

## **Lapid says he'll push for revoking ultra-Orthodox draft dodgers' right to vote**

Liberman welcomes opposition leader's threat, while Gantz derides 'illegal' and undemocratic proposal

By [Sam Sokol](#)

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Opposition Leader Yair Lapid chairs a meeting of his Yesh Atid party in the Knesset, October 27, 2025. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

Opposition Leader Yair Lapid threatened on Monday that if his party is elected to a future government, he will seek to revoke the voting rights of ultra-Orthodox Israelis who do not enlist in the Israel Defense Forces.

If the government's controversial [legislation](#) to enshrine Haredi draft exemptions passes, "in the next government, there will be a simple law: Whoever does not come to [military induction] will not come to the polls. Whoever does not enlist will not vote in the elections," Lapid told reporters, ahead of his Yesh Atid party's weekly faction meeting in the Knesset.

"In the current Knesset, a bill was voted down that said those who don't enlist don't vote. Yesh Atid voted in favor. We will bring back the proposal without batting an eye, and we'll tell the Haredim: This isn't against you. It's not a punishment. On the contrary, it's an invitation to be part of the Israeli story, of our shared destiny, of a country where everyone has the same obligations — otherwise, they won't have the same rights," he declared.

Lapid was referring to a failed bill sponsored by MK Avigdor Liberman's Yisrael Beytenu party that sought to link voting rights to national service.

In a statement, Liberman welcomed Lapid's insistence that "anyone who does not enlist will not vote."

During his own faction meeting on Monday afternoon, Liberman also called for restricting voting rights, citing the precedent of convicted felons in the United States.

Yisrael Beytenu party chairman MK Avigdor Liberman leads a faction meeting at the Knesset, in Jerusalem, on October 27, 2025. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

“We do not have enough space in prisons. So it is enough for them to have a criminal record, and they will not be able to vote,” he said.

Lapid’s comments drew harsh criticism from MK Yisrael Eichler, of the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism party, who said that he “welcomes [the] ‘democratic’ demand to strip citizens of their right to vote, provided that the law applies to every privileged individual who did not serve in a combat role at the front.”

“Additionally, anyone who has not completed their high school matriculation will not be allowed to serve as prime minister,” Eichler said, alluding to the fact that Lapid did not graduate from high school before serving as a reporter for the IDF magazine, *Bamahane*, during his mandatory military service.

Lapid and Liberman’s rhetoric was also condemned by Blue and White chairman Benny Gantz, who tweeted that “those who promise you to revoke the voting rights of draft dodgers know that it’s illegal and wouldn’t pass a Supreme Court test.”

“It’s possible and necessary to impose personal sanctions, revoke economic benefits, and prevent leaving the country. But fighting for democracy isn’t something you do only when it’s politically convenient. Denying the right to vote and be elected — that’s one step too far,” Gantz insisted.

But while they disagreed on voting rights, Gantz, Lapid, and Liberman issued similar messages against a massive ultra-Orthodox [anti-conscription demonstration](#) planned for Thursday afternoon in Jerusalem.

Addressing reporters ahead of his party's faction meeting, Gantz condemned the protest, calling it "dangerous for Israeli society and dangerous for the Haredi community."

The protest is being organized by representatives of ultra-Orthodox parties Degel HaTorah, Agudat Yisrael, Shas, and other factions, as ultra-Orthodox activists and lawmakers rage against what they describe as a "wave of arrests" of yeshiva students who ignored enlistment orders and are evading military service.

"At a time when our hostages are returning, soldiers are still in Gaza, and families and businesses are trying to rebuild, you, who didn't carry the burden, are now poking a finger in the eye of those who did?" Gantz asked, addressing the ultra-Orthodox public directly and calling on their "rabbis to stop this madness."

Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi and MK Avichai Boaron, both members of Likud, have expressed support for the rally and indicated that they may attend, prompting Liberman to issue a statement calling Likud "a branch of the Haredim."

Asked by The Times of Israel about Karhi and Boaron's statements in support of the demonstration, Lapid questioned the ruling party's Zionist credentials.

"How can they continue to call themselves a national party? This is anti-Zionist. This is anti-patriotic. This is anti-Jewish in my eyes. And the fact that Likud has become enslaved to the needs of the ultra-Orthodox for religious coercion at this level is unforgivable," Lapid said.

"These people are not really Likud. What do Shlomo Karhi and the values of Likud have in common? What do Avichai Boaron and the values of Likud have in common? How can they even say they are part of a national and liberal party? When they want to demonstrate in favor of draft evasion and corruption, are they?"

Pushing back against criticism in a lengthy post on X, Karhi insisted that the demonstration was "not against the army or against enlistment, but a protest

against the judicial system over the arrest of yeshiva students whose Torah study is their profession.”

The bill to regulate the conscription of yeshiva students being advanced by the coalition will “integrate large numbers of Haredim into the IDF,” while protecting those who learn full time, and it is “unacceptable that a person studying Torah in the Jewish state should be arrested... ‘for the crime of studying Torah,’” he added.

For the past year, the Haredi leadership has pushed to pass a law keeping its constituency out of the IDF, after the High Court ruled that decades-long blanket exemptions from army duty traditionally afforded to full-time Haredi yeshiva students were illegal.