



Friends of Mossawa

FEBRUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER

SUHA SALMAN MOUSA NAMED MOSSAWA CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The board of the Mossawa Center appointed Mrs. Suha Salman Mousa as the Executive Director of the Mossawa Center. She will accompany the management and development of the Mossawa parliamentary, legal, international and media advocacy, in addition to strengthen the community work. She is the first woman to be at the head of a civil rights organization in Israel.

Mrs. Salman Mousa led the initiative to establish Friends of Mossawa in the United States, expanding the advancement of the rights of the Palestinian-Arab minority in Israel to an international level, and promoting the work of the Mossawa Center in the US.



Mrs. Salman Mousa earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration for Executives and an MBA degree (non-profit organizations) from Haifa University. Over the years, she has fulfilled multiple leadership and management roles in a variety of organizations.

Mrs. Salman Mousa will lead the future strategies of the Mossawa Center as an independent, community-based advocacy institution, working with local councils, political groups, media institutions, international actors and civil society organizations. She will also continue to develop the work of Friends of Mossawa in the United States.

SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO JISR AZ-ZARQA BY GERMAN AND FRENCH AMBASSADORS

The ambassadors of France and Germany visited the village of Jisr az-Zarqa, an event organized by the Mossawa Center. The ambassadors, Eric Danon of France and Susanne Wasum-Rainer of Germany visited the council, a school, and the beach to witness the work on Mossawa Center's flagship development project.

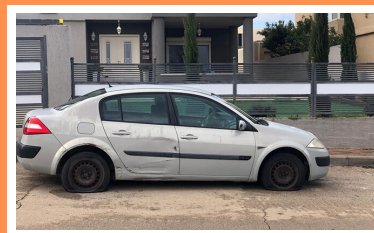
The Mossawa Center has worked relentlessly for months to help uplift the village and its community, a project funded by the EU. The ambassadors were shocked by the fact the Jisr az-Zarqa, the poorest Palestinian Arab locality in Israel, is situated right next Caesarea, one of the richest localities in Israel.



RENEWED 'PRICE TAG' ATTACKS ON PALESTINIAN ARAB COMMUNITIES

The latest round of racist 'price tag' attacks against Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel occurred in the village of Jish, and included vandalism of private property and damage to about 200 cars. This is the natural culmination to a vicious election campaign of delegitimization and incitement, emanating from the highest runs of the political system.

Netanyahu's extreme rhetoric towards Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel has caused a rise in attacks by the general public against the community.



The Joint List Surges in the March Israeli Elections

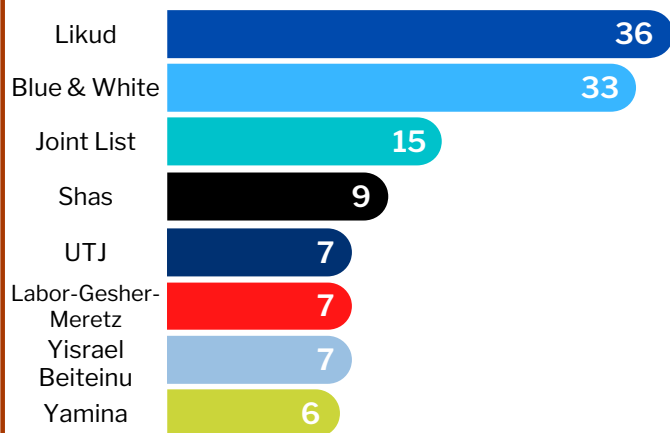
On Monday, March 2, Israel held its third round of elections within one year. The stakes were high, with the Joint List aiming to further cement its position as a political powerhouse in the Knesset, and Netanyahu - desperate to avoid criminal prosecution - looking to finally gain the necessary majority to form a government and remain in power. The results from the yesterday's election are shown below. Meanwhile, Gantz looked to further increase Blue and White's seats in the Knesset in order to remove Netanyahu from power.

Following an incitement filled campaign at the hands of Netanyahu and his extreme right-wing bloc - as well as by Gantz and his Blue and White party who further migrated to the right by adopting many of Netanyahu's policies, agenda, and platform - election day proved to be full of surprises.

One of the biggest developments of the election was the Joint List expanding its total seat count to 15 - the highest ever achieved by Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel. Palestinian-Arab voter turnout reached its highest since 1999, with many progressive Jewish voters - who felt alienated by 'centrist' parties' shift to the Right - also voting for the Joint List. This unprecedented development has cemented the Joint List as a major political player in Israel.

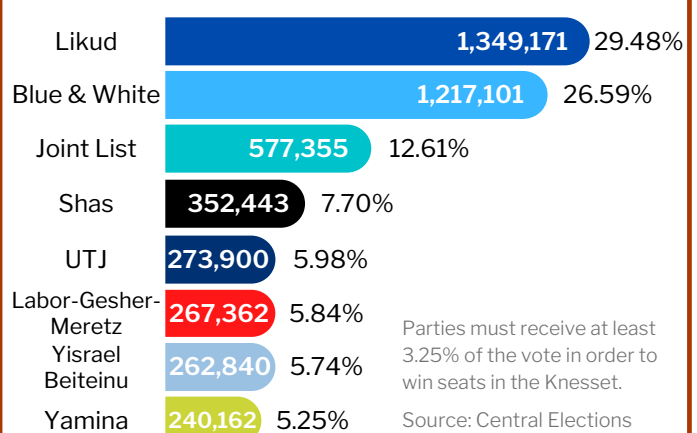
On the other hand, it appears Netanyahu and his extreme right-wing bloc have further consolidated their power in the Knesset, and it seems that Netanyahu will in fact remain in power and serve yet another term as Prime Minister.

