

# Women in the Knesset: Compilation of Data Following the Elections to the Twenty-third Knesset

Written for International Women's Day 2020

Review

Written by: Ido Avgar and Etai Fiedelman

Approved by: Orly Almagor Lotan

Design and production: Knesset Printing and Publications Department

Date: 12 Adar 5780, 8 March 2020

## Table of Contents

---

Summary .....	1
.1 Female Knesset Members over Time.....	3
.2 Female Candidates and Elected Members, Sixteenth–Twenty-third Knessets .	4
.3 The Twenty-third Knesset—Analysis by List .....	9
.4 Female Knesset Functionaries .....	11
.5 Comparing Israel to the Rest of the World .....	15
.6 Quotas for the Fair Representation of Women in Political Parties .....	17
6.1 The Situation in Israel .....	18

## Summary

This document was prepared for International Women's Day, and it presents various statistics regarding women in the Knesset. It opens with data on the number of women elected to the Knesset since its establishment and then presents detailed statistics regarding the number of women who ran for and were elected to the Knesset since the Sixteenth Knesset (i.e., since the repeal of the direct election of the prime minister), while focusing on the Twenty-third Knesset. The document also presents data on the representation of female Knesset Members among the parliament's functionaries. Finally, it addresses the situation in Israel in comparison to the rest of the world and as regards the use of quotas in promoting the equal representation of women in parliaments.

The data on the representation of women are taken from the report in *Reshumot* [Official Government Gazette] of lists that ran for election to the Knesset, the Knesset website, and the Central Elections Committee. We emphasize that **this document is being published before the publication of the official results of the elections to the Twenty-third Knesset, and the data herein are based on the results of the elections accurate to 5 March 2020.**

The key findings of the document:

- **Thirty women were elected in the elections to the Twenty-third Knesset—25% of the elected Knesset members.** This is the highest number of women elected since the establishment of the State, though the figure has barely changed since the 20th Knesset.
- Although, in several cases, a substantial number of women have become Knesset Members during the Knesset term due to changes in membership, the percentage of women Knesset Members among all the Knesset Members who serve during a given term generally remains fairly similar to the percentage of women at the start of the term.
- **The proportion of women on candidate lists submitted by the parliamentary groups that entered the Knesset doubled from 15% to 30% between the Sixteenth and the Twenty-third Knessets.** (For the purpose of this document, the "candidate list" of each parliamentary group was defined as having 1.5 times the number of members as the number of candidates actually elected from that group. Detailed definitions appear in Chapter 2.) **The percentage of women also increased among "realistic" candidates and among elected candidates, although the growth in these metrics was more moderate.** (For the purpose of this document, the list of "realistic" candidates—i.e., candidates with a realistic chance of entering the Knesset—was defined as the number of Members actually elected from each list plus an additional candidate for each full or partial group of ten elected Members). There did not appear to be a similar upward trend in the number of women in the top half of the list of elected candidates or serving as party leaders.
- **Excluding the ultra-Orthodox parties—Shas and United Torah Judaism—which had no female candidates (or Knesset Members), women composed 26–44% of the candidates on the lists of**

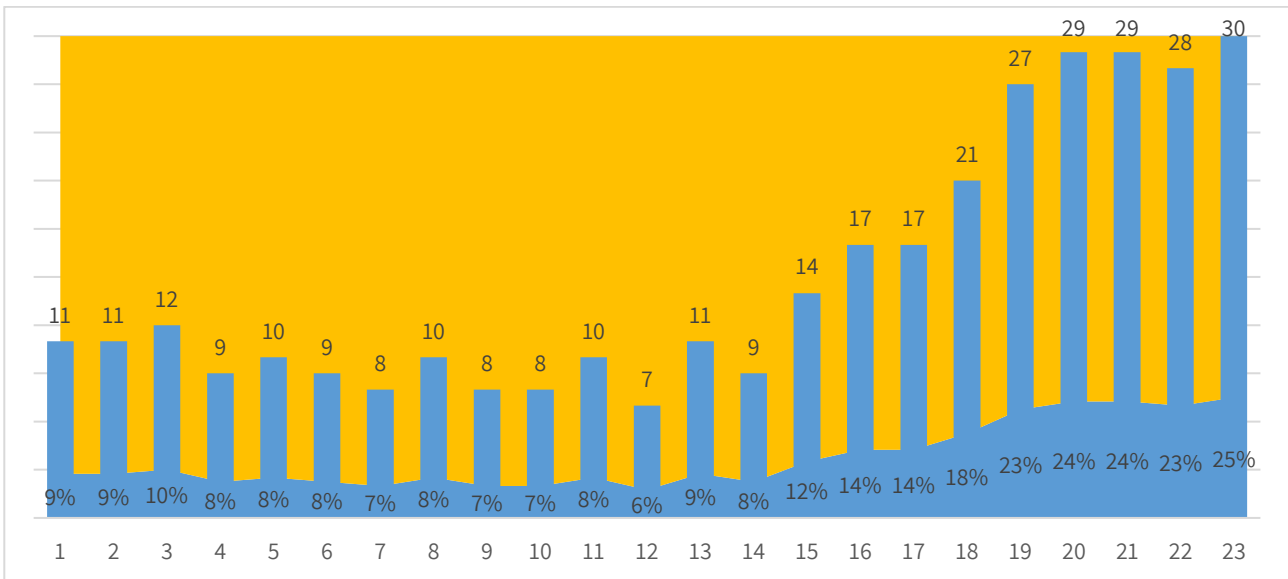
**candidates for the Twenty-third Knesset, 13–38% of the “realistic” candidates, and 14–43% of elected candidates. Four lists (including the ultra-Orthodox lists) had no women in the first five slots, three lists had only one woman in these slots, and only one list had two women in the top five positions. No list was led by a woman.**

- **Since the Knesset was established, only one woman has served as Speaker of the Knesset—** Dalia Itzik, who served as Speaker of the Seventeenth Knesset. Over the years, the percentage of female deputy speakers has fluctuated considerably, from 0–44%, but it is difficult to identify a clear trend.
- The ratio of women **chairs of standing Knesset committees** has ranged from 0–32% over the years, and it is difficult to point to a clear trend. Furthermore, **there is considerable variation between the standing committees regarding the number of women who have chaired them. Three standing Knesset committees (Finance; Foreign Affairs and Defense; and Constitution, Law and Justice) have never had a chairwoman, and the Economics Committee, Internal Affairs and Environment Committee, and the House Committee have had very few female chairs** (3%, 7%, and 8%, respectively). By contrast, almost a third of the chairpersons of the Education, Culture and Sports Committee have been women, as have 40% of the Members who chaired the Committee for Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Affairs and nearly half (45%) of the chairpersons of the Science and Technology Committee. Every chairperson of the Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality has been a woman, except for one (Gideon Sa’ar, who chaired the committee during the Seventeenth Knesset).
- The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) ranks parliaments around the world by the number of female members. **According to data from the IPU, Israel was ranked 83rd of 189 parliaments (before the elections to the Twenty-third Knesset) and 27th out of the 36 members of the OECD.**
- **Gender quotas are one of the tools used most commonly around the world to increase the number of women in parliament, and according to data from the IPU, they were in use in 130 countries around the world as of 2019.** In several dozen countries, the quotas are statutory—i.e., grounded in legislation (either in election laws or the constitution)—and therefore apply to all political parties. In other countries, which do not have mandatory quotas, some parties set representation requirements by adopting voluntary quotas that govern the number of women on their list. Such quotas are usually set out in the party bylaws.
- **At present, Israel does not have a statutory quota for the representation of women on parties’ lists of candidates for the Knesset,** though multiple bills have been submitted over the years to enshrine such a requirement in law. Some parties have established their own procedures for fair representation of women, whether by reserving places for women on the candidate list or by ensuring that the list has a given percentage of women. However, when parties merge to run for the Knesset on a joint list, women are often pushed farther down the list of candidates.

## 1. Female Knesset Members over Time

**Thirty women were elected in the elections to the Twenty-third Knesset, constituting 25% of the elected Members.** The number of female Knesset Members is thus the highest since the establishment of Israel.

