



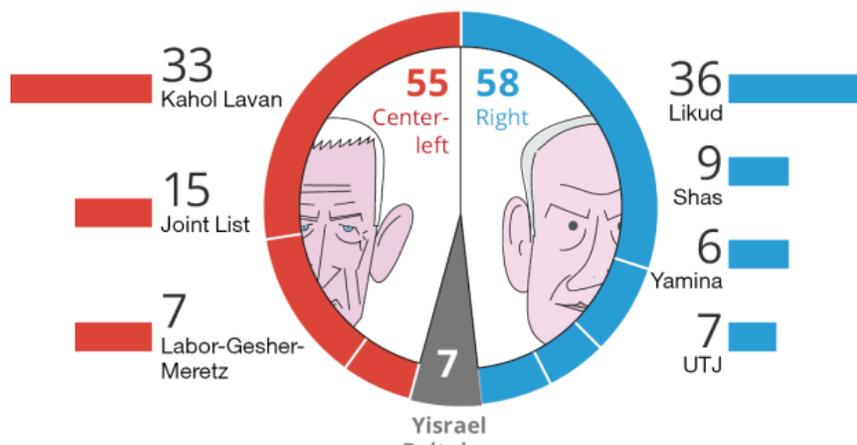
## 3<sup>rd</sup> Israeli Election

The Central Election Committee has completed counting 4,156,479 votes from 10,305 of the 10,615 regular polling stations, some 97% of all polling stations, CEC director-general Orly Ades said on Tuesday afternoon.

Absentee ballots from IDF soldiers, prisoners, diplomats and other emissaries will be counted on Tuesday night. Special ballots of those quarantined due to possible exposure to the coronavirus who voted in special polling station will be counted in a tent outside the Knesset on Wednesday morning.

The remaining three percent of polling stations are undergoing extra procedures to verify their accuracy, and their results will only be available on Sunday. Legally, the final results do not need to be published until next Monday.

According to preliminary results from some 90% of the regular polling stations, the parties would receive the following number of seats, pending vote sharing agreements and application of the Bader-Ofer surplus vote allocation system:



The Right-religious bloc has 58 seats (Likud, Shas, UTJ and Yamina)

The Center-Left bloc has 55 seats (Blue and White, The Joint List and Labor-Gesher-Meretz)

Yisrael Beytenu has 7 seats

There were 6,453,255 eligible voters in regular polling stations and 71% of these people voted.

Each of the 120 Knesset mandates currently represents approximately 34,600 votes. Among the three parties that currently are unofficially receiving seven seats, there is a 20,000 voter spread.



## As the election results come in, what did the people say? – analysis by Haaretz Newspaper

The first message the voters is that they don't care if Netanyahu will begin standing trial in two weeks on charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust.

The final tally is not yet in, and it is not clear exactly how Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will cobble together a coalition. But there are certain messages that emerged loud and clear from the nearly 4.6 million ballots cast in Monday's elections – with the soldiers' votes still left to be counted – that gave the right bloc 59 seats, the center-left block 54 and Avigdor Liberman seven.

The first message the voters sent is that they don't care if Netanyahu will begin standing trial in two weeks on charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust. Well, it's not exactly that they don't care, but rather, they think he can do both – be the prime minister and a defendant.

Blue and White's entire campaign centered around the notion that it is unthinkable that someone can serve as premier while on trial. The party's leaders – Benny Gantz, Moshe Ya'alon, Yair Lapid and Gabi Ashkenazi – shouted from every microphone that this breaks all norms of good governance and is something that simply cannot be. The electorate thought otherwise.

Israel went to the polls on Monday with eyes wide open, knowing full well – perhaps too well – what Netanyahu is being accused of. And the message they sent is that they don't care: He can still govern.

Some will say he can govern because the law does not stipulate that an indicted prime minister has to step down, only an indicted minister. Others will say he can govern because the case against him has been cooked up by an overzealous state's attorney.

Whatever the reason, the beating Blue and White – which ran almost solely on this issue – took at Netanyahu's hands is a clear message that what Blue and White said was unthinkable is very thinkable to many people.

The second message sent is that the country, or most of the country, does not believe Israel's democracy is in danger. It is fair to say that those on the Left, those in the media and those in academia are not the only ones who want to live in a working, vibrant, functioning democracy. So do – despite the stereotypes and caricatures – the vast majority of Likud voters.

That they cast a vote for Netanyahu shows that unlike the doomsday sayers, they do not believe Netanyahu poses a threat to the country's democracy. They did not buy Blue and White's slogan that Netanyahu is Israel's version of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.



*Edited by Idan Sharon, Adat Shalom's Shaliach. [Idan.Sharon@adatshalom.net](mailto:Idan.Sharon@adatshalom.net)  
The Congregational Shlichim Program is a partnership between  
the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and local synagogues.*