	12%	29%

5. To what extent should the Israeli government take into account the implications of its decisions on Diaspora Jewry?

	Total		Jews	Arabs
To a large extent	16%	50%	18%	6%
To a moderate extent	34%		36%	18%
To a small extent	35%	39%	36%	33%
Not at all	4%		3%	8%
No opinion	11%	11%	7%	35%

B. Israel among the Nations

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

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

	Total
Bad - 1	6%
2	4%
3	9%
4	12%
5	16%
6	18%
7	18%
8	11%
9	4%
Very good - 10	2%
Average	5.49
Percentage of those who responded	98%

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Poor (1-3)	19%	16%	32%
Rather poor (4-5)	28%	27%	33%
Rather good (6-7)	36%	38%	26%
Good (8-10)	17%	19%	9%
Average	5.49	5.71	4.19

* Among 98% who responded

Comparisons with previous years:

	2017	2016	2015	2014
Average	5.49	5.01	3.96	5.12

7. Where do you think Israel belongs?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
More in the Middle East	26%	26%	27%
More in Europe	28%	29%	27%
Equally in both Europe and the Middle East	25%	26%	18%
Neither in Europe nor in the Middle East	12%	12%	10%
No opinion	9%	7%	18%

Comparisons with previous years:

	2017	2016	2015	2014
More in the Middle East	26%	29%	27%	28%
More in Europe	28%	26%	31%	25%
Equally in both Europe and the Middle East	25%	23%	26%	28%
Neither in Europe nor in the Middle East	12%	15%	10%	16%
No opinion	9%	7%	6%	3%

8. Do you think that the criticism voiced in the world towards Israel stems primarily from:

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Basic hostility towards the State of Israel	59%	66%	14%
Disagreement with specific policies of the current Israeli government	34%	30%	59%
No opinion	7%	4%	27%

9. To what extent do you think the promotion of Knesset laws that are perceived as weakening democracy undermines Israel's global standing?

	Total		Jews	Arabs
To a large extent	26%	55%	23%	44%
To a moderate extent	29%		31%	20%
To a limited extent	18%	31%	19%	10%
Not at all	13%		14%	8%
No opinion	14%	14%	13%	18%

10. What areas of Israeli foreign relations would you like to learn more about?

(Respondents were allowed to provide two answers. This is why the columns exceed 100%)

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Cooperation between Israel and Arab countries	47%	46%	53%
International initiatives to promote peace	34%	38%	14%
Cooperation in the Mediterranean- for example, on issues related to natural gas findings	32%	32%	33%
The status of Israel-EU relations	27%	25%	41%
The work of the Israeli MFA	18%	20%	4%
None of the above	9%	9%	8%
No opinion	10%	9%	18%

C. Foreign policy priorities and bilateral relations

11. Which of the following foreign policy issues should the State of Israel prioritize in the coming year?

(Respondents were allowed to provide two answers. This is why the columns exceed 100%)

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2016
Relations with moderate Arab states	35%	36%	31%	31%
The Israeli-Palestinian peace process	31%	27%	55%	31%
Countering de-legitimization and the BDS movement	24%	27%	2%	22%
The threats from Iran	20%	22%	10%	12%*
Relations with the US	19%	21%	8%	37%
Relations with Asian countries	18%	20%	8%	14%
Relations with the EU	17%	17%	16%	22%
Relations with Russia	15%	16%	10%	14%
Relations with African countries	3%	2%	8%	3%
None of the above / No opinion	2%	0%	8%	6%

* The answer in 2016 was "Dealing with the Iranian nuclear threat"

12. About two years after the signing of the nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers (the P5+1), do you think that the nuclear threat to Israel has:

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Decreased	10%	7%	24%
Increased	28%	30%	14%
Remained unchanged	52%	53%	46%
No opinion	10%	10%	16%

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

(On a scale of 1-10; 1 is bad, 10 is very good)

	Total
Bad - 1	0%
2	1%
3	3%
4	5%
5	15%
6	15%
7	20%
8	20%
9	14%
Very good - 10	7%
Average	6.88
Percentage of those who responded	97%

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Poor (1-3)	4%	4%	7%
Rather poor (4-5)	20%	17%	36%
Rather good (6-7)	35%	36%	27%
Good (8-10)	41%	43%	30%
Average	6.88	6.96	6.38

* Among 97% who responded

Comparisons with previous years:

	2017	2016	2015	2014
Average	6.88	5.56	5.01	6.09

14. The relations with which countries (except for the US) are the most important to Israel today?

(Respondents were asked to provide three answers. This is why the columns exceed 100%. The table only includes countries receiving 5% and more)

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2016	2015	2014
Russia	51%	52%	43%	45%	41%	33%
Germany	34%	37%	16%	32%	31%	32%
Britain	26%	26%	20%	30%	19%	27%
China	25%	28%	8%	21%	20%	20%
France	20%	21%	14%	25%	14%	16%
Egypt	12%	13%	8%	18%	21%	27%
India	8%	9%	2%	2%	5%	2%
Jordan	7%	7%	12%	5%	10%	3%

Regarding the Palestinian Authority there was a large gap between Jews and Arabs:

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Palestinian Authority	1.5%	0%	10%

15. Who has more influence on current developments in the Middle East, US President Donald Trump or Russian President Vladimir Putin?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Russian President Vladimir Putin	52%	56%	31%
US President Donald Trump	15%	14%	18%
Both equally	21%	20%	24%
None of them	5%	4%	8%
No opinion	7%	6%	19%

16. What in your opinion will better serve the interests of Israel: That the EU becomes stronger or that the EU becomes weaker?

