

“AN EXPERT VIEW FROM ISRAEL”

Series Report #91

Special election report

SUMMARY OF A ‘MIDDLE EAST FORUM’ WEBINAR ENTITLED ‘ISRAEL UPDATE’



2 NOVEMBER 2022

In a brief ‘Webinar’ session organized by the Washington based MEF, Ashley Perry, an adviser to Israel’s minister of foreign affairs and deputy prime minister in 2009-15, provides weekly updates on Israeli politics.

SUMMARY OF ASHLEY PERRY’S COMMENTS

- Perry began his comments by saying that the result of the Israeli election of 1st November has brought a dramatic ending to the instability of the past 3 years given that a new and stable government will now be assuming office in a short time.
- Perry noted that this had been a great personal victory for Netanyahu.
- With an overwhelming majority of the votes counted, as Perry himself had predicted in previous briefings, the ‘Right Wing block’ led by Benjamin Netanyahu is now assured of forming the next government.
- Depending on the result of the absentee votes, Netanyahu’s coalition is assured of having a minimum of 61 and as many as 65 seats in the next Knesset (this number could in turn be supported by 4 or 5 additional votes of the religious ‘Hadash Ta’al Party’ which refuses to sit with any government).
- Perry said that it is now also possible for Netanyahu to bring in more people from the other side into his coalition. People like Benny Gantz and his ‘National Unity Party’ along with others associated with Gidon Saar (who himself because of personal differences is unlikely to sit with Netanyahu).
- Perry added that part of Netanyahu’s victory must be due to the poor performance of parties on the ‘Left’ such as Labour that barely surpassed the threshold of 3.25% with 4 seats but more importantly the failure of parties such as Meretz (having lost 6 seats!) or the Arab ‘Balad’ to meet the required threshold. He noted that Aylet Shaked of the right wing ‘Jewish Home Party’ had also failed to meet the threshold.

- Apart from Netanyahu, the meteoric rise of the 'Religious Zionist Party' of Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir who having doubled their numbers from 7 to 14, has now for the first time resulted in them becoming the 3rd largest party in the Knesset.
- According to Perry, the biggest loser in the election was perhaps no one other than the incumbent PM, Yair Lapid. While Lapid's own 'Yesh Atid' party was able to do marginally better than the last election, however many of his coalition partners failed to make the required threshold - something that their losing leaders attributed to Lapid for not encouraging tactical voting to ensure that those parties could pass the threshold and prevent a Netanyahu victory.
- Perry said that some 67% of all the 6 million plus eligible voters had participated in an election that had seen a rise amongst Jewish voters to the right with a similar pattern amongst Arab voters who voted in favour of the radical left.
- Perry ended his briefing by saying that the next step is for the Israeli president is now to summon all the party leaders and to ask Netanyahu to try and form his government in the next 28 days (which can if necessary can be extended by a further 14 days).
- With a safe majority in place, Perry was of the view that a new government under Netanyahu will be formed very quickly with a view of reversing some of the legislation passed in the previous Knesset from entering into law as well as passing the next budget in time.

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