



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (c) and his wife, Sara, at the opening of the Guatemalan embassy in Jerusalem, May 16, 2018. Photo: GPO/Kobi Gideon

## The “Mobileye Effect” in Latin America- Israel Relations, 2009-2019

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This article analyzes relations between Latin American countries and Israel over the past decade (2009-2019) and argues that Israel’s strengthened image as a technological leader with an entrepreneurial culture plays a key role in what is perceived as its being closely identified with Asia in Latin American eyes. This, along with other developments, has led Latin American countries to start viewing Israel as a new and intriguing source for technology. This trend is almost across the board and irrespective of the political situation in the Middle East and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The article analyzes the context of these changes in Latin American approaches to relations with Israel over the past decade, and in particular the coverage in the Latin American media, taking note of changes in the region’s UN votes on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It considers Israeli policy on international aid to Latin America (Mashav programs), which constitutes the core of Israel’s low-key policy in Latin America. In addition, it raises questions regarding short-term challenges to the relations and Israel’s ability and willingness to meet these expectations vis-à-vis the Latin American countries.

*Keywords:* Israel, Latin America, Asia, UN, embassies, technologies, start-up nation

## Introduction

In recent years, parallel to the political crises and regime changes in Latin America, there has been a significant improvement from the left and right in countries on the continent towards Israel. This article discusses approaches in Latin America to relations with Israel over the past decade (2009-2019) and argues that Israel's strengthened image as a start-up nation with a culture of entrepreneurship has played a central role in Latin America placing Israel in the same category as a number of fast growing and hi-tech savvy Asian nations. As a result of this process, Latin American states have started to view Israel as on par with the economic attractiveness of Asia as a new source of technology, and an economic model that is worthy of emulation. This change comes about irrespective of the political situation in the Middle East and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The trend coincides with the way Asia has become more relevant for Latin America and the changing influence of the United States on Latin America over the course of the years, as well as the political changes in the region.

Despite Israel's image as a technology leader and the entrepreneurial mentality in its relations with Latin America, to date the trend has not been included in assessments of Israel's relations with the region or received adequate research attention (Grossman, 2018; Kacowicz, 2017; Mena & Segura, 2016; Robinson, 2019; Vigevani & Calandrin, 2019).

This article analyzes the context of the changes in the perception of relations between Israel and Latin America over the past decade, and in particular examines the interpretation of the Latin American media in light of the changes in the region's voting at the UN on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It also relates to Israel's policy on international aid in Latin America (Mashav programs), which is the main focus of Israel's low-key policy in Latin America.

## The “Mobileye Effect”: The Change in Latin America's Relations with Israel, 2009-2019

There are currently 15 embassies of Latin American countries in Israel: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Peru, Paraguay, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico. Along with bilateral frameworks, these embassies operate in Israel along two parallel channels that create a regional dynamic in relations with Israel: in multinational regional blocs, and a regional framework that comprises all the Latin American countries.

In addition to direct relations, Latin American countries manage their relations with Israel in a unified front, via multinational Latin American blocs. Three blocs have been especially relevant to Israel over the past decade, with varying levels of influence. One is Mercosur (the Southern Common Market), a trade bloc established by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, with Venezuela joining a few years ago; the second is SICA (the Central American Integration System), whose members include Belize, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Panama; and the third is the Pacific Alliance, a trade bloc established by Chile, Mexico, Peru, and Colombia.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of these sub-regional frameworks is mainly to facilitate trade between countries with similar geographical characteristics, by canceling or reducing tariffs to encourage economic development, improve their international standing, and prevent economic-political conflicts among the members (Florensa et al., 2015). In the case of Mercosur, the Paraná River passes through four countries that belong to this bloc and the river is used for trade between them. In the case of the Pacific Alliance, the four member states have the option to cooperate on trade with Asia.

Latin America is a geopolitical region with a population of 750 million people and comprises 33 states, which account for 17 percent of the voting members at the UN General Assembly.

The region is the world's largest food producer, and the third largest energy producer. The Latin America governments relate to their power in the international arena primarily on the regional level, which is greater than that of any individual country on its own. Nevertheless, the cumulative power of these regional organizations is still limited. Therefore, the significance of regional frameworks in Latin America can be appreciated despite the disagreements between the various governments (AFP, 2019).

The relevance of these frameworks for Latin America's embassies in Israel stems not only from the agreements and from Israel's involvement in some of them, but mainly from projects that these countries try to advance in Israel in the framework of the regional organizations. An example is the free trade agreement that Israel signed with the Mercosur states in 2007 (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007). In addition, on February 10, 2014, Israel was accepted as an observer state to the Pacific Alliance (Basuk, 2014). By means of these blocs, Israel has also succeeded in building connections and even influencing Latin American countries in the absence of official diplomatic ties or a mission, such as in the case of Venezuela.

The second framework of Latin American countries in Israel is GRULAC (Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries), which includes all the Latin American ambassadors in Israel (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). GRULAC is a representative framework without real operational capabilities and is headed by the ambassador with the greatest seniority in Israel. Nevertheless, through GRULAC Latin American ambassadors have succeeded in increasing their countries' influence, and the group serves as a platform for broader contacts for Latin American countries that are not generally the major focus of Israel's foreign policy. Israeli and Latin American representatives use the framework to advance projects that would be likely to encounter obstacles in a bilateral framework. In addition, it serves as a forum for joint consultations for all the Latin American

ambassadors in Israel, and organizes meetings with various sectors of Israeli society (Embajada de Panamá en Israel, 2019).

The use of these frameworks by Latin American ambassadors to Israel leads to almost immediate regional implications for bilateral projects and agreements. For example, the projects that Israel hoped to advance with the SICA states shed light on the context in which decisions were made regarding the renewal of relations with Nicaragua (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). Israel attempted to be admitted to SICA and promoted projects in the fields of renewable energy, water purification, and others. Another element of importance is the participation of unofficial actors interested in fostering ties between Israel and Latin America like the Jewish communities in the various countries, who regularly participate in the relationship.

