

Israel Political Update

Chris Schaefer

Chris.Schaefer@bataandiary.com

832-428-1977



Israel vs. Palestine
Israeli and Palestinian Politics
The 2021 Election and Violence
The Aftermath

Israel vs. Palestine



Late 1800s – 1940s, Ashkenazi Jewish immigration

Late 1940s – 1980s, Mizrahi Jewish immigration

1990s – 2000s, Russian Jewish immigration



Ultra-Orthodox get special status as religious students and leaders.
Exempt from military service.
Given stipends to pursue religious studies.
Have developed Religious Zionism.





Sheikh Jarrah (yellow = Palestinian neighborhoods, red = settlement areas)



Israeli security forces detain a Palestinian during a protest over evictions in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. Photograph: Ahmad Gharabli/AFP/Getty Images



Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem



Great Mosque of Mecca



Mosque of the Prophet, Medina



The Second Temple

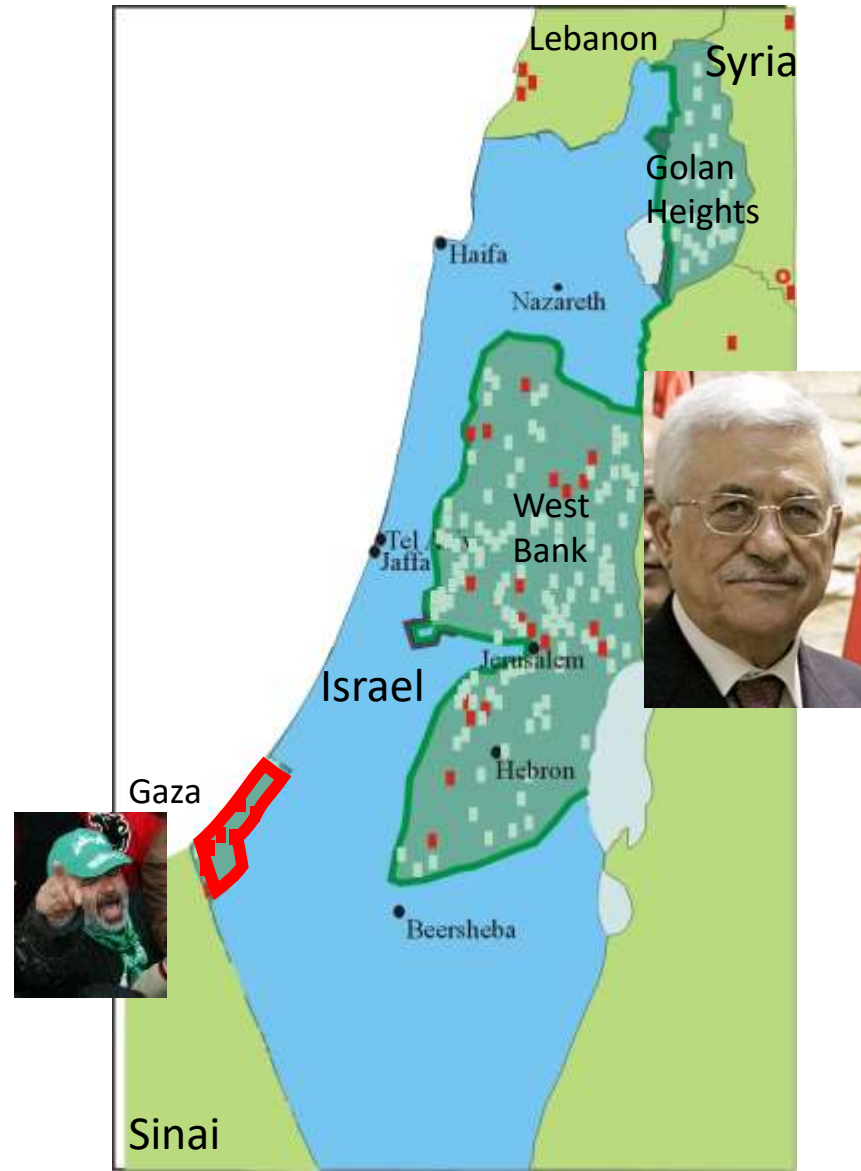
Palestinian Politics



2005, Mahmoud Abbas elected President of the Palestinian Authority



2006, Hamas wins the Palestinian Authority legislature election.



June 2007, Hamas drives the Palestinian Authority out of Gaza.
Israel isolates Gaza

Four groups of Palestinians, in “Palestine:”

- Israeli Palestinians—citizens of Israel
- Palestinian Authority citizens—West Bank
- PA Citizens under control of Hamas—Gaza
- Palestinian “residents” of East Jerusalem

Israeli Politics



Isaac Herzog,
Elected President
July 9, 2021



The Knesset in session



Naftali Bennett,
Prime Minister,
June 13, 2021



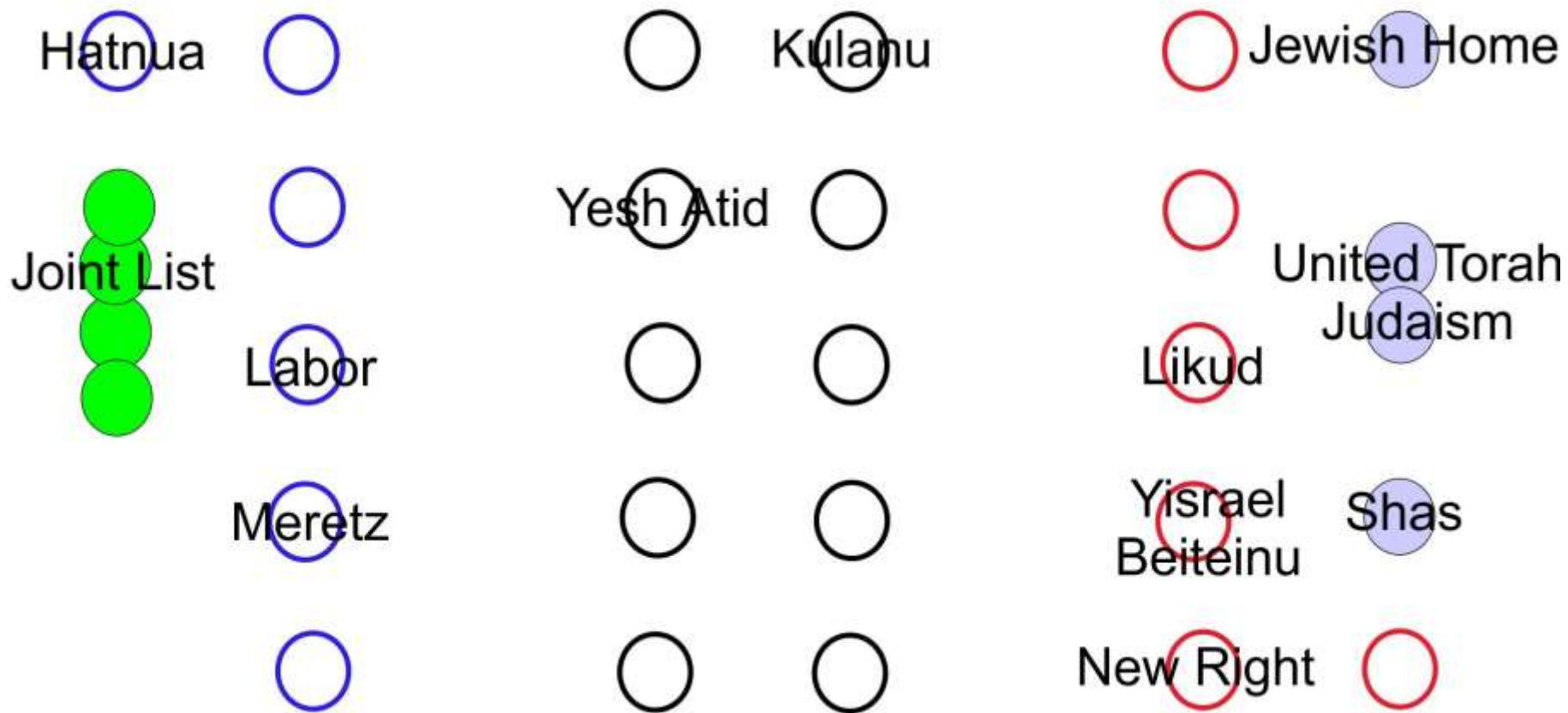
The Supreme Court

Israel Political Parties

Liberal/Left-wing

Centrist

Conservative/Right-wing

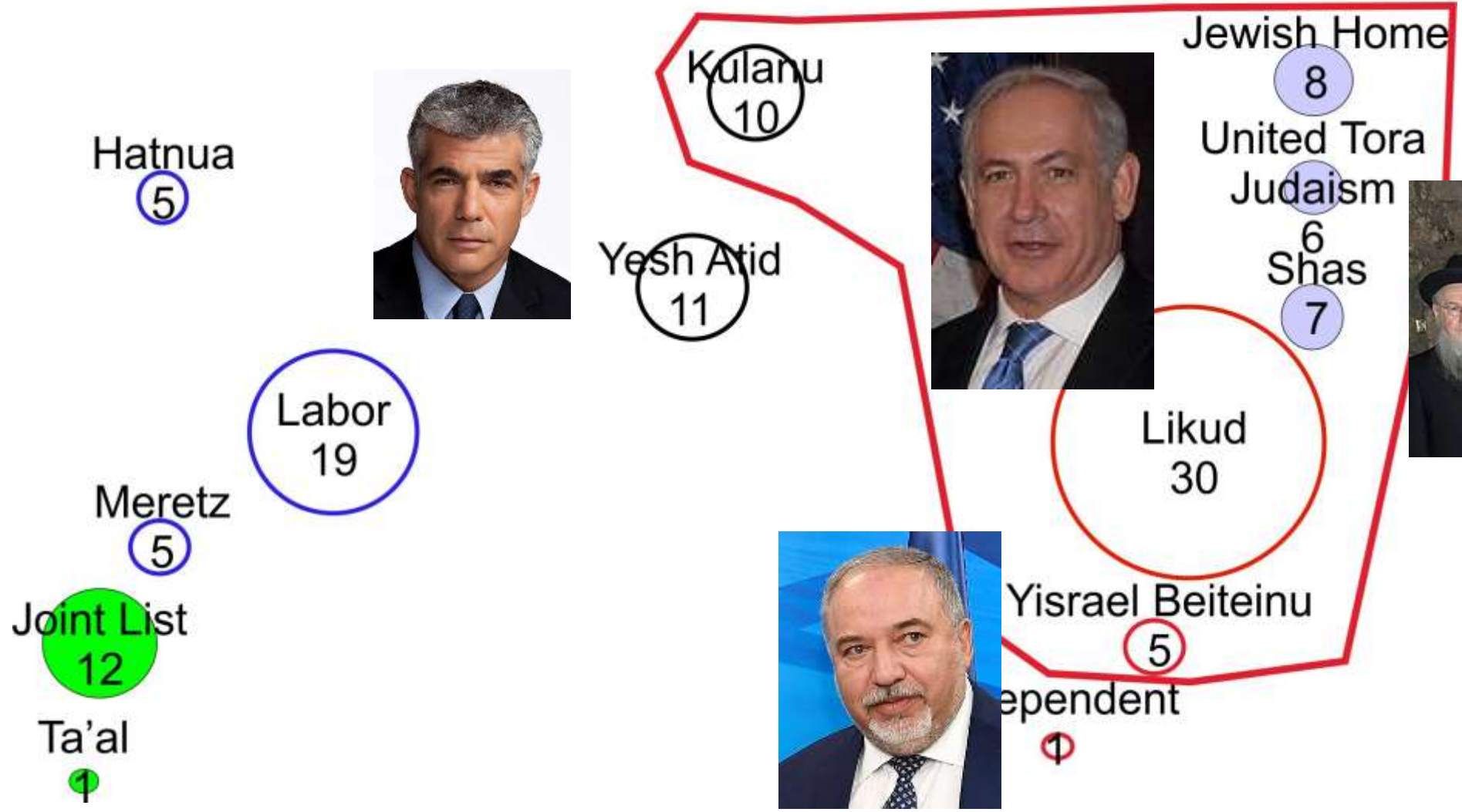


20th Knesset, elected 2015

Liberal/Left-wing

Centrist

Conservative/Right-wing





Nation-State Law Ultra-Orthodox Conscription Law



Nation-State Law:

