

# The Israeli Elections: Dominant Israeli Parties Spurn Democracy

By [Global Research News](#)

Global Research, January 23, 2013

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

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

On January 22, Israelis voted. Over 5.6 million were eligible. About 1,000 polling stations accommodated them. In most places, they stayed open until 10PM. Rural areas, small towns, and hospitals closed theirs at 8PM. Voting required presenting a valid ID, passport or driver's license. Anyone not sure where to go can check. Israel's Central Elections Committee posted relevant information online. A hotline was set up for the same purpose. Voters further than 20km from assigned polling stations got free rides or public transportation there and back. Tickets were supplied. Getting them required presenting valid IDs or other form of identification.

Specially adapted polling stations accommodated disabled voters. For the first time, Israelis could follow ballot counting online in real time. Special cell phones permitted it.

Within hours after polls close, an estimated 85% of votes were counted. Before end of day January 23, they'll all be. They'll be published as soon as available.

Likud/Yisrael Beiteinu has minority support. It's enough to stay dominant. Coalition partners will be chosen. Negotiations can take days, weeks or at times longer.

Near final results show Likud/Yisrael Beiteinu won 31 of 120 seats. Netanyahu will remain prime minister. He said he'll begin working toward forming "as broad a (coalition) government as possible."

Follow-up reports will explain more.

Money power rules America and other Western societies. Israel chose the same path. Wealth, power and privilege alone matter. Hardline rule is entrenched.

Democracy is more hypocrisy than real. In October 2007, [Haaretz](#) contrasted "occupying Land of Israel to the democratic Israel."

It called for "debate about Israel's control over the lives of Palestinians deprived of civil rights....Israeli democracy suffers from an essential flaw." It's more hypocrisy than real.

Fast forward five years. Things today are far worse. Democracy exists for privileged few alone. Inequality, racism, sexism, exploitation, capitalist excess, imperialism, and repressive harshness define policy.

Affording Netanyahu four more years deprives millions of Israelis of their rights. Palestinians have none. Arab citizens are called fifth column threats.

Haaretz contributors had their say. Their concerns reflect crisis conditions becoming graver.

An [editorial](#) said

“Israelis are being called upon to vote at a time when the country’s democracy faces real and present dangers.”

Right-wing hardliners are diabolical. Their agenda is clear. They intend “to undermine the state’s social and governmental institutions.”

Democratic freedoms are threatened. Extremists target “equal rights for all citizens, human rights, the judicial system, freedom of the press, and the right of citizens’ groups to operate unhindered.”

Voting right-wing “indicates a preference for territories over peace.”

Doing so undermines “democratic values.” Extremists govern Israel. Its future hangs in the balance.

[Yehonatan Geffen](#) headlined

“This election, there’s only one option for Israelis.”

Social justice and democratic freedoms depend on ending occupation harshness.

Coalition partners “spread confusion and (disingenuous) populist declarations about social justice and sharing the burden. (They’re) like doctors who” lie to their patients.

“Cancer here has been spreading here for” decades. It’s “metastasiz(ing).” It’s “terminal.” Few “will mourn (Israel’s) demise.”

It’s become the “State of Netanyahu,” said [Yossi Verter](#). “He controls the broadcast media to a great extent.”

He does it directly through the Israel Broadcasting Authority. He has indirect control through commercial television and dominant right-wing publications.

They spread his lies. They propagate his message. They ignore “dark corners” he wants concealed.

Israeli electoral politics reflects America’s. Horse race journalism dominates political reporting. Rhetoric substitutes for reality. Issues aren’t discussed. Voters are left uninformed in the dark.

Israel’s election lacked substance. Party politics, personality profiles, likely coalition partners, he said, she said, and who’s ahead, who’s behind reflected daily discourse.

Likud/Yisrael Beiteinu presented no party platform. Netanyahu got away with it. Major issues went unaddressed.

Trust him on faith, he urged. Israel’s dominant media didn’t hold his feet to the fire.

[Sefi Rachlevsky](#) headlined “A wasted vote is a vote for Bibi,” saying:

This year's election was "existential." Iran didn't disappear. Along with US/Israeli relations, its Netanyahu's main foreign policy issue.

