



THE ISRAEL  
DEMOCRACY  
INSTITUTE

# Annual Report 2025



**//** We are living through difficult days in which democracy is under strain, and we are no longer certain where we are headed...we [also] find ourselves in a moment of profound tension with our ultra-Orthodox and Arab brothers and sisters—though we are destined to live together, whether we wish it or not... I believe we must draw our ultra-Orthodox brothers closer and say to them: ‘know that in forty years, when the majority may no longer identify as Zionist, the future of the State of Israel will rest upon your shoulders. You must be partners in both rights and responsibilities...’ We know that Israel, as the state of the Jewish people, includes citizens who are not Jewish. Therefore, we must build bridges to Israel’s Arab citizens... We need democracy—without it, the Jewish people cannot survive in their land. **//**

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**Remarks made by IDI Honorary Chair and Joan and Irwin Jacobs Distinguished Fellow, the 10th President of Israel Reuven (Ruvi) Rivlin, at the Annual Conference of the Joan and Irwin Jacobs Center for Shared Society**

**December 2025**



# Message from the President and the Chairman of the Board >



Throughout 2025, the State of Israel faced unprecedented challenges. It was a year of continued war and sacrifice but also one of astonishing feats on the battlefield and enormous relief at the release of the remaining hostages. 2025 marked the beginning of a lengthy recovery process from Israel's longest war but also the alarming resumption of efforts by the sitting government to introduce controversial, far-reaching changes to the nation's delicate system of checks and balances. If anything, the gradual return to routine underscored the critical importance of fortifying Israel's governing institutions and restoring public trust in them.

In an atmosphere of deepening polarization and renewed efforts to weaken the institutional checks on executive power, the Institute did its best to serve as the "adult in the room," a nonpartisan beacon of stability, professionalism and concern for the common good. Simply put, the excessive concentration of power in any one branch of government threatens the rights of all Israelis regardless of their political persuasion. Our mission has been—and remains—to ensure the rule of law, strengthen the separation of powers and safeguard the liberties of all citizens.

In response to these challenges, over the past year the Institute operated along two complementary tracks. On the one hand, our team worked with government officials, opinion shapers and civil society leaders to defend beleaguered democratic institutions in the face of repeated efforts to weaken them, presenting decision makers and the public at large with balanced alternatives to reckless reform proposals and insights grounded in comparative research. At the same time, our entire staff invested substantial efforts in our "day after" initiative—an ambitious attempt to turn the tragedy of October 7th into an opportunity for national renewal by laying the conceptual policy foundations for consensual reform in the aftermath of the war.

The "day after" plans developed at IDI over the past year include: a comprehensive proposal for democratic stabilization and advancing a much-needed constitutional framework; a plan to counter the polarization amplified by social media; a blueprint

for decentralization of power and strengthening of local government; a program to streamline government and rehabilitate the civil service; and a disciplined fiscal roadmap to balance heightened security needs with continued investment in civilian infrastructure. We also set out to address the egregious problem of violence and crime in Arab society by launching a pioneering field initiative to test new approaches to law enforcement within Arab communities.

A major priority of our policy work this year was the ultra-Orthodox draft question. The war and the extreme pressure it created on hundreds of thousands of IDF reservists convinced most Israelis that the historic arrangements that allowed for ultra-Orthodox separatism cannot endure—for the sake of Israel's security and economic vitality. During the public debate surrounding a new military enlistment law, our experts advised decision makers and civil society organizations and contributed to efforts to resolve the crisis in a manner that addressed Israel's security needs and upheld the principle of equality. In parallel, the team worked to formulate a comprehensive new paradigm for reshaping relations between the state and the ultra-Orthodox community. This new framework is grounded in a new civic contract that abolishes sectoral subsidies, makes state funding contingent on adherence to the law, and provides genuine incentives for national service and work.

In response to the deepening polarization within Israeli society—reflected throughout our 2025 Israeli Democracy Index—we convened cross-sector roundtables and conferences on issues at the heart of the public agenda. In a climate of heated public discourse, the Institute's distinctive role as a reputable convener has become even more important—providing a rare forum for civil debate and the respectful exchange of diverse opinions in the service of the public interest.

We thank our partners and supporters, in Israel in the United States and around the world, for their generous support at a moment of profound uncertainty. The stakes for the future of our people and our state have never been greater.