The regional character of the work conducted by Latin American embassies with Israel revealed early in the past decade the complexity of these relations. In 2009, Bolivia and Venezuela cut off diplomatic relations with Israel following Operation Cast Lead, the military operation by the IDF in the Gaza Strip (December 2008-January 2009). Nicaragua followed suit in 2010 (AP, 2009; Keinon, 2009). Relations with these countries began to deteriorate even before the fighting in Gaza over ideological differences with those countries. However, their decisions had clear regional implications, in part because the rest of the Latin American countries felt the need to publicly address the question of how to enable continued relations with Israel despite the decisions of their partners in various regional blocs.

At the outset of the previous decade, Israel's standing in Latin America was problematic, especially in the largest and most influential countries in the region. In 2010, the Brazilian government officially recognized the Palestinian Authority as an independent state within the 1967 borders, including all of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem—a decision

that was adopted by almost all of the Latin American countries in 2010-2011. However, from Israel’s perspective the problematic stance of Latin American governments toward Israel in those years was not only related to the conflict with the Palestinians. An example of this was Brazil’s organizing of a summit in May 2010 with Turkey and Iran in order to discuss various ways for Iran to progress in its nuclear program. The Brazilian move came despite explicit requests by the Israeli government in international forums against such moves and the total awareness of Latin American countries of the implications for Israel (Barrionuevo & Arsu, 2010).

Israel’s standing in Latin America continued to be problematic in 2011. There were reports in the Argentinian press on direct negotiations between the governments of Argentina and Iran for improving their relations and jointly investigating the 1994 attack on the Jewish community center building in Buenos Aires (Eliashev, 2011). Following the Argentinian government’s decision, other countries in the region also began to strengthen their ties with Iran, Uruguay among them (EFE, 2011). During that period, Israel opposed the interim agreement on the nuclear issue, the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) (Landau and Kurz, 2014), which was finalized as the JCPOA in 2015. In Latin America, the public believed the rationale for this was Iran’s support for terrorism, such as the attack on the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, and not the Israeli position that Iran constitutes a direct threat to the State of Israel and a destabilizing force for additional countries in the Middle East (Clarín Política, 2013).

The negative attitude of Latin American governments toward Israel early in the decade can also be seen in discussions at international forums. In 2009, for example, there were five votes at the UN General Assembly on the topic of the “Palestinian territories,” and four votes on the “Palestinian question.”<sup>2</sup> There was a total of 135 votes by the 15 states that had embassies in Israel in 2019. The results of the nine votes

in 2009 were 107 against Israel, 20 abstentions, and five not present. Only the government of Panama supported Israel on three occasions. The following year the results were even worse from Israel’s perspective.<sup>3</sup>

International developments in 2009 were especially complex from the perspective of Israel’s standing in Latin America. The relationship must be viewed from within the framework of Latin America-Middle East relations and the tension between ideology and pragmatism in Latin America, especially toward the Middle East (Funk, 2016). Operation Cast Lead took place when Barack Obama began his term as President of the United States, which can be defined as the beginning of a new era in US-Latin America relations. Latin America was not a high priority for the Obama administration. Nevertheless, the period coincided with the term of Hugo Chavez as a defiant President of Venezuela and the US administration’s attempts to strengthen relations, and the renewal of relations with Cuba (which became official in 2015 despite the opposition from Congress). In addition, the reform of the US health system by President Obama was viewed in Latin America as a left wing policy (de la Torre, 2017; Reid, 2015).

Despite the global economic crisis in 2008, Latin American governments felt confident in their decisions in the international arena and sensed that they had the power to manage an independent policy in international forums. Examples of this were Brazil’s support for Iran’s position on the nuclear program (Lopes & Faria, 2016), and the ability of certain Latin American countries to fund development projects on their own. Similarly, Latin American governments felt they were capable of establishing new multinational regional frameworks that left the United States outside of Latin America’s decision making processes (Petersen & Schulz, 2018). In May 2008, the governments of South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela) signed an agreement



to establish the UNASUR bloc (Cancillería Colombia, UNASUR). Nearly two years later all of the countries in Latin America decided to establish a new bloc separate from the United States and Canada named the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños, Celac).<sup>4</sup>

During this period, a broad consensus developed in the region regarding the failure of neoliberal policy, which was seen as part of the United States interest in international financial organizations (Ruckert et al., 2017). The support of Latin American countries for Palestinian claims was connected not only to discussions in the international community on the Palestinian demand for self-determination. It also stemmed from internal socio-political discussions and policy in Latin America, which focused on topics related to human rights and the integration of minorities and those in need—and not from an anti-Israel stance (Redacción BBC Mundo, 2010).

Against this backdrop, Latin America lost interest in Israel during a period when Israel was changing some of its outlets for dialogue with Latin American society. This included the closure of the Ibero-America institute for Israeli culture (2010), which operated as a conduit for dialogue with figures with influence on public opinion in Latin America, including in countries without official relations with Israel. The decision was taken for budgetary reasons and due to the erosion of the institute's effectiveness. Various players in Latin America viewed this as an additional example of the problematic attitude of the Israeli government toward Latin America during those years, namely, canceling a channel of communication without offering suitable alternatives (DB-GB, 2010).