- **Only Jewish citizens have the “right of self-determination.”**
- **Hebrew is the nation’s only official language and Arabic is downgraded to “special status.”**
- **Establishes Jewish settlement as a “national value” and directs the State to promote settlement.**



Nation-State Law

Ultra-Orthodox Conscription Law



March 23, 2021 Israeli Election



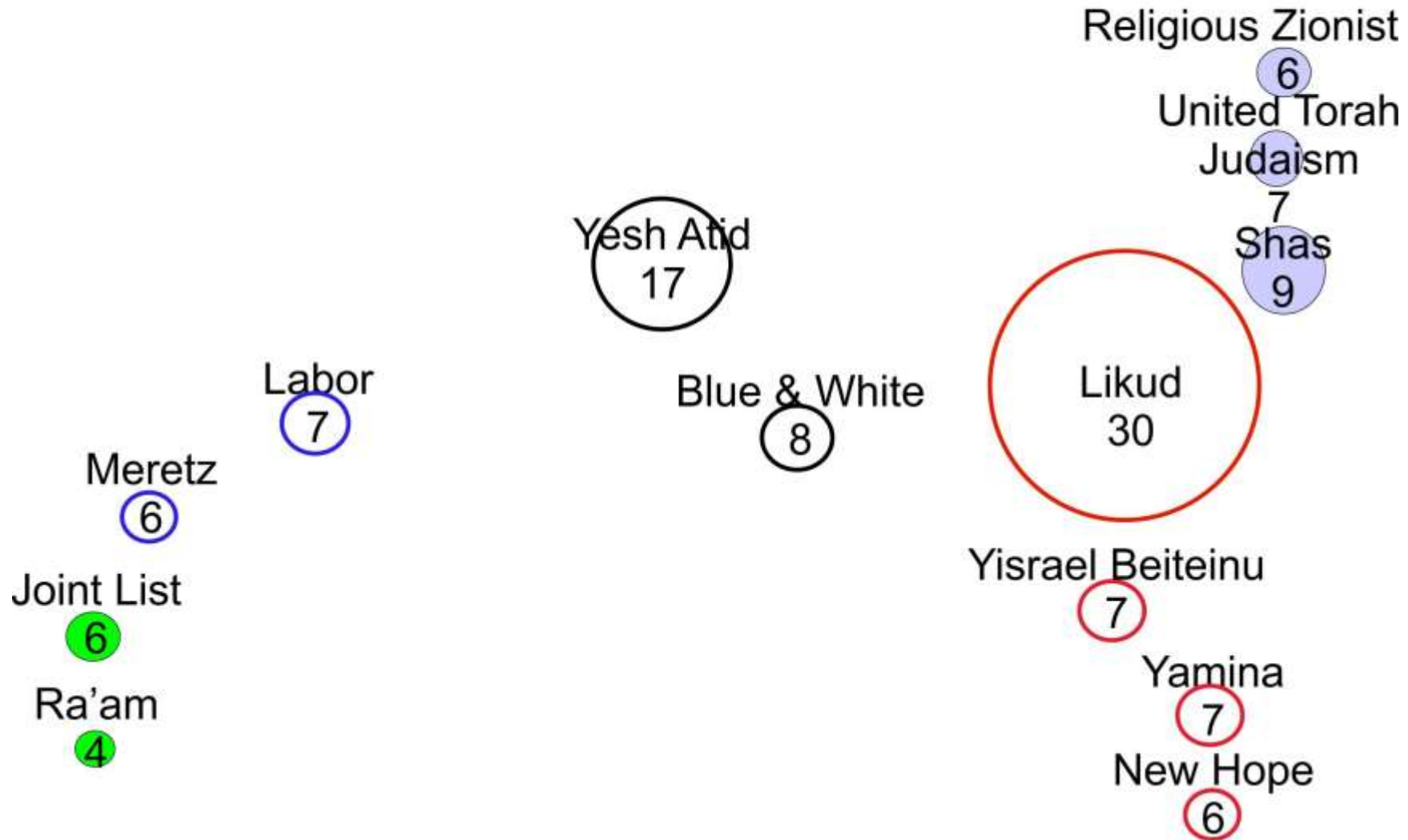
Mansour Abbas,
of Ra'am

24th Knesset, elected March 23, 2021

Liberal/Left-wing

Centrist

Conservative/Right-wing

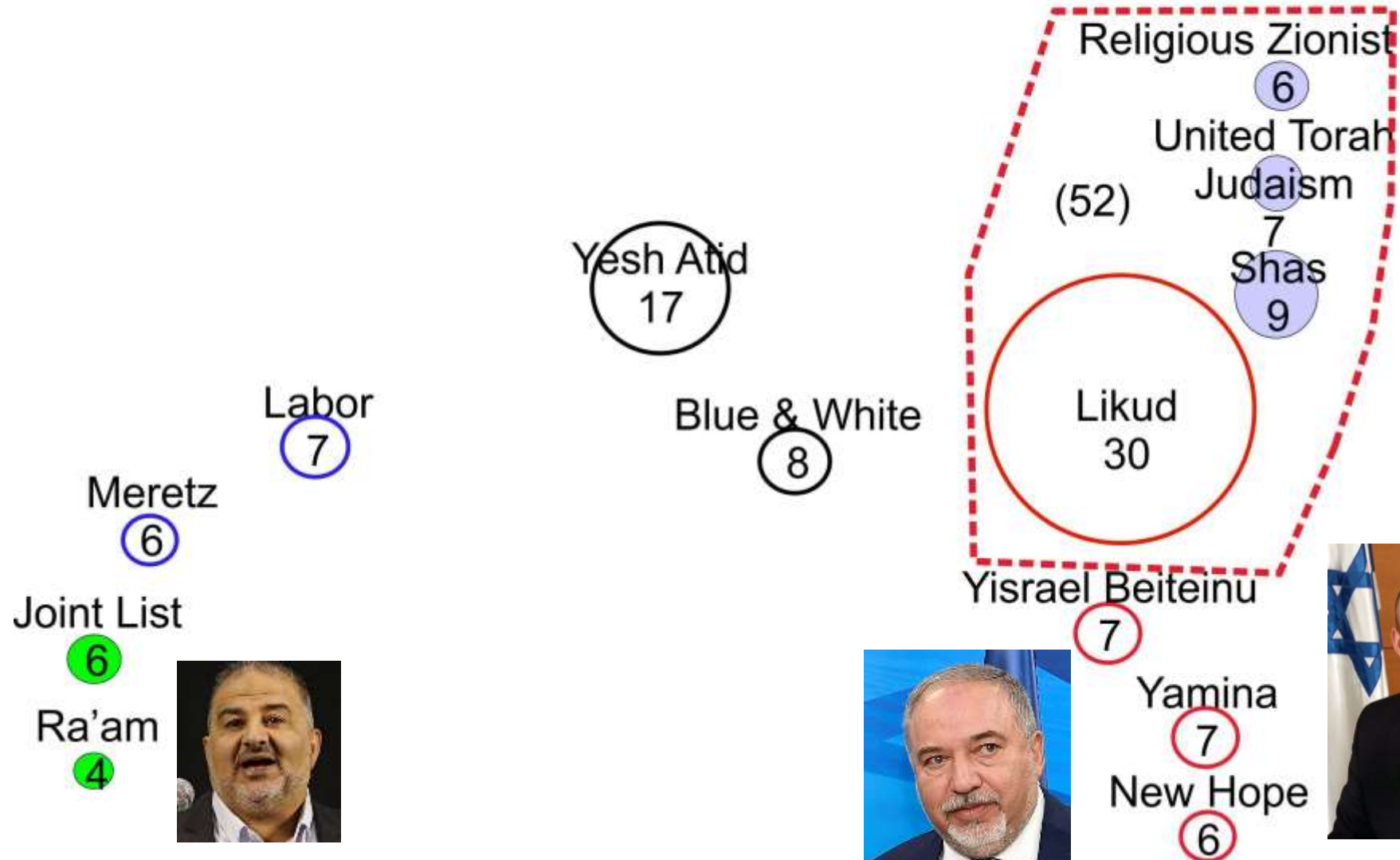


24th Knesset, elected March 23, 2021

Liberal/Left-wing

Centrist

Conservative/Right-wing

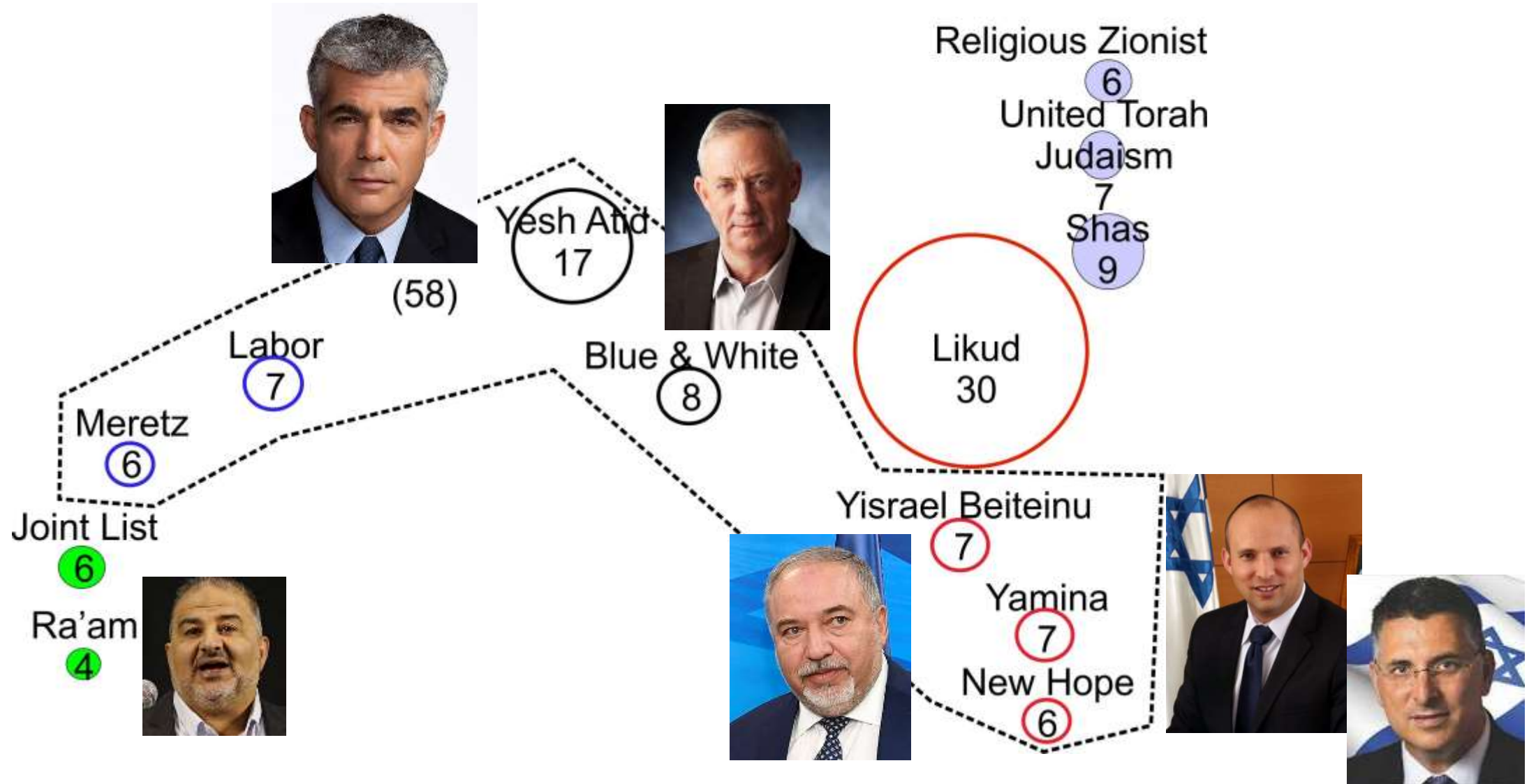


24th Knesset, elected March 23, 2021

Liberal/Left-wing

Centrist

Conservative/Right-wing