 **Amir Elstein**  
Chairman of the Board

 **Yohanan Plesner**  
President, Israel Democracy Institute

# IDI's Organizational Values >



# Research and Policy Centers >



## Center for Democratic Values and Institutions

Strengthening Israel's constitutional foundations and preserving the integrity of its democratic institutions.



## Center for Security and Democracy

Developing policy frameworks to overcome security challenges while preserving a free, law-abiding society.



## Center for Governance and the Economy

Advancing structural reforms that strengthen Israel's economy and enhance good governance.



## Viterbi Family Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research

Collecting, analyzing, and disseminating empirical data on Israeli public opinion to identify political and social trends.



## The Joan and Irwin Jacobs Center for Shared Society

Easing the tensions between religion and state and promoting social cohesion and a common civic denominator among Israel's diverse communities.

## IDI's Goals >

01  
→

Bolster the values and institutions of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state in the spirit of Israel's Declaration of Independence.

02  
→

Improve government performance so as to strengthen public trust in the democratic system and contribute to sustainable economic growth.

03  
→

Cultivate social cohesion and solidarity, political participation, shared values, and a common civic denominator among the different communities that make up the mosaic of Israeli society.

## Our Model of Impact >

The Israel Democracy Institute works to inform policy and legislation and enrich public discourse through rigorous applied research, guided by a nonpartisan commitment to the public good.  
**Our impact model advances these goals through three stages:**



Conduct excellent applied research to generate actionable proposals for reform.

Convene relevant stakeholders for a rigorous, practical debate on these proposals.

Work with partners in government, civil society, the business sector and the media to advance our policy recommendations and ensure their implementation in the field.

# Key Initiatives in 2025 >

## Constitutional Principles



IDI's constitutional experts served as an anchor of professional support for key stakeholders confronting initiatives that risked undermining Israel's democratic foundations in time of war. Through legal opinions, research-based policy papers, and sustained public engagement, the experts of the Institute's Defense of Democratic Values and Institutions program provided rigorous factual, comparative, and legal analysis of measures that threatened to undermine the rule of law, the separation of powers, judicial independence, and the liberties of all Israelis.

The program's research team was **a prominent voice in the Knesset and in the media**, and served as a trusted source of **knowledge for civil society organizations** seeking to act on an informed basis. The Institute's legal, economic, and comparative analyses were **cited by senior officials across multiple agencies** on issues ranging from the jurisdiction of the Attorney General and the procedure of political appointments to budgetary transparency and equal representation. In parallel, the team **finalized a package of detailed policy recommendations** to help Israel bounce back from the democratic backsliding of recent years and move towards adoption of a constitutional framework, including reforms in all three branches of government. In doing so, the program has established the groundwork for democratic renewal that must accompany the broader process of national recovery in the aftermath of the war.



Democracy on the Frontlines Conference,  
13.1.2025



People Managing People Through Machines Conference,  
8.9.2025

## Regulating the Digital Sphere



The Program for Democracy in the Digital Age operated at the forefront of efforts to address how artificial intelligence is reshaping institutions and promises to upend the public and private sectors with as yet unknown implications for democracy and individual liberties. The program **completed a landmark policy proposal for regulating social media platforms** designed to mitigate the harmful impact of coordinated disinformation networks and algorithmic polarization capabilities on Israeli society. In parallel, the team launched an **innovative study of the effects of AI on the workplace**. “People Managing People Through Machines” was the first of its kind in Israel to conceptualize and map the impact of artificial intelligence on workplace relations. The project combined surveys, focus groups, interviews, legal research, and a forward-looking role-playing workshop that explored scenarios in which people work alongside non-human intelligent systems, to develop a conceptual framework and policy recommendations. In partnership with JDC, the program also completed an important study examining how to protect specific population groups—children, older adults, Arab citizens, and the ultra-Orthodox community—in the age of artificial intelligence, mapping emerging risks and proposing potential policy interventions.

In the field of broadcasting and communications regulation, the program provided legal opinions on the draft Broadcast Media Bill, participated in Knesset deliberations, and convened strategic discussions on the shift of advertising budgets from local Israeli media outlets to global technology platforms. In preparation for 2026, an election year, the program **developed a comprehensive mapping of risks and detailed scenarios** within the digital influence landscape and authored a new study examining the intersection between the use of voter data and Israel’s new privacy legislation. Finally, in a year marked by rising antisemitism and increasingly polarized narratives surrounding Israel and the Jewish people, program experts participated in leading international forums—including United Nations bodies and the Council of Europe—to discuss the **relationship between technology policy and antisemitism**.



