



## REPERCUSSIONS OF NETANYAHU'S SIXTH GOVERNMENT ON THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

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### **Abstract:**

*The study aims to analyze the results of the Israeli 25<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections and the consequences of the presence of the far-right in Netanyahu's sixth government. The researcher applied the analytical and the foresight approaches. The researcher, therefore, analyzed the current government with its far-right political agenda in terms of controlling the Supreme Court and imposing Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank amid the international community's clear rejection.*

*The researcher concludes that the continuous shift of the Israeli society towards the right led to an extremist government, which will have its negative repercussions on the future of the Israeli society's cohesion. The study recommends that the Arab and Palestinian efforts be combined to abort the schemes of this fascist government, especially that it is met with international disapproval.*

**Keywords:** *Netanyahu's sixth government, far-right, Israel's future.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the new millennium, Israel has witnessed numerous changes at its political and party-related levels. Among the main changes are the exclusion of peaceful settlement with Palestinians from attention and interaction and the control of both the secular and religious right under the Likud over the Knesset and the government.

In Israel, parties are the essence of the political life and the center of interaction. The multiplicity of parties does not express division inside the society or ideological division in the political system. It rather expresses the goal of Israel's identity and results from the nature of a society that was formed through immigration. This probably explains the multiplicity of parties, and the ease with which parties and coalitions are formed and dissolved.

Western values and principles do not determine the partisan and political scene in Israel, but religion does. This explains the clear position of most political parties on religion; Israeli parties generally seek to explicitly reveal their religious ideology to the public. It is the religious ideology of the Israeli parties that enabled them to invite the Jews of the diaspora to immigrate to Israel.

The Israeli political system has many contradictions and complications that result from the immigration issue. Most problems that face the political system are but the result of overlooking these evident contradictions. It is clear that the more changes that occur in the population composition in Israel, the more the change in the balance among the various political parties and movements.

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### **Study Problem:**

Discussing the future of Israel raises several issues and questions. I am not about to investigate the existential future of Israel as a replacement colonization state. This study is, rather, an attempt to identify the consequences of having a right government that includes far-right parties for the first time ever. This is a contemporary situation that can have its repercussions at the medium- or long-term level. Therefore, the main question of the study is about the repercussions of the far-right



party's participation in Netanyahu's government on the future of Israel. This question leads to the following sub-questions:

- What is the composition of the ruling right coalition?
- What are the internal repercussions of the ruling right coalition on the future of Israel?
- What are the external repercussions of the ruling right coalition on the future of Israel?

#### **Study Objectives:**

- Analyzing the results of the Israeli 25<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections.
- Explaining and analyzing the components and formation of the Israeli government.
- Discussing the internal and external repercussions of the new government on the future of Israel.

#### **Study Importance:**

The study is important, as it aims to foresee the near future of Israel through explaining and analyzing a group of new phenomena that have come up during and after the formation of Netanyahu's sixth government. It is also important for foreseeing the future of Israel from an Arab, Palestinian perspective. Therefore, the study provides a primary contribution that will hopefully continue and be developed.

#### **Study Approach:**

The researcher will adopt the analytical approach to analyze the characteristics of the new phenomena to identify them on the ground. He will also apply the foresight approach to attempt to foresee the immediate future that may affect political stability in Israel.

#### **Study Axes:**

To answer the study questions and achieve its objectives, the study is divided into three main axes. The first axis reviews the literature on the partisan systems, categorizes them, and explains the position of Israel's partisan system on them. The second axis addresses the 25<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections, while the third discusses the repercussions of having a far-right government on the future of Israel. This research was conducted by the sponsorship of PALM Strategic Initiatives Centre

#### **First Axis: Literature on Partisan Systems:**

Partisan systems differ according to political systems. Partisan systems are categorized into multi-party systems, two-party systems, and one-party or dominant-party systems. Multi-party systems indicate the presence of constant and consistent coalitions among the various parties, leading to the formation of two grand fronts, each of which is composed of a number of parties that have converging political principles, objectives, and orientations. Due to the numerousness of parties, political polarity becomes apparent, as the different parties become eager to reveal their ideologies and compete against political rivals. Some parties fight over authorities against the state's official bodies. This leads to political instability and increases potential for civil war, as was the case in Spain in the thirties of the past century.<sup>1</sup> In order to understand the political system of any country, we need to know its partisan system, the relationships among the various parties, and the way the partisan system integrates into the political system as a whole.

