

How big is the divide between Israeli and American Jews?

Despite sharply different positions on the US presidential election, the communities are closer than they appear

Ted Sasson / Nov 10, 2024

According to election-night polling, Vice President Kamala Harris won an impressive share of the Jewish American vote. The highest quality [poll](#) reported 71% support for Harris and 26% support for former president (and now President-Elect) Donald J. Trump. Surveys of Israeli Jews, meanwhile, suggested an [opposite](#) set of preferences. Asked which candidate would better serve Israel's interests, 13% identified Harris compared to 66% who named Trump.

The political divide between Israeli Jews and American Jews has become huge, but what does it mean? Have Israeli Jews become immune to the threats to democracy that alarm many American Jews? Have American Jews become indifferent to the security needs of Israel? Before recriminations, it's important to understand what the election meant for each side of the Jewish divide.

Israeli Jews appreciated Trump's vocal support for Israeli government priorities during his first term, particularly recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, scrapping the Iran nuclear deal, and recognizing the Golan Heights as part of sovereign Israel. Trump won over the Israeli right by his support for the eventual annexation of parts of the West Bank in the "Deal of the Century," and ending the US practice of describing all settlements as illegal.

Yet, last December, several months into the war, Jewish Israelis [preferred](#) Biden over Trump by a significant margin. Biden visited Israel immediately following October 7, warned Iranians and Hezbollah against attacking (the famous "Don't") and rushed military aid as the war unfolded. He also repeatedly moved US aircraft carrier groups into the region and eventually engaged in joint defense maneuvers with Israel for the first time in history.

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About the Author

Ted Sasson is the Ruderman Family Foundation Scholar in Residence and Senior Researcher at the **Institute for National Security Studies**. He is also a professor and director of Jewish Studies at Middlebury College.

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