COUNTRY–ORGANISM GOVERNANCE ATLAS · ISRAEL · OCTOBER 2026

What Changed in Israel's Institutions Since 7 October

Three years on: what the courts, the Knesset, the media and the election machinery look like now, and what is still waiting on 27 October

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There is a clear movement, and it has a shape. The courts have held: they struck down the reasonableness law, voided the dismissal of the Attorney General and reversed election-committee disqualifications. The Knesset has meanwhile passed laws that change the rules around the courts, the Attorney General and the media, and several of them do not take effect until after the 27 October election. The measured indicators are lower, by modest amounts. That 7 October itself caused the movement is not established.

SECTION 1

Method

This note compares Israel's institutions in the week before 7 October 2023 with their state on 8 October 2026. "Before" means the values and laws in force on 30 September 2023. "Now" means the latest published values and events I could confirm.

Sources: a primary record where I could open one, otherwise at least two independent outlets from Times of Israel, ynet, Globes, the Jerusalem Post, Reuters, AP and Bloomberg. State-funded, advocacy and republishing outlets are not used as support. Vote counts come from press reports, not the Knesset record, which I have not yet checked.

Tags: F = a fact confirmed by a primary page or by two independent sources. C = sources disagree. S = my reading. [1 src] = one source only. Where I found one source, the text says so. Where I found nothing, it says "insufficient data".

I am an Israeli citizen and the sole author of this analysis. It is a structured analytical opinion at Stage 0 and not a prediction.

SECTION 2

The numbers

Every independent rights, judiciary, information and voice indicator I could pull is lower now than in the vintage in force in September 2023. Election and corruption indicators are not.

INDICATOR	BEFORE	NOW	CHANGE
Freedom House, total	77 (2023 ed.)	73 (2026)	-4, all in civil liberties
RSF press freedom	57.57, rank 97 (2023 ed.)	46.46, rank 116 of 180 (2026)	-11.11
V-Dem Liberal Democracy (v16)	0.640 (2022)	0.588 (2025)	-0.052
V-Dem judicial constraints	0.920	0.857	-0.063
World Bank Voice and Accountability	0.610 (2022)	0.448 (2024)	-0.162
World Bank Rule of Law	0.775	0.636	-0.139
V-Dem free and fair elections	0.875	0.873	-0.002
TI Corruption Perceptions Index	62 or 63 (2022; sources conflict)	62 (2025, rank 35)	about 0
World Bank Control of Corruption	0.885	0.947	+0.062

V-Dem's 68 percent intervals overlap between 2022 and 2025 for every series I checked, and the series are not independent: they draw on overlapping expert pools, and the World Bank indicators draw on several of the others. Read the table as one finding repeated, not as many confirmations. The 2025 World Bank values are not yet published.

SECTION 3

Institution by institution

The courts: judicial review

F

BEFORE	A law removing the court's power to review the reasonableness of government decisions had passed in July 2023. A full 15-justice hearing was set for 12 September 2023. The ruling was pending.
NOW	The court struck the law down 8 to 7 on 1 January 2024, the first time it had struck down a Basic Law amendment. It has since voided the dismissal of the Attorney General and reversed election-committee disqualifications (below). The law that changes how its judges are chosen has passed but is not yet in force.
READING	The check held. What changed is the rule for renewing it, and that change is waiting for the election (next section).

The courts: how judges are chosen

F; [1 SRC] ON THE VOTE COUNT AND THE 2026 COURT PROCEEDINGS

BEFORE	The nine-member Judicial Selection Committee included two representatives of the Israel Bar Association. A Supreme Court appointment needed seven votes.
NOW	The Knesset passed a law on 27 March 2025, with the opposition walking out of the final vote, that removes the two Bar representatives and replaces them with two public representatives, one appointed by the coalition and one by the opposition. A Supreme Court appointment then needs a simple majority of the nine, which must include one coalition-side and one opposition-side member (Globes, Jerusalem Post). It takes effect when the next Knesset convenes. The Jerusalem Post alone reports the vote as 67 to 1 and describes a deadlock mechanism; Globes gives no count. An 11-justice panel heard petitions on 21 June 2026 and the Knesset and government filed responses on 22 July (Jerusalem Post only). I found no ruling reported as of 8 October.
READING	This is the largest structural change on the calendar. My reading (S): it does not capture the current court. It sets the terms on which the next one is chosen, by whoever governs after 27 October, and an opposition-led government could repeal it before it takes effect.

