

The State of National Resilience—Operation Rising Lion

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Operation Rising Lion took place during a challenging time for Israeli national resilience. The combination of a prolonged, multi-front military campaign and deep societal polarization—fueled by the politicization of various aspects and phenomena related to the ongoing war—significantly eroded resilience. An examination of factors known to shape resilience revealed a marked decline, particularly in the areas of trust, social solidarity, optimism, and hope. In contrast, there was a notable improvement in the area of functional continuity and the maintenance of civilian routine, largely due to the ceasefire agreement with Lebanon and the return of many evacuees from northern communities to their homes. However, Operation Rising Lion reversed this trend: while functional continuity and civilian routine were disrupted due to widespread concern over potential damage from Iranian missile strikes, other aspects of resilience showed substantial improvement. This may indicate an overall strengthening of national resilience. This article examines the direction of this shift and the potential for sustaining it.

The concept of resilience refers to the ability of various systems to cope with severe disruptions or disasters—whether natural or man-made. Resilience is measured both by the system's ability to maintain reasonable functional continuity during the event and by its ability to recover quickly and even grow in its aftermath. Therefore, more than indicating strength, resilience reflects flexibility, adaptability, and coping capacity.

The multifaceted crisis experienced by the Israeli population includes unique elements that challenge national resilience. Even before the events of October 7, Israeli society was already facing a series of crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, political instability, and deep societal rifts surrounding the judicial reform. The events of October 7 and the subsequent war—fought on numerous fronts—intensified the disruption and damage to resilience, and the war's prolongation hindered recovery. Moreover, the deep social polarization in Israel, which existed even before the war, greatly intensified as the conflict continued. Many issues that were previously perceived as unifying became politically charged, further widening societal divides. Among these are the issue of the hostages and the very continuation of the military campaign in the Gaza Strip. The combination of prolonged disruption and deep social polarization has led to a significant decline in Israeli resilience, as reflected in various dimensions known to shape resilience, including trust, social solidarity, optimism, and hope. Nevertheless, one particular aspect—functional continuity and the preservation of routine—showed improvement as the military campaign progressed and most of the Israeli public returned to normal functions,

On one hand, Operation Rising Lion once again significantly disrupted functional continuity and the maintenance of daily routine for the majority of Israeli citizens. On the other hand, in light of the broad public support it received—[according to a survey](#) conducted by the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) on June 15–16, 73% of respondents from the general sample and 88% of respondents from the Jewish sample expressed support for Israel's attack on Iran—the operation may have served as a unifying force. It potentially bolstered social solidarity, improved optimism and hope, and increased trust in state institutions.

Moreover, [in a survey](#) conducted by the Israel Democracy Institute on June 15–17, approximately 82% of respondents from the general sample and 91% from the Jewish sample rated the resilience/coping ability of the Israeli public in the war so far as "high" or "very high." This article examines how Operation Rising Lion influenced Israeli national resilience, focusing on four key aspects known to shape resilience: trust in state institutions, social solidarity, optimism and hope, and functional continuity and routine maintenance.

Trust in State Institutions

Trust is a central aspect that shapes resilience, as it reflects both the public's willingness to rely on various state bodies and its identification with them—two essential foundations for effective recovery and rehabilitation. Public opinion polls conducted by the INSS indicate an upward trend in various trust indices: the levels of trust in the government, the prime minister, the IDF, and the chief of staff have risen significantly since the start of the campaign.

For example, in a survey conducted in May 2025—prior to the operation—only 21% of respondents in the general sample and 26% in the Jewish sample expressed high trust in the government. In [a flash poll](#) conducted on June 22–23, these figures rose to 32% and approximately 38% respectively. Trust in the prime minister also saw a notable increase: In May 2025, 26% of the general sample and 31% of the Jewish sample expressed high trust in the prime minister, whereas in the June 15–16 survey, these figures rose to 35% and 42%, respectively. Trust in the defense minister also increased, although to a lesser extent. In May 2025, 25% of the general sample and 29.5% of the Jewish sample expressed high trust in the defense minister, and those numbers had climbed to 32% and 38%, respectively, by the June 15–16 survey.

A closer look at the demographic breakdown of the Jewish sample reveals a more nuanced picture: The main increase in high trust in the government came from those respondents identifying as politically right-wing—an increase of about 18% compared to the May survey. In contrast, the increase was only about 7% among those identifying as "center" and merely 2.5% (within the margin of error) among those identifying as "left." Conversely, the rise in trust in the prime minister and the defense minister was more evenly distributed across the political spectrum. The share of respondents reporting high trust in the prime minister rose by about 11% among both "right" and "center" respondents, and by about 6% among those identifying as "left." The increase in trust in the defense minister was similar across all political groups. This suggests that, while the rise in personal trust in the leaders of the military campaign transcended political divisions, the increase in trust in the government as an institution is significantly shaped by the respondents' political orientation.

