

Chapter 8

Israel's Coalition in Power and Its Implications on Israel–Palestinian Relations and Conflict

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses Israel's recent coalition government and its implications for internal governance, its conflictual agenda to destabilize the Middle East region, and particularly, its relations to the raging war between Israel and Palestine in the Occupied Gaza and West Jerusalem respectively. Considering how the state of Israel was formed, the chapter argues that the far-right coalition formed in 2022 post-general elections led by Netanyahu is bound to entrench Palestinian oppression and Apartheid as well as sour relations in the region. The inclusion of ultra-nationalists and ultra-Orthodox parties in Israel's formed coalition has far-reaching implications for Israel's democracy and its ability to manage peace and stability in the Middle East and with Palestinians. Evidence from the raging Israel-Hamas war leads one to conclude that the coalition is being used and abused to undermine the international organisations and laws that prohibit Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian land. Secondary data was used to comprehend the complex dynamics of the coalition formed under the Netanyahu leadership, focusing on Israel's internal democracy and conflictual relations with Palestine and the region.

INTRODUCTION

Internationally, coalitions and their different categories have a protracted history of existence, formation and operations. Indeed, political coalitions are attached to party political systems and often use of political parties as the link between the state and electorates in the modern politics (Heywood, 2015). In essence, political coalitions are forged not only out of a common ideological standpoint but also through facing a common threat or enemy (Heywood, 2019). Scholarly political scientists have graduated beyond the what, who, and why to embrace the ontological and epistemological questions on how coalition governments impact governance and development. Within the multiparty democratic systems, coalitions are preferred to defuse the emergence of a dominant-party system. In conflict-saturated regions, democratic coalitions could be instrumental in accommodating cultures, ideologies of ethnic groups, traditions, and religions in order to promote access to opportunity and resources for inclusive governance and sustainable development (Gumede, 2023). Mithani and O'Brien (2021) view a coalition as a short-term alliance or collaboration of two or more political parties or groups that come together to work toward a shared objective, usually forming a government or gaining a majority in a legislative body. Conceptually, a coalition is a government made up of ministers or council members from various political parties, regardless of whether the parties have run against one another in elections (Dalmases, 2021). According to Beukes and De Visser (2021), a coalition government is the result of a convenient union of two or more political parties. Ndou (2022) highlights that coalitions are often established between parties to maximize their chances of achieving a specific goal or, more generally, to boost their electoral support.

Politics of coalitions is associated with electoral democracy (Bassin & Hunter, 2013). Thus, electoral democracy affords the electorates the golden democratic right to choose their representatives. An electoral democracy is “a democratic government based on a system that allows all citizens to choose one candidate for elected positions from a list of candidates” (Chauke, 2020, p. 38). In a democratic system of government, elections are tied to democracy, and democracy comes in different forms such as representative and direct democracy and others inclusive of authoritarian democracy (Held, 2006; Doorenspleet & Pellikaan, 2013). Representative democracy is a form of government in which the law is enacted by elected representatives (Heywood, 2019). This is different from direct democracy where larger numbers exert their dominance for compulsory compliance to smaller groups for their benefit (Held, 2006). Representative democracy is common in modern industrial and post-industrial societies (Ife, 2016, p. 141). Heywood (2019) holds that a representative democracy is limited to an indirect form of democracy. It is limited in that popular participation in government is infrequent and brief, being restricted to the periodic act of voting. On the other hand, there is a direct form of democracy where people engage directly in the country's governing procedure, and decisions are made directly by the public. If a new law or regulation is to be enacted, citizens have to vote against or in favour of it, and only then will it be approved or rejected (Germann & Serdult, 2017). It is also known as ‘pure democracy’ because there is no direct involvement of any intermediaries who make decisions on behalf of the citizens (Milic, Feller & Kubler, 2019). Direct democracy is a representation of common sovereignty and the right of citizens to make fundamental decisions directly with no intervention of their representatives (Colombo, 2018). No other model of democracy assures a greater degree of transparency and openness among the people and authorities. Public discussions and debates on major issues are held through participation (Mueller, Vatter & Schmid, 2016).

The democratic electoral principles aim to represent the core principle of making leaders responsive to citizens, which is accomplished through electoral competition for electorate approval under condi-

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