"There's no excitement about" supporting him. He's "viewed as the oppressor of the people." He reflects "fascism" writ large. Imagine affording him four more years.

[Nehemia Shtrasser](#) headlined "The mission: Fool the voters today," saying:

"Bibi's method" prioritized winning right-wing votes. Late in the game he sought centrist ones. His strategy reflected "hocus-pocus, deception and outright lies."

He won votes anyway he could. His politics are down and dirty. They reflect his dark side. Rhetorically he supports peace. In reality, he deplores it. He calls it a waste of time.

In two terms, he did nothing to pursue it. As long as he's prime minister, achieving it is impossible. He prioritizes conflict and instability. He invents enemies to hype fear.

He menaces the entire region. He threatens to embroil it in war. He doesn't negotiate. He demands. He wants Israel made ethnically pure.

He wants Arabs marginalized, denied and brutalized. He imposes harsh conditions. He hopes they're tough enough to get them to vote with their feet and leave. Disposessions give others no choice.

Israeli voters have few. Facts and truth don't matter. Strategy calls for "fool(ing) the public - just for today, at the polling booth."

[Idan Sasson](#) "love(s) Israel," he says. "Don't vote for democracy's death certificate," he urges.

Conditions today reflect Israel's "most existentially troubling period," he believes.

Likely new coalition partners worry him. He may never again be able to call Israel a democracy. Others are likeminded. Israeli scholars agree.

He quoted an unnamed friend saying:

"Israel is the biggest project of the Jewish people in history, and the occupation is the biggest problem facing Israel right now."

Other major problems exist. War is prioritized over peace. Neoliberal harshness is policy. Social inequality harms Jews and Arabs alike.

"Many Israelis don't seem to understand that by voting for Netanyahu they are signing democracy's death certificate."

The "whole world is watching," he said. He cares and prioritizes Israeli/Arab coexistence. He needs majority caring to achieve it. It's nowhere in sight.

[Gideon Levy and Alex Levac](#) headlined “Good night and good luck.” Television news pioneer Edward R. Murrow first said it. He used it to end broadcasts.

Levy and Levac chose good company. Israel reflects complacency and apathy, they said. Electoral fervor is absent. Netanyahu’s unfit to serve. Former Shin Bet heads deplore giving him another four years.

They went public saying so. It didn’t make enough of a difference to matter. Nor do occupation harshness, social injustice, or Israel’s “abominable international standing.”

“(N)one of this seemed to faze” people. “The candidates were groggy. Their listeners were sleepy. The parlor meetings, assemblies and rallies were all somnolent, with candidates and voters snoring in unison.”

Everything in the campaign was a “big yawn.” Public anger was absent. Candidates’ feet weren’t held to the fire. Voters asked “polite questions.”

“(T)rivial matters” substituted for real ones. Candidates ducked them.

“Where is the hatred when you need it? Where is the fervor and the fire – or at least a little smoke?” It was out of sight and mind.

Gatherings were absent. Rallies weren’t held. Parlor meetings were sparsely attended. Electoral campaigning was boring.

Platform committees used to conduct fiery debates. Parlor meetings and assemblies once mattered. Party branches became “kindergartens and stores.”

Hotels stand on former party headquarters ground. Except in Arab communities, posters were absent. Once they hung from balconies and trees everywhere.

“Where are the flyers that used to be dropped from the sky and covered the ground of our youth? Where are the cars with their blaring loudspeakers?”

Tourists arriving had no idea about election season. They had to ask or be told to know.

“How lacking was this election campaign in great ideas; how shallow and empty of ideals.”

Netanyahu was the only issue – “what he wears and how he looks.” What about what he stands for? What about great harm he caused Arabs, Jews, and regional neighbors?

What about prioritizing peace, rule of law principles, and real democracy. What about social justice, supporting Palestinian rights, and a nation fit to live in? What about doing what’s right, not wrong?

“Thank God it’s over,” Levy and Levac said. “(S)noozefest” substituted for substance.”

Maybe next time something will change. Maybe Israelis will decide it matters.

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