



ARAB POLITICS IN ISRAEL AND THE 17TH KNESSET ELECTIONS

Editor: Dr. Elie Rekhess

22 March 2006

Table of contents

Arab turnout since the establishment of the State of Israel	2
Arab vote in the last four elections – comparative view	3
Public Opinion Survey in the Arab Sector, November 2005	4
<i>Projected voting turnout</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Voting trends in the Arab sector – projected results of 2006 Elections. . .</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Passing the threshold</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>The Question of a Unified Arab Party</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>The Islamic Movement</i>	<i>5</i>
Number of Arab and Druze MKs in the last four Knessets	6
Candidates of the major Arab Parties in the 2006 Elections	6

Dr. Elie Rekhess is a senior research fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies and the Director of the Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation at Tel-Aviv University. He also serves as a Senior Academic Consultant to the Abraham Fund Initiatives.

Contact us: relie@post.tau.ac.il or arabpol@post.tau.ac.il (office)

A. Arab turnout since the establishment of the State of Israel¹

Year of Elections	Percentage of Arab eligible voters	Percentage of Arab vote	Nationwide percentage vote
1949 (Knesset 1)	9.5	69.3	86.9
1951 (Knesset 2)	11.6	85.5	75.1
1955 (Knesset 3)	9.0	91.0	82.8
1959 (Knesset 4)	8.2	88.9	81.6
1961 (Knesset 5)	7.7	85.5	81.4
1965 (Knesset 6)	8.3	87.8	83.0
1969 (Knesset 7)	8.4	82.0	81.7
1973 (Knesset 8)	8.4	80.0	78.6
1977 (Knesset 9)	9.2	75.0	78.5
1981 (Knesset 10)	9.8	69.7	78.5
1984 (Knesset 11)	13.0	73.7	78.8
1988 (Knesset 12)	14.3	73.9	79.7
1992 (Knesset 13)	13.3	69.7	78.2
1996 (Knesset 14)	10.3	77.0	79.3
1999 (Knesset 15)	11.0	75.0	77.2
2003 (Knesset 16)	13.0	62.0	67.8

¹ Data on the 1949-1992 elections (Knesset 1 – Knesset 13) derived from: Benjamin Neuberger, “The Knesset Elections in the Arab and Druze Population”, *Information and Contents Papers*, no. 3 (Tel-Aviv University: The Program on Arab Politics in Israel, May 1996), p. 3; Data on the 1996 elections (Knesset 14) are based on: Ilana Kofman, Rachel Israeli, “The Israeli Arab vote in the 1996 elections”, in Asher Arian and Michal Shamir (editors), *The 1996 Elections in Israel* (Jerusalem: The Israeli Democracy Institute, 1999), pp 12, 126; Data on 1999 elections (Knesset 15) based on: As’ad Ghanem, “Arab vote in the 15th Knesset elections”, in Asher Arian and Michal Shamir (editors), *The 1999 Elections in Israel* (Jerusalem: The Israeli Democracy Institute, 2001), pp. 8, 171, 190; Data on the 2003 elections (Knesset 16) based on: Nadim Rouhana, Nabil Salih and Nimr Soultany, “A Vote without Voice: The Vote of the Palestinian Minority in the Sixteenth Knesset Elections”, in Asher Arian and Michal Shamir (editors), *The 2003 Elections in Israel* (Jerusalem: The Israeli Democracy Institute, 2004), pp. 18, 329.

B. Arab vote in the last four elections – comparative view²

Year of Elections Party	1992	1996	1999	2003
DFPE (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality)	23.20%	37.00% ³	21.29%	26.00% ⁴
ADP (Arab Democratic Party) / from 1996: UAL (United Arab List)	15.20%	25.40% ⁵	30.55%	18.00%
NDA (National Democratic Alliance)	–	–	16.80%	20.00%
Labor	20.30%	16.60%	7.43%	7.50%
Meretz	9.70%	10.50%	5.02%	4.10%
Likud + religious parties	19.30%	5.20%	4.84%	8.40%
Others	12.30%	5.30%	14.07%	16.00% ⁶

² Source: Asad Ghanem & Sara Ozacky-Lazar, “The Arab Vote in the 15th Knesset Elections”, *Surveys on the Arabs in Israel*, no. 24 (Givat Haviva: The Institute for Peace Studies, October 1999); Nadim Rouhana, Nabil Salih and Nimr Soutany, “A Vote without Voice: The Vote of the Palestinian Minority in the Sixteenth Knesset Elections”, in Asher Arian and Michal Shamir (editors), *The 2003 Elections in Israel* (Jerusalem: The Israeli Democracy Institute, 2004), pp 335-336.

