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Basic Laws

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Powers and Functions
of the Knesset

Special thanks to the
Ministry of Foreign
Affairs for the
translation

Basic Law: The Knesset - 1958

What the Knesset is

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Composition

Electoral system

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Who shall not be a candidate

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Declaration of allegiance by members of the Knesset

1. The Knesset is the parliament of the State.
2. The place of sitting of the Knesset is Jerusalem.
3. The Knesset shall, upon its election, consist of one hundred and twenty members.
4. The Knesset shall be elected by general, national, direct, equal, secret and proportional elections, in accordance with the Knesset Elections Law; this section shall not be varied save by a majority of the members of the Knesset.
5. Every Israel national of or over the age of eighteen years shall have the right to vote in elections to the Knesset unless a court has deprived him of that right by virtue of any Law; the Elections Law shall determine the time at which a person shall be considered to be eighteen years of age for the purpose of the exercise of the right to vote in elections to the Knesset.
6. Every Israel national who on the day of the admission of a candidates list containing his name is twenty-one years of age or over shall have the right to be elected to the Knesset unless a court has deprived him of that right by virtue of any Law.
7. The following shall not be candidates for the Knesset:

- (1) the President of the State;
- (2) the two Chief Rabbis;
- (3) a judge (shofet), so long as he holds office;
- (4) a judge (dayan) of a religious court, so long as he holds office;
- (5) the State Comptroller;
- (6) the Chief of the General Staff of the Defence Army of Israel;
- (7) rabbis and ministers of other religions, so long as they hold office;
- (8) senior State employees and senior Army officers of such grades or ranks and in such functions as shall be determined by Law.

8. The term of office of the Knesset shall be four years from the day on which it is elected.

9. The elections to the Knesset shall take place on the third Tuesday of the month of Cheshvan in the year in which the tenure of the outgoing Knesset ends.

10. Election day shall be a day of rest, but transport services and other public services shall function normally.

11. The results of the elections shall be published in Reshumot within fourteen days from election day.

12. The Knesset shall convene for its first meeting on Monday in the second week following the week in which the election results are published, at four o'clock in the afternoon, or, if that day is a festival or the eve of festival, on the workday next following the festival.

13. The Knesset shall be opened by the President of the State or, in his absence, by the oldest Knesset member present; if the President of the State opens the Knesset, he shall hand over the chairmanship of the meeting to the oldest Knesset member present.

14. When the oldest Knesset member has opened the first meeting of the Knesset or taken over the chairmanship thereof, he shall make his declaration of allegiance as a Knesset member; the declaration shall read as follows:

"I pledge myself to bear allegiance to the State of Israel and faithfully to discharge my mandate in the Knesset."

When the oldest Knesset member has made his declaration of allegiance, he shall read the text once more to the members of the Knesset, and each of them in turn shall rise and declare:

"I pledge myself".

Declaration after the opening meeting

15. A Knesset member who was not present at the opening meeting or who became a Knesset member after that meeting shall make his declaration of allegiance at the first meeting that he attends; the chairman of the meeting shall read to him the text of the declaration, and the member shall rise and declare:

"I pledge myself."

Failure to make declaration

16. Where the Chairman of the Knesset has called upon a member of the Knesset to make his declaration of allegiance and the member has not done so, the member shall not enjoy the rights of a member of the Knesset so long as he has not made the declaration.

Immunity of Knesset members

Immunity of Knesset buildings

Procedure and rules

Chairman and Vice-Chairmen

Committees

Commissions of inquiry

Government member who is not a member of the Knesset

Quorum

Majority

17. The members of the Knesset shall have immunity; particulars shall be prescribed by Law.

18. The building of the Knesset shall have immunity; particulars shall be prescribed by Law.

19. The Knesset shall itself prescribe its procedure; in so far as such procedure has not been prescribed by Law, the Knesset shall prescribe it by rules; so long as the procedure has not been prescribed as aforesaid, the Knesset shall follow its accepted practice and routine.