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2016
That the EU becomes stronger	38%	36%	47%	41%
That the EU becomes weaker	37%	39%	22%	34%
No opinion	25%	25%	31%	--

* In 2016, another option was provided: "That there will be no change in the power of the EU". It was chosen by 25% of the respondents.

D. Regional Cooperation

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

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2016	2015	2014
Yes, it is possible	70%	69%	74%	64%	59%	69%
No, it is not possible	23%	24%	14%	26%	36%	28%
No opinion	7%	7%	12%	10%	5%	3%

18. Do you think that a breakthrough in Arab-Israeli relations can be achieved only after progress in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process or regardless of such progress?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Only after progress has been made in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process	39%	36%	58%
Regardless of whether there is progress in the peace process	48%	52%	24%
No opinion	13%	12%	18%

19. On which issues can Israel benefit most from cooperation with other countries in the Middle East?

(Respondents could mention 2 answers. This is why the columns exceed 100%)

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Addressing shared threats, including those posed by the Islamic state and Iran	56%	58%	43%
Political-diplomatic cooperation, promoting agreements with countries in the region Israeli-Palestinian peace process	56%	57%	47%
Business ventures, tourism, and gas exports	35%	35%	35%
Water and Climate	18%	19%	14%
Sports, culture, research, and education	11%	8%	27%
None of the above	3%	3%	2%

20. Do you agree with the view that Israel should seek coordination with neighboring Arab states before taking steps related to the Temple Mount/Al-Aqsa Mosque?

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Agree	46%	44%	60%
Disagree	39%	43%	18%
No opinion	15%	13%	22%

21. In June 2016, Israel and Turkey reached an agreement to mend their relations. Since then, do you think that Israel-Turkey relations have:

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Improved	10%	10%	8%
Deteriorated	19%	20%	16%
Remained unchanged	61%	61%	56%
No opinion	10%	9%	20%

E. The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process

22. In your opinion, do the policies of the current Israeli government:

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Distance a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians	58%	55%	70%
Advance a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinian	10%	10%	10%
No opinion	32%	35%	20%

23. In recent years, Israel has been offered various incentives to advance the peace process. Which of the following will most likely increase your support for the peace process?

(Respondents were asked to provide two answers. This is why the columns exceed 100%)

	Total	Jews	Arabs	2016	2015
Normalization of relations with the Arab world	29%	26%	45%	25%	35%
Security guarantees and arms supplies from the US	15%	14%	20%	19%	23%
A significant upgrade in ties with the EU	14%	14%	18%	18%	19%
An incentive package that includes all of the above	57%	60%	39%	42%	20%
None of the above	17%	17%	24%	23%	29%

The incentive which was ranked as 1st priority:

	2017	2016	2015
Normalization of relations with the Arab world	26%	22%	27%
Security guarantees and arms supplies from the US	6%	5%	15%
A significant upgrade in ties with the EU	5%	8%	11%
An incentive package that includes all of the above	46%	42%	20%
None of the above	17%	23%	27%

24. In your opinion, what will serve Israel's interests better:

	Total	Jews	Arabs
The continued intra-Palestinian split between the West Bank and Gaza	50%	55%	29%
Renewed unification between the West Bank and Gaza	24%	20%	45%
No opinion	26%	25%	26%

25. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The Arabs citizens of Israel should have a more central role in efforts to promote peace between Israel and the Palestinians"

	Total	Jews	Arabs
Agree	59%	60%	51%
Disagree	26%	26%	22%
No opinion	15%	14%	27%

For Further Information:

