Who serves in the IDF?

- all Israeli citizens, both male and female at the age of 18*
- Druze and Circassian males
- lone soldiers, or those with no immediate family in Israel ⇒ a new immigrant, foreign volunteer

*Who is exempt?

- Arab Israeli citizens of Israel, including Bedouins
- Yeshiva students who declare that Torah study is their profession
- Religious Jewish women, many volunteer in the national service
- those with physical disabilities are exempt, but can volunteer

Mission Statement:
The Israel Defense Forces is the military of the State of Israel. Its activities are subject to the authority of the democratic civil government of Israel. The purpose of the IDF is to preserve the State of Israel, to protect its independence, and to foil attempts by its enemies to disrupt the normal life within it. The soldiers of the IDF are obligated to fight and devote every effort, even at the risk of their own lives, to protect the State of Israel, its citizens and residents. Soldiers of the IDF shall act according to the values of the IDF and its commands, while abiding by the law, upholding human dignity, and respecting the values of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

Fast facts:
- the IDF was established in 1948
- there are around 176,000 soldiers actively serving right now
- typically women serve 2 years and men serve 3
- the IDF requires conscription at 18
- IDF soldiers do not deploy, they protect Israel's borders

Learn about pre-IDF military groups
Arab Israelis & the IDF

Female Service in the IDF: The Challenge of an Integrated Army

Women in the IDF

The IDF and the Ultra-Orthodox

Ultra Orthodox Jews & the IDF

Tal Law has history of contention