Multi-party parliament systems are usually characterized with weak governments and evident role of the minority parties that can even strengthen the ruling party's side.<sup>2</sup> Sartori<sup>3</sup> classifies partisan systems into four types: dominant party, two-party, multi-party and extremist systems. He categorized them according to his counting rule into seven types: one-party system, totalitarian-party system, dominant-party system, two-party system, restricted multi-party system, absolute

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<sup>1</sup>-Hamdi Abdul Rahman,(2001) Partisan Systems and Political Participation, *Democracy Magazine*, Issue 4, Autumn, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Tareq Khader,( 1986) *Role of Political Parties under Parliament Systems*, Cairo: Dar Nafea , pp. 218-220.

<sup>3</sup>Sartori Giovanni,( 2005) *Parties and Party Politics: A Framework for Analysis*, UK: ECRPpress, pp. 106–113.



multi-party system, and fragmented system. Duverger,<sup>4</sup> however, categorized them into one-party, two-party, and multi-party systems. Multi-party systems are classified into polarized and moderate multi-party systems, while two-party systems are classified into strict and resilient. In addition, dominant-party systems can be regular dominant or totalitarian-dominant.<sup>5</sup> The dominant-party system is rarely observed in two-party systems, as a dominant party usually eliminates its competitor and establishes a one-party system. The name “dominant party” implies that this party predominates the parliament seats and is, therefore, always the ruling party.<sup>6</sup>

A dominant party emerges in democratic systems through elections when there is no undermining of political freedoms, arrestment of opposition, restrictions on media, or corruption in judiciary. A dominant party is characterized with:

- Obtaining the largest share of votes
- Staying in authority for long times
- Taking a central position in government formations
- Having the main objective of reaching authority
- Being deep-rooted in the state institutions
- Existing in a political system where the competing parties are small or medium-sized and do not threaten its authority.<sup>7</sup>

Criteria used to divide the Israeli partisan political map can be classified into ethnic, religious, and ideological. According to ethnicity, parties are divided into Jewish and Arab, western Ashkenazi that express western Jews, eastern Sephardic parties that express eastern Jews, parties that express Russian Jews, and parties that express Ethiopian Jews. According to religion, parties are either religious or secular; and according to ideology, parties are either right or left. Israeli parties are characterized with splits and alliances, especially before elections, to improve parties’ chances of exceeding threshold or obtaining more seats, and thus increasing their chances of joining the coalition of the ruling party that is formed after the elections. Therefore, none of the parties can obtain the absolute majority of 61 seats at the Knesset, which explains the ongoing state of political and partisan instability in Israel.

## **Second Axis: Composition of Netanyahu’s Sixth Government**

### **First: The 25<sup>th</sup> Knesset Elections**

The 25<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections were conducted on November 1, 2022. The elections are the fifth within the past four years, as none of the government coalitions formed during this period was able to complete its four-year term according to the Knesset rules. Reasons included ideological, political, and personal conflicts among the parties of the Knesset or the parties of the ruling coalition. The elections were held in a distressed internal environment.

#### **– Elections Environment:**

1. The Israeli right was able to predominate the Israeli political arena after more than 20 years of swinging between the right and the left passing through the centrist (1984-2009). For instance, Netanyahu led the dominant Israeli right bloc that has constantly won between 2009 and 2021 and managed to form consecutive governments under the Likud. The dominance of the far right in Israel leads to overlooking all issues related to the Palestinians, especially peaceful settlement.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Maurice Duverger,( 1964) *Political Parties, The Organization and Activity in the Modern State* ,London: Methuen, p. 217.

<sup>5</sup>Su’ad Ash-Sharqawi,(2005) *Political Parties* , Cairo: Cairo University Publications, p 242.

<sup>6</sup>Abu Zaid, Adel Al-Qadi,( 2018) Systems and Functions of Multipartyism, *Political Studies*, Egyptian Institute for Studies, Istanbul: August, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup>Muhannad Mustafa,( 2015) Israeli Parliament Elections 2015, Towards the Formation of a Dominant System, *Siyasat Arabiya Magazine*, Issue 14, May, p. 35

<sup>8</sup>As’aad Ghanem,( 2019) The Knesset Elections and the Horizons of Change, *The Institute for Palestinian Studies*, Issue 118, Spring, p. 91.

