

# **Geopolitical Assessment: Israel's International Support, Regional Opposition, and Intervention Dynamics**

## **Executive Summary**

This report provides a comprehensive geopolitical assessment of Israel's international standing, analyzing its support networks, the alliances of its regional adversaries, and the complex dynamics that could lead to external pressure or conflict escalation affecting Israel. The analysis reveals a significant asymmetry in international support, with Israel heavily reliant on the United States for military and diplomatic backing, while facing declining public favorability in many Western nations and a generational shift in traditional ideological constituencies. Conversely, Israel's primary regional opponent, Iran, commands a resilient "Axis of Resistance" comprising various non-state actors, sustained by critical, albeit often indirect, support from global powers such as Russia and China.

The current geopolitical landscape is characterized by escalating regional tensions, with Israel's proactive military operations against Iran and its proxies contributing to a self-perpetuating cycle of conflict. While the direct military occupation of Israel by a foreign power is not indicated as an imminent scenario given Israel's formidable defense capabilities, the nation faces increasing forms of external intervention through diplomatic isolation, legal challenges, and economic pressures stemming from its actions in the ongoing conflict and its long-standing occupation of Palestinian territories. Understanding these intricate support and opposition dynamics is crucial for strategic forecasting and policy formulation in the volatile Middle East.

## **1. Israel's International Support Network (Excluding the United States)**

## 1.1. Diplomatic and Public Opinion Allies

While the United States remains Israel's most significant and steadfast ally, providing substantial military and economic assistance, the breadth of positive international sentiment and diplomatic support for Israel from other nations is notably limited and increasingly nuanced. Public opinion data from May 2025 indicates that outside the U.S., countries with the highest favorable views of Israel's military force include Nigeria (59%), Kenya (50%), India (34%), South Africa (34%), Hungary (36%), Brazil (32%), South Korea (31%), Canada (33%), and Argentina (26%).<sup>1</sup> However, it is critical to observe that in most of these nations, with the notable exceptions of Nigeria and Kenya, negative opinions regarding Israel still outnumber positive ones, reflecting a divided or predominantly unfavorable public perception.<sup>1</sup>

A consistent pattern observed across major Western nations is a significant decline in public support for Israel. A YouGov poll conducted in May 2025 revealed that fewer than a fifth of respondents in key European countries—including Britain, France, Germany, Denmark, Spain, and Italy—hold a favorable view of Israel. In these nations, public sympathy largely leans towards Palestinians.<sup>2</sup> This erosion of public favorability is particularly pronounced among younger populations in high-income countries, such as Australia, Canada, France, Poland, South Korea, and the U.S., who are increasingly inclined to view Israel negatively.<sup>1</sup> This demographic shift is a critical long-term indicator, as the attitudes of younger generations will increasingly shape future political landscapes and foreign policy orientations. The sustained negative public opinion in democratic nations can translate into mounting political pressure on governments, making it progressively challenging for them to provide unconditional diplomatic or material support to Israel. This suggests a potential future where Israel could face greater international isolation or conditional support, thereby impacting its strategic flexibility and access to vital resources.

Despite the widespread low public approval in Europe, some governments maintain varying degrees of official support or neutrality, creating a dichotomy between popular sentiment and state policy. Germany, for instance, is consistently characterized as a "very good friend" of Israel, a sentiment reportedly shared by both its leadership and populace.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Italy's government, under Prime Minister

Meloni, expresses support for Israel, although Italian law imposes restrictions on weapon sales to countries actively engaged in conflict, necessitating case-by-case reviews of defense exports.<sup>3</sup> France's right-wing political factions generally exhibit pro-Israeli leanings, yet the current French presidency maintains a more neutral diplomatic posture. Conversely, Spain is explicitly described as a "diplomatic enemy" of Israel.<sup>3</sup> This tension between public disapproval and governmental ties indicates that European governments are under increasing domestic pressure to align their foreign policy with public sentiment. Should the conflict persist or intensify, this internal dynamic could lead to more widespread official distancing from Israel, further affecting its diplomatic standing and military supply lines beyond the United States.

