

ISRAEL

Date of Elections: 23 July 1984

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament following premature dissolution of this body on 4 April 1984. Previous general elections had taken place in June **1981**.

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 facilities; these include 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 *Knessei* unless he has been sentenced to imprisonment of five or more years for violation of national security, where five years have not elapsed since the prison term was completed. The following people are also barred from being candidates: the President of the State; the State Comptroller; clergymen; judges; directors, auditors or legal counsels of government corporations; 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 2,500 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 500,000 *shekels*, which is returned if the list obtains at least 1 % 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 party lists having obtained at least 1 % 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 Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The *Knesset's* term was ended prematurely by the enactment of a dissolution law on 4 April 1984 because of the country's economic difficulties and the vote for dissolution by one of the governing coalition partners together with the opposition. The *Knesset's* four-year term would normally have ended in autumn 1985.

The election date had been set on 28 March. On 31 May, the election campaign was officially launched. Altogether 26 political groups fielded slates of candidates. Campaign debate centered on three main issues: the country's economic crisis (inflation, foreign debt, strikes, falling value of the national currency), the future of settlement and administration of the Israeli-occupied West Bank of the Jordan, and the costs of Israel's continued occupation of southern Lebanon. The opposition Labour-dominated Alignment, led by Mr. Shimon Peres, criticized the Government's economic policies while the right-wing governing *Likud* bloc, headed by outgoing Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir (who had replaced Mr. Menachem Begin in September 1983), attacked Labour's position on the issue of Jewish settlements on the West Bank.

Voting results left the Alignment and *Likud* parties virtually even in *Knesset* seats gained, both emerging with fewer than before. The 13 different smaller parties which achieved parliamentary representation thus appeared to hold the political balance. Following lengthy negotiations with these groups, the Alignment and *Likud* decided to join together and present a government of national unity resting on a broad coalition; this new Government received a vote of confidence from the *Knesset* on 13 September. The new Cabinet also comprised Ministers from some of the smaller parties. Under the agreement struck, Mr. Peres was to be Prime Minister and Mr. Shamir Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister; their positions are due to rotate after 25 months.

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors.	2,654,613	
Voters.	2,091,402	(78.78%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	18,081	
Valid votes.	2,073,321	

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Number of Seats	Number of Seats held at Dissolution
Alignment . . . . .	.120	724,074	34.9	44	49
<i>Likud</i> . . . . .	.120	661,302	31.9	41	46
<i>Tehiya-Zomet</i>. . . . .	.120	83,037	4.0	5	3
National Religious Party . . .	110	73,530	3.5	4	5
<i>Hadash</i>. . . . .	.120	69,815	3.4	4	4
<i>Shas</i>. . . . .	.29	63,605	3.1	4	
<i>Shinui</i>. . . . .	.120	54,747	2.6	3	
Civil Rights and Peace Move- ment . . . . .	.119	49,698	2.4	3	
<i>Yahad</i>. . . . .	.120	46,302	2.2	3	
Progressive Movement for Peace. . . . .	.120	38,012	1.8	2	
<i>Agudat Israel</i>. . . . .	.95	36,079	1.7	2	
<i>Morashah</i>. . . . .	.116	33,287	1.6	2	
<i>Tami</i>. . . . .	.120	31,103	1.5	1	
<i>Kach</i>. . . . .	.18	25,907	1.2	1	
<i>Ometz</i>. . . . .	.90	23,845	1.2	<u>1</u>	
				120	120

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

Law (including teaching)	26
Education (including university professors)	20
Economists.	12
Agriculture.	9
Journalism. I	9
Company directors and industrialists.	9
Business, secretarial and clerical.	8
Historians, authors and poets.	4
Industrial workers • • • 1.	3
Rabbis. !.	2
Others (including soldiers, diplomats and heads of local authorities).	<u>18</u>
	120

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

Men	110
Women	<u>10</u>
	120

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

30-40 years	11
40-45 »	9
45-50 »	24
50-55 »	29
55-60 »	21
Over 60 years	26
	120