
The Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation

Survey of the Arab Public in Advance of the 2019 Elections Predicts Sharp Decline in Arab Votership and the Weakening of Arab Parties

An in-depth survey conducted among a representative sample of the Arab electorate in Israel reveals:

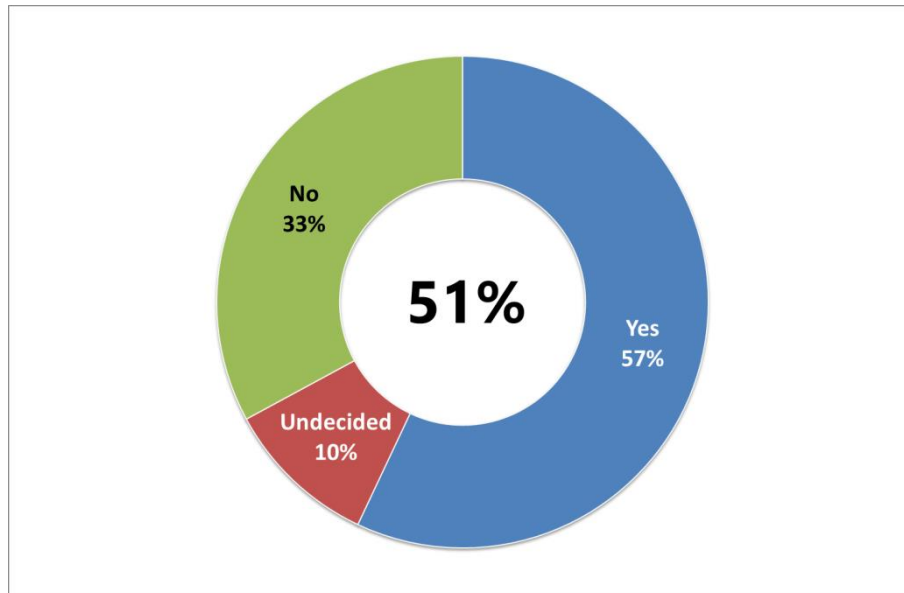
- The percentage of Arabs who will vote in the 2019 elections is expected to decrease to an unprecedented low of 51%, a significant decrease from the 2015 elections, in which Arab voter turnout was 64%.
- Hadash-Ta'al is expected to win 6 to 7 seats in the Knesset; Ra'am-Balad is expected to win 4 to 5 seats.
- Surprisingly, the Blue and White party gained the support of 9% percent of the Arab public, while the Jewish party with the most support from the Arab sector is Meretz, with 10.3%.
- Most important issues for the Arab public include a government program to eradicate violence and crime in Arab society, the struggle over building regulations in Arab localities, and the repeal or amendment of the Nation-State Law.

How Many Arab Citizens Will Vote?

According to the survey findings, 57% of respondents stated that they intend to vote on election day, 33% answered that they do not intend to vote, and 10% were yet undecided. Weighing these responses against past experience with similar polls, 51% of Arab citizens are expected to vote in the upcoming elections.

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Will You Vote in the Upcoming Elections?



The survey findings point to a significant decrease in the percentage in voter turnout of Arab citizens as compared with the previous elections in 2015, which saw the establishment of the Joint List and a turnout rate of 63.5% amongst the Arab population. The survey predicts in the upcoming Elections Arab voting rates will return to the average level of the decade that preceded the establishment of the Joint List – 55.4% – or perhaps even lower.

However, it should be taken into account that the data was collected four weeks in advance of the elections. Past experience shows that voter turnout tends to be a bit higher in actuality; as the day of the election draws nearer, political parties are expected to increase their efforts to mobilize the Arab public to vote.

Why vote? 66% of survey respondents reported that their main reason for voting is their desire to exercise their civil right to vote and to see their candidates elected. Other respondents (21%) replied that the more Arab citizens vote, the greater the number of representatives they'll have in the Knesset. Only 6% of survey participants believe that participating in the elections expresses belief in the Knesset members who represent the Arab public.

