



MITVIM
The Israeli Institute for
Regional Foreign Policies

Findings of a Mitvim Poll on Israel's Foreign Policy



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The majority of the Israeli public believes Israel's foreign policy is more reactive than proactive and that it is not conducted according to clearly defined principles. A recent poll of **Mitvim - The Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies** found that the Israeli public thinks the country's foreign policy relies too much on its relationship with the US, and agrees that Israel should use more diplomacy instead of force. The majority of the public recognizes a need to involve the Arab citizens of Israel in a more central role in improving Israel's relations with other Middle Eastern countries, and agreed that incentives from the international community will be more effective for mobilizing support for the peace process rather than sanctions.

The poll findings show that most of the Israeli public, and especially the Arab sector, thinks Israel should offer assistance to other countries in promoting peace processes, based on its own experience throughout the years. Significant public support is given to assist Turkey in the advancement of its peace processes with, for example, Cyprus, the Kurds, or Armenia, as part of the mending of Israeli-Turkish ties. The poll shows that the Israeli public is divided over whether Israel belongs more to Europe, the Middle East, or both.

The poll was initiated by the Mitvim Institute and was conducted by the Rafi Smith Institute on 28-29 October 2013 among 500 men and women, as a representative sample of the Israeli adult population (Jewish and Arab sectors). The margin of error is 4.5%.

According to **Dr. Nimrod Goren**, Chairman of the Mitvim Institute, "The poll findings show that the Israeli public is interested in a new type of foreign policy, one that differs from the period Avigdor Lieberman's previous term as Israel's foreign minister. Israel needs a new foreign policy paradigm that regards peace and regional belonging as top-priority national projects, emphasizes engagement and cooperation, values pluralism and tolerance, seeks benefits in Israel's unique multi-regional location, is open-minded towards the international community, and seeks opportunities for the improvement of regional relations".

Dr. Ehud Eiran, from the Mitvim Institute and Haifa University, claims that "it is symbolic that the poll is published in the month of November, when Israel marks the Balfour Declaration and the UN resolution regarding the establishment of a Jewish state. These events marked a change in the discourse about the return to Zion - from a discourse based on biblical promise, to one based on international law and on interaction with the international community. Today, a majority of Israelis want to belong to the family of nations, and to stop being a 'people dwelling alone'. In contrast to Israel's traditional policies, the poll findings show that most Israelis want their country to be a more integral part of the regional and global systems".

The poll's main findings are:

1. In your opinion, does Israel conduct its foreign policy with a clearly defined set of principles?

	TOTAL	Jewish Population	Arab Population
With a clearly defined set of principles	31%	30%	36%
Without a clearly defined set of principles	47%	51%	27%
No opinion	22%	19%	37%

2. Would you define Israel's foreign policy as more proactive or reactive?

	TOTAL	Jewish Population	Arab Population
More proactive	16%	14%	21%
More reactive	52%	55%	37%
Equally proactive and reactive	6%	6%	8%
No opinion	26%	25%	34%

3. Relations with the United States are a keystone to Israeli foreign policy. In your opinion, does Israel rely on its relationship with the United States:

	TOTAL	Jewish Population	Arab Population
Too much	45%	44%	48%
Adequately	33%	35%	24%
Too little	8%	7%	12%
No opinion	14%	14%	16%

4. In principle, should Israeli foreign policy be more heavily reliant upon the use of force or the employment of diplomatic measures?

	TOTAL	Jewish Population	Arab Population
Use of force	18%	18%	15%
Employment of diplomatic measures	57%	56%	62%
Force and diplomacy in a similar manner	9%	10%	6%
No opinion	16%	16%	17%

5. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “The Arabs citizens of Israel should have a more central role in improving Israel’s relations with the countries of the Middle East.”

	TOTAL	Jewish Population	Arab Population
Agree	59%	55%	74%
Disagree	27%	31%	12%
No opinion	14%	14%	14%

6. What would increase your support of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, if the international community imposes sanctions on Israel in order to reach an agreed upon agreement with the Palestinians or if it offers Israel incentives?

	TOTAL	Jewish Population	Arab Population
Sanctions	8%	7%	9%
Incentives	44%	44%	48%
Sanctions and incentives equally	3%	2%	7%
Neither sanctions nor incentives	20%	23%	6%
No opinion	25%	24%	30%

7. Israel's practice is to offer humanitarian aid to countries in the world that face the tragedy of natural disasters. Should Israel, based on its experience at advancing its own peace processes, offer its services also to those countries seeking conflict resolution?

	TOTAL	Jewish Population	Arab Population
Sanctions	49%	43%	78%
Incentives	38%	45%	6%
No opinion	13%	12%	16%

8. If Turkey asks Israel, as part of the mending of Israeli-Turkish ties, to assist it in the advancement of its own peace processes with, for example, Cyprus, the Kurds, or Armenia, should Israel in your opinion be receptive or dismissive to this proposal?

	TOTAL	Jewish Population	Arab Population
Be receptive	54%	51%	66%
Be dismissive	25%	28%	12%
No opinion	21%	21%	22%

9. In your opinion, does Israel belong more to the Middle East, or to Europe? Is it equally a part of both, or does it belong to neither?

	TOTAL	Jewish Population	Arab Population
Belongs more to the Middle East	23%	24%	17%
Belongs more to Europe	23%	21%	33%
Equally a part of both	27%	27%	26%
Belongs to neither	16%	17%	11%
No opinion	11%	11%	13%

For further information:

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