

Ynet-News, Jun 15, 2021 – Tuesday

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Jerusalem flag march through Jaffa Gate approved for Tuesday

06.14.21 – Mo- - - News Placed in Jun 14 spot – Monday
Bennett-Lapid coalition began without ceremony, handshake, public, or photo op.

06.14.21 – Mo- - - News
Gantz accuses Interior & Religious Affairs MKs for Meron disaster in April

06.13.21 – Su- - - News Placed in Jun 12 spot – Saturday
Hundreds at Western Wall pray against new government as Knesset voted

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New 13th PM Naftali Bennett confirmed replacing Netanyahu by 60 to 59 vote
Sunday

06.13.21 – Su- - - News
 Hamas threatens rocket fire if Jerusalem flag march enters Damascus Gate

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 Biden views March of Flags June 15 as provocative aggression to Hamas

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06.14.21
Jerusalem flag march through Jaffa Gate approved for Tuesday

06.14.21
Public security minister: Jerusalem flag march will go ahead as scheduled
Labor's Omer Barlev says controversial Tuesday event will take place 'within confines of the law' and according to police recommendations; IDF orders fielding of additional Iron Dome batteries across south as Hamas threatens renewed rocket fire
Ynet| Updated: 06.14.21 , 19:51

Incoming Public Security Minister Omer Barlev on Monday gave the go-ahead to a contentious Jewish nationalist parade that was scheduled to take place in East Jerusalem the next day.

"In a democracy, it is allowed and important to demonstrate within the confines of the law," Barlev was quoted by the Times of Israel as saying.

"We will hold a police assessment about the events and we will operate according to the recommendations of the police."

Following an assessment briefing with Police Commissioner Yaakov Shabtai and security officials, Barlev approved the march's route.

"I was under the impression that the police is well prepared and that a great effort has been made to safeguard the delicate fabric of life and public safety," he said in a statement.

The march will proceed down Sultan Suleiman road before arriving at the Damascus Gate. An Israeli flag dance will be held at the plaza in front of the gate. The marchers, however, will not enter the Old City through the Damascus Gate.

From the Damascus Gate, marchers will pass through the Jaffa Gate and head toward the Western Wall through peripheral areas of the Muslim Quarter of the Old City. Part of the route will be detoured through the Jewish Quarter due to security concerns and to prevent overcrowding.

Earlier Monday, the predominantly Arab Joint List to Barlev and Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, calling for the event, dubbed the March of the Flags, to be canceled immediately.

"Over the past month we have been witness to the rising tensions in Jerusalem which have led to terrible bloodshed and dangerous regional flareups," the party said. "We warn ahead of time that the event is highly likely to reignite tensions and lead to dangerous violence and escalation."

The Jerusalem Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) warned Sunday of an "explosion" if the march goes through the capital's Old City.

The PLO said that ensuing unrest could extend beyond Jerusalem to the Palestinian territories if the march takes place, saying that the "occupation authorities" have not learned from the political changes in the region and internationally.

Hamas has also launched a warning to Israel that it would respond fiercely to the Jewish state's "regular activities" in Jerusalem, saying it had not ruled out the option of resuming rocket fire at cities across the country due to actions it found objectionable.

The IDF ordered in response to field additional Iron Dome missile defense system batteries across Israel's south.

Ministers voted last week to allow the march following a compromise between outgoing prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz, with a route to be decided between the organizers and police.

The annual parade marks the reunification of the capital after the 1967 Six-Day War and usually takes place on Jerusalem Day, which this year fell on May 10. The march was interrupted when Hamas fired rockets at Jerusalem from Gaza, marking the start of a bitter 11-day conflict.

Ahead of the cabinet vote, ministers were warned by defense officials that the parade's traditional route could lead to a flare-up in tensions not only within the city, also spilling over to the West Bank, Gaza Strip and other places across Israel.

The annual march was also called off in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

06.14.21

Bennett-Lapid coalition began without ceremony, handshake, public, or photo op.

06.14.21

In first meeting as opposition leader, Netanyahu vows to topple 'dangerous' Bennett-Lapid government

After unusually truncated 30-minute handover meeting with new prime minister, Likud head hints of possible cooperation with predominantly Arab Joint List alliance in unseating the new coalition, which he branded as united solely by 'hate'

Moran Azulay | Published: 06.14.21 , 18:10

Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday oversaw his first faction meeting as opposition leader, promising that his allies in the right-wing bloc will work tirelessly to topple Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's "dangerous fraudulent" government.

