

## The Knesset (1958)

(Updated January 2003)

Note: The [official translation](#) (up to and including Amendment 10) of this basic law dated from 1987, since which time an additional 25 amendments were passed. This new - unofficial - translation of the law incorporates all amendments to date (January 2003).

What the Knesset is	1. The Knesset is the parliament of the state.
Place of sitting	2. The Knesset sits in Jerusalem.
Composition	3. The Knesset shall, upon its election, consist of one hundred and twenty members.
Electoral system	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 altered save by a majority of the members of the Knesset.
The right to vote	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. 5A. The list of candidates for the Knesset shall be submitted only by a party; the means of association and registering of the parties and the conditions for submitting a list of candidates shall be determined by law.
The right to be elected (Amendments Nos. 8, 10, 22, 26)	6. (a) Every Israel national who on the day of the submission 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 the law or he has been sentenced, by a final verdict, to actual imprisonment for a term of over three months and on the day of submission of the list of candidates seven years have not passed since the day he concluded serving his term of imprisonment, unless the chairman of the Central Elections Committee has determined that the crime of which he has been convicted, in accordance with the circumstances, does not bear moral turpitude. (b) [Annulled] (c) A candidate for the Knesset who has been sentenced as stated in Section (a) and whose sentence was finalized after the submission of the list of candidates and before he has begun to serve as a Knesset member, shall be treated as one who has withdrawn from the list of candidates that included his name, or from his membership in the Knesset, whichever the case, unless the chairman of the Central Elections Committee has

determined that the crime of which he has been convicted, in accordance with the circumstances, does not bear moral turpitude.

(d) The determination of the chairman of the Central Elections Committee, in accordance with Sections (a) and (c) will not be required if the court has ruled by law that the offense, in accordance with the circumstances, does bear moral turpitude.

(e) For the purpose of this section, "actual imprisonment" is the sum of all terms of actual detention which the convicted person must serve in a single continuous period, even if other sentences have been imposed, including suspended sentences that have been activated;

"offense" is each offense for which a period of actual imprisonment has been imposed.

Restriction of candidacy for MK who leaves his faction  
(Amendments Nos. 12 and 21)

6A. (a) A member of Knesset who leaves his faction and does not resign from office at the time of his leaving, shall not be included, in the election of the next Knesset, in the list of candidates submitted by a party that was represented by a faction of the outgoing Knesset; this regulation shall not apply to a faction split under circumstances determined by the Knesset Election Law.

(b) For the purposes of this section:

"resignation from a faction" - including a vote in the Knesset plenum not in accordance with the position of the faction concerning the expression of confidence or no confidence in the government; voting shall not be construed as resignation if the Knesset member has not received compensation in exchange for his vote;

"compensation" - directly or indirectly, by a promise or future commitment, including the assurance of a place on the list of Knesset candidates, or the appointment of the Knesset member himself or someone else to whatever position.

Who shall not be a candidate  
(Amendments No. 2, 21, and 33)

7. The following shall not be candidates for the Knesset:

(1) the president of the state;

(2) the two chief rabbis;

(3) a judge;

(4) a religious court judge;

(5) the state comptroller;

(6) the chief of the General Staff of the Israel Defense Forces;

(7) rabbis and ministers of other religions while holding paid office;

(8) senior civil servants and senior IDF officers of such ranks and positions as shall be determined by law;

(9) policemen and prison warders of such ranks and positions as shall be determined by law;

(10) employees of corporations established by law of such ranks

Prevention of participation of candidates list (Amendments Nos. 9 and 35)	and positions as shall be determined by law; unless they have ceased to serve in that position or job, as stated, before the deadline for submitting lists of candidates for the Knesset, and unless an earlier date has been set by law.
Term of office of the Knesset Date of elections (Amendment No. 1)	<p>7A. A candidates list shall not participate in elections to the Knesset, and a person shall not be a candidate for election to the Knesset, if the goals or actions of the list or the actions of the person, expressly or by implication, include one of the following:</p> <p>(1) negation of the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state;</p> <p>(2) incitement to racism;</p> <p>(3) support for armed struggle by a hostile state or a terrorist organization against the State of Israel.</p> <p>8. The term of office of the Knesset shall be four years from the day on which it is elected.</p> <p>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, but if the year which preceded that year was a leap year, the elections shall take place on the first Tuesday of that month.</p>
Extending the Knesset's term (Amendment No. 15)	<p>9A. (a) The Knesset shall not extend its term except by passing a law by a majority of 80 members and unless special circumstances exist that prevent the holding of elections at their proper time; the extension shall not exceed the time required by the above-mentioned circumstances; the election date shall be set by law.</p> <p>(b) Without impinging Section 34, the Knesset is entitled, by a majority decision of its members, to advance the date of elections as determined in accordance with Sub-section (a) above, on condition that the new date is not earlier than the date set for Knesset elections in accordance with Section 9.</p>
Election day is public holiday Publication of election results (Amendment No. 20)	<p>10. Election Day shall be a public holiday, but transportation services and other public services shall function normally.</p> <p>11. The results of the elections shall be published in the government gazette Reshumot within eight days of Election Day.</p>
Convening of the Knesset	<p>12. The Knesset shall convene for its first meeting on Monday of 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 first workday following the festival.</p>

