

# “AN EXPERT VIEW FROM ISRAEL”

Series Report #64



## SUMMARY OF A ‘MIDDLE EAST FORUM’ WEBINAR

5 APRIL 2022



*In a brief ‘Webinar’ session organized by the Washington based MEF, Ashley Perry, an adviser to Israel's minister of foreign affairs and deputy prime minister in 2009-15, provides weekly updates on Israeli politics.*

### **A SUMMARY OF COMMENTS MADE BY ASHLEY PERRY**

- Perry began his comments by making a brief reference to the wave of terrorist attacks carried out by Jihadi Arabs purporting to represent ISIS that has now taken the lives of more than 10 Israeli citizens and injured many more.
- Perry then devoted the rest of his presentation to the latest crisis facing the governing coalition following the resignation of of a parliamentary majority.
- Idit Silman, the defacto government whip, whose departure has deprived the government
- Idit Silman has now effectively defected from Naftali Bennet’s Yamina Party to Likud, thereby causing the coalition to lose its majority. The
- Israeli PM has claimed that “she had been persecuted by the Likud for
- months at the most horrific level until she broke”.
- Specifically, the issue that forced the recent action had to do with the
- ‘ultra-religious beliefs’ of Silman and her supporters who could not yield
- to the demand by the leftist Meretz party for allowing leavened bread
- more commonly known as ‘Chmetz’ Jewish Passover - something which is forbidden under Jewish law.
- to be served in hospitals during the
- According to Perry, as absurd as this excuse may sound, Silman, her
- husband and her children had been consistently harassed over such
- issues by ultra-religious Jews in the past several months.
- However, according to Perry, her move (that creates a new 60-60 seat
- situation in the Knesset between the coalition and the opposition) does
- not mean that the opposition can force a new elections, at least for now,
- given that 6 members of the ‘Joint Arab List’ are unlikely to join forces
- by voting with an opposition that is led by Netanyahu.
- Despite recent foreign policy successes, Naftali Bennet was taken by
- surprise and as a result his Yamina Party’s representation in the Knesset
- has now been reduced to 5. He is seen as not having been able to keep
- people in check and essentially keep a close eye on developments taking
- place on the ground.
- What this development means is that while the government may not fall
- at this time, especially since the Knesset is not in session at this time, but
- it is unlikely that the next Israeli Budget can now be approved given the

- current composition of the Knesset. Hence, it is most likely that new
- elections will have to be announced by March 2023.
- Meanwhile, the opposition might also try and force a vote of no
- confidence leading to what is called the 'Dispersal of Knesset Law', in
- which case Netanyahu will have to rely on Benny Gantz (who does not
- have good relations with Lapid) to vote against the government.
- Perry concluded by saying that Israeli domestic politics has once again
- been thrust into an atmosphere of uncertainty, with Netanyahu trying
- his best to force a new election.

