

Global Alarm as Netanyahu to Form Israel's Most Right-Wing Government Ever

"Israeli elections make clear the truth that Palestinians have always known: The Israeli state isn't just founded on Jewish supremacy, it depends on it."

By [Jessica Corbett](#)

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People around the world have expressed concerns about Israelis empowering [indicted](#) former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to form the nation's most far-right government in history since Israel held its fifth election in less than four years on Tuesday.

"If you are shocked and horrified by this growing, emboldened Israeli fascist movement, ask yourself how you'll commit to opposing Jewish supremacist ideology, policies, and institutions in days and years ahead," Simone Zimmerman, co-founder of the American Jewish group IfNotNow, [tweeted](#) late Wednesday. "Fighting fascism, authoritarianism, and racism everywhere is our only hope."

The results were [confirmed](#) Thursday. Netanyahu's party, Likud, secured 32 seats in the Knesset, Israel's parliament, followed by outgoing Prime Minister Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid with 24 seats. The bloc breakdown, as *Haaretz* reported, is 64 seats for the Netanyahu camp and 51 for the current coalition.

"The election's biggest surprise is the resounding success of the radical right-wing Religious Zionism coalition," Mitchell Plitnick, president of ReThinking Foreign Policy, [wrote](#) Wednesday for *Responsible Statecraft*, stressing that party leaders Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir will have "enormous influence in the coalition politics of the next Israeli government."

The far-right alliance, which won 14 seats, "was put together from several smaller lists, including Otzma Yehudit ('Jewish Power'), Noam, which fights for conservative 'family values,' the National Union-Tekuma and Jewish Home," *Middle East Eye* [explained](#).

Jewish Power (let that name sink in) Ben Gvir has a conviction record of

incitement & support for terrorism. Israel's occupation army considered him so extreme, unhinged, & violent that they wouldn't let him enlist. Congratulate Israel on its next minister of public security!
<https://t.co/VHzu7A7wcv> pic.twitter.com/kuA4HMPvXS

— Ariel Gold אריאל ✨🕊️ (@ArielElyseGold) [November 3, 2022](#)

The other parties that won some of the 120 seats were: National Unity Party (12), Shas (11), United Torah Judaism (7), Yisrael Beiteinu (6), Hadash-Ta'al (5), the United Arab List (5), and Labor (4). *Haaretz* noted that “left-wing party Meretz was just a few thousand votes short of making it into the next Knesset, ending a three-decade-long era of political representation.”

Netanyahu—who has been charged with accepting bribes, breach of trust, and fraud but denied any wrongdoing—will soon have four weeks to form a government.

The Associated Press [highlighted](#) that Netanyahu will have to work with Smotrich, “a West Bank settler who has made anti-Arab remarks” and aspires to lead Israel's Defense Ministry, and Ben-Gvir, “a disciple of a racist anti-Arab rabbi,” [Meir Kahane](#).

Meet Itamar Ben-Gvir, “the David Duke of Israel,” who is on course to join Israel's new coalition government & makes Marjorie Taylor Green look like a woke leftist.

My take on the Israeli elections, U.S. parallels, & Israel's own turn towards neo-fascism:pic.twitter.com/rfVmsAjDln

— Mehdi Hasan (@mehdirhasan) [November 3, 2022](#)

As the AP detailed:

Ben-Gvir says he wants to end Palestinian autonomy in parts of the West Bank and until recently hung a photo in his home of Baruch Goldstein, an American-Israeli who killed 29 Palestinians in a West Bank shooting attack in 1994. Ben-Gvir, who seeks to deport Arab legislators, says he wants to be put in charge of the national police force.

Religious Zionism has promised to enact changes to Israeli law that could make Netanyahu's legal woes disappear and, along with other nationalist allies, they want to weaken the independence of the judiciary and concentrate more power in the hands of lawmakers.

“Netanyahu has never led a coalition with such ideological cohesion,” Yousef Munayyer, a senior fellow at the Arab Center Washington D.C., [tweeted](#) of Israel's longest-serving prime minister, warning of a “stable, unified, right-wing religious nationalist government” that will pursue an “extra racist agenda.”

Aida Touma-Suleiman, a Knesset member for Hadash, [told](#) *The New York Times*: “These are difficult days... This isn't the ordinary, classic right that we know. This is a change—in which a racist, violent right-wing threatens to turn into fascism.”

IfNotNow said in a series of tweets Wednesday that “as Jews, we're repulsed by the results

of the Israeli election. But we're not surprised. We need to recognize how we got here. The victory for Kahanists is the product of an apartheid regime that suppresses the rights of Palestinians on both sides of the green line."

