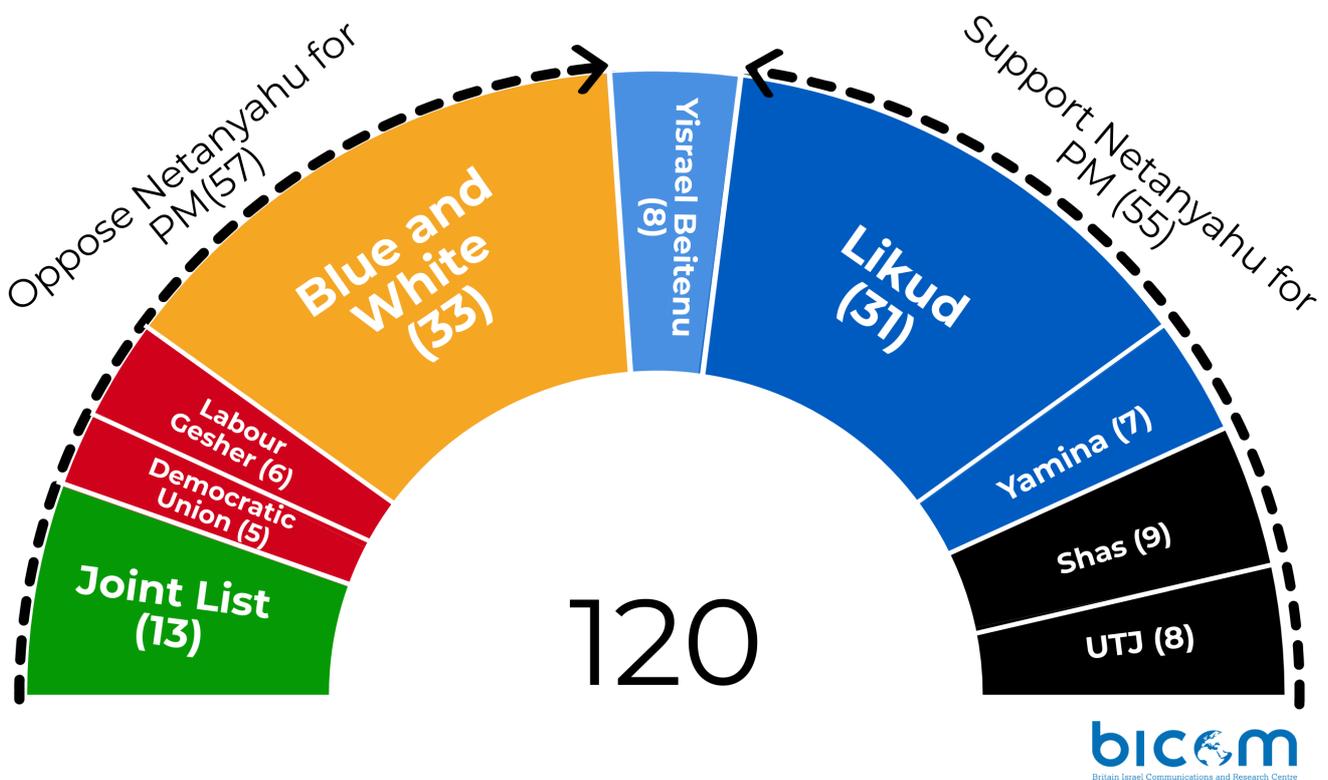


Israeli Elections Bulletin | September 20

On 17 September Israelis voted for the second time in five months. Our final bulletin analyses the results and asks what happens next.

Final Election Results



Netanyahu fails to win 61 seat majority

With nearly 100 per cent of the votes counted in the Israeli general election, Benny Gantz’s Blue and White party beat Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud by two seats (33-31), Avigdor Lieberman’s Yisrael Beitenu party won 8 seats, compared to 5 in April, retaining its position as the kingmaker of any future coalition. Overall the centre-left/Arab bloc of parties outperformed the right-wing/ultra-Orthodox bloc by two seats - 57 to 55 with Lieberman’s party currently on the fence. 69.4 per cent of eligible voters turned out to vote, an increase of 1.5 per cent compared to April’s election.