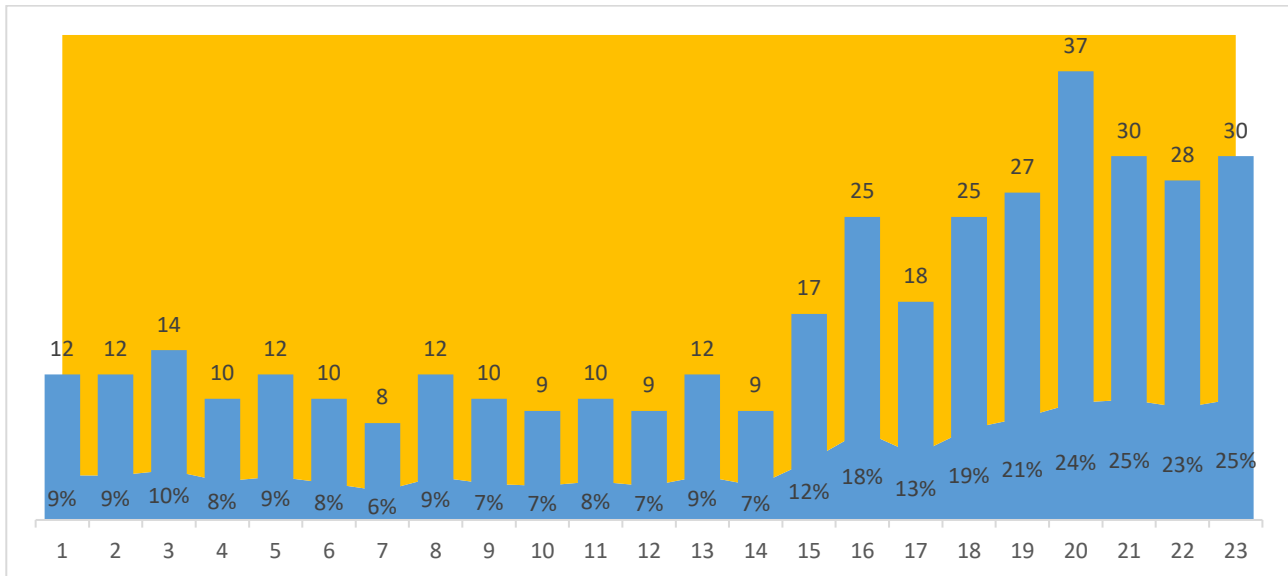
**Chart 1 : Number of Women Elected to the Knesset and the Percentage of Women Members Elected, 1st–23rd Knessets**



The number of female Knesset Members remained relatively stable for the first fifty years of Israel's existence but then increased greatly from the Fifteenth Knesset (1999–2003) to the Twentieth Knesset (2015–2019). In the three most recent elections—which all occurred during the past year—the number of women elected to the Knesset remained stable. This is likely tied to the fact that many parties left the candidate lists they set for the elections to the Twenty-first Knesset unchanged for the elections to the Twenty-second and Twenty-third Knessets, with the exception of party mergers.

The number of female Knesset Members—and the percentage of all Knesset Members who are female—may change during the Knesset's term due to changes in membership, which occur to varying degrees in each Knesset. The graph below shows the percentage of women out of all the Knesset Members who served in each Knesset, from the First to the Twenty-third (which, as of the publication of this document, has yet to be sworn in, and thus its elected members have yet to start their term).

**Chart 2: Number of Female Knesst Members who Served in each Knesset and the Percentage of Women among all the Knesset Members who Served in each Knesset (including Changes in Membership), 1st–23rd Knessets\***



\* The Twenty-first and Twenty-second Knessets served only a few months and hardly had any changes in membership. As of the date of publication, the Twenty-third Knesset had yet to be sworn in and, naturally, has had no changes in its composition.

Although in some of the Knessets, a considerable number of women started serving during the Knesset term due to changes in membership (with a record of eight new female Knesset Members in the Sixteenth and Twentieth Knessets), the percentage of women Knesset Members among all the Knesset Members who serve during a given term generally remains fairly similar to the percentage of women at the start of the term.

## 2. Female Candidates and Elected Members, Sixteenth–Twenty-third Knessets

Quite naturally, the number of women elected to the Knesset depends on the number of women running for office. An in-depth examination of women running for the Knesset must address the various stages of running for office, such as primaries in parties that have them; **in this document, however, we focused on gender representation in the lists of candidates for the Knesset.** This review will focus on the elections that have been held since 2001, when the law mandating the direct election of the prime minister was repealed—i.e., **from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-third Knessets—while specifically touching on the Twenty-third Knesset, regarding which the data will be segmented by parliamentary group.** Before we present the data, we will present some notes regarding our methodology and define several of the terms we employed in this review:

- Because there are many lists of candidates running for the Knesset, only a few of which pass the electoral threshold and enter the Knesset, this document **only examined candidate lists that passed the electoral threshold and entered the Knesset.**
- The percentage of women in each category was calculated by dividing the total number of women who ran or were elected on the relevant lists by the total number of candidates or elected Members

on these lists.

- **Lists of candidates for the Knesset:** The number of candidates varies from list to list; for example, the number of candidates on lists to the Twenty-third Knesset ranges from 17 candidates (on the Yamina list) to 120 candidates (on the Likud and Blue and White lists). For the sake of uniformity in the comparison between parliamentary groups, we defined **the size of a parliamentary group's candidate list for the purposes of this document as 1.5 times the number of Knesset Members actually elected from the list (i.e., 1.5 times the number of parliamentary group members)**. For example, if 30 Knesset Members were elected from a certain parliamentary group, we set the size of the group's candidate list at 45 candidates. In the case of a parliamentary group with an uneven number of Knesset members, the result was rounded up. Note that this formula is weighted by parliamentary group size (larger groups gain larger additions), which allows us to include in the data Knesset Members who might start serving during the Knesset term due to changes in membership, while preventing the data from being distorted as a result of candidates who were given places on the candidate list that offer them no chance of serving in the Knesset.
- **Candidates in “realistic” slots:** Because a candidate’s place on the list affects his or her chances of being elected, we set out to review the number of women among those candidates who have a reasonable chance of being elected to the Knesset. For the purpose of this document, **the number of “realistic” candidates was calculated as the number of actual Knesset Members elected from each list, plus one candidate for every ten Members**. Thus, a parliamentary group with up to 10 Knesset Members will have one additional candidate, one with 11–20 Knesset Members will have two candidates added, and so forth. For example, if a certain parliamentary group has six Knesset Members, the number of realistic places on the list will be seven; if a group has 24 Knesset Members, the number of realistic places on its list will be 27. This formula is weighted by parliamentary group size (larger groups gain larger additions), but it limits the number of extra candidates in order to avoid adding “partial” candidates and to ensure that the number of “realistic” places remains reasonable (i.e., 1–4 places added to the number of Knesset Members who were actually elected).
- **Elected candidates:** Candidates from each parliamentary group who were elected to serve as Knesset Members; this term does not include Members who entered the Knesset as the result of changes in membership.

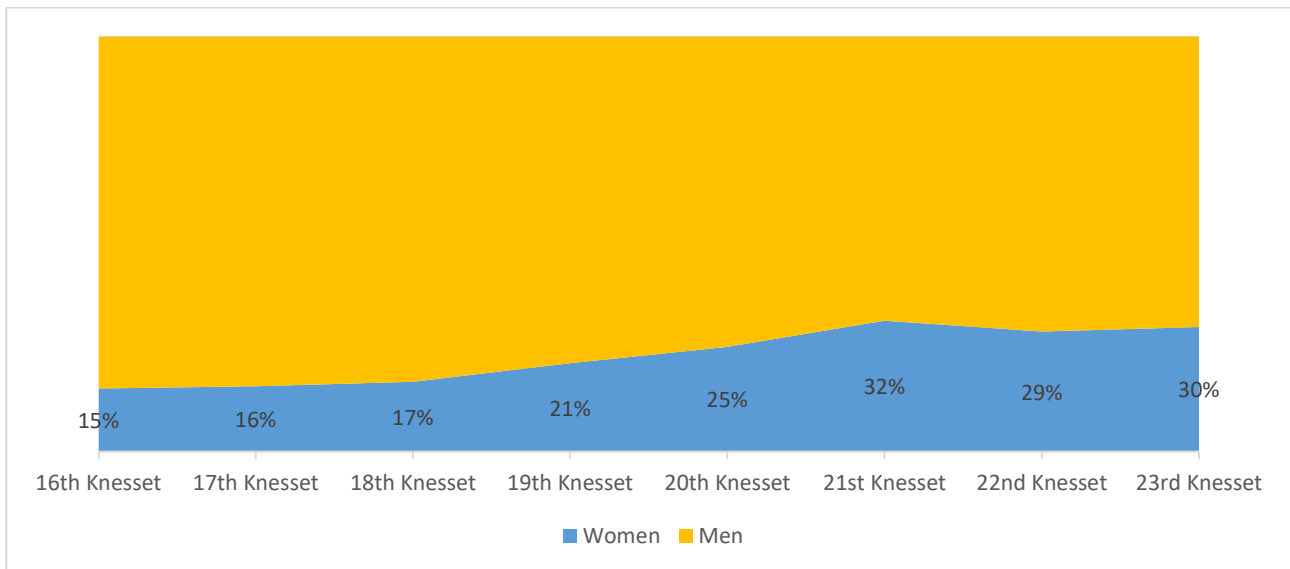
**In addition to affecting women's chances of being elected to the Knesset, the placement of women on candidate lists affects their chances of assuming positions within the Knesset (e.g., committee chairperson) and the Government. Therefore, we defined three parameters to evaluate women's positions on candidate lists:**

- **The top half of the list of elected Members:** The percentage of women in the upper half of each parliamentary group's list of elected Knesset Members. When the number of Members from a given

group was uneven, the result was rounded up.