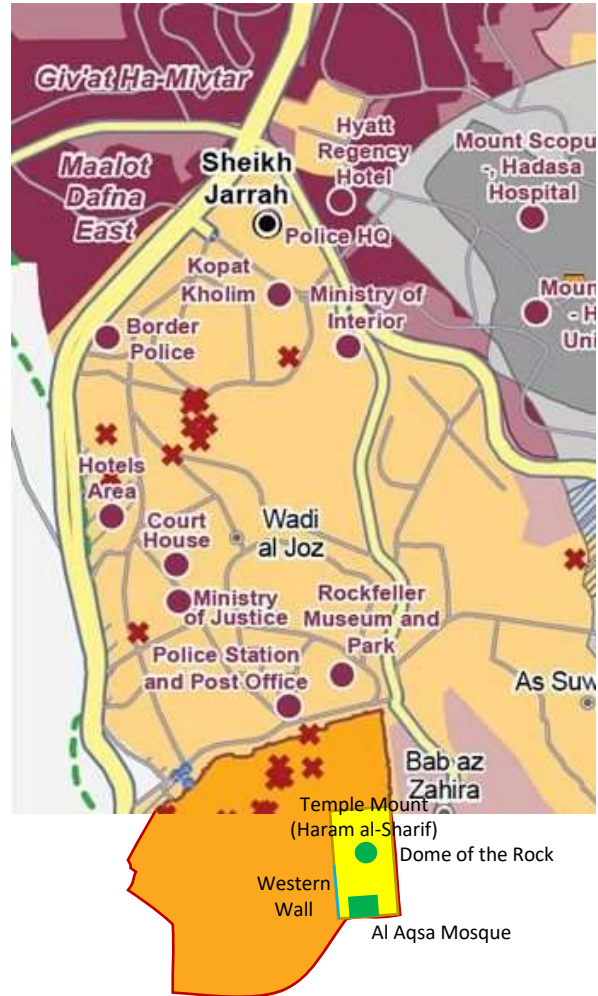


The Violence



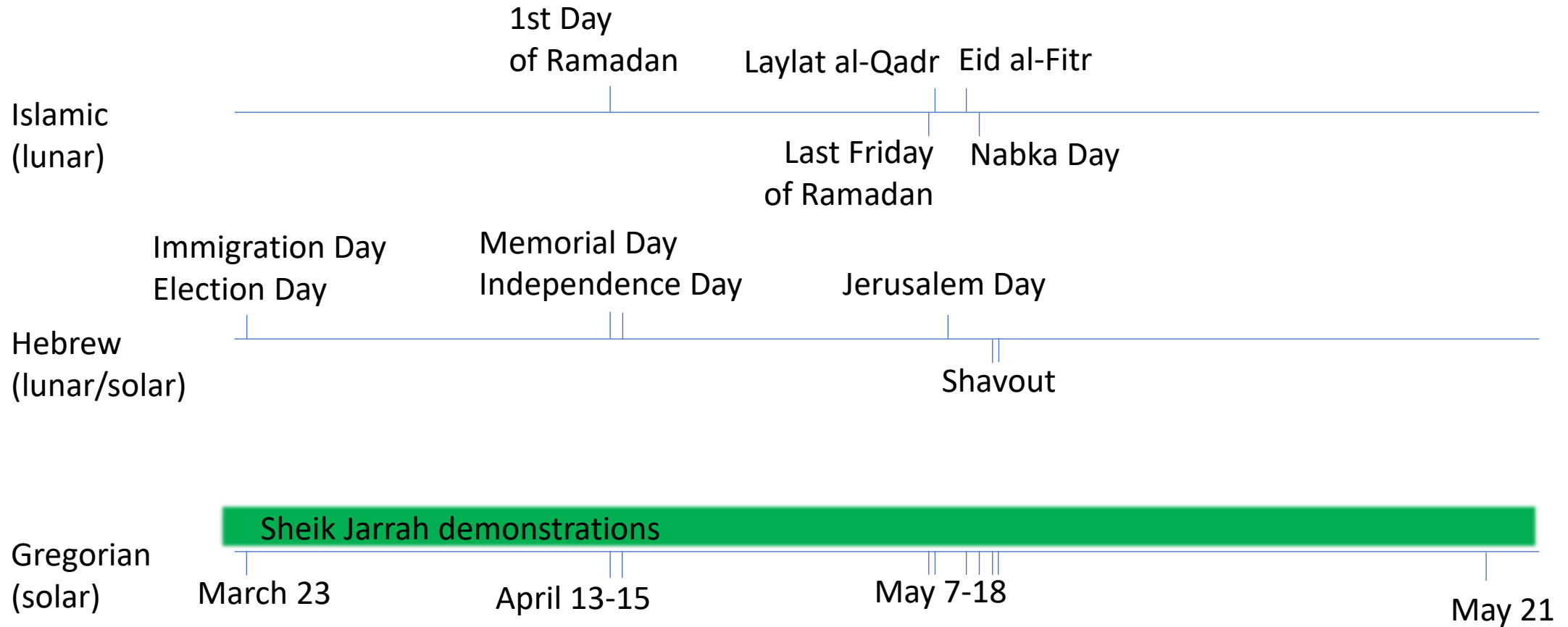


Damascus (Nablus) Gate plaza



Damascus (Nablus) Gate plaza





April 13, 2021—Israeli Memorial Day/1st Day of Ramadan



April 13, 2021—Israeli Memorial Day/1st Day of Ramadan



April 13, 2021—Israeli Memorial Day/1st Day of Ramadan



April 13, 2021—Israeli Memorial Day/1st Day of Ramadan

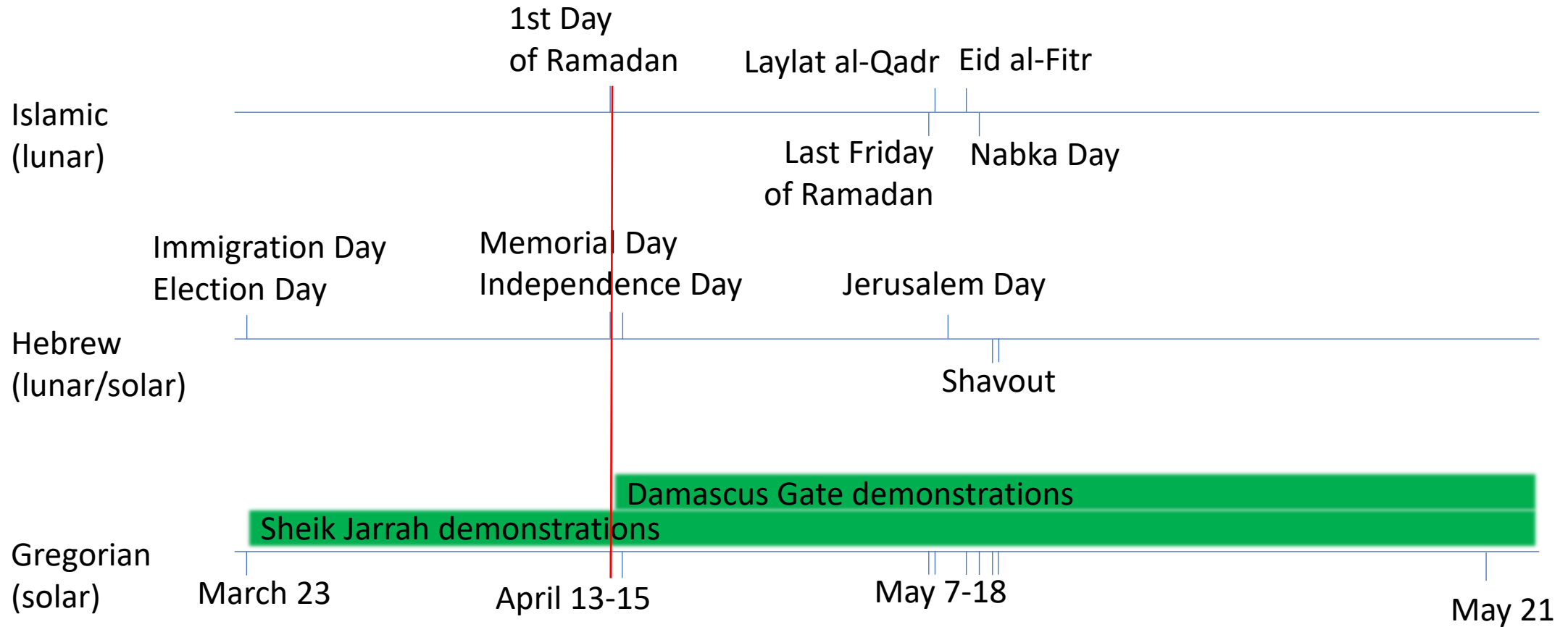


Israeli security forces stand guard outside the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem's Old City (Menahem Kahana/AFP)

April 13, 2021—Israeli Memorial Day/1st Day of Ramadan



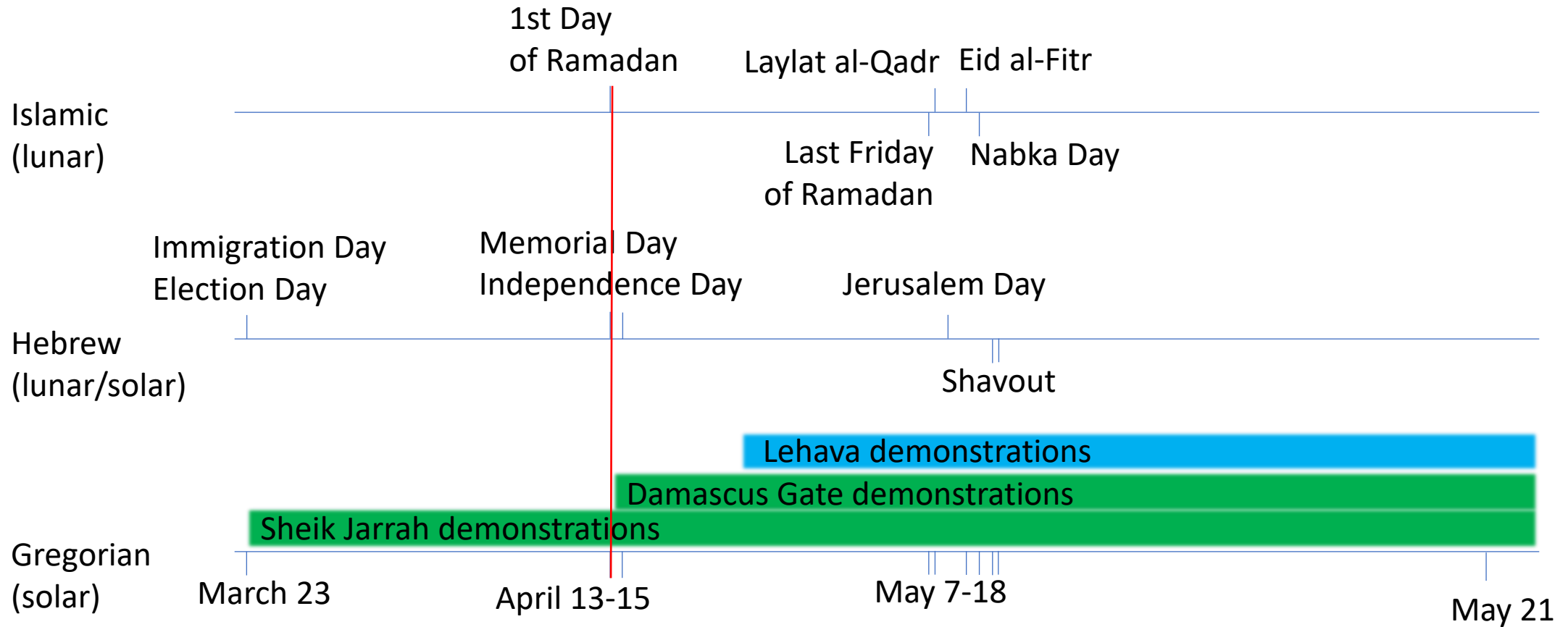
Police disperse crowds of Palestinian youth at Damascus Gate.
Credit: Ohad Zwigenberg