Trust in the IDF and the chief of staff also increased, although less sharply—partly because public trust in both was already relatively high. In the June 22–23 survey, 82% of respondents in the general sample and 94% in the Jewish sample reported high trust in the IDF, up from 75% and 88%, respectively, in the May survey. As for the chief of staff, trust rose from 56% in the general sample and 67.5% in the Jewish sample in May 2025 to 69% and approximately 81%, respectively, in the June 15–16 survey.

When analyzing the Jewish sample by ideological identification, in the first week of the military campaign against Iran, trust in the IDF increased across all ideological groups—by about 5% among those identifying as right-wing, about 2.5% (within the margin of error) among centrists, and 11% among left-wing respondents. However, during the second week, while trust levels among right-wing and centrist respondents remained stable, trust among left-wing respondents declined by 7.5%. Looking at the campaign as a whole, trust in the IDF among the Jewish public rose overall, with the increase slightly more pronounced among right-wing respondents, but not by a large margin. A similar pattern was observed regarding trust in the chief of staff. These findings suggest that the rise in trust in the IDF is less influenced by prior ideological positions.

Social Solidarity

Social solidarity is considered a key element that shapes resilience, as it enables the public to unite and cooperate in recovering from functional disruptions. It also reflects a sense of community, cohesion, and a willingness to volunteer. Data from the June 15–16, 2025 survey indicates a significant increase in the proportion of respondents reporting a strengthened sense of social solidarity in Israel. In the general population, 48% reported an increase and among the Jewish sample, the figure reached approximately 55.5%, compared to 30% and 34.5%, respectively, in the March 2025 survey. However, a closer look at the Jewish sample by political affiliation reveals that this increase occurred primarily among those identifying with right-wing (an increase of about 26%) or centrist (about 15%) views. Among left-wing respondents—who form a much smaller group in both surveys—the increase was much more modest, at only around 5%. This data suggests that while perceived social solidarity has grown, its increase is still shaped by the political polarization that has characterized Israeli society during this period.

Alongside the survey data, the operation saw the launch of public campaigns promoting social solidarity and a revived discourse centered on the slogan “Together We Will Win,” which was featured across various television channels. However, despite these unifying efforts, polarizing and divisive discourse persisted—particularly on social media platforms. These platforms often emphasized the revived narratives that reflected longstanding societal rifts, predating and continuing beyond October 7, such as the public controversy surrounding the Brothers in Arms organization. However, this discourse seemed to have receded from the public spotlight during the campaign against Iran—especially in comparison to its prominence during the war in Gaza.

It is still too early to predict—particularly in light of the ideological divides and the ongoing divisive discourse online—whether the strengthening sense of solidarity reflects a temporary

“rally ‘round the flag” effect typically observed during intense wartime (which seems to be the case at present), or whether it signals a more lasting shift, which would require further monitoring. What is clear, however, is that any resurgence of polarizing discourse and mutual vilification between different groups would likely undermine the positive trend observed thus far.

Optimism and Hope

Another key element shaping resilience is the public’s sense of optimism and hope. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks explained that while optimism is the belief that the world is improving, hope is the belief that together we can improve the world. Both are essential for social resilience, as they motivate citizens to initiate and drive recovery processes, believing that they can overcome disruption.

During Operation Rising Lion, most of the Israeli public was optimistic regarding the campaign’s duration. In two surveys conducted during the operation, approximately 60% of respondents in the general sample and 64% in the Jewish sample estimated that the campaign between Israel and Iran would last between one week and one month—an estimate that retrospectively turned out to be accurate. Additionally, in the June 22–23 survey, 39% of the general sample and 42.5% of the Jewish sample believed that the home front would be prepared to endure the consequences of the war for up to one month. Another 18% in both groups believed it could endure for two to three months, while only a small minority thought the public could sustain itself for longer periods. Conversely, only 20% of the general sample and 18% of the Jewish sample believed that the home front could endure for only a few more days. In both surveys, the majority of respondents—across both general and Jewish samples—believed that the Israeli home front was largely or very well prepared to cope with the war against Iran. In the June 22–23 survey, 63% of the general sample and 70% of the Jewish sample expressed this view. These findings provide further evidence of public perceptions regarding the resilience of the Israeli home front and optimism about its ability to withstand challenges.

In fact, the public’s optimism regarding the campaign’s duration proved to be justified, as the home front was not ultimately tested beyond the timeframe that most respondents had anticipated. Consequently, it is difficult to assess how this optimism during the Iran campaign will influence long-term national resilience, particularly in addressing other aspects of the broader, multi-faceted crisis. Further research is needed to examine other indicators of optimism and hope within the wider public.

