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Right-65 seats & Netanyahu win over Arab-9 & Left-55 defeating opposition snag Gantz

Home 2019 Election

Gantz: Nothing is final yet; Bennett: The soldiers will decide my fate

With some 95% of the votes counted, right-wing bloc holds a large lead over the Left • New Right, Moshe Feiglin's Zehut party fail to pass minimum threshold • Arab parties win nine total seats, fewer than in 20th Knesset • Haredi parties hold strong.

by Israel Hayom Staff , Danielle Roth-Avneri , Ariel Kahana Published on 2019-04-10 10:45 Last modified: 2019-04-10 18:16

Gantz: Nothing is final yet; Bennett: The soldiers will decide my fate

Blue and White co-leader Benny Gantz greets activists | Photo: Gideon Markowicz

Blue and White party leader Benny Gantz (SNAG) said Wednesday morning that despite the results that appeared to give Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a fifth term in office and a large lead to the right-wing bloc, nothing was final yet.

Gantz told Blue and White activist that they should be proud of their achievements, which he called “unprecedented.”

“Good morning, friends. Yes, good morning,” Gantz wrote in a message on Wednesday.

“The reports aren’t telling the final story. Although it looks like gray skies are on the way, two things are missing – they don’t include electoral movement and it could be that we’ll make some kind of political move. They certainly can’t obscure the sunshine of hope we gave to the people of Israel and Israeli society.

“Our voters asked for hope and we gave it to them. They wanted a different path and we laid it out. ... Therefore, we will not withdraw from our public obligation to represent over a million citizens who wanted something different from us. We have a historic achievement under our belts. We have something to be proud of, and we will be,” Gantz’s message read.

Meanwhile, New Right co-founder Naftali Bennett, whose party initial results indicated would not make it past the minimum electoral threshold, expressed hope on Wednesday that the soldiers’ votes would change the picture and manage to give his party the 3.25% it needed to sit in the Knesset.

In a press conference outside his home, Bennett said, “All my life, I’ve given all I could for the sake of this good people. I was always a soldier of the state. As a combat soldiers in [the elite commando unit] Sayeret Matkal, as a high-tech entrepreneur, as education minister, and as a cabinet member during Operation Protective Edge. Now the soldiers

will decide where I will continue to fight on their behalf. What is certain is that I will never stop giving everything [I have] to the State of Israel.”

With some 95% of votes counted, it appeared that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Gantz had each won 35 votes, but that the right-wing bloc was ahead by a large margin.

The ultra-Orthodox parties Shas and United Torah Judaism each won eight seats. Yisrael Beytenu under former Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman won five seats, and Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon’s Kulanu party won four seats. The Union of Right-Wing Parties (Habayit Hayehudi-National Union-Otzma Yehudit) won five seats.

As of Wednesday morning, the Zehut party under far-right leader Moshe Feiglin, which made headlines in the campaign due in part to his espousal of cannabis legalization, failed to make it into the Knesset at all.

On the Left, the Labor party made the worst showing in its history, winning a scanty six seats, compared to the 2013 election – the last time it ran as an independent party – when it won 15. In 2015, Labor ran with Hatnuah on the joint Zionist Union list, which won 24 seats but stayed in the opposition in the 20th Knesset.

Meretz won four seats.

The Hadash-Ta’al Arab party won five seats, and the Balad-Ra’am list won four, which means the Arab parties will have significantly less representation in the 21st Knesset than they did in the 20th Knesset, when they united as the Joint Arab List.

Home World News

German police raid Islamic organizations over suspected Hamas support
German interior ministry says the main targets of the raids were WorldWide Resistance-Help and Ansaar International, which are believed to have collected funds for Hamas "under the guise of humanitarian aid."

by Reuters and Israel Hayom Staff Published on 2019-04-10 10:37 Last modified: 2019-04-10 17:44

German police raid Islamic organizations over suspected Hamas support

Hamas terrorists partake in a military drill in the southern Gaza Strip, March 25 | Photo: Reuters

German police on Wednesday raided offices belonging to Islamic organizations suspected of financing the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas, which is on the European Union's terrorism blacklist.

The German interior ministry said the main targets of the raids were WorldWide Resistance-Help and Ansaar International, which are believed to have collected funds for Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, under the guise of humanitarian aid.

The organizations say on their websites that they collect donations for people in Gaza, Somalia, Syria and other countries.