April 21, 2021—during Ramadan



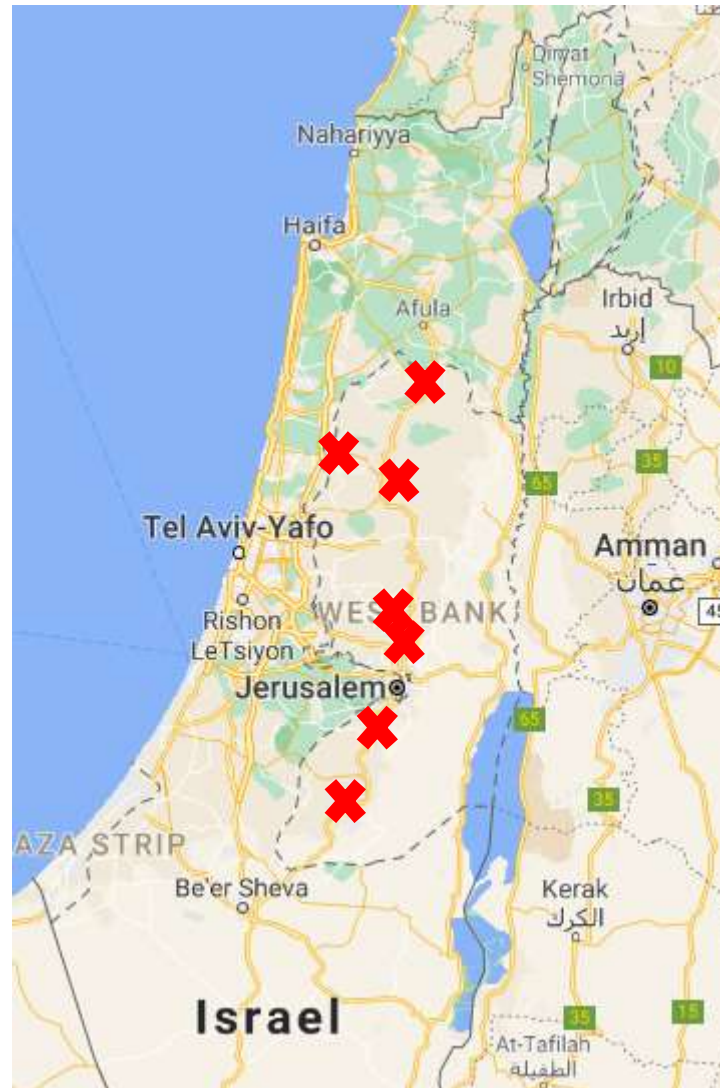
Supporters of the far-right Jewish group Lehava face the police near Jerusalem's Old City. Credit...Ariel Schalit/Associated Press



April 25, 2021—Police open the Damascus Gate to Palestinians

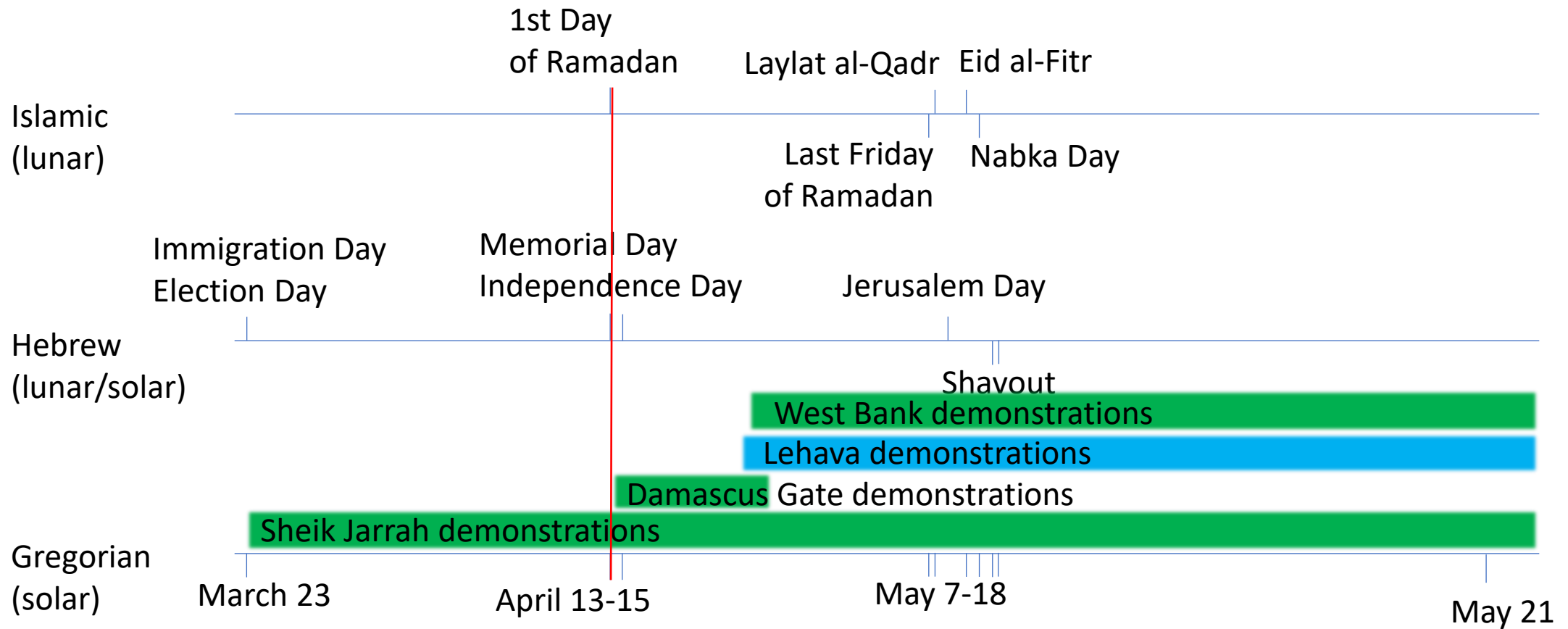


April 25, 2021—protest demonstrations spread to the West Bank





Settlers from the Chavat Maon outpost attack Homra village, defended by five Palestinians, around noon. These settlers have, in the past, vandalized the village's olive trees. <https://taayush.org/?m=2021>



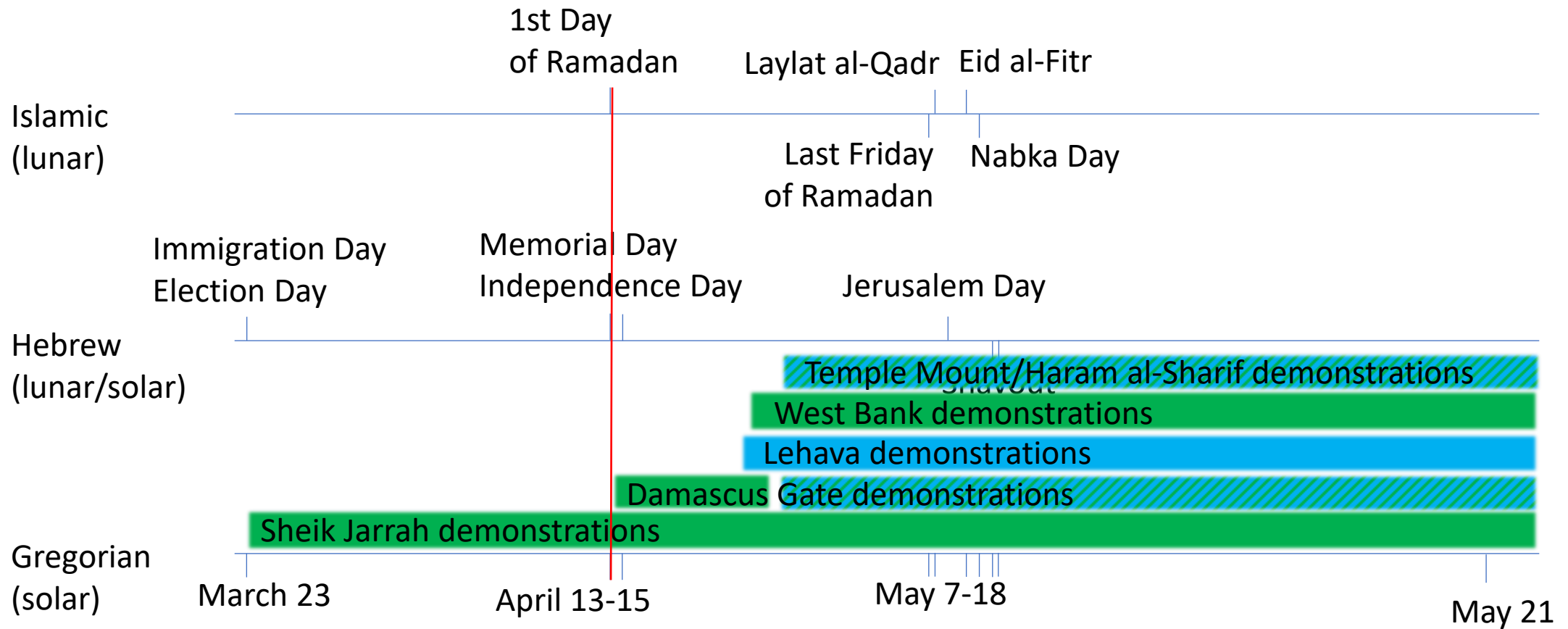
April 26, 2021—Jewish settlers and Israeli police in the Al Aqsa compound



Palestinian protesters run amid clashes with Israeli security forces at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound [Ahmad Gharabli/AFP]



Israeli police aim their weapons at Palestinians in the Al-Aqsa compound. [Ammar Awad/Reuters]



April 29, 2021—Abbas cancels Palestinian legislative elections.



Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian president since 2005, is increasingly unpopular and were he to hold a free and fair election he would probably lose.

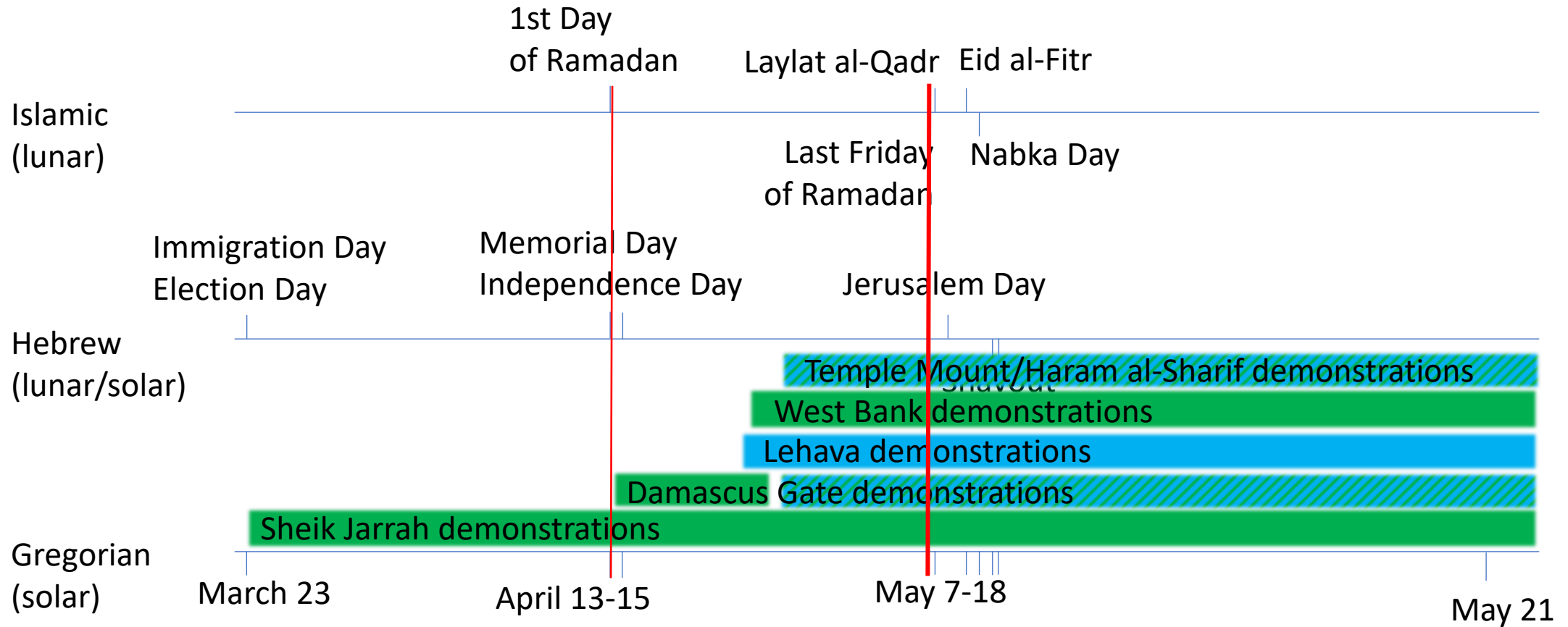
Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister since 2009, is struggling to form a new government, as the opposition inches closer to a deal that would unseat him. (The Economist, 5/1/21.)