20. The Knesset shall elect from among its members a Chairman and Vice-Chairmen.

21. The Knesset shall elect from among its members permanent committees, and it may elect from among its members committees for specific matters; the functions, powers and procedure of the committees shall, in so far as they are not prescribed by Law, be prescribed by the Rules.

22. The Knesset may appoint commissions of inquiry - either by empowering one of the permanent committees in that behalf or by electing a commission from among its members - to investigate matters designated by the Knesset; the powers and functions of a commission of inquiry shall be prescribed by the Knesset; every commission of inquiry shall include also representatives of party groups which do not participate in the Government, in accordance with the relative strength of the party groups in the Knesset.

23. A member of the Government who is not a member of the Knesset shall, as to everything relating to the Knesset, have the same status as a member of the Government who is a member of the Knesset, except that he shall not have the right to vote.

24. The Knesset shall hold debates and pass decisions whatever the number of members present.

25. Save as otherwise provided by Law, the Knesset shall pass its decisions by a majority of those

	participating in the voting - those abstaining not being reckoned as participating - and the voting procedure shall be prescribed by the Rules.
Meetings	26. The meetings of the Knesset shall be held at its place of sitting: Provided that in special circumstances the Chairman of the Knesset may, in consultation with the Vice-Chairmen, convene the Knesset elsewhere. The meetings of the Knesset shall take place on workdays.
Publicity of meetings	27. The Knesset shall sit in public unless it has been decided, under such conditions and in such manner as has been prescribed by the Rules, that it shall sit in camera.
Publication - open meetings	28. The publication of proceedings taken and utterances made at an open meeting is not restricted and does not entail any criminal or civil liability: Provided that the chairman of the meeting may, in such manner as has been prescribed by the Rules, prohibit the publication of anything the publication of which may, in his opinion, prejudice the security of the State.
Publication - closed meetings	29. The publication of proceedings taken and utterances made at a closed meeting is prohibited in so far as it has not been permitted in the manner prescribed by the Rules.
Prohibited publication	30. A person who publishes anything the publication of which is prohibited under the preceding two sections is liable to the penalties prescribed by Law.
Sessions	31. The Knesset shall hold two sessions a year; one of them shall open within four weeks after the Feast of Tabernacles, the other within four weeks after Independence Day; the aggregate duration of the two sessions shall not be less than eight months.
Time for opening of sessions	32. If the Knesset has not been convened within the four weeks referred to in the preceding section, it shall convene on Monday in the fifth week, at four o'clock in the afternoon.
Convening of the Knesset out of season	33. In addition to the aforementioned sessions, the Chairman of the Knesset shall convene the Knesset upon the demand of thirty members of the Knesset or upon the demand of the Government.
Dissolution of the Knesset	34. The Knesset shall not decide to dissolve itself before the expiration of its term of office save by adopting a Law for that purpose.
Date of elections after dissolution of the Knesset	35. The Law concerning the dissolution of the Knesset shall contain a provision as to the date of the elections to the next Knesset.
Term of office of the Knesset after dissolution	36. If the Knesset decides to dissolve itself, the term of office of the next Knesset shall run until the month of Cheshvan next following the termination of four years from the day of its election.
Continuity of the Knesset	37. The outgoing Knesset shall continue to hold office until the convening of the incoming Knesset.
Extension of validity of enactments	38. Any enactment due to expire during the last two months of the term of office of the outgoing Knesset or within four months after the Knesset has decided to dissolve itself or during the first three months of the term of office of the incoming Knesset shall continue in force until the expiration of the said three months.
Remuneration of members of the Knesset	39. The members of the Knesset shall receive a remuneration as provided by Law.
Resignation of member of the Knesset	40. A member of the Knesset may resign his office; resignation shall be by personal presentation of a letter of resignation by the resigning member to the Chairman of the Knesset or, if the member is unable to present the letter of resignation personally, by transmission thereof in the manner prescribed by the Rules; the letter of resignation shall be signed on the day of the presentation or transmission.
Consequences of resignation	41. If a member of the Knesset tenders his resignation, his membership of the Knesset shall cease forty-eight hours after the letter of resignation reaches the Chairman of the Knesset, unless the member withdraws resignation before then.
Termination of tenure of member of the Knesset	42. If a member of the Knesset is elected or appointed to one of the posts the holders of which are debarred from being candidates for the Knesset, his membership of the Knesset shall cease upon the election or appointment.
Replacement of Knesset member	43. If the seat of a member of the Knesset falls vacant, it shall be filled by the candidate who, in the list of candidates which included the name of the late member, figured immediately after the last of the elected candidates.
Law not to be affected by emergency regulations	44. Notwithstanding the provision of any other law, this Law cannot be varied, suspended, or made subject to conditions, by emergency regulations.
Entrenched sections	45. Section 44, or this section, shall not be varied save by a majority of eighty members of the Knesset.

