

NETANYAHU, ALLIES SECURE VICTORY IN ISRAEL ELECTION

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Victory wave: Israeli far-right lawmaker and the head of 'Jewish Power' party, Itamar Ben-Gvir, waves the Israel flag after first exit poll results for the Israeli Parliamentary election in Jerusalem. APOren Ziv

Former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his right-wing allies secured a clear victory and a majority in Parliament following elections two days ago, Israel's electoral commission said on Thursday.

Results released by the electoral commission said that with 99% of votes counted, Mr. Netanyahu and his far-right allies had secured a majority.

With 32 seats for Mr. Netanyahu's Likud party, 18 for ultra-Orthodox parties and 14 for a far-right alliance called Religious Zionism, the right-wing bloc won a total of 64 seats, while caretaker Prime Minister Yair Lapid's centrist bloc won 51 seats.

The commission added that the official and final results would be presented to Israel's President on Wednesday.

Mr. Lapid called his rival Mr. Netanyahu to congratulate him on Thursday. Mr. Lapid's concession sets the former premier up to form what may be the most right-wing government in Israeli history, while also spelling the end of an unprecedented period of political deadlock.

The 73-year-old Netanyahu secured his comeback after 14 months in the Opposition. He remains on trial over corruption allegations, which he denies, with the case returning to court on Monday.

Mr. Netanyahu has already begun talks with coalition partners on the make-up of a new government, Israeli media reported, but there was no immediate confirmation from his Likud party.

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