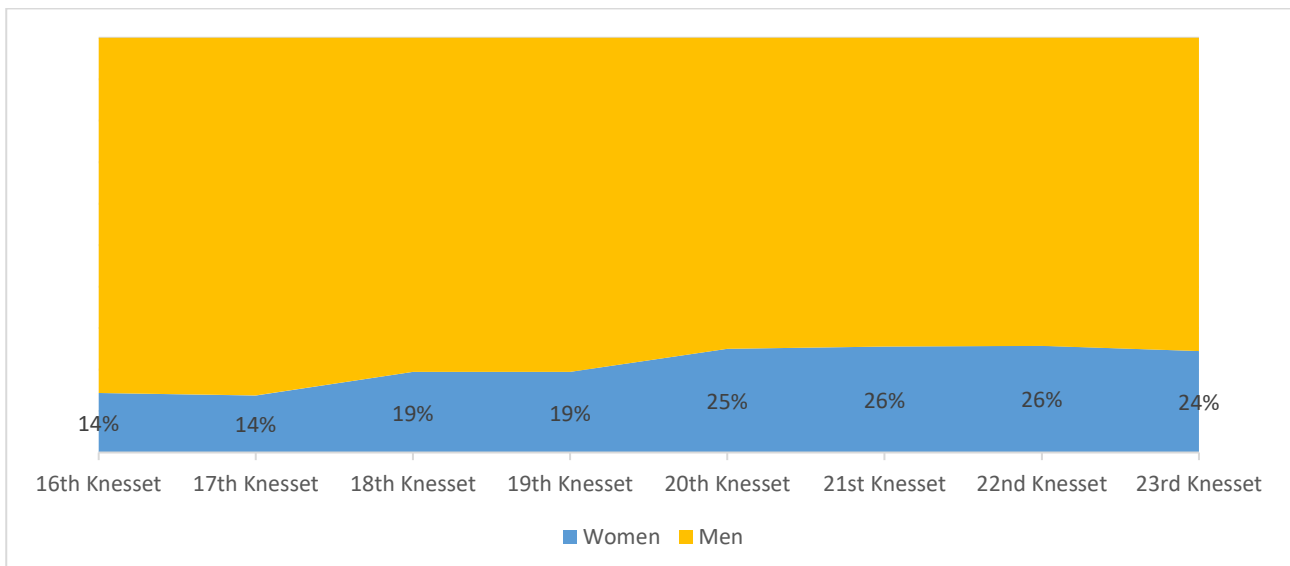
- **Top five elected representatives:** The percentage of women among the top five Knesset Members in each parliamentary group.<sup>1</sup>
- **Head of the list.**

**Chart 3: Percentage of Women Candidates,\* 16th–23rd Knessets**



\*As stated above, the list of candidates from each parliamentary group consists of 1.5 times the number of elected candidates in that parliamentary group.

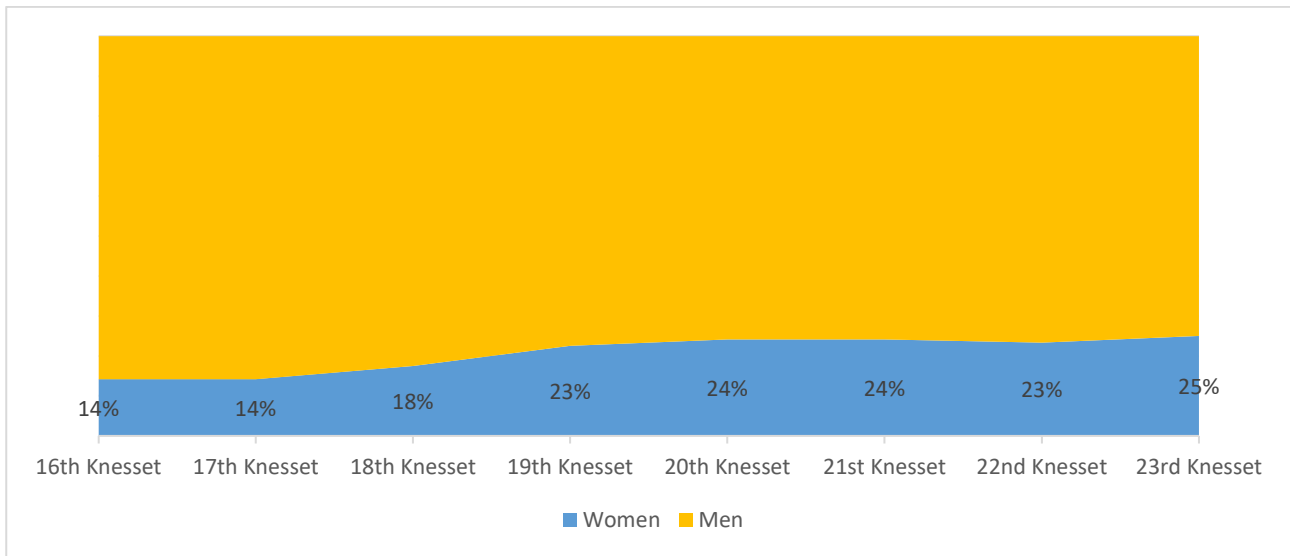
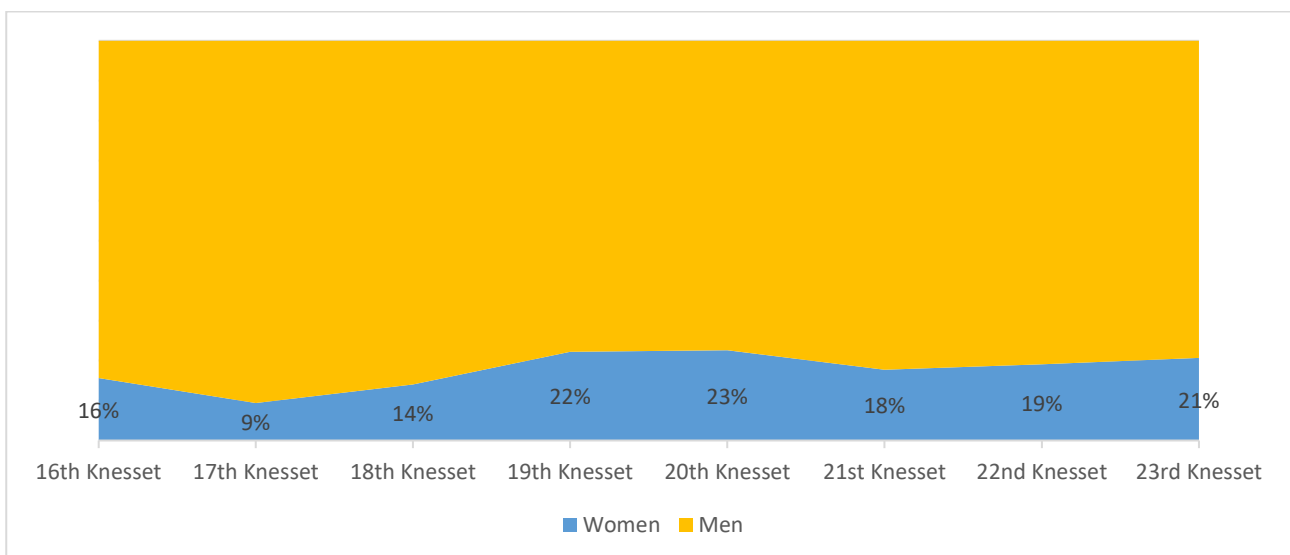
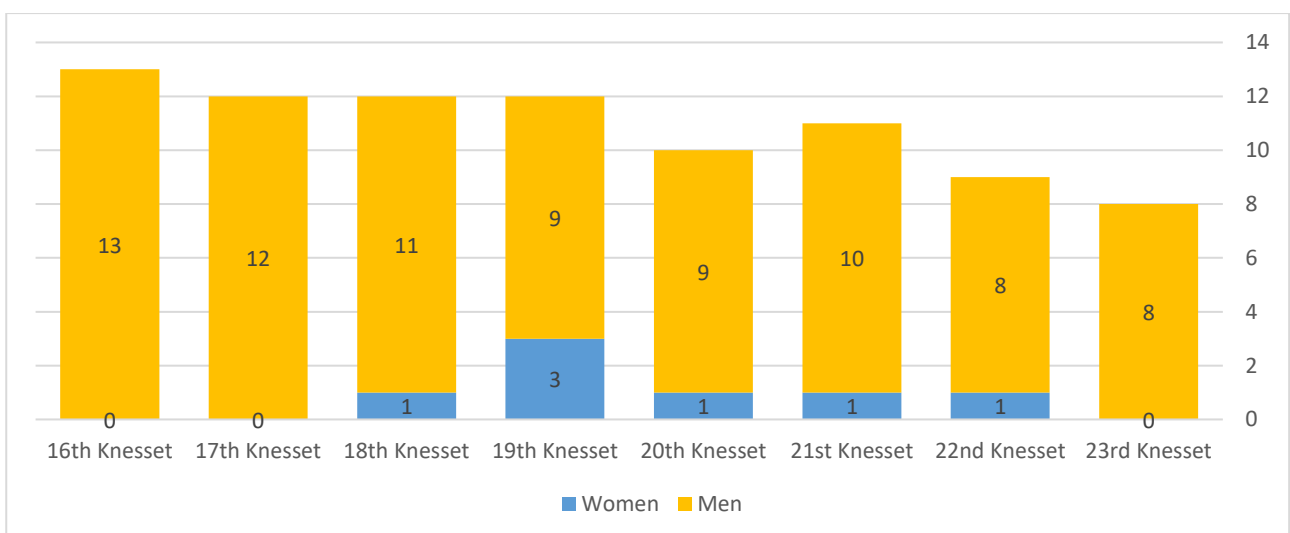
**Chart 4: Percentage of Women among Candidates in “Realistic” Places,\* 16th–23rd Knessets**



