

Tomorrow the Surplus Clock Closes

Aryeh Leib Thorne Toren · 15 October 2026

Most of the surplus-vote pairs are already named. One day remains to file.

By Aryeh Leib Thorne Toren

Tomorrow, Friday 16 October, is the last day for lists to notify the Central Elections Committee of surplus-vote agreements ahead of the 27 October election. Under Israeli law that notice must be in eleven days before election day. The pairs that have already been announced in the press are not a mystery list. They are the map of who decided to pool leftovers — and who has not.

A surplus-vote agreement is not a merger. Each list still runs alone. Both partners must clear the 3.25 percent electoral threshold, or the deal does nothing. If both clear, the pair is treated together only when the leftover seats are handed out by the Bader–Ofer rule. That is the whole mechanism: pool the remnants so one more seat may land inside the camp rather than outside it. For scale, the 2022 election had 4,764,742 valid votes, so one seat was worth $4,764,742 \div 120 = 39,706$ votes. Monday's piece walked the Bader–Ofer arithmetic. Today the news is the clock.

On the governing side of the map, Likud has already signed with Religious Zionism. Shas and United Torah Judaism announced their own pair on Sunday 11 October. On the other side, Yashar paired with The Democrats, and B'Yachad with Yisrael Beiteinu, both in September. The Joint List and Ra'am signed in September as well, and that pairing still stands as of Thursday 15 October. The Jerusalem Post, The Times of Israel, and ynet have all carried those announcements. The pattern is clear: the large lists that expect to clear the threshold have mostly found partners.

What remains open is the smaller edge of the right. On Tuesday 13 October, Otzma Yehudit leader Itamar Ben-Gvir refused a surplus-vote agreement with Ofer Winter's People of Israel list (also called Amcha Yisrael), writing that Winter was "Bennett II" and that Otzma would not sign with him. Winter answered that the refusal throws votes in the trash and that people are tired of the gimmicks. The Times of Israel, The Jerusalem Post, ynet and Haaretz all carried those statements the same day. As of the evening of Thursday 15 October, Otzma Yehudit is still unpaired. A Walla poll published with the Tuesday reporting put People of Israel under the threshold. Whether that poll holds is for election night. The filing deadline does not wait for another survey.

As of the evening of Thursday 15 October, the lists still without a publicly reported surplus partner are Otzma Yehudit, People of Israel, the Reservists–Economic list, and Blue and White (Blue and White unpaired is single source, not yet confirmed). They have until tomorrow, Friday 16 October, to decide. After that, whatever seats the leftover round awards will be fought without those signatures.

None of this tells you who will form a government. It tells you which votes can still be joined for the last seats, and which cannot. In a Knesset where sixty-one is the only number that governs, a day on the calendar can matter as much as a slogan. Tomorrow the surplus clock closes. After that, the ballots do the rest.

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