2. The Israeli 36<sup>th</sup> government under Bennett-Lapid was dissolved upon internal conflicts among the government members, especially the members of Yamina party. The conflicts revealed problems in the structure of the Israeli political system, perhaps the main of which is the crisis of forming sustainable governments that usually bring together the whole political spectrum from right to Arab parties. Such governments are usually subject to blackmail by the small parties.<sup>9</sup>
3. Netanyahu is the strongest personality in the Israeli political system, but he faces multiple obstacles. He is suspected by the judicial system, as he was repeatedly interrogated for corruption suspicions, known as files 1000, 2000, and 4000. The charges included accepting bribes from Jewish businessmen in exchange of tax exemptions. Another charge was the involvement of his relatives in the “German-submarine affair”. In the three charges, there are testimonies given under oath against Netanyahu, which may surprise Netanyahu at court and lead to punitive measures that might reach a prison sentence or at least considerable fines.<sup>10</sup>
4. The right also suspect Netanyahu and perceive him as a pragmatic who is driven by national considerations rather than the religious, Jewish creed. His willingness to form a partnership with the United Arab List in 2021 comes to support these suspicions.
5. Polarities arise in the Israeli society among the religious currents and between the religious and secular currents. Conflict in the Israeli society is apparent among Jews over various matters, especially democracy and the relationship between religion and the state. Essential conflicts among parties revolve around the settlement of the Arab-Zionist conflict and the identity of the state (whether it should be secular or religious).<sup>11</sup>
6. The influence of the religious Zionism on the Israeli public space is because the Israeli youth increasingly join the army, especially the military elite units. Therefore, they get high military ranks. One of these is Yair Naveh, who assumed the position of Deputy Chief of the General Staff.<sup>12</sup>

#### Elections Results:

Forty lists participated in the elections. The number is almost always the same in the Israeli elections, but most lists do not exceed the threshold of (3.25%). Most of the lists get minimal votes (a few hundreds or thousands). Candidates on these lists usually seek fame or try to exploit the time they are given on the official media to deliver political or societal messages.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> elections, the number of voters was about 6,788,804, among whom 590 thousand people have either immigrated or permanently moved out of Israel but have an Israeli citizenship.<sup>13</sup> The general voting percentage in the last elections was 70.63%, rising from 67.4% in the elections of March 2021.<sup>14</sup> Half of the increase is attributed to the increase in voting percentage among Arabs (from 43.5% in the elections of 2021 to 55.5% in the elections of 2022). The percentage of voting Jews also increased to 73.4%.<sup>15</sup>

Surprisingly, in the 25<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections, the religious blocs representing the Zionist religious, and the Haredi Jews obtained 30% of the Jewish votes (compared with 27% in the elections of 2021). The religious Jewish party Shas, which is composed of eastern Haredi Jews, obtained 24.4% more votes than it had obtained in 2021.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Heba Jamal Al-Din,( 2015) Early Israeli Elections, *Afaq Seyaseya* (Political Horizons) Journal, Issue 19, p. 51.

<sup>10</sup>As'aad Ghanem, Op.Cit., p. 92.

<sup>11</sup>Walid Abdul Haii,( 2022) Future of Political Stability in Israel in 2030, *Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies, Beirut*: September, p. 506.

<sup>12</sup>Antoine Shalhah,( 2022) Israeli Right Forms Knesset Majority, *Israeli Scene*, Madar Center, 06/11/.

<sup>13</sup> Knesset website: <https://votes25.bechirrot.gov.il/nationalresults>

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Barhoum Gracie,(2022) Religious Parties Obtaining 30% of the Israeli Votes, *Israeli Scene*, Madar Center. Issue 557, 21/11/.

The religious Zionist current entered the elections with two lists; “Religious Zionism”, who got 14 seats (compared with only six in the elections of 2021), and “The Jewish Home-Yamina”, who had gotten seven seats in the elections of 2021 but had not crossed the Knesset’s threshold for entry. Led by Ayelet Shaked, The Jewish Home had obtained 1.2% of the votes. The two lists combined obtained 14.8% more votes.<sup>17</sup>

Yesh Atid and Blue and White, Labor and Meretz obtained 31.24% of the votes in 2021 and 33.71% of the votes in the late elections. The 25<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections have terminated, at least at the parliament level, the parties of the so-called Zionist left represented in Meretz party, which has been in a survival struggle since the 2006-elections when its representation regressed dramatically from one of the top three parties established in 1992 to a party with only three seats at the Knesset. The Labor party, which had exclusively ruled Israel during the first 29 years of its establishment, obtained about 176 thousand votes, the lowest representation since the first elections in 1949, granting it only four seats.<sup>18</sup>

The Arab parties remain to be represented by 10 seats in the Knesset. The United Arab List under Mansour Abbas obtained the highest number of votes (194 thousand, of which 53 thousand were from Negev towns). The list obtained five seats. The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Hadash) under Ayman Odeh obtained about 179 thousand votes, granting them five seats at the Knesset. Balad party under Sami Abu Shehadeh obtained a little over 138 thousand votes, which would have granted them more than three seats at the Knesset, but they did not cross the threshold.<sup>19</sup> The following table shows the votes and seats obtained by the winning parties at the 25<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections.