Why refrain from voting? The most common reason cited for not voting (50.5%) is simple: "I have no interest in politics". Other survey participants (19%) stated that there was no party that represented them. Only 12.4%

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connected their decision to refrain from voting to the dissolution of the Joint List, and 10% of respondents said they intend to boycott the elections for ideological reasons.

These findings demonstrate the depth of political apathy present in Arab society, a phenomena which is also common (though to a lesser extent) in Israeli society as a whole.

Appraisal of Representatives' Effectivity in the Knesset

In light of the crises between the four founding components of the Joint List this past year, which eventually led to the List's dissolution and the establishment of two smaller political partnerships – Hadash-Ta'al and Ra'am-Balad – the survey respondents were asked to give their opinion on the performance of Joint List MKs from the outgoing Knesset.

It appears that the majority of the Arab public does not judge Arab Knesset members' performance harshly: 57% rated their performance positively while 42% gave a negative assessment of their performance (of which 24% rated their performance as "very poor"). However, the Arab public views the dissolution of the Joint List as a negative sign that attests to division and lack of coordination and effectiveness, and not necessarily as a positive sign of political pluralism. Nearly 60% of the survey respondents agree that the political influence of Arab parties in the next Knesset will decrease because there will not be coordination between them. Only 32% agree with a counter-argument that the party's division into two independent lists will actually afford the Arab factions more freedom of action.

At the same time, 64% of respondents believe that the political influence of the Arab political parties will not change, because in any case its influence was never pronounced. 61% believe that whether or not they end up having political influence or not, the main issue is that the founding parties of the Joint List will continue to be represented in the upcoming Knesset.

In spite of the low rate of expected voter turnout, the depth of political apathy, and the crises among Arab Knesset members, it appears that the Arab public is unwilling to give up on the Knesset as an arena for political struggle.

The percentage of respondents who agree with the statement "The Knesset is a relevant political arena for Arab citizens" stands at 63.7%, and an additional 12.6% of respondents believe that even if the Knesset is not necessarily

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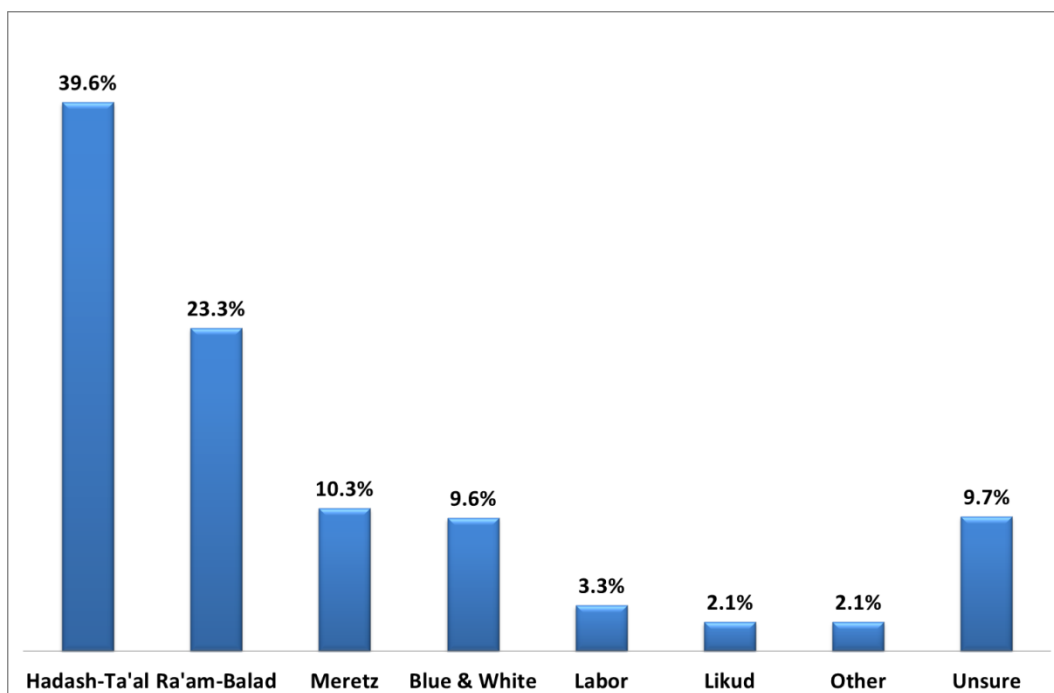
relevant, they still should not give up on it. Conversely, a sizable portion (20%) of respondents believe that the Knesset has ceased to be a relevant political arena and that it's possible to give up on it.

