VFI EDUCATES · THURSDAY 22 OCTOBER 2026

Israel Votes

What to watch on 27 October — and why it all comes down to 61

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Thirty-eight lists were approved. Blue and White withdrew, and on 21 Oct the Central Elections Committee pulled its slips from the polling stations, leaving thirty-seven. These are the fourteen the polls have been tracking, in the order of their ballot letters. Likud: *machal*. Yashar!: *derech*, "the way." Together: *rak*, "only."

A majority of the Knesset.

A government can be sworn in with more yes votes than no — abstentions don't count. Bennett's was confirmed **60 to 59** in 2021.

Sixty-one is what it takes to govern without leaning on somebody else's abstention.

The third Tuesday of Heshvan.

In the year the Knesset's term runs out. After a leap year, the first Tuesday instead. 5786 wasn't one.

Fixed by the Central Elections Committee chairman, Justice Noam Sohlberg, on 20 April 2023: four years means four years.

HESHVAN 5787 BEGAN MONDAY 12 OCTOBER

1st Tuesday	2 Heshvan · 13 Oct
2nd Tuesday	9 Heshvan · 20 Oct
3rd Tuesday	**16 Heshvan · 27 Oct**

3.25%

Under it, a list wins nothing. So four seats is the smallest delegation there is.

This year: about 165,000–170,000 votes. Our estimate, from the 2026 roll at 2022's turnout.

2022

3.16%

MERETZ — MISSED BY UNDER A TENTH OF A POINT

~417,000

BALLOTS, CLOSE TO 9% OF THE VOTE, THAT ELECTED NOBODY

SURPLUS-VOTE DEALS · AS OF THE 16 OCT DEADLINE

Yisrael Beytenu + Together · Yashar! + the Democrats · Ra'am + the Joint List · Likud + Religious Zionism · Shas + United Torah Judaism

No deal: Otzma Yehudit · Amcha Yisrael · the Reservists

No absentee ballot. No mail-in. You have to be there.

Diplomats and a short list of state envoys voted at the missions on 15 October. Everyone else flies home.

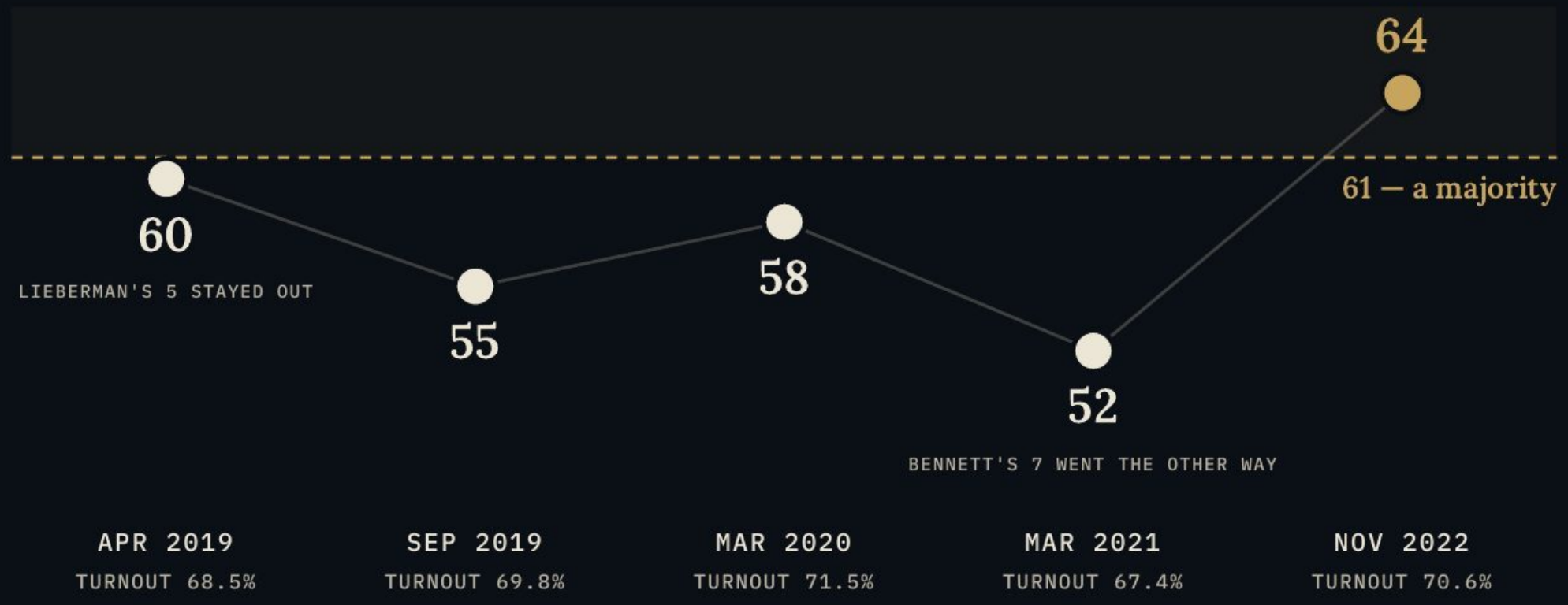
7,331,981
ELIGIBLE VOTERS, AS OF 6 SEP · 543,177 MORE THAN 2022