## A New Paradigm for Relations Between the State and the Ultra-Orthodox



The program's experts on the ultra-Orthodox community played a central role in shaping public and policy discussions concerning relations between the State of Israel and its growing ultra-Orthodox community across security, economic, sociological, and constitutional dimensions. This work was particularly influential in the debate over ultra-Orthodox enlistment, which became especially urgent in light of the war, the expiration of the exemption provision in the Military Service Law, and the continued non-enlistment of most ultra-Orthodox men. The program **provided decision makers, public influencers, and civil society organizations with data-driven research, objective analysis, and practical policy recommendations.** Researchers participated in ongoing deliberations of the **Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee** and documented legislative efforts to circumvent the existing law and promote mass non-enlistment through legislation framed as reform but in fact dedicated to preserving the status quo. The Institute's work **informed Supreme Court rulings, media coverage, and concrete proposals adopted** by leaders from across the political spectrum. Owing to its extensive knowledge base and policy expertise, the Institute has become a central actor in this field, and its researchers serve as advisers on the issue in public committees and important professional forums.

During the year, the program **completed a comprehensive proposal for a new paradigm** governing relations between the state and the ultra-Orthodox community. The previous integration model—based primarily on voluntary incentives and incremental change—proved insufficient in the face of political pressures, demographic trends, and mounting security and economic pressures. As a direct result of the war, Israel now faces a narrow window of opportunity to initiate reforms necessary to preserve its prosperity and social cohesion. The proposed paradigm calls for a reduction of communal autonomy and special arrangements in areas such as education, military service, taxation, welfare, and banking; a reduction in redistributive arrangements under which the economic consequences of ultra-Orthodox lifestyle choices are borne disproportionately by non-ultra-Orthodox Jews; and turning from a separatist communal mindset to one of individual responsibility.

Joan and Irwin Jacobs Center for Shared Society Conference,  
28.12.2025



Eco Governance Conference,  
11.3.25



## Strengthening the Civil Service

The Program for Civil Service Reform continued its work to strengthen Israel's civil service in close collaboration with government ministries and civil society partners. Among its key achievements in 2025: **developing a structured framework for senior public-sector appointments**, including standardized criteria and professional search **committees**; **establishing a human capital task force in partnership with the Civil Service Commission** to improve employee mobility and streamline mid-level recruitment processes; and **supporting long-term strategic planning in government ministries and local governments**, efforts that led to legislative proposals and government decisions. In addition, a three-year effort to promote public-sector innovation yielded tangible results. Following extensive collaboration with several government ministries, **the government published an official "innovation guide,"** drawing significantly on the Institute's research and policy recommendations, and approved the establishment of a government innovation center.

**Improving the Appointment Process for the Civil Service Commissioner** – IDI researchers recommended that the next Civil Service Commissioner—the official responsible for overseeing Israel's civil service—be appointed through a professional search committee. This recommendation was reflected in the position submitted by the Attorney General to the Supreme Court. IDI research was cited three times in the High Court of Justice ruling issued in September 2025 on the matter and formed a central component of the Court's reasoning.

**Advancing Women's Representation in the Civil Service Commission** – In February, the High Court of Justice cited IDI research documenting record-low representation of women among Directors-General in the current government in a ruling on senior civil service appointments. IDI's experts also presented their findings to the Knesset Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality. Following the ruling, IDI submitted policy recommendations to the Civil Service Commission; in December, the Commission adopted a new procedure expanding representation requirements and incorporating key IDI proposals, including proactive candidate searches, a preference mechanism in cases of equal qualifications, and mandatory consideration of representation throughout the appointment process.

# Key > Initiatives



Eli Hurvitz Conference on Economy and Society, 5.7.2025

## Strengthening Political Parties and Advancing Electoral Reform



IDI's proposal to introduce a personal component into Israel's election system—allowing voters to influence the ranking of candidates within party lists using a semi-open ballot—**gained support from political parties across the political spectrum. A multi-party Knesset caucus to advance the idea will be launched in 2026.**

## Safeguarding Electoral Integrity



IDI launched an initiative in late 2025 to map emerging risks to electoral integrity, and to develop appropriate policy responses, with particular attention to new artificial intelligence-based threats originating abroad and domestically. As part of this effort, IDI researchers met with political leaders, professional staff in the Knesset and government, representatives of the Central Elections Committee, and numerous civil society organizations, and **formulated a comprehensive and practical plan to help ensure free and fair elections in 2026.**