"Whoever supports Hamas under the guise of humanitarian aid disregards fundamental values of our constitution and discredits the commitment of many aid organizations," Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said in a statement.

The ministry said the two organizations also supported Hamas through propaganda campaigns.

White House: Trump discussed Iran, human rights with Saudi crown prince
U.S. lawmakers have called on the Trump administration to take a harder line on Saudi Arabia • President Trump says U.S.-Saudi partnership is important both for U.S. economy and Middle East stability.

by Reuters and Israel Hayom Staff Published on 2019-04-10 17:33 Last modified: 2019-04-10 17:36

U.S. President Donald Trump spoke with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman by phone on Tuesday, discussing Riyadh's role in Middle East stability, maintaining pressure on Iran and the importance of human rights issues, the White House said.

Washington's Middle East ally faces rising pressure over its handling of the war in Yemen and moves to stifle internal dissent, including the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi and prosecution of women's rights activists.

A bipartisan chorus of U.S. lawmakers has called on the White House to harden its stance toward Saudi Arabia after Khashoggi was killed at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.

U.S. intelligence believes the crown prince ordered the killing, which Saudi officials deny.

Trump has said the U.S. partnership with Saudi Arabia is important for the U.S. economy and maintaining stability in the region.

The U.S. State Department on Monday publicly designated 16 people for their role in Khashoggi's death and said they and their families would be barred from entering the United States.

The United States on Monday also designated Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization, drawing an angry reaction from Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Tuesday.

The White House said Trump used the call with the crown prince to discuss ways of "maintaining maximum pressure against Iran." Saudi Arabia is leading a coalition battling Iranian-backed Houthi insurgents in Yemen.

Next Stop – the Moon: Israeli Lunar Spacecraft Pulls Off Key Maneuver
SpaceIL says it is still waiting to receive data to ensure Genesis has indeed entered moon's orbit, but spacecraft's biggest challenge still lies ahead

Asaf Rone | Apr 04, 2019 5:27 PM

2 comments Zen

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The first Israeli lunar spacecraft succeeded on Thursday in one of its biggest challenges en route to the moon: A maneuver allowing it to be captured by lunar gravity.

With 97% of votes counted, Netanyahu set to form a right wing cabinet

With 97.3% of the polling stations already counted, Likud and Blue and White each appear to have won 35 seats. The ultra-Orthodox right-wing bloc leads by 10 seats

Ynet | Published: 04.10.19 , 02:22

Benjamin Netanyahu heading into his 5th consecutive term as Prime Minister, has a clear majority of support to form a right wing coalition government

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"This is an unimaginable achievement," Netanyahu said, at around 2am. "I am very moved tonight, a night of tremendous victory. I am very excited that the people of Israel once again trusted me for the fifth time, and with greater confidence."

Benjamin and Sara Netanyahu on stage at Likud HQ in Tel Aviv (Photo: AFP)

Benjamin and Sara Netanyahu on stage at Likud HQ in Tel Aviv (Photo: AFP)

He added: "I have already started talks with the leaders of our right-wing parties, and almost all of them have publicly declared that they will recommend me to form the government, and will do so to our president. There will be a right-wing government, but I intend to be the prime minister of all the citizens of Israel, right and left, Jews and non-Jews, I care about everyone, that's how it was and that's how it will be. "

Netanyahu's Likud and the Blue and White Party led by Benny Gantz appear to have 35 seats each, while the ultra-Orthodox Shas and United Torah Judaism parties each won eight seats. The once mighty Labor party was down to just six seats.

Moshe Kahlon's Kulanu party was on course to win four seats, while Hadash-Ta'al, Meretz were set to claim four seats apiece.

the Union of Right-Wing Parties has won five seats while the New Right party led for Ministers Naftali Bennett and Ayelet Shaked are hoping the soldiers' vote, not yet counted will carry them over the required threshold.

The results put the rightist bloc in the lead with 65 seats, while the leftist bloc stands at 55 seats.

Benny Gantz had also claimed victory hours earlier, as the exit polls showed his Blue and White party locked in a tight race with Netanyahu's Likud.

"This is an historic day. Thank you to Netanyahu for his service for the country. Just as he said - the largest party should be the one to form the government," said Gantz, in a speech at his party headquarters just two hours after the release of exit polls that predicted a slight lead for his party over the Likud, but an advantage to the right-wing bloc led by Netanyahu.

