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Rivals give low odds to coalition with Netanyahu

Members of Eisenkot's bloc say a narrow government is the most likely option

Analysis **Ravit Hecht**

There is an inverse relationship between the effort being spent on forming a "unity government" between Gadi Eisenkot and Benjamin Netanyahu and the chances of it actually happening. The assessment in the "bloc of change" that Eisenkot heads is that of all the possibilities – a narrow coalition reliant on the Arab parties, a coalition that includes the Haredi parties, a new election or a coalition that includes Netanyahu and his Likud party – the last option is the least likely.

The negotiating teams are meeting – Michael Rabello and Ofir Katz on behalf of Likud; Yoav Horowitz and Chili Tropper on behalf of Eisenkot's Yashar party. The right moves are seemingly being made. But everyone involved seems to believe that the purpose is more to put on a show of exploring this option than to actually move forward with it.

The gulf between the sides is too great. Even before the question of who would serve as prime minister first, which will never be resolved, there are other disputes, including ones that arose only after the election.

One is Likud's demand that Eisenkot halt the Knesset's efforts to repeal the outgoing government's coup laws, which he refuses to do. Another, which also seems unsolvable, is over the establishment of a state commission of inquiry into October 7.

These are all circles that can't be squared. But in addition, the track record of one participant, Netanyahu, doesn't exactly encourage a desire to take risks with him – especially at a time when he is ceaselessly pushing for a war with Iran despite the unstable political situation. He is proving over and over that he does not and will not have any limit to how far he will go to keep his government from being replaced.

"Even people in the change bloc who are promoting a unity government are kind of doing it with a

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A full moon over Jerusalem, on Tuesday. *Itay Cohen*

High Court: Settlers are acting 'like militias'

Justices say violent attacks on Palestinians can't be dismissed as work of few isolated offenders

Matan Golan and Chen Maanit

The High Court of Justice on Tuesday sharply criticized the Israeli government for allowing settlers to encroach on land belonging to Palestinians in the West Bank village of Burqa, saying the perpetrators appeared to be "operating in an organized manner, like militias."

Burqa residents petitioned the court to halt the attacks – including harassment, abuse and the uprooting and burning of olive trees – against them. Supreme Court President Isaac Amit said the settlers' actions were fueling antisemitism.

The village has been subject to repeated attacks since new outposts were established on its lands several months ago. Over the weekend, it was also reported that settlers expelled Palestinians from their lands, and grazed their flocks there.

The three-justice panel chaired by Amit ordered the state to report by December 3 on the concrete measures taken by the military and police to fulfill their duty to protect Palestinians. The response must include affidavits from Central Command chief Maj. Gen. Avi Bluth and the commander of the Central Unit of the West Bank Police District.

The justices added that the violent settlers could not be dismissed as isolated bad actors, adding that "One cannot help but wonder how such a serious, widespread and persistent phenomenon is taking place under the watch of the authorities responsible for maintaining order in the area."

In an unusual move, Amit attached photographs to the ruling, including images of olive trees set ablaze.

"This burning tree, consumed by fire, is but a tiny fraction of the daily price paid by local Palestinian residents as a result of the ongoing violence perpetrated by rioters, as reflected in the numerous petitions pending before this court – many of whose allegations have not been disputed by the state's representatives,"

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Democrats halt talks with Yashar, citing contacts with Likud

Noa Shpigel

Yair Golan's Democrats party said Tuesday evening it was suspending coalition talks with Gadi Eisenkot's Yashar party over its negotiations with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud. Shortly afterward, Yashar said Eisenkot and Yisrael Beiteinu leader Avigdor Lieberman had met and agreed to sign a coalition deal between their parties.

The Democrats, which together with Yashar and Yisrael Beiteinu comprise three of the four parties in Eisenkot's bloc, had been in advanced talks with Yashar on forming a government that would replace Netanyahu. Party sources told Haaretz that the rupture was serious and that they were no longer willing to negotiate with Eisenkot while he pursued a deal with Likud. The Democrats has ruled out serving in a government together with Likud.

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Franek Sterczewski at the airport. *Sterczewski's X account*

Polish MP headed for West Bank held, then deported

Ben Kroll

Israel denied entry to a Polish lawmaker who said he was traveling with a parliamentary delegation to the West Bank, holding him for 14 hours at Ben-Gurion International Airport before sending him back.

Franek Sterczewski, an independent lawmaker affiliated with Prime Minister Donald Tusk's Civic Platform, described his detention in a series of posts on Monday. "I am part of a parliamentary delegation documenting the situation of Palestinians in the West Bank," wrote Sterczewski, who has represented Poznan in Poland's lower house of parliament since 2019.

Sterczewski said he was being held "unlawfully" at the airport, where he spent the night awaiting deportation. "You will not be able to hide the truth about the genocide in Gaza and the ethnic cleansing in the West Bank," he wrote.

In a follow-up post, Sterczewski tagged Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski and asked whether the government would allow Israel to treat a Polish citizen and lawmaker this way.

Polish Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maciej Wewiór said Sterczewski had not informed Poland's diplomatic mission of the planned visit and that the Polish consul in Tel Aviv intervened "as soon as we learned of the situation."