## Deepening Cooperation with Government Bodies



IDI expanded its strategic cooperation with central government bodies in the fields of economic policy, including the Ministry of Finance, the Israel Tax Authority, the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), the Bank of Israel, the Ministry of Labor, and the National Insurance Institute. IDI's deepened collaboration with the CBS enabled researchers in IDI's Center for Governance and the Economy to base their work on the most reliable and high-quality data available. During the year, **the CBS appointed IDI experts to a number of professional committees, including the Public Council for Statistics and the Committee on Business Statistics.** In collaboration with the CBS, IDI contributed to the launch of Israel's first national survey on the adoption of artificial intelligence in the business sector.



Democracy on the Frontlines Conference, 13.1.25

## Assisting Evacuees and the Self-Employed During the War



IDI contributed to the **removal of long-standing barriers to the transfer of wage data** from the National Insurance Institute to the Central Bureau of Statistics, granting policymakers and civil society organizations access to actionable, up-to-date economic data on evacuees and other populations affected by the war. IDI researchers also **advanced policy research on protecting the rights of self-employed workers during times of crisis**, which was presented at the 2025 Eli Hurvitz Conference on Economy and Society. As a consequence, the National Insurance Institute established an advisory committee that began work on formulating draft legislation to strengthen their social safety net in times of national emergency.

## Strengthening Local Government



Recommendations by IDI's Local Government Project **served as the basis for legislative proposals** concerning compensation for city council members and for Ministry of Interior regulations requiring the full-time employment of municipal auditors. **IDI research on local government was cited 28 times in a High Court of Justice ruling** concerning the "Arnona Fund"—a mechanism governing the redistribution of municipal property tax revenues. The ruling underscored the importance of anchoring the relationship between central and local government in a Basic Law, which is currently being developed by IDI's local government team.

## Promoting Public Security and Professional Law Enforcement



Researchers in IDI's newly established Democratic Law Enforcement Project **founded a senior police leadership forum dedicated to promoting strategic thinking and professionalism in Israel's national police force**. The project team participated in the legislative process to amend the law regulating the municipal policing framework (an arrangement that coordinates cooperation between local authorities and national police in community-level enforcement), **took part in numerous discussions in the Knesset National Security Committee, and provided proposals and recommendations for revising the legislation**.

IDI researchers also participated in Knesset deliberations concerning the regulation of local security patrol units operating within municipalities, submitting formal opinions and convening a multi-sector roundtable on the issue. The project also continued to monitor and contribute to legislative processes concerning firearm licensing.

# Key > Initiatives



Annual Conference on Security and Democracy, 25.11.2025

## Safeguarding Freedom of Expression, Protest, Individual and Minority Rights



During the war, IDI worked to emphasize the importance of protecting freedom of protest and expression, as decision-makers weighed removing safeguards for freedom of expression and minority rights in the context of incitement investigations. IDI researchers demonstrated how excessive measures ostensibly designed to enhance security could undermine civil liberties without materially strengthening counterterrorism efforts. Following **sustained engagement in Knesset committees, with media outlets, and with professional stakeholders**, legislators introduced a substantive amendment into the Counterterrorism Bill requiring approval at a senior level before the initiation of certain police investigations.

## Strengthening the Police Complaints Review System



Researchers in IDI's Program for Safeguarding Democratic Values and Institutions worked to advance reforms to the system for reviewing complaints against police officers within the Police Internal Investigations Department (PIID), the Ministry of Justice unit responsible for investigating alleged police misconduct. The team advanced policy proposals and formulated recommendations aimed at safeguarding the independence and professionalism of the PIID and minimizing risks of politicization. These efforts followed structural changes separating the PIID from other law enforcement bodies and placing the appointment of its director under a designated selection committee. IDI researchers advanced this policy approach within the professional committee appointed by the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General—whose subsequent report cited the Institute's research team—as well as in engagement with members of the relevant Knesset committee and through the publication of formal position papers. **The bill underwent significant revisions between its original draft and the version approved** in its first reading in the Knesset.