"Itamar Ben-Gvir and other Kahanists only became the third largest party in Israel with the support of Jewish-Israeli leaders across the political spectrum who prefer empowering Jewish ultranationalists and fascists to partnering with Palestinians," the group continued. "Those right-wing leaders confirmed what we already know: For them, Jewish power means trampling on freedom and equality to uphold a system of supremacy and exclusion."

We are standing alongside our Palestinian partners, demanding equity, fairness, justice, and freedom for Jews and Palestinians.

And we're working alongside those who are resisting authoritarians, fascists and ethnonationalists around the world.

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— IfNotNow  (@IfNotNowOrg) [November 2, 2022](#)

The U.S. group Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) [declared](#) that "Israeli elections make clear the truth that Palestinians have always known: The Israeli state isn't just founded on Jewish supremacy, it depends on it."

Hagai El-Ad, executive director of the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem, [said](#) that "with today's rise of the racist 'Jewish Power' party, the quiet part of Israel's regime of Jewish supremacy over Palestinians has never been louder. To date, the world was mostly silent in the face of this 21st century reality of apartheid."

"No one should be allowed to continue pretending that the ugly reverberations of Israel's decadeslong subjugation, disenfranchisement, and oppression of Palestinians hasn't reached their ears," he argued. "Global silence was, and remains, complicity. It underwrote today's political outcome. That silence must now—ever so belatedly—be replaced with action, effective consequences, and accountability."

Some observers specifically focused on the United States, a key ally that provides Israel with billions of dollars in military aid each year.

"The inclusion of far-right Jewish supremacists in Israel's governing coalition will add to the ongoing narrative shift that is making it increasingly difficult for folks to continue to make excuses for Israel's war crimes and human rights violations," Tariq Kenney-Shawa, U.S. policy fellow at the Palestinian think tank Al-Shabaka, [told Al Jazeera](#).

Yes, truly inspiring to see record numbers of Israelis turn out to the polls to show support for violent Jewish supremacists, all while 5 million + Palestinians who will continue being oppressed were held under lockdown on election day.

We <3 democracy.  pic.twitter.com/CD9FDORGZP

— Jewish Voice for Peace Action (@JvpAction) [November 2, 2022](#)

Beth Miller, political director at JVP Action, told *Al Jazeera* that the election results serve as a “moment of exposure” for Israel’s “Jewish supremacist” policy as well as an “escalation” in an already unjust system of “apartheid,” a term increasingly used by human rights advocates.

“Israel shouldn’t be separated from the rise of far-right authoritarianism and fascism across the globe,” Miller said. “At the same time, the U.S. has a long-standing history of always turning its head the other way whenever the Israeli government is carrying out systemic human rights violations.”

“Now, what that means is that we’re in a moment of reckoning here in the U.S.,” she added.

In his piece for *Responsible Statecraft*, Mitchell made the case that “the power and influence Ben-Gvir, Smotrich, and other far-right figures will inevitably wield” in the new government “should provoke a reassessment in Washington’s approach to diplomacy with Israel, particularly regarding the Palestinians.”

However, Mitchell also expressed skepticism that President Joe Biden—who on Wednesday night [delivered](#) an impassioned speech about rising authoritarianism in the United States, just days before the midterm elections—will make any major changes to the U.S. relationship with Israel:

Indeed, U.S. inaction has only made conditions for progress worse. It has effectively allowed the issue of Palestinian rights, let alone prospects for a resolution of the conflict, to be swept from view. Even Palestinian citizens of Israel, who hoped for progress last year when, for the first time in Israeli history, a party that represented some of their community was part of the governing coalition, now find themselves in a very dangerous position with openly racist parties in control of their government. Millions more Palestinians under occupation were, of course, denied the vote and must now prepare themselves for more assaults by settlers and Israeli soldiers.

This is not a time to hope things get better. The Biden administration must make it clear to Israel that all Palestinians are entitled to basic human rights. The Israeli right has long made a point of “standing up” to its patron in Washington. This new government is certain to lean heavily on that idea. It will be crucial for Biden to stand up against that, though his track record offers little hope that he will.

In an early signal of the Biden administration’s position, a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department, Ned Price, [told](#) reporters Wednesday that “we hope that all Israeli government officials will continue to share the values of an open, democratic society including tolerance and respect for all in civil society, particularly for minority groups.”

After the election results were confirmed Thursday, the U.S. ambassador to Israel, Tom Nides, [tweeted](#) that during a “good call” with Netanyahu, “I congratulated him on his victory and told him I look forward to working together to maintain the unbreakable bond.”

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Articles by: [Jessica Corbett](#)

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