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# **Bennett-Lapid Alliance: A Potential Challenge To Netanyahu, But Not A Political Reset**

**By**

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**3 June 2026**

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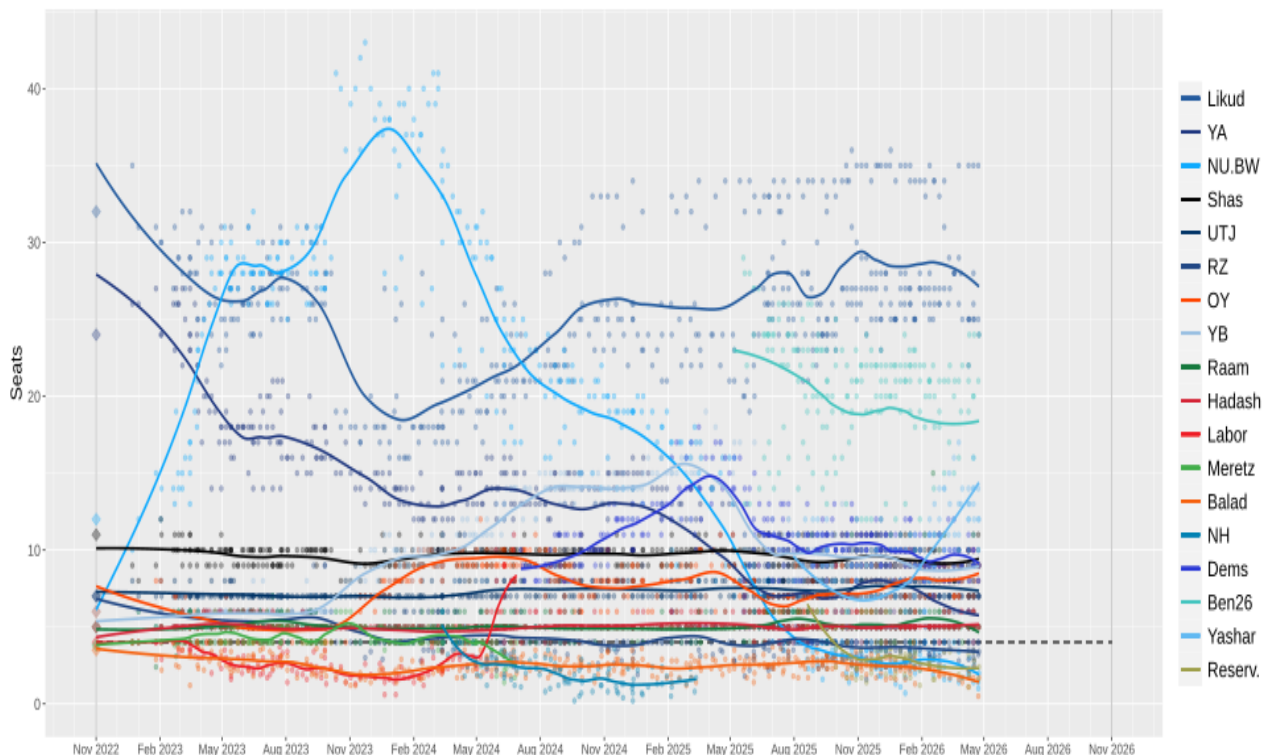
**Bennett-Lapid Alliance: A Potential Challenge To Netanyahu, But Not A Political Reset**

**3 June 2026**

**Executive Summary**

- ✦ Israel’s repeated elections between 2019 and 2022 reflected deep political fragmentation, with coalition instability weakening governance, delaying policymaking, and increasing political polarization.
- ✦ Former Prime Ministers Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid have revived their alliance under the “Together” banner, seeking to capitalize on public dissatisfaction with Netanyahu following the October 7 attacks, subsequent wars, and ongoing corruption trial.
- ✦ The alliance’s platform focuses on constitutional reform, education system integration, term limits for political leaders, and reducing the influence of ultra-Orthodox parties in Israeli politics.
- ✦ Bennett and Lapid support mandatory military service for Haredi Jews, a highly divisive issue that contributed to tensions within Netanyahu’s coalition and accelerated calls for early elections.
- ✦ Recent polling suggests the Bennett-Lapid alliance could emerge as the largest political force in the Knesset, although neither the pro- nor anti-Netanyahu camps currently appear able to secure a governing majority on their own.
- ✦ Despite presenting a credible alternative to Netanyahu, the alliance faces significant obstacles, including coalition arithmetic, the role of Arab parties, and the broader fragmentation of Israel’s political landscape.

**Key Picture: Opinion Polling for the Next Israeli Legislative Election**



Source: [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2026_Israeli_legislative_election)

## Bennet-Lapid: Another Attempt; Revising Past Elections

Israel's repeated elections have become a symbol of the country's growing political fragmentation and political instability. Between 2019 and 2022, Israelis voted five times because no political group could secure a durable parliamentary majority.<sup>1</sup> Constant deadlock has weakened long-term policy-making, delayed budgets, intensified political polarisation and created governments heavily dependent on fragile coalition bargaining.<sup>2</sup>

The 2022 Israeli elections marked Netanyahu's return to power after the collapse of the coalition government led by Naftali Bennet and Yair Lapid.<sup>3</sup> The Bennett-Lapid coalition collapsed because it was an ideologically fragile alliance bringing right-wing, centrist, left-wing and Arab parties united under one objective: removing Netanyahu from power. Internal disagreements with Bennett's own party, disputes over religion, cooperation with Arab parties, and the coalition's razor-thin parliamentary majority made the government unstable.<sup>4</sup>

