



RESEARCH PAPER

THE 39TH WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS: HOW THE RIGHT CONTROLS THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL ZIONISM

17-12-2025

Executive summary

The 39th World Zionist Congress convened in Jerusalem from 28 to 30 October 2025, marking its first in-person session in a decade, following the 2020 congress that was held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Congress was held under the auspices of the World Zionist Organization, with the aim of setting general policy orientations, allocating funding to national institutions, formulating a future roadmap for Zionism in Israel and the diaspora, and determining new appointments within the organization and its affiliated committees.

This research paper seeks to address three main questions: What is the role of the Congress within the World Zionist Organization? How is the reciprocal relationship of influence between the Organization and Israel manifested? And what are the key outcomes of the Congress, and what do they reveal about future trends in global Zionist policy?

It is important to note that the Congress constitutes the highest legislative authority of the World Zionist Organization. It comprises approximately 500 delegates from Israel and the Jewish diaspora, geographically and ideologically distributed across right-wing, centrist, and left-wing currents. Political parties and movements enjoy varying rights in voting and debate, while representatives of international Zionist organizations participate with limited voting power. The Congress determines general policies, allocates budgets, and oversees the implementation of programs in education, culture, immigration, settlement, and religious affairs, thereby granting it significant capacity to direct the activities of the Zionist movement worldwide.

The most recent Congress was attended by 543 delegates from 36 countries, with a clear dominance of Israeli delegates and right-wing and center-right parties. Centrist and left-wing factions constituted a relative minority, yet they succeeded in passing a number of practical resolutions.

Among the most notable decisions were halting the establishment of the E1 settlement located between East Jerusalem and the Ma'ale Adumim settlement; strengthening the teaching of the Hebrew language in the diaspora; opening access to the Western Wall to the general public; supporting equitable conscription in Israel; establishing a commission of inquiry into the events of 7 October; enhancing transparency in budget approvals; and protecting civil society in Israel. At the same time, several resolutions related to the imposition of sovereignty over the West Bank and the Jordan Valley were blocked.

Overall, the outcomes of the Congress revealed an increasing subordination of the World Zionist Organization to Israeli policies, as the right-wing current within the Israeli government and the Organization's executive elite has come to exercise direct influence over the direction of financial and settlement policies. Meanwhile, centrist and left-wing factions have retained the ability to pass certain social, cultural, and educational decisions through strategic alliances. This indicates that the Organization has increasingly become an executive instrument for Israeli policy orientations, particularly in the fields of immigration, settlement activity, and the consolidation of Jewish influence in the diaspora.

Despite the numerical dominance of right-wing currents in both elections and executive positions, the Congress's major resolutions were often passed through centrist-left alliances, while the right retained political and financial control over the key institutions. This dynamic is reflected in the appointment of influential chief executives and in efforts to earmark massive budgets, amounting to billions of dollars, for land management and settlement-related projects. Such developments underscore the right's ability to steer overarching policies at both the domestic and external levels, even as some socially and culturally moderate resolutions are approved.

The Congress also highlighted the importance of engaging the new generation of Jews in the diaspora, which has shown a growing

detachment from Zionist identity. Accordingly, resolutions focused on funding educational, cultural, and religious programs aimed at reconnecting youth with Judaism and Zionism. This orientation later manifested in the convening of a global youth conference in Budapest, as well as in Israel's emphasis on digital advocacy programs targeting younger generations. These efforts fall within a broader context of safeguarding the continuity of support from Jewish communities worldwide, enhancing Israel's international image, and confronting the rise of global antisemitism.

As disputes over the future of the West Bank persist, the right continues to consolidate its settlement agenda by securing control over executive positions and financial resources. The Congress thus reveals a dual prospective trajectory for global Zionism: an intensification of the right's political influence domestically, alongside sustained efforts to unify cultural and educational activities in the diaspora, while maintaining the Organization as an international representative platform that Israel can leverage to advance its national strategies.

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The 39th World Zionist Congress convened in Jerusalem over three days (from 28 to 30 October). The Congress, which is held every five years, returned to an in-person format after the previous session in 2020 was conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Convened under the auspices of the World Zionist Organization, the Congress seeks to reach agreement on a range of key issues, most notably the allocation of funding to Zionist institutions; the formulation of a future action plan for the global trajectory of Zionism, whether with regard to Jews in Israel or those in the diaspora; and the appointment of new officials within the World Zionist Organization, its affiliated committees, and the heads of its three principal national institutions.

The Congress constitutes a periodic forum that brings together a selected body of delegates representing the geographic distribution of Jewish communities worldwide, alongside representatives of Zionist political and thematic factions. Its membership numbers approximately 500 delegates, who, over the course of three days, participate in deliberations on agenda items and vote on the resolutions pertaining to them. Within this framework, the present paper seeks to address the central question: To what extent do the 39th World Zionist Congress and its outcomes influence future Zionist policies and orientations?

Design & Art Direction

Monem Aboutaleb

First:

The World Zionist Congress and Its Role within the Structure of the Zionist Movement

The World Zionist Congress constitutes the highest legislative authority of the World Zionist Organization and is regarded as its supreme body. It was founded in 1897 by Theodor Herzl, with its first meeting held in Basel, Switzerland. Following the inaugural Congress, various European countries were selected to host the subsequent sessions, which were convened annually until 1901. The Congress then shifted to a roughly biennial cycle between 1903 and 1913. Its meetings were suspended between 1913 and 1921 due to the First World War and the ensuing turmoil, before resuming from 1921 until 1939. The Congress was again interrupted during the Second World War. Since 1946, it has been convened approximately every four to five years. Following the declaration of the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Congress began meeting in Jerusalem in 1951 and has continued to do so up to the present day.¹

A. Importance of the Congress

The World Zionist Congress represents the most prominent representative body within the international Jewish community. As the supreme legislative authority of the World Zionist Organization, it bears responsibility for determining the Organization's general policies and strategic orientations. Despite its central importance, the Congress remains largely opaque to many observers of the Zionist movement, owing to the complexity of its internal structure and the nature of its organizational and political mechanisms. This complexity renders a full understanding of its role challenging, even within Jewish circles themselves.

The significance of the Congress is evident in its authority to allocate substantial budgets and financial resources to Zionist institutions

worldwide, in addition to shaping policies related to Jewish education and the reinforcement of Jewish identity in the diaspora. Moreover, the Congress contributes to redefining the relationship between Israel and Jewish communities abroad in a manner that reflects the priorities of the global Zionist movement².

The Congress derives its greatest influence from its role as the institution that embodies the general authority of the Zionist movement; that is, the body that continually redefines the concept of national leadership in a context that transcends the boundaries of the Israeli state. It also provides a federal framework that allows each current and group space for expression and participation in Zionist political decision-making. The impact of the Congress is further evident in its coordination of roles among the various Zionist institutions, such as the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency, and the Jewish National Fund. The Congress's internal decisions and power balances are directly reflected in the policies of these institutions, whether in the areas of settlement and immigration or in the allocation of resources and support to Jewish communities abroad. Accordingly, the Congress represents a central convergence point for Zionist decision-making at multiple levels, combining political and organizational dimensions while charting Zionist policies worldwide for the ensuing five-year period³.