\*The size of the list of candidates in "realistic" places from each parliamentary group is calculated as the number of Knesset Members actually elected from that list plus an additional candidate for each full or partial group of ten elected Members.

<sup>1</sup> This figure is presented only for the Twenty-third Knesset, as previous Knessets had parliamentary groups with less than five Members.



**Chart 5: Percentage of Women among Elected Members, 16th–23rd Knessets****Chart 6 : Percentage of Women in the Upper Half of the List of Elected Members, 16th–23rd Knessets****Chart 7: Heads of Candidate Lists, by Gender, in Absolute Numbers, 16th–23rd Knessets**

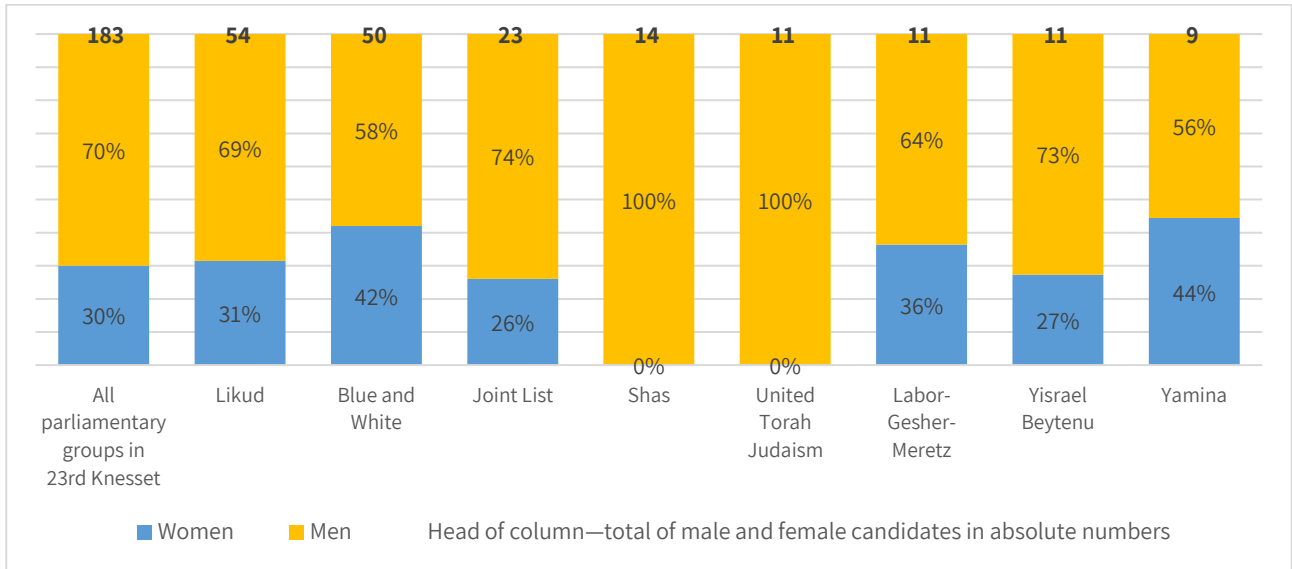
**A review of the above charts reveals the following findings:**

- While women comprised 15% of the candidates in the elections to the Sixteenth Knesset (in lists that passed the electoral threshold, as previously noted), that rate increased to 30% in the elections to the Twenty-third Knesset.
- **The increase in the percentage of women among candidates in "realistic" places during this period was more moderate:** In the elections to the Sixteenth Knesset, women made up 14% of candidates in what we defined as realistic places; in the elections to the Twenty-third Knesset, that rate stood at 24%.
- The percentage of women in the upper half of the list of elected members has fluctuated since the Sixteenth Knesset. In the last few Knessets, it was approximately 20%.
- As for women heading candidate lists, with the exception of the Nineteenth Knesset (where a quarter of the lists were led by women), **all of the elections we reviewed had at most one woman-led party.**

**All of the above indicates that the percentage of women on Knesset candidate lists grew significantly during the period under review, though their presence in relatively high places on these lists did not increase at a similar rate.**

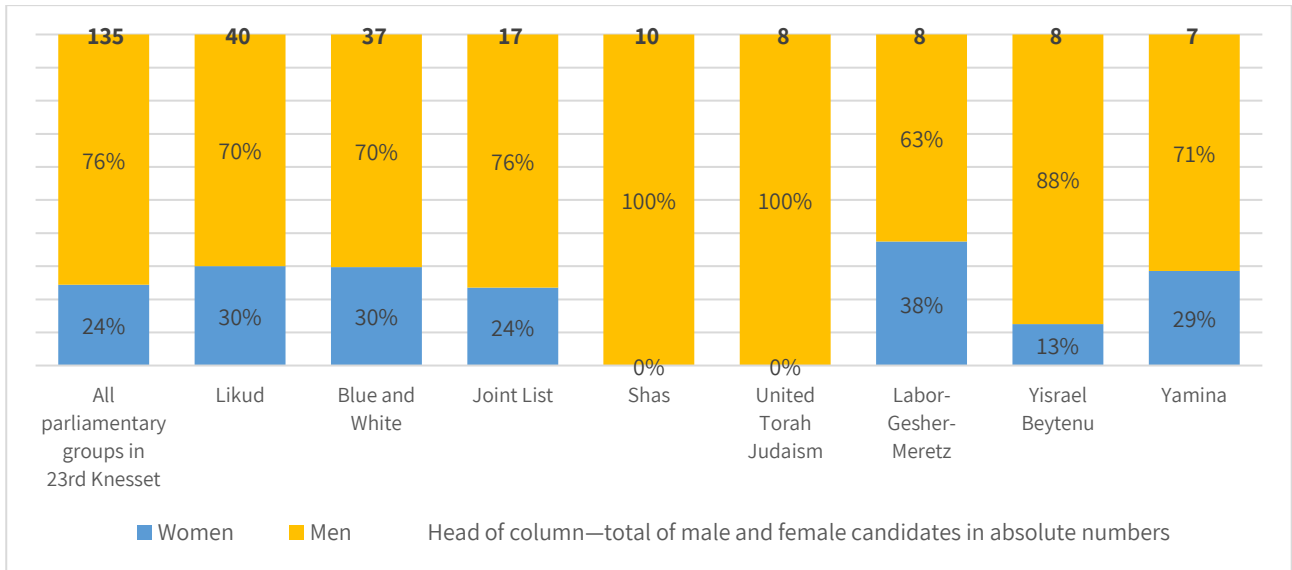
### 3. The Twenty-third Knesset—Analysis by List

