

Livni Edges Win in Israel

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni could become Israel's second female prime minister.

✖ **Feb. 11, 2009** – In extremely tight parliamentary elections held in Israel on Tuesday Tzipi Livni, Israel's foreign minister and leader of the centrist Kadima Party, appeared to have gained one seat more than tough rival Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu, whose party was favored to win in the run-up to yesterday's elections.

With 99.7 percent of the votes counted, Livni's Kadima won 28 seats out of the Knesset's 120 parliamentary seats while Netanyahu's conservative Likud won 27 seats, according to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA). In third place with 15 parliamentary seats was Israel Beiteinu, the ultra-conservative party led by Avigdor Lieberman, a Russian Jew.

Final results will not be available until Feb. 18.

"It appears that [Kadima] will win approximately 28 mandates," said Mideast analyst Mike Evans, who just wrote *Jimmy Carter: The Liberal Left and World Chaos*. "That in no way gives Livni the ability to form a government. In order to form a government, 61 mandates in the 120-seat Knesset are necessary."

Evans believes a government formed under Livni would not bode well for Bible-believing Christians and Jews who support the state of Israel. "Livni would be more than delighted to pursue an Oslo peace plan that would divide Jerusalem and rip the Golan Heights and most of Judea and Samaria from Jewish hands," he said.

Because of the conservative results of Tuesday's voting, analysts say that it will be very difficult for Livni to form a coalition government, and some media reports have indicated

Netanyahu was declaring victory Wednesday. "Israelis want peace and security," said David Brog, executive director of Christians United for Israel. "While their emphasis may have been different, both Livni and Netanyahu spoke to both of these goals.

"Livni spoke of continuing the peace process, but she showed that she could defend Israel from her enemies in Gaza. Netanyahu spoke of defending Israel from Iran and Hamas, but has previously shown that he is capable of taking risks for peace. What you see in this close election is how very dear these dual goals are to most Israelis," Brog said.

Evans said Lieberman, who is extremely popular among Israel's 1 million Russian Jews, would never form a coalition government with "the liberal Livni." "When the dust settles, Lieberman will be the kingmaker," he said.