Eisenkot struggles to form a government as Netanyahu escalates offensive on all fronts

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Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu remains in charge following Israel's inconclusive elections, while former military chief and unindicted war criminal Gadi Eisenkot, leader of the opposition bloc, endeavours to form a government.

Eisenkot wants to create a government able to carry out Washington and Tel Aviv's war agenda in the region amid mounting international opposition. Struggling to assemble a viable coalition, he announced he would establish a minority government should he fail to secure a majority. Such a government would be dependent on the support of the two Arab parties—the Joint List and the United Arab List/Ra'am—in the 120-seat Knesset, even though they would not be part of the government.

Some of his right-wing coalition partners have rejected such an arrangement. Avigdor Lieberman stated explicitly he would vote against it, declaring it would bring Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu back to power "on steroids".

Netanyahu and his fascistic ministers have responded by whipping up a ferocious anti-Arab campaign to delegitimize any political collaboration with the Arab Knesset members, accusing Eisenkot of "relying on the votes of supporters of terrorism who advocate the destruction of the Jewish state." Netanyahu and his supporters have made repeated and unsubstantiated claims that the Arab parties had "stolen" the election, possibly with foreign assistance, claims that the election commission has rejected.

Eisenkot's allies in the "Change" bloc include former settler leader Naftali Bennett and his Together party, Lieberman, leader of the far-right Israel is Our Home party, and Yair Golan, a former general and leader of the Democrats formed from the remnants of the Labor Party and Meretz that supports a "two state solution" sometime in the future. They won a combined 48 seats in the Knesset, while Netanyahu's coalition won 53, losing its overall majority. This made the two Arab parties that won 11 and 8 seats pivotal.

Eisenkot's bloc—some of whom, including Eisenkot, have served under Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister—has no major political differences with him. While they all campaigned on ending Netanyahu's rule, they are now divided over how to reach a majority. Bennett favours a unity government with Netanyahu's Likud party under Eisenkot, while Lieberman prefers one backed by the ultra-Orthodox parties.

Eisenkot invited Likud to discuss a coalition under his leadership, while Likud issued a set of preconditions, among them: ending "boycotts" of Netanyahu and members of his government and including the ultra-Orthodox parties. This is a major sticking point as they are demanding legislation granting exemption from military service for Orthodox Jews studying in religious seminaries, an anathema to the secular opposition bloc.

On Tuesday, the Democrats suspended their talks with Eisenkot and called for him to rule out a unity government with Netanyahu. They said that negotiations with Likud and the ultra-Orthodox parties were shaping the terms of the next government, ensuring that Netanyahu's policies would survive his departure. They have refused to serve in a government with Likud.

Netanyahu remains prime minister and keen to attack Iran, pressing US President Donald Trump to resume the war or at least give him the green light for an attack. He has bombarded the public with alarmist claims that Iran was developing chemical weapons. He claimed on Monday that Israel's ability to confront regional threats "depends on our unity" under his leadership.

This followed Eisenkot's rejection of the claim that Iran posed a direct and immediate threat requiring action before a new government could be formed. He said a unilateral move against Iran by Netanyahu would drag the region into a new security crisis. Netanyahu accused those supposedly downplaying the threats of doing so "for political reasons".

In a major blow to the prosecution and to Netanyahu's political opponents, on Wednesday the judges presiding over the trial of three cases involving bribery, fraud and breach of trust over Netanyahu's efforts to rig the media in his favour called on Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara to consider

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dropping the bribery charge against him in the most important Case 4000. They also questioned whether the evidence supported the allegations in Case 2,000 and suggested they would consider a plea bargain in the remaining and least significant case, Case 1,000.

Netanyahu welcomed the judges' remarks, saying they vindicated his claim that the cases were baseless and the product of "fake news" and a "deep state" conspiracy out to keep him from power. He called for an immediate end to his trial that he called a colossal waste of money.

He accused the opposition of panicking as the cases against him "crumble" and rushing to advance legislation banning anyone facing criminal charges from becoming prime minister. He repeated his call for the formation of a unity government, saying Israel faced "enormous and immediate dangers" that could only be addressed through national unity, adding "My hand is extended for unity".

In the weeks following Israel's inconclusive elections, Netanyahu, wanted for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court, has intensified the Zionist state's attacks on the Palestinians and Lebanon.

On November 12, an Israeli air strike hit the Nasser Medical Complex in the Gaza Strip, killing at least six Palestinians, including a surgeon, a child and patients, and wounding 20 others.

On November 18, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) launched a ground operation near Nuseirat and Bureij, the first since the fraudulent October 2025 ceasefire imposed by the Trump administration to give Israel total control over Gaza. This incursion went well beyond Israel's "Yellow Line" that encompasses more than 60 percent of Gaza, up from just over half in October 2025. Further areas are subject to access restrictions, limiting the Palestinians to only 70 percent of the Gaza Strip. The IDF issued evacuation orders, displacing around 6,000 Palestinians.

Israel's three-year-long war has left nearly 2 million people utterly destitute and dependent upon humanitarian aid from the "international community". Over the last eight months Israel has allowed in less than half of the aid it agreed was necessary. This has deprived the Palestinians of food, fuel, medicines and medical equipment, as well as tents and materials for building temporary shelters and repairing infrastructure.

They now face the winter months in conditions worse than those of last year when at least 11 children reportedly died from hypothermia-related causes. Earlier this month, a nine-month-old baby died of hypothermia.

In the West Bank, settlers, acting with the support of the IDF, have continued their pogroms against Palestinian villagers, killing a 72-year-old Palestinian woman near Jericho on November 17. On November 10, Israeli forces shot and killed a Palestinian boy, bringing the number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem by settlers and soldiers this year to more than 85, and more than 1,100 since October 2023.

On Wednesday, United Nations human rights chief Volker Türk warned of a widening risk of "systematic" atrocity crimes in the occupied West Bank. He cited the violent efforts to replace Palestinian communities with Israeli settlers and Israel's policies of annexation and displacement that have led to the forcible eviction of more than 42,000 Palestinians from their homes since October 2023.

Local officials reported that the Israeli military had installed five iron gates west of Hebron that could restrict movement for roughly 70,000 Palestinians. Soldiers dismantled a protest tent near Khirbet Humsa after declaring it a military zone.

Within Israel, there have been several attacks by individuals and state forces affecting Palestinian citizens. In the last two weeks, masked men set fire to a mosque in the Arab village of Ed-Dahi in northern Israel, while a Jewish Israeli driver rammed pedestrians at multiple locations in the Arab town of Kafr Qasim, wounding eight Palestinian citizens.

Last month, hundreds of Israeli police accompanied bulldozers demolishing about 80 dwellings in the "unrecognized" Bedouin village of al-Dhahiyah near Rahat in the Negev desert, leaving 400 homeless. This forced displacement follows police raids in southern Bedouin communities, including a January operation in Tarabin Al-Sana that involved blockades, tear gas, and the fatal police shooting of a 35-year-old resident carried out as National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir stood by.

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