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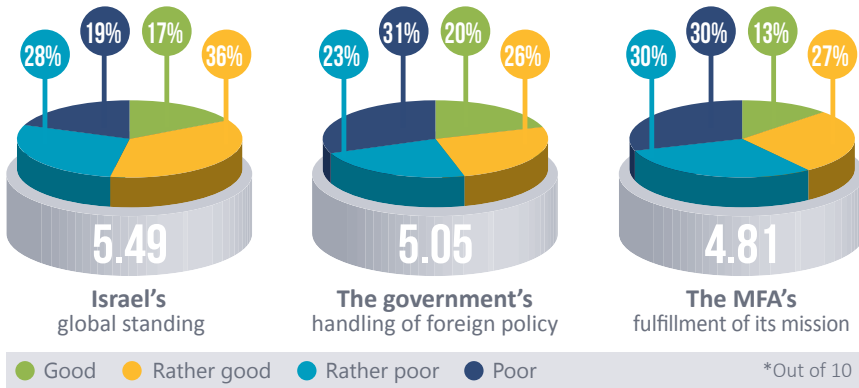
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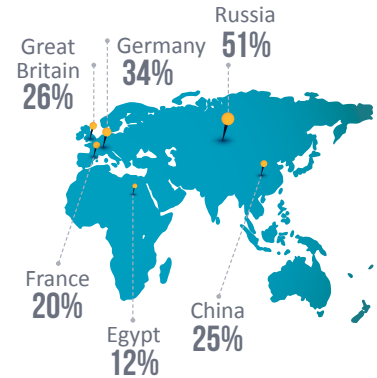
The 2017 Israeli Foreign Policy Index - Key Findings

General Assessments

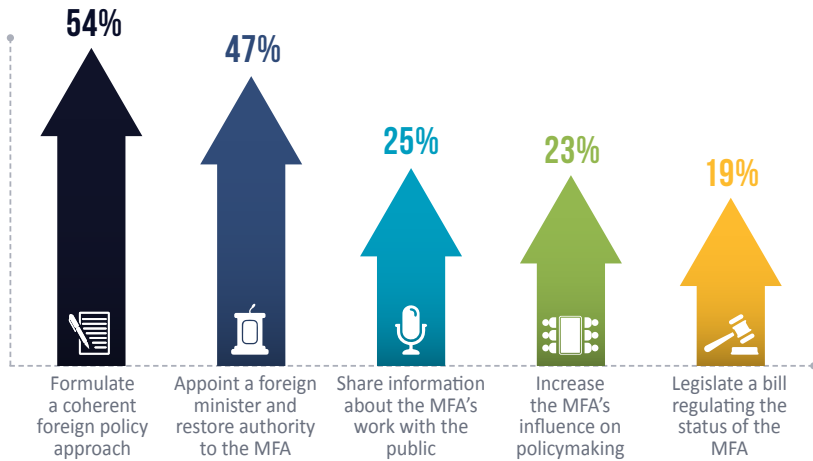
Average ratings on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high)



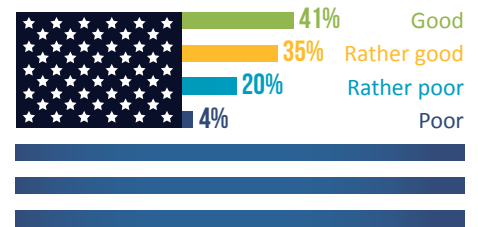
The most important countries for Israel in the world (except for the US):



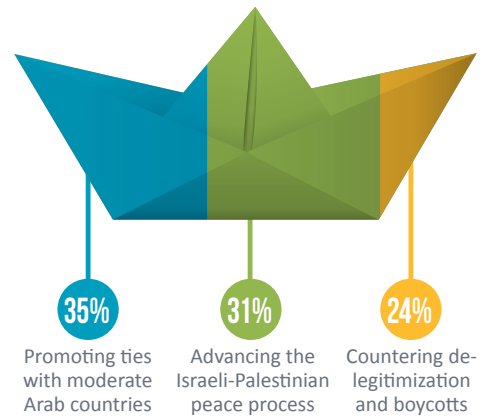
How can the Israeli MFA be strengthened?



The state of Israel-US relations: 6.88 (Out of 10)



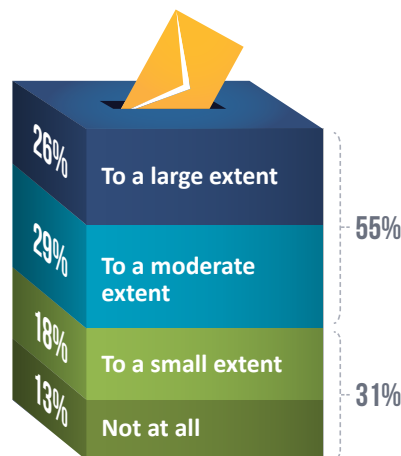
Israel's top foreign policy priorities:



The policy of the current Israeli government:



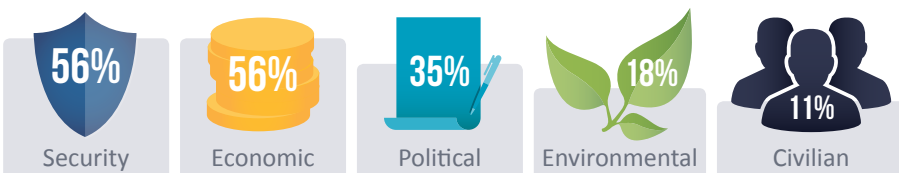
The advancement of laws perceived as weakening Israel's democracy undermines Israel's global standing:



Regional cooperation between Israel and Middle Eastern countries is:



From which type of cooperation with Middle Eastern countries Israel can benefit the most?



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