Opening of the Knesset (Amendment No. 27)	13. The Knesset shall be opened by the president of the state or, in his absence, by the most veteran Knesset member present; if the president of the state opens the Knesset, he shall hand over the chairmanship of the meeting to the most veteran Knesset member present; under this basic law the "most veteran" is the one whose membership in the Knesset is the longest, whether continuously or cumulatively, and among those of equal seniority, the oldest.
The opening session (Amendment No. 23)	14. Arrangements for the opening session shall be determined by law and shall express the character of the State of Israel and its heritage.
Declaration of allegiance by members of the Knesset (Amendment No. 23)	15. (a) A Knesset member shall make a declaration of allegiance as follows: "I pledge myself to bear allegiance to the State of Israel and faithfully to discharge my mandate in the Knesset." (b) Arrangements for the declarations shall be set by law.
Non-declaration	16. If the speaker of the Knesset has called upon its members to make their declarations of allegiance and a member has not done so, that member shall not enjoy the rights of membership as long as he has not made the declaration.
Non-declaration due to double citizenship (Amendment No. 22)	16A. If a Knesset member holds an additional, non-Israeli citizenship, and the laws of the country whose citizenship he holds permit him to be released from such citizenship, he shall not declare allegiance until after he has done everything required on his part to be released from such citizenship, and he shall not enjoy the rights of a Knesset member until he makes his declaration.
Immunity of Knesset members	17. The members of the Knesset shall have immunity; particulars shall be prescribed by Law.
Immunity of Knesset buildings	18. The buildings of the Knesset shall have immunity; particulars shall be prescribed by Law.
Procedures and rules	19. The Knesset shall determine its procedures; in so far as such procedures have 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 custom and practice.
Speaker and Deputy- Speakers (Amendments Nos. 24, 27, and 34)	20. (a) The Knesset shall elect from among its members a speaker and deputy-speaker; until the speaker is elected, the most veteran Knesset member who is not the prime minister, the prime minister-elect, a minister or deputy minister, shall serve as acting speaker. (b) The Knesset shall be entitled by its rules to determine restrictions on the election of a Knesset member to serve as

Acting Speaker and  
Interim Speaker of  
Knesset  
(Amendments  
Nos. 4, 24, and 27)

speaker of the House or deputy speaker.

(c) The Knesset shall be entitled, by a majority vote of its members, to suspend the speaker or a deputy speaker or to determine restrictions on their office; particulars to be set by law.

(d) The Knesset shall be entitled, by a majority vote of its members or by a larger majority to be determined by law, to dismiss the speaker or a deputy speaker; particulars to be set by law.

20A.(a) Whenever the speaker of the Knesset leaves the territory of the state, a deputy speaker shall serve as acting speaker until his return.

(b) Whenever the speaker of the Knesset notifies the House Committee, or if the House Committee determines, that for reasons of health the speaker of the Knesset is temporarily unable to perform his duties, or the speaker announces that he is temporarily unable to perform his duties and the House Committee acknowledges his announcement, a deputy speaker shall serve as acting speaker until the speaker notifies the House Committee or until the House Committee determines that the speaker is no longer unable to perform his duties.

(c) When the post of speaker of the Knesset has fallen vacant - because the speaker has resigned or has died or because the House Committee has determined that for reasons of health he is permanently unable to perform his duties - a deputy-speaker shall serve as acting speaker until the Knesset elects a new speaker.

(c1) (1) If the speaker of the Knesset is suspended from his post by a decision in accordance with Section 20(c), a deputy speaker shall serve as acting speaker until the suspension is lifted or until the election of a new speaker, whichever case may be.

