

The World Zionist Congress Election 2020 FAQs

What is the World Zionist Organization?

The World Zionist Organization (WZO) was founded by Theodor Herzl at the First World Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland in 1897. Today, it serves as the Parliament of the Jewish People, and designates representatives to The Jewish Agency for Israel, The Jewish National Fund, and other affiliates. The WZO utilizes the World Zionist Congress to establish its policies and internally elect leadership to the bodies that define executive policy, departmental direction, and budgetary decisions.

What is the World Zionist Congress?

The Zionist Congress is the World Zionist Organization's legislative body. The Congress meets every five years in Jerusalem. The Congress is the only body in which all of World Jewry is represented democratically. It determines policy, designates its course of action, chooses the leadership of the World Zionist Organization, as well as the Keren Kayemeth L'Yisrael (JNF Israel). These decisions influence hundreds of millions of dollars in funding and paid portfolios. Importantly, the Congress makes decisions that affect the status of Reform Jews in Israel and across the world and allocates considerable funding available to Progressive Jews in Israel.

Why is this important?

The American delegation to the Congress is the largest single delegation from outside of Israel, with 145 delegates. The decisions of the Congress influence hundreds of millions of dollars in funding and the Reform movement currently receives over \$4 million each year. Because the election is held every 5 years, the impact of the election could impact over \$20 million for Reform institutions and program in Israel and the United States. In addition, the Congress will help determine the leadership of the Israeli national institutions, budgetary decisions, and policy in Israel and worldwide.

In short the WZC elections in the United States is crucial for the growth and influence of the Reform Movement in Israel and around the world.

What is ARZA?

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ARZA, the Association of Reform Zionists of America, is the Zionist arm and voice of the Reform Movement and an affiliate of the Union for Reform Judaism, serving 1.5 million Reform Jews in North America.

ARZA is the vehicle for the collective participation of American Reform Jews in the Israel engagement agenda with an emphasis on advocacy, travel, and Zionist education in North America. Our mission is to make Israel fundamental to the sacred lives and Jewish identity of Reform Jews. A Zionist organization, ARZA unconditionally supports Israel and champions activities that further Israel as a pluralistic, just, and democratic Jewish state.

How does ARZA help Reform Judaism in Israel?

ARZA provides the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) and the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) with financial support generated through individual membership dollars from members of URJ congregations. ARZA, and its umbrella organization ARZENU, represents Reform Judaism in the World Zionist Organization thereby providing a strong voice for Reform Jews in America and our movement Israel in

this worldwide organization.

How does ARZA represent itself in the Congress?

ARZA is a proud member of ARZENU, the umbrella organization of Reform and Progressive Religious Zionists. ARZENU has constituent groups in fourteen countries and represents the interests of these groups and of Reform and Progressive Judaism worldwide in the governing bodies of the World Zionist Organization and in the Jewish Agency for Israel.

World Zionist Congress Election 2015 Results

ARZA received 39% of the votes and 56 of 145 delegates.

I voted in the 2015 Elections. What have we accomplished since then?

Due to our success in previous elections:

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Through the force of our delegation we were able to ensure that over \$4,000,000 a year (\$20 million over 5 years) of financial support goes to our movement in Israel.

We appoint key professionals to carry out our Reform Jewish values within the National Institutions that help implement Reform values (Equality, Pluralism, commitment to a Two State Solution).

We join with Israeli political parties to influence Israeli society in matters of Conversion, Marriage and Divorce, Religious Pluralism, Gender rights, and Combatting racism.

We have passed key resolutions in the World Zionist Organization's policy body for equality, transparency, and pluralism.

Why We Want You to Vote for the Reform Movement

The election is our chance to have our voice heard in Israel.

It's a powerful way to combat the discrimination the Reform Movement faces from the Israeli government.

The Government of Israel allocates nearly 4 billion NIS a year to Orthodox and Haredi institutions (in comparison to only 10 million NIS for the Reform and Conservative movements combined) who then block support of the pluralistic streams. The World Zionist Congress elections enable both ideological influence on Israel and the Jewish people's agenda while also ensuring basic funding to pluralistic and Reform programs.

Only by growing our strength in national Israeli institutions can we ultimately make progress on the issues we care about: pluralism, peace, economic justice.

The WZC offers us the opportunity to appoint key leaders of these influential organizations. The Jewish National Fund (KKL) controls a significant budget and holds responsibility for land purchases and sales in the Land of Israel. It is critical for us to hold meaningful leadership positions in these organizations in order to implement our values and to prevent use of government and public/philanthropic funds in ways antithetical to our ideology.

The funds allocated through our leadership roles in the WZO and JNF-KKL are critical. They are the largest individual budget source of the IMPJ. Currently, the KKL- WZO agreement provides

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the Israeli Reform Movement close to 3.5 million NIS (~\$950K)/ year. This money is guaranteed through 2020, which over 5 years will total 17.5 million NIS ≈. Additionally, these institutions provide between 20-25% of the Israeli Reform Movements budgets.

How Do I Vote?

Voting takes place January 21, 2020 - March 11, 2020. All voting will be online and accessible by mobile devices. It is a simple process and should take 60-90 seconds. We will post the link for voting on the Temple website.

Who is eligible to vote?

In order to vote, one needs to be:

- 18 years of age and older
- Self-identified as Jewish
- Agree to the Jerusalem Program
- Agree to a minimal processing fee.

Why do I have to pay to vote?

The \$7.50 fee is to cover the administrative cost of the elections. An independent audit agency gets this fee to conduct the election and insure the fairness of the vote.

Do I have to be a member of an organization or congregation to vote?

No. Just to fulfill the aforementioned criteria.

Can I vote more than once?

No. One person, one vote.

What is the Jerusalem Program?

The Jerusalem Program is the official platform of the World Zionist Organization and the global Zionist movement. It states that Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, brought about the establishment of the State of Israel, and views a Jewish, Zionist, democratic and secure State of Israel to be the expression of the common responsibility of the Jewish people for its continuity and future.

It speaks among other things as well:

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The unity of the Jewish people,

Its bond to its historic homeland Eretz Yisrael

The centrality of the State of Israel and Jerusalem

The of shaping an exemplary society with a unique moral and spiritual character, marked by mutual respect for the multi-faceted Jewish people, rooted in the vision of the prophets

Striving for peace and contributing to the betterment of the world.

It does not mean that you are in favor of expanding the borders of Israel or agree to the legitimacy of the settlements. The Reform Movement's decades long commitment to a Two-State solution and championing of all nations' rights to self-determination and statehood, as the Zionist movement has achieved that for the Jewish People is compatible with the Jerusalem Program.