After the March 2009 change of government in Israel and the appointment of Avigdor Liberman as Foreign Minister (2009-2012), there was an attempt to improve Israel's standing in Latin America. Liberman himself announced on the Foreign Ministry's website in Spanish, "The

purpose of [my] visit is to emphasize the great importance that the Foreign Ministry attaches to the region" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009)—but it was seen as too little, too late. Indeed, when in July 2009 Lieberman went on an official visit to Colombia, Peru, Brazil, and Argentina, the local press did not display much interest in his visit. From the viewpoint of Latin American countries, Israel should have presented its firm stance on the Iranian issue before Iran improved its relations with Latin America. Even though the Foreign Minister's message, as reported in the media, was "to take action against Iran's increasing activity in South America" (AFP, 2009), there were no assessments indicating any benefit in relations with Israel. Instead, it was perceived mainly as a "symbolic gesture" from Israel that merely aimed to influence public opinion in Latin America.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast with the apathy expressed during that period regarding relations with Israel, there was increasing interest in Latin America in the Arab countries (NA, 2009). The visits of Arab leaders, such as Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's in July 2010 to Latin American countries (Venezuela, Cuba, Brazil, and Argentina), were viewed in the local media as an economic opportunity to increase exports to Arab markets,<sup>6</sup> as offers of trade agreements were raised regarding the export of agricultural products and beef from Latin America (Ayuso et al., 2018).

Israel's lack of attractiveness to Latin America during that period was also expressed within the frameworks of Israel's low-key aid, which operated in a similar manner to that during the 1990s. The Mashav projects (from Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) that included participants from Latin American countries are a good example. Mashav programs in Latin America in 2010 (MASHAV, 2010) were not very different from the 1996 programs (MASHAV, 1996) and their impact on improving Israel's standing in the region was limited.

The first signs of change in attitudes toward Israel in the Latin American media emerged in late 2011 (Reuters, 2011), when articles began to appear in Spanish on the Israeli hi-tech industry. This was accompanied by official Foreign Ministry publicity in Latin America about new technology projects. In that year an article was published on the website of the Israeli embassy in Argentina entitled “Science, Technology, and Business” about the success of several Israeli hi-tech projects; among those cited was Mobileye. The article explained how large companies in the United States and Europe such as Coca-Cola have integrated Israeli innovative technology (Embajada de Israel en Argentina, 2011).

The case of Mobileye provides a look at the change in Latin America’s attitude toward Israel. The developer of advanced driver assistance systems was acquired in 2017 by Intel for \$15.3 billion, in the largest acquisition ever of an Israeli company. The unprecedented deal opened up a lively debate on the role of higher education in advancing economic modernization and on the future needs of the region through the development of scientific, technological, and innovation capabilities. This development was seen not only as an opportunity for the future of the region but also as a way to cope with the socioeconomic challenges of the immediate future. For example, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) published a report in 2010 that recommended cooperation between the business sector and academia (universities and research centers) in order to improve economic performance in the region while at the same time building new opportunities (CEPAL, 2010). Thus, in this context, concepts such as “technology transfer” and “ecosystem” began to reverberate. In 2011, for example, an article was published in the Chilean press on the success of Israeli academia, how it influenced the economy, and in what way it could be emulated in order to create new paths for economic growth in Latin America (Rojas, 2011).

Even though Israel had started publicizing the country’s technological developments in Latin America as early as the 1960s—mainly in the fields of defense, agriculture, and medicine (Oded, 2009)—the case of Mobileye was different. It was seen as an example of a trend that began at that time in Latin America, namely, entrepreneurship that was the result of an innovative means of solving an existing problem relevant to the entire population that is unrelated to the defense industry and is derived from academic research. The example also generated considerable interest among various circles in Latin America where Israel receives little notice, such as university graduates who were starting to develop professional careers during the period when Silicon Valley became a euphemism for success (Clarín Mundo, 2013). From 2011 onwards, following the buzz created by the book *Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel’s Economic Miracle* (Senor and Singer, 2009), there were articles in the Latin American media that began to use terms like start-up and hi-tech with regard to Israel. That year there was also increasing concern about the impact of the BDS movement in Latin America, and here too the book’s rationale became more attractive in Israel’s dialogue with Latin American society.<sup>7</sup>

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The first Mashav course on the topic of start-ups was only held in 2014—Innovative Entrepreneurship: From Idea to Business (MASHAV, 2014). But already three years prior to that, Israel slowly started to become a popular destination for new players from Latin America who were interested in entrepreneurship, innovation, and hi-tech. 2014 was problematic

for Israel's relations with Latin America due to Operation Protective Edge (July 8-August 26), and led five Latin American countries (Ecuador, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, and Peru) to recall their ambassadors for consultations (AFP, 2014). Nevertheless, in contrast to 2009, Latin American countries took steps to strengthen their economic relations with Israel. Thus, articles in the Latin American press dealt not only with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but also with the "Silicon Valley of the Middle East" (Fernández, 2014).

At this stage, Latin American businesspeople, politicians, public opinion leaders, and academics started to take notice of a veteran Israeli product (namely, original technological innovation) in a new way and that was not directly connected to the geopolitical situation in the Middle East, the arms industry, or US policy. This in turn influenced and strengthened the development of relations between Latin American countries and Israel. The emphasis on concepts such as start-up, hi-tech, and innovation ultimately contributed to the "Asianization"<sup>8</sup> of Israel in the eyes of Latin American public opinion. Israel gradually became part of the "Asian path" to economic modernization and worthy of emulation. This was not only for the sake of increasing the export market, but mainly for creating new opportunities related to innovative technologies. This concept was almost completely separated from the political situation in the Middle East.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Technology Dream in Latin America: The Change in UN Voting (2009-2019)**

In 2009 there were four UN General Assembly votes regarding the rights of the Palestinians.<sup>10</sup> The results were especially harsh for Israel, as reflected by how the 15 Latin American countries that in 2019 had embassies in Israel voted. There were 46 votes against Israel, nine abstentions, and five absences (four by Honduras, which was in the midst of a political crisis that ended with a military coup that year, and one by Panama).

No Latin American government supported Israel on this issue. The countries in the region that voted in the manner perceived as most friendly to Israel were Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Peru. All of them voted against Israel twice and abstained twice.

