

Knesset Dissolves, Israelis Head to 4th Election in 2 Years

For the fourth time in two years, Israelis are heading to a national election after the government collapsed overnight.

Knesset Speaker Yariv Levin announced that the Knesset dissolved automatically at midnight today after the deadline expired to pass a 2020 budget or a bill to extend that deadline.

“We need to say that we are in a complicated period with multiple challenges, with multiple conflicts. It appears to me that there’s not an end of the conflicts in the public and also naturally in this building,” Levin told the plenum.

During the last seven months, the short-lived coalition between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud party and Alternate Prime Minister Benny Gantz’s Blue and White party was plagued by mistrust and infighting.

“Unfortunately, we couldn’t find enough in common in order to prevent another election and in order to allow the 23rd Knesset and its members to realize the mandate that was given us,” Levin said.

Earlier, Netanyahu and Gantz blamed each other for the government collapse.

“Apparently, Blue and White, including its people who are going to vote here, are going to drag us into unnecessary elections,” Netanyahu said. “I want to tell you that I am not afraid of elections. We are prepared for that; we will win.”

“I had no illusions in regards to Netanyahu. I knew his record as a serial promise violator,” Gantz said.

The upcoming elections are scheduled for March 23—just days before the Passover holiday.

According to opinion polls, Likud will still have a lead over other parties. But challengers, Gideon Saar, who bolted the Likud just two weeks ago and formed the New Hope party, and Naftali Bennett, with his Jewish Home party, will also draw a large following from the right.

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