## **1.2. Military and Supply Partners**

Beyond the United States, which accounts for a dominant 69% of Israel's major conventional arms imports between 2019 and 2023, Germany and Italy serve as significant, albeit much smaller, military suppliers.<sup>4</sup> Germany is a notable contributor, providing 30% of Israel's arms imports during the same period, with its defense exports to Israel increasing nearly tenfold. These contributions include essential components for air defense systems, communication equipment, 3,000 portable anti-tank weapons, and 500,000 rounds of ammunition.<sup>4</sup> Italy, while a smaller supplier at 1% of Israel's arms imports, provides equipment such as helicopters and naval artillery. The Italian government has affirmed its commitment to honoring existing contracts but rigorously reviews new sales to ensure compliance with its domestic law, which prohibits the sale of munitions to countries engaged in conflict or those accused of human rights violations.<sup>4</sup>

A critical development impacting Israel's military supply chain is the conditional nature of support from several European nations. The United Kingdom, France, and Canada have already taken steps to halt the supply of certain weapons to Israel since the onset of the Gaza war. Furthermore, these nations have explicitly threatened Israel with sanctions if it fails to cease its military operations in Gaza and ensure the unimpeded entry of humanitarian aid.<sup>2</sup> This response highlights a direct link between Israel's conduct in conflict zones and the willingness of its military partners to provide armaments. This trend signifies a broader shift in international relations where humanitarian concerns and perceived violations of international law are increasingly factored into defense export policies. Such a development could lead to a narrowing of Israel's supply base, making it even more critically dependent on the United States

for advanced military hardware and potentially constraining the scope or duration of future military campaigns if other sources become unreliable.

Despite public diplomatic tensions, a pragmatic, often covert, security alignment is emerging in the Middle East. In June 2024, a secret meeting was held in Bahrain involving the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief Herzi Halevi, the CENTCOM chief, and high-ranking generals from Bahrain, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.<sup>6</sup> The primary focus of this clandestine gathering was regional security cooperation, specifically aimed at deterring the political and military ambitions of Iran.<sup>6</sup> This informal coalition, sometimes referred to as the "Arab-Israeli alliance," is driven by a shared threat perception concerning Iran, rather than broad support for Israel's other policies, such as its actions in Gaza. This indicates a strategic pragmatism among certain Arab states, who prioritize their security interests against Iran over historical or ideological opposition to Israel. While this alliance remains informal and sensitive to public opinion—as evidenced by Saudi Arabia halting normalization talks with Israel after the Gaza war<sup>6</sup>—its existence provides a significant, albeit fragile, counter-balance to Iran's regional influence. The covert nature of these interactions underscores the political sensitivities involved, yet they lay a potential foundation for future, more overt, regional security architecture should geopolitical conditions permit.

### **1.3. Ideological and Political Backing**

A substantial component of Israel's international support, particularly within the United States, stems from Christian Zionism. This influential ideology, prevalent among some evangelical Christians, interprets biblical prophecies as eternally promising the land of Israel to the Jewish people. A core tenet is the belief that God will bless those who support Israel, often referencing Genesis 12:3.<sup>7</sup> Adherents of this view frequently perceive the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 as a direct fulfillment of biblical prophecies and a prerequisite for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup> Prominent evangelical leaders, including Joel Rosenberg, Yael Eckstein, and Pastor John Hagee, consistently frame current conflicts in the Middle East as "biblical prophecy unfolding" and advocate for robust support of Israel's actions as divinely ordained.<sup>9</sup>

Influential organizations like Christians United for Israel (CUFI) embody this ideological backing. As the largest pro-Israel organization in the U.S., with over 10 million members, CUFI actively lobbies for Israel, combats antisemitism, and aims to educate

Americans to "speak and act with one voice in defense of Israel and the Jewish people".<sup>15</sup> CUFI regularly convenes annual summits in Washington D.C. to influence policy and public opinion, advocating for strong U.S. backing for Israel.<sup>16</sup>

However, a significant generational shift is underway within American evangelicalism, posing a long-term challenge to this traditional ideological support. Data indicates a dramatic decline in support for Israel among young evangelicals (ages 18-29), dropping from 75% in 2018 to 34% in 2021, a trend likely exacerbated by the ongoing conflict in Gaza.<sup>10</sup> Younger evangelicals are described as "awakening to realities" and increasingly rejecting a "false gospel that equates unwavering political support for Israel with love for the Jewish people," often influenced by uncensored footage and reports from human rights organizations.<sup>18</sup> This internal challenge to the historical bedrock of support represents a long-term trend that could fundamentally alter the political calculus for Israel in the U.S. If this trend persists, Israel could lose a significant portion of its most fervent and politically active base of support in the U.S., potentially necessitating a re-evaluation of its lobbying strategies and a shift in its approach to international relations, as the "unconditional" nature of this support may become increasingly conditional or diminish over time. This could impact everything from military aid appropriations to diplomatic backing in international forums.