(2) If the speaker of the Knesset is removed from his post by a decision in accordance with Section 20(d), a deputy speaker shall serve as acting speaker until the election of a new speaker.

(d) The deputy speaker who is to serve as substitute speaker or acting Knesset speaker shall be elected in that behalf by the House Committee.

(e) During his tenure as substitute speaker or acting speaker of the Knesset, the deputy speaker shall serve in every capacity assigned to the speaker of the Knesset by law, shall perform every duty given the speaker of the Knesset by law, and shall exercise every power vested in the speaker of the Knesset by law.

(f) The provisions of this section shall also apply, mutatis mutandis, if the circumstances envisaged in Subsections (a), (b),

(c), or (c1) with regard to the speaker of the Knesset exist with regard to a deputy speaker who is serving as substitute speaker or acting speaker.

Committees  
(Amendments  
Nos. 13, 14, 16, and 28)

21. (a) The Knesset shall elect permanent committees from among its members and it may also elect committees from among its members for specific matters; the functions, powers, and procedures of the committees shall, in so far as they are not prescribed by law, be prescribed by the rules.

(b) The rules may determine regulations concerning the authority of the committees to summon an office holder or functionary of the Civil Service, a local authority, a religious council, a corporation established by law or a government corporation, and to require him to provide information on the activities of the body which he serves, unless such disclosure entails some violation of the law, of a professional commitment, or of an obligation of trust to which he is bound by law, and he shall be assured the rights of a witness before the court; the summons shall be issued via the minister concerned or with his knowledge, and for someone who is not in the Civil Service this shall be done by the head of the body in which the invitee serves; and the minister or the head of the body in which the invitee serves may inform the committee that he himself will appear in place of the invitee.

(c) [Annulled]

Knesset control over  
regulations  
(Amendment  
No. 30)

21A. (a) Regulations that are set by a minister and that determine criminal punishment if they are violated shall not take effect unless they are approved, before being issued, by the Knesset committee responsible for the subject matter; if the committee has not decided to approve or reject the regulations within 45 days from receiving them, the regulations shall be considered as approved.

(b) This section does not encroach upon the regulations of a Basic Law or other law.

Commissions  
of inquiry

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 also include representatives of factions which do not participate in the government, in accordance with the relative strength of the Knesset factions.

Cabinet  
member who is not a  
member

23. A cabinet member who is not a member of the Knesset shall, as to everything relating to the Knesset, have the same status as a cabinet member who is a member of the Knesset,

of the Knesset	except that he shall not have the right to vote.
Quorum (Amendment No. 6)	24. The Knesset shall hold debates and pass decisions whatever the number of members present, save as otherwise provided by law.
Majority	25. 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, unless otherwise provided by law.
Meetings	26. The meetings of the Knesset shall be held at its place of sitting; however, in special circumstances the speaker of the Knesset may, in consultation with the deputy speakers, convene the Knesset elsewhere. The meetings of the Knesset shall take place on workdays.
Openness of meetings (Amendment No. 17)	27. The Knesset shall meet publicly.
Publication (Amendment No. 17)	28. The publication of proceedings taken and utterances made at a Knesset session is not restricted and does not entail any criminal or civil liability. 29. [Annulled by Amendment No. 17.] 30. [Annulled by Amendment No. 17.]
Sessions (Amendments Nos. 5 and 29)	31. Regulations concerning the periods of Knesset sessions and the convening of the House out of session shall be set by law. 32. [Annulled by Amendment No. 31.] 33. [Annulled by Amendment No. 29.]
Dissolution of the Knesset (Amendment No. 15)	34. The Knesset shall not decide to dissolve itself before the expiration of its term of office, unless by passing a law for that purpose by a majority of members.
Date of elections after dissolution of the Knesset (Amendment No. 30)	35. The law concerning the dissolution of the Knesset shall contain a provision that the date of the elections to the next Knesset shall not be later than five months from the day the law is passed.
Term of office of the Knesset after dissolution	36. Once the Knesset decides to dissolve itself, the term of office of the next Knesset shall run until the next month of Cheshvan following the termination of four years from the day of its election.
Dissolution due to non- passage of the budget bill (Amendment No. 30)	36A. (a) If the state budget bill has not been passed within three months of the beginning of the fiscal year, the day following the conclusion of the above period (to be known as the determining day) shall be considered as if the Knesset had decided to dissolve itself before the end of its term, and early elections shall be held on the last Tuesday before the end of 90 days from

the determining day, unless the Knesset has decided by a majority of its members, within five days of the determining day, due to the proximity of the election date to a festival, holiday, or memorial day, to hold elections at a later date, but no later than 100 days from the determining day.