12,018
REGULAR POLLING STATIONS · 250 IN HOSPITALS · 55 IN PRISONS

7 days
HOW EARLY SOLDIERS' STATIONS CAN OPEN, DOUBLE ENVELOPE

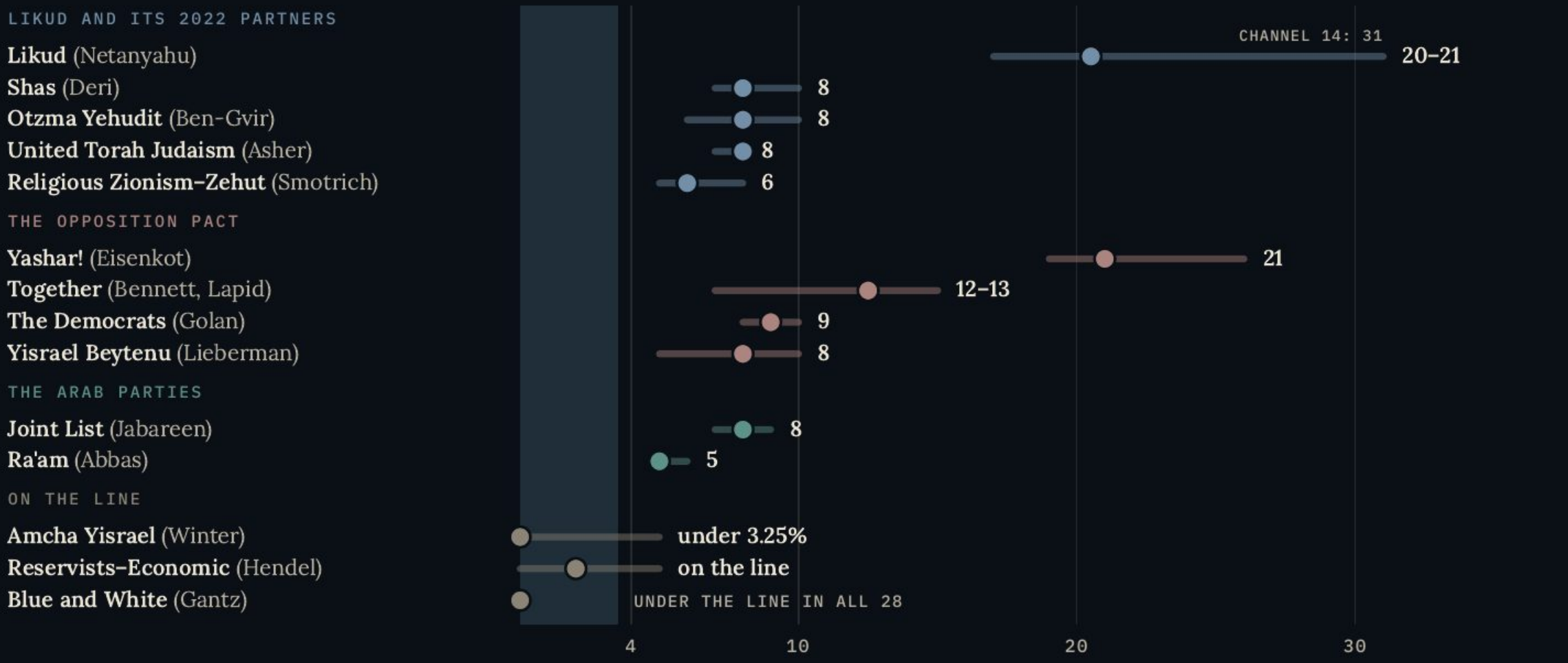
Polls close at 10 PM in Israel — **4 PM Eastern** on Tuesday. Israel's clocks go back on the 25th; ours not until 1 November.