Wewiór said Israel denied Sterczewski entry because he had joined a 2025 flotilla that sought to break Israel's naval blockade of Gaza. He was detained, deported and barred him from entering Israel for five years.

"The authorities of individual countries decide whom to admit to their territory. We have no influence over their decisions, but we have a duty to help our citizens. And that is exactly what we did," Wewiór wrote, adding that Poland advises against all travel to Israel.

Israel's Foreign Ministry did not respond to Haaretz's request for comment.

Kushner warns of 'pariah status'

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Volatile, anti-Arab atmosphere

What four civics teachers see in their classrooms – it's not pretty

Lior Dattel

Shay, a junior high civics teacher in central Israel, says he is shocked at how quickly his students have picked up right-wing rhetoric from the recent election. Children in his class have repeatedly argued that Arab lawmakers are illegitimate coalition partners, that Gadi Eisenkot is dangerous because he might form a government with them and that Arabs as a whole stole the election and should be denied the right to vote.

"I couldn't understand how this campaign had spread among the students so quickly," the teacher, from the Sharon Plain, told Haaretz, using a pseudonym. "I don't know why the children hold such extreme views. Maybe they're just repeating what they heard on social media." He said he tried to talk in class about the procedures for forming the government and swearing in Knesset members. "But I didn't succeed," he bemoaned. "No matter what I tell them, as far as they're concerned, it's a fact: The Arabs stole the election, and a government mustn't be formed with them."

This incident is not isolated. In conversations with civics teachers in several schools across the country, a similar picture emerges. Years of war and the judicial overhaul have changed students, even when teachers stress equality and tolerance as paramount values. Over the last three years, says Arnon Ben-Dor, an educator and civics teacher at a high school in Hadera, the classroom climate precludes teachers from discussing current political events. "The great fear is that students will blow up the lesson. Teachers are also afraid of being perceived as left wing or liberal, or too soft."

Sometimes the concern is about what might happen after class. "I held a discussion about the Sde Teiman detention center," Ben-Dor recalls. "I said that soldiers who abuse detainees, even terrorists, should stand trial and go to prison if found guilty." Two students reported him. "In the evening, I received a call from someone in the system," he recounts. "He said that the two claimed I had stated that soldiers who abuse a terrorist should be punished."

Ben-Dor responded that he hadn't phrased it exactly that way, but it seemed clear that this wasn't the point at all. Any statement suggesting that Arabs, let alone Palestinians, are also human beings, is considered incitement. This isn't entirely new, but recently, "there has been a worrying escalation," he adds. "There's more racism and nationalism among students than among adults."

Ben-Dor, who holds a PhD in political science from the University of Haifa, and used to lecture for civics teacher trainees at Oranim College, says that October 7 was a watershed moment. "Immediately afterward, nationalism and racism in the classrooms reared their heads and became extreme and frightening," he explains. "It wasn't easy before, but everything pales in comparison to the atmosphere in classrooms in recent years."

He says the extremism has become even more tangible in recent weeks. "In one of the classes before the election, one student said Arabs shouldn't be allowed to vote," he recalls. He says he tried to explain that many

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Minister Amichay Eliyahu lashes out at Arab lawmakers

Delayed and under attack
The increasing dangers facing Palestinian medics



Amir Levy

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23 troops, officers died by suicide in 2026, highest toll in 16 years

Tom Levinson

Twenty-three active-duty soldiers and officers have died by suicide since the beginning of the year, the highest annual total in the Israeli military in 16 years.

At least 17 additional soldiers who served in the regular army or reserves during the war died by suicide this year while not on active duty. Five police officers have also died by suicide this year.

Six suicides have also been recorded among patients of the Defense Ministry's Rehabilitation Department, the government authority tasked with supporting disabled and wounded veterans of the Israel Defense Forces and other Israeli security forces. Several of them were long-time disabled veterans whose mental health had been damaged in previous wars.

The figures point to a further rise in suicides across Israel's security bodies, a trend that began with the outbreak of the Gaza war on October 7, 2023. In the decade preceding the war, the IDF recorded an average of 12 suicides a year. By contrast, military data show that seven active-duty soldiers died by suicide between October 7 and the end of 2023, 21 died by suicide in 2024 and 22 in 2025.

Since the war began, military mental health officials have maintained that the figures do not indicate a crisis, attributing the rise in suicides to the substantial increase in the number of people serving, particularly in the reserves.

"When you examine the number of suicides in relation to the number of people serving, you find that proportionally there has been no increase," the IDF said during the war's first year. But the upward trend continued this year, even as the number of deployed troops has now fallen considerably compared with the months immediately after October 7.

The army's figures provide only a partial picture of the scale of the phenomenon, since they do not include soldiers who died by suicide while not on active duty. For years, the military declined to address the issue, arguing that soldiers who had been discharged were no longer its responsibility.

However, a series of media reports about soldiers who fought in the war in Gaza and died by suicide after returning to civilian life forced the military to change its policy, at least to some extent.

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Soldiers participating in a Memorial Day ceremony at the Nes Tziona Cemetery, in April.