A Permanent Seat for India on the Security Council Is in Israel's Interest

written by Dr. Adi Schwartz | 09.11.2026

Key Points

- The current structure of the Security Council reflects the balance of power in 1945, not the strategic realities of the 21st century. India – the world's most populous country, a major democracy, and an economic, nuclear, and technological power – still lacks a permanent seat.
- Israel has supported India's aspiration for a permanent seat for years. Indian leaders have publicly acknowledged Israel's support, but it has yet to become a structured and sustained diplomatic effort.
- Israel and India share a deep strategic partnership and strong ties that have proven resilient in the aftermath of October 7. The partnership is based on shared values as well as shared interests.
- India's admission as a permanent member could, over time, diversify the support available to Israel on the Security Council, reduce Israel's exclusive reliance on American protection there, and bring a power with which Israel has a deep strategic partnership into the center of decision-making.
- Even if Security Council reform is not completed in the near future, Israel's engagement would create immediate diplomatic value: It would give Israel a constructive diplomatic initiative to pursue with India and help shift Israel from a defensive posture at the UN toward a more active role in shaping the institutional agenda.

Introduction

Israeli support for a permanent seat for India on the Security Council would not represent a dramatic change of course. Such support has already been expressed publicly, and India's prime minister has thanked Israel for it. This paper proposes turning that support into a concrete diplomatic plan and translating it into diplomatic capital.

The timing is right. In October 2026, India reiterated at the UN its demand that discussions on Security Council reform move to text-based negotiations, with a timetable and a defined goal. At the same time, relations with Israel were elevated in February 2026 to a "Special Strategic Partnership for Peace, Innovation and Prosperity." In a recent UN vote, Israel sided with India against Pakistan. Together, these developments create an opportunity to raise Security Council reform at the highest diplomatic levels through established bilateral channels.

Israel's Interest

1. Diversifying support on the Security Council

The American veto is an exceptionally important strategic asset for Israel, but long-term policy should not rest on the assumption that American backing will always be automatic and equally strong. India is not a substitute for the United States, nor is it expected to support Israel in every vote. Its positions are also shaped by its standing in the developing world, its relations with Arab countries, and its diplomatic tradition. The realistic goal is not "an Indian veto for Israel," but greater diplomatic flexibility through closer coordination with a potential permanent member with which Israel has established trust and strong security cooperation.

2. Strengthening the partnership by supporting a key Indian goal

For India, a permanent seat on the Security Council is a longstanding national goal and a symbol of its growing international standing. Active Israeli support would add a diplomatic dimension to the partnership. It would allow Israel to support a major Indian aspiration in the multilateral arena and lay the groundwork for discussions on closer mutual support on issues such as institutional bias, terrorism, and Israel's right to self-defense.

3. Moving from reactive diplomacy to agenda-setting

Israel devotes considerable effort to blocking hostile resolutions, negotiating changes to their language, and defending itself against discriminatory UN mechanisms. These efforts are essential, but they leave Israel reacting to outcomes shaped by others. Active support for India would allow Israel to work with a major global power that seeks to reform the structure of the international

system. This would make it possible to present the UN's shortcomings not as a uniquely Israeli complaint, but as a structural problem of representation, legitimacy, and effectiveness. Israel could also work with India to influence committee agendas and the resolutions under consideration.

4. Aligning with geopolitical realities

India has a larger population than any of the five current permanent Security Council members. It is also a rising economic and technological power, a nuclear-armed state, a longstanding contributor to UN peacekeeping operations, and a leading voice of the Global South. Its absence weakens the Council's legitimacy. From Israel's perspective, strengthening the standing of a major non-Western democracy that is also a strategic partner is preferable to preserving a structure in which China and Russia have permanent seats while India does not.

Limitations of the Initiative

Changing the structure of the Security Council is extremely difficult. Amending the UN Charter requires the support of two-thirds of the General Assembly's members and ratification by two-thirds of states, including all five permanent members. Four of the five permanent members have previously expressed support for India's candidacy; China is the main obstacle. There is also opposition from rival states in the "Uniting for Consensus" coalition. The initiative is unlikely to succeed in the short term, and its long-term outcome remains uncertain.

Moreover, high-profile Israeli advocacy without coordination with New Delhi could prove counterproductive, potentially complicating India's efforts to build a broad international coalition. The effort should therefore begin with discreet consultations to determine what kind of Israeli support India would welcome, in which forums, and when.

Policy Recommendations

1. Convene an interagency discussion within 30 days, led by the National Security Council and including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, and Israel's mission to the UN, to reaffirm existing support and define objectives, messages, and responsibilities.
2. Raise the issue in senior-level political dialogue between the two countries. The initial priority should be to determine what kind of support

India would welcome, rather than assume that another public statement would be the most effective approach.

3. Propose that Israeli and Indian officials jointly draft a brief working paper outlining areas of agreement: the need for a more representative and effective Security Council, expansion of the permanent-member category, a transition to text-based negotiations, and the establishment of milestones for the process.
4. Include the issue in discussions with the United States. Israel cannot advance such a change on its own, but it can encourage Washington to make its declared support for India an active part of its multilateral agenda.
5. Instruct the relevant Israeli missions to identify a small group of countries where Israeli diplomacy could add value, and act only in coordination with India. The emphasis should be on diplomatic conversations, not an independent Israeli campaign.
6. Develop a complementary public track: dialogue between Israeli and Indian research institutes, a small expert-level conference, and joint articles. This track would allow both sides to explore ideas and build support for reform without turning every initiative into an official government commitment.
7. Pursue diplomatic reciprocity in a measured way: do not condition support on a particular Indian vote, but seek to ensure that deeper Israeli support is accompanied by candid discussions about India's voting record on Israel-related resolutions, discriminatory UN mechanisms, and cooperation in combating terrorism.

Measures for the Coming Year

Success need not mean an immediate amendment to the UN Charter. Progress over the coming year could be measured against several milestones: placing the issue on the official agenda of the strategic dialogue; establishing an interagency contact team; holding an Israel-India-US trilateral consultation; drafting agreed messages or a joint statement; and conducting an expert-level event with a leading Indian research institute. These achievements would turn a general position into sustained policy.

Conclusion

Israel cannot determine the composition of the Security Council on its own, but that is no reason to stay out of the arena. India views a permanent seat as a strategic goal; Israel already supports it; and relations between the two countries have reached the level of a special partnership. The right step, therefore, is to turn existing support into a structured, coordinated, multiyear diplomatic effort. Even if reform is delayed, the effort itself would strengthen ties with India, broaden Israel's coalition in the international arena, and move Israel from a defensive posture toward a more active role in shaping the rules of the game.

This policy paper draws on papers published by Yossi Rozen on November 1, 2026, and by Dr. Rafi Biton on September 23, 2026.

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