**Table (1) Distribution of seats to the winning parties at the 25<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections:**

Party	Number of votes	Percentage of votes	Number of seats
Likud	1115336	%23.41	32
Religious Zionism	516470	%10.84	14
Shas	392964	%8.25	11
Yahadut HaTora (United Torah Judaism)	280194	%5.88	7
Yesh Atid (There is Future)	847435	%17.79	24
State Camp	432482	%9.08	12
Yisrael Beiteinu Israel Our Home	213687	%4.48	6
Labor Party	175992	%3.69	4
United Arab List	194047	%4.07	5
Hadash and Ta'al (Arab Movement for Change)	17873	%3.75	5

Source: Central Elections Committee: <https://votes25.bechirrot.gov.il>

<sup>17</sup>Barhoum Gracie,(2022) 25<sup>th</sup> Knesset Elections, *Israeli Scene*, Issue 555, Madar Center, 6/11/.

<sup>18</sup>Ori Wertman and Meir Elran,(2022) The Israeli Electorate from the Perspective of the 22 Elections, *Inss Insight*, No. 1664, 01/12/.

<sup>19</sup>Ephraim Lavie, and others,(2022) Arab Society in Israel and the Elections to the 25<sup>th</sup> Knesset, *Inss Insight*, No 1661,Nov 20.

### Analysis of the Results

The table shows regression of the left-centrist and the left in Israel. There is an evident orientation by the Israeli society towards the right, carrying more changes such as racism, hatred, and disregard to the law.

- Netanyahu managed to be re-elected after he had unified the right including Likud, Religious Zionism, and Haredim and unified the far right including Religious Zionism under Smotrich, Jewish Power under Itamar Ben-Gvir, and Noam under Avi Maoz. He also eliminated Yamina-Jewish Home.<sup>20</sup>
- Netanyahu's new role as Head of Government is not easy, especially that the government has extremist, fascist orientations. Therefore, he will put up with blackmail throughout the coalition period. This means that Netanyahu will be a prime minister that is incapable of forcing his decisions on his ministers, as he formed alliances with small parties with many roles and demands. In addition, Netanyahu needs a majority at the Knesset in order to keep his government in authority.<sup>21</sup>
- The elections results show that Netanyahu's right-wing parties, which he called the right-wing bloc, obtained 58% of the votes and occupied (64) seats at the Knesset in addition to the share of The Jewish Home that did not cross the threshold. This indicates a massive majority of the right-wing parties in the Israeli society, obtaining 68% of the active votes in the Israeli society.<sup>22</sup>

The main factor of success of Netanyahu's Camp was reinforcing the power of the Religious Zionism Party, whose seats increased from six in the elections of 2021 to 14 in the recent elections, marking a historical achievement for Religious Zionism. In addition, Shas obtained 11 seats, more representation than he has received in 15 years. Yahadut HaTora maintained its election power with seven seats.<sup>23</sup>

### Second: Composition of the New Government Coalition

#### 1- Coalition Negotiations:

Netanyahu was shocked by his partners in the right-wing bloc, as they blackmailed him and the Likud as never before in the Israeli policy. The coalition negotiation lasted two months, and Netanyahu could not finish the formation of his government in the first period. This proves that the coalition negotiations are difficult. It is clear that there is severe struggle on the ministerial portfolios. For instance, the Religious Zionism demanded a number of authoritative ministries such as the Ministries of Defense and Finance in addition to presence in the State Security Cabinet.<sup>24</sup>

The size of the current coalition agreement wordings is unprecedented in the Israeli government, especially for the agreements of the Religious Zionism and the Otzma Yehudit blocs, which included numerous and specific details. The coalition agreements focused on:

- Attempting to annex the West Bank on the ground. This was stated in Article 118 of the agreement with the Religious Zionism.
- Accelerating and intensifying the Judaization of Negev and Galilee and offering incentives to the Jews to live in these regions; establishing 14 settlements and one central city in the Negev desert and one large settlement in Galilee.
- Imposing religious regulations and restrictions on the public life, especially the education system and cultural programs.<sup>25</sup>

