

Israel bans coalition of Arab political parties from April elections



Tel Aviv, March 11 (RHC)-- Israel's election committee has banned an alliance of Israeli Arab parties from fielding candidates in April's general election.

The move will bar candidates from the Balad-United Arab List -- which represents Palestinian citizens of Israel -- from running for Israel's parliament, the Knesset.

The ban was celebrated by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who said in a statement: "Those who support terrorism will not be in the Israeli Knesset!"

Palestinian candidate Heba Yazbak said the measure had nothing to do with terror, and was instead aimed at stifling Palestinian rights. Yazbak said: "They are actually banning the Arab, to choose, by themselves, their representatives and their leaders. We, of course, will go to the high court, and we will continue until the end. And we will not accept this discrimination against us and against the Arab people in Israel."

The ban on Israeli Arab candidates came as Israel's election committee said it would allow members of the far-right Jewish Power party to run in April's election. The party is tied to the Jewish Defense League, a far-right group that was classified in 2000 by the FBI as a "right-wing terrorist group." This all comes as Israel's attorney general says he's prepared to indict Netanyahu on corruption charges.

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