Arab Society in Israel at a Crossroads: Challenges and Opportunities Conference, 10.2.26

## Preparing for Climate Change



On the basis of policy recommendations developed jointly by IDI's Climate Project and the Ministry of Energy to promote innovation and energy security, the **government approved the establishment of a Hydrogen and Innovation Valley initiative in the Negev** focused on clean-energy innovation and hydrogen technologies. In parallel, members of IDI's Climate Project **worked with a number of government ministries to suggest revisions to Israel's carbon tax framework and its national climate targets under the Paris Agreement.** Building on a joint effort of IDI and six government ministries to formulate a national plan for transition to renewable energy, the government approved a new regulation requiring the installation of solar panels on the roofs of new public buildings.

## Ensuring Security and Prosperity for Arab Society



In response to the missile attacks of Hezbollah, IDI's Program on Arab Society published a comprehensive review examining gaps in protective infrastructure for Arab communities faced with missile and unmanned aerial threats, **helping to bring key shortcomings to the attention of government and security decision-makers.** The team also worked to mitigate proposed reductions to the government budgets allocated for the socioeconomic development of Arab society. This advocacy, conducted in partnership with other civil society organizations, **resulted in the reduction of planned budget cuts from NIS 3 billion to NIS 220 million.** The Program also published the 2025 Statistical Yearbook of Arab Society in Israel in collaboration with the Authority for the Economic Development of Arab Society within the Ministry for Social Equality and the Advancement of Women. **The Yearbook constitutes the most comprehensive data repository on Arab society in Israel,** containing data across key domains including demography, quality of life, violence and crime, employment, health, and education.

## Advancing Democratic Civic Competence in Education



The Education for Democracy Policy program promotes an innovative approach emphasizing democracy as a foundational concept that pervades the entire curriculum and every part of student life. Grounded in the premise that democratic civic competence is an essential skill for citizens of the future, especially in light of the defining trends of our time - among them the erosion of trust in democratic values and institutions, the widespread use of social media and AI, and varied states of emergency - program experts are **developing the foundation for the advancement of democratic civic competence in Israel's education system.** This past year was marked by the practical implementation of this concept into action plans across diverse organizations and institutions, including **a teacher-training academic institution, a diverse nationwide school network, Arab and Jewish local authorities, and civil society organizations.** In addition, the program's work in advancing digital literacy and the skillset to decipher fact from fiction online has received numerous references in official policy documents and in the media, and the program's "FAKE OR NOT" learning module was adapted for the age of AI.