The Congress's core functions include the election of the Chair of the Zionist Executive, the Vice-Chair, members of the Executive, members of the Zionist General Council and their deputies, the President of the Zionist Supreme Court, the legal counsel of the World Zionist Organization, and the financial comptroller. It also receives and reviews reports submitted by the Zionist Executive and the institutions of the World Zionist Organization, as well as the report of the financial comptroller, upon which it deliberates and issues decisions.

Within its committees, the Congress examines proposals submitted by delegates of the Zionist General Council, members of the Congress Presidium, the Zionist Executive, and the Zionist federations. The conclusions reached by these committees are then presented for a vote in the Congress's plenary session. Finally, the Congress sets the policies of the World Zionist Organization, including financial policy. In the interval between congresses,

the Zionist General Council assumes a number of the Congress's powers, including the authority to amend the constitution.

What is the World Zionist Organization and what are its objectives?

The central body of the Zionist movement was established in 1897 at the First World Zionist Congress in Basel, under the leadership of Theodor Herzl

It oversees the unification of Zionist activities and the management of its national institutions:



Keren Kayemet (Jewish National Fund): Land acquisition and settlement financing.



Keren Hayesod: Fundraising to support immigration and settlement expansion.



The Jewish Agency: Organizing immigration and integrating newcomers into Israel.

Objectives of the Organization

- Formulate long-term strategies for implementing the global Zionist project.
- Strengthen Jewish unity worldwide and reinforce their connection to Israel.
- Promote immigration to Israel and the expansion of settlements.



B. Participants in the Congress:

1. Delegates (with full voting rights on Congress decisions)

Under the rules governing the convening of the Congress, approximately 500 delegates from around the world participate, taking part directly in the voting process. This section addresses the composition of the delegate body, including representatives of Israeli Jewry, Jews from the United States, and Jewish communities in the diaspora. It also examines the principles

governing the selection of delegates, patterns of geographic and ideological representation, and the resulting ratios of representation and balance of power within the Congress. These delegates constitute the core of the Congress and are vested with full voting rights.

Composition of the Congress membership (delegates):

Seat allocation: Seats are distributed according to fixed proportions designed to reflect the geographic distribution of the World Zionist Movement, as follows⁴:

- Israel: 38%
- United States of America: 29%
- Jewish diaspora (rest of the world): 33%

Delegates from each country with a Jewish community are selected through elections organized by local voting authorities. In each region, an electoral committee determines the electoral mechanism and oversees the conduct of elections in every country where a Zionist federation exists, provided that such a federation is a member of the World Zionist Organization. Elections for the Congress must be held no later than three months prior to the convening of the Congress.

In the case of diaspora countries, the total number of delegates is determined in advance, while the allocation of delegates for each country is decided before every Congress by a special committee. This committee takes into account several factors, including the size of the Jewish population in each country, as well as Zionist indicators such as the number of members in Zionist federations, levels of immigration, and the scope of Jewish educational and advocacy activities.

To stand for election, a candidate must belong to a party affiliated with one of the five major factions within the Zionist Organization, all of which enjoy full voting rights within the World Zionist Congress. Accordingly, representation within the Congress is commonly

described as both “ideological and geographic,” as it combines political and intellectual affiliation with the geographic representation of Jewish communities worldwide.

Zionist Federations:

The World Zionist Congress includes representatives of geographically based Zionist federations from various countries around the world, in addition to Zionist women’s organizations and international Jewish organizations that enjoy a special status. Congress participants are also permitted to form what are known as ideological blocs or federations, which function in a manner similar to political parties within the Congress. These blocs bring together participants who share the same ideological outlook or Zionist orientation, combining political parties and organizations within unified groupings. There are five such federations:

- The World Zionist Federation: The Labor Zionist Movement, ARZENU, and the Meretz Federation.
- The United Faction: Kadima, HaNoar HaTzioni, and Merkaz.
- The Mizrahi World Movement / Ichud Leumi / Herut / Yisrael Beiteinu.
- World Likud / Shas.
- Hadassah / the Union.

2. Participating international Jewish organizations (with limited voting rights on Congress decisions):

International Jewish organizations have been represented in the World Zionist Congress since 1972, provided that they accept the Jerusalem Program. These bodies enjoy limited voting rights: they do not vote on candidacy or election matters related to the institutions of the World Zionist Organization, and their participation is confined to issues that fall within their respective mandates or directly affect their interests. The participating international Jewish organizations include:

- B'nai B'rith International.
- Maccabi World Union.
- Na'amat.
- World Zionist Organization of Women.
- Masorati Olami (World Masorti Movement).
- World Emunah.
- World Organization of Synagogues and Orthodox Communities in Israel and the Diaspora.
- American Sephardi Federation.
- World Union for Progressive Judaism.
- World Union of Jewish Students.
- Zionist Council in Israel⁵.

3. Advisory participants (without voting rights on Congress decisions):

In addition to the delegates who enjoy full voting rights in the Congress, there are advisory participants who may take part in discussions but do not possess voting rights. These include officeholders such as members of the Zionist Executive, members of the Zionist General Council who were not elected as Congress delegates, heads of Zionist federations, judicial officeholders, the President of the Zionist Supreme Court, the Attorney General, the Comptroller, and representatives of Zionist youth movements. Observers who do not have the right to speak or vote may also be invited by the Zionist Executive or the Congress Presidium⁶.

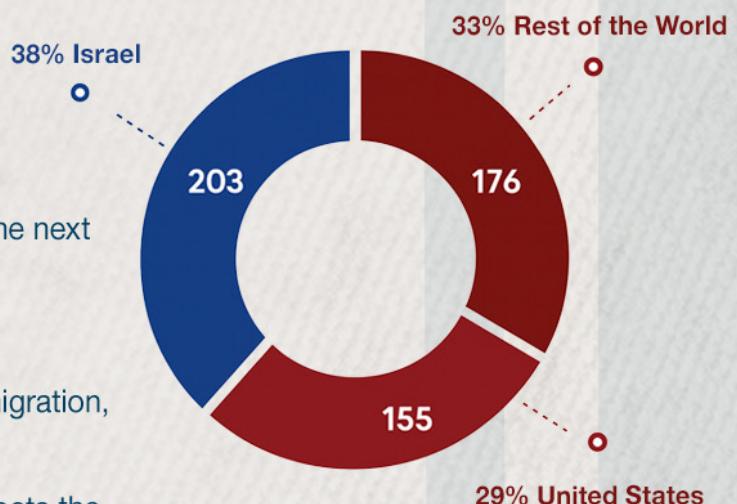
What is the World Zionist Congress?

- The supreme legislative body of the World Zionist Organization.
- Convenes every five years in Jerusalem.
- Comprises approximately 500 delegates from Israel, the Diaspora, and the United States, elected within each country.

Importance

- Sets strategic policies and directions for the next five years.
- Allocates budgets to national institutions.
- Influences education, Jewish identity, immigration, settlement, and Diaspora relations.
- Reviews reports of national institutions, elects the executive leadership, and votes on key resolutions.

