



Knesset Elections: No Change in Government Without Arab Parties

Ten days before the Israeli parliamentary elections on October 27, nearly all polls point to a deadlock: Neither Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's current governing coalition nor the opposition bloc is set to secure the required majority of 61 out of the Knesset's total 120 seats. If the opposition wants to unseat the Netanyahu government, it will likely have to rely on the participation—or at least the support—of Arab parties.

By Sacha Wigdorovits

In four out of five polls conducted on October 15 and 16, neither of the two political blocs reached the required majority of 61 seats. Only the poll by Channel 14, whose surveys regularly show significantly more favorable results for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, puts the current governing coalition at 61 seats.

Gadi Eisenkot leads by a narrow margin over Benjamin Netanyahu

The four remaining polls show a deadlock: The governing bloc—comprising Netanyahu's Likud, two right-wing nationalist parties, and two ultra-Orthodox parties—and the Zionist opposition bloc—comprising three parties and a two-party coalition—each average about 50 to 51 seats. Both camps thus fall well short of the required majority.

In most polls, the Yashar Party led by former Israeli Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot is slightly ahead of Netanyahu's Likud, or the two parties are tied. According to these polls, Yashar averages 21.8 seats, while Likud averages 21.0. Excluding the Channel 14 poll—which traditionally favors Netanyahu—Yashar averages 22.25 seats and Likud averages 19.

According to these polls, the Beyachad ("Together") alliance, led by former Prime Ministers Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid, would be the third-strongest force in the new parliament with 11 to 12 seats. It belongs to the opposition camp.

Four to nine seats for independent parties

It remains to be seen whether the Amcha Israel party, led by former General Ofer Winter, will clear the 3.25 percent voter threshold required to enter the Knesset. Depending on the poll, it will either win four seats or fail to clear the threshold. Winter cannot be clearly aligned with either of the two major political blocs.

The same applies to the recently formed alliance of the parties "The Reservists,"



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“New Economic Party,” and “Oz,” led by Yoaz Hendel, Yaron Zelekha, and Einat Wilf. This alliance, too, belongs neither to the governing bloc nor to the opposition bloc. Based on the analyzed polls, it appears likely that they will enter the Knesset: All five polls predict that they will win at least four seats.

Arab parties with 13 to 15 seats

Arab parties could play a decisive role in the formation of the next government. Three of them have joined forces to form a joint list, while Ra’am, led by Mansour Abbas, is running independently. In the five most recent polls, the United List is projected to win eight to nine seats, and Ra’am five to six seats.

Together, the Arab parties would thus hold 13 to 15 seats. Their support could help the opposition camp secure a parliamentary majority. As early as 2021, Ra’am became the first independent Arab party to join an Israeli governing coalition.

So far, with the exception of Yair Golan, the chairman of the Democrats, leading opposition politicians have ruled out the possibility of an Arab party rejoining the government. Whether they will maintain this stance following an election result without a clear majority, however, remains to be seen.

Support from Arab Parties or New Elections

A unique situation arises from Yoav Segalovitz’s candidacy as the second candidate on Ra’am’s list. If the party wins at least five seats, as predicted, he would be guaranteed a seat in the Knesset.

Segalovitz holds a doctorate in law; he is Jewish and a Zionist. As a high-ranking police officer, he was committed to fighting crime in Arab communities and therefore enjoys a good reputation among Arab Israelis as well. His inclusion in a government led by the current opposition would be politically easier for the opposition to justify than a formal coalition with Ra’am, but would likely still result in support from the Arab party.

It is conceivable that the opposition could form a government even without the formal participation of Arab parties. However, this would require that these parties be willing to support a minority government in the Knesset formed by the existing opposition parties.

It remains to be seen what the balance of power will actually look like in Israel’s



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highly fragmented parliament after October 27, 2026. Current polls suggest, however, that a change in government will not be possible without the support of Arab parties. If efforts to form a government capable of securing a majority fail, Israel will soon face another election.

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