Palestinian-Israelis in a Jewish State: Dilemmas of Identity and Politics

Israel’s April 9 Knesset election, and the campaign that preceded it, once again laid bare the second-rate status of the country’s 20 percent Palestinian-Arab minority. Although official Israel frequently boasts that Arab citizens are accorded equal rights, the campaign messaging from both rightwing and centrist parties was that non-Jewish citizens and the parties that represent them are not legitimate participants in the country’s governance.

Amid this atmosphere of exclusion and marginalization, and in the wake of last year’s Nation-State of the Jewish People Law, turnout in the Arab sector dropped precipitously compared to the 2015 election: Arab voters went to the polls at only two-thirds the rate of Jewish voters.

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