Flanked by the heads of the Shas, United Torah Judaism and the Religious Zionist parties, Netanyahu stated that the new coalition will "fall much faster than expected because what united them is hate."

"We have a strong opposition like no other," he added. "We are vehemently united in toppling this dangerous left-wing government."

Bennett, 49, a former ally of Netanyahu turned rival, became prime minister after a 60-59 vote in Knesset on Sunday. Bennett will hold office for two years, and will be replaced for two years by Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, the architect of the coalition.

As foreign minister, Lapid joined one of 27 ministers in a carefully constructed coalition of right-wing Yamina, New Hope and Yisrael Beytenu, centrist Yesh Atid and Blue & White, left-wing Meretz and Labor and Islamist Ra'am.

The new government marks the end of a political crisis that sparked four elections in two years, including two rounds of voting during the coronavirus pandemic.

Netanyahu on Monday reiterated his claim that Bennett cheated his voters, saying that the person "who transfers six Knesset seats, in an act of fraud, from the right to the left could maybe mislead and form a temporary government and nothing else."

The Likud leader also hinted of possible cooperation with the predominantly Arab Joint List alliance, saying that the opposition would hold a meeting every Monday at 1:30pm and if needed would include "the entire opposition."

Netanyahu stressed the need for "ironclad discipline in the opposition," asking members to refrain from infighting.

"If we focus all of our efforts, we can topple them, and we have a good reason to topple them: the good of the country," he said.

The gathering took place several hours after Netanyahu's extraordinarily short hand-over meeting with Bennett in his Jerusalem office, which lasted some 30 minutes.

The formal transfer of power meeting ended without the traditional ceremony and public good wishes, without a handshake and with no photo op.

06.14.21

Gantz accuses Interior & Religious Affairs MKs for Meron disaster in April

06.14.21

Gantz pushes for Meron disaster probe rejected by previous government

Coalition agreement says that government will approve state commission into tragedy that claimed 45 lives at April Lag B'Omer celebration; families of mainly Haredi victims had demanded inquiry that was rebuffed by ultra-Orthodox lawmakers in Netanyahu coalition

Yoav Zitun, Moran Azulay | Published: 06.14.21 , 15:28

Defense Minister Benny Gantz on Monday sent the Cabinet Secretariat a proposal for the creation of a state commission of inquiry into a stampede at a Lag B'Omer celebration in April in which 45 people were killed and some 150 others injured.

The previous government had refused to approve an investigation into the events on Mount Meron during the predominantly ultra-Orthodox celebration, claiming that an internal probe by the Religious Affairs Ministry would be sufficient.

Gantz's proposal calls for the government to establish a state commission with full authority to investigate the stampede that is believed to have occurred due to poor planning at the event.

The coalition agreement stipulates that the new government, which was sworn in on Sunday, will approve the commission.

"This is a moral debt we owe to the families [of the victims]," said Gantz on Monday. "It is equally important to investigate the incident in order to avoid a repeat of such tragic events."

The commission was demanded by the victims' families, who less than a month after the disaster sent a letter to then-prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, requesting an independent probe headed by a Supreme Court justice.

"We believe only such an inquiry will be able to conduct a thorough search for the truth," the families wrote.

The Knesset Arrangements Committee had been set to vote on a proposal for a state commission, in a motion tabled by Yesh Atid at the end of May. But the ultra-Orthodox legislators in the previous government said they preferred a panel of inquiry with less authority and a more limited probe. The members of that investigation would have been appointed by Interior Minister Aryeh Deri, the leader of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party. The Interior Ministry and Religious Affairs Ministry, both formerly headed by Shas ministers, were responsible for the administration of the site in particular during the annual Lag B'Omer celebrations.

The stampede, seen as Israel's worst civilian disaster, occurred when tens of thousands of ultra-Orthodox worshipers began leaving the Toldos Aharon compound at Mount Meron after the event. The stampede occurred when people tried to leave via a single narrow exit at the compound. The first people heading to the exit are believed to have fallen on the slippery floor and been crushed by those who followed after.

Israel Police later came under fire for allowing the event to go ahead despite overcrowding.

