

# World reacts to new government in Israel, end of Netanyahu era

*Several world leaders congratulate the new government as Palestinians see little prospect for change.*



*Benjamin Netanyahu's long reign officially ended after the Knesset, Israel's parliament, approved with a thin 60-59 majority vote a coalition cobbled together by centrist opposition leader Yair Lapid and ultra-nationalist Naftali Bennett*

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Several world leaders have welcomed Israel's new government, but Palestinians remained defiant over what they perceived as a continuation of the previous administration.

Benjamin Netanyahu's 12-year grip on power ended on Sunday, his administration replaced by a coalition government cobbled together by the centrist Yair Lapid and ultra-nationalist Naftali Bennett. In a razor-thin 60-59 confidence vote, Israel's parliament approved the new government.

The vote was won after Lapid finalised a coalition deal between eight different parties with little in common, aside from the desire to topple Netanyahu, leaving many analysts to question the new government's chances of long-term survival.

Here is how world leaders reacted to the new government:

### **Joe Biden**

US President Joe Biden said the United States remained committed to Israel's security and would work with its new government. In a statement, the US president welcomed the new government coalition led by nationalist Naftali Bennett and sought to reaffirm US-Israel ties.

"I look forward to working with Prime Minister Bennett to strengthen all aspects of the close and enduring relationship between our two nations," Biden said. "Israel has no better friend than the United States."

"The United States remains unwavering in its support for Israel's security," Biden said. "My administration is fully committed to working with the new Israeli government to advance security, stability, and peace for Israelis, Palestinians, and people throughout the broader region."

### **Angela Merkel**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said she was looking forward to "working closely" with Israel's new prime minister.

"Germany and Israel are connected by a unique friendship that we want to strengthen further. With this in mind, I look forward to working closely with you," Merkel said in a message addressed to Bennett and shared by her spokeswoman Ulrike Demmer on Twitter.

### **Mahmoud Abbas**

The office of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said that the change in government remains an Israeli matter and that Palestine's demands remain the same.

"This is an internal Israeli affair," Nabil Abu Rudeineh, Abbas's spokesman, said in a statement. "Our position has always been clear, what we want is a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital," he added.

### **Hamas spokesman**

Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum insisted that no matter the colour of the new administration, Israel "remains a colonial entity".

"Regardless of the shape of the government in Israel, it will not alter the way we look at the Zionist entity," Barhoum said. "It is an occupation and a colonial entity, which we should resist by force to get our rights back," he added.

### **Sebastian Kurz**

Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz congratulated Bennett and Lapid and said he looked forward to working with them.

“Austria is committed to Israel as a Jewish and democratic state and will continue to stand by Israel’s side,” he said on Twitter.



*Yair Lapid was the architect of the new Israeli coalition government*

### **Dominic Raab**

The United Kingdom’s foreign minister also congratulated Bennett and Lapid on the formation of the government.

In a tweet, Dominic Raab said he looked forward to continued UK-Israel “cooperation on security, trade and climate change, and working together to secure peace in the region”.

### **Justin Trudeau**

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he looked forward to working with Bennett and Lapid “to keep our people safe and supported as we recover from the global COVID-19 pandemic, and help both of our countries build back better”.

In a statement, Trudeau said the leaders would “explore ways to further strengthen the relationship between Canada and Israel”, including through a bilateral trade agreement. He also thanked Netanyahu “for his valuable partnership over the years”.

### **Chuck Schumer**

US Senate Majority Leader said he hoped the new government will pave the way for “serious” negotiations over a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"I am urging the Biden Administration 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," Schumer said.



*Netanyahu promised that he would be back*

### **Benjamin Netanyahu**

Removed Israeli prime minister swiftly took to social media promising to return soon to power.

"Do not let your spirit fall," he said on Twitter. "We'll be back – and faster than you think," he added.

Source: Al Jazeera And News Agencies