

# Netanyahu Wins

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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He'll likely be able to form a hard-right coalition and become Israel's first ever four-term prime minister.

Headlines explained:

New York Times: "Netanyahu Soundly Defeats Chief Rival in Israeli Elections"

London Guardian: "Netanyahu claims 'great victory' after last minute surge in support"

Haaretz: "Netanyahu's Likud scores decisive victory in Israeli election"

Times of Israel: "Netanyahu scores crushing victory in Israeli elections"

Jerusalem Post: "Israeli elections take dramatic turn as official tally gives Likud sweeping victory"

Pre-election polls had Isaac Herzog/Tzipi Livni's Zionist Union winning 24 of 120 Knesset seats to Likud's 20.

Exit polls showed a dead heat. Final results surprised with Likud winning 30 seats to Zionist Union's 24.

The Joint (Arab) List party finished third with 14 seats. Yesh Atid got 11, Kulanu 10, Bayit Yehudi 8, Shas 7, United Torah Judaism 6, Yisrael Beytenu 6, and Meretz 4.

Early Wednesday morning, Herzog conceded. He congratulated Netanyahu on winning. He told reporters:

"I wished him luck, but let it be clear, the problems are the same problems. Nothing has changed."

Zionist Union will continue serving as "an alternative in every area."

Final results will be announced Thursday morning. They'll include a record number of female MKs - 28 won seats, one more than the previous Knesset.

Turnout exceeded 70% of Israel's 5.9 million eligible voters. Israelis vote for parties, not individual candidates.

Knesset seats are allocated according to the voting percentage participating parties win.

Netanyahu has up to six weeks to form new coalition governance.

Likud said he hopes it will include Naftali Bennett's Jewish Home party, Moshe Kahlon's Kulanu, Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beytenu, Aryeh Deri's Shas, and Yaakov Litzman's United Torah Judaism.

Combined would be a 67-seat Knesset majority – six more than needed.

Reports indicated heavy Arab turnout hoping to oust Netanyahu. Joint (Arab) List party head Ayman Odeh called Tuesday “a historic day for the Arabs.”

“Today we are giving our answer to racism and to those who want to exclude us,” he said.

He ruled out participating in coalition governance. At the same time, he indicated keeping his cards close to his chest, saying:

“After the elections, we will listen to what Herzog has to say and then we will decide.”

“The right wing has taken over, so I'm hoping the Arabs can be part of a bloc formed against Netanyahu.”

Despite emerging as third largest Knesset party, Joint List has no say whatever under either a Netanyahu or Herzog-led coalition.

Believing otherwise is foolhardy. Israel's 20% Arab population is powerless, persecuted, and denied rights afforded solely to Jews. Election results changed nothing.

Israel is like America. Democracy is pure fantasy. Not a dime's worth of difference separates major parties on issues mattering most.

Voter choices are largely bad or worse. For Israeli Arab citizens and most Jews, Netanyahu or Herzog makes no difference.

Election results changed nothing. Government headed by either leader assures ugly business as usual.

Both and likely coalition partners support:

- apartheid worse than South Africa's;
- militarized occupation harshness;
- settlement construction on stolen Palestinian land;
- war, not peace;
- Arabs denied virtually all rights afforded Jews; and
- continuation of decades if institutionalized racism.

Bottom line: Whenever things change in Israel they stay the same. It's been this way since 1948 - especially under nearly half a century of militarized occupation.

Netanyahu openly campaigned against Palestinian self-determination.

Doing so and election day Facebook fear-mongering about "Arabs heading to the polls in masses" got him last minute support enough for decisive victory.

Fascists rule Israel. Left of center governance is too inconsequential to matter.

Israelis are as mindless as Americans. They have themselves to blame.

Reelecting Netanyahu assures hardening extremist governance - ideologically over-the-top and then some.

Belligerence, state-sponsored terrorism, militarized occupation, racist persecution, settlement expansions, and neoliberal harshness reflect official policy.

Netanyahu is a world-class thug - a ruthless demagogue. He spurns rule of law principles. He abhors democratic values.

He prioritizes stealing all valued Palestinian land. He deplores peace. He calls pursuing it a waste of time.

His likely coalition partners are militantly hardline, racist, anti-democratic, and offensive to all values progressives and civil libertarians hold dear.

On Tuesday, ugly business as usual triumphed. Right-wing extremist rule continues. Neoliberal harshness remains official policy.

long denied justice for Palestinians hasn't changed. Israel's political system remains a blight on humanity.

It's just a matter of time before more naked aggression erupts. Maybe war on Iran before Netanyahu's tenure ends.

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*His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."*

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