**Chart 8: Gender Distribution of Candidates, \* 23rd Knesset**



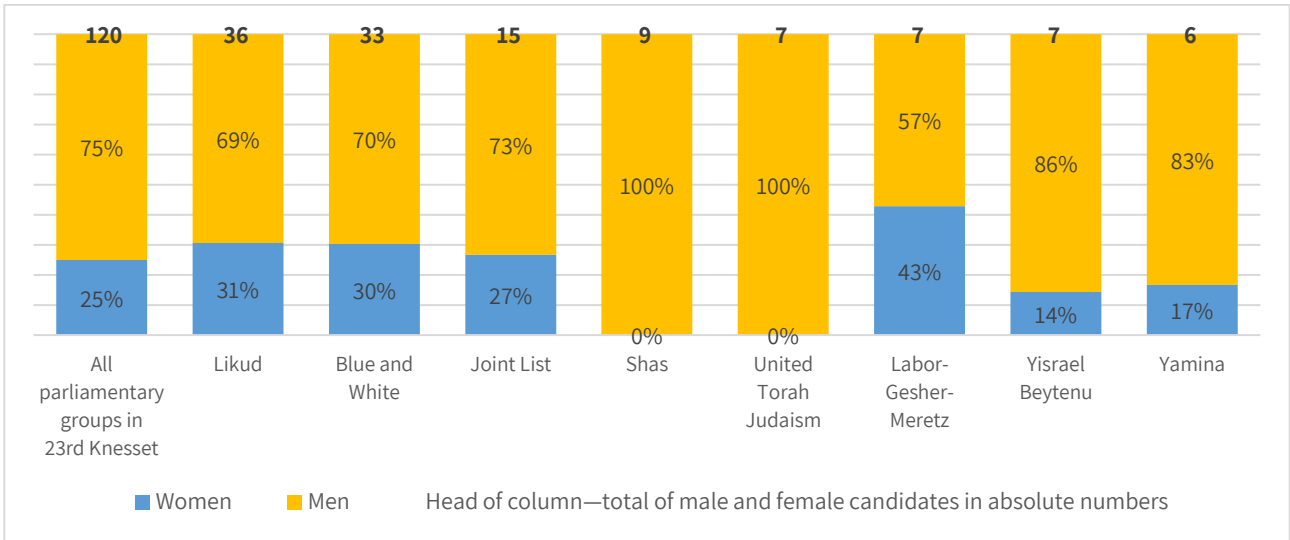
\* The size of the candidate list for a given parliamentary group is 1.5 times the number of elected candidates in that parliamentary group.

**Chart 9: Gender Distribution of Candidates in “Realistic” Places, 23rd Knesset**

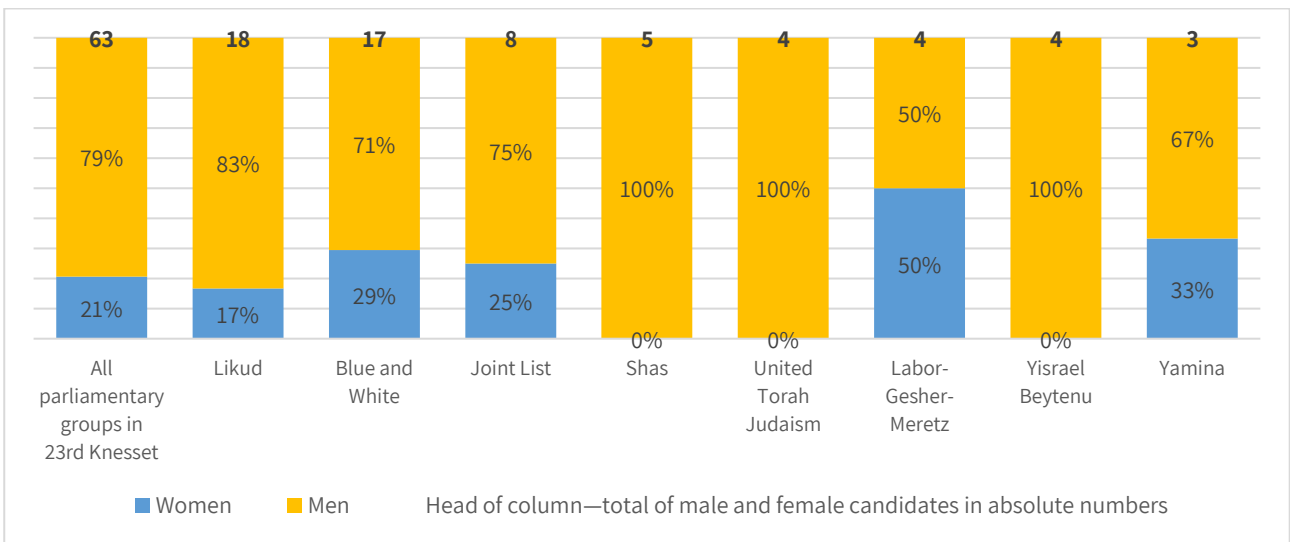


\* The size of the list of candidates in "realistic" places from each parliamentary group is calculated as the number of Knesset Members actually elected from that list plus an additional candidate for each full or partial group of ten elected Members.

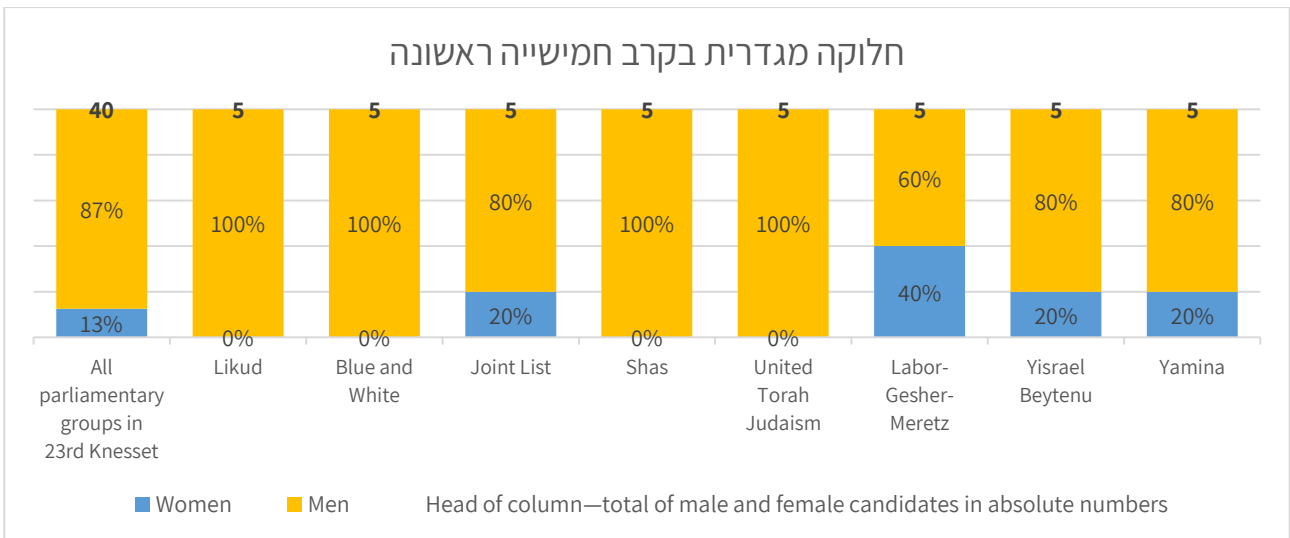
**Chart 10: Gender Distribution of Elected Members, 23rd Knesset**



**Chart 11: Gender Distribution of the Upper Half of the List of Elected Members, 23rd Knesset**



**Chart 12: Gender Distribution of Top Five Candidates, 23rd Knesset**



**The two ultra-Orthodox lists—Shas and United Torah Judaism—had no female candidates.** The percentage of women on the rest of the lists ranges from 26–44% of candidates; 13–38% of “realistic” candidates; 14–43% of elected candidates; 17–50% of the Members in the top half of each parliamentary group; and 0–40% of the top five candidates of each parliamentary group.

