



Israel profile - Leaders

Prime minister: Benjamin Netanyahu & the right-wink Likoud.

"Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of the right-wing Likud party, became prime minister after an inconclusive early election in February 2009, a decade after holding the office once before.

The outgoing administration, led by the centrist Kadima party, failed to reassemble as a new centre-left coalition, and Mr Netanyahu was able to form a government with the nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu party, various Jewish religious parties and the centre-left Labour party. He later united Yisrael Beiteinu with Likud in an attempt to form a broad conservative party.

This government managed to steer Israel out of the global economic recession, but faced mounting protests about the rising cost of living. It also failed to make any headway in relations with the Palestinians, Jewish settlers on the West Bank and the Obama administration in the United States.

During the election Mr Netanyahu had pledged not to transfer land occupied by Israel to a Palestinian state in return for peace, on the grounds that previous Israeli withdrawals had only met with further Palestinian armed attacks.

Several months later he angered settlers by accepting the creation of Palestinian state, but his conditions, including its complete demilitarisation, were unacceptable to Palestinian leaders.

The prime minister's refusal to concede a full suspension of settlement activity - a key Palestinian condition for a return to stalled peace talks - frustrated the United States, and a partial suspension of permits for new settlements in 2009-2010 only served to spark angry protests by settlers.

Mr Netanyahu's repeated warnings over the perceived threat of Iran's nuclear programme have also complicated relations with the US."

Questions.

1. Underline key information.
2. Sum up the main points* to do an oral presentation.

*foundation – ideology – territorial influence – role in the Arab-Israeli conflict/peace process. political allies/rivals – etc.