

BREAKING: Netanyahu and Benny Gantz, Former Israeli Defense Minister, Announce Emergency Unity Government Today

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UPDATE at 5:30PM Israel Time: About an hour after ALL ISRAEL NEWS was the first media outlet to break the story, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Benny Gantz issued an official statement confirming that they have agreed to form an emergency national unity government.

Netanyahu, Gantz, and current Defense Minister Yoav Gallant will form a three-person “war cabinet” to directly manage the war against Hamas.

A fourth place in that cabinet is reportedly being held for former Prime Minister Yair Lapid, if he decides to join the government.

Right now, however, sources close to Lapid tell ALL ISRAEL NEWS that he will not join.

The formation of this “war cabinet” is evidence that Gantz prevailed with his demand that two highly controversial members of Netanyahu’s government—National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir and Finance Minister Betzalel Smotrich—would be excluded from war decisions.

The Netanyahu-Gantz agreement also has several other provisions, I’ve learned:

Ron Dermer, Israel’s Minister for Strategic Affairs and very close Netanyahu confidante, will serve as an “observer” in the war cabinet.

Gadi Eisenkot, the former IDF chief of staff and close ally of Gantz, will also serve as an “observer,” providing strategic and tactical advice but not making decisions.

No laws will be passed through the Knesset on any subject other than measures directly related to winning the war against Hamas.

Gantz’s party will also have five Ministers serving in the emergency government without portfolio.

All of Netanyahu’s political partners in the current government except Ben Gvir backed his decision to make this emergency government with Gantz.

JERUSALEM, ISRAEL – On Monday night, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin “Bibi” Netanyahu called for the formation of an emergency national unity government.

Netanyahu invited the leaders of Israel’s opposition parties to set aside all other issues and focus solely on fighting and defeating the Hamas terror threat in Gaza.

Now, ALL ISRAEL NEWS can confirm that one key opposition leader – Benny Gantz of the National Unity party – has agreed to form such a government.

Indeed, the announcement is expected later today, three well-placed sources tell me.

From my personal perspective, this is a very encouraging development.

Yes, Israelis have been deeply divided over some of Netanyahu’s policies and manner of governance, especially his approach to judicial reform.

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Gantz has been one of the most outspoken critics of Netanyahu in recent years, and particularly this year.

Yet, as Israel prepares for a massive ground invasion of the Gaza Strip—the worries that another front will open with the Hezbollah terror force in Lebanon, which has 150,000 powerful missiles aimed at Israel—we need the best military minds the country has to offer, working together.

We also need to come together as a nation and be unified toward victory.

We can fight over other important internal matters later.

I know Benny Gantz.

I've met with him several times and been very impressed with him.

Few Israelis have more military experience and wisdom than he does.

Gantz served in the Israeli Defense Forces for 36 years.

He served as the chief of staff of the IDF, the highest position in the military, roughly equivalent to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the United States.

He also served as Israel's defense minister.

His experience and vast credibility and popularity with the Israeli people—right now, Gantz is the leading candidate to become Israel's next prime minister—will be extremely important in helping formulate war plans, as well as to project unity and authority, and to convince Israelis that the government has the best people leading us into battle.

Another member of Gantz's party is former IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot.

I've also met with Eisenkot and am very impressed with him, as

well.

His vast experience in military strategy will also be enormously valuable to Netanyahu and his team.

What is unclear so far is whether the most controversial member of Netanyahu's government – Itamar Ben Gvir, the anti-Arab, firebrand national security minister – and his party will remain in the government, or have any role or authority if they do remain.

That said, I'm told that former Prime Minister Yair Lapid—head of the Yesh Atid party and the main leader of Israel's opposition—will not be joining the emergency government.

That's unfortunate.

Lapid doesn't have much military experience.

But he is an excellent communicator in Hebrew and English.

Having served not only as prime minister but as foreign minister, Lapid would be enormously helpful in explaining Israel's case to the world, and through the media.

This is a developing story—more details soon. {eo}

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