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Netanyahu selects Bennet defense minister joining Likud & New Right parties in Knesset

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Netanyahu appoints Bennet defense minister

Appointment will be brought to the government for approval at its upcoming plenum; Likud and New Right parties will immediately form a joint faction in the current Knesset

Moran Azoulay, Itamar Eichner and Yuval Karni | Published: 11.08.19, 20:11

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appointed Naftali Bennet minister of defense in his caretaker government on Friday.

Likud said that the two met at the Prime Minister's Office, and that the incumbent proposed to Bennett to take up the post - which Bennet accepted. The appointment will be brought to the government for approval at its upcoming plenum.

It was also reported that Bennett agreed that if a solution to the current political deadlock was found and a new government was established, such as a broad unity government or a narrow government, another person would be appointed minister of defense.

Bennett's partner in the leadership of the "New Right," Ayelet Shaked, will not be given a ministerial position in the transition government. Only if a new government is formed, is she likely to get an appointment.

Netanyahu and Bennett also agreed that the Likud and New Right parties will immediately form a joint faction in the current Knesset (like Likud and Yisrael Beytenu had done in the 19th Knesset) and commit to acting together as a joint faction throughout the current Knesset.

The two parties may also run together in the next elections.

Blue and White officials strongly criticized the decision to appoint Bennet defense minister, labeling it 'inappropriate'.

"Instead of promoting the government that the people have chosen and want, Netanyahu continues to fortify himself in his immunity bloc (referring to Likud's right-wing bloc, which consists of far right and ultra-Orthodox parties)," said the officials. "Appointing an 'apprentice' to the post of defense minister is an inappropriate act for the most sensitive system in the state and for the State of Israel".

Bennett's cynical appointment was made out of a narrow and personal political interest and not a look at the good of the security establishment and the State of Israel".

The country deserves a prime minister who puts Israel first. Blue and White will continue to strive for a government in general and a unity government in particular".