Netanyahu Coalition in Israel Loses First Vote in Parliament

Tel Aviv, July 9 (RHC)-- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party has lost the first vote despite forming a coalition to maintain dominance at the Israeli parliament (Knesset).

For the first time since Netanyahu took office back in May, the coalition lost a vote on jurisdiction of bailiffs 46-45. "Opposition members waited outside the chamber, burst in at the moment of truth and achieved a majority in the preliminary reading," wrote Israeli daily Haaretz.

The coalition, consisting of 30 Likud members as well as 31 others from other parties, was formed in May, providing a knife-edge majority that allowed the premier to take office. "Netanyahu's coalition of 61 is unable to function," said a member of the opposition Yesh Atid party, MP Karin Elharrar, who sponsored the bill.

According to the Associated Press, the vote highlighted "the challenge of governance" at the 120-seat Knesset, in which Bibi's coalition holds not more than 61. "We carried out a classic ambush," opposition leader Isaac Herzog told public radio. "We entered by surprise... Nobody suspected that there would be a majority or that we would even be present there."

Before becoming law, the bill would need to pass three other readings but Wednesday's vote implied vulnerability on the side of Netanyahu's coalition against a united ambush by the opposition.

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