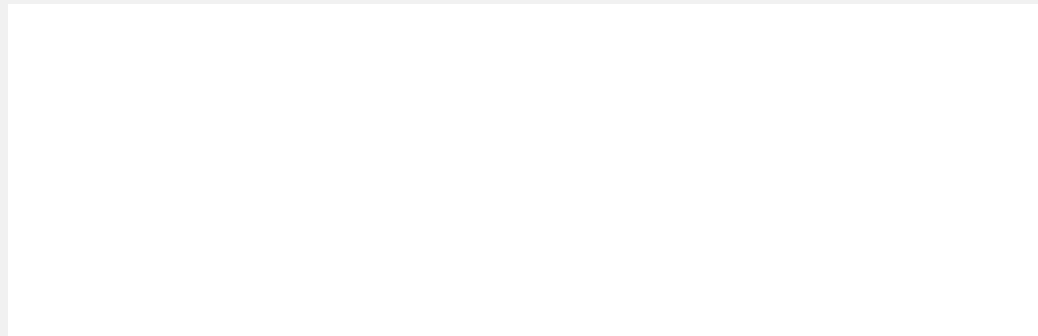


Central Elections Committee

Covid-19 and Elections

How Israel managed the challenge





Scope

Defining the Challenge

Creating the legal framework

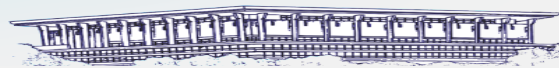
The logistical execution

The Poll Workers

The voting process

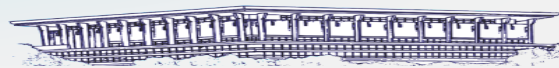
The Tallying of the votes

Fake news



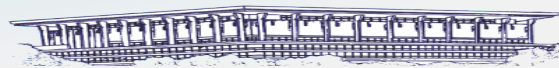
Defining the Challenge

- In the midst of conducting the third elections in a row, the Covid-19 virus has shown up.
- Thousands of eligible voters were put into quarantine.
- The social distancing measures weren't in effect yet (our luck).
- We had to find solutions on the fly, when the health prohibition kept changing, and we couldn't change the law.
- We didn't have all the information – and had to make our adjustments accordingly.




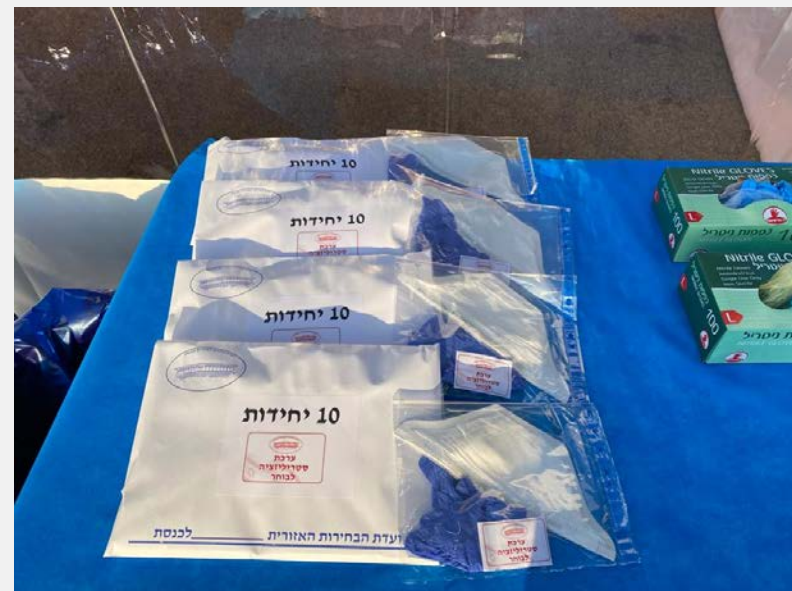
The Legal Framework

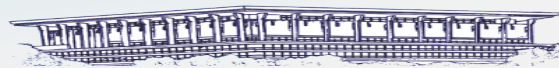
- We used a special measure to declare certain area's as Hospitals so that we could put polling places for the isolated votes there.
- Every voter that wad in quarantine could come cast his vote on those polling stations – and only them.
- The health ministry has amended the quarantine order so that voters who where under quarantine was eligible to come, alone, to the special polling stations.



The logistical execution

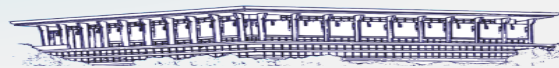
- Locating the polling places – we received information from the ministry of health daily and we chose the main cities regarding this information. Some of the placed objected to the placement (NIMBY).
- Planning – total separation 
- Voter kits – gloves, mask, 2 envelopes, pen – in a separate plastic bag
 - N95 Mask
 - Voting envelope
 - Outer envelope
 - Declaration





Poll workers

- Only Israeli red cross (MADA) workers – certified in managing health problems – because regular poll workers refused to come.
- Same pay as regular poll workers – for less hours.
- Special poll workers training in the morning and a guide to answer questions on the spot – using texting groups.
- Creating a training kit – presentation and online.
- Each polling station had a cop present to keep order with CEC usher.
- Disposing the waste in the end of the day, and destroying it by a medical waste disposal company.



Polling stations

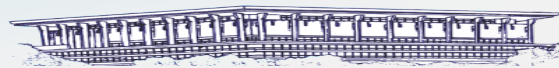
- One or two in population centers – according to number of quarantined voters – with information regarding the spread of quarantined voters.