To whom will Arab Citizens Give Their Support?

An examination of the voting intentions (from amongst the 57% of respondents who indicated that they plan to vote) yielded the following results:

The two political partnerships between the four former Joint List parties are expected to collectively take 63% of the Arab vote, with Hadash-Ta'al receiving 39.6% and Ra'am Balad receiving 23.3%. This is a considerable decrease in comparison with the percentage of Arab votes cast for the Joint List in the last parliamentary cadence – 82%.

The survey data predicts that Arab voter turnout on election day will be 51%, and when taking into consideration that the national turnout rate will be 70%, both Arab parties are likely to pass the threshold for entry to the Knesset: Hadash-Ta'al is expected to win 6 to 7 seats and Ra'am-Balad is expected to win 4 to 5 seats. It is possible to estimate that the combined force of the two Arab lists in the next Knesset will be 10 to 11 seats.



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Meretz is on track to be the largest Jewish party in the Arab arena with 10.3% of the vote. A possible reason for this is the placement of a Muslim Arab and a Druze in the fourth and fifth seats on the party's list, spaces which would guarantee realistic representation in the next Knesset. On the other hand, the most surprising revelation of the poll is the Blue and White party's anticipated capture of 9.6% of the Arab vote (mainly among the Druze with 57%).

Other Jewish parties that will win nominal support from the Arab public are the Labor Party (3.3%) and the Likud (2.1%).

What Are the Issues on the Arab Public's Political Agenda?

All survey respondents (including those who said they did not intend to vote) were asked to indicate the most important issues for Arab Knesset members to address in the next parliament.

The responses raise three matters that the Arab public finds most pressing: the eradication of violence and crime in Arab society (27%), attempts to regulate so-called "illegal structures" in Arab localities (22%), and the struggle to repeal or amend the Nation-State Law (20%).

Another important standing issue for the Arab public is the improvement of relations between Arab and Jewish citizens (16%).

Only 10% of respondents believe that there is a need to consolidate a new economic development plan similar to the Five-Year Plan (Government Resolution 922) from 2016-2020, which allocated an unprecedented budget of 11 billion shekels to the Arab population. An even smaller percentage of respondents (less than 4%) believe that Arab Knesset members should work to strengthen the tie with the Palestinian Authority.

Issue	% Support
Eradication of crime and violence in Arab society	26.8%
Legalization of so-called "illegal structures" in Arab localities	21.7%
Struggle to change or repeal the Nation-State Law	19.6%
Improvement of Arab-Jewish relations	15.7%
Consolidation of a new economic plan similar to 922	9.6%
Strengthening the connection with the Palestinian Authority	3.6%
Other/Unsure	3.0%

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Should the Arab parties provide outside support to the coalition? The Arab public is divided on whether or not the Arab factions should participate in a bloc that would support the government from outside the coalition. Most of the respondents (57%) believe that the Arab parties should not serve as a fig leaf for the government by supporting the coalition from outside (16% of respondents wholly reject this premise). Conversely, 40% of respondents believe that the Arab parties must provide the government support from outside the coalition, of which 21% of such respondents are fully convinced of this necessity.

What should be the conditions for the support of the Arab factions?

From amongst those who support such a move, 28% believed that the necessary condition would be the amendment or cancellation of the Nation-State Law, 25% thought support should be extended upon the assurance of development budgets for Arab settlements, and 23% demand legalization of “illegal structures” in Arab locales. Only 9% staked support of Arab factions in the coalition upon the advancement of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

This survey was conducted by the Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation, which operates on behalf of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University.

The survey was conducted through the Yafa Survey Institute under the management of Dr. Aas Atrash. The data was collected from March 12, 2019 to March 16, 2019, with a representative sample of the adult Arab population in Israel (age 18 and above). The sample included 506 respondents. Margin of error is 5%.

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