Seat Distribution



ההטבות הפענית הטרומית | הקונגרס הציוני העולמי

WORLD ZIONIST ORGANIZATION



20.48
קונגרס ציוני עולמי



Second:

The 39th World Zionist Congress (Jerusalem, 2025)

The 39th World Zionist Congress convened in Jerusalem from 28 to 30 October 2025. On the first day, Tuesday, 28 October, proceedings commenced with the inaugural plenary session, which featured welcoming remarks and official opening addresses. This was followed by a second session dedicated to honoring distinguished figures participating in the Congress. The third plenary session then began and was divided into several parallel meetings focusing on key issues, including combating antisemitism, the role of Zionism on social media, and the role of women within the Zionist movement. Concurrently, the Constitution Committee convened to discuss organizational and procedural matters related to the Congress. The first day concluded with an official opening ceremony, marking the end of the day's proceedings.

On the second day, the participating parties and organizations held meetings to discuss internal matters and prepare strategies for the upcoming sessions. This was followed by the fourth plenary session, entitled "Zionism 20.48," during which the new executive leadership proposed by the Standing Committee was elected. A dedicated session was also held to establish a "Beit Midrash," alongside roundtable discussions on Zionist issues conducted under academic supervision. Subsequently, the specialized committees of the Congress began their work, with delegates divided among thematic tracks addressing sovereignty and borders; language and cultural identity; pluralism, social justice, and Jewish unity; accountability and transparency; social and national policies; resilience and recovery; combating antisemitism; education and memory; constitutional matters; and leadership and individual empowerment. A special committee was also convened to draft proposed resolutions for submission to the Congress.

This was followed by a closed meeting of the Resolutions Drafting Committee to review and finalize the proposed texts. At the same time, participants took part in various field visits, including tours of the areas surrounding Gaza, rehabilitation tours in central Israel under the program “Heroes Against Their Will,” and visits to Jerusalem as part of the “Heart of the People, Heart of the Nation” program, aimed at exploring the culture and daily life of Jewish communities in Israel.

On the third day of the Congress, participating parties and organizations met once again, as delegates continued deliberations on internal issues and finalized their positions for the formal sessions. The fifth plenary session then convened and was dedicated to decision-making, during which the resolutions and proposals submitted throughout the Congress were discussed and put to a vote. This was followed by the sixth plenary session, which constituted the closing session of the Congress, during which a summary of proceedings and outcomes was presented. Subsequently, the Zionist General Council held its 391/ session to address organizational and administrative matters related to the Zionist movement⁷.

A. Elections and Delegates:

The Congress convened with a total of 543 delegates from across the world: 203 delegates (38 percent) from Israel, based on the results of the most recent Israeli Knesset elections; 155 delegates (29 percent) from the United States; and the remaining delegates from the rest of the Jewish diaspora (33 percent). It is noteworthy that, as a result of the steady increase in Jewish immigration to Israel since the establishment of the state, the number of Israeli delegates within the World Zionist Congress has gradually risen over time. This increase has come at the expense of the relative representation of Jewish communities abroad, whose share of seats has correspondingly declined. As a result of this shift, the balance of participation within the Congress has increasingly tilted toward the Israeli side, thereby strengthening the influence of Israeli political parties and currents on the decisions and overall orientations of the World Zionist Organization⁸.

Diaspora delegates were elected through open voting by all adult Jews who affirmed their commitment to the Jerusalem Program and paid a nominal

fee. While this system had previously been applied in the United States, 2025 marked the first time that elections were held in many countries where national delegate lists had formerly been determined through behind-the-scenes arrangements among Zionist organizations. In total, approximately 265,000 voters participated in the elections. In addition to the regional delegates, there were 232 additional delegates representing international Jewish organizations, all of whom enjoyed full voting rights.

The World Zionist Congress was attended by delegates from at least 36 countries, who are typically selected through elections conducted by each national Zionist federation under the supervision of a regional elections committee to ensure procedural integrity and regularity. In 2025, Zionist federations in France, Italy, Hungary, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Chile held elections to nominate their representatives to the Congress. By contrast, Jewish communities in Russia and Ukraine were unable to conduct general elections to select their representatives due to the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war, which necessitated the postponement of elections or the adoption of alternative mechanisms for representation.

The 2025 Congress also marked the first participation of Serbia, Paraguay, Kazakhstan, Uganda, Azerbaijan, Ecuador, and Belarus, each represented by a single delegate. France was represented by 21 delegates, while Canada and the United Kingdom each received 19 delegates⁹.

B. Outcomes of the Congress:

Draft resolutions on constitutional amendments:

The Constitutional Review Committee presented a set of draft amendments to the Constitution of the World Zionist Organization submitted by the participating parties and organizations during the Congress sessions. These proposals ranged from organizational and administrative issues to matters of an ideological nature. B'nai B'rith International submitted a proposal to expand the powers of the Congress, while the ARZENU movement proposed the creation of a new bylaw to regulate the mechanisms for implementing the Constitution. World Likud, for its part, put forward two proposals aimed at reducing administrative expenditures and revising the reference timelines

for elections and candidacies. The Shas movement focused on issues of identity and heritage, calling for the designation of a commemorative day for Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the spiritual leader of Shas, and for the establishment of a framework to protect synagogues and historic buildings.

The Eretz Hakodesh movement submitted two proposals: lowering the age of eligibility for voting and candidacy to 17, and strengthening oversight and accountability powers within the executive bodies. The Am Yisrael Chai movement advanced proposals concerning the unification of the regulations governing Zionist federations and the clarification of the powers of the Secretariat-General. The Vision movement proposed the establishment of general rules for institutional transparency and for ensuring compliance with constitutional and judicial provisions. Meanwhile, the World Organization of Orthodox Communities and Synagogues submitted a proposal to create the position of Chief Institutional Security Officer within the Organization. Additional proposals included an amendment submitted by the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) to strengthen opposition to the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, as well as a proposal by the World Mizrachi Movement to amend Article 22 of the Constitution.

The Yesh Atid party submitted two proposals aimed at ensuring equal representation for women and conditioning the eligibility of Israeli delegates on the completion of national or military service. Hadassah, in turn, proposed an amendment to the “Jerusalem Program” to enhance the practical dimension of Zionist affiliation. With regard to voting on the aforementioned draft resolutions, the following outcomes were adopted:

- The establishment of the new Regulation (1A) for the implementation of the constitutional provisions (Articles 2 and 2A) was approved.
- The amendment of Article 41(c) of the Constitution was approved. This amendment had not been among the proposals submitted prior to the Congress and pertains to the mechanism for selecting members of the external executive body of the World Zionist Organization, particularly with regard to the representation of Jews in the diaspora.
- The proposal to lower the age of eligibility for voting and candidacy for the Congress Council to 17 years was not adopted¹⁰.

Draft Resolutions on Key Topics:

Political parties, unions, and participating organizations submitted a series of proposed resolutions for adoption at the conference. These proposals were distributed across ten specialized committees, addressing most of the political, social, and cultural issues confronting the Zionist movement in Israel and the diaspora, as follows¹¹:

Committee One: Sovereignty and Borders

The proposals focused on geopolitical matters. The Organization of Orthodox Communities and Synagogues called for extending Israeli sovereignty over the Temple Mount, while Israel365 Action advocated for applying Israeli sovereignty to the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) and the Jordan Valley. Conversely, the Labor Zionist Alliance proposed halting settlement construction in the E1 area.

