

# ISRAEL

## Party Portrait

Israel was established in 1948 as the national homeland for the Jewish people. Following the 1967 war, Israel annexed the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem and began civil and military administration of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Israel withdrew from Area A of the West Bank in 1993 following the Oslo Accords, and from Gaza in 2005. Attempts to negotiate a final status agreement have failed since then. As a small country, the only democracy in an unstable region, a Jewish nation surrounded by Arab and Muslim states, Israel believes it must maintain impressive deterrence capabilities and military power.

## Key Interests

- Weaken Iran-Syria-Hezbollah axis and radical Salafi groups, strengthen moderate Sunni states, weaken Russia's support of Syria, prevent Iran nuclear capabilities, weaken Iran's economic/military support to Hezbollah, strengthen Jordan
- Revive Israel-Palestinian negotiations, promote refugee regional solution with minimal political cost
- Achieve recognition by Arab states, weaken boycott attempts, recovering international reputation, maintain effective diplomacy, maintain access to water, natural resources

## Sources of Leverage

**Military** – Possesses substantial military power with offensive and defensive capabilities and military, security industry. Nuclear-armed.  
**Technology** – 1 of 6 global cyber powers, increases diplomatic leverage  
**Natural Resources** – Preferential access to aquifers in West Bank  
**Economic** – Export-oriented state, limited natural resources and small market. Economic strength mainly from science/tech sectors, innovative capabilities and startup industry  
**Political** – Strong alliance with the US despite its international reputation deteriorating in recent years

## Regional Strategy

Help stabilize Jordanian and Egyptian regimes with parallel support from Saudi Arabia, coordinate with Russia on effects/spillover of Syrian war to Israeli territory, renew/expand relations with Turkey, and improve coordination with US administration. Cultural, political, and humanitarian “hasbara” (public relations) to portray Israel in a positive light in international conversations and delegitimize detractors. It presses for a more favorable and permanent nuclear deal with Iran while maintaining the status quo in relation to Palestinians and continuing to build within/expand settlements.

## Powerful Individuals

Benjamin Netanyahu (Prime Minister), Avigdor Liberman (Defense Minister), Naftali Bennett (Education Minister), Yair Lapid (Leader of Yesh Atid Party), Yitzak Herzog (Head of opposition and leader of the Zionist Union), Leaders of the Settlers

## Potential Negotiation Moves

**Deepen US Relationship** - Build relationship with new US administration while continuing to build settlements and secure borders  
**New Regional Coalition** - Build coalition or create bilateral agreements with countries such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey for increased regional legitimacy  
**Control Resources** - Leverage control of PA tax funds and control of movement within and out of the West Bank as bargaining chip  
**Integrate “outside-in” and “inside-out”** - Aim to create a triangular structure of concessions and profits between Israel, the PA and moderate Sunni Arab states.  
**Internal moves** - Change coalition government and consolidate fragmented Israeli society.

## Internal Conflicts

Majority of Israeli public supports the “Two State Solution.” Right-wing groups support annexation of Palestinian territories, while some left-wing groups support a “One State” or binational solution. Center-left public believes the Israeli national interest is to act urgently towards a peace agreement and/or disengagement, through negotiations or unilateral measures; center-right groups counter that Israel should maintain the status quo until circumstances change. Right wing advocates for tough military actions to defeat terror, left wing calls for diplomatic/political measures to achieve peaceful resolution. The political structure produces fragile coalition governments with excessive power to small political groups. Religious-secular divide: extreme right is orthodox and rejects the separation of religion and state; central and left wing groups hold more secular liberal views.

## Memberships

IAEA, MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE, OECD, UN

## Allies

GERMANY, NATO, UNITED STATES

## Partners

EGYPT Government, ERITREA, EUROPEAN UNION, FRANCE, HOLY SEE, INDIA, JORDAN, KURDS of Iraq, RUSSIA, SOUTH SUDAN, TURKEY, UNITED KINGDOM

## Rivals

PALESTINE Fatah, IRAQ State of Law Coalition, SAUDI ARABIA, UNITED NATIONS

## Adversaries

AQAP, ARAB LEAGUE, EGYPT Muslim Brotherhood, IRAN, ISIS, LEBANON Government, LEBANON Hezbollah, PALESTINE Civil Society, PALESTINE Hamas, SUDAN, SYRIA Government, YEMEN Government, YEMEN Houthis

## Active Armed Opponents

N/A

## Proxy

N/A

## External Sponsor

N/A

## Aid Recipient

HUMANITARIAN ACTORS, SOUTH SUDAN

## Aid Donor

UNITED STATES