06.13.21

Hundreds at Western Wall pray against new government as Knesset voted

06.13.21

Hundreds gather at Western Wall for prayer rally against new government. As Knesset convenes to vote on its formation, far-right rabbis and activists say new administration would harm the Jewish character of the state under 'the left and the radical left'

Kobi Nachshoni | Published: 06.13.21 , 23:31

Hundreds gathered on Sunday at the Western Wall in Jerusalem for a prayer rally against the new government as Knesset convened to vote on its formation.

Congregating under the banner of "time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it", participants — mostly religious Zionist and ultra-Orthodox Jews — said they feared the new government would harm the Jewish character of the state under "the left and the radical left."

The event's organizer said that "there is fear of a government comprised of members of Knesset that have turned the war against Judaism to their life's mission. Some of them have turned the war the settlement in the Land of Israel to their life's mission."

"We pray that G-d will not allow them to carry out their plot to weaken the Judaism of the country and the settlement in all its parts. May he prevent them the power from harming the sanctity of the family, the sanctity of the people of Israel, of the kashrut and the Sabbath. May he prevent them from abandoning the Land of Israel to the Arab takeover."

The protest rally was attended by prominent figures within the religious Zionist movement, including Rabbi Dov Lior, one of the most prominent adjudicators in religious Zionism; Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, chief rabbi of the city of Safed and member of the Chief Rabbinate Council; Rabbi Tzvi Kostiner, head of Yeshiva Midbara ke-Eden in Mitzpe Ramon; Rabbi Yehoshua Weitzman, head of Yeshivat Ma'alot; Rabbi David Dudkevitch, chief rabbi of the West Bank settlement of Yitzhar; and Rabbi Yehuda Sadan, head of the High Yeshiva in the West Bank settlement of Eli.

06.13.21

New 13th PM Naftali Bennett confirmed replacing Netanyahu by 60 to 59 vote Sunday

06.13.21

Bennett becomes Israel's 13th prime minister, ending Netanyahu era
New PM and his coalition confirmed in Knesset by vote of 60 to 59, replacing Netanyahu after 12 years in office; new government due to meet in Knesset for the first time shortly after vote; celebrations held in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv
Ynet, News Agencies | Updated: 06.13.21 , 21:42

Israel swore in a new government under right-winger Naftali Bennett on Sunday evening, ending a 12-year term in office for Benjamin Netanyahu and ushering in a coalition that for the first time in the country's history has an Arab party as a member.

The new government, which has the narrowest possible majority of 61 in the 120-strong Knesset, was confirmed by a vote of 60 to 59, with a handful of members of the coalition absent from the vote.

Celebrations broke out in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, which have seen frequent protests against Netanyahu, as Bennett was confirmed as prime minister.
In the plenum, ministers from the former government stood and cleared their seats for the members of new cabinet. Netanyahu briefly shook hands with Bennett and then swiftly departed before the new government was sworn in.
Bennett was sworn in first, his voice clearly wavering as he took the pledge, followed by the rest of his government.

Following the vote, the newly inaugurated government held its **first cabinet meeting Sunday**, with **Bennett presiding** over the gathering and opening it with the "Shehechyanu" prayer of thanksgiving.

"The difficulties of forming a unity government are behind us, now the citizens of Israel look upon us," Bennett said. "Now we must **prove ourselves**, and **work together** in unity and cooperation to mend the rift among the public and **return** the state to **proper governance** **after** debilitation brought by internal **squabbles**."

Foreign Minister Yair **Lapid, sitting alongside Bennett**, said that "what formed this government is friendship and trust, and what is going to maintain this government will be friendship and trust."

The Knesset vote capped a day of speeches in parliament, including **Bennett's** own that was **heavily heckled by members** of Netanyahu's outgoing right-wing, religious government, who have **accused him of lying** to his voters in order **to take power**.

Bennett, who recently said he was **uniting with Arab**, left-wing and centrist parties in order to avoid Israel's fifth elections since April 2019, pledged to be a prime minister for all Israelis.

His centrist coalition **partner** Yair **Lapid**, who **will become prime minister in 2023** as part of their **rotation agreement**, forwent his own Knesset speech as he expressed outrage at the abuse hurled at Bennett during his address.

In brief remarks, Lapid said he wanted to "ask for forgiveness from my mother" for having to witness the disruptions during the session at which every MK was invited to take the podium.

Lapid will be foreign minister **in the interim**, one of **27 ministers** in a carefully constructed **coalition** of right-wing Yamina, New Hope and Yisrael Beytenu, centrist Yesh Atid and Blue & White, left-wing Meretz and Labor and Islamist Ra'am.