Lesson: need more places, even at the same parking place – the voting takes a long time. We added some during the day.

- Shortened voting hours.

lesson: need more time – we had to lengthen the hours.

- The polling stations has been but in outdoor parking of government offices, stadiums and Israeli red cross stations – far from regular polling places.
- we have Erected the tents in the morning (1 hour) but dismantling them was a chore because we found no company willing to do so.
- If the weather was stormy, we had to make alterations to the tents – more massive and more expansive.



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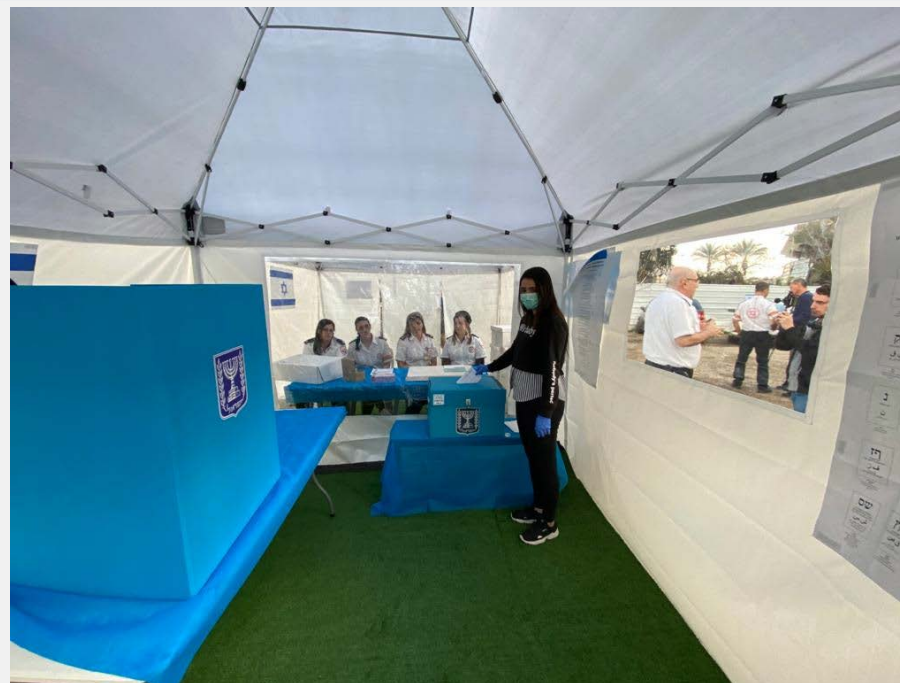
The voting process

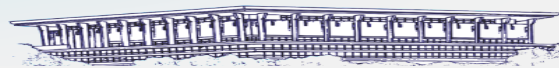
Line – two meters
apart – outside

Identification before a
dedicated poll worker
– outside

Flowchart for the voter

Voting in a separate
tent – observed by the
other poll-workers

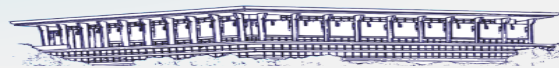




Voting process and participation

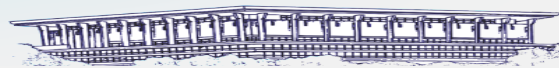
- Only one poll worker that was in isolation gear – had direct contact with the voters - and his job was to identify the voter – with his government ID and allow him or her to vote and keep that the voter is wearing protective gear.
- Requirements – every voter needed to come alone in a car. With no one else with him/her and with a facemask and gloves.
- **Voter participation** – the voter participation in Israel is somewhat high (comparably), almost 71.5% of eligible voters.

The voter participation of the isolated voters was very high – almost 80% of isolated voters came to the special polling places and voted.



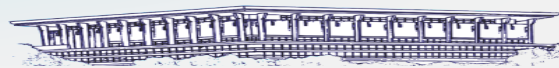
Counting and tallying

- Opening the ballots box after two days (so to give the droplets time to dry) – by a dedicated protected crew (we had no knowledge yet on the contagious effect). ▶
- Verifying the voter didn't vote twice by matching the ID number on the outer envelope to the registrar.
- Opening the outer envelopes and separating them from the voting envelopes – to keep the vote secret.
- Counting with a protected crew – that was formed by the committee's senior staff.
- Observers from the major parties.



Fake news and communications

- A special ad that run on networks and social media on the week prior to elections day – to spared our fear and state the personal responsibility of voters.
- A small video-ad with instructions – in the national networks and social media.
- Online manual.
- Fake news:
 - Forming a special team in HQ – with representatives from the ministry of health, a senior Medical doctor, police and the attorney general to deal with rumors and fake news.
 - Special news bulletins and press releases through-out the day and the week before.



Lesson learned

- The voting process is long – we should have
 - placed more polling stations
 - for longer hours.
 - If the elections were now
 - maybe create early voting procedures (need an amendment of the elections act).
 - Or creating special “vote and drive-through” in giant tents.
- Poll workers – a main problem. Didn’t want to come.
To work at the polls and observe and to clean up the polling places.
- We have placed 16 special polling stations for almost 6,000 eligible votes.
- And we needed to put body-heat measures and all polling places, so that a voter with symptoms will that came to his regular polling station will be referred to the special polling places.



Central Elections Committee

Thank You

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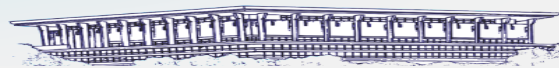
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