

Netanyahu Fighting for His Political Life

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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On April 9, Israeli Knesset elections were held, 61 coalition seats needed for majority rule.

New elections were called after Netanyahu failed to cobble together enough support for reelection as prime minister. He remains interim PM.

On September 17, Israelis go to the polls again to elect a prime minister and Knesset members.

Ten parties are competing for seats. Polls show Netanyahu-led Likud and Benny Gantz/Yair Lapid's Blue and White party are each projected to win 31 of 120 Knesset seats, according to polls.

Throughout Jewish state history, Israeli coalitions governed, no single party ever winning a majority on its own.

Today extremist right-wing parties dominate Israel's political landscape, reflecting hardline rule, democracy pure fantasy as in the West.

Netanyahu is desperate to retain power ahead of an October pre-indictment hearing on bribery, fraud, and breach of trust charges, strong evidence against him.

Ahead of elections, Israeli military intelligence-connected [DEBKAF](#) (DF) said he warned Hamas via Egyptian officials that he "stands ready for a major war," adding:

"The IDF already had its orders and is standing ready to launch a comprehensive military campaign against Hamas" — next week's elections possibly to be postponed if occurs.

Is more Israeli aggression on Gaza coming for the fourth time since December 2008?

Is waging it a Netanyahu pre-election scheme against a nonexistent enemy to win votes in a closely contested race?

Is Lebanon's Hezbollah a possible target? Last week, its leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah warned Israel of a strong response if it attacks Lebanese territory aggressively, saying:

If the IDF "attack(s), then all your borders and forces will be at risk," adding: "(N)o longer" will red lines be observed, vowing to attack "deep inside" Israel in response to its aggression.

On Sunday, Israeli media reported that IDF troops began large-scale military exercises,

simulating war on Hezbollah, perhaps on Gaza as well.

On Monday, Hezbollah said it downed an Israeli drone operating illegally in Lebanese airspace, the IDF admitting loss of its UAV, saying it “crashed on the Lebanese side.”

Earlier, Nasrallah declared a “new phase” against Israeli aggression, “a new battlefield which is targeting Israel’s drones in Lebanon’s skies, and it is in the hands of Hezbollah field commanders.”

On successive days last week, Israeli warplanes terror-bombed targets in Gaza, Hamas falsely blamed for its aggression, what occurs on the Strip with disturbing regularity, the world community doing nothing to hold Israel accountable for crimes of war and against humanity.

On Sunday, Netanyahu’s cabinet unanimously approved a camera bill Israeli attorney general Mandelblit called “aberrant...flawed,” adding:

“(A)dvancement of the bill will harm the ability to properly hold election day (by undermining) the exercise of the fundamental right to vote and also the implementation of the legal obligation to conduct free, secret and equal elections.”

If adopted, the measure permits Likudniks and other parties to bring cameras into polling stations, an apparent ploy by Netanyahu to intimidate opposition voters and claim fraud if defeated for reelection.

During April 9 elections, hidden body cameras were used in Arab area polling stations, a similar intimidating tactic to minimize turnout against him.

“Faced with Netanyahu’s thugs, the Labor Party has begun enlisting thousands of volunteers from the kibbutz movement and veterans of combat units to stand at polling places on election day in the Arab and Druze communities and to hold back Bibi’s thugs,” Israeli Channel 12 reported.

Netanyahu falsely claimed that “only someone who wants to steal the election would oppose the placement of cameras,” adding:

“It is not a coincidence that Benny Gantz and Lapid oppose cameras, because they want the election to be stolen.”

On Sunday, the Times of Israel reported the measure is likely to be adopted “in (a) rushed vote, but still faces legal hurdle(s),” including by AG Mandelblit’s opposition and Central Elections Committee.

In August, the CEC banned filming by party representatives in polling stations. Will Israel’s Supreme Court rule on this issue?

The so-called Israel Democracy Institute slammed the measure, calling it “particularly blatant since the expedited governmental bill was submitted by a transitional government,

which had failed to win the confidence of the current Knesset, and is being promoted only a few days before the elections...in a manner that prevents the necessary organization and preparation for such a fundamental change.”

[Haaretz](#) accused Netanyahu of claiming election fraud to undermine rival parties, adding:

Likudniks “hadn’t mentioned election fraud even once during Netanyahu’s ten-year term in office (are) suddenly portraying it as an existential danger.”

He “fired up his base, put his rivals on the defensive, asserted his domination over the election campaign and possibly found the ace in the hole that could tilt the elections his way.”

If he fails to form a ruling coalition, will he claim fraud and cause turmoil?

Will he order the IDF to attack Gaza and/or Lebanon aggressively, postponing elections as a vote-getting tactic if he fears losing next week?

As election day approaches, extremist far-right rule in Israel makes anything possible.

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