

Netanyahu Wins

- Results are not yet final, but at this stage, Benjamin Netanyahu will almost certainly remain the country's prime minister and will form a coalition very similar to the outgoing government.
- Netanyahu's Likud and Benny Gantz's Blue and White Party, look like they will win 35 seats each.
- However, Netanyahu will likely have the support of 65 members of the new Knesset, compared to just 55 for Gantz.
- Despite the possibility of a Netanyahu indictment, this is the largest number of seats won by the Likud since 2003. See details of Netanyahu's [victory speech here](#).
- In terms of right vs. left blocks, the results are almost identical to the last elections, and those numbers have basically held steady for over ten years.
- The main changes occurred through movement within the political blocks. Likud essentially siphoned off votes from other parties on the right; and Blue and White did the same from parties on the center-left. There was very little movement between the blocks.
- For the first time in many years, Israel has returned to a situation where the majority of the Knesset is made up of two large parties. No other party reached double digits.

Still Counting

- Since several seats are very close, we will likely not see final results for up to a week.
- So-called "double envelopes" have not been counted yet. These include the votes of soldiers, diplomats and JAFI *shlichim* abroad, Israeli merchant seamen, prisoners, hospital patients and people with significant mobility issues.
- These results could change some numbers, but are highly unlikely to alter the overall result of a Netanyahu victory.
- Voter turnout was 67.8%, down from 2015's 71.8%. Voting was particularly low in the Arab sector.

Gantz

- When exit polls were first published at 10pm Israel time last night, it seemed that Gantz had a better chance of winning, but those results changed fairly quickly.
- Nonetheless, at 11pm, Gantz, along with his partners Yair Lapid, Moshe Boogie Ya'alon and Gabby Ashkenazi, proclaimed victory to admiring crowds. (Once the results were clearer, Netanyahu did the same at around 2:30am.)
- Despite not becoming prime minister, Gantz's 35 seats are highly impressive for a person (and party) that only entered politics two months ago. For background on Gantz, [see here](#).
- Gantz will likely become the Chair of the Opposition.

Other Parties on the Right

- One of the biggest surprises of the night is that the New Right Party of Naftali Bennett and Ayelet Shaked looks like it will not receive enough votes to bring it over the electoral threshold, which will mean they will not be in the new Knesset. Since the numbers are close, this could still go either way.
- Similarly, Moshe Feiglin's Zehut Party, which had been polling some seven seats, will also not make it into the Knesset. Orly Levy's Gesher, and several other smaller parties did not pass the threshold either. Both the Sefardi and Ashkenazi ultra-Orthodox parties ended with eight seats each. Combined, the Haredi parties increased their strength by almost a quarter from the previous Knesset.
- Avigdor Liberman's Yisrael Beteinu won five seats and Moshe Kahlon's Kulanu won four. Both have said they prefer to see Netanyahu as prime minister.

- The United Right (formerly Jewish Home Party), which also backs Netanyahu, won five seats, meaning that the Kahanist Itamar Ben Gvir will not be in the Knesset unless more senior party members resign upon being made ministers to pave the way for him to become an MK.
- With Feiglin, Bennett, Shaked, Oren Hazan and Ben Gvir likely not in the new Knesset, some commentators have pointed to a seeming trend where many of the more extreme candidates were not elected.

Other Parties on the Center-Left

- The Labor Party, known in Israel as the party that founded the country, was decimated in the elections and only won 6 seats (down from 24 last time). Despite rumors that party leader Avi Gabbay was going to resign during his speech to followers, for now Labor's chair remains in place. The party of David Ben Gurion, Golda Meir, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin may possibly be facing the end of the road.
- Meretz, the only party besides Labor that has said it will recommend Gantz for prime minister, dropped from five seats in the last elections to four in the current round.
- The United (Arab) List of the last elections (which had won 13 seats) split into two parties before the current elections. The Hadash-Ta'al component has won six seats, and the other half, Ra'am-Balad, will likely win four, although it is also precariously close to the electoral threshold.

The New Knesset

- The new Knesset will have 49 new MKs who have not served before (compared to 39 after the last elections).
- Of the 120 new MKs, 29 will be women (compared to 35 in the outgoing Knesset).
- For those who understand Hebrew, you can see real-time results, also broken down by cities and regions, [here](#). An English breakdown of results in some cities can be [seen here](#).

What Happens Now?

- Final official results will be published next Wednesday. President Reuven Rivlin will then invite the heads of each party to meet with him and will ask each leader who they support as prime minister.
- By law, one week after the final results are published, the President asks the person who "has the greatest chance of forming a government" (in other words, the support of more than 61 elected members of the new Knesset) to attempt to build a coalition. That person then has 28 days to secure support (and can ask for an additional 14-day extension).
- If all continues as expected, it will be Benjamin Netanyahu who will be tasked, and if he succeeds (as is almost certain), he will become prime minister.
- In July, Netanyahu will overtake David Ben Gurion to become Israel's longest serving prime minister.

Election Tidbits

- Election Day in Israel is a national holiday, and most businesses are shut. In addition to the day being a celebration of democracy, it is a popular day for hikes, beach trips and family visits; in a country where Sunday is a regular workday. Millions of Israelis took advantage of yesterday's warm weather to enjoy the outdoors.
- Israeli hi-tech firm, OrCam, provided "talking glasses" to the visually impaired at polling booths, allowing them to vote unassisted. [Details here](#).
- An analysis of Netanyahu's victory can be [read here](#).