**Table 1: Israel's Key International Supporters (Excluding US)**

Country/Entity	Primary Type of Support	Notable Views/Contributions
<b>Public Opinion</b>		
Nigeria	Public sentiment	59% favorable view of Israel's military force <sup>1</sup>
Kenya	Public sentiment	50% favorable view of Israel's military force <sup>1</sup>
India	Public sentiment	34% favorable view, strong cultural ties <sup>1</sup>
Hungary	Public sentiment	36% favorable view <sup>1</sup>
Brazil	Public sentiment	32% favorable view <sup>1</sup>
South Korea	Public sentiment	31% favorable view <sup>1</sup>
Canada	Public sentiment	33% favorable view, but

		younger generations increasingly negative <sup>1</sup>
Argentina	Public sentiment	26% favorable view <sup>1</sup>
<b>Military/Supply</b>		
Germany	Arms supplier	30% of Israel's arms imports (2019-2023), tenfold increase in defense exports; supplies air defense components, anti-tank weapons, ammunition <sup>4</sup>
Italy	Arms supplier	1% of Israel's arms imports (2019-2023); supplies helicopters, naval artillery; sales reviewed due to "at war" laws <sup>4</sup>
<b>Covert Regional Security Cooperation</b>		
Bahrain	Security partner	Participated in secret meeting with Israel, US, other Arab states for regional security cooperation against Iran <sup>6</sup>
Egypt	Security partner	Participated in secret meeting with Israel, US, other Arab states for regional security cooperation against Iran <sup>6</sup>
Jordan	Security partner	Participated in secret meeting with Israel, US, other Arab states for regional security cooperation against Iran <sup>6</sup>
Saudi Arabia	Security partner	Participated in secret meeting with Israel, US, other Arab states for regional security cooperation against Iran <sup>6</sup>
United Arab Emirates	Security partner	Participated in secret meeting with Israel, US, other Arab

		states for regional security cooperation against Iran; normalization deals linked to countering Iran <sup>6</sup>
<b>Ideological/Political</b>		
Christian Zionist Groups (primarily US-based)	Ideological/Lobbying	Interpret Bible as promising land to Jews, assert divine blessing for supporters; influential lobbying (CUFI with 10M+ members) <sup>8</sup>

## 2. Israel's Regional Opponents and Their External Backing

### 2.1. The Axis of Resistance

Israel's primary regional opponent is Iran, which leads a network of allied paramilitary groups collectively known as the "Axis of Resistance".<sup>6</sup> This network has historically served as Iran's deterrence strategy, largely shielding it from direct military strikes by the U.S. or Israel despite persistent threats.<sup>21</sup> Key components of this axis include:

- Hezbollah (Lebanon):** Traditionally considered Iran's most powerful non-state ally, Hezbollah has been significantly impacted by recent Israeli military actions. After months of sustained attacks, Hezbollah has been "effectively neutralized," with its weapons stocks systematically targeted and destroyed across Lebanon, and much of its political and military leadership eliminated.<sup>21</sup> Iran provides Hezbollah with the majority of its funding, training, weapons, and explosives, facilitating the transit of weapons through Syria.<sup>23</sup>
- Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) (Iraq):** These powerful, Iran-aligned factions in Iraq have intensified calls for American troop withdrawal and threaten renewed attacks against U.S. personnel, viewing them as legitimate targets and enablers of Israeli aggression.<sup>24</sup> The PMF retains the capability to launch attacks on the approximately 2,500 U.S. troops stationed in Iraq.<sup>21</sup>