# Taking the National Pulse >

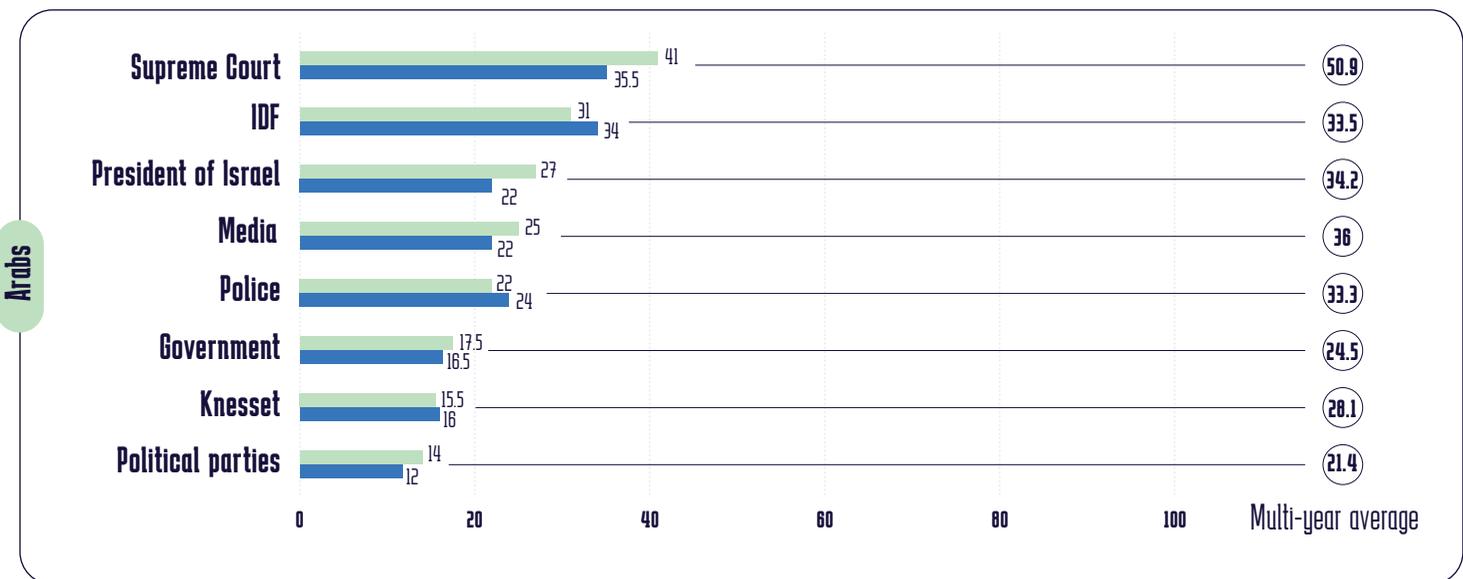
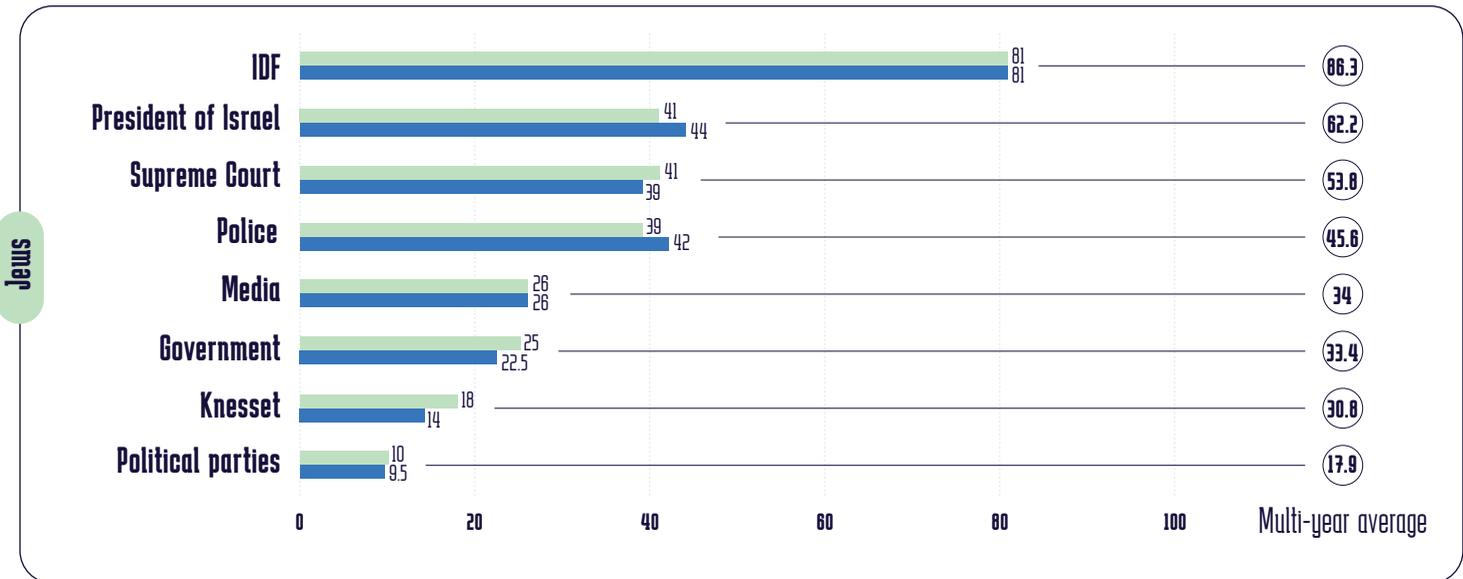
Throughout the year, IDI's Viterbi Family Center for Public Opinion Research monitored public attitudes on Israel's democracy in monthly public opinion surveys and publication of the **23rd Israeli Democracy Index**.

This year's findings point to low levels of trust in political institutions, restored trust in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), and increasing tensions between political camps.

These findings were presented to President Isaac Herzog and continue to serve as a key resource for policymakers, the media, and civil society organizations.