### The Government Composition

This second largest government in the history of Israel is composed of 30 ministers and 10 deputy ministers. This large number comes to please the parties that have joined the government

<sup>20</sup>Mohammed Armin Karbeet,(2023) *Israeli Electing Votes' Orientation towards Religious and Political Right* , Bagdad: Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup>Mtanes Shehadeh,( 2022) *25<sup>th</sup> Knesset Elections*, Haifa: Mada Al-Carmel, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup>Muhannad, Mostafa,(2023) *Reading in the 25<sup>th</sup> Knesset Elections*, Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Center, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup>Barhoum Gracie(2022) *Netanyahu's New Government, Special Report*, Madar Center.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid, p. 5.



coalition. Netanyahu also had to distribute many ministerial portfolios to his party members to please them or reward them for their loyalty. He also punished the ones who attempted to succeed him through giving them insignificant ministries or excluding them altogether.<sup>26</sup> The following table shows the number of ministers and deputy ministers of the new coalition:

**Table 2 Distribution of Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and Cabinet members to the coalition:**

Party	Minister	Deputy	Cabinet Members
Likud	18	2	8
Shas	5	2	1
Yahadut HaTora	1	2	0
Religious Zionism	3	1	1
Otzma Yehudit	3	2	1
Noam	0	1	0

- The table is prepared by the researcher.  
The 37<sup>th</sup> Israeli government received Knesset's trust by a majority of 63 members (as opposed to other 54 members). The new Israeli government is characterized with:
  1. Presence of extremists in authority. Some were considered terrorists and listed on the Shin Bet lists and have now assumed senior ministerial offices with strategic effect on the Palestinian cause.
  2. The judicial revolution, or the so-called judicial reform. It includes the override clause that allows the Knesset to enforce laws rejected by the court with a majority of 61 Knesset members and enables changing judges. As such, the clause grants the politicians greater authority in selecting the judges. It also includes the abolition of the "unreasonableness" grounds that allowed the judiciary to intervene and cancel rules due to their unreasonableness.<sup>27</sup>

## 2- Problems with the Government:

- Netanyahu assigned the Knesset member of Likud, David Amsalem, in three ministerial positions three weeks after the government had been formed. These are additional minister in the Ministry of Justice, Minister for Regional Cooperation, and Liaison Minister between the Government and the Knesset. His appointment came after he had viciously attacked Netanyahu, accusing him of preferring the Ashkenazi to the eastern Jews when selecting government members.
- The Supreme Court of Justice in Israel refused Aryeh Deri as Minister, forcing Netanyahu to reach an agreement with him to dismiss him from his posts as Minister of Health and Interior.
- The Ministry of Defense witnessed conflict between three ministers over the distribution of authorities by virtue of the coalition agreements. For instance, Gallant was appointed as Minister of Defense, while Smotrich was appointed Minister at the Ministry of Defense, such that he be responsible for settlement and civil administration, including the planning and construction entities that are usually under the authority of the Minister of Defense. Ben Gvir undertook the responsibility of national guard forces while they are active in the West Bank. This means that while these forces are active, they are under the authority of the Ministry of Defense, but while in Israel, they are supervised by the Head of Police.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Political Studies Unit, Policy Map of the Most Extreme Government in Israeli History, *Situation Assessment*, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, Doha: 09/01/2023.

<sup>27</sup>Honeida Ghanem,(2022) The New Far-Right in Israel, *Qadaya Magazine*, Madar Center, Issue 88, Winter, p. 86.

<sup>28</sup>Barhoum Gracie, Netanyahu's Government Shocked by the Crises of Appointing Deri as Minister, *Israeli Scene*, Issue 565, Madar Center, 23/01/2023.

- Prime Minister Netanyahu dismissed Gallant from his post as Minister of Defense on 26/03/2023 after the latter had held a press conference to demand stopping the judicial reform plan. As Netanyahu could not enforce the dismissal of Gallant upon the security developments in Israel, Netanyahu's status in the political scene was compromised.

### Third Axis: Repercussions of Netanyahu's Government's Policies on the Future of Israel

The results of the Israeli elections are the beginning of changes that may be further deepened in the political and partisan map in Israel. The prominent feature of this change is the presence of the fascist right in the executive authorities, which indicates continued right-wing control over the Israeli political arena and continued protest against the legal changes and projects on the Knesset's agenda. This has its consequences at both the internal policies level and the level of struggle with the Palestinians.