- **Houthi Militants (Yemen):** The Houthis are close allies of Iran, coordinating attacks on Israel and shipping in the Red Sea as a show of support for Palestinians in Gaza.<sup>21</sup> While they reached an agreement with the U.S. in May to cease attacks, they have indicated a readiness to resume operations if the U.S. directly strikes Iran.<sup>26</sup> They pose a threat to U.S. bases in the region and international shipping lanes.<sup>27</sup>
- **Hamas (Gaza):** Hamas has long been under Iran's influence to varying degrees and receives funding, often channeled through sham charities that exploit public sympathy for humanitarian causes.<sup>21</sup> Israel's renewed offensive in Gaza aims to undercut Hamas's recovering military strength and governmental capacity by targeting its civilian administrators and public infrastructure.<sup>29</sup>
- **Syrian Regime:** Iran has historically supported Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria, and Hezbollah has played a key role in assisting pro-Assad forces during Syria's civil war, facilitating the transit of weapons from Iran to Hezbollah.<sup>23</sup>

The intelligence indicates that while Israel's military actions are having a significant impact on key Iranian proxies like Hezbollah, degrading their immediate capabilities, the underlying network and motivation for proxy warfare persist. This suggests that while Israel may be achieving tactical successes in weakening these groups, the broader strategic challenge of Iran's regional influence remains, potentially leading to new forms of asymmetric responses. The elimination of Iranian commanders, while creating confusion at the top, does not necessarily destabilize the Iranian regime itself in the short term.<sup>31</sup>

## 2.2. International Condemnation and Opposition

Israel's military actions, particularly its recent strikes on Iran and ongoing operations in Gaza, have drawn widespread international condemnation, contributing to a broadening sense of legal and diplomatic isolation. UN experts have "unequivocally condemned" recent Israeli military attacks against Iran, characterizing them as "flagrant violation of fundamental principles of international law," a "blatant act of aggression," and a "violation of jus cogens norms".<sup>32</sup> These experts have highlighted civilian casualties, including women and children, and have explicitly called for an end to arms supplies to Israel.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, these UN experts have directly linked Israel's strikes on Iran to "ongoing and intensifying occupation, annexation, apartheid and violence in the West Bank as well as genocidal violence against the people of Gaza".<sup>33</sup> The International Court of Justice (ICJ) also called on Israel to halt its military

offensive in Rafah in May 2024.<sup>34</sup>

Major Christian denominations and faith groups have also voiced strong opposition. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has urged both Iran and Israel to halt escalatory actions, describing the conflict as an "immediate and dangerous threat" and emphasizing the necessity of dialogue, respect for international law, and the protection of human dignity.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and other affiliated faith groups have condemned Israel's attacks on Iranian territory as "unlawful" and urged de-escalation, specifically calling on the U.S. to leverage its influence to halt Israel's aggression.<sup>36</sup> Pope Leo XIV has called for "responsibility and reason" and a "safer world, free from nuclear threat" to be pursued through respectful encounters and sincere dialogue.<sup>37</sup>

In the diplomatic sphere, Arab foreign ministers, at Iraq's request, held emergency meetings in Istanbul to discuss the regional repercussions of the Israel-Iran war, urging practical steps to influence European countries and direct communication with the United States.<sup>38</sup> Many Muslim-majority countries, including some that maintain diplomatic relations with Israel, have jointly condemned Israel's actions.<sup>21</sup> The international community's growing disapproval is further evidenced by several countries recognizing Palestinian statehood since October 2023, including Mexico, Armenia, Slovenia, Ireland, Norway, Spain, the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Barbados. France also plans to recognize a Palestinian state within months.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, and Nicaragua have severed diplomatic relations with Israel, while Bahrain, Chad, Chile, Honduras, Jordan, South Africa, and Turkey have recalled their ambassadors.<sup>34</sup> During a UN Security Council meeting, members condemned attacks on civilians, with several delegations, including China's, emphasizing that Israel's actions violate international law and jeopardize Iran's sovereignty and security.<sup>40</sup> This widespread condemnation, coupled with legal proceedings and diplomatic downgrades, indicates a significant and growing international legal and diplomatic backlash against Israel's military actions. The explicit language of "genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity" used by UN bodies and experts creates a powerful narrative that can lead to further isolation, sanctions, and legal challenges, representing a significant erosion of Israel's international legitimacy and potentially impacting its ability to secure future support or maintain existing relationships.

