



Written by [James Murphy](#) on September 27, 2022

## Resurgent Bibi? New Israeli Elections Offer Chance for Netanyahu's Return

With the nation of Israel set to conduct its fifth general election in three years, a familiar face has emerged as a candidate to again lead the country. Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of the Likud ("Consolidation") Party, who has served as Israel's prime minister for much of the last three decades, is again one of the leading candidates to be the next person to lead the nation.

The election will take place November 1.

In June of this year, discord among a weak "unity" government, formed in 2021, led to the announcement that Israel's parliament, the Knesset, would again be dissolved and a new election called for. Naftali Bennett of the New Right Party had been serving as prime minister, but chose to retire from politics rather than stay on in a caretaker role. Currently, Yair Lapid serves in the caretaker role.

Netanyahu, who many thought to be politically dead after the 2021 loss coupled with an ongoing criminal scandal involving allegations of fraud, bribery, and breach of trust, has [emerged](#) as a front-runner to again take the leadership reins in Israel.

Netanyahu claims that the [indictments](#) brought against him were full of "false information" and that the investigation process was "tainted."

Now it seems that the bloc led by Netanyahu's Likud Party may be on pace to win the 61 seats needed to form a new government. Polls show Likud winning at least 32 Knesset seats, with affiliated parties (Religious Zionism, Shas, and United Torah Judaism) picking up the slack.

Although he had been removed from power and embroiled in scandal, Netanyahu the politician has never truly gone away. Netanyahu remained on as head of the Likud Party, a member of the Knesset, and the leader of the opposition since the last government formed in 2021.

At 73-year-old Netanyahu displays amazing stamina, traveling the nation almost daily and speaking publicly in various cities, often behind the bulletproof window of the Likud Party campaign bus.

In a very close election in a very divided country, Netanyahu still faces difficult challenges ahead in his quest to regain the job of prime minister.

Ironically, one man who may ultimately decide who next runs Israel might be an Arab. Mansour Abbas, the leader of an Islamist party known as Raam, made history last year when it became the first Arab



AP Images  
Benjamin Netanyahu



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party to join a ruling government in modern Israel. Many believe that Abbas has connections to the terrorist group Hamas — a charge he denies. He has drawn the ire of Palestinians for his tacit acknowledgement that Israel has a right to exist by participating in its government.

In addition, one former ally of Netanyahu's, Benny Gantz of the Blue and White Party, which formed a government with Netanyahu in 2020, has announced that he will not again sit in a government with Netanyahu.

In a television interview on Saturday, Gantz let his feelings be known: "If Netanyahu establishes a government of 61 [seats] I request that you call me for an interview on the end of the state. This will be an extremist government that will drag the country to the brink and to further radicalization — I will not be part of it."

Netanyahu, for his part, referred to a recent speech by interim prime minister Yari Lapid at the United Nations, in which Lapid called for a two-state solution to the ongoing Palestinian issue. "Tonight we heard a speech full of weakness, defeat and bowing of the head. After the right-wing government led by me removed the Palestinian state from the world agenda, after we brought four historic peace agreements with Arab countries that bypassed the Palestinian veto, Lapid is bringing the Palestinians back to the forefront of the world stage and putting Israel right into the Palestinian hole," Netanyahu said.



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