#### I- Internal Repercussions of the Governing Coalition's Policies:

The coalition agreements increased concerns about the future of seculars in Israel, due to the religious strictness and extremism and political extremism. The formation of the government rose objections against assigning the political and religious extremist Avy Maoz, head of Noam party, in charge of the extracurricular activities file in the Ministry of Education through appointing him as deputy minister in the President of the Government's office. The objection is attributed to Moaz' strict positions against the secular.<sup>29</sup>

Such initiatives are no longer exclusive to the religious parties. For instance, the Minister of Culture and Sport from the Likud party, Miki Zohar, proposed an initiative demanding the cancelation of cultural activities on Saturdays, which contributes to turning Israel into a religious state.<sup>30</sup>

#### • Judicial Reforms

The judicial reforms file is probably the most critical one at the level of the internal Israeli conflict. It is unanimously accepted by the coalition to limit the authorities of the Supreme Court, but this receives wide rejection by the Israeli street, the judiciary, the former legal consultants to the government, judicial experts and specialists, and the rights parties and associations. The rightists' ideological position on the Supreme Court is that it represents an obstacle that hinders the execution of their political and electoral projects. This idea has become an important element of the rightists' speech in the past few years, so the judicial reform is not any less important to them than the settlement project in the West Bank.

The Israeli Minister of Defense, Yariv Levin, announced a comprehensive, large-scale reform plan in the legal system and the judicial structure in Israel. He divides the aspired changes into four main fields:

1. Restricting the Supreme Court's Capability of canceling government laws and decisions. This will require a body of all 15 judges of the Supreme Court with special majority. There would also be the override law that will enable the Knesset to re-legislate such laws, should they be cancelled with a 61-Knesset-member majority.
2. Changing the judge selection process to grant the current government effective authority on the judge selection committee.
3. Preventing the Supreme Court from applying the reasonableness test to judge the government's decisions and legislations.
4. Allowing ministers to appoint their own legal consultants instead of appointing consultants that are supervised by the Ministry of Justice and the government's legal consultant. This turns these posts into political ones.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Antoine Shalhat, Upon Moving More Coalition Agreements under the Spotlight, *Israeli Scene*, Issue 562, Madar Center, 26/12/2022.

<sup>30</sup>Barhoum Gracie, Netanyahu's New Government..., Op.Cit, p. 6.

<sup>31</sup>Antoine Shalhat, Levin's Plan to Reform the Judicial System, *Israeli Scene*, Madar Center, Issue 563, 09/01/2023.



Levin's plan is drastic to change the rule in Israel, as it grants the coalition majority absolute power. The ruling coalition will have control over the public authorities, while the ability to observe the application of the law or prevent corruption will be minimized. It is evident that in the democratic world, the Israeli model is indeed the weakest democratic model in terms of balance and restraints.

- **Repercussions of the Ruling Coalition on Settlement with the Palestinians:**

The elections results came in favor of the right-wing parties that deny the rights of the Palestinian people and reject political settlement. The elections results prove that the Palestinians do not have an Israeli partner to peaceful settlement. The right-wing parties' statements indicate negative steps towards the Palestinian Authority, while the coalition agreements include escalation steps against the Palestinian Authority to fight its political orientations against Israel.<sup>32</sup>

The current coalition exhibits unanimous agreement on the position on the West Bank. It seems to attempt to issue a set of special laws regarding the annexation of the West Bank. One of the coalition agreement articles states that the "Jewish people" has the right to seize control over the entire land of Israel, which leads to issuing laws that reinforce settlement. The first of these was on 09/01/2023 through effecting the law of extending the work under emergency regulations, known as the apartheid law, that apply the Israeli law on the West Bank lands.

A law has been passed to legalize dozens of settler outposts and turn them into full settlements. Suppression of the Palestinian people has never been worse. There is an agreement in the coalition to legislate laws for executing Palestinian resistance members. The law is present but needs unanimous approval by the three military judges followed by approval by the military leader. The law was passed in preliminary reading in 2017, but the legal consultation teams for the government, the Ministry of Justice, and the Knesset stood against it. Therefore, its legislation path had been interrupted.<sup>33</sup>

Another law enables revoking the Israeli citizenship or identity from any Palestinian resistance activist convicted by the occupation court under the so-called Counter-Terrorism Act in the Israeli legislation and receives allocations from the Palestinian Authority. The file of Al-Quds and Masjid Al-Aqsa remains a crucial one that affects everyday events. The Religious Zionism current blocs and Likud members are for allowing prayers in the Haram yards.<sup>34</sup> It seems that changing the status quo in Al-Quds will lead to confrontations not only with the Palestinians, but with Jordan as well.