FIVE ELECTIONS SINCE 2019 · LIKUD AND THE PARTIES THAT RAN AS ITS PARTNERS



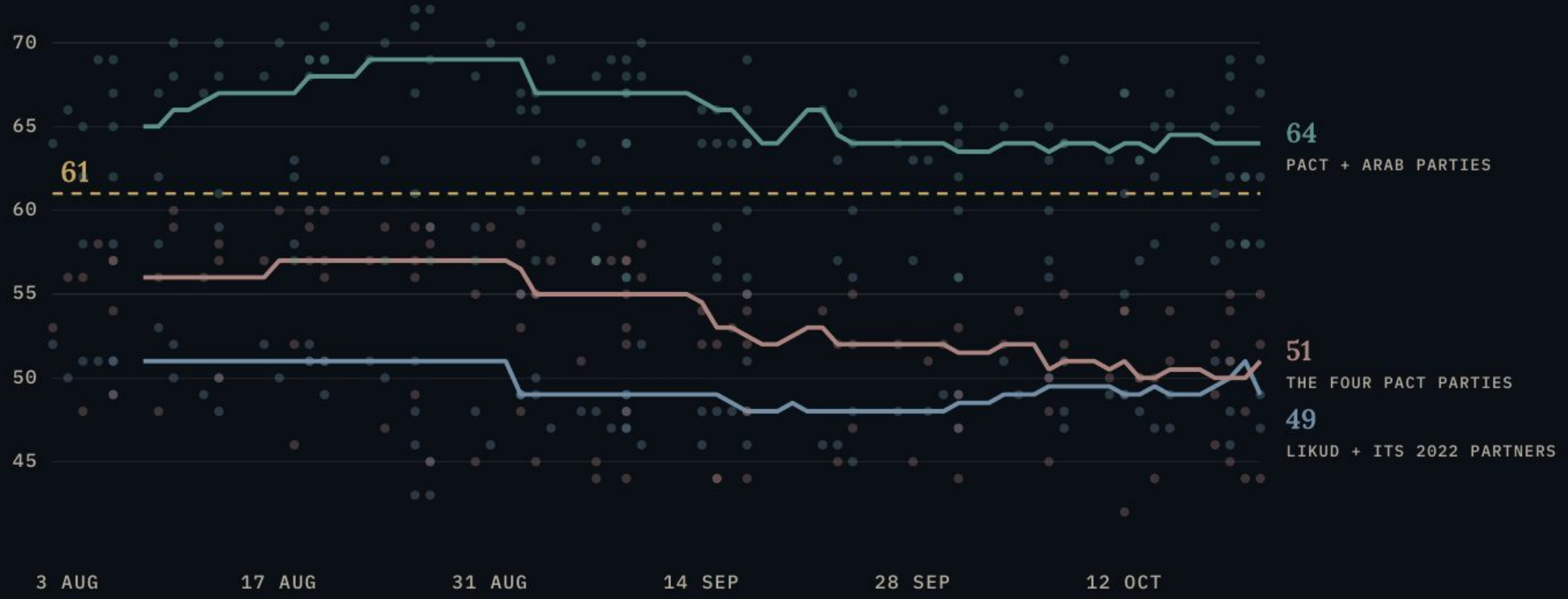
Central Elections Committee official results, 21st–25th Knesset. September 2019: Blue and White finished first, 33 seats to Likud's 32 — and no government came of it.

WHERE THE PARTIES STAND · 28 POLLS, 6 OCT–21 OCT · MEDIAN (DOT) AND RANGE (LINE)



Channels 12, 13, 14 and 16, Kan, Maariv, Walla, Israel Hayom, i24NEWS, Zman Yisrael. Shaded: under the 3.25% threshold. Polls through 21 Oct 2026.

NEITHER SIDE IS AT 61 WITHOUT HELP · SEATS BY CAMP, EVERY POLL SINCE 2 AUG



117 polls (dots) and the 14-day median (lines). Every poll with Likud and its 2022 partners at 61 or more was a Channel 14 poll. Pact = Yashar!, Together, Yisrael Beytenu, the Democrats. Excludes Winter's and Hendel's lists. Outlets' reports, CEC filings and Wikipedia's poll table; through 21 Oct 2026.

CHANNEL 13 · 21 OCT

46·38

Eisenkot · Netanyahu

CHANNEL 12 · 21 OCT

44·33

Eisenkot · Netanyahu

CHANNEL 14 · 21 OCT

55·45

Netanyahu · Eisenkot

There is no slip for prime minister.