The key results of the election were the surge in support for Lieberman which was likely fuelled by moderate right-wing voters, perhaps previous Kulanu voters, who decided not to support Likud. The increased support for Arab parties was also crucial and voter turnout in Arab communities was much higher, at 60 per cent compared to 49 per cent in April. It’s possible the higher voter turnout was a reaction to Netanyahu’s proposal to put cameras in polling stations in Arab communities and his repeated allegations of Arab voter fraud.

Netanyahu's call yesterday for immediate national unity talks with Gantz were rebuffed by the Blue and White leader, who declared victory and said his party would "not be dictated to." Gantz re-stated his intention to form a broad and liberal unity government. Netanyahu, for his part, said he was "disappointed" at Gantz's refusal to meet.

Next week, President Reuven Rivlin will ask the party leader with the best chance of building a 61-seat majority to form a government. That candidate will have 28 days (plus the option of a two week extension) to form a coalition. If that candidate fails, the President is expected to demand they return that mandate to him so he can ask another party leader in order to avoid a repeat of what happened in April when Netanyahu initiated a vote to dissolve the Knesset.

With no easy path for Gantz or Netanyahu to form a government, the President may have to get more actively involved in the process in order to avoid a third election. Israeli political leaders will now engage in complex negotiations in which a series of creative solutions will start to appear in the media as well as stories about potential coalitions, rotating Prime Ministers, party splits and policy compromises. Some will be the result of real talks and others designed as part of the negotiation tactics to force a deal.

But analysts are predicting that the proceedings could last months. In one extreme scenario, unprecedented in Israeli history, three different party leaders could be tasked with forming a government and fail to do so – the last of whom would be at the end of December – after which the Knesset would automatically dissolve and elections called again.

Here are a few scenarios that could emerge:

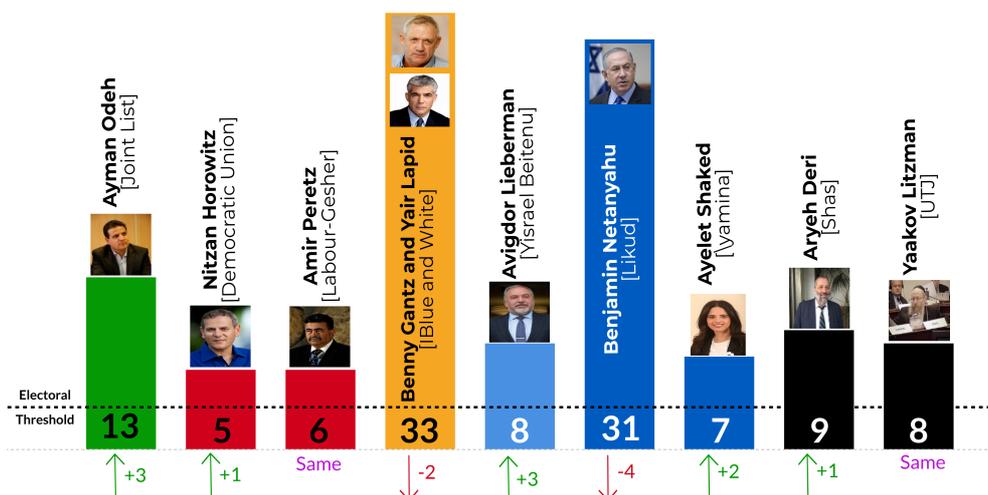
1. Blue and White form a grand coalition with Yisrael Beitenu and Likud – Gantz agrees a rotating Prime Minister deal with Netanyahu and Lieberman becomes Deputy Prime Minister.
2. Likud and Yisrael Beitenu do a deal and form a right-wing ultra-Orthodox coalition in which Lieberman becomes Prime Minister after two years.
3. Likud decide to replace Netanyahu. Their new leader forms a grand coalition with Blue and White (with or without Yisrael Beitenu). They agree a rotating Prime Minister deal.