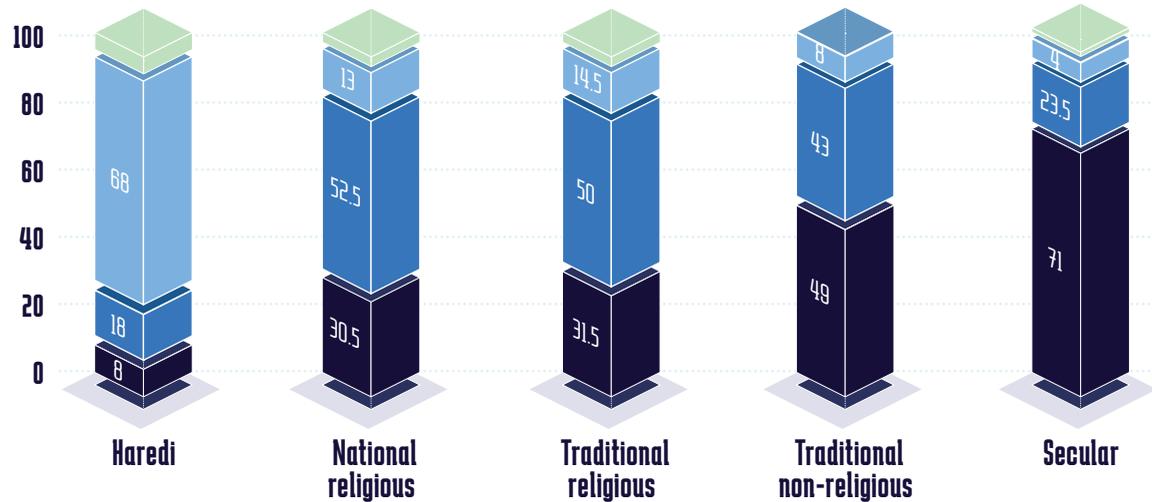
## Trust in each of the following institutions

2025 2024

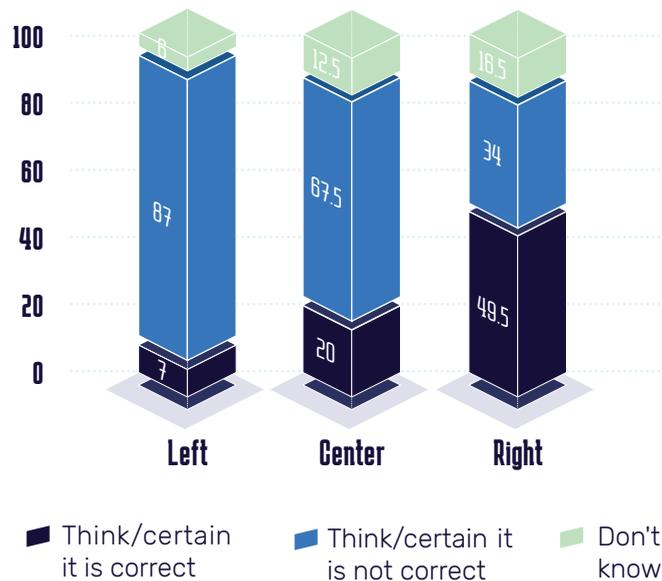


✳ Given the fact that, due to the war, the IDF is in need of a very large number of soldiers, what is the correct solution regarding the conscription of Haredim? (Jews; %)

- Don't know
- Leave things as they are (a minority of Haredi men voluntarily enlist)
- Draft those young Haredi men who are not engaged in Torah study and are enrolled at "dropout yeshivot"
- Draft all young Haredi men, with the exception of a small number of outstanding yeshiva students



✳ In the current circumstances, in your opinion, is it correct or not correct at this time to advance the judicial overhaul initiated by Justice Minister Yariv Levin? (% Jews, October 2025)



✳ Agree that a state commission of inquiry is the most appropriate mechanism for investigating the events of October 7 (Jews; %)



# By the Numbers >



**668**

meetings with with Members of Knesset and government ministers, senior professional officials, and civil society leaders and organizations



**163**

appearances before Knesset committees



**159**

publications and expert policy and legal opinions



**112**

lectures delivered by IDI scholars



**11**

government tenders and competitive RFPs won



**99**

conferences, policy forums, and public policy seminars

## Israeli Media



**1,456**

mentions across Israeli media



**382**

television and radio interviews



**403**

print publications, including 148 opinion pieces and columns



**671**

publications on news sites



**40** million NIS

in estimated media exposure (USD 13 million)

## Website



**36.4 million**  
page views



**814,000**  
unique visitors



**2,150**  
daily visitors  
on average

## Social Media



**127,100**  
followers across  
platforms



**18 million**  
impressions of  
IDI content

## YouTube



**2.3 million**  
cumulative  
views



**660**  
videos  
published

### Most Viewed Videos

- > **1,050,130** Job Interview in the AI Era
- > **685,000** "New Order: Your Sons are our Sons, with Carmit Palty Katzir" Podcast Video
- > **670,000** Disobeying the High Court of Justice is a Red Line