The government comes out of the seat count, and out of who will sit with whom.

LIKUD AND ITS 2022 PARTNERS · MEDIAN SEATS, 6 OCT–21 OCT

Likud BENJAMIN NETANYAHU	מחל	"As long as I am prime minister, there will be no Palestinian state controlled by Iran — neither in Gaza nor in Judea and Samaria."	**20–21** 2022: 32
Shas ARYEH DERI	שס	Torah study protected in law, the Rabbinate over marriage and conversion. "We support Netanyahu, period."	**8** 2022: 11
United Torah Judaism YAAKOV ASHER · THREE PARTIES	ג	No support for any government without a draft law "without sanctions and without quotas."	**8** 2022: 7
Religious Zionism–Zehut BEZALEL SMOTRICH	ט	Sovereignty in Judea and Samaria, a restructured judiciary, dairy reform. "On my watch, there will not be a Palestinian state."	**6** 2022: 14 with Otzma
Otzma Yehudit ITAMAR BEN-GVIR	ב	Offensive action in place of "containment," complete victory over Hamas, sovereignty.	**8** 2022: with RZ
Amcha Yisrael OFER WINTER · "PEOPLE OF ISRAEL"	ך	Will recommend only Netanyahu. Joins no government until a conscription law passes.	**under 3.25%** just under, most polls

THE OPPOSITION PACT, SIGNED 26 SEPTEMBER · MEDIAN SEATS, 6 OCT–21 OCT

Yashar! GADI EISENKOT	דרך	"There is no Palestinian state, and under a government we form, no Palestinian state will be established." Universal service; an October 7 inquiry reaching back ten years.	**21** new list
Together NAFTALI BENNETT, YAIR LAPID	רק	"You serve, you get. You don't serve, you don't get anything. Not a shekel." No repeat of 2021's partnership with Ra'am.	**12–13** Yesh Atid 2022: 24
Yisrael Beytenu AVIGDOR LIEBERMAN	ל	Universal conscription, civil marriage, transport on Shabbat. Won't sit with Netanyahu "even if the world turns upside down."	**8** 2022: 6
The Democrats YAIR GOLAN	אמת	No one under indictment as prime minister or minister; civil marriage. Jewish-Arab partnership is "absolutely our future."	**9** Labor 2022: 4

THE ARAB PARTIES · AND THE LISTS ON THE LINE

Ra'am MANSOUR ABBAS	עם	The only Arab party ever in a coalition (2021). A seat at the table to fight crime and fund Arab towns.	**5** 2022: 5
The Joint List YOUSEF JABAREEN	חדם	Hadash, Ta'al and Balad together again. Won't join a coalition; hasn't ruled out backing one from outside.	**8** Hadash-Ta'al 2022: 5
The Reservists–Economic YOAZ HENDEL, YARON ZELEKHA	די	Three conditions: only a "Zionist government," a conscription law for everyone passed first, and an inquiry into October 7.	**on the line** 4 when over · out in 10 of 18 since 13 Oct
Blue and White BENNY GANTZ	כן	"We need a Zionist government that crosses the blocs." Under the line in every published media poll. Gantz pulled out on the 19th, and on the 21st every candidate resigned. Its slips are out of the trays, and a Blue and White ballot counts as invalid.	**withdrew** off the ballot 21 Oct

23 Sep: the Central Elections Committee voted to bar Ra'am and the Joint List. 2 Oct: the High Court reinstated both, unanimously. The committee declined to bar Otzma Yehudit; on 4 Oct the High Court dismissed the Democrats' petition against Ben-Gvir on procedural grounds.

Bennett, Eisenkot and Lieberman rule out depending on an Arab party. Lieberman won't sit with Netanyahu or the Haredi parties. United Torah Judaism wants a draft law with no sanctions and no quotas; Winter wants a conscription law first.

1

A Haredi party crosses over.

Shas or United Torah Judaism ends up on the other side of the line.

2

An Arab party lends support from outside.