May 1, 2021— Hamas issues an ultimatum.



Hamas military commander
 Mohammad Deif.





May 7, 2021—Sheikh Jarrah demonstrations turn violent.



Friday, May 7, 2021. Weekly Sheikh Jarrah demonstration.



A Palestinian woman scuffles with an Israeli border police officer during a protest against the forced displacement of Palestinian families (AP Photo/Mahmoud Illean)



Sign in [Arabic](#) reads "We will not leave," on the walls of the [Sheikh Jarrah](#) neighborhood

May 7, 2021—Last Friday of Ramadan.



When the Mosque fills with a large congregation, as on holy days, worshippers gather on the plazas outside.

May 7, 2021—Last Friday of Ramadan.



After prayers at the Aqsa Mosque on May 7, Palestinian youths began throwing stones at the Israeli police. The police replied with stun grenades. Credit...Ammar Awad/Reuters



May 7, 2021. Israeli police enter the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

May 8, 2021—Laylat al-Qadr, the most sacred night of Ramadan.



Vendors at Damascus Gate run for cover.

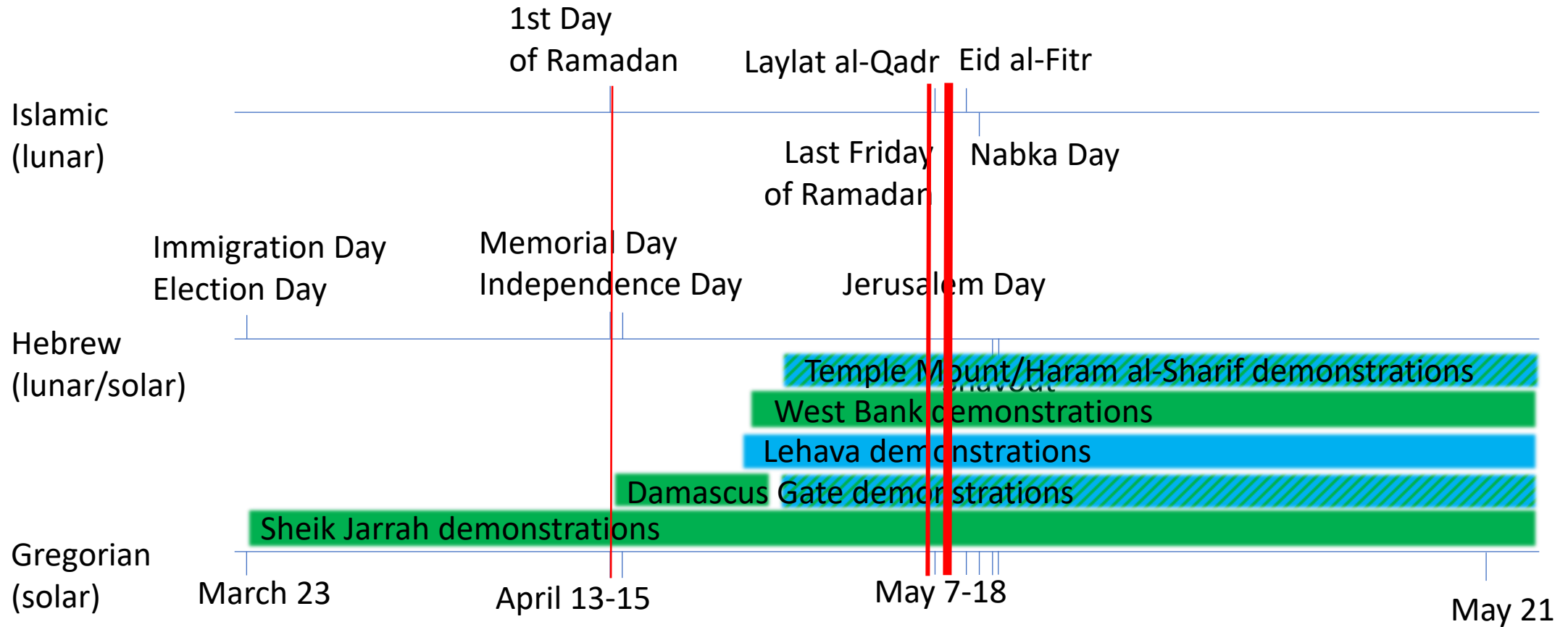


A police stun grenade goes off during clashes at Damascus Gate on May 8. Credit...Amir Levy/Getty Images

May 9, 2021—Palestinian violence and police retaliation erupt in Jerusalem.



Violence escalated on Sunday, May 9.



May 10, 2021—Jerusalem Day, 28th Day of Ramadan.



8:00 am. Israeli police enter the al-Asqa compound to clear it of stone-throwing Palestinians. Credit...Ahmad Gharabli/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

May 10, 2021—Jerusalem Day, 28th Day of Ramadan.



Palestinians barricade the mosque and throw rocks at the Israeli police.
Credit...Mahmoud Illean/Associated Press

May 10, 2021—Jerusalem Day, 28th Day of Ramadan.

70 settlers attempt to break into al-Aqsa Mosque, May 10, 2021.



May 10, 2021—Jerusalem Day, 28th Day of Ramadan.



Israeli police run after a Palestinian demonstrator at Al-Aqsa Mosque on May 10, 2021, in Jerusalem. Laurent Van Der Stockt / Getty



Palestinians clash with Israeli security forces at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound on May 10, 2021. Mahmoud Illean / AP

May 10, 2021—Jerusalem Day, 28th Day of Ramadan.



Palestinians evacuate a wounded man during clashes with Israeli security forces at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, on May 10, 2021. Mahmoud Illean / AP

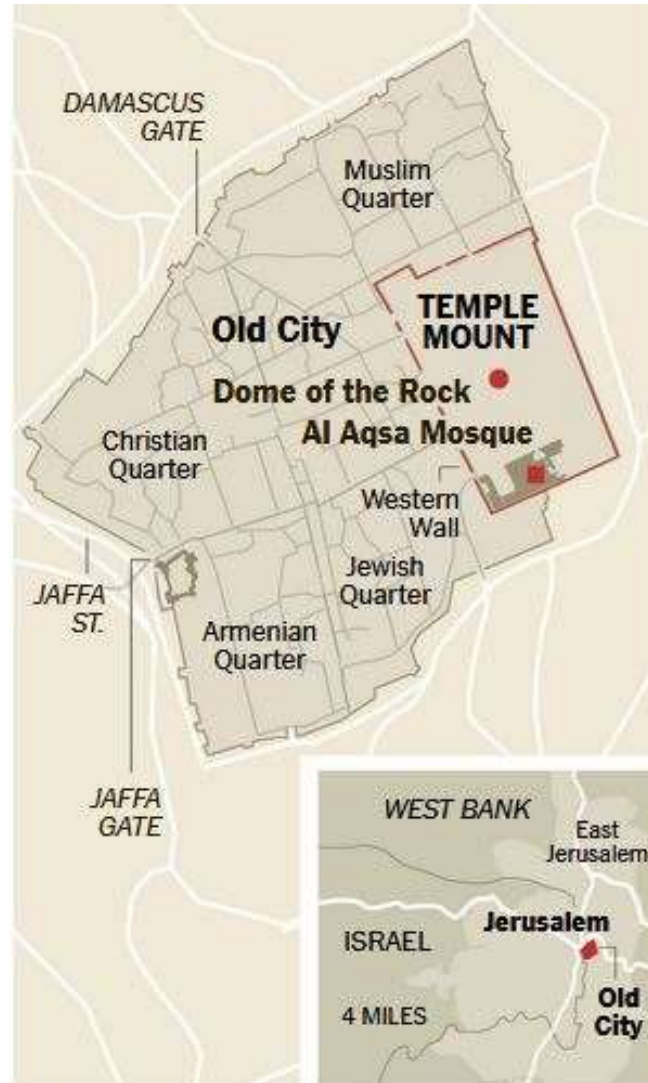


Helping a wounded protester at the Aqsa Mosque compound on Monday. Palestinian medics say at least 180 Palestinians were hurt in the violence, including 80 who were hospitalized. Credit...Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

May 10, 2021—Jerusalem Day, 28th Day of Ramadan.



Israelis wave national flags before Jerusalem Day “Flag March,” in Jerusalem, May 10, 2021. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)



But at 4:00 pm the route was changed to bypass the Damascus Gate, enter the Jaffa Gate and avoid the Muslim Quarter. Credit...Atef Safadi/EPA, via Shutterstock

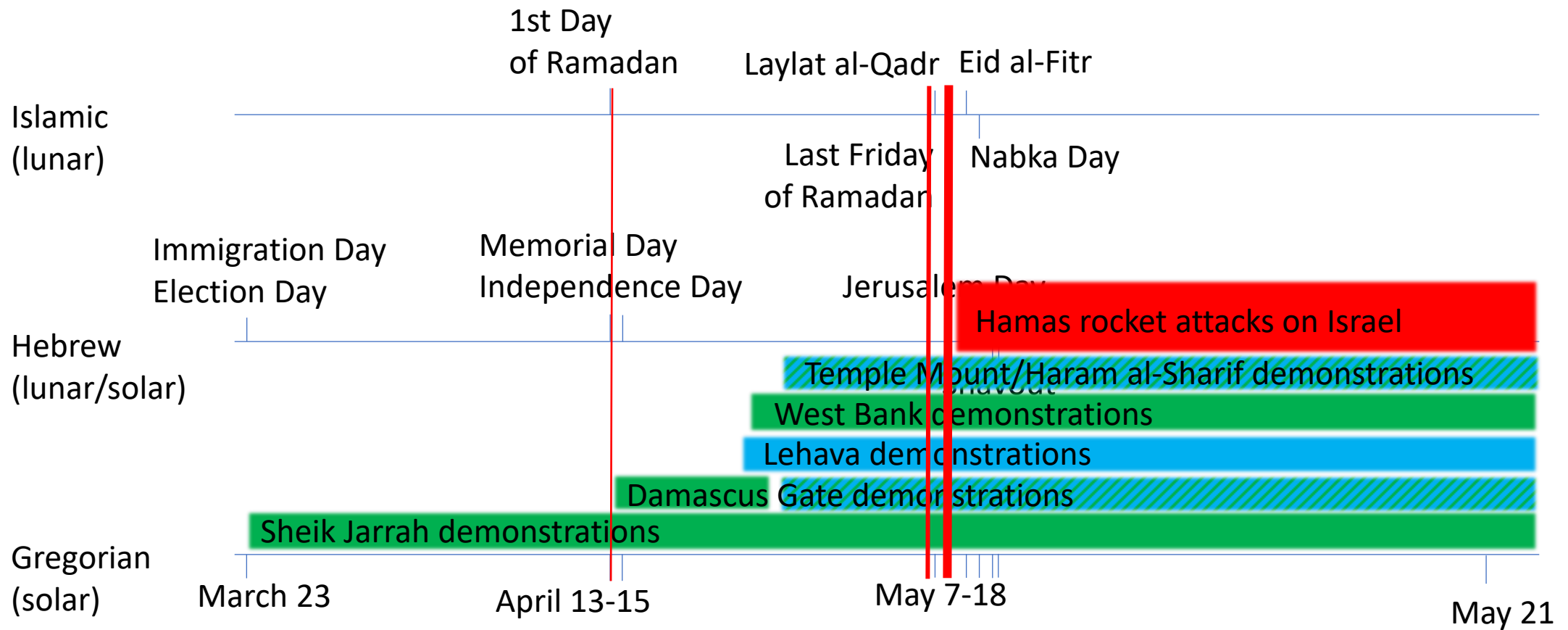
**May 10, 2021—Jerusalem Day, 28th Day of Ramadan.
(Hamas' deadline)**



Rockets launched from the Gaza Strip (R), and missiles from the Iron Dome defense system sent up to intercept them (L).



Building in Ashdod, southern Israel, damaged by a rocket launched from the Gaza Strip on May 11, 2021.
Avi Roccah / Reuters



May 11, 2021—Israeli retaliation on Gaza.



Israeli airstrikes in the southern Gaza Strip on May 11, 2021. (Ibraheem Abu Mustafa/Reuters)



Israeli air strike on the Hanadi compound, in Gaza City, on May 11, 2021. Mohammed Abed / AFP / Getty

May 11, 2021— Hamas responds with rocket barrages.