Netanyahu is scheduled to have a pre-indictment hearing in early October to challenge the evidence in the three cases where the Attorney General has recommended he be indicted for bribery, fraud and breach of trust. Netanyahu needed a 61 seat majority to vote to grant him immunity, that's not going to happen now so Netanyahu will attempt to stay on as Prime Minister and will refuse any offer to serve as a minister in a new coalition because minister's are required if they are indicted for criminal offences, something likely to happen to Netanyahu in less than three month's time.

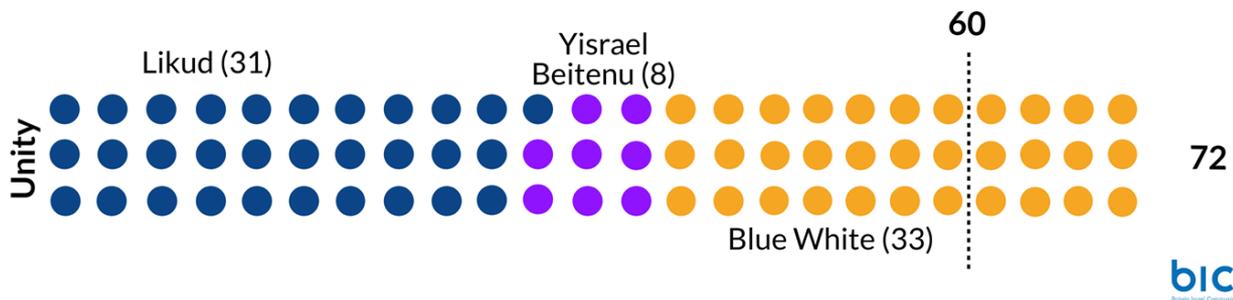
The most likely outcome with these results is some form of grand coalition but the exact make up of that and the policy compromises required will be negotiated fiercely in the weeks ahead. But one thing is clear, Benjamin Netanyahu has failed for the second time to form a 61-seat majority coalition and that could cause intense debate in the Likud about whether they should stick with him or move to appoint a new leader.

How the parties shaped up

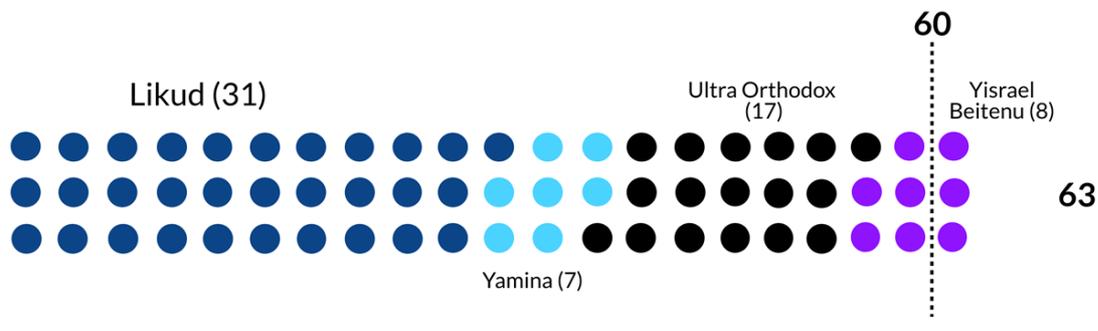
Final September 2019 election results compared to April 2019 election results