### **2.3. Opponents' Supply and Support Chains**

Iran's "Axis of Resistance" is sustained by a network of external state and non-state actors, forming a critical, albeit often indirect, support structure.

- **Russia:** Moscow maintains strong economic and military ties with Tehran, serving as a top supplier of weapons and technology to Iran. In January 2025, Russia and Iran signed a "comprehensive strategic partnership" treaty, deepening their political, economic, and military cooperation.<sup>41</sup> While Russia has condemned Israeli strikes as "categorically unacceptable" and offered condolences to Iran, it has not signaled any intention to offer direct military intervention beyond political support.<sup>41</sup> This indicates that Russia's support, while crucial for sustaining Iran's military and nuclear ambitions, is not a blank check for direct military engagement on Iran's behalf.
- **China:** Beijing has offered Iran "strong rhetorical support" but historically demonstrates little interest in direct military involvement in Middle Eastern conflicts.<sup>21</sup> China's diplomatic approach emphasizes de-escalation; at the UN Security Council, it proposed a four-point plan focusing on promoting a ceasefire, ensuring civilian safety, and advancing dialogue and negotiation as the fundamental way forward.<sup>42</sup>
- **Pakistan:** As the only Islamic country with a nuclear arsenal, Pakistan has expressed "unwavering solidarity" with Iran in the face of Israeli aggression.<sup>21</sup> While this offers significant political and symbolic backing, there is no indication of material military support.
- **Direct Iranian Support to Proxies:** Iran directly provides its proxies, including Hezbollah, PMF, and Houthis, with funding, training, weapons, and explosives.<sup>23</sup> This direct supply chain is crucial for sustaining the operational capabilities of the Axis of Resistance.

While Russia and China are key global allies for Iran, their support appears to be primarily political and rhetorical, with Russia being a significant arms supplier but showing no signal of direct military intervention. China is explicitly described as having "little interest in getting directly involved." This suggests that Iran's external support, while important for sustaining its military and nuclear ambitions, is not a blank check for direct military intervention on its behalf. However, the "comprehensive strategic partnership" with Russia and Pakistan's "unwavering solidarity" indicate a strengthening of a geopolitical bloc that could provide long-term strategic depth to Iran, even if direct military intervention is unlikely. This creates a complex deterrence scenario where Iran's adversaries must consider the potential for indirect or long-term

support from these major powers.

**Table 2: Israel's Primary Regional Opponents and Their External Backers**

Opponent/Proxy	Primary Affiliation	External Backing/Support Type	Status/Capabilities
<b>Iran</b>	State Actor	Russia (weapons, technology, strategic partnership, political support) <sup>41</sup> ; China (rhetorical support) <sup>21</sup> ; Pakistan (unwavering solidarity) <sup>21</sup>	Primary regional adversary, leads "Axis of Resistance"; pursuing nuclear program, capable of missile/drone attacks <sup>43</sup>
<b>Hezbollah (Lebanon)</b>	Non-State Proxy	Iran (funding, training, weapons, explosives, political/diplomatic aid) <sup>23</sup>	"Effectively neutralized" after Israeli attacks; weapons stocks destroyed, leadership killed <sup>21</sup>
<b>Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) (Iraq)</b>	Non-State Proxy	Iran (alignment, influence) <sup>24</sup>	Iran-aligned factions emboldened, threaten renewed attacks against U.S. personnel; capable of targeting U.S. troops <sup>21</sup>
<b>Houthi Militants (Yemen)</b>	Non-State Proxy	Iran (close ally, coordination) <sup>21</sup>	Coordinate attacks on Israel and Red Sea shipping; capable of disrupting maritime trade and targeting U.S. bases <sup>27</sup>
<b>Hamas (Gaza)</b>	Non-State Proxy	Iran (influence, funding via sham charities) <sup>21</sup>	Military and governmental capacities targeted by Israel; aims to control aid flows <sup>29</sup>

<b>Syrian Regime (Bashar al-Assad)</b>	State Actor	Iran (support, facilitates weapons transit for Hezbollah) <sup>23</sup>	Supported by Iran and Russia; facilitates Iranian influence in the region <sup>23</sup>
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### 3. Comparative Analysis of Support Dynamics