Committee Two: Hebrew Language and Cultural Identity

This committee concentrated on promoting Hebrew language studies within Jewish diaspora communities. The Jewish Future proposed supporting the teaching of modern Hebrew, while the Herut Movement suggested expanding access to language learning and increasing its prevalence.

Committee Three: Pluralism, Social Justice, and Jewish Unity

Proposals centered on civil liberties and equality in Israel and the diaspora. The global Meretz Movement called for banning hate speech within Jewish communities and promoting pluralism. The global Masorti Movement submitted two proposals: first, opening the Western Wall's family section (the mixed area) to the general public, and second, supporting a fair conscription system in Israel.

Committee Four: Accountability and Transparency in Governance and Institutions

The Global Merkaz Organization proposed establishing an official investigative committee for the events of October 7. The World Union for

Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) called for enhanced transparency in national institutional budgets, while ARZENU submitted a proposal to safeguard the security of liberal Jewish communities in Israel.

Committee Five: National and Social Affairs

This committee reviewed proposals concerning civil society and international relations. The Labor Zionist Alliance advocated for strengthening civil society in Israel, Meretz Global proposed preventing Zionist organizational participation in settlement projects in Gaza, and Israel365 Action advanced an initiative to deepen relations with Christian Zionist allies.

Committee Six: Community Recovery and Resilience

Proposals addressed the effects of war and psychological trauma. The Voice of Israel organization suggested establishing a national mental health task force for victims of terrorism and injured soldiers. The Zionist Women's Organization proposed initiatives to enhance community resilience and combat violence, while the Herut Movement advanced measures to support Holocaust survivors.

Committee Seven: Combating Anti-Semitism

Maccabi World Union proposed an initiative to address discrimination against Jews in sports. The global Mizrachi Movement submitted a plan to strengthen local efforts in the United States to combat anti-Semitism. Meanwhile, the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) called on diaspora universities to adopt firm stances against anti-Semitism on campus.

Committee Eight: Education and Memory – Identity and Historical Awareness

The World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) proposed supporting youth movements and informal education in the diaspora. The Zionist Executive Committee presented a draft resolution concerning the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem. Voice of Israel suggested expanding educational initiatives on Israel and combating anti-Semitism in schools and universities.

Committee Ten: Leadership and Empowering the Next Generation

This committee focused on enhancing the role of women and youth in Zionist life. The World Zionist Women's Organization (WIZO) proposed encouraging female leadership in Israel and the diaspora. World Emunah submitted two proposals: one to support women as pillars of Jewish continuity and Zionist leadership, and another to facilitate the arrival of young female national service volunteers (Sherut Leumi) in Israel.

In this context, 24 draft resolutions concerning national, security, social, educational, and cultural issues were put to a vote by the delegates, with the following outcomes:

- The resolution to strengthen relations with Christian Zionist allies was rejected.
- The resolution to halt settlement construction in E1 was adopted.
- The resolution to promote Hebrew language studies in Jewish diaspora communities was adopted.
- The resolution to expand access to Hebrew language education in the diaspora was adopted.
- The resolution to embrace Zionist diversity and prohibit hate speech within Jewish and Zionist communities was adopted.
- The resolution to open public access to the egalitarian section of the Western Wall was adopted.
- The resolution to support a fair conscription system in Israel was adopted.
- The resolution to establish a government investigative committee for the events of October 7 was adopted.
- The resolution to enhance transparency in national institutional funding was adopted.
- The resolution to ensure the security of liberal Jewish communities in Israel was adopted.

- The resolution to strengthen civil society organizations in Israel was adopted.
- The resolution to prevent the World Zionist Organization from funding or participating in settlement projects in Gaza was adopted.
- The resolution to establish a national mental health task force for victims of terrorism and soldiers suffering from psychological trauma was adopted.
- The resolution to promote community resilience and combat violence was adopted.
- The resolution to support Holocaust survivors was adopted.
- The resolution to combat discrimination and anti-Semitism in sports, arts, and culture was adopted.
- The resolution to enhance local efforts to combat global anti-Semitism was adopted.
- The resolution to impose clear anti-Semitism policies on diaspora universities was adopted.
- The resolution to strengthen youth movements and informal education in the diaspora was adopted.
- The resolution concerning the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem was adopted.
- The resolution to expand educational initiatives on Israel and anti-Semitism in primary, secondary, and higher education was adopted.
- The resolution to promote female Zionist leadership in Israel and the diaspora was adopted.
- The resolution to empower women as pillars of Zionist leadership and Jewish continuity was adopted.
- The resolution to organize national service for young female volunteers from the diaspora was adopted.

Key Outcomes and Resolutions of the 39th Zionist Congress

Adopted Resolutions

Education

- Expand Hebrew education in the Diaspora and access to the Zionist archives in Jerusalem.
- Strengthen education about Israel and combat global antisemitism.

Security and Society

- Halt the construction of the E1 settlement between Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim.
- Establish a commission to investigate the events of October 7.
- Prohibit funding or implementation of settlements in Gaza.
- Reinforce international efforts against antisemitism.

Identity and Culture

- Expand access to the Western Wall (Kotel/Buraq Wall).
- Support a more equitable conscription system in Israel.

Youth and Women

- Support youth movements and informal education programs in the Diaspora.
- Promote female leadership and organize national service for women.

Resolutions Rejected or Unaddressed

- Rejected proposals to strengthen relations with Christian Zionist allies.
- Did not discuss proposals to extend Israeli sovereignty over the Temple Mount, the West Bank, or the Jordan Valley.

Changes in the Leadership of the World Zionist Organization:

- **Election of the Executive Chair:** During the conference, Rabbi Doron Perez was appointed Executive Chair of the World Zionist Organization until April 30, 2028, representing a coalition comprising the Mizrahi, Beitenu, Herut, Derekh Eretz, and Lavi movements. It was also determined that Yaakov Hagoel would assume the role of Executive Chair from May 1, 2028, representing the global Likud party.
- **Election of Vice Chair and Acting Executive Chair:** Yitshar Hess was reappointed as Vice Chair and Acting Executive Chair of the Organization, representing the global Merkaz party.
- **Election of Members of the Executive:** In accordance with Articles 14(e) and 41(1)(c) and (d) of the World Zionist Organization Constitution, the 39th World Zionist Congress elected the members of the Executive. The elected members included 11 from the right, 7 from the center, and 9 from the left and center-left of the Zionist spectrum.
- **Election of the Global Chair of Keren Hayesod:** The Congress resolved to elect Sam Grundwerg as Global Chair of Keren Hayesod until January 31, 2026. The Executive clarified that Grundwerg agreed to extend his term temporarily until a new chair could be elected, due to the inability to convene the Consultation and Consensus Committee tasked with nominating candidates. The Congress also authorized the Executive to conduct consultations and propose new candidates, with the final decision to be made by the World Zionist General Council.
- **Election of the Honorary President of the World Zionist Organization:** Pursuant to Article 15 of the World Zionist Organization Constitution, the Congress delegated authority to the General Council to elect the Organization's President based on a recommendation from the Executive, in accordance with Articles 14(e) and 39 of the Constitution¹². Current discussions indicate that Rabbi Doron Perez may assume the presidency while Yaakov Hagoel continues to lead the Executive.