After the Bennet-Lapid coalition failure in the 2022 elections, in April 2026, the two ex-Prime Ministers presented the 'Together' alliance, running on a joint list in the next Israeli elections<sup>5</sup>, reviving the partnership that helped end Netanyahu's 12-year uninterrupted seat in power in 2021. Given that the next elections will be a contested environment after one of the most turbulent periods in the country's political history, 'Together' could have a chance at ousting Netanyahu. Since the Hamas-led attacks of 7 October 2023, Israel has remained engaged in military campaigns in Gaza, confrontations with Hezbollah in Lebanon, and direct escalation with Iran, reshaping domestic politics. At the same time, Netanyahu has faced extended criticism over the handling of the wars, the intelligence failures surrounding October 7, and his continued corruption trial.<sup>6</sup>

### 'Together': The Same Proposal From The 2022 Elections?

Although the Bennet-Lapid alliance has not yet published a complete formal manifesto, its platform centres on institutional reform, economic liberalisation and reducing the influence of ultra-Orthodox parties. One of the alliance's most ambitious proposals is the creation of an Israeli constitution 'in the spirit of the declaration of Independence', integrating the country's disparate school systems in the 'greatest social revolution since the state was founded'<sup>7</sup>. Indeed, the coalition announced to unify the fractured education system, which is separated into four streams: Secular Jewish, Religious Jewish, Haredi and Arab, into a common curriculum.<sup>8</sup>

Separately, both parties have committed to term limits for the Prime Minister and other constitutional reforms.<sup>9</sup> Another issue shaping the election is the intelligence failure surrounding the 7 October attacks. While a citizen-led investigation into October 7 commenced, Netanyahu's government has actively rejected calls for an apolitical State Commission of Inquiry.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, Bennett announced his first action if elected would be forming such a commission.<sup>11</sup>

Both Bennet and Lapid support mandating Haredi conscription to the Israel Defence Forces<sup>12</sup>, and have called for a commission to investigate the 'sabotage of Haredi enlistment'<sup>13</sup>. Their conscription has been a sensitive matter, accelerating the prospect of early elections. The draft touches on Israel's social divides, between secular and national-religious Israelis who serve in the army and ultra-Orthodox communities that have historically received exemptions. Netanyahu returned to office heavily dependent on ultra-Orthodox parties, many of which oppose mandatory military service for yeshiva students.

Ultra-Orthodox men enrolled in full-time religious study have been exempt since the state of Israel was created in 1948, but Israel's High Court of Justice ruled it illegal in 1998.<sup>14</sup> In 2024, the High Court ordered to begin actively conscripting this sector as the army needs more manpower due to Israel's involvement in Gaza, Lebanon and escalating confrontation with Iran. A crisis began in July 2025, when the ultra-Orthodox parties Shas and United Torah Judaism (UTJ) pulled their support from the coalition unless a bill was passed exempting constituents from the draft.<sup>15</sup> As a result, Israel's ruling coalition has submitted a call for an early election, to which, if the vote passes next week, as expected, elections will be held within 90 days, projected for the third week of August.<sup>16</sup>

Altogether, this time, their pitch is less about ideological renewal than about political repair. The coalition aims to assure competence after the continued crises and wars, create unity towards a common constitution after years of polarisation shown in five elections in 3 years, and equality by ensuring military service for everyone after years of exemptions.

### Are There Real Chances Of Success? What The Polls Say

In Israel's 120-seat Knesset, 61 seats are needed for a governing majority. Channel 12's survey conducted in late April 2026 showed the Bennet-Lapid coalition would win 26 seats, with Bennet 2026 and Yesh Atid garnering 21 and 7 seats, respectively, situating them ahead of Netanyahu's ruling Likud, which obtained 25 seats.<sup>17</sup> In the poll, Netanyahu's right-wing bloc garnered 50 out of 120 Knesset seats, while the Zionist opposition parties received 60 and the Arab factions 10.<sup>18</sup>

For many Israeli voters, voting may be a decision between Netanyahu's 'exhausted' and corrupted politics and a younger version of hawkish centrism. Bennet's 'Together' promises national rebuilding, while Lapid gives the alliance secular, middle-class credibility. Furthermore, the alliance also invites military chief Gadi Eisenkot's Yashar party into a broader anti-Netanyahu front, potentially strengthening its security credentials.<sup>19</sup>

The alliance gives the opposition a leadership vehicle, but it does not yet solve Israel's coalition arithmetic: polls still suggest neither Netanyahu's bloc nor the anti-Netanyahu camp has an easy path to 61 seats. A revived Arab Joint List could become decisive, but Bennett has ruled out relying on Arab parties, making the anti-Netanyahu camp's route to power more difficult. The four main Arab-majority parties have been discussing a revived Joint List, and polling among Arab citizens showed 82% support for re-establishing a united list.<sup>20</sup> However, Bennett has said he will not rely on Arab parties to form a government<sup>21</sup>, even though Ra'am's support was crucial to the 2021 government change. That makes the coalition's task to govern harder as they must defeat Netanyahu while avoiding the very Arab political support that may be necessary to do so. Furthermore, it also weakens the alliance's claim to democratic renewal, because excluding Arab parties reinforces the political marginalisation of roughly one-fifth of Israel's citizens.<sup>22</sup>

Altogether, Netanyahu faces danger, but not necessarily defeat. Netanyahu's coalition is weak, the ultra-Orthodox partners are restless and may be unreliable for coalition-building in the next elections, and Bennett and Lapid have given the opposition a recognisable leader and list. Yet Israel's fragmented electoral system, the unresolved role of Arab parties and the ideological narrowness of the opposition leave the outcome uncertain. The Bennett-Lapid alliance may offer Israelis an alternative to Netanyahu, but their success in the next elections is still up for debate.

## NOTES

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