DAVID BEN-GURION
Prime Minister

YITZCHAK BEN-ZVI
President of the State

* Passed by the Knesset on the 22nd Shevat, 5718 (12th February, 1958) and published in Sefer Ha-Chukkim No. 244 of the 30th Shevat. 5718 (20th February, 1958). p. 69; the Bill was published in Hatzot Chok No. 180 of 5714, p. 18.

Basic Law: The Knesset (Amendment No. 1)*

Amendment of section 9	1. In section 9 of the Basic Law: The Knesset**, the full stop at the end shall be replaced by a comma, to be followed by the words : "But if the year which preceded that year was a leap year, the elections shall take place on the first Tuesday of that month."
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DAVID BEN-GURION
Prime Minister

YITZCHAK BEN-ZVI
President of the State

* Passed by the Knesset on the 16th Tammuz, 5719 (22nd July, 1959) and published in Sefer Ha-Chukkim No. 285 of the 24th Tammuz, 5719 (30th July, 1959), p. 146 ; the Bill and an Explanatory Note were published in Hatzot Chok No. 403 of 5719, p. 438.

** Sefer Ha-Chukkim No. 244 of 5718, p. 69; LSI vol. XII, p. 85.

Basic Law: The Knesset (Amendment No. 2)***Amendment of section 7**

Paragraph (7) of section 7 of the Basic Law: The Knesset** shall be replaced by the following paragraph:

"(7) rabbis and ministers of other religions while holding office for a remuneration."

DAVID BEN-GURION
Prime Minister

YITZCHAK BEN-ZVI
President of the State

* Passed by the Knesset on the 23rd Tammuz, 5719 (29th July, 1959) and published in Sefer Ha-Chukkim No. 286 of the 2nd Av, 5719 (6th August, 1959), p. 158; the Bill and an Explanatory Note were published in Hatzot Chok No. 404 of 5719, p. 448.

** Sefer Ha-Chukkim No. 244 Of 5718, p. 69; LSI vol. XII, p. 85.

Basic Law: The Knesset (Amendment No. 3)***Addition of section 46**

1. In the Basic Law: The Knesset**, the following section shall be added after section 45:

"Special majority when required

46. The majority required by this Law for a variation of section 4, 44 or 45 shall be required for decisions of the Knesset plenary at every stage of law-making, except a debate on a motion for the Knesset agenda. In this section, "**variation**" means both an express and an implicit variation."

DAVID BEN-GURION
Prime Minister

YITZCHAK BEN-ZVI
President of the State

* Passed by the Knesset on the 2nd Av, 5719 (6th August, 1959) and published in Sefer Ha-Chukkim No. 291 of the 12th Av, 5719 (16th August, 1959), p. 210; the Bill and an Explanatory Note were published in Hatzot Chok No. 372 of 5719, p. 151.