## IDI's New Podcast

### "New Order with Yohanan Plesner"



**24**  
episodes



**910**  
followers



**24,200**  
listens

## International Media

### International Social Media Exposure



**932,000**  
Facebook



**333,900**  
Instagram



**9.9 million**  
X



**9,000**  
international media mentions

- > **276** in leading global outlets, including The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal



**25** | international briefings

# Core Team and Leadership >

## Senior Management



**Yohanan Plesner**  
President



**Prof. Suzie Navot**  
Vice President, Research



**Dr. Jesse Ferris**  
Vice President, Strategy

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**Daphna Aviram-Nitzan**  
Center for Governance and  
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**Adv. Anat Thon Ashkenazy**  
Center for Democratic  
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Joan and Irwin Jacobs  
Center for Shared Society



**Dr. Eran Shamir-Borer**  
Center for Security and  
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## Senior Fellows



**Prof. Tamar Hermann**  
Academic Director, Viterbi Family Center for  
Public Opinion and Policy Research



**Prof. Nathan Sussman**  
Center for Governance and the Economy, Guest  
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Joan and Irwin Jacobs Center for Shared Society



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Center for Democratic Values and Institutions



**Prof. Gideon Rahat**  
Center for Governance and the Economy



**Dr. Tehilla Shwartz Altshuler**  
Head, Democracy in the Digital Age Program,  
Center for Democratic Values and Institutions



**Prof. Yuval Shany**  
Center for Security and Democracy

## Program Heads



**Gilad Be'ery**  
Economic Reform Program



**Ronny Barboy**  
Ultra-Orthodox in Israel Program



**Adv. Rita Golstein-Galperin**  
Civil Service Reform Program



**Dr. Tammy Hoffman**  
Education for Democracy  
Policy Program



**Adv. Edna Harel Fisher**  
Public Corruption Program



**Dr. Khader Sawaed**  
Arab Society in Israel Program



**Dr. Assaf Shapira**  
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# 2025 Budget Report >

Figures in USD thousands

Budget Category	\$	%
Undesignated Grants	7,197	54%
Designated Grants	5,614	42%
Partnerships and Misc.	601	4%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>13,412</b>	<b>100%</b>

Organizational Unit	\$	%
The Center for Democratic Values and Institutions	1,929	14%
The Joan and Irwin Jacobs Center for Shared Society	2,072	15%
The Center for Governance and the Economy	2,491	19%
The Center for Security and Democracy	629	5%
The Viterbi Family Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research	674	5%
IDI Press	428	3%
Communications, Media, and International Strategy	1,113	8%
Government Relations	1,228	9%
Resource Development	701	5%
Administration and Finance	2,147	16%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>13,412</b>	<b>100%</b>

Unaudited financial prior to finalization of financial statements.

Revenue reflects funding for 2025 activities, excludes funds transferred from year to year and multi-year projects.

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The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books. After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom. Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, ma'pilim [(Hebrew) - immigrants coming to Eretz-Israel in defiance of restrictive legislation] and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood. In the year 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodore Herzl, the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country. This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917, and re-affirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and Eretz-Israel and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home. The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people - the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe - was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the comity of nations. Survivors of the Nazi holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to Eretz-Israel, undaunted by difficulties, restrictions and dangers, and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their national homeland. In the Second World War, the Jewish community of this country contributed its full share to the struggle of the freedom- and peace-loving nations against the forces of Nazi wickedness and, by the blood of its soldiers and its war effort, gained the right to be reckoned among the peoples who founded the United Nations. On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable. This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State. Accordingly we, members of the people's council, representatives of the Jewish community of Eretz-Israel and of the Zionist movement, are hereby assembled on the day of the termination of the British Mandate over Eretz-Israel and, by virtue of our natural and historic right and on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the State of Israel. We declare that, with effect from the moment of the termination of the Mandate being tonight, the eve of Sabbath, the 6th Iyar, 5708 (15th May, 1948), until the establishment of the elected, regular authorities of the State in accordance with the Constitution which shall be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than the 1st October 1948, the People's Council shall act as a Provisional Council of State, and its executive organ, the People's Administration, shall be the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, to be called "Israel". THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. THE STATE OF ISRAEL is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the United