(b) Notwithstanding the regulations of Sub-section (a), if the state president has initiated measures to form a new government in accordance with Section 30 of the Basic Law: The Government, or elections to the Knesset have been held after the deadline for submitting the budget bill in accordance with Section 3 of the Basic Law: The State Economy, and before the end of three months from the beginning of the fiscal year, the determining day shall be as in Sub-section (a), three months from the beginning of the fiscal year or 45 days from the day the government is established, whichever is later.

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.

Salary of Knesset members

39. A Knesset member shall receive a salary as provided by law.

Resignation of Knesset member

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 speaker of the Knesset or, if the member is unable to present the letter personally, by delivery thereof in the manner prescribed by the rules; the letter of resignation shall be signed on the day of the presentation or delivery.

Consequences of resignation

41. If a member of the Knesset tenders his resignation, his Knesset membership shall expire forty-eight hours after the letter of resignation reaches the speaker of the Knesset, unless the member withdraws the resignation before then.

Termination of tenure or candidacy (Amendment No. 33)

42. If a member of the Knesset or an elected candidate for Knesset membership has been appointed to a position whose holder is barred from being a candidate for the Knesset, his membership in the Knesset or candidacy for the Knesset, whichever applies, ceases upon his election or his appointment to one of the above positions; for this purpose, "a candidate for the Knesset" is one whose name is included in the list of candidates for the Knesset, from the day the list is submitted until the day of the beginning of his tenure as a member of the

Knesset Member who has been convicted (Amendments Nos. 7, 18, 26, 32)	<p>Knesset.</p> <p>42A.(a) If a Knesset member has been convicted of a felony by a final verdict, and the court by its own initiative or at the request of the attorney-general has determined that the offense bears moral turpitude, his membership in the Knesset shall end on the day the court issued its final verdict, no matter if the offense was committed when he was a member of that same Knesset, a member of a previous Knesset, or before he was a member of Knesset.</p> <p>(b) Sub-section (a) shall apply also to a Knesset member whose verdict was made final after he began to serve as a member of Knesset; the request of the attorney-general in accordance with Sub-section (a) may be submitted as long as the verdict has not been made final; the request shall be submitted to the court that issued the verdict, and if an appeal has been filed, to the court of appeal.</p>
Suspension (Amendments Nos. 7 and 26)	<p>42B. (a) If a Knesset member has been convicted of a felony, 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 verdict is not final.</p> <p>(b) If a Knesset member has been convicted of a felony and sentenced to imprisonment, the House Committee may, upon the proposal of any Knesset member, suspend him from office as a Knesset member for the period during which he is serving his sentence.</p> <p>(b1) The regulations of this section shall also apply to a Knesset member who has been convicted of an offense as stated in Sub-section (a) or (b) before becoming a Knesset member.</p> <p>(c) The House Committee shall not pass a resolution under this section before the Knesset member has been given an opportunity to be heard.</p>
Replacement of Knesset member (Amendment No. 7)	<p>43. (a) If a Knesset member's position falls vacant, he shall be replaced from the list of candidates that included his name by the candidate whose name appears immediately after the last of the elected candidates.</p> <p>(b) If a person's membership in the Knesset has been suspended under section 42B, his position shall become vacant for the period of the suspension and his place shall be taken by the candidate referred to in Sub-section (a). If he resumes his position, the last person on the list of candidates who became a Knesset member shall cease to hold office, but his right to become a Knesset member thereafter, under Sub-section (a), shall not be impinged.</p>
Stability of the law	<p>44. Notwithstanding the provision of any other law, this law cannot be altered, suspended, or made subject to conditions, by</p>

	emergency regulations.
Rigidity of sections	45. Section 44, or this section, shall not be altered except by a majority of eighty Knesset members.
Application of rigidity (Amendment No. 15)	45A. Section 45 shall also apply with regard to altering Section 9A (a).
When a special majority is required (Amendments Nos. 3, 11, and 15)	46. Under this law, changing Sections 4, 9A, 34, 44, or 45 shall require a majority vote by the Knesset plenum for first, second, and third readings; under this section, "change" is either explicit or implicit."

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 Hatza'ot Chok No, 180 of 5714, p. 18.