#### 3.1. Asymmetry in Alliances

The analysis reveals a pronounced asymmetry in the nature and breadth of international alliances for Israel and its opponents. Israel's military capabilities and its ability to conduct operations, such as "Operation Rising Lion" against Iran <sup>43</sup>, are critically dependent on the United States. The U.S. provides approximately \$3.8 billion annually in military aid, accounting for a staggering 69% of Israel's major conventional arms imports between 2019 and 2023.<sup>4</sup> This includes the deployment of advanced defense systems like the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) battery and associated U.S. troops to bolster Israel's defense.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, the destruction of deeply buried facilities like Iran's Fordo uranium enrichment plant is believed to be beyond Israel's sole capability, implicitly requiring the U.S.'s specialized "bunker-buster" bombs.<sup>45</sup> This reliance on the U.S. creates a critical dependency for Israel's strategic objectives and long-term military sustainment.

Simultaneously, a significant internal divergence exists within the U.S. political landscape regarding the extent of American involvement in the Middle East. The "MAGA split" within the Republican movement highlights a tension between "America First" hardliners and traditional conservative supporters of Israel.<sup>47</sup> Figures like Steve Bannon, Tucker Carlson, and Charlie Kirk advocate for limited U.S. involvement, asserting that Israel should "fight their own wars" and warning against entanglement in new conflicts.<sup>49</sup> This non-interventionist stance resonates with a segment of the electorate, as polls indicate that nearly two-thirds of Republicans support talks with Iran, and Trump voters generally do not wish for U.S. involvement in Israel's war with Iran.<sup>24</sup> A Fox News poll shows 49% overall approval for Israel's strikes, but this is sharply divided along partisan lines, with 73% of Republicans approving compared to

only 32% of Democrats and Independents.<sup>52</sup> Conversely, conservative commentators like Mark Levin defend the "special relationship" with Israel as an integral part of U.S. foreign policy.<sup>47</sup> This internal U.S. debate suggests that while current U.S. support for Israel is robust, it is not monolithic and could be subject to future political shifts or public pressure. Such developments could create a strategic vulnerability for Israel if the non-interventionist stance gains greater political traction, potentially weakening a crucial pillar of its international standing. The observed generational shift in evangelical support for Israel further compounds this potential long-term erosion of a key pro-Israel constituency in the U.S.

### **3.2. Geopolitical Implications**

The current conflict dynamics carry a high risk of regional destabilization and unintended consequences. Israel's military actions, particularly its "preemptive neutralization" strategy against Iran's nuclear program and military infrastructure, are perceived as attempts to definitively alter the balance of power and potentially lead to the toppling of the Iranian regime.<sup>43</sup> Israel views Iran's nuclear program as an existential threat and characterizes the Iranian regime as promoting oppression and chaos, arguing that a failure to support Israel would embolden this threat.<sup>43</sup>

However, this aggressive posture risks escalating the conflict into a wider regional war. Iranian counter-strikes could target U.S. bases in the Gulf, disrupt shipping lanes via Houthi actions, and trigger proxy conflicts in Syria and Lebanon.<sup>53</sup> The internal political dynamics in Iraq, where the Prime Minister is caught between upholding a security partnership with the U.S. and facing intense domestic pressure from Iran-aligned Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) factions, highlight how regional states are caught in the crossfire, increasing the potential for localized conflicts to spiral.<sup>24</sup> The United Nations has warned that further escalation could "ignite a fire that no one can control".<sup>40</sup> For the U.S., direct military engagement alongside Israel against Iran is largely assessed to lead to Iranian retaliation against U.S. assets and potential entanglement in "yet another years-long war".<sup>15</sup> This "endless war" concern is a significant strategic consideration for the U.S., as it could lead to a withdrawal of support or a shift in U.S. foreign policy priorities, leaving Israel more exposed. The widespread international condemnation of Israel's actions also suggests that the perceived legitimacy of its military campaigns is diminishing, which could further complicate any future international efforts to de-escalate or mediate the conflict. This complex interplay of actions and reactions creates a self-perpetuating cycle of

conflict, making peaceful resolution increasingly difficult and carrying significant humanitarian and economic costs, including potential spikes in oil prices.<sup>47</sup>