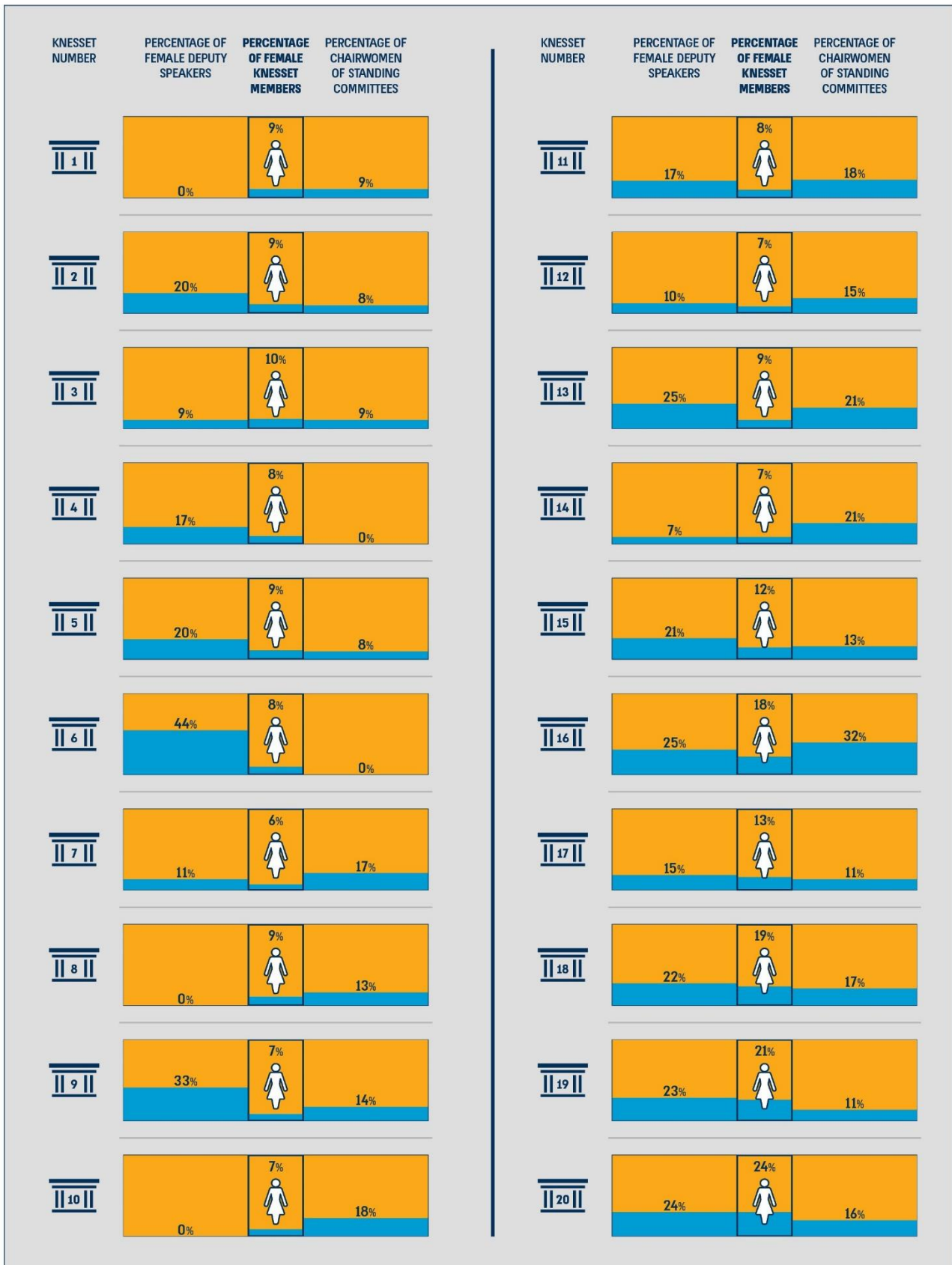
Results show that both in the aggregated data from all the parliamentary groups and in the data from the large parliamentary groups (Likud, Blue and White, and the Joint List) the percentage of women decreased the farther up the candidate list we climbed. The smaller groups show a much greater variance.

Four lists (including the ultra-Orthodox lists) had no women among the top five candidates, three lists had only one woman, and only one list had two women in the top five. No list was led by a woman.

#### **4. Female Knesset Functionaries**

Besides examining the percentage of women among the Knesset Members, it is also worth looking at the roles filled by female Knesset Members. **Since the Knesset was established, only one woman has served as Speaker of the Knesset—Dalia Itzik, who served as Speaker of the Seventeenth Knesset.** Presented below are data regarding the number of women serving as deputy speakers and as chairs of standing Knesset committees.

**Chart 13: Percentage of Women among Knesset Members, Deputy Speakers, and Chairs of Standing Committees, 1st–20th Knessets\***

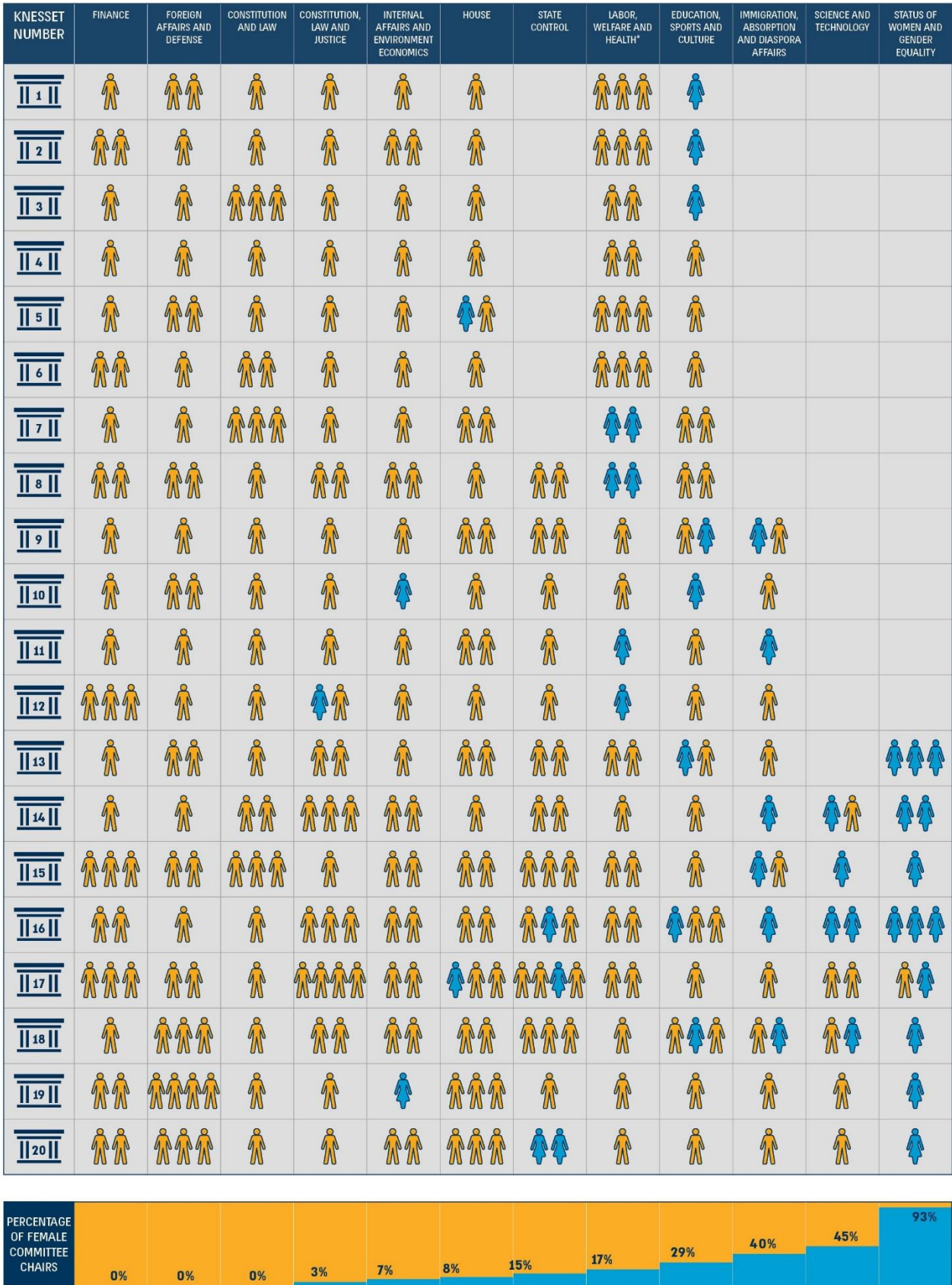


\* The Twenty-first and Twenty-second Knessets were dissolved before most of the standing committees could be established.

The chart indicates that **over the years, the rate of female deputy speakers has fluctuated greatly—from 0% to 44% of the Speakers, although it is difficult to pinpoint a clear trend.** It is possible that this datum was influenced by the considerable variation in the number of deputy speakers in each Knesset. **Similarly, the percentage of women chairs of the Knesset's standing committees during a given term—which ranges from 0%–32%—does not point to a clear trend either.** We might have expected to see that the increased percentage of female Knesset Members would be accompanied by a similar increase in the rate of female Knesset functionaries, but the data show that that is not necessarily the case.

The figure below presents the gender distribution of the Knesset Members who chaired each of the Knesset's standing committees, from the First Knesset to the Twentieth Knesset. Note that the figure accounts for changes in membership (with the chronological order running left to right).

Chart 14: Chairs of Standing Knesset Committees, by Gender, 1st–20th Knessets



\* Until 1977 (the Eighth Knesset, inclusive) there was a Labor Committee that operated alongside the Committee for Public Services. For the purposes of this chart and in order to maintain continuity, we regarded the two as a single committee and listed both chairpersons under the Labor, Welfare and Health Committee.



The chart indicates that **three permanent Knesset committees have never been chaired by a woman—the Finance Committee; the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee; and the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee—and that three additional committees—the Economics Committee, the Internal Affairs and Environment Committee, and the House Committee—have had very few chairwomen** (3%, 7% and 8%, respectively). By contrast, women constituted almost a third of the chairpersons of the Education, Culture and Sports Committee; 40% of the chairs of the Committee for Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Affairs; and nearly half (45%) of the chairpersons of the Science and Technology Committee. Finally, all the chairs of the Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality have been women, except for one (Gideon Sa'ar, who chaired the committee during the Seventeenth Knesset).