Functional Continuity and Maintenance of Routine

This aspect of resilience suffered the most severe blow during Operation Rising Lion due in part to the high intensity of the fighting, the extensive damage to buildings and critical national infrastructure (including Bazan oil refineries, Soroka Hospital, and the Weizmann Institute), and the strict (and justified) guidelines issued by the Home Front Command. At the start of the campaign, the Home Front Command moved the entire country from a state of full activity to essential activity only, banning educational activities, gatherings, and access to workplaces—except for vital sectors.

[During the operation](#), 29 people in Israel were killed, and approximately 3,520 were injured, most of them lightly or moderately. According to a report from the National Digital Agency's Knowledge and Information Center, between 13,000 and 19,000 residents from about 17 local municipalities were left without proper housing. These individuals now represent a second wave of evacuees, some of whom may remain displaced for an extended period. Over 41,000 compensation claims were submitted to the property tax authority, mostly concerning building damage. While these numbers reflect less damage than originally forecast (which had been far more dire), the destruction in major cities undoubtedly affected public morale, which itself is a key component of social resilience.

The Home Front Command's restrictions significantly disrupted business activity: In the first week of the operation, credit card spending dropped by 27%, with the sharpest declines recorded in aviation, dining, clothing, and fuel. These figures point to the difficulty of maintaining functional continuity and routine among Israeli citizens during a high-intensity campaign. When an entire country is forced to drastically reduce normal functioning, this constitutes a blow—albeit a temporary one in this case—to national resilience.

The disruption of routine and heightened sense of threat also affected the mental resilience of Israeli citizens. According to reports from the National Digital Agency's Knowledge and Information Center, demand for psychological assistance rose significantly during the operation due to personal distress and anxiety. Data from the Ministry of Health and the Meuhedet Health Fund revealed a 440% increase in requests for mental health support between June 13–24, compared to the period of June 1–12. Alongside the rise in calls to emergency hotlines, health funds also reported dozens of percentage points of increase in the purchase of sedatives, sleep aids, and anti-anxiety and antidepressant medications.

These challenges were also reflected in the public's sense of personal security, as indicated in surveys conducted by INSS and the Israel Democracy Institute. In the INSS survey held on June 15–16, there was a noticeable rise in respondents reporting low or very low personal security: 32% of the general sample and 23% of the Jewish sample, compared to 25% and 20%, respectively, in the May survey. Simultaneously, in the Israel Democracy Institute survey conducted on June 15–17, about 70% of respondents in the general sample and 66% in the Jewish sample reported being quite worried or very worried about their physical safety and the safety of their families in the near future.

Altogether, the data points to a significant erosion of functional continuity and the public's ability to maintain routine during Operation Rising Lion. This disruption was expected given the intense fighting and extremely strict Home Front Command regulations throughout much of the campaign. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that such severe disruption of routine undermines resilience and puts citizens in a state of serious distress—the extent and long-term consequences of which are not yet fully measurable. There is reason to expect that, with the end of high-intensity fighting and the lifting of restrictive Home Front guidelines, there will be a significant improvement in this area in the near future—assuming the fighting does not resume or shift into a prolonged war of attrition.

Conclusion

An examination of key resilience-shaping factors suggests that Operation Rising Lion marked a turning point in Israeli national resilience. Before the operation, assessments of these factors indicated a notable decline, especially in trust, social solidarity, optimism and hope, although there had been a significant improvement in functional continuity and routine. During the operation, however, functional continuity and routine suffered substantial harm, while the other aspects improved markedly—potentially indicating an overall strengthening of national resilience.

These findings offer a measure of hope, especially given the expectation that functional continuity and routine will also improve, as combat intensity subsides. However, attention must be paid to the possibility that the end of hostilities with Iran may also affect other resilience indicators—not necessarily for the better. The underlying problems that eroded resilience—deep social polarization and the ongoing war in Gaza—are still present. They appear to be resurfacing, possibly even intensifying, amid speculation about early Knesset elections. None of the contentious issues have been resolved, and together, they are likely to continue challenging Israeli society.

The trend of increasing solidarity observed during the Iran campaign likely stems from the “rally ‘round the flag” effect, common during intense conflicts, and bolstered by the IDF’s military successes in Iran. However, the fact that trust in the government and social solidarity appeared to be significantly influenced by political affiliation raises concerns. If divisive discourse resumes after the operation ends, these indicators could revert to the troubling trends that prevailed beforehand. Given the critical importance of national resilience to Israel’s recovery from the current crisis, conscious efforts must be made to preserve the improvements seen during the operation. This includes strengthening positive trends and combating harmful influences—especially deep social polarization. In this context, it is particularly important to end the fighting in Gaza and secure the return of the hostages, whose continued captivity by Hamas undermines social resilience.

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