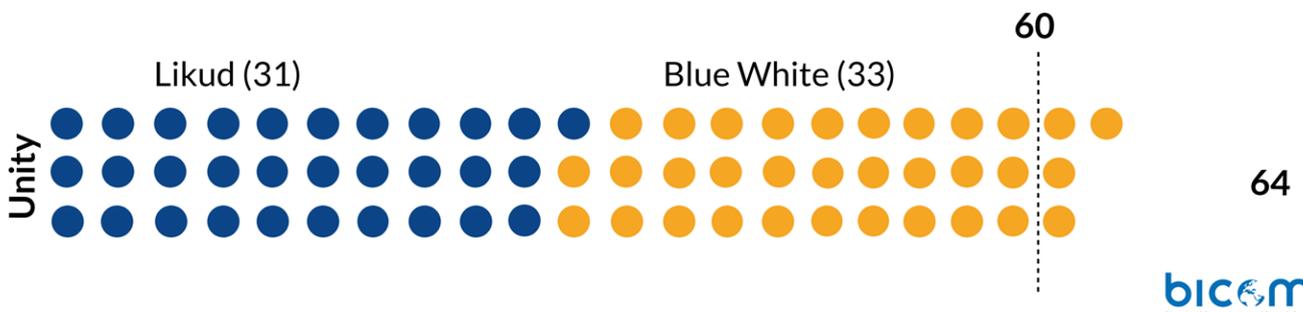
Getting to 61 - possible coalitions



Blue and White form a grand coalition with Yisrael Beitenu and Likud – Gantz agrees a rotating Prime Minister deal with Netanyahu and Lieberman becomes Deputy Prime Minister.



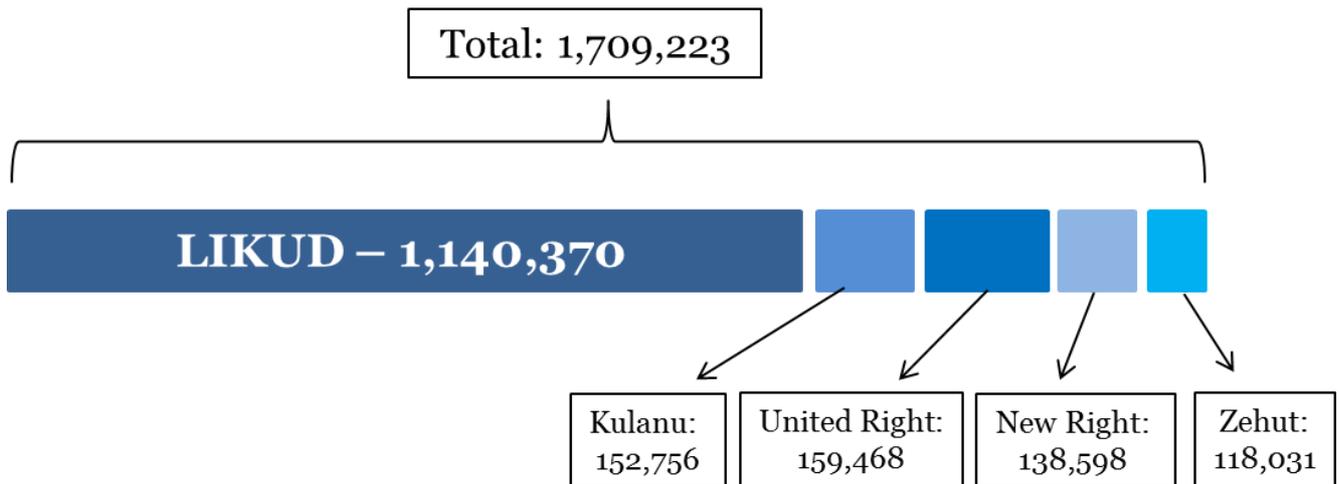
Likud and Yisrael Beitenu do a deal and form a right-wing ultra-Orthodox coalition in which Lieberman becomes Prime Minister after two years.