**Table 3: International Public Opinion on Israel's Military Actions (Selected Countries)**

Region/Group	Public Sentiment Towards Israel's Military Actions	Key Observations
<b>Europe</b>	Record low favorability (<20% in UK, France, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Italy) <sup>2</sup>	Majority sympathize with Palestinians; more respondents unable to understand Israeli viewpoint than able to <sup>2</sup>
<b>High-Income Countries (Youth)</b>	Increasingly negative views among younger generations <sup>1</sup>	Includes Australia, Canada, France, Poland, South Korea, U.S.; younger people more likely to view Israel negatively than older generations <sup>1</sup>
<b>United States (Overall)</b>	Split approval (49% approve, 46% disapprove of strikes) <sup>52</sup>	Majority (59%) believe attacks will make world more dangerous; high concern for Iran's nuclear program (78%) <sup>52</sup>
<b>United States (Republicans)</b>	High approval (73% approve of strikes) <sup>52</sup>	Iran's nuclear program ranks among top three concerns for Republicans <sup>52</sup>
<b>United States (Democrats/Independents)</b>	Low approval (32% approve of strikes) <sup>52</sup>	About three-quarters believe strikes will increase peril <sup>52</sup>
<b>American Evangelicals (Younger)</b>	Dramatic decline in support (from 75% in 2018 to 34% in 2021) <sup>10</sup>	"Awakening to realities" and rejecting "unwavering political support for Israel" <sup>18</sup>

#### 4. Potential for External Pressure and Regional Conflict Escalation Affecting Israel

#### 4.1. International Pressure and Diplomatic/Economic Interventions

The concept of "intervention" in the context of Israel extends beyond direct military engagement to encompass significant diplomatic, legal, and economic pressures. The international community's response to Israel's military actions, particularly in Gaza and against Iran, indicates a growing trend of external pressure designed to constrain Israel's conduct and alter its international standing.

UN experts have unequivocally condemned Israeli military attacks against Iran, labeling them as "flagrant violation of fundamental principles of international law," a "blatant act of aggression," and a "violation of jus cogens norms".<sup>33</sup> These experts have also called for a cessation of arms supplies to Israel and emphasized the necessity of respecting ongoing International Court of Justice (ICJ) proceedings against Israel for alleged "genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity".<sup>33</sup> The ICJ itself called on Israel to halt its military offensive in Rafah in May 2024.<sup>34</sup> Such legal actions, irrespective of their final judgments, create a powerful narrative that can lead to further isolation and pressure.

European countries, including the UK, France, and Canada, have not only halted some weapon supplies but have also threatened sanctions if Israel fails to cease military operations in Gaza and ensure humanitarian aid access.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, there is a concerted diplomatic effort to recognize Palestinian statehood, with France actively lobbying other European nations, following recent recognitions by Spain, Ireland, Norway, Slovenia, Mexico, Armenia, the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Barbados.<sup>2</sup> This trend of diplomatic recognition, coupled with countries like Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, and Nicaragua severing diplomatic ties, and others such as Bahrain, Chad, Chile, Honduras, Jordan, South Africa, and Turkey recalling their ambassadors<sup>34</sup>, signifies a broadening diplomatic isolation. The UN Security Council has urged a cessation of hostilities, with some members, including China, Pakistan, and Algeria, explicitly stating that Israel's actions violate international law.<sup>40</sup> This cumulative effect of international condemnation, legal proceedings, diplomatic actions, and threats of sanctions represents a significant form of external intervention that aims to constrain Israel's actions and alter its international standing. This constitutes a form of "occupation" of its diplomatic and economic space, suggesting a shift towards a

complex environment where international legal and humanitarian norms are increasingly leveraged as tools of pressure, potentially limiting Israel's freedom of action and access to resources over time.

