



The Sabra Report

Netanyahu, Far-right on Verge of Coalition Deal

Haaretz, November 29th, 2022

Recap:

Benjamin Netanyahu's bloc secured a majority of Knesset seats in the November 1st election, but his efforts to put together a coalition have stalled, due to disagreements between his allies over the allocation of ministerial posts.

The Context:

- ✦ Netanyahu, whose bloc won 64 of 120 Knesset seats, has 28 days to assemble a majority coalition but holds little sway over Israel's fringe parties who he depends on to form a coalition [1]. The ministers in waiting add to a growing sense of alarm over the composition of Netanyahu's likely government.
- ✦ Potential partners include Bezalel Smotrich, a lawyer arrested by the Shin Bet in the early 2000's for allegedly supporting a Jewish terrorist group, Itamar Ben-Gvir, who has past convictions for racist incitement, Aryeh Deri, who served two years in prison for taking bribes as interior minister and recently received a suspended jail sentence for tax evasion and Avi Maoz who seeks to "cancel pride parade[s] from a legal point of view."
- ✦ Smotrich agreed to back down from his demand to serve as defense minister in exchange for receiving both the finance ministry and a portfolio on matters relating to Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank [2]. Ben-Gvir is set to become national security minister with expanded powers over Israel's police force [3]. Deri will reportedly share the finance ministry with Smotrich and serve as both interior and transportation minister [4]. Maoz, whose anti-Arab and anti-LGBTQ party argues for a strict interpretation of Jewish law in Israel, will run the Jewish identity authority. He will also manage the agency that oversees Jewish immigration from former Soviet states which critics say he would likely limit due to his interpretation of what qualifies someone as being Jewish [5].
- ✦ Outgoing Prime Minister Yair Lapid called the incoming government "full-on crazy" [6], while Palestinian leaders have warned about the dangers of a "right-wing fascist coalition" to Israeli Arabs and Palestinians. Netanyahu has remained largely silent in public since the coalition talks began [7] but pledged that Israel will "remain a country of laws."

Conversation Points:

- ✦ Can Netanyahu rein in his coalition like he thinks he can?
- ✦ How should politicians balance their personal beliefs with the responsibility of governing a pluralistic society?
- ✦ Will the recent spate of terror attacks work in favor or against the incoming coalition?

Notes:

1. [Netanyahu's far right coalition putting Israel on collision course with Washington](#), Ben Caspit, AI Monitor, November 29th, 2022
2. [Smotrich to get Finance Ministry, Deri Interior and Transport ministries - report](#), ELIAV BREUER, Jerusalem Post, NOVEMBER 21st, 2022
3. [Netanyahu signs Israel coalition deal with anti-LGBT Noam party](#), BBC, November 29th, 2022
4. [Smotrich to get Finance Ministry, Deri Interior and Transport ministries - report](#), ELIAV BREUER, Jerusalem Post, NOVEMBER 21st, 2022
5. [Netanyahu signs Israel coalition deal with anti-LGBT Noam party](#), BBC, November 29th, 2022
6. [Smotrich to get Finance Ministry, Deri Interior and Transport ministries - report](#), ELIAV BREUER, Jerusalem Post, NOVEMBER 21st, 2022
7. [Netanyahu signs Israel coalition deal with anti-LGBT Noam party](#), BBC, November 29th, 2022

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