

ISRAEL

Date of Elections: May 17, 1977

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament following premature dissolution of this body. Previous general elections had taken place in December 1973.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Israel, the *Knesset*, consists of 120 members elected for 4 years.

Electoral System

Every Israeli national at least 18 years of age is entitled to vote. Although no persons are expressly disqualified from voting, certain cannot do so because they are not provided with polling faculties; this includes prisoners or persons abroad who are not seamen.

The electoral register is drawn up at the national level and revised annually. Voting is not compulsory.

Every qualified voter at least 21 years of age may be a candidate for the *Knesset*. The following people, however, are barred from being candidates: the President of the State; the State Comptroller; salaried rabbis; judges; and senior civil servants and army officers of a certain rank, unless they cease to hold their posts 100 days before election day; where a more junior civil servant or army officer becomes a candidate his service is suspended until election day and, if he becomes a member of the *Knesset*, so long as he is a parliamentarian.

A list of candidates may be presented either by 750 members of the electorate or by a party group represented in the outgoing *Knesset*. In the former case the representative of the list must deposit 1\$ 40,000, which is returned if the list obtains at least one per cent of the total valid votes cast in the country.

Deputies of the *Knesset* represent the entire nation, which forms one constituency. Voting is for lists of candidates, with proportional distribution of seats effected according to the d'Hondt method of highest average between

all lists having obtained at least one per cent of the valid votes cast. Within each list, the seats won are allotted to the candidates according to their order of appearance on the list. The "next-in-line" candidate of the list concerned fills a vacancy which arises in the *Knesset* between general elections.

General] Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The May election date was set by the *Knesset* on January 5, 1977. Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin had the previous month excluded the three National Religious Party (NRP) members from his coalition Cabinet following the abstention of NRP *Knesset* members in a vote of confidence in the Government. The NRP's departure from the coalition left the Government without an absolute parliamentary majority. The Prime Minister then submitted his resignation but remained in office until the elections as head of a caretaker Government. He then announced his resignation as leader of his party on April 8 following an investigation into his private financial transactions.

A total of 22 parties proposed lists of candidates for the 120 *Knesset* seats, the principal groups being the traditionally ruling Labour Party, the rightist *Likud* coalition (the main opposition) and the newly-founded Democratic Movement for Change (DMC). Campaign issues related mainly to the economy (inflation, strikes), foreign affairs, and scandals over charges of corruption and bribery which had plagued the Government since the previous (1973) elections. The Labour Alignment emphasized the issue of negotiating peace with the Arab world while *Likud* and the DMC attacked Labour's record at home.

On polling day, Labour was defeated for the first time since independence in 1948 as *Likud* achieved a clear success and the DMC picked up 15 seats. *Likud* leader Menahem Begin became Prime Minister after forming a coalition Government (*Likud, Shlomzion, NRP, Agudat Israel*) on June 20.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution
of Seats in the Knesset

Number of registered voters.	2,236,293
Voters.	1,771,726 (79.22 %)
Blank or void ballot papers.	23,906
Valid votes.	1,747,820

Political Group	Votes obtained	a/ %	Number of seats
<i>Likud</i> (Herut, Laam and Liberal Party)	583,968	33.41	43 (+4)
<i>Maarakh</i> (Labour Party and <i>Mapam</i>)			
Alignment	430,023	24.60	32 (-19)
Democratic Movement for Change *	202,265	11.57	15
National Religious Party.	160,787	9.19	12 (+2)
<i>Rakah</i> Front	80,118	4.58	5 (+1)
<i>Agudat Israel</i> **	56,652	3.24	4
<i>Flatto-Sharon</i> *.	35,049	2.00	1
<i>Shlomzion</i> *.	33,947	1.91	2
<i>Shelli</i>	27,281	1.56	2 (+1)
Arabs supporting Labour.	24,185	1.38	1 (-2)
<i>Poalei Agudat Israel</i> **.	23,571	1.34	1
Citizens Rights Movement	20,621	1.17	1 (-2)
Independent Liberals.	20,384	1.16	1 (-3)
Others.	48,969	2.80	

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• Did not nominate candidates at previous (1973) elections

** Won the same number of seats in 1973 as the *Torah* Front

2. *Distribution of Members of the Knesset
according to Professional Category*

Lawyers.	25
Political and public service officials.	14
Economists.	13
Farmers.	12
Journalists and writers.	11
Teachers.	10
Social scientists.	10
Managers.	7
Salaried clerks.	5
Rabbis.	4
Engineers.	3
Manual workers.	3
Others.	3
	<u>120</u>

3. *Distribution of Members of the Knesset
according to Sex*

Men	112
Women	8
	<u>120</u>

4. *Distribution of Members of the Knesset
according to Age Group*

20-29 years.	1
30-39.	9
40-49.	37
50-59.	49
60-69.	23
70-79.	1
	<u>120</u>