- **Appointment of the President of the Supreme Zionist Court, Constitutional Amendments, and Formation of a Constitutional Committee:** The Congress entrusted the General Council with appointing the President of the Supreme Zionist Court and with deliberating on amendments to the Constitution of the World Zionist Organization. It also tasked the Executive with establishing a constitutional committee to review proposed resolutions that were not addressed during the Congress.

Conference Budget and New Allocations:

The Congress witnessed intense political tensions, which delayed the approval of the World Zionist Organization's budget. As the highest legislative authority of the Organization, the Congress is responsible for approving the financial framework—estimated in the billions of dollars—and for allocating funds to national institutions, including the World Zionist Organization itself, Keren Hayesod (United Israel Appeal), the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), and the Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemet LeIsrael, KKL).

However, the proceedings of the Congress were paralyzed due to prolonged disputes between the center-right and center-left blocs over leadership positions and power-sharing arrangements. The initial coalition agreement collapsed amid internal disagreements within the Likud party, particularly following a proposal to appoint Yair Netanyahu, son of the Israeli Prime Minister, as Head of the Public Relations Department of the Organization. This proposal met with strong opposition from center-left parties, especially Yesh Atid, resulting in a political deadlock that lasted more than two weeks and prevented essential votes, including on the budget.

On November 4, 2025, a new preliminary power-sharing agreement was reached to resolve the crisis. It was described as enjoying broad support and considered a preparatory step toward finalizing the budget¹³. Nevertheless, the agreement quickly unraveled: on November 6, 2025, opposition leader Yair Lapid announced Yesh Atid's withdrawal, accusing the World Zionist Organization of corruption and petty political bargaining. Lapid clarified that while his party would continue participating in Congress proceedings, it would not engage in any governance or budgetary deals, nor accept

any executive positions or financial allocations. This withdrawal effectively nullified the preliminary agreement and cast doubt on the Congress's ability to pass the budget.

Meanwhile, the Congress resumed voting on certain funding items, including an allocation of approximately \$61 million for projects aimed at strengthening the Jewish presence in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria)—a controversial measure opposed by center-left parties, including Yesh Atid. The intersection of leadership disputes and ideological divisions further obstructed final budget approval through early November 2025¹⁴.

Consequently, despite the successful convening of the 39th World Zionist Congress and its discussion of the Organization's financial framework, the budget could not be formally adopted due to the collapse of successive power-sharing agreements. The crisis underscored the depth of political divisions within the global Zionist movement and delayed the implementation of the financial plan for the next term.

Third:

The Influence of the World Zionist Congress on the Formulation and Direction of Global Zionist Policies

As noted in the first section of this paper, the significance of the World Zionist Congress stems from its role as the supreme legislative body of the World Zionist Organization. The Congress formulates policies and decisions regarding global Zionism, which are implemented by the Organization's affiliated agencies, branches, and institutions. This is particularly true for policies concerning settlement, education, and immigration to Israel, which in turn shape these domains both within Israel and, more broadly, across the United States and the Jewish diaspora. The Congress not only legislates and votes on new decisions but also oversees and monitors their implementation through reviewing reports from the Organization's committees and supervising the three core national institutions during each session.

Since its establishment in the 19th century, the World Zionist Congress has been the driving force behind the Organization's activities, particularly in providing funding and land for early Zionist settlers. This was primarily achieved through Keren Hayesod and Keren Kayemet, which were responsible for land acquisition, settlement financing, and facilitating immigration to Israel. Later, in the early 20th century, following the formalization of the British Mandate in 1923, the British government established the Jewish Agency, the third national institution tasked with implementing the Congress's decisions, including land purchases, immigrant settlement, and infrastructure development. Consequently, the three major Zionist institutions, each responsible for one of Israel's key areas, remain under the comprehensive control of the World Zionist Congress.

Regarding the Congress's influence on Zionist policies, it is notable that the first World Zionist Congress, held in Basel, Switzerland, in 1879, established the Zionist Organization as a unifying body serving

the interests of the Zionist movement. One of the Organization's primary objectives at the time was to establish a legally and formally recognized homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine—a goal that was ultimately realized in 1948 with the founding of the State of Israel. This was accomplished through the adoption of the Basel Program, which outlined four specific activities to achieve this aim: the promotion of Jewish settlement in Palestine by farmers, artisans, and merchants; the organization and unification of Jews through appropriate local and public institutions in accordance with the laws of their respective countries; and the cultivation of Jewish national consciousness and awareness.

At the Second World Zionist Congress in 1898, the establishment of the Jewish Colonial Trust was approved as the financial instrument of the Zionist Organization, and it was formally founded in London in 1899. The purpose of the Trust was to provide funding for the Zionist project and support land acquisitions in Palestine. In 1902, the Trust established its Palestinian branch, known as the Anglo-Palestine Bank, opening its first branch in Jaffa in 1903. The bank played a pivotal role in supporting Jewish settlers through long-term agricultural loans, financing settlement projects, and importing necessary equipment and materials.

Additionally, the Jewish National Fund (JNF / Keren Kayemet LeYisrael) was established following the Fifth World Zionist Congress in 1901 with the aim of raising international donations to purchase land in Palestine for Jewish settlers¹⁵.

After 1948, the Zionist Organization continued, through its national institutions, to support Jewish immigration and settlement in Israel, as well as the occupied territories after 1967, including the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In 1951, the Organization held its 23rd Congress in Jerusalem for the first time, redefining the Zionist program—referred to as the “Jerusalem Program”—to focus on consolidating the State of Israel, gathering Jews from the diaspora in the land of Israel, and strengthening Jewish national unity. It also proposed that Israel enact legislation recognizing the World Zionist Organization as the representative body of the Jewish people in all matters involving the organized participation of Jews worldwide in the development of Israel. Accordingly, in November 1952, the Knesset passed a law

recognizing the Organization as a “mandated agency” to continue its work in Israel, facilitating immigrant absorption and settlement, and authorized it to enter into a charter with the government.

At the 34th Congress of the World Zionist Organization in 2002, resolutions focused on enhancing Jewish settlement within Israel, particularly in the Galilee, Negev, and Arava regions. These resolutions later extended to settlement programs in the West Bank, which were translated into practical projects on the ground, such as the establishment of the Kochav Yaakov settlement near Ramallah, where groups of Jewish immigrants from the diaspora were relocated and settled with the support and funding of Keren Hayesod. The Congress’s resolutions on immigration also facilitated the arrival of Jews from around the world, especially following the collapse of the Soviet Union, contributing to the absorption of large numbers of immigrants¹⁶.

In June 2010, the World Zionist Congress voted in favor of a resolution calling on the Israeli government to support a two-state solution, strengthen Israel’s relations with the United States, and impose a freeze on settlement construction. The resolution followed extensive deliberations within the Settlement Committee and was adopted by approximately three-quarters of the votes at the Congress, despite strong protests from the Israeli right, which subsequently halted further voting sessions¹⁷. On the ground, the Netanyahu-led Israeli government implemented the resolution only partially and temporarily: settlement construction was frozen for just ten months under international, particularly U.S., pressure, before the freeze was lifted and construction resumed in specific areas of the West Bank. This partial implementation demonstrated that resolutions of the World Zionist Congress can influence Israeli policy but often encounter domestic political constraints and the influence of right-wing parties supportive of settlement expansion, limiting the effectiveness of full implementation of international or global Zionist decisions¹⁸.