A decade later, in an identical vote, the results were significantly different: 37 votes against Israel, 14 abstentions, and nine votes in support of Israel.<sup>11</sup> In 2019, Guatemala, for example, voted in support of Israel three times and abstained once. Guatemala was not alone: most of the Latin American countries changed the way they voted regarding Israel, especially the largest countries in the region—Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina.

The five votes held in 2009 on the "Palestinian territories" were based on the work of the committees connected to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Looking back, we can discern a significant change. In 2009 there were 61 votes opposed to Israel's position, 11 abstentions, and only Panama's three votes were in favor of Israel.<sup>12</sup> Ten years later, the number of votes against Israel dropped to 49, with five votes in favor of Israel's position and 25 abstentions.<sup>13</sup>

The justifications for the changes in voting at the UN and/or in attitudes toward Israel, as they are expressed in the media in Latin America, allow us to identify a transformation in the approach of the region's countries, a change that is shared by both sides of the political map. In 2009, the President of Panama, Ricardo Martinelli, who began his term (2009-2014) that year, justified the UN vote in the local media as supporting the position of the US government in the conflict in the Middle East, without indicating a specific rationale directly connected to Israel (EFE, 2010). In other words, not only did only one country in Latin America support Israel's position in a debate on the Palestinian issue; the President of that country did not even publicly indicate the desirability of relations with Israel as a reason for the support. Panama's support was not reflected in a preferential approach in Mashav programs. In 2009 only 15 people from

Panama participated in Mashav programs in Israel (MASHAV, 2009), while 65 participants came from Ecuador, a country that voted decisively against Israel that year.<sup>14</sup>

A year later (2010), the positions of Latin American governments against Israel at the UN were harsher. In votes held on the Palestinian issue there were 48 votes against Israel (compared to 46 in 2009) and 12 abstentions.<sup>15</sup> In the debates in 2010, Israeli policy regarding the conflict with the Palestinians was severely criticized, and the governments that voted in a friendlier manner towards Israel on this issue were Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, and Peru; all of them voted against Israel twice and abstained twice. As for debates on the Palestinian territories, there were 61 votes against Israel (no change from 2009), 11 abstentions, and only two votes in favor of Israel (Panama, which was absent from voting on one occasion).<sup>16</sup> The President of Panama explained to the Spanish media after his visit to Israel in March 2010 that his support for Israel at international forums stemmed mainly from the shared democratic values of the two countries—an ineffectual message in the region (Benarroch, 2010).

Nor was Israel attractive enough to the opposition in Panama in 2010 to tip the scales toward voting in its favor. The opposition’s message in the media was that Panama’s foreign policy stemmed mainly from the pressure of conservative circles in the US Republican Party, which, according to opposition figures, influenced not only the decisions regarding Israel but especially its relations with the rest of the Latin American countries, especially Cuba and Venezuela (Alvarado, 2010). Panama’s support for Israel at UN debates was not reflected in Mashav programs. Even with a total lack of any advocacy activity in Panama, there were only 27 participants from the sole country that supported Israel in 2010 (MASHAV, 2010). More participants came from countries antagonistic toward Israel, such as Uruguay,<sup>17</sup> with 44 participants (MASHAV, 2010).

However, in 2011 there was a slight decline in the number of votes against Israel regarding the conflict with the Palestinians. The Latin America media began to relate to Israel in a different manner and also addressed issues connected to its technological capabilities. In UN votes on the Palestinian territories, the number of votes against Israel went down to 60 (instead of 61 during the previous two years), following El Salvador’s decision to change its position. That year it voted against Israel three times and abstained twice, unlike four times and once, respectively, in 2009 and 2010.<sup>18</sup>

El Salvador’s Foreign Minister at that time, Hugo Martinez, explained in the local media that he met with Israel’s new ambassador and with the Director-General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry’s Latin America and Caribbean Department in order to hear about “Israel’s point of view regarding the conflict with the Palestinians” (Cancillería El Salvador, 2012). In addition, Martinez publicly thanked the State of Israel for the aid it provided following the serious flooding that occurred in Central America that year, and highlighted the importance of Israel’s technological capabilities, even though the aid was part of a larger international effort that included other countries, such as Japan and South Korea (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). This change in Israel’s favor in El Salvador’s vote at the UN coincided with San Salvador’s recognition of the Palestinian state, after the visit of representatives of the Palestinian Authority in Latin America (Cancillería El Salvador, 2012). After that visit, El Salvador hardened its position: instead of voting against Israel twice and abstaining twice as in previous years, it voted against Israel four times.

In the votes on the “Palestinian question” that year, Honduras also changed the way it voted, not voting against Israel even once, but choosing to abstain (three times) and be absent from voting once.<sup>19</sup> However, this decision took place in parallel with its recognition of the Palestinian state that same year, in



accordance with the decisions of the rest of the Latin American countries (EFE bis, 2011). The change in Honduras's position was explained by its desire to contribute to dialogue between the sides (Redacción El Heraldo, 2014).

In 2011, Israel expanded its aid to Latin America through Mashav (MASHAV, 2011). The number of participants in Mashav programs from Latin America grew from 603 participants from 20 countries in 2010 to 702 participants from 23 countries in 2011. In this context, 46 participants came from Honduras instead of the 15 that had participated in 2010. The country with the largest number of participants in Mashav courses in Israel was Ecuador, with 115 participants (MASHAV, 2011). Nevertheless, the government of Ecuador voted against Israel at UN debates, both on the Palestinian question and at debates about the territories. While it could not be expected that participation in Mashav courses would change Ecuador's votes (at that time Ecuador was a member of the Bolivar bloc), it was expected that there would be some connection between participation in the Mashav program and policy towards Israel.

The year 2012 was especially complicated for Israel at the UN, as not only was the Palestinian

American countries against Israel in the vote on the Palestinian territories declined from 61 in 2009 to 57 in 2012, and the number of abstentions rose from 11 to 15.<sup>20</sup> Despite Israel's military operations in Gaza (Cast Lead in 2009 and Pillar of Defense in 2012), the number of Latin American countries that voted against Israel decreased instead of increasing, as might have been expected.

