

RELEASE IN FULL

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Subject: Fw: Israeli election ends in dramatic deadlock (AP)

From: OpsNewsTicker@state.gov [mailto:OpsNewsTicker@state.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, January 23, 2013 12:30 AM
To: NEWS-IsrPAL; NEWS-Mahogany
Subject: Israeli election ends in dramatic deadlock (AP)

JERUSALEM (AP) - Israel's parliamentary election has ended in a stunning deadlock between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-line bloc and center-left rivals, forcing the badly weakened Israeli leader to scramble to cobble together a coalition of parties from both camps, despite dramatically different views on Mideast peacemaking and other polarizing issues.

Israeli media says that with 99.8 percent of votes counted on Wednesday morning, each bloc has 60 of parliament's 120 seats. Commentators said Netanyahu, who called early elections expecting easy victory, would be tapped to form the next government because the rival camp drew 12 of its 60 seats from Arab parties who've never joined a coalition.

A startlingly strong showing by a political newcomer, the centrist Yesh Atid party, turned pre-election forecasts on their heads and dealt Netanyahu his surprise setback.

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