In 2015, the Israeli government approved legislation transferring the authority to manage lands in rural areas of the occupied West Bank to the Settlement Department of the World Zionist Organization. The law grants this department the power to plan, develop, and allocate land for new settlements, either using its own resources or through external entities. This

amendment represented a significant step in expanding Israeli settlement activity in the occupied territories and transferring resource management to the Zionist Organization¹⁹.

In November 2016, the 37th World Zionist Congress adopted an official resolution opposing the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement. The resolution followed a proposal by the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) and emphasized that the BDS movement constitutes discrimination against Jews regardless of their place of residence—whether in Israel, in territories under its control, or worldwide. The resolution addressed companies, academic and cultural institutions, as well as Jewish/Israeli individuals, artists, and scholars, emphasizing the need to counteract any impact of BDS on the global Jewish community. Implementation of the resolution required all Zionist bodies affiliated with the World Zionist Organization—including the General Council, Executive Committee, WZO institutions, and global Zionist federations—to adopt policies opposing BDS at both local and international levels²⁰.

In March 2017, the Knesset passed legislation prohibiting supporters of boycotting Israel from entering the country. The law, proposed by members of the governing coalition from the right and center, bars foreign nationals who have publicly called for a boycott of the Jewish state or who work for organizations advocating such measures. The legislation also extends to supporters of boycotting products from settlements in the West Bank²¹.

In October 2020, the 38th World Zionist Congress adopted a resolution aimed at promoting Jewish immigration and coordinating with the Jewish Agency, as well as expanding the deployment of shlichim (emissaries) and programs to encourage Jewish migration worldwide. This decision was part of the World Zionist Organization's broader efforts to strengthen ties between Israel and the Jewish diaspora and to stimulate Aliyah to Israel, in line with the Congress's objective of gathering the Jewish people in their historical homeland²².

On the ground, the Jewish Agency and Israel's Ministry of Immigration and Integration implemented these directives by expanding immigration programs and supporting tens of thousands of Jewish immigrants in

2020, despite the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This demonstrates how Congress resolutions are translated into tangible actions executed by the Organization's affiliated institutions, with formal reporting mechanisms established to monitor implementation²³.

A comprehensive review of the history of the World Zionist Congress—from its first meeting in 1897 to its contemporary sessions—reveals that the World Zionist Organization continues to wield significant institutional and strategic influence over the formulation of Zionist policies. While the nature of this influence has evolved over time, it has shifted from direct political decision-making to indirect impact exercised through its executive arms and affiliated institutions operating in coordination with the Israeli government.

In its early years, the World Zionist Organization exercised absolute authority in defining the objectives of the Zionist project. The First Congress in 1897 marked the ideological and political starting point for establishing a “national homeland for the Jews in Palestine.” Subsequent congresses, such as those in 1901 and 1902, created the financial and operational instruments of the project, funding land purchases and settlement construction that laid the foundational nucleus of the future State of Israel. This indicates that the Organization was not merely a political or intellectual framework but effectively established the institutions of the state prior to its formal existence.

However, it can be argued that the Organization's current influence is contingent on the balance of power within Israel. When right-wing and religious currents dominate the government, as has been the case over the past decade, Congress decisions are reinterpreted to align with their political interests, as seen in issues such as settlements and the Law of Return. Consequently, the Organization's influence is now closely linked to Israel's domestic political environment and the relationship between the government and the global Zionist bodies.

Fourth:

Assessment of the Congress Outcomes and Their Implications for Zionist Intentions and Actions in the Next Phase

A. Congress Slogan:

The Congress slogan (20.48) reflects two temporal dimensions related to the Zionist project: 1948, the year of Israel's establishment, a foundational event in the trajectory of modern Zionism, and 2048, representing the centenary of the state and a long-term vision for the continuation of the Zionist project. The slogan seeks to connect the past, present, and future by offering participants a perspective on the objectives achievable over the coming decades. The Congress deliberately adopted this formulation without explicit explanation, aiming to provoke reflection and curiosity among participants as a subtle promotional strategy for the event.

B. Timing Significance:

It can be noted that the Congress was convened at a sensitive juncture, following a series of recent conflicts involving Israel. The sequence began with the October 7 war in the Gaza Strip, followed by the northern conflict with Lebanon, confrontations with the Houthis, and finally the war with Iran. This succession of events underscores that the timing of the Congress is closely linked to significant developments affecting both Israel and Jews worldwide. These recent events have noticeably impacted the global image of Jews, diminishing the effectiveness of traditional media narratives related to antisemitism on the international stage. This was particularly evident in efforts by Jewish communities worldwide to formulate new strategies aimed at improving and managing their global image in response to widespread public and governmental criticism.

As is known, the Congress convenes every five years, meaning that the past four to five years have witnessed substantial changes likely to directly

influence the future of Jews both within Israel and across the diaspora. In this context, Executive Vice Chair Yitshar Hess wrote an article just days before the Congress, highlighting the importance of its timing for several reasons. Among these, he emphasized the need to allocate part of the funding from the major national institutions affiliated with the Organization to support reconstruction and recovery projects following recent events, both materially and through advocacy efforts.

Hess stressed that resources should not be wasted on internal political conflicts but must be urgently and effectively directed toward rebuilding efforts, while maintaining focus on the broader objectives without delving into the specifics of individual projects. He also cited significant incidents affecting Jews worldwide as motivating factors for the Congress's heightened importance. Most notably, he referred to what he described as a terrorist and antisemitic attack in Manchester on Yom Kippur—one of the most important Jewish holidays—characterizing it as “a wake-up call to Jewish leaders everywhere to intensify our efforts on this front.” Hess used the Manchester incident as a warning, urging the Congress to allocate stronger funding and programs to combat antisemitism in the West. From his perspective, confronting hatred against Jews is not merely an ethical issue but one of community security and the survival of Jewish communities in the diaspora.

Additionally, Hess highlighted a critical issue for Zionism concerning the younger generation, particularly abroad, which has increasingly distanced itself from Zionist and religious identity. For this reason, he emphasized the need for the Congress to allocate funding for educational, cultural, and religious programs in synagogues and Jewish youth organizations, with the aim of reconnecting young people with Judaism and Zionism after a period of fragmentation and declining interest. This perspective explains the World Zionist Organization's decision to organize a global youth congress in Budapest on November 3, 2025, for the first time, specifically to address this disengagement from core Zionist principles²⁴.

Hess also addressed internal divisions within the global Zionist movement, warning against attempts by far-right currents within the movement to impose their agenda on the Congress and national institutions, mirroring

developments in Israeli politics. From this analysis, the global Zionist landscape can be summarized as follows:

- There are deep divisions between factions, with a growing dominance of right-wing trends on the global stage.
- While left-wing and centrist currents remain, right-wing influence continues to expand year by year, shaping the Organization's policies and directions.
- Younger generations are largely detached from core Zionist principles, highlighting a strategic focus on youth engagement.
- The recent wars involving Israel have made it imperative for the World Zionist movement to reorganize itself to confront the significant changes of the past five years²⁵.
- These factors collectively represent the major challenges currently facing the global Zionist movement.