Israel's Iron Dome anti-missile system (R) intercepts rockets launched from the Gaza Strip (L), as seen from Ashkelon, Israel, on May 11, 2021. Nir Elias / Reuters

May 11, 2021—demonstrations and riots continue in Israel.



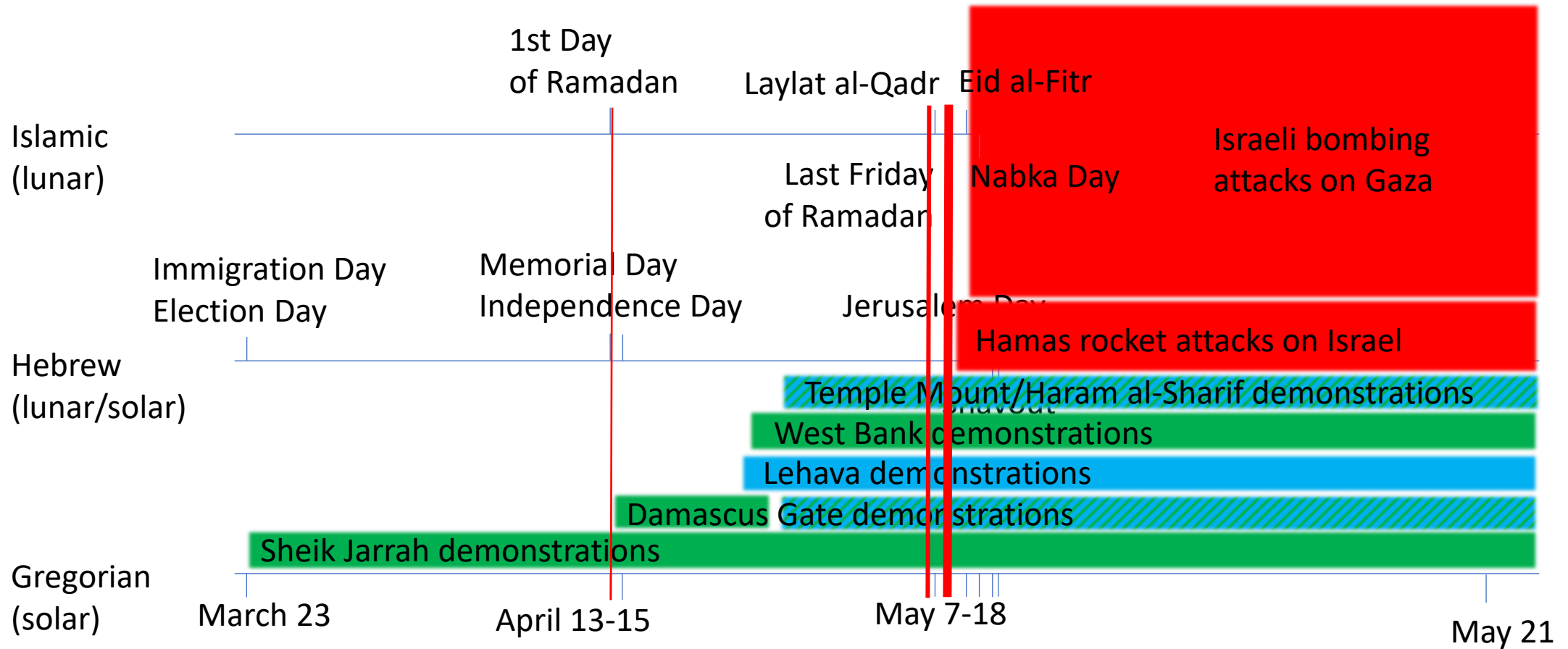
Jacob Simona stands by his burning car in the Israeli city of Lod on May 11, 2021. Heidi Levine / AP



A Palestinian man, right, scuffled with a Jewish man who appeared to swerve his car into a passer-by after it was hit by stones. Credit...Abir Sultan/EPA, via Shutterstock



Palestinians throw stones at Israeli soldiers at the Qalandiya checkpoint on May 11, 2021. Abbas Momani / AFP / Getty