L-R: Moshe Ya'alon, Benny Gantz, Gabi Ashkenazi and Yair Lapid (Photo: Yuval Chen)
L-R: Moshe Ya'alon, Benny Gantz, Gabi Ashkenazi and Yair Lapid (Photo: Yuval Chen)

One of the exit polls was later corrected to show a small lead for Likud.

"There are election losers, there are election winners - and we are the winners," Gantz said.

"They said we would not win, we won," Gantz said. "We will win in a way that is respectful to everyone, respectful of the past, respectful of the present, and building a joint future that is yet to come."

Gantz also vowed to move quickly to form the next government.

"We have a responsibility to form a government that will serve the State of Israel and not itself," he said. "The sooner we form a government, the sooner we can lead the State of Israel. We have a lot of work ahead of us."

Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi (C) chairs a session of the 30th Arab League summit in the Tuni Arab leaders to draft UN Security Council resolution on Golan
22 member states of the Arab League also said they will seek a legal opinion from the International Court of Justice and warned other countries from taking measures that would affect Syria's sovereignty over the disputed territory
Reuters|Published: 04.01.19 , 08:38

Arab leaders said on Sunday they would seek a UN Security Council resolution against the US decision to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights and promised to support Palestinians in their bid for statehood.

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Arab leaders, long divided by regional rivalries, also ended their annual summit in Tunisia calling for cooperation with non-Arab Iran based on non-interference in each others' affairs.

Arab leaders who have been grappling with a bitter Gulf Arab dispute, splits over Iran's regional influence, the war in Yemen and unrest in Algeria and Sudan sought common ground after Washington recognized Israel's sovereignty over the Golan.

Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi (C) chairs a session of the 30th Arab League summit in the Tuni

Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi (C) chairs a session of the 30th Arab League summit in the Tuni

But the abrupt departure from the summit shortly after it began by Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, who is locked in a row with Saudi Arabia and other Arab states, suggested rivalries were not easily buried. No reason was given for his departure.

"We, the leaders of the Arab countries gathered in Tunisia ... express our rejection and condemnation of the United States decision to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan," Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit said.

He said Arab countries would present a draft resolution to the UN Security Council and seek a legal opinion from the International Court of Justice on the US decision. It warned other countries away from following Washington's lead.

Trump signed a proclamation last week recognizing the Golan Heights as part of Israel, which annexed the area in 1981 after capturing it from Syria in 1967.

Trump's earlier decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital also drew Arab condemnation. Palestinians want East Jerusalem as the capital of a future state.

Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz told the Arab leaders his country "absolutely rejects" any measures affecting Syria's sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi said Arab nations needed to ensure the international community understood the centrality of the Palestinian cause to Arab nations.

In their final communique, Arab states renewed support for an Arab peace initiative that offers Israel peace in exchange for withdrawal from all lands occupied in the 1967 war and said they would seek to revive peace talks with the Jewish state.

Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump show off the US declaration of recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights (Photo: EPA)

Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump show off the US declaration of recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights (Photo: EPA)

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who also addressed the meeting in Tunis, said any resolution to the Syrian conflict must guarantee the territorial integrity of Syria "including the occupied Golan Heights".

RIFTS REMAIN

The **Tunis summit brought together the rulers of Saudi Arabia and Qatar** for the first time at the same gathering since 2017 when Riyadh and its allies imposed a political and economic boycott on Doha.

But Qatar's emir left the summit hall shortly after Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit praised the way Saudi Arabia handled its rotating Arab League presidency last year, live television footage showed.

Qatar's state news agency did not say why the Qatari emir left, but Tunisia's state news agency TAP said the rest of Qatar's delegation stayed.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt accuse Qatar of supporting terrorism and say it has been cozying up to Iran, a charge Doha denies.

The row has defied mediation efforts by Kuwait and the United States, which called on Gulf Arab states to unite in opposition to Iranian influence in the region.

The final communique said Arab states called for ties with Iran to "be based on good neighborliness, non-interference in internal affairs, the non-use of force or threats, and refraining from practices and actions that would undermine confidence and stability in the region."

Arab states remain divided over other issues, including how to deal with pro-democracy protests that have erupted in the region since 2011. The presidents of Sudan and Algeria, two nations roiled by anti-government protests, did not attend the summit.

Syria's seat at the summit was vacant. Damascus has been suspended from the League since 2011 over its crackdown on protesters at the start of its civil war. The League has said no consensus has yet been reached to allow Syria's reinstatement.