

## Perspectives on the Gaza War: Politics, Security, and Society in Israel



### Dr. Ilai Z. Saltzman

*Director of the Gildenhorn Institute for Israel Studies at the University of Maryland*

#### About Dr. Saltzman

Dr. Ilai Saltzman is an Associate Research Professor of Israel Studies, and the Director of the Gildenhorn Institute for Israel Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park. His scholarship and teaching focus on international security, Israeli foreign and security policy, US foreign policy, and political psychology. Dr. Saltzman is the author of *Securitizing Balance of Power Theory: A Polymorphic Reconceptualization* (2012). He has also written numerous scholarly articles, and book chapters, as well as commentaries in the Los Angeles Times, Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, and other prominent outlets. Dr. Saltzman earned his Ph.D. in International Relations in 2010 from the University of Haifa and was a postdoctoral research fellow at the International Security Program (ISP), Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University (2009-2010).



**Contact Dr. Saltzman**

**Email:** saltzman@umd.edu

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# Common Q&A's

## **How has the Gaza war reshaped Israel's political landscape?**

The war has intensified divisions within Israel while also creating moments of unity. Some political leaders face growing criticism over preparedness and decision-making, while others have actually gained support by continuously criticizing the current government. There were major infightings between the coalition parties, and the opposition seems largely ineffective. At the same time, debates over security, governance, and accountability are pushing Israeli politics into new and uncertain territory with the question of general elections looming large.

## **What are the main security challenges Israel is confronting during the war?**

Israel's military has been contending with a complex battlefield—urban warfare in Gaza, persistent rocket fire, and threats from Hezbollah and Iran's attacks. Beyond the battlefield, however, the war raises longer-term questions: how to balance military necessity with humanitarian concerns, how to sustain international legitimacy, how to deal with exhausted and traumatized soldiers, and how to prepare for future conflicts that may look very different from past ones.

## **How is Israeli society responding to the war?**

Israeli communities are showing remarkable resilience—volunteering, supporting displaced families, and mobilizing in creative ways—but the war has also deepened trauma and widened social fissures. Issues such as trust in government, economic pressures, and debates over identity and responsibility are shaping the public mood and may influence Israeli society well beyond the immediate conflict. The debate concerning the enlistment of Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) men has created new schisms in Israel's socio-political landscape, exacerbating pre-existing tensions among different groups.

# Key Takeaways

- ✓ The Gaza war is not only a military conflict but also a political and societal turning point for Israel.
- ✓ Israel's security challenges extend far beyond Gaza.
- ✓ Israeli society is resilient but under unprecedented strain.
- ✓ The war is dramatically altering Israel's international standing, threatening to turn it into a pariah state.
- ✓ The long-term consequences and the degree of reversibility of these trends remain uncertain.

*The views expressed by the speaker don't necessarily reflect Chai Mitzvah's official position.*