In the local media, there were not many references to Honduras's foreign policy that could explain the change in its voting, especially given the political, economic, and military crisis that many Central American countries experienced, Honduras in particular. Nonetheless, regarding relations with Israel, Honduran President Porfirio Lobo Sosa (2010-2014) insisted on the importance of relations with Israel, which aided Honduras in various instances through its technological knowledge and experience, such as the Israeli ambassador's offer of assistance from Israeli companies in constructing modern, fire-proof prisons, in order to cope with the crisis experienced that year by Honduras in general, and its prison system in particular (Notimex, 2012).<sup>21</sup>

Along with the aid to Honduras, Israel again increased the number of participants from Latin America at Mashav programs in Israel: 753 participants from 27 countries—including even Venezuela (three), Bolivia (two), and Nicaragua (two)—countries that had cut off their relations with Israel a few years earlier (MASHAV, 2012). The country with the largest number of participants in Mashav courses in Israel was Colombia with 108 participants, followed by Ecuador (83), whose government unfailingly voted against Israel in votes on the Palestinian question and debates on the territories, without abstaining or being absent even once.

In 2013 there was an additional decline in the number of votes against Israel on the Palestinian issue. In voting on the situation in the territories, there were 54 votes against Israel instead of 57 the previous year, with 18 abstentions and two votes in favor—both by

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status at the UN decided then (Redacción BBC, 2012), but Israel also carried out a military operation in the Gaza Strip (Operation Pillar of Defense, November 14-21, 2012). In this context, Honduras significantly changed the way it voted at the UN regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and instead of voting against Israel four times and abstaining once at a debate on the Palestinian territories, it abstained four times and voted against Israel only once. Consequently, the votes of 15 Latin

Panama, which again was absent from one vote.<sup>22</sup> There was a marked change in how the government of Paraguay voted. Throughout the presidency of Horácio Cartes (2013-2018), the government of Paraguay abstained in votes on both the Palestinian question and that of the territories.

However, the most significant change in the case of Paraguay, similar to that of Panama in 2013, was the way the local media covered relations with Israel, in part in order to explain the foreign policy—irrespective of the conflict with the Palestinians or the situation in the Middle East, while emphasizing Israel as a relevant model for technological-economic modernization, especially given the success of its hi-tech industry and the connections to that industry. Gustavo Leite, Paraguay’s Minister of Industry and Commerce, emphasized in his visit to Israel following the reopening of the embassy in Tel Aviv that “the delegation was also received by the Hebrew University’s center for technology and business incubators” (Morán, 2013).

The discourse on Israel in the Latin American press in 2013 shows that this public reference to Israel was a combination of the results of the Foreign Ministry’s work with Latin America and various developments in the world of hi-tech itself. Articles were published on Facebook’s decision to open a development center in Tel Aviv (AP, 2013) and on Google’s purchase of Waze from Israel (ABC Tecnología, 2013). At the same time, articles of a political-commercial nature were published, such as on the technological cooperation agreement signed between Mexico and Israel (REDACCIÓN SIPSE, 2013) and the free trade agreement between Colombia and Israel. The local press in Colombia interpreted this agreement as an opportunity for Colombia, because “the Jewish state stands out in the global context thanks to its technological innovations, productive alliances and technological cooperation” (Redacción Semana, 2013). Despite the continued centrality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the press and in various circles in Latin American countries,

the media spotlight on Israel was increasingly directed toward its hi-tech industry.

The year 2013 was also one of political-diplomatic changes in Latin America, in part due to the death of Hugo Chavez and the beginning of Maduro’s presidency in Venezuela (Ellner, 2015). This change was made clear in several issues related to regional decisions in Latin America, such as the cessation of various integration projects with Arab countries and projects that Chavez pursued (for example, the cancellation of the program for academic exchanges between the regions, the cessation of talks on free trade, and more).<sup>23</sup>

Coinciding with the period of weakened relations between Latin America and Arab countries, Israel’s international aid agency offered for the first time the field of innovation and entrepreneurship at its center for training programs. Latin American countries received a new official message from Mashav that made clear that “in Israel there are more start-ups per capita than any other country, an achievement that is the result of close cooperation between businesses and government, a culture that rewards risk-taking, embraces innovation and entrepreneurship, and encourages imagination” (MASHAV, 2013). There were courses on subjects such as entrepreneurship for small and medium-sized business; innovative entrepreneurship—from idea to the opening of a business; support systems for entrepreneurs, and more (MASHAV, 2013). In 2013, there were participants from more Latin American countries (20), although there were fewer participants in total (565), with broad participation surprisingly from the Caribbean countries. Once again the country with the largest number of participants was Colombia (117), and almost all of the countries sent participants to programs related to science and technology.

The following year, which included Israel’s extended military operation Protective Edge in the Gaza Strip, tested the trend of improved attitudes of Latin America toward Israel. Only Honduras and Panama changed the way they

voted at UN debates on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but in debates on the “Palestinian question,” Honduras was the only country that voted in favor of Israel.<sup>24</sup> This was a new government whose President was the first Latin American president to have also been a graduate of a Mashav program—a fact that the President himself made sure to publicize on his official website (Cancillería Honduras). In these debates, Honduras abstained four times, instead of abstaining twice and voting against Israel twice as in the previous years. In votes on the Palestinian territories, Honduras abstained three times and voted against Israel twice (instead of opposing once as in the previous years). The international relations of the new Honduran government that year, especially with Israel, did not receive much public attention. Nonetheless, in the local press, there are mentions of the importance of the technological aspect of relations with Israel, such as in the case of acquiring radar for the war against drug cartels (see for example Baide, 2014).

