

Israel Voter Turnout Hits Highest Mark in Decade

The voter turnout for Tuesday's Knesset election was the highest it has been in the last decade, according to statistics released by the Central Elections Committee.

Some 3.8 million citizens, representing 66.6 percent of all eligible voters, went to the polls, according to the figures, which were compiled by Professor Avraham Diskin. About 80 percent of the nation's soldiers voted, with 67 percent of soldiers voting from their military bases, and 12-15 percent voting at civilian polling stations nationwide.

By 8 p.m. on Tuesday, 63.7 percent of eligible voters had cast their ballots. In the final two hours of voting, there was a relatively low turnout of only 3 percent.

After the polls closed, the elections committee reported that 66.6 percent of the eligible population had voted, compared with 65.2 percent in 2009 and 63.5 percent in 2006. Only in 2003 was the voter turnout higher, at 68.9 percent.

The Central Elections Committee, based in the Knesset's Jerusalem compound, was the "beating heart" of Tuesday's election. Some 30 telephone operators sat in one of the compound's larger halls, addressing general malfunctions or irregularities at the nation's polling stations. Color-coded diagrams detailing voter turnout in previous elections and in Israel's largest cities adorned the walls of the auditorium.

The support team did not receive any complaints of serious problems throughout Tuesday. Still, there were some irregularities. In Hadera, there were complaints that Shas supporters were attempting to distribute counterfeit Habayit Hayehudi ballots.

In Petach Tikva, ballots for Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid and Rabbi Amnon Yitzhak's Koach Lehashpia parties allegedly went missing at polling stations. At a polling station in Tel Aviv, voters complained that they had been misled into mistakenly placing their ballots in boxes placed by the Israel Broadcasting Authority to gather statistical data on the elections, wasting their votes.