

Leaders



Kadima

Ehud Olmert was a [Knesset](#) Member from 1973, serving on the House, Constitution, Law & Justice Committee, State Control, Foreign Affairs & Defense, Finance, Education & Culture, and Internal Affairs & Environment Committees.

In November 1993, Olmert was elected Mayor of [Jerusalem](#).

In February 2003, Ehud Olmert was appointed [Minister of Industry and Trade](#), and Deputy Prime Minister. Olmert became an influential member of the Cabinet and was one of the first to advocate a withdrawal from Gaza, an idea that was ultimately endorsed by Prime Minister [Sharon](#) and became the [disengagement plan](#).

Following [Ariel Sharon](#)'s decision to leave the [Likud Party](#) in November 2005, Olmert joined with Sharon and several other former Likud ministers to form the new centrist party, [Kadima](#).



Peretz immigrated to Israel in 1950 from Morocco. He became head of Sderot council in the 1980s and Histadrut chairman in 1995. In 1999, he left Labor after serving as a party MK for 11 years and founded One Nation. Defeated Peres as head of Labor in November 2005



Eli Yishai - Shas

Yishai began his political career as aide to Nissim Ze'ev, and quickly became assistant to Aryeh Deri, who he replaced as Shas leader in 2000. Since then, Yishai has frozen Deri and his supporters out of the party.



Avigdor Lieberman - Yisrael Beiteinu

Lieberman immigrated to Israel in 1978 and became involved in right-wing politics while at Tel Aviv University. He was head of the Prime minister's Office under Benjamin Netanyahu in 1996. He founded Yisrael Beiteinu in 1999.



Yosef (Tommy) Lapid - Shinui

Lapid and his mother immigrated to Israel in 1948; his father was killed by the Nazis. The sharp-tongued, Hungarian-born Lapid spent most of his life in Israel as a journalist. He took over as Shinui leader in 1999.



Natan Sharansky - Yisrael b'Aliyah

Sharansky spent nine years in a Russian jail as a 'Prisoner of Zion.' He immigrated to Israel in 1986 and founded Yisrael b'Aliyah ten years later to represent immigrants from the former Soviet Union.



Effi Eitam - National Religious Party

Eitam spent 30 years in the IDF, finally leaving military service after being passed over for promotion. He vociferously opposes talks with the Palestinians and the creation of a Palestinian state.



Abdulmalik Dehamsheh - United Arab List (Ra'am)

As a young man, Dehamshe was sentenced to 10 years in prison for recruiting terrorists. He became a lawyer, and even represented Hamas

leader Ahmed Yassin. He worked as a lawyer until winning a Knesset seat in 1996.



Mohammad Barakeh - Hadash

Barakeh was a member of Tel Aviv University's Arab Student Committee. In the first intifada, he carried out aid work for the Palestinians in the territories. He became Hadash secretary-general in 1992, and its leader in 1999.



Meir Porush - United Torah Judaism

Porush attended a Talmudic College and completed his military service. He has twice served as a deputy minister. Porush has been involved in local politics in Jerusalem as a member of the city council and as deputy mayor.



Azmi Bishara - National Democratic Alliance

A political scientist, Bishara strongly supports the concept of making Israel a state of all its citizens. He established a number of Arab student committees and co-founded the Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy.



Michael Kleiner - Herut

Kleiner immigrated to Israel from Germany in 1951. In 1981, he was elected to the Knesset on the Likud list. He left the party in 1996 to co-found the National Union. A short time later, he left to set up the far-right Herut faction.

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