

Netanyahu's Likud Party Wins Israeli Parliamentary Elections



Jerusalem, March 18 (RHC-Xinhua) -- Incumbent Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu emerged early Wednesday as the decisive winner of Israel's parliamentary election, showed official results after 99 percent of the ballots having been counted.

Israel's ruling right-wing Likud party won 30 seats in the 120-member parliament and beat opposition leader Isaac Herzog's Zionist Union, which won only 24 seats.

The Joint List came in third with 14 seats, a landmark result for the newly-formed alliance of Arab parties, which ran together for the first time.

Other parties that got seats in the Israeli Knesset were Centrist Yesh Atid, the new center party Kulanu, the ultra-nationalist Jewish Home, Shas, United Torah Judaism, Yisrael Beiteinu and the leftist Meretz.

Turnout was 71.8 percent, 4 percentage points higher than in the previous elections in 2013.

This will be Netanyahu's fourth term in office and a third consecutive term. However, he will still have to work hard to form a new coalition with at least 61 members, as required under the Israeli parliamentary system.

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