

# The Sabra Report

Raising Awareness and Encouraging Discussion About Israel

## Israel Heading for Third Election in Less Than a Year After Politicians Fail to Form Government

Ruth Eglash, Washington Post, December 11<sup>th</sup> 2019

### Recap:

Israelis will return to the polls in March for the third time in less than a year, after lawmakers failed form a new government.

### The Context:

- ☆ The previous September 17<sup>th</sup> election produced a virtual tie between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party and Benny Gantz's Blue and White party. With neither able to gain a majority in the 120-seat Knesset, both refused to compromise on core demands and failed to form a coalition
- ☆ Netanyahu to hold a primary for Likud's leadership on December 26<sup>th</sup>. Gideon Sa'ar, the first real challenger to Netanyahu's leadership in 14 years, will have just two weeks to mount a race. "There is a national need for a breakthrough that will end the ongoing political crisis and unite the people of Israel," Sa'ar said [1]. Netanyahu initially opposed a primary but changed his mind.
- ☆ Culture Minister Miri Regev believes that, despite Netanyahu's looming indictment charges [2], "[Sa'ar] knows very well that Likudniks don't like to oust a sitting Prime Minister who wins [3]."
- ☆ Sa'ar claims he can reach across the aisle and end the political deadlock that's plagued Israel for the past 12 months. "For a year now, the Prime Minister has been unable to form a government. We supported him on things that were not easy and now we have reached a point where the outline is irrational [4]," said Sa'ar.

### Conversation Points:

- ☆ Why did Netanyahu originally oppose Likud primaries and why did he ultimately change his mind?
- ☆ Will a third election yield different results if there are no fundamental changes in the race makeup?
- ☆ What are the internal and external repercussions if Israeli leaders cannot resolve their political deadlock?

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## Jerusalem's Chief Rabbi Visits Bahrain On Unprecedented Trip

Jerusalem Post, December 11<sup>th</sup> 2019

**Recap:**

Jerusalem's Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar visited Bahrain, making him the first of his stature to visit the Muslim Gulf state.

**The Context:**

- ✧ Municipal rabbis are considered official representatives of the State of Israel but not its government. Amar, who was previously the Sephardic chief rabbi of Israel, visited Bahrain to participate in a religious forum alongside clerics from Kuwait, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, and other Arab and Islamic countries [5]. During his trip, Amar met with the Bahraini king and sent him "a blessing from Jerusalem."
- ✧ The Bahraini and Israeli governments have worked towards normalizing ties in recent months, although they still do not communicate diplomatically. Currently, Israel holds diplomatic ties with only two Arab states, Egypt and Jordan.
- ✧ In October, Israel's Foreign Ministry attended a security conference in Bahrain in a rare formal visit and in June Bahrain hosted an American-led conference to discuss the economic aspects of its long-awaited Israeli-Palestinian peace plan [6].

**Conversation Points**

- ✧ Why are Israeli-Arab diplomatic interactions important?
- ✧ Why has Bahrain embraced warmer ties with Israel?
- ✧ Why are relations between the Gulf States and Israel thawing?

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## Unlike Theranos, Startup's Blood Test Device 'Delivers on Promise' With FDA Nod

Shoshanna Solomon, Times of Israel, December 5<sup>th</sup> 2019

**Recap:**

Israeli startup Sight Diagnostics received US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) clearance to market a blood test device that extracts results of a complete blood count (CBC) test in minutes from a drop of blood.

**The Context:**

- ✧ Blood samples are usually taken from patients in medical centers and sent to centralized labs for analysis. The CBC – which counts red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets in a patient's sample – is one of the most basic and informative tests a doctor can conduct. 500 million CBC tests are conducted in the US annually [7].
- ✧ Sight's OLO blood analyzer promises the same accuracy as large laboratory machines but at an effective cost and at the point of care, giving physicians results within minutes. The machine takes thousands of images of the sample and its performance is comparable to analyzers that are 50 times larger and more complicated to operate [8].

- ☆ Sight's approval follows almost a decade of research and was preceded by its malaria testing machine which conducted nearly 1,000,000 field tests in 24 countries. Sight's success stands in stark contrast to defunct US firm Theranos, who promised similar results, but was later exposed as a fraud.

**Conversation Points:**

- ☆ How can Sight convince consumers that it is not the new incarnation of Theranos?
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**Notes:**

1. [Sa'ar vs Netanyahu: Likud leadership primary set for December 26](#), RAOUL WOOLLIFF, Times of Israel, December 11<sup>th</sup> 2019
2. [Sa'ar vs Netanyahu: Likud leadership primary set for December 26](#), RAOUL WOOLLIFF, Times of Israel, December 11<sup>th</sup> 2019
3. [Culture Minister: 'Sa'ar won't succeed in forming government'](#), Israel National News, December 10<sup>th</sup> 2019
4. [Sa'ar: I'll limit PM's tenure to two terms](#), Israel National News, December 9<sup>th</sup> 2019
5. [Jerusalem's chief rabbi makes history in Bahrain](#), i24NEWS, December 10<sup>th</sup> 2019
6. [Jerusalem chief rabbi visits Bahrain for interfaith event, meets king](#), Times of Israel, December 10<sup>th</sup> 2019
7. [Anti-Theranos: FDA Approval in Hand, Sight Diagnostics Aims At \\$2.7 Billion Blood Testing Giant, Sysmex](#), Peter Cohan, Forbes, December 5<sup>th</sup> 2019
8. Ibid.

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**The Sabra Report** is a newsletter intended to stimulate conversation about Israel by recapping major events & providing context. Our conversation points are meant to encourage discussion amongst friends and family.

The Sabra Report is written by Irving Safdieh.

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