## 5. Comparing Israel to the Rest of the World

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) ranks parliaments around the world by the percentage of female members. The following table presents the top countries on the IPU ranking, as well as the IPU rankings of all the OECD member countries. In countries with a bicameral parliament, the data refer to the lower house. These data are accurate for January 2020.

**Table 1: Percentage of Women in Parliaments and Global Ranking of Selected Countries, January 2020<sup>2</sup>**

Country	Rank	Percentage of women members of parliament	Country	Rank	Percentage of women members of parliament
Rwanda	1	61.25%	United Kingdom	39	33.85%
Cuba	2	53.22%	Netherlands	40	33.33%
Bolivia	3	53.08%	Germany	48	31.17%
United Arab Emirates	4	50%	Australia	51	30.46%
Mexico	5	48.2%	Latvia	52	30%
Nicaragua	6	47.25%	Luxembourg	52	30%
Sweden	7	46.99%	Canada	58	28.99%
Grenada	8	46.67%	Estonia	59	28.71%
Andorra	9	46.43%	Poland	60	28.7%
South Africa	10	46.35%	Slovenia	64	27.78%
Finland	11	46%	Lithuania	79	24.11%
Spain	13	44%	United States	82	23.43%
Switzerland	16	41.5%	<b>Israel</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>23.33%</b>
Norway	17	41.42%	Chile	87	22.58%
New Zealand	20	40.83%	Czech Republic	89	22.5%
Belgium	21	40.67%	Ireland	99	20.89%
Portugal	22	40%	Greece	101	20.67%

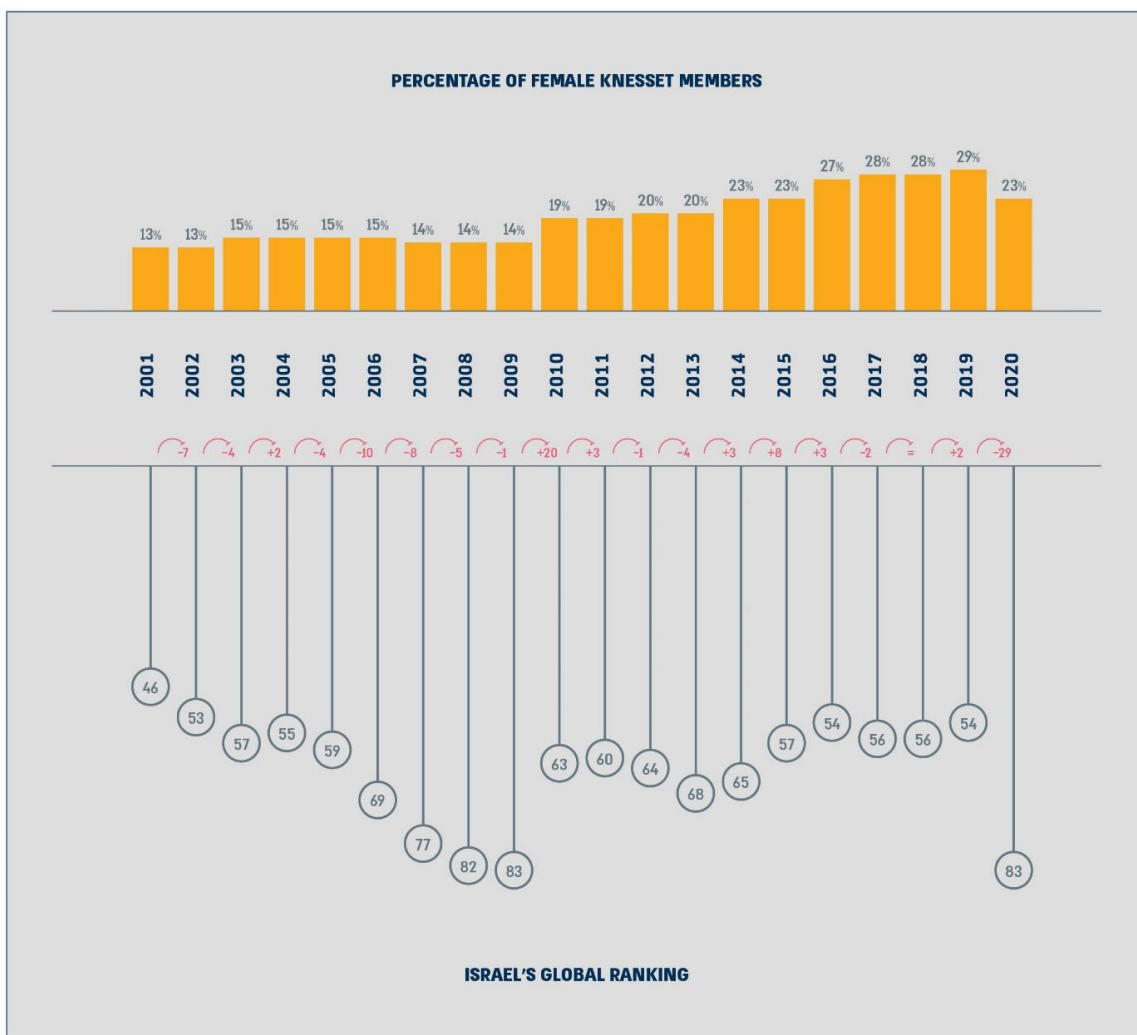
<sup>2</sup> IPU website, "[Percentage of Women in National Parliaments](#)," accessed 12 February 2020.

Denmark	25	39.66%	Slovakia	101	20.67%
France	26	39.51%	Turkey	123	17.32%
Austria	28	39.34%	South Korea	124	17.29%
Iceland	31	38.1%	Hungary	156	12.06%
Italy	36	35.71%	Japan	165	9.91%

According to the IPU data, which relates to the situation before the elections to the Twenty-third Knesset, Israel was ranked 83rd out of 189 countries; among the OECD members, Israel was 27th out of 36.

Israel's place on the IPU ranking has fluctuated greatly over the past twenty years. Because each country's rank is determined by both the percentage of women in its own parliament and the percentage of women in other parliaments, a country's ranking can change without any change to the number of women in its own parliament. For example, Israel dropped from 64th to 68th place from 2012 to 2013, even though the rate of women in the Knesset remained unchanged (20%).

**Chart 15: Women in the Knesset Compared to Israel's Rank on the IPU Women in National Parliaments Ranking**



## 6. Quotas for the Fair Representation of Women in Political Parties

Electoral quotas are one of the main tools currently in use to increase the percentage of women serving as elected officials, and particularly as members of parliament. The assumption underlying the use of this tool is that treating men and women equally in the political world is not sufficient to attain equal representation for members of the two genders. This is because integrating women into the political sphere requires addressing various barriers, both structural and other; for example, the difficulties women face in integrating into a male-dominated political system and expressing themselves within it. The argument for quotas is, therefore, that clear and binding numerical goals are needed in order to overcome the structural barriers women face in electoral processes and achieve an outcome that aspires towards gender equality.<sup>3</sup> The counterargument is that quotas also have built-in disadvantages. First and foremost, the very existence of quotas and the preferential treatment of women compromises the principles of liberal democracy and equal rights for all. Furthermore, quotas infringe on citizens' right to elect the candidates of their choice, as the quotas determine in advance that some candidates will be elected on the basis of gender rather than merit.<sup>4</sup>

As previously noted, quotas promoting the representation of women in parliaments are today a commonly used tool; **according to data from the IPU, in 2019, gender quotas were employed in one form or another in 130 countries.**

In some countries the quotas are statutory (i.e., enshrined in legislation—either in election laws or a constitution) and therefore apply to all the political parties. In other countries, which do not have mandatory quotas, some political parties set their own fair representation requirements by voluntarily adopting quotas to govern the percentage of women on their list of candidates. These quotas are usually set out in party bylaws.

In both types of quota (statutory and voluntary), the requirements can apply to **candidate lists** or to **seats in parliament**. Quotas for candidate lists require the parties running in an election to ensure that a certain number or percentage of their candidates are women. Quotas that govern seats in parliament reserve a certain number or percentage of seats in a chamber of parliament for women. Data from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) indicate that **statutory quotas governing candidate lists are used in 59 countries around the world, and statutory quotas governing parliament seats in 24 countries.**<sup>5</sup> **The institute's data indicate that while quotas governing candidate lists are**

---

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the different types of quotas, the necessary adjustments for increasing their effectiveness, and other parameters see: Rinat Benita and Shelly Mizrahi Simon, *Equal Representation for Women in Local Government*, Knesset Research and Information Center, 5 March 2018, accessed 23 February 2020 [Hebrew].

<sup>4</sup> Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), "[Quotas](#)," accessed 18 February 2020.

<sup>5</sup> In countries with a bicameral parliament, the data refer to the lower house.