C. Growing Divisions within Jewish Diaspora Communities:

Recent elections in Jewish diaspora communities across the United States and Europe have highlighted significant internal divisions. Reports monitoring these elections, for example in the United States, noted that numerous challenges were filed against elected members. Most of these challenges were ultimately rejected, though they were largely based on allegations of fraud, particularly targeting lists with a right-leaning, more hardline orientation, such as Shas. In some cases, certain lists were alleged to have won due to invalid nomination documents or election manipulation affecting other competing lists.

The U.S. lists also sparked controversy due to the inclusion, for the first time, of influencers and digital content creators from the American Jewish community, raising widespread debate. Many criticized the participation of Jewish influencers who had no prior engagement in political decision-

making. For instance, the “Eish Ham” list, led by the “Eish Hatorah” institutions, became one of the most controversial in this regard. It included several social media influencers, most notably Lizzy Savitsky, an American Jewish influencer known for her stance against antisemitism. Initially focused on fashion, Savitsky gradually shifted her content toward Jewish religion and traditions, using her social media platforms to support Israel, conduct interviews with hostages’ families, assist Jewish university students, and educate followers about the rise of antisemitism worldwide.

It is worth noting that Savitsky was among the influencers who met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his recent visit to New York on September 27, 2025. She is reportedly part of what is referred to as the “Esther Project,” led by the company Bridge Partner, which operates on behalf of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Under this initiative, influencers are paid approximately \$7,000 per post for participating in promotional campaigns in support of Israel.

The list also included influencers specializing in fashion, such as Ellie Zeller and Jamie Geller, a renowned chef who has become a prominent Jewish media figure, as well as Melinda Strauss, another influencer who shares lifestyle and food-related content on her social media platforms; Tanya Zuckerbrot and Zack Sieg Fox were also part of the list. The “Eish Hatorah” list was not the only one incorporating content creators and influencers; the Israel365 Action list included journalist and influencer Josh Hamer and comedian Elon Gold.

This development sparked controversy and challenges to the U.S. lists. Nonetheless, these lists succeeded in securing seats at the Congress. The American Jewish community thus experienced unprecedented internal electoral disputes, marking the first time such divisions have manifested so prominently.

D. Significant Interest from Zionist Parties Worldwide:

Notably, elections were held for the first time in many years in countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom, where previously members were selected without voting. This year, seven new countries joined the Congress. There was also extensive promotion of internal elections in European countries, particularly by right-wing parties, which exerted considerable influence over the electoral landscape and secured majorities in several cases.

E. Left and Center Control over the 39th Congress Decisions:

Focusing on internal divisions, it is noteworthy that although the right-wing bloc held a numerical majority among delegates, most of the decisions adopted at the 39th Congress were proposed by centrist and moderate left-wing or social-liberal organizations and parties. In other words, despite the right-wing factions' numerical dominance in representation, centrist and left-leaning groups—including Masorti Olami, Merkaz, Meretz Global, and the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO)—were able to successfully advance and secure the adoption of their proposals.

Masorti Olami, representing the centrist bloc, advanced resolutions including opening access to the southern section of the Western Wall, which had been restricted since a stone fell in 2018, and supporting Israel's fair conscription system. Meanwhile, the “Future of the Jews” list, representing the liberal-left, proposed a resolution to enhance the study of modern Hebrew in the diaspora. The World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ), aligned with the liberal-left, also emphasized transparency in budgets to ensure equal opportunities within national institutions.

The Labor Zionist Alliance, a centrist-left coalition, proposed measures to protect Israeli civil society organizations from taxation or governmental restrictions, as well as a halt to settlement construction in the E1 area of the West Bank. The Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO),

representing the social-centrist wing, contributed proposals to strengthen women's leadership in Jewish life and Zionist institutions. On political issues, the World Union of the left-liberal Meretz Party submitted a resolution prohibiting the World Zionist Organization from supporting the resettlement of Gaza residents in any form.

In contrast, the role of right-wing factions such as Herut, Likud, and the American Zionist Organization (ZOA) was relatively limited, primarily focusing on supporting Holocaust survivors and imposing requirements on diaspora universities to combat antisemitism. The majority of major decisions and practical policy directions were determined by the centrist and left-wing blocs.

Despite the numerical dominance of right-wing factions in the elections, centrist and left-wing groups were able to assert control over decision-making by building strong alliances within the Congress. They focused on globally acceptable issues such as education, civil society support, and rights protection, leveraging previously mentioned committees to draft resolutions prior to voting and utilizing the influence of the left-leaning diaspora worldwide to secure approval. This strategy allowed them to shape the Congress outcomes effectively, despite not holding the majority among delegates.

By contrast, the resolutions calling for the expansion of sovereignty over the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) and the Jordan Valley—highly sensitive dossiers aligned with the far-right agenda—were obstructed. This outcome indicates that centrist and left-wing factions exerted greater influence over the conference's overall practical policy orientation²⁶. It is also notable that centrist and left-wing groups cooperated to consolidate their efforts through negotiations and dialogue with other factions, including limited engagement with the center-right. Nevertheless, the implementation of these resolutions remains in the hands of the Zionist Council, whose membership is predominantly right-leaning.

It is important to note that the conference itself does not possess binding executive authority. However, its outcomes exert significant influence over the policies of major institutions, including the World Zionist Organization,

the Jewish National Fund, and the Jewish Agency for Israel. These outcomes shape budgetary allocations, support programs in Israel and the diaspora, the enhancement of cooperation among different factions, and the management of relations with Jewish communities worldwide.

F. Right-wing dominance over executive positions:

With regard to recent appointments within the organization, the process sparked considerable controversy, as right-wing orientations appeared to dominate clearly, particularly through the Likud faction and its representatives within the executive leadership. By contrast, the Zionist left demonstrated a weak presence in this configuration, with its role largely confined to a symbolic minority or limited advisory positions. This development is attributable to a significant shift prior to the announcement of the appointments, when Yair Lapid declared his party, Yesh Atid, would withdraw from the power-sharing agreement governing key institutions such as the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and the Jewish National Fund. Lapid justified the withdrawal by arguing that these institutions are corrupt and beyond reform, and that operating from within them would be futile, citing patronage and corruption at lower levels.

This withdrawal came just one day after a preliminary agreement had been reached between Yesh Atid and Likud on power-sharing within the organization, before the agreement was subsequently rescinded. The decision triggered a dispute with the World Labor Zionist Alliance, which criticized Lapid's move as populist and inconsistent, describing it as a "hollow victory" that effectively handed control of the institutions to the right and ultra-religious political forces. The Alliance maintained that reform should be pursued from within the institutions through persistence and coalition-building, rather than through withdrawal²⁷.

These developments indicate that, over the next five years, the right wing is poised to dominate a substantial budget estimated at approximately USD 5 billion. This dominance enhances its political, financial, and land-related control over key national institutions, particularly given that these bodies exercise authority over roughly 12 percent of Israel's land.