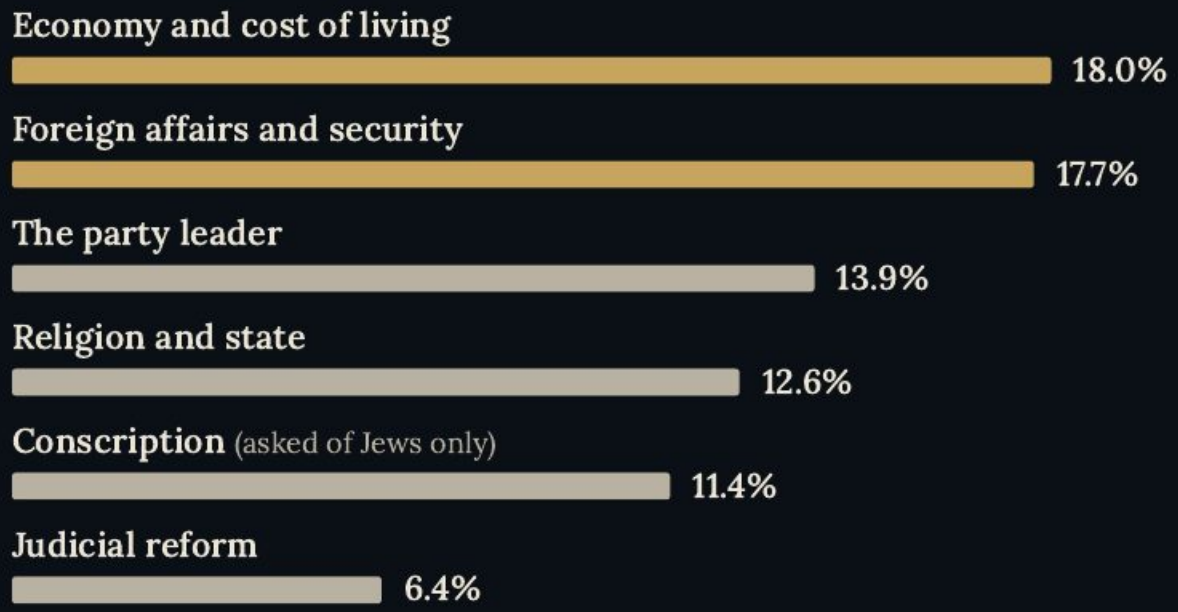
It backs a government without joining it.

3

Small lists fall under the line.

Their votes leave the count, the pie shrinks, and everyone else's seats go up.

"THE BIGGEST FACTOR IN YOUR VOTE" · ISRAEL DEMOCRACY INSTITUTE · FIELDWORK 31 AUG – 3 SEP 2026



68%

OF JEWISH VOTERS: OCTOBER 7 IS CENTRAL TO THEIR VOTE

31.5%

OF ARAB VOTERS: CRIME IN ARAB TOWNS COMES FIRST

50%

SAY TIES WITH THE UNITED STATES MATTER TO THEIR VOTE · 55% OF JEWS

Israeli Voice Index, August 2026: 605 interviews in Hebrew, 150 in Arabic, margin of error ±3.57%. Published 9 September.

The draft

June 2024 — the High Court rules, unanimously, that yeshiva students must be drafted

July 2026 — the Knesset freezes arrests, 58 to 54

3 September — a nine-justice panel strikes the freeze down. No draft law is on the books

To 30 November — emergency call-ups for up to 200,000 reservists

The October 7 inquiry

The government's bill — six members, chosen by two-thirds of the Knesset or split 3 and 3. First reading 59 to 0 in December 2025; then out of time

The opposition — a state commission, its members chosen by the president of the High Court

15 January — the High Court's deadline for the government to answer the petitions

HOW IT COULD END · MITZPE INSTITUTE ODDS · AS OF 21 OCT 2026

32–38% — **No government, and another election**
Every mandate runs out under Basic Law: The Government

21–27% — **A minority government**
Eisenkot sworn in with 54 to 58, the Arab parties abstaining, and Liberman voting yes after refusing it three times

14–20% — **A rotation**
Likud and Yashar! in one broad government, Netanyahu serving first

11–16% — **Likud and its 2022 partners back at 61**
The polls wrong by a wide margin, Winter's seats, and the small lists on that side clearing

8–13% — **The opposition at 61**
Ra'am inside the coalition, and somebody breaking a public pledge

Judgment on the polling and on each party's stated red lines — not a poll, and not a preference.
A government can take office on more yes votes than no.

2009: Kadima 28, Likud 27 — the mandate went to Netanyahu.

2022: from 1 November to 29 December, with 64 seats.

Dates after 4 November are the latest the law allows. It can go faster. A government takes office only once the Knesset votes confidence in it.

Watch three things

The threshold — Winter's list, the Reservists, anyone at four or five

Turnout — 70.6% in 2022. Arab turnout 53.2%, up from 44.6%

The Haredi recommendation — if it's "nobody," the mandate gets harder

SKIP THE HEADLINE ABOUT WHO WON.

Count to 61.

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mitzpe.org — the Institute