In debates on the Palestinian territories, Panama also changed the way it voted, but in this case, against Israel. It voted twice against Israel, instead of once as in the previous years.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, in the local media the government of Panama emphasized its intention to work toward a free trade agreement with Israel, despite the seemingly serious damage to Israel’s image following Operation Protective Edge. Why was Panama interested in this agreement that year? Meliton Arrocha, Panama’s Minister of Commerce and Industry, clarified that it was because “a strategic alliance with Israel could strengthen Panama in terms of innovation, information technologies, and agricultural technologies” (Redacción Capital, 2014). These two decisions by Panama’s government—more voting against Israel at the UN with attempts to strengthen economic relations—did not constitute an ostensible contradiction. That year, Panama voted in a manner friendlier to

Israel than Colombia, a country that had signed a free trade agreement with Israel a year earlier.

Surprisingly, in a period when technological issues became more central in the public discourse between Israel and Latin American countries, and Mashav programs began to emphasize heavily technological innovation and thus also the importance of an entrepreneurial culture in Israeli aid programs, the number of candidates for the program from the region declined significantly. In 2014, only 393 participants came to Israel from 24 Latin American countries (MASHAV, 2014). This time too, the country with the largest number of participants from the region was Colombia (78), even though it was not the country that voted at the UN in the manner closest to the Israeli position on the conflict with the Palestinians.

The following year, Panama, which had a conservative government that advanced a liberal economic agenda, was the only country that significantly changed its UN voting regarding Israel. It voted against Israel four times (instead of once as in the previous years), and supported Israel only once, in a debate on the situation in the territories.<sup>26</sup> While Panama publicly discussed the possibility of recognizing the Palestinian state due to international pressure, it ultimately became one of the only Latin American countries that did not recognize the Palestinian state.<sup>27</sup> The statements by Panama’s Foreign Minister in the local media about the Middle East, in which she made a clear distinction between relations with Israel and relations with the Palestinians, demonstrate the new tone in Latin America regarding the connection with Israel. When it came to relations with the Palestinians, she commented on moral and ethical issues related to discussions on human rights (EFE, 2015), but as for Israel, she mentioned economic interests related to strategic fields for Panama’s future. In her visit to Israel in 2015, she emphasized the need for cooperation between universities in the two countries (EFE bis, 2015).

In other words, after 2014, the perception of Israel’s technological leadership and entrepreneurial culture constituted a substantial portion of the discourse in Latin America regarding relations with Israel, and also facilitated a response to criticism of strengthening the relations with Israel during times of intensified conflict with the Palestinians. Starting in 2015, there is a discernable process whereby businesspeople and academics in Latin America and Israel started to take advantage of interest in technological-economic issues and to organize private delegations and visits dedicated to these fields. This was assisted by the Foreign Ministry’s work in Latin American in the areas of innovation and hi-tech. Programs were organized that to a certain extent supplemented (sometimes intentionally) Mashav’s work in Latin America as in previous years, both in terms of the nature of the programs and the number of participants (Consejo Interamericano de Comercio y Producción, Capítulo Argentino, 2018).

The political changes in Latin America in 2015 contributed to the strengthening of the trend of referring to Israel in the context of economic interests and business possibilities due to its technological innovation. This was underscored by the opposition victories in Argentina and Brazil and growing disagreements between Latin American governments over issues such as the crisis in Venezuela.

In 2016, the Israeli government decided for budgetary reasons to close several embassies and consulates in different regions of the world. This included the embassy in El Salvador, a country whose votes against Israel at the UN became more vocal under President Salvador Cerén (2014-2019). Despite negotiations that attempted to prevent the closure (inter alia, the government of El Salvador emphasized to the Israeli government that the offices of the SICA bloc are located within its territory), El Salvador announced that it would keep its embassy in Tel Aviv. However, it later lowered its level of representation to that of minister-counselor

(until 2020). Here too, the need for continued relations with Israel was emphasized, especially on economic matters related to technological innovation (Cancillería El Salvador, 2016).

In May 2016, Costa Rica opened an official office for promoting trade relations (PROCOMER) in Israel, even though a free trade agreement was not signed between the countries. This is the only case in the history of Costa Rica of opening such an office under these conditions (Rodríguez, 2016). Along with exporting various products, such as coffee and pineapples, the director-general of PROCOMER declared that Costa Rica seeks to use the office in Tel Aviv to expand its connections with Israeli technological innovation, thus expanding its presence in the Israeli economic system (PROCOMER, 2016). While Costa Rica voted decidedly against Israel at the UN on the Palestinian issue and only abstained once in voting at debates on the territories, the office in Tel Aviv aimed at expanding trade relations with Israel and even to expand its activities to include overseeing trade relations between Costa Rica and the Palestinian Authority.

Brazil, the largest economy and one of the most important countries in Latin America, has also expressed increasing interest in Israel. On December 29, 2018, the first joint press conference took place between President-elect Jair Bolsonaro and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who attended Bolsonaro’s inauguration. This was the first visit to Brazil by an Israeli prime minister since Israel’s establishment. At this symbolic event, Bolsonaro referred to the possibility of moving Brazil’s embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and described how a strategic alliance with Israel could contribute to economic modernization in Brazil due to its hi-tech industry (Few, 2019; Guliano, 2018).<sup>28</sup> The image of technological leadership and entrepreneurial culture in Israel has played a central role in attitudes toward Brazil-Israel relations (and especially changes in them) and has also enabled other governments in Latin America to offer or present possibilities



for a better economic future by adopting work processes developed in Israel. This is without ignoring the religious and political-ideological elements of the Bolsonaro government—a government that comprises a complex coalition of evangelical groups (especially those who define themselves as pro-Zionist) and has the support of the Brazilian defense forces. The government was also established at the height of a crisis experienced by the traditional parties from both the left and the right.