Yesh Atid, which ranked as the third-largest party in terms of seats at the conference (after Likud and Eretzenu), had the opportunity to lead the Jewish National Fund, the body responsible for land administration, financing infrastructure projects, supporting settlements, and overseeing environmental and agricultural rehabilitation in Israel, under the leadership of Meir Cohen. However, the party's withdrawal resulted in the loss of this opportunity and significantly increased the likelihood of right-wing control over the Fund, thereby granting the right broader political and settlement-related influence, especially in light of the fact that no new appointment to head the Fund has yet been made.

G. The budget approval crisis and the suspension of remaining appointments:

The most recent conference was marked by numerous disputes. Notably, even approximately two weeks after its conclusion, no final agreements had been reached regarding either the budget or the appointments within the Zionist Organization. With respect to the budget approval crisis, the matter appears likely to be referred to the Zionist Council. The crux of the issue lies in the composition of the Council, which consists of the newly approved appointees endorsed by the conference and currently leans heavily toward the right. As a result, both the budget and the mechanisms overseeing its implementation are likely to fall under the control of the far-right or nationalist factions.

Similarly, the remaining appointments—including the honorary presidency of the organization, the other members of the executive authority, and the heads of national institutions, including the Jewish Agency and the two principal funding bodies—will be subject to appointment by the Council. Moreover, the Zionist Council holds the authority to amend the organization's constitution in line with the outcomes of the conference, a process that, by extension, is also highly likely to come under right-wing influence.

H. The debate over the impact of the World Zionist Organization:

The evolution of Zionist congresses can be assessed historically and systematically through five principal phases that reflect shifts in the congress's objectives, the nature of its deliberations, and the role of the Zionist movement within the global and Israeli political context.

The first phase, during the Herzl era:

In this period, the congresses focused on establishing the organization and shaping its internal structures, adopting a largely ideological and parliamentary character. Attention centered on Palestinian affairs and educational activities among Jewish communities, alongside laying the foundations of the first Zionist institutions and articulating the broader goals of the Zionist movement as the basis for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestinian territory. At this formative stage, the Zionist Organization played a central and foundational role in the overall construction of the movement.

The second phase after Herzl:

With the transition of the Zionist movement into its second phase following Herzl, the congresses focused primarily on issues of immigration and settlement. This phase extended from the Seventh to the Eleventh Congress. Accordingly, the Zionist Organization's congresses functioned as an executive foundation for early Zionist plans, which strengthened their role in practical implementation.

The third phase, from the Balfour Declaration to the establishment of Israel (1917-1948):

During this period, the congresses evolved into an international parliamentary platform with a distinctly political character. They were endowed with broad financial authorities, alongside increased activity by Zionist political parties, which reinforced the organization's international and political profile. This phase laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Jewish state and the consolidation of control over Palestinian territory.

The fourth phase, from 1948 to the beginning of the new millennium:

From the establishment of Israel in 1948 until the beginning of the new millennium, the congresses became closely linked to the “modern” Jewish state. Conference programs were reformulated—from the Basel Program to the Jerusalem Program—and the organization was accorded a superior status vis-à-vis Israeli governments and the Knesset. The Status Law of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency (1952) was adopted in Israel during this period. Consequently, the congress became an integral part of the official political system, integrating its activities with the state and participating in the formulation of national policies.

The fifth phase, from 2000 to the present:

It is evident that the effectiveness and role of the World Zionist Organization have declined markedly in recent decades compared with the organization’s formative periods and the early years of the World Zionist Congress. This decline can be attributed primarily to internal disputes and divisions, which have led some Jewish currents to disengage from the organization or to refrain from implementing its agendas in a coherent and sustained manner.

Moreover, the balance of power and the locus of control over global Zionist policies have increasingly tilted in favor of Israel itself. Over time, Israel has assumed responsibilities of governance, construction, and maintenance that were previously undertaken by the World Zionist Organization, prompting renewed questions as to where ultimate authority resides: with Israel or with the Zionist Organization. In this context, it has also become evident that the core functions of the World Zionist Organization have increasingly shifted toward mobilization. The organization now operates largely as a mobilizing instrument for Jews who take the Zionist-Jewish mission seriously and seek to adapt it to the demands of the contemporary world. At the same time, it has evolved into a vehicle for implementing Israeli decisions. Given that Israel holds the largest share of representation within the organization—reflecting the balance of political currents in the Knesset—the organization has, in practice, become an extension of the Israeli government and a mechanism for executing its policies, particularly in light of right-wing dominance in the Knesset. Consequently, the World Zionist Organization no longer represents

world Jewry as a whole, as it claims, but rather represents Israel and its governing authorities.

This does not, however, imply the disappearance of its influence. On the contrary, one may argue that a defining characteristic historically associated with the Jewish people—namely fragmentation and dispersion—has become especially pronounced in the current period. The most recent congress was therefore of considerable importance, as it convened in the aftermath of significant developments on both the Israeli and international stages. Nevertheless, its outcomes were neither decisive nor transformative. Two key issues, in particular, remained unresolved: the rejection of the construction of the E1 settlement in the West Bank, and the failure to deliberate on the imposition of sovereignty over the West Bank and the Jordan Valley, despite the inclusion of this issue among the proposed draft resolutions.

These developments occurred against the backdrop of recent U.S. statements opposing the imposition of sovereignty over the West Bank. Although such statements may be characterized as functional and temporary—largely shaped by shifts in Arab and global public opinion and by the United States' desire to defuse international anger over its own position and that of Israel—the decisions of the World Zionist Organization were nonetheless consistent with this stance. This alignment may contribute to delaying the policy of imposing sovereignty over the West Bank for a certain period, given that the organization retains a degree of pressure leverage, albeit a limited one.

Nevertheless, this does not preclude the possibility that sovereignty may be imposed at a later stage, as the Zionist Council—comprising executive members from the Israeli right and Jewish representatives from around the world—may in the future adopt decisions reflecting such a direction. This prospect has been further reinforced since 2015, when the Israeli government approved an amendment to the Status Law of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency, granting the organization's Settlement Division broad powers to manage land in rural areas of the occupied West Bank. Under this law, the Division is authorized to formulate plans, develop land, and allocate it for the establishment of new settlements, whether through the organization's own resources or in cooperation with

external entities. This framework effectively endows the organization with the capacity to influence the settlement file and exert control over the West Bank after the conclusion of the congress, through alternative mechanisms at its disposal.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that the future of global Zionism will be characterized by a dual-layered complexity across multiple levels. Internally, deep-seated divisions among right-wing, centrist, and left-wing factions will continue to shape dynamics. The right is likely to dominate executive positions, financial resources, and settlement-related portfolios, granting it extensive leverage over major policy directions, while centrist and left-wing forces will retain the ability to influence certain decisions through strategic alliances and institutional positioning, particularly in the educational, cultural, and social spheres. Externally, the prevailing trajectory of contemporary Zionism appears focused on mobilizing younger generations in the diaspora through educational, mobilization, and advocacy programs aimed at re-engaging youth with Jewish and Zionist identity, alongside efforts to improve the international image of Israel and Jews through media and digital outreach. Finally, at the strategic level, there is a discernible Israeli inclination to employ the World Zionist Organization as an executive instrument to advance national objectives—particularly in land and settlement-related issues—while maintaining the organization as a largely symbolic international representative façade rather than an autonomous actor capable of independently shaping policy contrary to Israeli preferences.

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