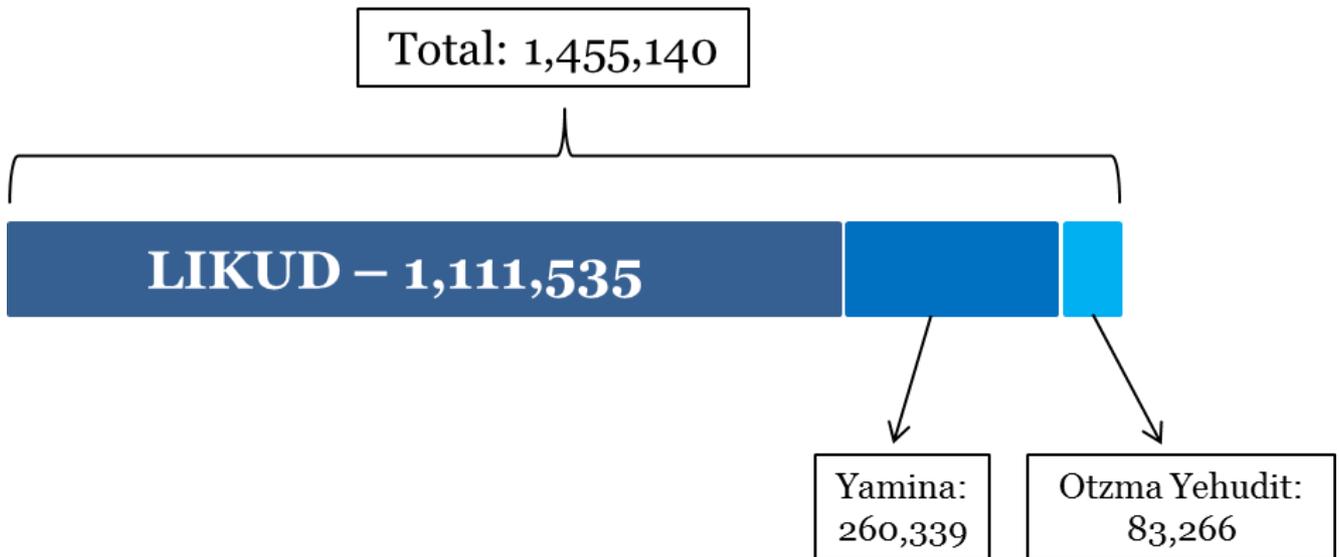
Likud decide to replace Netanyahu. Their new leader forms a grand coalition with Blue and White (with or without Yisrael Beitenu). They agree a rotating Prime Minister deal.

