

After 22:00: From the Last Ballot to a New Government

A fridge page for the weeks after Israel's vote on Tuesday 27 October 2026. Dates, deadlines and the arithmetic behind them. No predictions.

Aryeh Leib Thorne Toren · Jerusalem · Monday 26 October 2026 · 15 Cheshvan 5787

Voting ended at 22:00 on Tuesday 27 October 2026. Only the official count decides the result. Here is what happens next, step by step, with the legal deadline for each step.

Step 1. The count (from Tuesday night 27 October)

- After voting ends, each voting station's committee counts its own ballot box and sends the protocol up the line.
- Double-envelope ballots are counted separately and later. These come from voters who could not vote at their own station: soldiers, hospital patients, prisoners, diplomats abroad and others. Ynet's election guide estimated they amount to about 15 seats' worth of votes this time, so early totals can shift.
- The Central Elections Committee (CEC) has said it expects to finish the count around midday Thursday 29 October 2026 (as reported by Ynet and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel).

Step 2. Official results (by Wednesday 4 November)

- The law requires the official results to be published in the Official Gazette (Reshumot) within eight days of election day.
- The math: Tuesday 27 October + 8 days = Wednesday 4 November 2026. That is the latest date. Publication can come sooner.

Step 3. The new Knesset is sworn in (Tuesday 10 November)

- The 26th Knesset holds its opening session 14 days after the election: Tuesday 27 October + 14 days = Tuesday 10 November 2026.
- The 120 members swear allegiance. A majority is 61.

Step 4. The President consults and assigns the task (within 7 days of official results)

- President Isaac Herzog meets representatives of every list that entered the Knesset. Each tells him whom it recommends to form a government.
- Within seven days of the official results, he must give the task to one member of Knesset who has agreed to take it on (Basic Law: The Government).
- The math: if results are published on the last allowed day, Wednesday 4 November, the latest date for the assignment is Wednesday 11 November 2026. If results come earlier, this date moves earlier too.

Step 5. Coalition talks (28 days, plus up to 14)

- The member of Knesset given the task has 28 days. The President may extend this by up to 14 days, for 42 days in all.
- The math, using the latest possible dates: 11 November + 28 days = Wednesday 9 December 2026. With the full extension: 9 December + 14 days = Wednesday 23 December 2026.
- A government is formed only when the Knesset votes confidence in it. Until then the outgoing government keeps working.

If the first attempt fails

- The President has three days to choose: give the task to a second member of Knesset, who gets 28 days with no extension, or tell the Speaker that he sees no way to form a government.
- If that happens, there is a window of 21 days in which 61 members of Knesset can ask the President in writing to give the task to one of them. That member then has 14 days.
- If every route fails, the Knesset dissolves and new elections are held within 90 days.

Three habits for the next few weeks

- Treat election-night numbers as early. Wait for the double envelopes.
- When you hear a date, ask: is that a deadline, or an estimate?
- Count to 61. Every coalition claim comes down to that number.

Sources

- Basic Law: The Government, sections 7 to 11, as summarised by the Knesset's lexicon page "Forming a Government" (main.knesset.gov.il).
- Association for Civil Rights in Israel, "What to expect after the elections" (acri.org.il/post/1422).
- Ynet election guide on the double envelopes and timetable; N12 timetable for the day after.

All glory to the Ribono shel Olam · Errors are mine.

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