³ In 1996: A unified list of DFPE and NDA.

⁴ Including AMC (Arab Movement for Change), headed by Dr. Ahmad Tibi

⁵ Hereafter: Including the Islamic Movement (Southern Faction)

⁶ Including 6% who voted for National Unity Party, headed by former MK Hashim Mahameed, which did not pass the threshold.

C. Public Opinion Survey in the Arab Sector, November 2005

In late November 2005, the Yaffa Institute conducted a survey in the Arab sector in favor of the Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation. The sample included 545 participants (maximum deviation percentage – 5%).⁷

1. Projected voting turnout

67% I will participate
 18% I will not participate / boycott the elections
 15% Does not know / refuses to answer

2. Voting trends in the Arab sector – projected results of 2006 Elections

Party	2006 projected results		2006 projected results – adjustment ⁸	
	Percentage	Votes	Percentage	Votes
Zionists Parties				
Labor	27.7%	110,135	33.0%	131,525
Kadima	9.0%	35,784	10.7%	42,604
Likud	1.6%	6,361	1.9%	7,601
Meretz	1.4%	5,566	1.6%	6,496
Shas	0.5%	1,988	0.5%	2,298
Arab Parties				
DFPE + AMC	15.3%	60,832	21.87%	87,061
NDA	12.9%	51,290	18.44%	73,423
UAL	7.4%	29,422	10.57%	42,074
Other				
Has not decided yet	16.2%	64,411		
Secret	7.1%	28,229		
White ballot	0.5%	1,988		
Does not know	0.4%	1,192		

⁷ The full survey (in Hebrew) can be viewed at: <http://www.dayan.org/kapjac/files/Survey2006.ppt>

⁸ The adjustment is based on statistical analysis and breakdown of floating votes in previous elections.

3. Passing the threshold

Number of votes needed to pass the threshold for the 17 th Knesset (Total eligible voters: 5,018,287 ⁹)		
Expected turnout percentage (nationwide)	2% threshold	Number of votes needed per mandate
68%	68,249	28,437
70%	70,256	29,273
75%	75,274	31,364
78%	78,285	32,619

- Estimated number of eligible voters in the Arab and Druze sectors in the Elections for the 17th Knesset: 576,000
- Estimated number of Arab and Druze voters: 398,000

4. The Question of a Unified Arab Party

- Some 60% of the voters would cast the ballot in favor of a united Arab party
- In that case, the rate of “floating” votes would drop from 16.2% to only 6.0%.
- The Labor party would get 18.1% of the Arab vote (instead of 27.7%) and Kadim – 7.9% (instead of 9%)

5. The Islamic Movement

- One important finding of the survey was the popularity of the Islamic Movement among the Arab population.
- The Northern Faction, headed by Shaykh Ra‘id Sallah, gained special popularity:
 - Almost 50% of the participants think that this faction should participate in the elections, while 30% think it should not, and 20% do not have an opinion.
- Had the northern faction participated in the elections, it would have won almost 23% of the Arab vote.

⁹ Source: Ministry of Interior, the National Inspector on the Elections, November 27, 2005

D. Number of Arab and Druze MKs in the last four Knessets¹⁰

	1992 (Knesset 13)	1996 (Knesset 14)	1999 (Knesset 15)	2003 (Knesset 16)
DFPE	2	4*	2	3**
NDA			2**	3
UAL		4***	5	2
ADP	2			
Labor	3	3	2	2
Likud	1		1	2
Meretz	1	1	1	
Total	9	12	13	12

E. Candidates of the major Arab Parties in the 2006 Elections

	DFPE	NDA	UAL-AMC
1.	Muhammad Barake	Dr. Azmi Bishara	Shaykh Ibrahim Sarsur
2.	Dr. Hanna Suwaid	Dr. Jamal Zahalka	Dr. Ahmad Tibi
3.	Dr. Dov Hanin	Wasil Taha	Talab al-Sana'
4.	Dr. 'Afu Ighbariyah	Sa'id Naffa'	Shaykh Abbas Zakur
5.	Manal Shalabi	Abd al-Rahim Fuqara	Salman Abu Ahmad

¹⁰ Source: The Knesset web site: <http://www.knesset.gov.il/index.html>

* In 1996 Elections: a unified list of DFPE and NDA

** Including AMC, headed by Ahmad Tibi

*** From 1996: a unified list of ADP and the Islamic Movement – the Southern Faction