The new government marks the end of a political crisis that sparked four elections in two years, including two rounds of voting during the coronavirus pandemic.

The vote on the government was overseen by new Knesset Speaker Mickey Levy of Yesh Atid, whose election to the post moments beforehand was the first true sign of the changing of the guard.

Levy, a former Jerusalem police chief, declined to make a speech as he took the speaker's seat in order to expedite the process.

Both **Bennett and Lapid** have said they **want to bridge political divides** and unite Israelis under a government that will work hard for all its citizens.

Their cabinet faces considerable diplomatic, security and financial **challenges: Iran**, a fragile ceasefire with **Palestinian** terror groups in **Gaza**, a looming war crimes probe by the International Criminal Court, and economic recovery following the coronavirus pandemic.

On top of that, their patchwork **coalition will still have to contend with Netanyahu** — who is sure to be a combative head of the **opposition**.

The leadership in the U.S., Israel's strongest ally, congratulated the new government, with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer expressing the hope "that we can now begin serious negotiations for a two-state solution."

He called on the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden "to do all it can to bring the parties together and help achieve a two-state solution where each side can live side by side in peace."

Biden, who spent Sunday in the U.K. meeting with Queen Elizabeth II, sent his own message of congratulations to the new prime minister, saying in an official statement that he "looks forward to working with Prime Minister Bennett to strengthen all aspects of the close and enduring relationship between our two nations."

"Israel has no better friend than the United States," Biden said. "The bond that unites our people is evidence of our shared values and decades of close cooperation and as we continue to strengthen our partnership, the United States remains unwavering in its support for Israel's security."

Biden added his administration was "fully committed to working with the new Israeli government to advance security, stability, and peace for Israelis, Palestinians, and people throughout the broader region."

In Gaza, the ruling Hamas terror organization said it would confront the new government.

Spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said Sunday any Israeli government is "a settler occupier entity that must be resisted by all forms of resistance, foremost of which is the armed resistance."

Hamas and Israel fought an 11-day war last month. The bitter enemies have fought a total of four wars since Hamas, which seeks Israel's destruction, seized control of Gaza in 2007 from the rival Palestinian Authority.

Despite their enmity, the sides have been conducting indirect talks aimed at shoring up a cease-fire. Barhoum said "the behavior of this government on the ground will determine the way and nature of dealing with it on the ground."

06.13.21

Hamas threatens rocket fire if Jerusalem flag march enters Damascus Gate

06.13.21

PLO warns of 'explosion' if Jerusalem flag march goes ahead

Hamas reportedly threatens to resume rocket fire on Israeli communities if it objects to actions in capital; new route set to avoid flashpoint areas such as Damascus Gate, Muslim Quarter of Old City

Ynet| Published: 06.13.21 , 15:51

The Jerusalem Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization warned Sunday of an "explosion" if a controversial far-right march known as the "Flag Parade" takes place next Tuesday in the Old City of Jerusalem.

The PLO said that ensuing unrest could extend beyond Jerusalem to the Palestinian territories if the march takes place, saying that the "occupation authorities" have not learned from the political changes in the region and internationally.

Hamas also reportedly warned that it would respond fiercely to Israel's "regular activities" in Jerusalem, saying it had not ruled out the option of resuming rocket fire at cities across the country due to actions it found objectionable.

Ministers voted last week to allow the march following a compromise between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz, with a route to be decided between the organizers and police.

The new route will mostly avoid the area of the Damascus Gate entrance to the Old City and the Muslim Quarter, which could be flashpoints for potential violence.

The annual parade to celebrate the reunification of the capital after the 1967 Six-Day War usually takes place on Jerusalem Day, which this year fell on May 10. The march was interrupted when Hamas fired rockets at Jerusalem from Gaza, marking the start of a bitter 11-day conflict.

Ahead of the cabinet vote, ministers were warned by defense officials warned that the parade's traditional route through the Damascus Gate and the Muslim Quarter could lead to a flare-up in tensions not only within the city but possibly also in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and other locations across Israel.

The annual march was also called off in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

06.10.21

Biden views March of Flags June 15 as provocative aggression to Hamas

06.10.21

U.S. warns Israel 'far-right provocations' could light up Jerusalem

Biden administration conveys to Defense Minister Gantz it expects Israel to avoid moves that could further escalate tensions in the capital and could spill over to the rest of the country, even kicking off another round of fighting in the Gaza Strip

Yoav Zitun | Published: 06.10.21 , 23:26

The Biden administration warned Israel that a Jewish nationalist march that was scheduled to take place in East Jerusalem next Tuesday could reignite violence across Israel and kick off another round of fighting in the Gaza Strip, Ynet has learned on Thursday.