On the other hand, Smotrich's plan to seize control of the West Bank lands is based on the belief that the sea and the river should border but one state, the State of Israel, whose legality relies on the divine right. His plan gives the Palestinians three options: leaving the state, living in subjugation according to alleged Jewish rule, or fighting back, in which case the army will know what to do.<sup>35</sup>

The right-wing's acts aim to change the features of Israel in reliance on the excess power it now owns and cause gradual shift of the entire political, partisan map towards the right. This clearly reflects in the right's practices in the occupied lands of 1967.

## **II- External Repercussions of the Ruling Coalition's Policies:**

External repercussions that may face the new government lie at two main levels:

The first challenge is fear from worsening of relations between the Jews and Arabs inside Israel and the possible outcomes of the government's tolerance with the settlers and intolerance with the Palestinians in the West Bank. The Israeli position on the holy places of Al-Quds will also be exposed, which may lead to clashes in the West Bank and Al-Quds and consequently violence in the

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<sup>32</sup>Mohammed Armin Karbeet, Op.Cit,p.8.

<sup>33</sup>Barhoum Gracie, How Stable is the New Government?, *the Israeli Scene*, Madar Center, Issue 564, 16/01/2023.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Bezalel Smotrich,( 2017) The Decisive Plan is the Right's Key to Success, *Hashiloach*, Issue 6, (in Hebrew), <https://bit.ly/3wLmpFJ>.

Arab street in Israel, and eventually violent clashes in and outside the mixed cities. An Israeli civil war may even erupt due to conflict over the occupied lands.<sup>36</sup>

The second challenge that will reflect on Israel's national security is related to the position of the US Administration on the practical sense of having the Religious Zionism as an essential political component of the coalition, as this can affect the special relations with Biden's Administration and with the Jewish community in the United States.<sup>37</sup>

In the Israeli context, the widespread distress can harm the national resilience; causing political, social, or economic crises or other conflict scenarios.<sup>38</sup>

- **The United States and the Jews of the United States:**

The Netanyahu Government's attempt to make wide amendments in the judicial system led to an uncommon disagreement with the United States. The response started with advice during meetings with Israeli officials, but were then publicly declared as Netanyahu is determined to continue with his reformation plan. On his visit to Israel in January 2023, the US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, declared his criticism of the plan. Afterwards, President Biden publicly criticized the plan on 19/03/2023. The crisis with the US Administration was further complicated when Netanyahu dismissed Gallant from his post as Minister of Defense in late March 2023. Such crisis is not welcomed by the Israeli public, who consider the relationships with the US as one of the main pillars of Israel's power. Therefore, Netanyahu had to announce on 27/03/2023 postponing the decision regarding the amendments plan. His announcement was not sufficient to satisfy the Americans, as the White House used a more decisive tone and demanded the Israeli government to dismiss its reform plan entirely.<sup>39</sup>

On the other hand, there is a clear disparity in the relationship of the Jews of the United States with Israel in terms of the Jewish religion matters and the political aspects. The majority of the US Jews believe that Israel violates human rights.<sup>40</sup> The main determinants for the Jews of the US towards what happens in Israel are summarized as follows:

1. It is naïf to take the support of the US Jews to Israel for granted. This is more evident as the Israeli society is shifted towards the right, while the Jewish community in the US are shifting in the opposite direction.
2. Most Jews in the United States belong to the reform and conservative currents and support the democratic parties.
3. The increased authority of the right-wing parties and the Haredim weakens the ties between the Jews of the US and Israel.
4. The Jewish solidarity that united the "Jewish people" is weakened.<sup>41</sup>

The tension in the relationship between the Jews of the United States and Israel deepens the division with democracy. Therefore, Israel under Netanyahu will face a serious problem, if democratic president and congress are elected in the United States.<sup>42</sup> The tension is currently evident in the United States' rejection of meeting with members of the Religious Zionism or inviting Prime Minister Netanyahu to visit the United States and in the United States' explicit rejection of the judicial reforms plan in Israel.

## 5. The Arab World (Normalization)

<sup>36</sup> Walid Abdul Haii,(2020) *Future of Israel in Non-Arab Foresight Studies*, , Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Center ,September, p. 3.

<sup>37</sup>- OriWertman and Meir Elran,( 2022) The Israeli Electorate from the Perspective of the 22 Elections, *INSS Insight* ,No.1664,December,1,.