The Attorney General and legal advisers

F; C ON THE VOTE COUNT

BEFORE	The Attorney General was in office, and her legal opinions bound the government.
NOW	In August 2025 the government voted to dismiss her and the High Court froze the decision. On 14 December 2025 a seven-justice panel voided it 7 to 0, ruling that the cabinet resolution changing the dismissal process was adopted without a proper basis (Times of Israel, Bloomberg). On 15 July 2026 the Knesset passed a law that ends the binding force of her legal opinions, lets the government adopt a court position different from hers, and gives the coalition effective control over how she is appointed and dismissed. The Times of Israel and the Jerusalem Post report the vote as 65 to 51; ynet reports 61 to 51. It takes effect in January 2027, two months after the election. Petitions asking the High Court to strike it down have been filed. Her authority as head of the prosecution is unchanged; the coalition says it will pursue that separately if re-elected (Times of Israel).
READING	Three outlets agree on the content and the date and disagree by four votes on the count, so I tag the count contested until the Knesset record is checked. A bill to place ministry legal advisers under directors-general, advanced in January 2026, was not confirmed as passed: insufficient data.

The media

F; [1 SRC] ON THE DECEMBER 2025 EXTENSION

BEFORE	No law allowed the government to close a foreign broadcaster.
NOW	A law adopted in April 2024 as wartime legislation, tied to the state of emergency and aimed mainly at Al Jazeera, was extended on 23 December 2025 (22 to 10) to 31 December 2027. A single favourable opinion from security agencies is enough to order a shutdown, with no court approval, and the law applies even without a state of emergency (Times of Israel). On 16 July 2026 the Knesset passed a broadcasting reform 53 to 48 that creates a new broadcast authority, disbands the Second Authority for Television and Radio, and lets the communications minister appoint six of the nine members of its council from a search committee's recommendations (Globes). On 19 July Justice Ofer Grosskopf froze the provisions due to take effect immediately; the rest of the law is not suspended and a second part of the reform is to be advanced separately (Jerusalem Post, Globes).
READING	The first law is in force. The second is passed and partly frozen. RSF's 2026 score of 46.46 predates the second.

Emergency powers

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BEFORE	A state of emergency in force since 1948, renewed by the Knesset every year, with no automatic sunset.
NOW	The same. In addition, on 28 February 2026, at the start of the operation against Iran, the defence minister declared a special situation on the home front under the Civil Defense Law; the government extended it on 1 March to 12 March (Israel Democracy Institute, ynet). That is a time-limited instrument that activates Home Front Command powers. It is not a second state of emergency. Whether it was extended past 12 March: insufficient data.
READING	The architecture did not change. A narrower instrument was used on top of it.

Accountability for 7 October

F; C ON ONE DATE

BEFORE	Not applicable.
NOW	As of 22 July 2026 no inquiry of any kind had been established. A coalition bill for a politically appointed commission (three members from the coalition, three from the opposition) passed a first reading 59 to 0 with the opposition boycotting; ynet dates it 6 July and the Jerusalem Post places it in June, so I mark the date contested. The coalition was not expected to advance it further, and the government told the High Court it could not finish the legislation and plans to complete it after the election. Petitions asking the High Court to order a state commission are pending, and the government argues the court has no authority to order one (Jerusalem Post, Times of Israel).
READING	The mechanism for institutional learning from the deadliest attack in Israel's history has not been built. This is the only row where the "now" is an absence.

Elections and the electoral machinery

F; [1 SRC] ON THE 4 OCTOBER RULING

BEFORE	Five elections between April 2019 and November 2022, all results accepted.
NOW	The Knesset dissolved in July and the election is on 27 October. The Central Elections Committee, chaired by Justice Noam Sohlberg, voted 19 to 5 (two abstaining) on 23 September to disqualify Hadash lawmaker Ofer Cassif. On 2 October the Supreme Court reversed that, 7 to 2 on Cassif and unanimously for the United Arab List and the Joint List, and Balad's Sami Abu Shehadeh withdrew (Jerusalem Post, ynet). On 24 September the committee voted 19 to 10, with one abstention, against disqualifying the whole Otzma Yehudit slate (ynet, Jerusalem Post). On 4 October the High Court dismissed The Democrats' petition to bar it, on procedural grounds and without ruling on the merits (Jerusalem Post only).
READING	The machinery is working, and the court is its final arbiter. V-Dem's free and fair elections score has not moved (0.875 to 0.873).