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**Israel's image as a technological leader has encouraged the process of its Asianization in Latin America not only in relation to political decisions. This is clear in Latin American countries' coping with the coronavirus crisis.**

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Israel-Latin America relations are seen in Latin American countries as mutually complementary, where both sides have shared interests in maintaining the relations. The purpose of the “Shmita program” by the Guatemalan embassy in Jerusalem was to become a strategic partner for Israel in the years where according to Jewish law the land must remain fallow every seventh year. The aim was to strengthen the agricultural sector in Central America technologically. The program's attractiveness was twofold. Guatemala increased its export of agricultural produce and took advantage of opportunities for the technological development of its agriculture. Israel for its part benefited from the supply of agricultural produce during a period of low domestic agricultural production and the sale of its agricultural technology in Guatemala. Guatemala's ambassador to Israel explicitly connected the considerable growth in his country's agricultural exports to the Middle East to his embassy's move to Jerusalem (Iton Gadol, 2019).

Israel's image as a technological leader has encouraged the process of its Asianization in Latin America not only in relation to political

decisions. This is clear in Latin American countries' coping with the coronavirus crisis. On March 30, 2020, the President of Argentina announced at a press conference that in light of the spread of the coronavirus, he had begun a round of consultations with China, South Korea, and Israel (Jastreblansky, 2020), and on May 5, he announced to the media that his government is learning from the example of South Korea and Israel in exiting the lockdown (Perfil, 2020).

## Conclusion

Israel's technological development has become a strategic issue in Latin America-Israel relations in recent years, and is underscored by the possibilities inherent in relations with the start-up nation. This image has allowed Latin American countries to manage their relations with Israel according to a new paradigm, which separates relations with Israel from the political debate on the Middle East (especially the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also other issues such as the civil war in Syria, Iran's increasing influence in the Middle East, and more). Israel's technological attractiveness and its image as “an Asian hi-tech power” have actually strengthened certain ideological attitudes—such as those of several evangelical groups—and provided legitimacy for changes in other cases. But they have mainly had an impact on the way the future of relations with Israel is perceived, and this has led to a change in Israel's standing on the international stage. Israel's technological image and notions on the future role of technology have led to changes in the thinking about future relations. Latin American governments have succeeded in justifying political decisions that are supportive of Israel, both on the international stage and in the field of bilateral economic relations.

However, these developments raise new and complex challenges. First and foremost, the technological image directs Latin American-Israel relations mainly along business and economic considerations. However, the

technology sector has its own interests and dynamics that are not necessarily political. Second, this image provides Latin American governments with greater latitude: they can strengthen economic-technological relations with Israel while politically maintaining significant distance.

The development of this image provides Latin America with the perceived appeal for strengthening relations with Israel; it also provides a limited window of opportunity for complementary bilateral relations. A rapid development of technology will complicate any future cooperation, as the result of an expanding gap in the way the ecosystem operates in each country and how the different players handle technological innovation. Only recently in Latin America, unlike Israel, have institutions been established that will be capable of utilizing and implementing the knowledge accumulated at universities toward commercializing technological innovations. The perceived

value in improving relations with Israel could strengthen the connection in the short term but lead to crises due to unrealistic expectations on the part of Latin American countries regarding the results from their relationships with Israel. Furthermore, the challenges of Israel-Latin America relations will not only be connected with current political or defense issues in the Middle East—the annexation of territories, military conflicts, and more—but will also be closely tied to Latin America’s expectations regarding its future in Asia. Thus, Latin America’s path to Asia also runs through Israel.

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**Table 1. Participants in the Mashav program in Israel, 2009-2019**

	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Costa Rica	Dominican Republic	Ecuador	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Mexico	Panama	Paraguay	Peru	Uruguay
2009	35	35	18	90	19	6	65	40	116	3	52	15	14	54	18
2010	27	40	21	100	18	2	76	21	51	15	58	27	20	67	44
2011	33	30	32	92	36	7	115	28	85	46	50	25	23	62	18
2012	55	29	29	108	63	26	83	36	82	32	46	14	25	61	32
2013	14	12	16	117	55	8	49	48	50	21	20	25	15	44	27
2014	1	0	1	78	46	20	37	30	43	11	1	22	19	41	25
2015	2	46	2	84	26	17	36	25	33	10	5	23	21	45	14
2016	17	5	5	73	41	17	40	24	34	15	9	40	56	59	11
2017	22	1	9	85	35	14	32	20	30	18	5	31	47	50	16
2018	31	5	11	82	39	19	27	21	113	52	8	42	55	51	20
2019	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Source:** Mashav, annual reports 2009-2019

Tables 2-4. Votes at the UN on the “Palestinian question,” 2009-2019

Year	Argentina				Brazil				Chile				Colombia				Costa Rica			
	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent
2009	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2010	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2011	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2012	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	2	-	3	-	5	-	-	-
2013	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2014	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2015	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2016	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2017	3	-	1	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2018	3	-	1	-	3	-	1	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2019	3	-	1	-	1	2	1	-	4	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	4	-	-	-

Year	Dominican Republic				Ecuador				El Salvador				Guatemala				Honduras			
	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent
2009	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	4
2010	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	3	-	1	-
2011	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	3	1
2012	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	2	-	3	-	2	-	3	-	1	-	4	-
2013	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	-
2014	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	4	-
2015	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	4	-
2016	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	4	-
2017	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	2	2	-
2018	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	2	2	-
2019	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	2	2	-

Year	Mexico				Panama				Paraguay				Peru				Uruguay			
	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent
2009	4	-	-	-	3	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	3	-	1	-
2010	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	3	-	1	-
2011	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2012	5	-	-	-	2	1	2	-	4	-	1	-	3	-	2	-	5	-	-	-
2013	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2014	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2015	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2016	3	-	1	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2017	1	-	3	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2018	1	-	3	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-
2019	1	-	3	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	4	-	-	-

Source: General Assembly. ResolutionA/RES, 2009-2019

Tables 5-7. Votes at the UN on the “Palestinian territories,” 2009-2019

Year	Argentina				Brazil				Chile				Colombia				Costa Rica			
	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent
2009	4	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2010	4	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2011	4	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2012	4	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2013	4	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2014	4	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2015	4	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2016	4	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2017	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2018	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2019	4	-	1	-	1	1	3	-	5	-	-	-	2	1	2	-	5	-	-	-