Seat Distribution Following Israeli Election March 2020



Source: Maariv

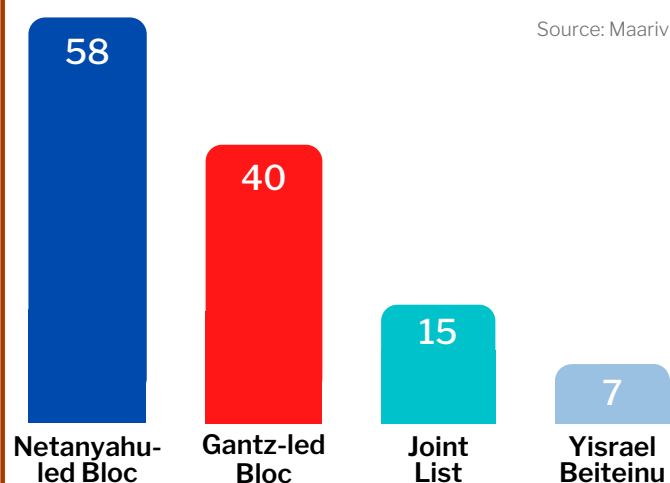
Share of Vote per Party Israeli Election March 2020



Parties must receive at least 3.25% of the vote in order to win seats in the Knesset.

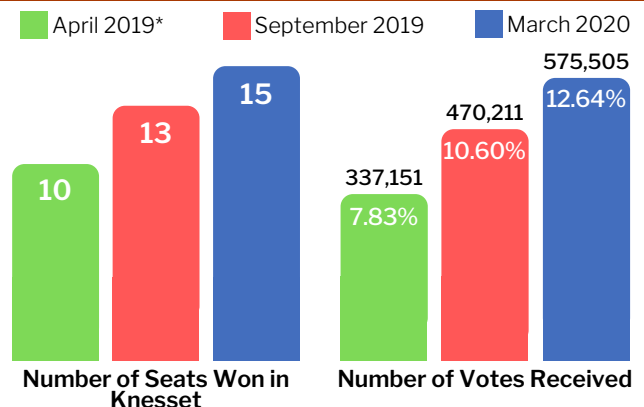
Source: Central Elections Committee

Bloc Division According to Israeli Election Results March 2020



Source: Maariv

Palestinian Arab Parties' Performance Over the Past 3 Elections



* During the April 2019 elections, parties in the Joint List split up and ran as two separate lists.

Source: Haaretz, Central Elections Committee

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Netanyahu's main rival and self-proclaimed 'centrist,' Benny Gantz, has made it clear that the Joint List "will not be a part of my government," should he be recommended to form a government, adding, "I will act to implement President Trump's peace plan." Gantz, throughout the campaign, has proven time and time again that he is not an alternative to Netanyahu. Moreover, due to his increasingly Right-wing views and platform which echoes that of Netanyahu's, it is not clear that the only progressive, pro-peace party in Israel is the Joint List.

The formation of the Labor-Gesher-Meretz alliance has led to many progressive Jewish voters in Israel to vote for the Joint List. Joint List leader Ayman Odeh made it clear on election day that the Joint List will receive at least one seat in the Knesset from Jewish voters who feel alienated from Meretz's shift to the Right by aligning itself with Labor. As was the case, the Labor-Gesher-Meretz alliance gained no new seats - in fact it lost seats - and the Joint List gained a monumental two seats, pushing its total to 15 - the highest it has ever held.

Read the Mossawa Center's Israeli Election Briefing and Analysis to get a full summary about the elections, as well as a detailed analysis regarding what the future may hold. Click the button below or go to our website to read it!

Members of Gantz's Blue and White, as well as from the Labor-Gesher-Meretz alliance have proposed introducing a bill which bars indicted lawmakers from forming a government - move clearly aimed at preventing Netanyahu from forming a government. This comes as reports indicate that Netanyahu's Likud is attempting to convince members of Blue and White to defect in order to grant the Likud the majority it needs to form a government (currently it is short 3 seats from a majority). Avigdor Lieberman, leader of Yisrael Beiteinu, has said he supports the proposed bill and will also back Gantz for prime Minister.

MOSSAWA CENTER IN THE COMMUNITY

The Mossawa Center was invited to events prior to the elections to discuss the challenges facing the Palestinian Arab community in Israel, and the racism and incitement against the community. Challenges that were discussed include the rise in violence within the community, lack of funding and support from the government, and economic stagnation facing the community.



The Mossawa Center completed its early childhood kindergarten training program in Jisr az-Zarqa, as part of a joint project with the local council. Over 50 kindergarten teachers participated in the workshop aimed at addressing the importance of being a supportive teacher and developing healthy communication skills with parents and their children.



The Mossawa Center stands in solidarity with the Lod Culture Center. As part of the Mossawa Center's efforts to allocate budgets to culture NGOs, it has succeeded in increasing the funds for Palestinian cultural projects and events from 11 million shekels in 2014 to over 60 million shekels in 2019.



As part of the Mossawa Center's work with Palestinian Arab localities, it hosted a workshop about women's labor rights in Dir al-Asad. The workshop was led by the Mossawa Center's legal advisor, Rana Jarban, and focused on women's rights in the workplace and how to combat sexism in the workplace.