The Basic Laws	F; C ON THE EFFECT
BEFORE	Torah study had no Basic Law.
NOW	On 13 July 2026 the Knesset passed Basic Law: Torah Study, 63 to 52, in a softened version (ynet, Jerusalem Post). The Jerusalem Post reports critics saying it could make it harder for courts to challenge arrangements that exempt yeshiva students from military service; ynet makes a similar assessment in its own voice and names no critics.
READING	The effect on the courts is a claim by critics and press assessment, not a finding. I include it because a Basic Law changes the ground the courts work on.

SECTION 4

Scorecard

AREA	DIRECTION	IN ONE LINE	TAG
Judicial review	Held	Reasonableness law struck down; no check lost	F
Judicial selection	Rules changed, not yet in force	Takes effect with the next Knesset	F
Attorney General	Rules changed, not yet in force	Law passed 15 July (vote reported as 65-51 and 61-51); effective January 2027; petitions filed	F, C on the vote
Media	Weaker	Foreign-broadcaster law in force to end-2027; broadcasting law passed, partly frozen	F, [1 src]
Emergency powers	Unchanged, narrower tool used	Home front declaration, 28 February 2026	F
Accountability for 7 October	Absent	No inquiry established; political bill passed first reading only	F, C on one date
Elections	Working	Court reversed disqualifications (2 October)	F, [1 src]
Public trust	Insufficient data	IDI publishes by institution in charts only	n/a

SECTION 5

What is waiting on the calendar

Several of the changes above are written to take effect after the election, not before it.

WHEN	WHAT
27 October 2026	Election.

WHEN	WHAT
When the next Knesset convenes	Judicial Selection Committee law takes effect.
January 2027	Attorney General law takes effect (1 January per the Jerusalem Post).
31 December 2027	Foreign-broadcaster law expires, unless extended again.
Not yet dated	Any High Court ruling on the Judicial Selection Committee law, the Attorney General law and the broadcasting reform.

> That is why the election is a structural event and not only a political one. A returning coalition lets these laws take effect. An opposition coalition can repeal them first. I do not predict which. The framework does not.

SECTION 6

Is it 7 October?

Direction is clear. Cause is not.

The judicial overhaul fight and the attack sit in the same 2023 coding year. Of V-Dem's 2022 to 2025 fall, the 2023 year holds 77 percent of civil liberties, 57 percent of rule of law, 46 percent of Liberal Democracy, 41 percent of judicial constraints, 35 percent of free expression and none of legislative constraints. From 2018 to 2022 the same series were rising.

RSF had already fallen 2.05 points in the last edition before the attack, then 4.34, 2.18 and 4.60 in the three after. Three of Freedom House's four points came in the 2024 edition, which covers 2023. World Bank Political Stability has fallen every year since 2018.

My reading (S): the decline began with the overhaul and its protests. The attack and the war added to it, and then supplied the legal route for some measures: the foreign-broadcaster law was passed as temporary wartime legislation. A clean split between the two is not possible with annual data. A chart read at two dates tells you the patient is worse. It does not tell you why.

On the framework's thresholds, read backwards, one hard gate was active in September 2023, the emergency architecture. Two are active now: the press-freedom gate crossed only with the 2026 RSF edition. The earlier count is my retrospective application of the thresholds, not a published finding.

SECTION 7

What I could not establish

- Vote counts are from press reports, not the Knesset record. The Attorney General law is reported as 65 to 51 by two outlets and 61 to 51 by a third. The Knesset record is still to be checked for every vote quoted here.
- The 67 to 1 vote on the March 2025 Judicial Selection Committee law is reported by the Jerusalem Post only; Globes and the Times of Israel give no count.

- Institutional trust before and after: the Israel Democracy Institute publishes it in charts only, and my extraction was not reliable enough to quote.
- Any High Court ruling on the Judicial Selection Committee law, the Attorney General law or the broadcasting reform after the dates given above: none found, which is not proof that none exists.
- Whether the January 2026 bills on ministry legal advisers and civil-service appointments passed.
- One-source items are marked in the text: the 2025 vote count and the 2026 court proceedings on the Judicial Selection Committee law, the December 2025 extension of the foreign-broadcaster law (Times of Israel only among the outlets I use), and the 4 October High Court ruling on Otzma Yehudit.
- Whether the Feb 2026 home front declaration was extended beyond 12 March.
- A dated, within-year comparison would need event-level data (protest and detention counts, RSF's monthly barometer). I did not pull it.
- Minority and civil-society protection since 7 October is not covered here. It needs its own sourced note.

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