U.S. officials conveyed to Defense Minister Benny Gantz they expected Israel to avoid moves that could further escalate tensions, and especially what they call "far-right provocations."

The so-called "March of Flags" was supposed to take on Thursday but police ordered to postpone the event, fearing it would provoke local Palestinians to attack marchers.

The rally usually takes place on Jerusalem Day but was interrupted this year when Hamas fired a barrage of rockets at the capital from the Gaza Strip, marking the start of an 11-day conflict between the IDF and the Palestinian enclave's terrorist factions. It was also called off in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In late-night consultations Monday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tasked Police Commissioner Yaakov Shabtai with providing alternative routes so that the march could go ahead.

Ministers voted Tuesday to allow the controversial far-right march to take place in Jerusalem's Old City next Tuesday, June 15, with a new route to be decided between the rally's organizers and police.

Meanwhile, dozens gathered near the Damascus Gate in East Jerusalem Thursday evening to protest the decision to postpone the march that was slated to leave from that location to the Temple Mount.

Religious Zionist party MK Itamar Ben-Gvir joined the protesters, slamming the police for "capitulating to Hamas" and declaring he "won't give up" on Jerusalem and the Old City.

The fact that a member of Knesset in Israel cannot march through the Old City is a disgrace, a capitulation to Hamas and a win for terrorism," he told the crowd while noting he did not intend to confront police. "I came here to protest the decision of a failing police commissioner. We won't give up on Jerusalem and the Old City. It is ours."

After Ben-Gvir left the area, unrest erupted as two groups flying the Israeli and Palestinian flags clashed. Police officers used riot control measures, including several stun grenades, to disperse the crowd and arrested five people suspected of disturbing the peace at the scene.

In the view of U.S. fears of rekindled violence, Hamas military wing spokesman Abu Obeida said Thursday evening the terrorist group was closely monitoring the "provocative and aggressive" events in Jerusalem in general and the al-Aqsa Mosque in particular.

Secretary of State Anthony Blinken spoke with Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi on Wednesday, but it is unclear whether he raised the issue.

The U.S. supported Israel during the conflict in Gaza and backed the Jewish state's right to defend itself. However, the Biden administration had pressured Israel to seek a ceasefire a few days into the fighting.

At the end of the operation, the U.S. administration vowed to replenish Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system and Blinken arrived in Israel for a state visit.

06.13.21

G7 three-day summit in Vienna & England; Iran says nuclear deal unlikely

Caution on Iran nuclear deal as G7 leaders vow to stop bomb

Diplomats warn negotiations with Iran still need more time after EU coordinators suggest differences over 2015 accord limiting Iran's nuclear activities had narrowed further
Associated Press| Published: 06.13.21 , 23:49

Diplomats from outside the European Union cautioned Sunday that negotiations with Iran to salvage a landmark nuclear deal still need more time, as leaders of the Group of Seven wealthy nations reaffirmed a commitment to stop the Islamic republic from building nuclear weapons.

Iranian envoys held another round of negotiations with international delegations in Vienna a day after EU coordinators suggested that differences over the 2015 accord limiting Iran's nuclear activities had narrowed further. But Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi told Iranian state media he thought a deal was unlikely to emerge in the coming week. A diplomat from Russia also said more time was needed to work out details.

The Vienna meetings are aimed at rebuilding a nuclear containment agreement between Iran and major world powers that the Trump administration withdrew the United States from in 2018.

U.S. President Joe Biden and other G-7 leaders expressed support for the Vienna process after a three-day summit in southwest England that ended Sunday. The G-7 nations are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

"We are committed to ensuring that Iran will never develop a nuclear weapon," the leaders said in a joint statement.

"A restored and fully-implemented (nuclear deal) could also pave the way to further address regional and security concerns," the statement said.

A resolution would see Iran return to commitments made in 2015, aimed at making the development of a nuclear weapon impossible, in exchange for lighter U.S. sanctions. Sunday's bilateral meetings followed joint negotiations held Saturday involving senior diplomats from China, Germany, France, Russia, and Britain. The United States was not directly involved.