

Netanyahu Closes in on Victory in Israeli Elections

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With nearly 97% of Israel's vote counted (as of 9 a.m. ET), former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's bloc has 65 seats, beyond the majority of 61 needed to form a coalition. Although the ongoing vote count will change those numbers, it's almost certain Netanyahu will get the chance to form a government.

Exit poll results indicate that when the count is complete, Netanyahu likely will get the nod from President Isaac Herzog to form a governing coalition. Here's the breakdown:

Netanyahu's Likud party stands at 31 seats, followed by Prime Minister Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid Party with 24.

The Religious Zionists were a strong third with 14 seats; Benny Gantz's National Unity Party and the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party were tied at 12.

If the numbers hold up, Netanyahu would have four more seats than he needs for a government.

Because the early numbers are based on exit polls, they can change in the ensuing hours, but Likud supporters celebrated in Jerusalem as Netanyahu told the cheering crowd early Wednesday that they were "on the cusp of a huge victory."

Israelis say the most important thing to them in these elections is to come out with a government that will be able to stay in power for its full term as well as protect the country.

"That we actually get a government, and we don't have to keep voting and voting, and we get people in there that actually do their job and do what they say," one voter told CBN News.

"I hope it will be the last time. We need to stop to fighting each other and to make the decision to be together," said another voter.

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