Year	Dominican Republic				Ecuador				El Salvador				Guatemala				Honduras			
	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent
2009	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2010	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2011	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	3	-	2	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2012	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	3	-	2	-	4	-	1	-	1	-	4	-
2013	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	1	-	4	-
2014	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	2	-	3	-
2015	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	1	-	4	-
2016	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	1	-	-	1	1	3	-
2017	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	1	1	3	-
2018	4	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	1	1	3	-
2019	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	1	4	-	-

Year	Mexico				Panama				Paraguay				Peru				Uruguay			
	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent	Against	In favor	Abstained	Absent
2009	4	-	1	-	1	3	1	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2010	4	-	1	-	1	2	1	1	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2011	4	-	1	-	1	2	1	1	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2012	4	-	1	-	1	2	1	1	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2013	4	-	1	-	1	2	1	1	-	-	5	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2014	4	-	1	-	2	1	2	-	-	-	5	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2015	4	-	1	-	4	1	-	-	-	-	5	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2016	4	-	1	-	3	-	2	-	-	-	5	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2017	3	-	2	-	3	-	2	-	-	-	5	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2018	3	-	2	-	3	-	2	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-
2019	4	-	1	-	3	-	2	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	4	-	1	-

Source: General Assembly. ResolutionA/RES, 2009-2019



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## Notes

- 1 The article discusses the multinational blocs in Latin America that were the most relevant to Latin America-Israel relations during the past decade, and not the more marginal ones.
- 2 UN General Assembly resolutions 64/91 to 64/95, 2009, See <https://www.un.org/en/ga/64/resolutions.shtml>.
- 3 Latin American countries saw and still see themselves as part of the Third World-Global South, and their position derives in part from this.
- 4 These two blocs, which were established in order to promote regional interests and cooperation, emphasize the limits of the US government's influence during that period on decision makers in the region.
- 5 The Israeli Foreign Ministry's attempt to market Israel to Latin American public opinion irrespective of the conflict with the Palestinians is familiar, as in the case of the musical video "How Beautiful Is Israel" (La Tigresa del Oriente, 2010).
- 6 During that period there were visits by the Emir of Qatar (Hamad al-Thani) to Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela, and by the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, to Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay. In addition, there was considerable interest in the local media in light of the visit of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.
- 7 The book raises the question: how does Israel—a country with 7.1 million people, only 60 years old, surrounded by enemies, since its establishment in a state of constant war, without natural resources—create more start-up companies than large nations? See the book's description at <https://bit.ly/2DPkLft>. Questions that the Foreign Ministry previously tried to raise were, for example: what would you do if people said these things about your country?
- 8 This term is included in a larger-scale study on the technological relations between the two regions.
- 9 Such as in the case of the conflict between North Korea and South Korea—attitudes towards South Korea are not connected to this conflict.
- 10 UN General Assembly resolutions 64/16 to 64/19, 2009. See <https://www.un.org/en/ga/64/resolutions.shtml>.
- 11 UN General Assembly resolutions 74/10 to 74/13, 2019. See <https://www.un.org/en/ga/74/resolutions.shtml>.
- 12 See note 2.
- 13 UN General Assembly resolutions 74/87 to 74/90; 74/243, 2019. See <https://www.un.org/en/ga/74/resolutions.shtml>.
- 14 The Latin American country with the largest number of participants in Mashav courses was Guatemala with 116 participants. That year 614 people from 22 Latin American countries participated in programs in Israel.
- 15 UN General Assembly resolutions 65/13 to 65/16, 2010. See <https://www.un.org/en/ga/65/resolutions.shtml>.
- 16 Ibid, resolutions 65/102 to 65/106.
- 17 See in particular in the tables above the voting pattern against Israel starting in 2011, which was also reflected in the harsh tone against it in the written media.
- 18 Resolutions 65/102 to 65/106. The change in the voting of the government of El Salvador (which was in power during the years 2009-2014) took place regarding resolution 65/105—"Israeli practices on the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem," regarding which the government decided to abstain, a voting pattern that continued in 2012.
- 19 UN General Assembly Resolutions 66/14 to 66/14, 2011. See <https://www.un.org/en/ga/66/resolutions.shtml>.
- 20 UN General Assembly Resolutions 67/118 to 67/122, 2012. See <https://www.un.org/en/ga/67/resolutions.shtml>.
- 21 The offer by the Israeli ambassador to Honduras came after a fire broke out at a prison in the city of Comayagua February 14-15, 2012, which took the lives of over 350 prisoners.
- 22 UN General Assembly Resolutions 68/80 to 68/84, 2013. See <https://www.un.org/en/ga/68/resolutions.shtml>.
- 23 Inter alia, the cancellation of RIMAAL: The Research Network on Latin America and the MENA region.
- 24 UN General Assembly Resolutions 69/20 to 69/23, 2014. See <https://www.un.org/en/ga/69/resolutions.shtml>.

25 Ibid, Resolutions 69/90 to 69/94.

26 UN General Assembly Resolutions 70/87 to 70/91, 2015. See <https://www.un.org/en/ga/70/resolutions.shtml>.

27 This occurred during the year when the Vatican, headed by a Pope from Latin America, recognized the Palestinian state, while Panama only discussed the option of recognition.

28 On March 31, 2019, another joint press conference was held, but in this case in Israel, during the first official

visit to Israel by Brazil’s president. Bolsonaro and Netanyahu explained that Brazil’s embassy would not move to Jerusalem in the near term, only a Brazilian trade office. Israel’s Prime Minister explained that this decision is part of a new agenda between the countries that includes various objectives in a wide variety of areas in the field of technology and innovation, from cybersecurity to agrotech.