Fragmentation on the right

April Election



September Election

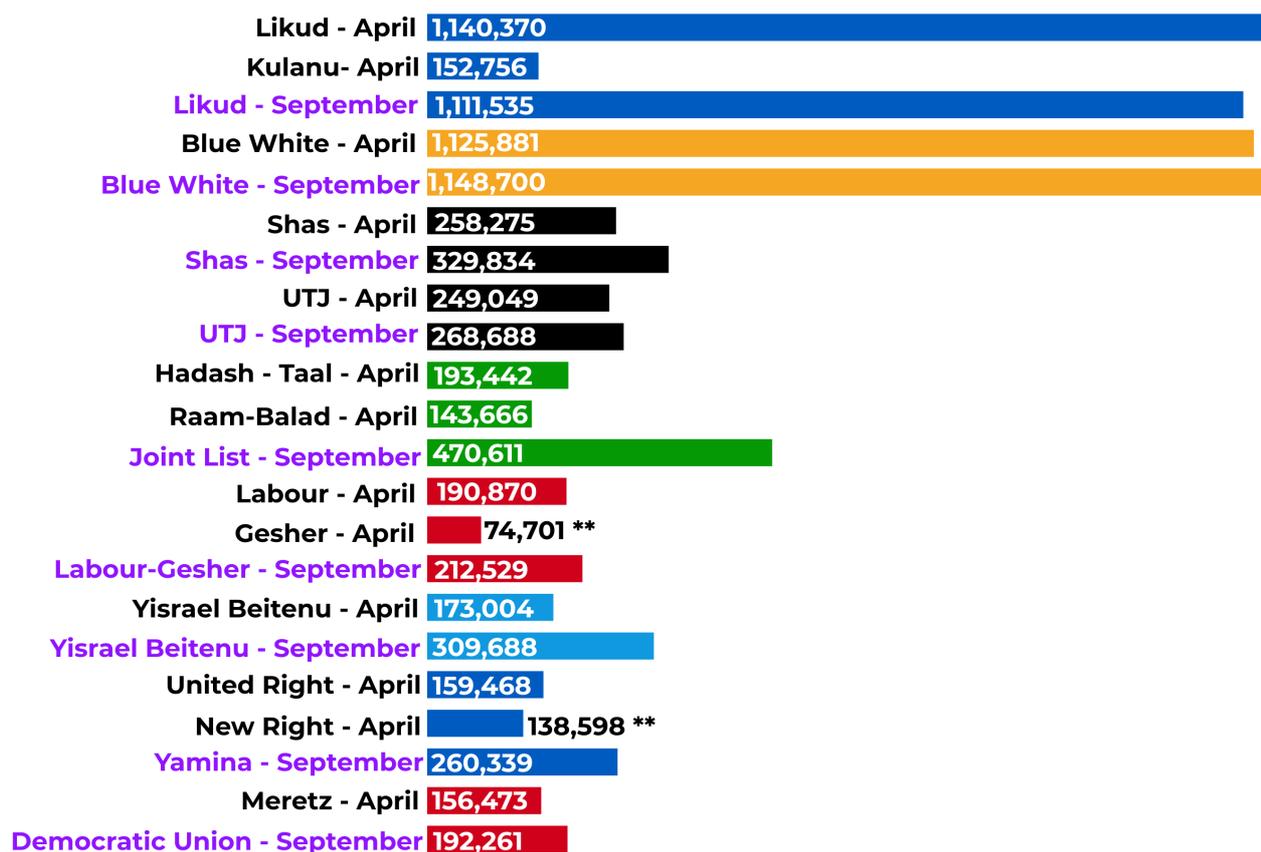


The big story of this election are the Likud voters from April who abandoned the party this week. Likud won 35 seats in April and 1,140,370 votes. On Tuesday they won just 31 seats and 1,111,535 votes. This loss is compounded because Likud absorbed the Kulanu party after the April election where it won 4 seats and 152,756 votes. Netanyahu also did a deal with Moshe Feiglin's Zehut party promising him a cabinet post if he pulled out of the race and urged the 118,000 voters who supported him in April to switch to Likud. Neither of these deals resulted in more support for Likud, they went elsewhere or didn't vote at all.

Official returns showed a cumulative loss of support nationally for Likud (now nominally including both Kulanu and Zehut) in previous strongholds and demographic groups. In particular, downturn in support was noticeable among Ethiopian Israelis and towns in southern Israel – the former likely due to outrage over police conduct, the latter likely due to continued rocket fire from Gaza. Loss of support was also evident in formerly solid Likud cities like Netanya, Bat Yam, Naharia, and Acre –all showed a several percentage point drop from the previous April election. On a cumulative national scale these dips added up.

Former Likud voters are believed to have dispersed to a variety of parties, including Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu, the Labour-Gesher alliance, Blue and White, as well as the Sephardi ultra-Orthodox Shas. And yet, while Arab-Israeli turnout rose significantly overall voter turnout increased by 1 per cent to 69 percent.

Total votes per party - April 2019 vs September 2019



**New Right and Gesher did not pass the electoral threshold in April

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[Our latest podcast](#)

[Episode 69 | Is it really bye bye Bibi?](#)

James Sorene talks to Lahav Harkov, Senior Contributing Editor of the Jerusalem Post and Raf Sanchez, Israel correspondent for the Daily Telegraph and Richard Pater speaks with Daphna Liel and Shalom Lippner to examine the Israeli election results and analyse what happens next during weeks of coalition talks.



bicom's podcast

Fathoming the 2019 Israeli Election: The Sequel

[Tal Schneider](#) discusses key issues related to the upcoming election. [Avi Weiss](#) discusses the strengths and weaknesses of Israel's economy and warns that the economic potential of Israeli high-tech is being squandered. [Yisrael Medad](#) argues that the Left is now viewed, in the eyes of the majority of the public, as outside the Jewish political consensus in Israel. [Hamutal Gouri](#) argues from a feminist perspective for an awakening of the Israeli public which she reproaches as too willing to vote against its own political interests. [Doron Matza](#) argues that Benjamin Netanyahu's broadly pragmatic diplomatic, security and economic policies enjoy widespread consensus, and this 'paradigm' will continue for the foreseeable future, regardless of who wins the election. [Liam Hoare](#) writes an in-depth study on Nitzan Horowitz, leader of Meretz and co-leader of the Democratic Union, who he claims is now 'the leader of the Israeli left'. *Maariv* journalist [Revital Amiran](#) argues that identity politics and populism have been the largest obstacles to the revival of Zionist Left but the two left slates fighting this election are tackling both and thus laying the foundations for left renewal. [David Newman](#) of Ben-Gurion University predicts the events of 2019 will renew interest in electoral reform in Israel.