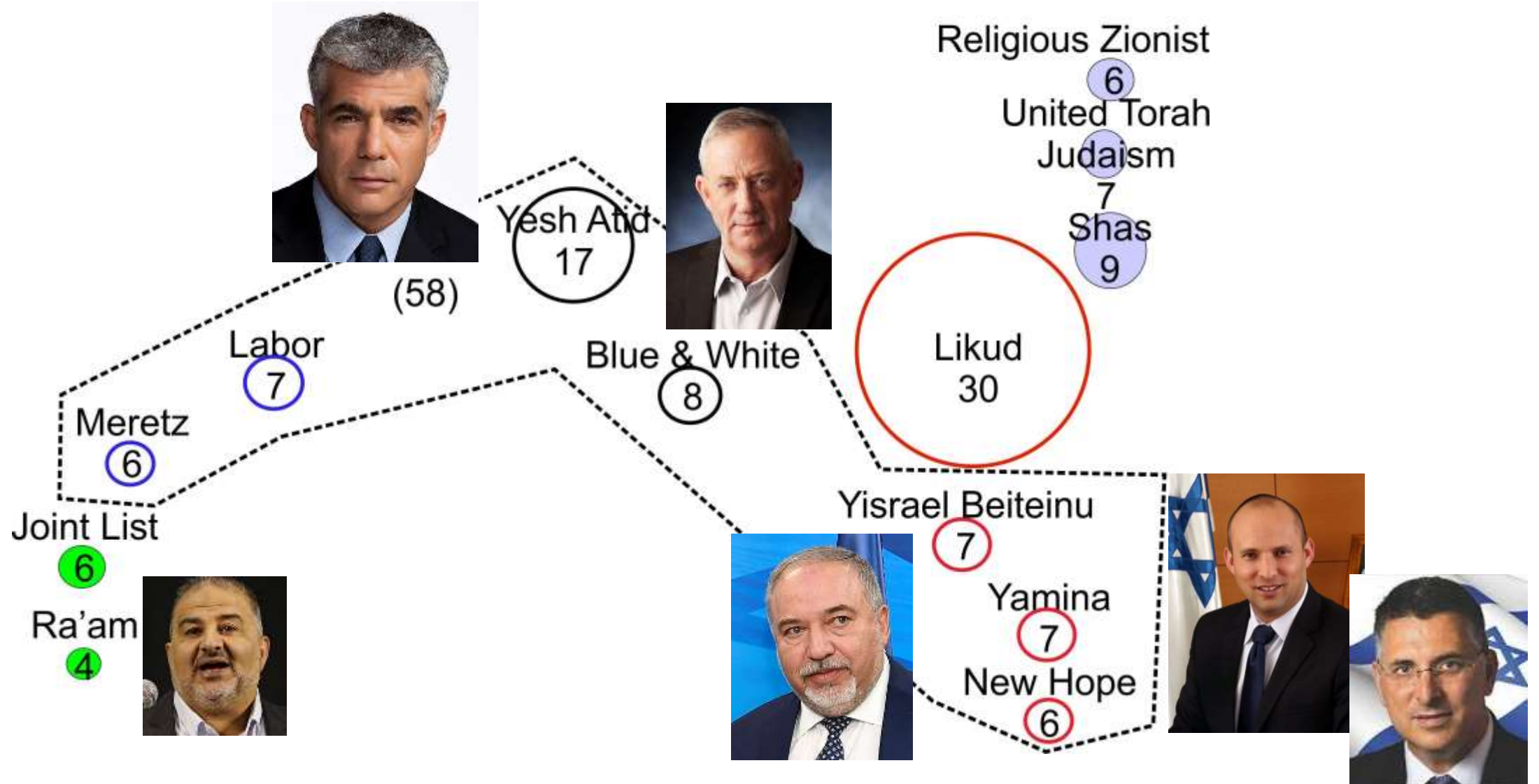


24th Knesset, elected March 23, 2021

Liberal/Left-wing

Centrist

Conservative/Right-wing

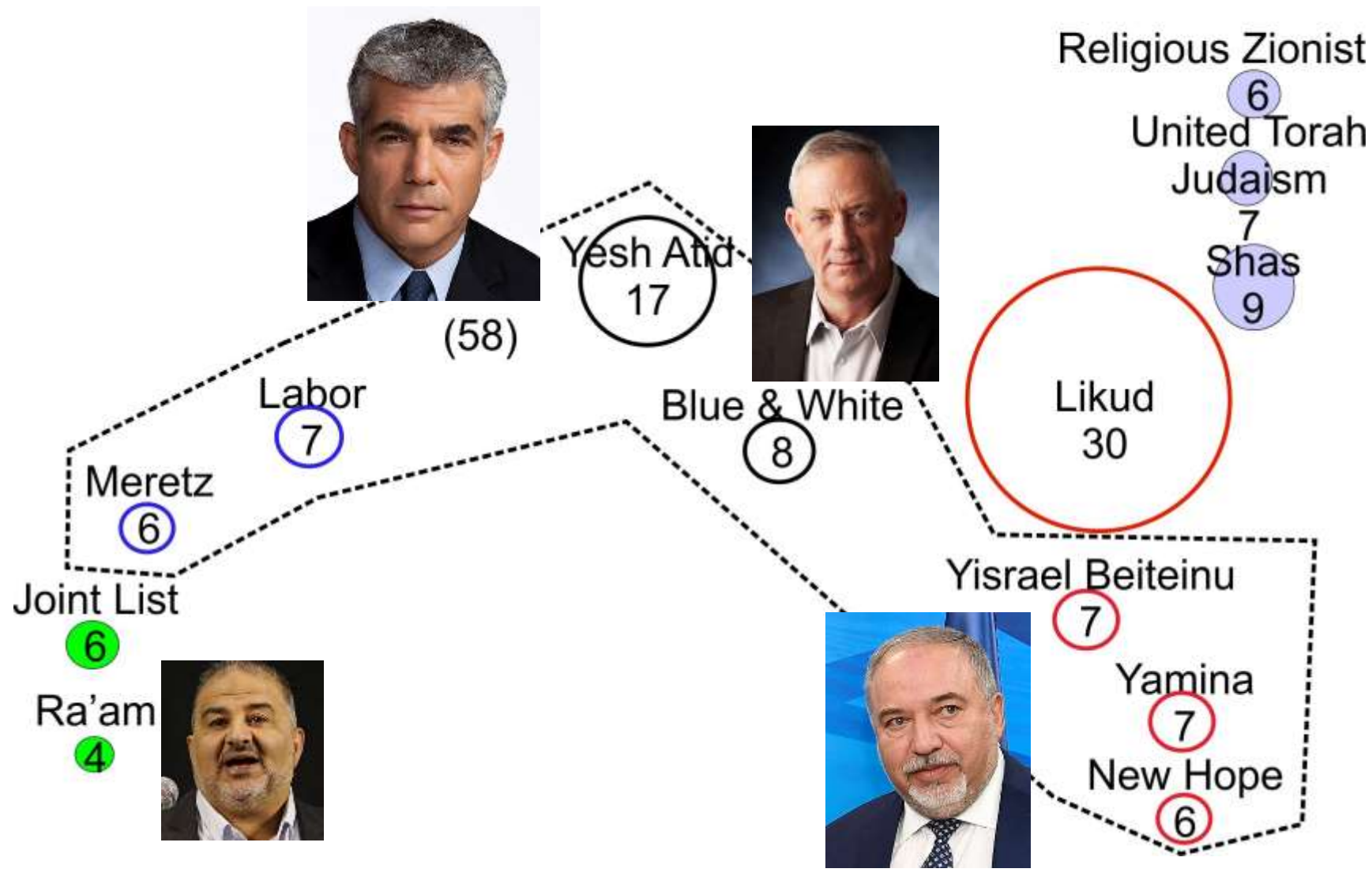


24th Knesset, elected March 23, 2021

Liberal/Left-wing

Centrist

Conservative/Right-wing

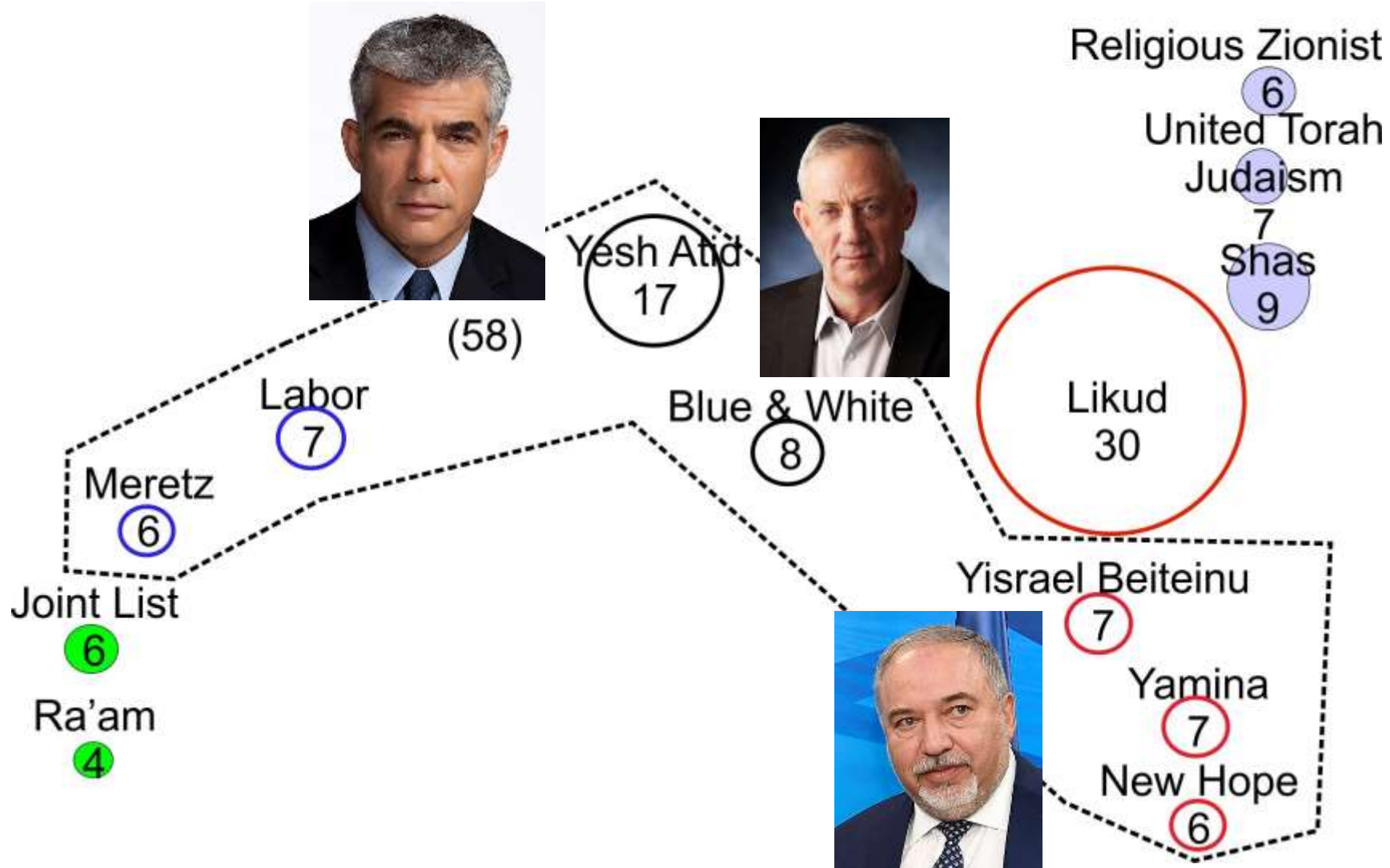


24th Knesset, elected March 23, 2021

Liberal/Left-wing

Centrist

Conservative/Right-wing



May 13, 2021—Peace efforts begin.



Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi (L) and Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry (R)



U.S. president [Joe Biden](#) condemned the rocket attacks into Israel and added that "Israel has a right to defend itself".

May 13, 2021—Operation “Guardian of the Walls” begins.



Israeli reservists.



Israeli soldiers fire a 155 mm self-propelled Howitzer at targets in the Gaza Strip.

May 14, 2021—Israeli airstrikes hit “the Metro.”



Smoke and flames rise from an early morning Israeli air strike in Gaza City. (The Atlantic, 5/15/21)



Buildings are blown apart during Israeli airstrikes on Palestinian militants in Gaza City May 14, 2021. Reuters/Ibraheem Abu Mustafa

May 14, 2021—West Bank demonstrations turn deadly



Israeli security forces deploy near Beit El settlement in the occupied West Bank on May 18, 2021. - ABBAS MOMANI/AFP via Getty Images



Israeli security forces fire tear gas at protesters in the West Bank city of Hebron, on May 14, 2021. - HAZEM BADER/AFP via Getty Images

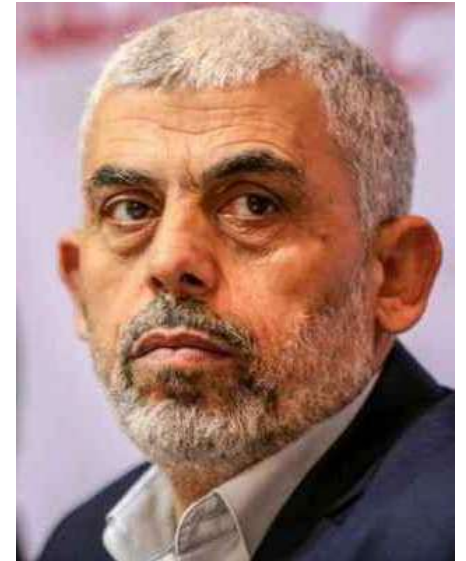
May 14, 2021—Egypt makes a cease-fire proposal



Abdel Fatah El Sisi,
President of Egypt



Benjamin Netanyahu,
Prime Minister of Israel



Yahya Sinwar,
Political Leader of Hamas

**May 15, 2021—Israel destroys the al-Jalaa tower,
Headquarters of the Associated Press and al Jazeera.**



An Israeli airstrike hits the high-rise building housing The Associated Press' offices in Gaza City on Saturday. The attack came roughly an hour after the Israeli military ordered people to evacuate the building. Hatem Moussa/AP



May 15, 2021— Hamas rockets hit residential buildings in Ramat Gan.



Israeli emergency services work at a site in Ramat Gan, hit by a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip. One man was killed in the attack. Oded Balilty/AP



A woman in Ashdod, Israel, carries her dog and runs for shelter after sirens warn of rockets fired from Gaza, near the site where a previous rocket hit.

May 16, 2021—Phase II of Guardian of the Walls targets the Metro.



Israeli soldiers fire a 155 mm self-propelled Howitzer at targets in the Gaza Strip on May 18.



Smoke billows following an Israeli air strike in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on May 13, 2021. - SAID KHATIB/AFP via Getty Images

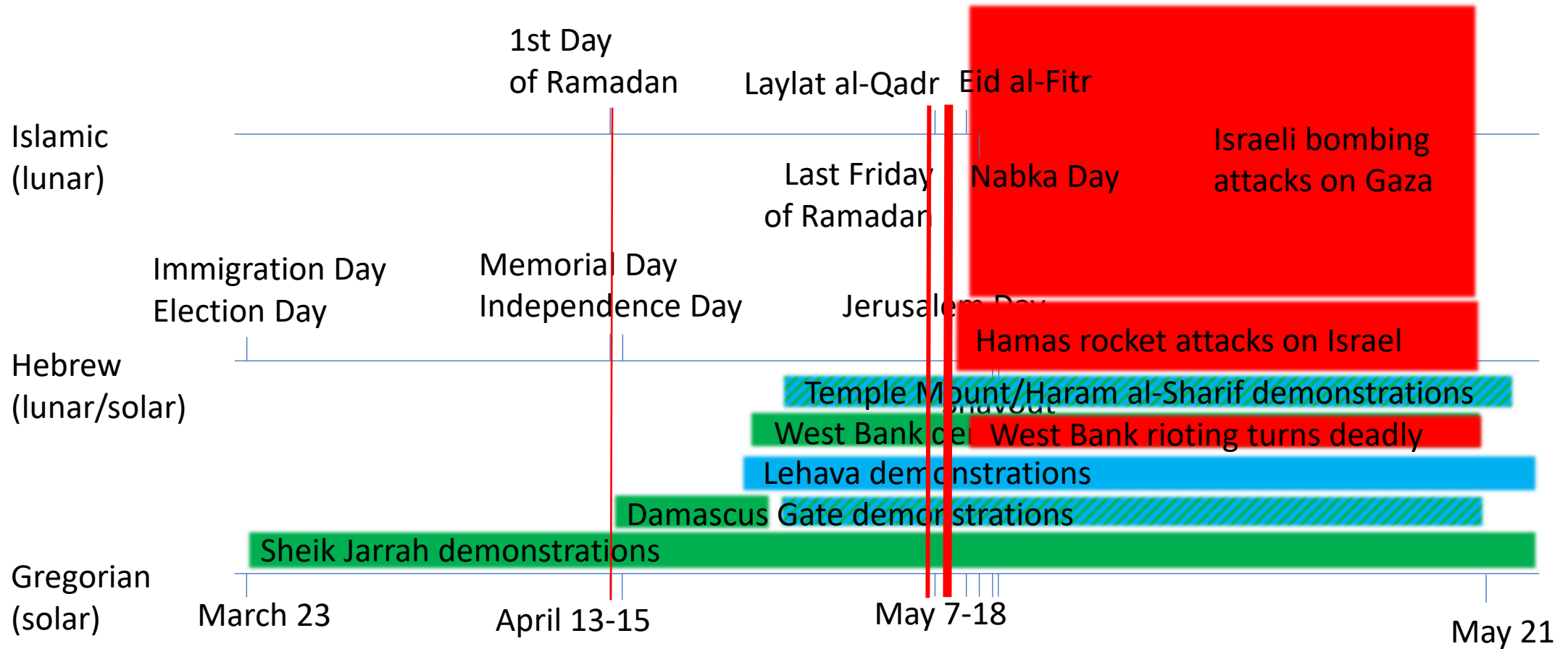


Explosions are seen over Gaza City as Israeli forces strike targets on May 18.

May 20, 2021—Israel and Hamas agree to a cease-fire.



President Joe Biden delivers remarks on the conflict in the Middle East from the White House on May 20, 2021. Israel and Hamas announced that they would agree to a cease-fire, which will go into effect Friday, following days of fighting that claimed more than 230 lives. - Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images



May 21, 2021—Cease-fire.



Yahya Sinwar, leader of the Palestinian Hamas movement, gestures on stage during a rally in Gaza City. - MAHMUD HAMS/AFP via Getty Images)



Palestinian supporters wave to members of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of the Hamas movement, during a military parade in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip. - SAID KHATIB/AFP via Getty Images

Aftermath



Benjamin Netanyahu



Palestinians gather to pray around the bodies of 13 Hamas militants killed in Israeli airstrikes on Gaza City. - MAHMUD HAMS/AFP via Getty



People sitting in the rubble of a bombed house in Gaza. Samar Abu Elouf for The New York Times

Neighbors walk among the rubble of a building destroyed by an airstrike in Gaza. (AP Photo/John Minchillo)



Repetitive scenario, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2021:

- Palestinian deaths outnumber Israeli deaths.
- Buildings in Gaza are flattened.
- We see pictures of bereaved families.
- After massive air strikes, artillery and sometimes ground action—
cease-fire.
- Hamas claims to have demonstrated that it is the champion of
Palestinian rights.
- Israel claims it has “mowed the lawn,” reducing Hamas’ military
capacity.
- Qatar, the U.S. and other countries pay for rebuilding the damage.
- Quiet returns.
- The wound festers until next time.



Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz meets with US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken in Washington, D.C., on June 3, 2021. *Jerusalem Post*.

What is different this time?

- It began with Israeli Palestinians.
- All Palestinians, Israeli, East Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza, rallied to support each other.
- Hamas stepped forward to defend the al-Aqsa Mosque and Israeli Palestinians rather than Gaza.
- Hamas fielded considerably more sophisticated weaponry than in previous conflicts.
- Support for Palestinians was openly expressed in the United States, including the news media.
- Members of the U.S. Democratic Party in Congress openly questioned Israel's actions and U.S. military support for Israel.
- Politically, for the first time, an Arab party will be included in an Israeli government.



