

# “AN EXPERT VIEW FROM ISRAEL”

Series Report #75



## SUMMARY OF A ‘MIDDLE EAST FORUM’ WEBINAR



29 JUNE 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.*

### SUMMARY OF ASHLEY PERRY’S WEEKLY COMMENTS

- Perry began his weekly comments by saying that the bombshell he had predicted had finally happened with the Israeli Knesset set to disband and new elections to be held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022 (this actual date was released after the webinar).
- Perry noted that PM Naftali Bennet (aged 50) had decided not to contest a seat in the next Knesset in the forthcoming election, vying instead to take some time off from politics and making a comeback at a later stage.
- Bennet’s departure means that his long-time partner, Ayelet Shaked an Israeli activist, and software engineer currently serving as Minister of Interior and by all accounts much more of a politician than Bennet himself, will now step up to become the next leader of the Yamina Party.
- According to Perry, unlike Bennet, Ayelet Shaked has no problems sitting with Netanyahu and essentially helping him (as the latest polls have indicated) gain the 61 seats needed for forming a government in the aftermath of the upcoming election.
- However, in Perry’s view, if the latest polls were to prove accurate, Yamina with an expected number of 5 seats will still leave Netanyahu a few votes short of the needed majority.
- Nonetheless, all of these developments are good news for Netanyahu, irrespective of the fact that Yamina, short of some of its key members such those who deserted Bennet – e.g., Idit Saliman, Nir Oblach and Amichai Chikli – will need to come up with whole new roster of candidates.
- Perry said that prior to its dissolution, the Knesset still needed to pass three urgent laws that could not be delayed:

- 1. Metro Law (needed to pass ASAP for the start of a new underground construction badly needed for tackling Israel's traffic problems).
- 2. A visa waiver law for Israelis travelling to US (as well as UK and EU). The passage of this was important as President Biden wanted to make reference to this development in the course of his visit to Israel in a couple of weeks.
- 3. Laws governing the state of Israeli's living in so-called 'Green Zone' - i.e., West Bank (Perry noted that the joint Arab was keen for this law that provides for the wellbeing of all Israelis in this area not to pass in order to embarrass the state.
- Finally, according to Perry, the date of the election had to be decided with the Coalition wanting 11 November (as late as possible) while Likud wanted 25 October, when ultra-Jewish students were still around in the aftermath of religious holidays [eventually, November 1<sup>st</sup> was announced a day after this webinar].
- Meanwhile, until the upcoming election, Yair Lapid will assume the office of Prime Minister, with his swearing in ceremony expected to be held on Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