Top five Members of Knesset from each party

Blue and White

1. Benny Gantz
2. Yair Lapid
3. Moshe Ya'alon
4. Gabi Ashkenazi
5. Avi Nissenkorn

Likud

1. Benjamin Netanyahu
2. Yuli Edelstein
3. Yisrael Katz
4. Gilad Erdan
5. Moshe Kahlon

The Joint List

1. Ayman Odeh
2. Mtanes Shehadeh
3. Ahmad Tibi
4. Mansour Abbas
5. Aida Touma-Sliman

Shas

1. Arye Dery
2. Yitzhak Cohen
3. Meshulam Nahari
4. Yaakov Margi
5. Yoav Ben Tzur

Yisrael Beitenu

1. Avigdor Liberman
2. Oded Forer
3. Evgeny Sova
4. Eli Avidar
5. Yulia Malinovsky

UTJ

1. Yaakov Litzman
2. Moshe Gafni
3. Meir Porush
4. Uri Maklev
5. Yaakov Tessler

Yamina

1. Ayelet Shaked
2. Rafi Peretz
3. Bezalel Smotrich
4. Naftali Bennett
5. Moti Yogev

Labour-Gesher

1. Amir Peretz
2. Orli Levi-Abekasis
3. Itzik Shmuli
4. Merav Michaeli
5. Omer Bar-Lev

Democratic Union

1. Nitzan Horowitz
2. Stav Shaffir
3. Yair Golan
4. Tamar Zandberg
5. Ilan Gilon

How we got here | news stories from BICOM

Gantz refuses Netanyahu meeting | [20 September](#)
Netanyahu calls for unity government with Gantz | [19 September](#)
Netanyahu fails to win 61 seat majority | [18 September](#)
Polls open in Israeli election | [17 September](#)
Facebook suspends Netanyahu's chat page | [13 September](#)
Netanyahu would extend Israeli sovereignty to Jordan Valley | [11 September](#)
Israeli cabinet approves law to allow cameras in polling stations | [9 September](#)
Netanyahu flies to London for last minute visit | [5 September](#)
Israel and US could sign new defence pact | [4 September](#)
Zehut party could withdraw from election after deal with Netanyahu | [28 August](#)
Netanyahu rejects national unity government | [7 August](#)
Likud candidates pledge loyalty to Netanyahu | [5 August](#)
Gantz calls for unity government | [2 August](#)
Lieberman will only support a unity government | [31 July](#)
Israeli right unites and Arab parties recreate joint list | [29 July](#)
Shaked calls for right-wing merger | [26 July](#)
Barak merges with Meretz | [25 July](#)
Ayelet Shaked to lead New Right party | [22 July](#)
Israeli leaders meet amid merger rumours | [8 July](#)
Amir Peretz elected Labour leader | [3 July](#)
Meretz chooses new leader for September election | [28 June](#)
Ehud Barak launches new party | [27 June](#)
Lieberman backs unity government | [17 June](#)
Attorney General refuses to delay Netanyahu hearing | [7 June](#)
Stav Shaffir to run for Labour leader | [June 7](#)
Ultra-Orthodox party sought segregation in public places | [4 June](#)
Netanyahu sacks Bennett and Shaked | [3 June](#)
Netanyahu says Lieberman 'drunk with power' | [31 May](#)
Netanyahu fails to form government | [30 May](#)
Kulanu to join Likud for early election | [29 May](#)
Knesset votes for new elections | [28 May](#)
Coalition talks deadlocked over conscription bill | [24 May](#)