** Sefer Ha-Chukkim No. 244 of 5718, p. 69; LSI vol. XII, p. 85.

Basic Law: The Knesset (Amendment No. 4)***Addition of section 20A**

1. In the Basic Law: The Knesset**, the following section shall be inserted after section 20:

"Acting Chairman and Interim Chairman of Knesset

20A.(a) Whenever the Chairman of the Knesset leaves the territory of the State, a Vice-Chairman shall serve as Acting Chairman until his return.

(b) Whenever the Chairman of the Knesset notifies the House Committee, or if the House Committee decides, that for reasons of health the Chairman of the Knesset is temporarily unable to carry out his functions, a Vice-Chairman shall serve as Acting Chairman until the Chairman notifies the House Committee or until the House Committee decides that the Chairman is no longer unable to carry out his functions.

(c) When the post of Chairman of the Knesset has fallen vacant - because the Chairman has resigned or has died or because the House Committee has decided that for reasons of health he is permanently unable to carry out his functions - a Vice-Chairman shall serve as Interim Chairman until the Knesset elects a new Chairman.

(d) The Vice-Chairman who is to serve as Acting Chairman or Interim Chairman of the Knesset shall be elected in that behalf by the House Committee.

(e) During his tenure as Acting Chairman or Interim Chairman of the Knesset, the Vice-Chairman shall serve in every capacity assigned to the Chairman of the Knesset by law, shall carry out every function imposed upon the Chairman of the Knesset by law and shall exercise every power vested in the Chairman of the Knesset by law.

(f) The provisions of this section shall also apply, mutatis mutandis, if the circumstances envisaged in subsection (a), (b) or (c) with regard to the Chairman of the Knesset exist with regard to a Vice-Chairman who is serving as Acting Chairman or Interim Chairman."

LEVI ESHKOL
Prime Minister

SHNEUR ZALMAN SHAZAR
President of the State

* Passed by the Knesset on the 2nd Adar Bet, 5727 (14th March, 1967) and published in Sefer Ha-Chukkim No. 493 of the 11th Adar Bet, 5727 (23th March, 1967), p. 24; the Bill and an Explanatory Note were published in Hatzot Chok No. 710 of 5727, p. 28.

** Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5718, p. 69 - LSI vol. XII, p. 85; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5719, pp. 146, 158 and 210 - LSI vol. XIII, pp. 155, 167 and 228.

Basic Law: The Knesset (Amendment No. 5)*

Amendment of section 31

1. In the Basic Law: The Knesset**, section 31 shall be re-marked as section 31(a) and the following subsection shall be added thereafter:

"(b) If a Knesset has been elected otherwise than at the date prescribed in section 9, the House Committee shall prescribe the times of the two terms in the year in which it was elected."

YITZCHAK RABIN
Prime Minister

EFRAIM KATZIR
President of the State

* Passed by the Knesset on the 27th Tammuz, 5734 (17th July, 1974) and published in Sefer Ha-Chukkim No. 741 of the 6th Av, 5734 (25th July, 1974), p. 108; the Bill and an Explanatory Note were published in Hatza'ot Chok No. 1129 of 5734, p. 234.

** Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5718, p. 69 - LSI vol. XII, p. 85; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5719, pp. 146, 158 and 210 - LSI vol. XIII, pp. 155, 167 and 228; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5727, p. 24 - LSI vol. XXI, p. 14.

Basic Law: The Knesset (Amendment No. 6)***Amendment of section 24**

1. In section 24 of the Basic Law: The Knesset**, the words "**save as otherwise provided by Law**" shall be added at the end.

YIGAL YADIN
Deputy Prime Minister
Acting Prime Minister

YITZCHAK NAVON
President of the State

* Passed by the Knesset on the 3rd Av, 5740 (16th July, 1980) and published in Sefer Ha-Chukkim No. 977 of the 12th Av, 5740 (25th July, 1980), p. 160; the Bill and an Explanatory Note were published in Hatza'ot Chok No. 1399 of 5739, p. 176.

** Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5718; LSI vol. XII, p. 85; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5719, pp. 146, 158 and 210 - LSI vol. XIII, pp. 155, 167 and 228; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5727, p. 24 - LSI vol. XXI, p. 14; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5734, p. 108 - LSI vol. XXVIII, p. 112.

Basic Law: The Knesset (Amendment No. 7)***Addition of sections 42A and 42B**

1. In the Basic Law: The Knesset**, the following sections shall be inserted after section 42:

"Knesset Member who has been convicted"

42A.(a) The Knesset may, by resolution, remove a Knesset Member from office if it finds that he is not worthy of his office because he has been convicted, by final judgment, of a criminal offence and been sentenced to a penalty of actual (i.e., not suspended - Tr.) imprisonment for a term of one year or more.

(b) The Knesset shall not remove a Knesset Member from office save following a complaint brought before the House Committee by at least ten Knesset Members and upon the proposal of the House Committee. A resolution of the Knesset to remove a Knesset Member from office shall not be passed save by a two-thirds majority of the Members of the Knesset.

(c) The House Committee shall not propose, and the Knesset shall not resolve upon, the removal of a Knesset Member from office before he has been given an opportunity to be heard."

Suspension

42B.(a) Where a Knesset Member has been convicted of a criminal offence, the House Committee may, upon the proposal of any Knesset Member, suspend him from office as a Knesset Member for the period during which the judgment is not final.

(b) Where a Knesset Member has been convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to imprisonment, the House Committee may, upon the proposal of any Knesset Member, suspend him from his office as a Knesset Member for the period during which he is undergoing his penalty of imprisonment.

(c) The House Committee shall not pass a resolution under this section before the Knesset Member has been given an opportunity to be heard."

Amendment of section 43

2. Section 43 of the Basic Law: The Knesset shall be re-marked as section 43 (a) and the following subsection shall be added thereafter:

"(b) Where a person's membership of the Knesset has been suspended under section 42B, his seat shall become vacant for the period of the suspension and his place shall be taken by the candidate referred to in subsection (a). If he resumes his seat, the last of the list of candidates who became a Knesset Member shall cease to hold office, but his right to become again a Knesset Member thereafter, by virtue of the provision of subsection (a), shall not be affected thereby."

MENACHEM BEGIN
Prime Minister

YITZCHAK NAVON
President of the State

* Passed by the Knesset on the 26th Adar Bet, 5741, (1st April, 1981) and published in Sefer Ha-Chukkim No. 1016 of the 3rd Nisan, 5741 (7th April, 1981), p. 168; the Bill and an Explanatory Note were published in Hatza'ot Chok No. 1519 of 5741, p. 243.

** Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5718, p. 69 - LSI vol. XII, p. 85; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5719, pp. 146, 158 and 210 - LSI vol. XIII, pp. 155, 167 and 228; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5727, p. 24 - LSI vol. XXI, p. 14; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5734, p. 108 - LSI vol. XXVIII, p. 112; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5740, p. 160 - LSI vol. XXXIV, p. 177.

Basic Law: The Knesset (Amendment No. 8)*

Amendment of section 6

1. In section 6 of the Basic Law: The Knesset**, after the words "unless a court has deprived him of that right by virtue of any Law" there shall be added the words "or he has been sentenced to a penalty of actual (i.e., not suspended - Tr.) imprisonment for a term of five years or more for an offence against the security of the State designated in that behalf by the Knesset Elections Law and five years have not yet passed since the day when he terminated his period of imprisonment".

MENACHEM BEGIN
Prime Minister

YITZCHAK NAVON
President of the State

* Passed by the Knesset on the 26th Adar Bet, 5741, (1st April, 1981) and published in Sefer Ha-Chukkim No. 1016 of the 3rd Nisan, 5741 (7th April, 1981), p. 168; the Bill and an Explanatory Note were published in Hatza'ot Chok No. 1525 of 5741, p. 288.

** Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5718, p. 69 - LSI vol. XII, p. 85; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5719, pp. 146, 158 and 210 - LSI vol. XIII, pp. 155, 167 and 228; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5727, p. 24 - LSI vol. XXI, p. 14; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5734, p. 108 - LSI vol. XXVIII, p. 112; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5740, p. 160 - LSI vol. XXXIV, p. 177; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5741, p. 168 - supra, p. 190.

Basic Law: The Knesset (Amendment No. 9)*

Amendment of section 7A

1. In the Basic Law: The Knesset**, the following section shall be inserted after section 7:

"Prevention of participation of candidates' list

7A. A candidates' list shall not participate in elections to the Knesset if its objects or actions, expressly or by implication, include one of the following:

- (1) negation of the existence of the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish people;
- (2) negation of the democratic character of the State;
- (3) incitement to racism."

Amendment of Knesset Elections Law

2. In the Knesset Elections Law (Consolidated Version), 5729-1969*** -

(1) in section 63, the words "A candidates' list duly submitted" shall be replaced by the words "A candidates' list not prevented by section 7A of the Basic Law: the Knesset from participating in elections to the Knesset and duly submitted";

(2) in section 64 -

(a) the marginal note shall be amended to read "Appeal";

(b) the following subsection shall be inserted after subsection (a);

"(a) 1) Where the Central Committee has approved a candidates' list, the Attorney-General or the Chairman of the Central Committee or at least one quarter of the members of the Election Committee may, not later than the 18th day before election day, appeal to the Supreme Court on the ground that the list is prevented by section 7A of the Basic Law: the Knesset from participating in elections to the Knesset.";

(3) in section 65, the words "or by the Supreme Court" shall be replaced by the words "or as decided by the Supreme Court".

SHIMON PERES
Prime Minister

CHAIM HERZOG
President of the State

* Passed by the Knesset on the 13th Av, 5745 (31st July, 1985) and published in Sefer Ha-Chukkim No. 1155 of the 20th Av, 5745 (7th August, 1985), p. 196; the Bill and an Explanatory Note were published in Hatza'ot Chok No. 1728 of 5745, p. 193.

** Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5718, p. 69 - LSI vol. XII, p. 85; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5741, p. 168 - LSI vol. XXXV, p. 192.

*** Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5729, p. 103 - LSI vol. XXIII, p. 110; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5743, p. 106 - LSI vol. XXXVII, p. 125.

Basic Law: The Knesset (Amendment No. 10)*

Amendment of section 6

1. Section 6 of the Basic Law: The Knesset** shall be re-marked as section 6(a) and the following subsection shall be added thereafter:

"(b) Where an Israeli national is a national also of another state, and the law of that state enables his release from its nationality, he shall not be a candidate for the Knesset unless, by the time of the submission of the candidates' list including his name and to the satisfaction of the chairman of the Knesset Central Elections Committee, he has done everything required on his part to be released therefrom. For this purpose, a person shall not be regarded as a national of another state unless, at any time, he had a passport of that state or another document attesting to his being a national of that state."

Application

2. Section 1 shall apply in respect of the elections to the Twelfth Knesset and onwards.

YITZCHAK SHAMIR
Prime Minister

CHAIM HERZOG
President of the State

* Passed by the Knesset on the 20th Iyar, 5747 (19th May, 1987) and published in Sefer Ha-Chukkim No. 1215 of the 28th Iyar, 5747 (27th May, 1987), p. 120; the Bill and an Explanatory Note were published in Hatzot Chok No. 1748 of 5745, p. 268.

** Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5718, p. 69 - LSI vol. XII p. 85; Sefer Ha-Chukkim of 5745, p. 196 - LSI vol. XXXIX.



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