



Israel's 36th Government

13 June, 2021

Israel's 36th government was sworn in by the Knesset late last night in Israel, with Naftali Bennett becoming the Jewish State's 13th Prime Minister. Yair Lapid was sworn in as the country's Alternate Prime Minister, and will rotate with Bennett, becoming prime minister in two years' time.

For a backgrounder on how this government came about, and its constituent parties, see the summary that JFNA's Israel office put together last week, [here](#). And see [here](#) and [here](#) for background articles about incoming Prime Minister, Naftali Bennett.

The new [coalition](#) is being labelled a "Unity Government" and also a "Government of Change." It is made up of ideologically disparate partners, who are largely united by their desire to see the end of the Netanyahu-led coalition. Nonetheless, all sides to the coalition have declared their commitment to put ideological differences aside in order to "responsibly govern the country." One of the features of the new government has been an attempt at parity between the left and right constituents, with each side of the political aisle being given equal strength in the new coalition.

New Government's Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of the new government can be discerned by examining the publicly available coalition agreements reached between the various parties making up the new alliance. Among the interesting and important points worth noting, the incoming government has agreed to:

JEWISH WORLD AND RELIGION & STATE

- Strengthen relations between Israel and global Jewish communities
- Work to increase Jewish immigration to the State of Israel.
- Implement the Kotel compromise deal (brokered by Sharansky, but frozen by the government)
- Create competition in the field of Kashrut services, and standardization in the field.
- Change the body that elects the Chief Rabbi of Israel to bring about the election of a Zionist Chief Rabbi.
- Open the possibility of conversion through regional and municipal rabbinical authorities (to promote more liberal options for those undertaking the conversion process).
- (Apart from these issues, the status quo will be maintained in matters of religion and state, and the Yamina Party has been given a veto on all such changes).

DAILY LIFE

- Establish a university in the Galilee.
- Promote a national plan for strengthening and developing northern Israel.
- Promote a program to reduce crime in the Arab sector.
- Set a national goal for raising the number of high-tech workers to 15% of all workers in the economy by 2026.

OTHER ISSUES

- The establishment of a state inquiry to investigate the disaster on Mount Meron.
- Limit the term of office of the Prime Minister to 2 terms or 8 years.
- Legislate an "IDF Recruitment Law" to ensure a more equal sharing of the burden of military services across different sectors of the population. In parallel, the introduction of a new model for national-civilian service for specific communities will be examined.

New Ministers

The new ministers in the government are:

1. Prime Minister - Naftali Bennett (Yamina) (and Interior Minister in second half of term)
2. Alternate Prime Minister and Foreign Minister - [Yair Lapid](#) (Yesh Atid) (and Prime Minister in second half of term)
3. Defense Minister - Benny Gantz (Blue and White)
4. Finance Minister - Avigdor Liberman (Yisrael Beiteinu)
5. Justice Minister - Gideon Saar (New Hope) (and Foreign Minister in second half of term)
6. Education Minister - Yifat Sasha Biton (New Hope)
7. Interior Minister - Ayelet Shaked (Yamina) (and Justice Minister in second half of term)
8. Immigration Minister - Penina Tamano Shata (Blue and White)
9. Internal Security Minister - Omer Bar Lev (Labor)
10. Transportation Minister - Merav Michaeli (Labor)
11. Health Minister - Nitzan Horwitz (Meretz)
12. Environmental Minister - Tamar Zandberg (Meretz)
13. Regional Cooperation Minister - Esawi Frej (Meretz)
14. Welfare Minister - Meir Cohen (Yesh Atid)
15. Energy Minister - Karine Elharar (Yesh Atid)
16. Housing Minister - Zeev Elkin (New Hope)
17. Diaspora Affairs Minister - Nachman Shai (Labor)
18. Communications Minister - Yoaz Hendel (New Hope)
19. Culture Minister - Chili Tropper (Blue and White)
20. Agriculture Minister - Oded Forer (Yisrael Beitenu)
21. Economy Minister – Orna Barbivai (Yesh Atid)
22. Minister of Religious Services – Matan Kahane (Yamina)
23. Science and Technology Minister – Orit Farkash HaCohen (Blue and White)
24. Minister of Tourism – Yoel Razvozov (Yesh Atid)
25. Minister of Social Equality - Merav Cohen (Yesh Atid)
26. Minister of Settlement Affairs- Nir Orbach (Yamina)
27. Minister of Intelligence – Elazar Stern (Yesh Atid)
28. Minister in the Finance Ministry – Hamad Amar (Yisrael Beitenu)
29. Knesset Speaker - Mickey Levi (Yesh Atid)

Jewish Federations Welcomes the New Government

In a statement, JFNA said:

The Jewish Federations of North America congratulates incoming Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and incoming Alternate Prime Minister Yair Lapid on forming a new government. JFNA also sends greetings and best wishes to all the party leaders and ministers who have joined the coalition.

JFNA's Chair of the Board of Trustees Mark Wilf said, "JFNA sends Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and the entire incoming Israeli government a warm embrace as they embark on this new chapter in modern Israeli history. Federations are eager

to work closely with the incoming government and look forward to working together to build bridges between Israel and global Jewry. At the same time, we send our sincere gratitude to outgoing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government for their many years of dedicated service to the State of Israel and for their role in promoting cooperation and friendship with North American Jewry.”

Eric Fingerhut, JFNA’s president and CEO said, “We were fortunate to meet with Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, Defense Minister Benny Gantz and many other senior officials of the new government during our trip to Israel just two weeks ago. Those meetings left us confident that the new government will work closely with us to strengthen Israel and the entire Jewish People. We welcome the stability that a new government will bring to Israel. We are also particularly pleased to see an Arab party join the ruling coalition, which is not just unprecedented but also symbolizes ever-greater integration of the Arab sector into Israeli shared society. We are excited to begin working with the new government and wish all these leaders strength and success.”

As always, JFNA’s Israel office is keeping a close watch on developments and will update Federations as needed.

For more information, please contact JFNA’s [Dani Wassner](#), Director of Communications and Government Relations in Israel.

Sources: The Knesset, Office of the Prime Minister, The Israel Democracy Institute, The Jerusalem Post, i24 News, Walla!, Kan Israel Radio, Galei Tzahal Radio, The Times of Israel, Ha’aretz