**used in both developed and developing countries, quotas governing the allocation of parliament seats are more widespread in developing countries.**<sup>6</sup>

In order for quotas to be effective—i.e., achieve their objective of increasing the percentage of women in parliament—development of the quota mechanism must address certain issues. For example, quotas must include clear, numerical goals, and they must be tailored to the electoral system in the country, the type of candidate list, and other relevant characteristics. Finally, to be effective the mechanism must stipulate sanctions for failure to comply (usually a monetary penalty or disqualification of the candidate list).

At the same time, in order for quotas to bring about an increase in the percentage of incumbent women—not just the percentage of women on candidate lists—they must address the candidates' ranking and placement on the lists. Such systems, which address both general numerical objectives as well as the ranking of female candidates and the assignment of a place on the list with realistic chances of election, are called **double quotas**. These include the **Zipper System** (in which the candidate list alternates between men and women), mandatory representation for both genders in the first two places, placing a woman in every third position on the list, and other models.<sup>7</sup>

As to the effectiveness of quotas, a review by the IPU of elections held in 2018 indicates that the average rate of female elected candidates was 18.6% in countries without quotas as compared to 25.6% in countries with quotas.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, an evaluation of the impact of gender quotas requires a more comprehensive examination that accounts for additional factors or a longitudinal review of the effects of instituting such quotas.

## 6.1 The Situation in Israel

In Israel, bills to increase the rate of women in the Knesset, in the Government, local authorities, and other public bodies have been proposed for more than two decades. The vast majority of the bills—and certainly those relating to the Knesset or the Government—were blocked at the submission stage before a preliminary reading and did not reach the stages of more advanced legislative procedures.

Interestingly, in 2014, the Knesset adopted Amendment 12 to the Local Authorities (Election Financing) Law, **which was meant to raise the rate of women in local politics by creating a financial incentive for placing women in realistic slots on party lists**. The amendment stipulates that political groups of members of local councils that are comprised of at least one-third women will receive **increased electoral financing**—an additional 15% of the election financing to which they are entitled by law.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> IDEA, "[Gender Quotas around the World](#)," accessed 4 March 2020.

<sup>7</sup> See note 1.

<sup>8</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union, [Women in Parliament in 2018: The Year in Review](#), 2019. The data refer to elections to the lower house or a unicameral parliament.

<sup>9</sup> See note 1.

As mentioned previously, gender quotas can be statutory or voluntarily adopted by parties. In Israel, as stated above, there are no mandatory statutory quotas, though some parties have set their own rules governing the representation of women.

Below, we present information regarding the various parties elected to the Twenty-third Knesset and their treatment of the representation of women. We note that some of the lists running for the Twenty-third Knesset were comprised of several parties; in such cases, the position of the women on the candidate lists was not necessarily the same as what the various parties decided:

- Likud—Aside from a few changes, the Likud's candidate list to the Twenty-third Knesset was decided in primaries that were held in advance of the elections to the Twenty-first Knesset. The bylaws governing the election of Likud candidates to the Twenty-first Knesset<sup>10</sup> ensure women's representation on the list by reserving six slots up to number 40 for women (places 10, 20, 25, 31, 35, and 40), unless women were elected to higher places on the national list even without the guaranteed representation.<sup>11</sup>
- Blue and White—We were unable to obtain information by the date of publication regarding a guarantee of women's representation in the parties that comprise this parliamentary group. We also note that the Blue and White party's bylaws make no mention of guaranteed women's representation.<sup>12</sup>
- Joint List:
  - Hadash—According to Knesset Member Aida Touma-Sliman, the party has no mechanism to guarantee women's representation.<sup>13</sup>
  - Balad—Information that was submitted in the past to the Knesset Research and Information Center indicates that according to the party's constitution, its national list will guarantee a woman in every three places (i.e., in the first through the third places, the fourth through the sixth, and so on—up to the 21st place).<sup>14</sup> Balad did not provide up-to-date information on this matter, but Knesset Member Aida Touma-Sliman of the Joint List noted that as far as she was aware, the mechanism to guarantee representation for women remains in force.<sup>15</sup>
  - Ra'am—According to Knesset Member Aida Touma-Sliman, a decision was made before the elections to the Twenty-second Knesset to reserve the fifth place on the party's list for a woman unless a woman was elected to a higher position. The mechanism came into effect for the

---

<sup>10</sup> This information was taken from the bylaws governing the elections to the Twenty-first Knesset. Because the Likud did not hold primaries in advance of the elections to the Twenty-second and Twenty-third Knessets, the arrangement is still valid, to the best of our knowledge.

<sup>11</sup> For more information, see "[Bylaws for the Election of Likud Candidates to the Twenty-first Knesset \(Temporary provision\)](#)," accessed 1 March 2020 [Hebrew].

<sup>12</sup> For more information, see "[Party Bylaws](#)," accessed 3 March 2020 [Hebrew].

<sup>13</sup> Knesset Member Aida Touma-Sliman (Joint List), response to query from the Knesset Research and Information Center, phone call, 28 January 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Benita and Mizrahi Simon, [Equal Representation for Women](#), p. 23.

<sup>15</sup> Knesset Member Aida Touma-Sliman (Joint List), response to query from the Knesset Research and Information Center, phone call, 28 January 2020.

elections to the Twenty-third Knesset, but the candidate for the fifth position ran in the primaries for the fourth place on the list and won.<sup>16</sup>

- Ta'al—We obtained no information on this subject by the date of publication.
- United Torah Judaism—We received no response from the parties that comprise the United Torah Judaism list, but in practice, the group's list of candidates for the Knesset has never included women.
- Shas—We did not receive a response on the subject, but in practice the party's list of candidates for the Knesset has never included women. The Research and Information Center was told in the past that the party has no mechanism for the representation of women.<sup>17</sup>
- Labor-Gesher-Meretz -
  - Israeli Labor Party—Section 5.3 of the primary election bylaws for party candidates running for the Twenty-first Knesset<sup>18</sup> stipulates that “women’s representation will be ensured by having every group of ten candidates, up to the 45th position, include at least two women.” Section 18 stipulates that three of the top ten positions (four, seven, and nine) will be reserved for women.<sup>19</sup>
  - Gesher—Despite requests to Gesher, we did not receive a response regarding the guaranteed representation of women in the party.
  - Meretz—The party’s constitution guarantees that each gender will receive at least 40% of the positions in all party institutions. This guarantee therefore encompasses each set of five candidates on the party’s list to the Knesset, not including the party leader (i.e., 2–3 women in slots 2–6, 7–11, etc.).<sup>20</sup>
- Yisrael Beytenu—According to Yisrael Beytenu’s director, the party has no mechanism to ensure women’s representation.<sup>21</sup>
- Yamina -
  - HaBayit HaYehudi—In advance of the elections to the Twenty-first Knesset, changes were made to the party’s primary election procedures. Among other things, it was decided to reserve the third, sixth, and ninth places for women as well as the second of every subsequent set of five places, up to the 117th place.<sup>22</sup> In response to an inquiry on the subject from the Knesset

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Benita and Mizrahi Simon, [Equal Representation for Women](#), p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> This information was taken from the bylaws governing the elections to the Twenty-first Knesset. Because the Labor Party did not hold primaries in advance of the elections to the Twenty-second and Twenty-third Knessets, the arrangement is still valid, to the best of our knowledge. See also "[Primary Election Rules for Party Candidates for the Twenty-first Knesset](#)," accessed 3 March 2020 [Hebrew].

<sup>19</sup> Omri Sagiv, legal counsel to the Israel Labor Party, email, 27 February 2020.

<sup>20</sup> "[Meretz Party Constitution](#)," sections 59–60, accessed 3 March 2020 [Hebrew].

<sup>21</sup> Roman Grabitz, Director of the Yisrael Beytenu parliamentary group, in response to query by the Knesset Research and Information Center, phone call, 19 January 2020.

<sup>22</sup> HaBayit HaYehudi, "[Procedures for the Primary Elections for the Party's List for the Twenty-first Knesset](#)," accessed 3 March 2020 [Hebrew].

Research and Information Center, the party stated that these changes were also applied to the elections to the Twenty-second and Twenty-third Knessets.<sup>23</sup>

- We were unable to obtain information regarding the National Union and the New Right by the date of publication.

It is important to note that other tools besides quotas exist for increasing the percentage of women in public roles. These include empowerment and skill development for women who wish to become involved in politics, campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of incorporating women in public roles, organizations that advocate gender equality, and even initiatives born out of political parties themselves to increase the percentage of women.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Inbar Cohen, Director of the Jewish Home parliamentary group, response to query by the Knesset Research and Information Center, email, 19 January 2020.

<sup>24</sup> For example, the major parties in the UK—the Conservatives, Labour Party, Liberal-Democrats, and others—began initiatives to increase the rate of women in politics. For more information, see: Sue Maguire, [Barriers to Women Entering Parliament and Local Government](#), Institute for Policy Research (IPR) report, University of Bath, October 2018.