#### **4.2. Risk of Wider Regional Conflict**

The current conflict is characterized by an escalating feedback loop, where Israel's preemptive military strikes trigger retaliatory actions, which in turn justify further Israeli operations. Israel's strikes on Iran are perceived as attempts to disrupt U.S.-Iran diplomatic deals.<sup>32</sup> These strikes have been met with Iranian counter-strikes that have caused civilian casualties and damaged infrastructure within Israel.<sup>32</sup> Iran's Revolutionary Guards have vowed "decisive retaliation".<sup>53</sup> This cycle is further exacerbated by Iran's proxies, such as the Houthis, who have threatened to target U.S. ships if Washington directly joins strikes on Iran.<sup>27</sup>

The geopolitical positioning of countries like Iraq, whose airspace serves as an "unwitting corridor" for both Israeli and Iranian operations, highlights the precarious position of regional states caught in the crossfire.<sup>24</sup> The United Nations has issued stark warnings that further escalation could "ignite a fire that no one can control," underscoring the severe risks of uncontrolled regional conflagration.<sup>40</sup> For the United States, military engagement alongside Israel against Iran is widely assessed to lead to Iranian retaliation against U.S. assets and the potential for entanglement in "yet another years-long war" in the Middle East.<sup>15</sup> This risk of prolonged conflict, coupled with the disruption of diplomatic efforts, entrenches the cycle of violence, making peaceful resolution increasingly difficult. This implies that the risk of a broader, uncontrolled regional war is not merely theoretical but a direct consequence of the current strategic choices and retaliatory actions, with significant humanitarian and economic costs.

#### **4.3. Assessment of "Occupation of Israel" Scenario**

The query specifically asks about the potential for "intervention and occupation of Israel." Based on the provided research, there is no direct evidence or analysis suggesting an imminent or feasible military occupation of Israel by a foreign power.

The term "occupation" within the research material overwhelmingly refers to Israel's *own* ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories, specifically the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, and the associated international legal and human rights implications.<sup>33</sup> These discussions highlight the consequences of Israel's policies as an occupying power, including alleged war crimes, human rights violations, and the establishment of settlements.<sup>33</sup>

Israel possesses "unparalleled military prowess"<sup>43</sup> and has demonstrated significant operational capabilities, including achieving "full aerial superiority over Tehran's skies".<sup>27</sup> Its robust multi-tiered air defense systems, such as Iron Dome, Arrow, and David's Sling, provide a strong deterrent against large-scale aerial attacks.<sup>4</sup> While missile and drone attacks from adversaries like Iran and its proxies are a persistent threat, causing casualties and damage<sup>32</sup>, these do not constitute an occupation of sovereign Israeli territory. The threats to Israel are primarily from missile attacks, proxy warfare, and the potential for nuclear proliferation from Iran.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the analysis clarifies that the term "occupation" in the context of the query should be understood as referring to the

*implications* of Israel's own actions as an occupying power and the *risks of intervention* in the form of broader regional conflict or international pressure, rather than a literal military takeover of Israeli sovereign territory.

## Conclusions

The geopolitical landscape surrounding Israel is characterized by complex and often contradictory dynamics of support and opposition. Israel's primary external support remains overwhelmingly concentrated in the United States, particularly through military aid and a strong, albeit internally divided, political and ideological constituency. However, this reliance is increasingly vulnerable to shifts in U.S. domestic politics, notably the growing non-interventionist sentiment within the MAGA movement and a significant generational decline in support among American evangelicals. Outside the U.S., Israel faces declining public favorability in key Western nations and conditional military support from European partners, often tied to human rights considerations. While covert regional security cooperation with some Arab states against Iran offers a pragmatic alignment, it remains sensitive to public opinion and broader regional events.

Conversely, Israel's regional opponents, led by Iran's "Axis of Resistance," maintain a resilient network of proxies, despite recent Israeli efforts to degrade their capabilities. This network is sustained by critical, albeit primarily political and rhetorical, backing from global powers like Russia and China. This creates an asymmetric challenge for Israel, where its own support is concentrated and potentially fragile, while its adversaries benefit from a dispersed, yet persistent, network of alliances.

The potential for external intervention and occupation of Israel, as directly posed by the query, is not indicated in the form of a conventional military takeover by a foreign power, given Israel's formidable defense capabilities. Instead, the analysis points to increasing forms of external pressure and "intervention" through diplomatic isolation, legal challenges, and economic measures, stemming from international condemnation of Israel's actions in Gaza and its long-standing occupation of Palestinian territories. The ongoing conflict also presents a significant risk of wider regional escalation, driven by a self-perpetuating cycle of strikes and retaliations, with potential for U.S. entanglement and broader destabilization. Understanding these multifaceted dynamics is essential for navigating the evolving strategic environment in the Middle East.

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