

Elections 2026: A union

Launching joint slate, Bennett and Lapid promise ‘the era of division is over’



Former prime minister Naftali Bennett, left, and Opposition Leader Yair Lapid formally announce the formation of their new political union titled Together, in Herzliya, April 26, 2026. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

‘We are uniting today to win the elections and to establish a Zionist government,’ says Lapid. ‘To win the elections, the entire Israeli center must stand behind Naftali Bennett’

By [Sam Sokol](#) 27 April 2026

In a flag-decked conference room of the upscale Dan Accadia Hotel in the beachfront city of Herzliya on Sunday evening, former prime ministers Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid promised to usher Israel into a new, post-Netanyahu age.

Standing behind one of two identical podiums in front of the new logo of his and Lapid’s “Together” political union, Bennett addressed the assembled press, boasting that the decision to merge their parties into one electoral slate was the “most Zionist and patriotic act we have ever done, for the sake of our country.”

“Tonight, we are uniting and establishing the Together party under my leadership, a party that will lead to a great victory, and the opening of a new era for our beloved country,”

Bennett declaimed, looking into the television cameras while photographers snapped their shots and reporters typed notes into their smartphones and laptops.

Hours earlier, Lapid and Bennett's spokespeople had announced that the two former allies had once again joined forces, as they did to build a coalition after the 2021 elections, [uniting their Bennett 2026 and Yesh Atid parties](#) into a combined ticket called "Together – Led by Bennett."

In Herzliya, Bennett doubled down on talk of unity and amity, declaring that while he and Lapid do not agree on everything, together they represent 80 percent of Israelis and that they "can fight together for the good of the people of Israel, just as our children, our soldiers, fight shoulder to shoulder.

"Our unity is a message to the entire people of Israel: The era of division is over. The era of correction has arrived," Bennett continued, insisting that during their previous short-lived government, he and Lapid "accomplished in one year what other governments have not done in four" by improving the economy, stopping Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policy of transferring suitcases of Qatari cash to Hamas, and returning "personal security to the streets."



Former prime minister Naftali Bennett and Opposition Leader Yair Lapid hold a press conference announcing the formation of their new "Together" party in Herzliya, April 26, 2026. (Sam Sokol/Times of Israel)

The Bennett-Lapid government, which was in office from June 2021 to December 2022, made history with its diverse coalition of right-wing, centrist and left-wing parties, also including the Islamist Ra'am party, led by Mansour Abbas. The coalition marked the first interruption of Netanyahu's premiership since 2009, and many on the right staunchly opposed it and pressured members of Bennett's Yamina party to leave. After 18 months, Netanyahu managed to bring the coalition down by pressing most of Bennett's own party MKs to defect, triggering elections. Netanyahu was returned to power and has held the premiership in the almost four years since.

A government of 'professionals'

Bennett promised a government of "professionals" who "think only of the good of Israel" and said he would enter office with plans ready to go, "so as not to waste a single moment" — a reference to the fact that two out of three of the candidates for his party announced so far are [technocrats](#) who previously served as the director generals of the finance and communications ministries.



Former premier and 2026 Knesset candidate Naftali Bennett (center) poses with Liran Avisar Ben-Horin (left) and Keren Terner (right), candidates on his 'Bennett 2026' slate, April 12, 2026. (Naftali Bennett on X)

Bennett then listed a number of policy priorities which he said he would implement immediately upon taking office: the establishment of a state commission of inquiry into the

failures surrounding the Hamas onslaught of October 7, 2023; term limits for prime ministers; cutting funding for Haredi draft evaders; and working to “strengthen a Judaism that brings [people] together, is kind and inclusive, without coercion.”

Bennett’s political career — he also headed the Jewish Home, New Right and Yamina parties — was long associated with the hawkish, pro-settler and nationalist ideological space now occupied by far-right Religious Zionism party leader Bezael Smotrich, and his embrace of these issues — especially those relating to [religion and state](#) — highlights the veteran politician’s efforts to move toward the political center.

Toward this end, Bennett described himself as a “right-wing, liberal Zionist” who will only rely on Zionist parties for his coalition rather than sitting with Abbas’s Ra’am again. “We’re not in the left bloc or the right bloc, we’re in the block of the entire Jewish people,” he said.



Former prime minister Naftali Bennett (right) meets with former MK Gadi Eisenkot to discuss their political futures, September 7, 2025. (Courtesy Naftali Bennett’s office)

Asserting that he and Lapid were “racing forward to victory,” Bennett invited Yashar party chairman Gadi Eisenkot to join them, stating that “our door is open for you too.”

Asked by The Times of Israel about recent polls showing that if Eisenkot, Lapid and Bennett were to run together, their combined ticket would become the largest faction in the Knesset — [though it would not significantly change the respective sizes of the two main rival](#)

[blocs](#) — Bennett was dismissive, stating that “our joint move, Yair Lapid’s and mine, is a massive move. It is a bold move.”

“It’s a ‘whoever dares wins’ move, because when you truly want to fix things — at moments as difficult as the ones we are in, with a nation that is largely in post-trauma and needs to be lifted up — you don’t do it with hesitancy. You do it with great audacity. That is what we are doing tonight. This is only the beginning, and we will win big,” he replied.

‘Putting ego aside’

Lapid, in turn, declared that “the State of Israel needs to change direction. This is a test of our leadership — and we will meet it. What you see here today is the first step. We are here because this country needs unity as much as it needs air to breathe.”

Lapid and his party are “putting ego aside and doing what is right for the State of Israel,” he said, insisting that “to win the elections, the entire Israeli center must stand behind Naftali Bennett.”

“I am not trying to blur differences or disagreements, but there has always been something else between us: trust and friendship. We have known each other for many years. We have been through a great deal together. We have made difficult decisions together. We know we can count on one another. There is trust and there is friendship between us,” Lapid stated.

“We are uniting today to win the elections and to establish a Zionist government, strong and stable. A partnership between the center and right, between religious and secular, between north and south — without draft dodging and without extremism,” he continued.

“Israel has the best people in the world. They deserve an efficient, functioning, honest government, one that invests in the working public that serves in the army, in reservists and their families. A government that will provide security, focus on education, lower prices, fight corruption, and draft the Haredim.”

Neither Bennett nor Lapid clarified how they would be allocating seats on their joint slate.