<sup>38</sup>Meir Elram, Mora Deitch,( 2023) Israels JudicialReblution Social Resilience and National Security, *INSS Insight* 1692 Feb 27.

<sup>39</sup>Political Studies Unit, Crisis of the US-Israeli Relations: The Judicial Reform Plan in Israel, *Situation Assessment*, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, Doha, 06/04/2023

<sup>40</sup> Antoine Shalhat, Israel and the Jews of the United States, *The Israeli Scene*, Madar Center, Issue 556, 14/11/2022.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

Some Israeli analysts warn about the consequences of the current government's misunderstanding of the Arab countries' positions, especially on the unilateral steps that might be taken against the Palestinians before resuming the construction of settlements or any large-scale security operations against the Palestinians, as such acts may result in serious threat to the expected relationship network with the Arab countries that signed Abraham Accords.<sup>43</sup> This contradicts the normalization concept sought by Israel which grants a Middle Eastern environment that is heading towards development and prosperity. It is for this normalization that new values, such as trade interests that require ending the boycott against Israel, are being regionally deep-rooted.<sup>44</sup>

The Arab countries that had signed Abraham Accords condemned Ben Gvir's short visit to Al-Aqsa compound, leading to postponing Netanyahu's visit to the United Arab Emirates that was decided in the first week on January 2023. The postponement was explained as a protest against Ben Gvir's provocative step. However, this did not withhold the working groups from convening for preparation (the Negev Forum that was held in Abu Dhabi on 11/01/2023).<sup>45</sup>

Netanyahu makes no effort to conceal his desire to build relations with Kingdom Saudi Arabia and sign a peace treaty with the Kingdom. He explicitly expresses that the agreements with Saudi Arabia are an essential objective that he seeks to achieve in his current term. Normalization with Saudi Arabia will encourage some Arab and Islamic countries to establish relations with Israel.<sup>46</sup> In addition, continuous official normalization waves with Israel will create a more convenient environment that brings better chances of continued improvement of the stability level in Israel.<sup>47</sup>

The Israelis believe that Netanyahu's ambition to reach a normalization agreement with Saudi Arabia, which set the condition of establishing a Palestinian state as have the UAE and Bahrain in 2020, as a sign of moderation and self-control. The right also see that Netanyahu's efforts to achieve normalization with Saudi Arabia will suspend the plans of annexing the West Bank in exchange for normalization.<sup>48</sup>

### Conclusion

Netanyahu's sixth government is the most far-right ever, as evident from the signed coalition agreements among the powers participating in the government coalition. It is clear that the new right-wing coalition is aiming to control the political life in Israel and move from a dominant-party to a totalitarian-party state.

The attempt to transform from a dominant-party to a totalitarian-party state will create more conflicts at the internal and external levels. It is clear that at the internal level, demonstrations will continue to express rejection of the judicial reform process which indicates that Israel is heading towards a constitutional, political, and social crisis between the government and the state. This is likely to develop into internal division. The Palestinian cause and the settlement process are clearly marginalized through extensive settlement and legislation of settlement outposts to seize control of the West Bank.

Israeli interactions with the US, the Jews of the diaspora, and the Arab normalizing states have proved rejection of the current government's orientations, which will compromise the relationships between Israel and the western countries that defend democracy, independent judiciary, liberal values, and minorities' rights. None of the Arab countries received far-right members of the Israeli government. The Arab normalizing countries also refused the Israeli government's plans regarding the Palestinian lands, especially the temporal and spatial division of Masjid Al-Aqsa. It is clear,

<sup>43</sup> Randa Haidar, How Will Israel's Far-Right Government Affect Normalization and Relations with Arab Countries? *News and Analyses*, Institute of Palestine Studies, 30/1/2023.

<sup>44</sup> Ephraim Lavie, and others, (2022) Arab Society in Israel and the Elections to the 25<sup>th</sup> Knesset, *Inss Insight*, No. 166 1, 20/11/.

<sup>45</sup> Randa Haidar, Op. cit.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Walid Abdul Haij, Future of Stability..., Op.Cit, p. 12.

<sup>48</sup> Lee Lee Galilee, What Happens in Israel is not a Change of Government but of the Entire System, *Noon Post*, 31/12/2022

<https://www.noonpost.com/index.php/content/46178>

then, that the Israeli government's internal and external orientations have their negative repercussions on Israel. It is also evident that instability will be the main characteristic of Netanyahu's sixth government.

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