Mahmoud Abbas,
President of the
Palestinian Authority



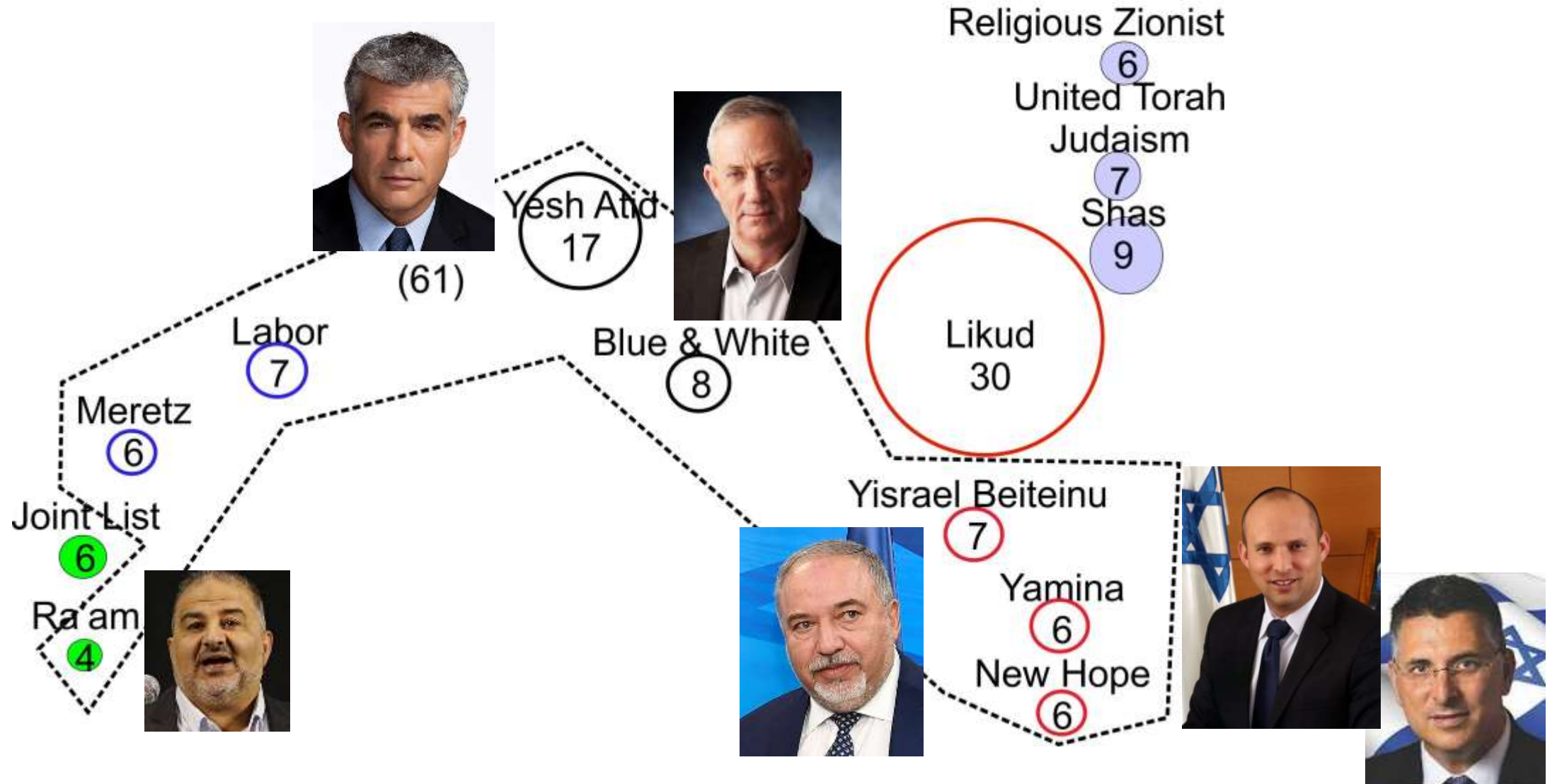
Yahya Sinwar,
Political Leader of Hamas

24th Knesset, elected March 23, 2021

Liberal/Left-wing

Centrist

Conservative/Right-wing

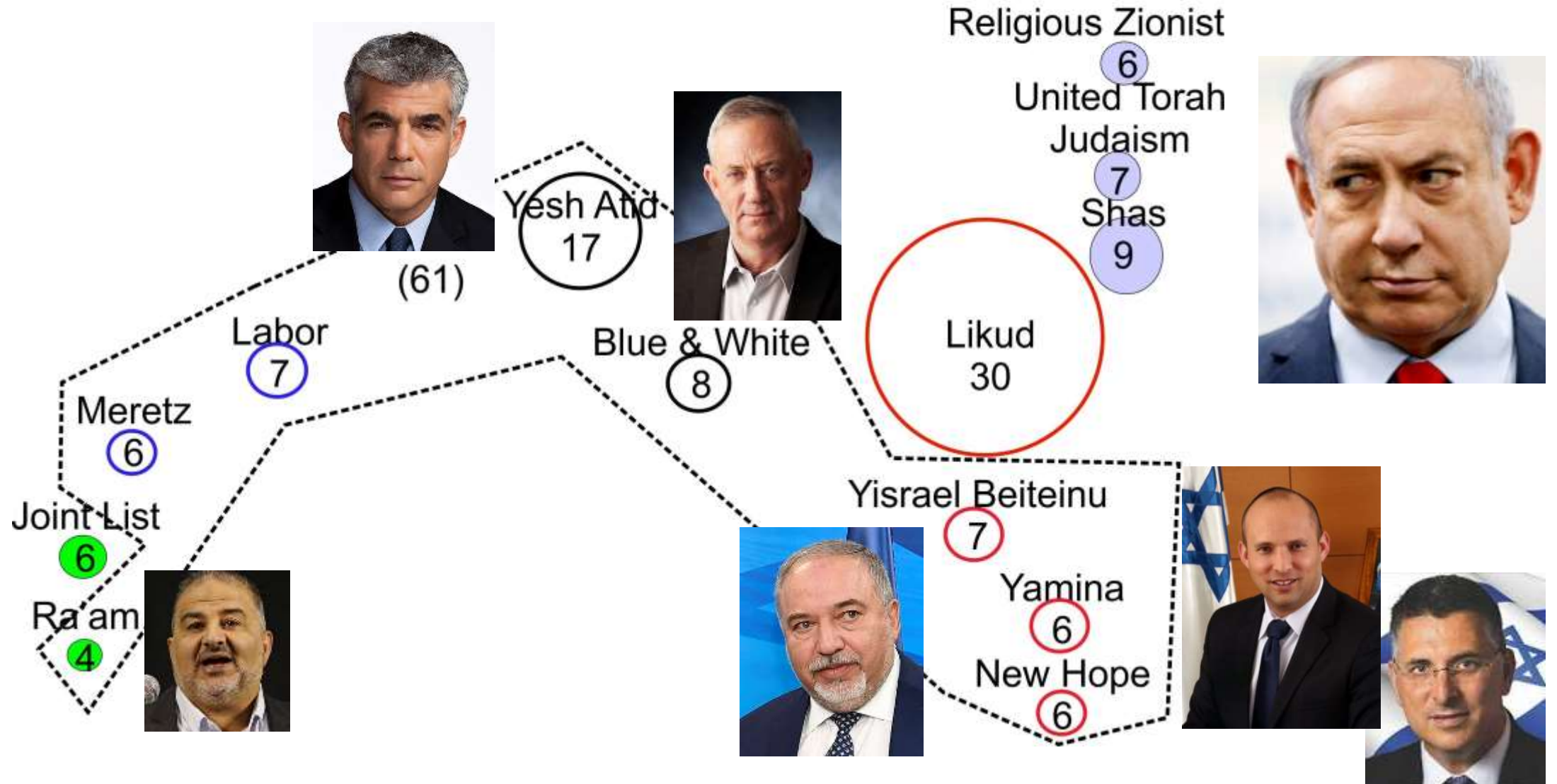


24th Knesset, elected March 23, 2021

Liberal/Left-wing

Centrist

Conservative/Right-wing





Religious Zionism leader Bezalel Smotrich leads demonstrations against Naftali Bennett and the “change government.” The Israeli far-right now sees Bennett as a traitor to their cause and to Israel. (Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90)



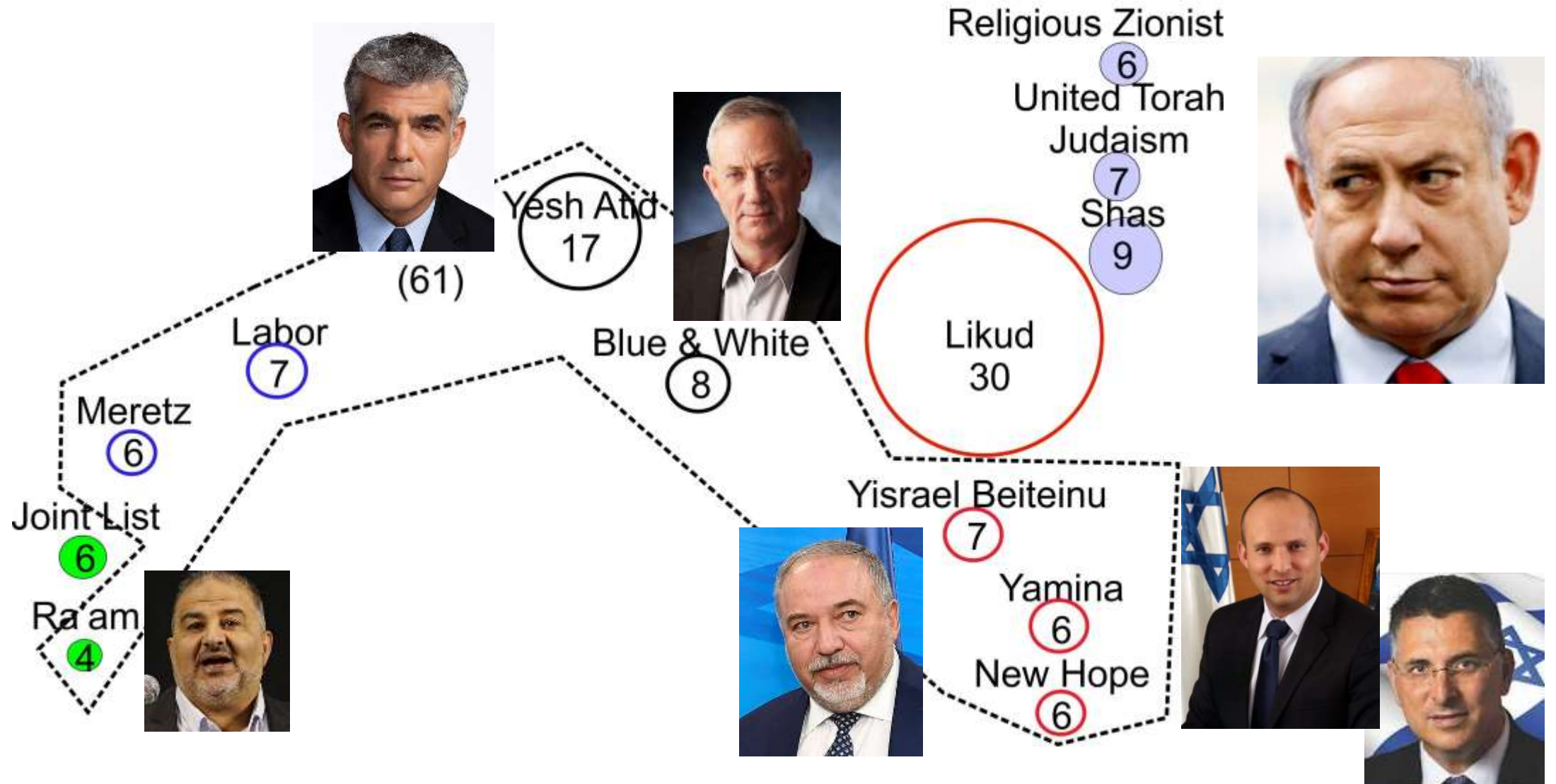
Israeli soldiers stop a symbolic wedding party at the Hezma checkpoint in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, on March 9, 2013. In January 2012, the Israeli Supreme Court endorsed the 2003 law banning Palestinians married to Israeli Arabs from obtaining Israeli citizenship or residing in Israel. - ABBAS MOMANI/AFP via Getty Images

24th Knesset, elected March 23, 2021

Liberal/Left-wing

Centrist

Conservative/Right-wing





There have been reports of telephone calls between PM Naftali Bennett and President Isaac Herzog, and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas...



...and meetings between Israeli and Palestinian legislators.



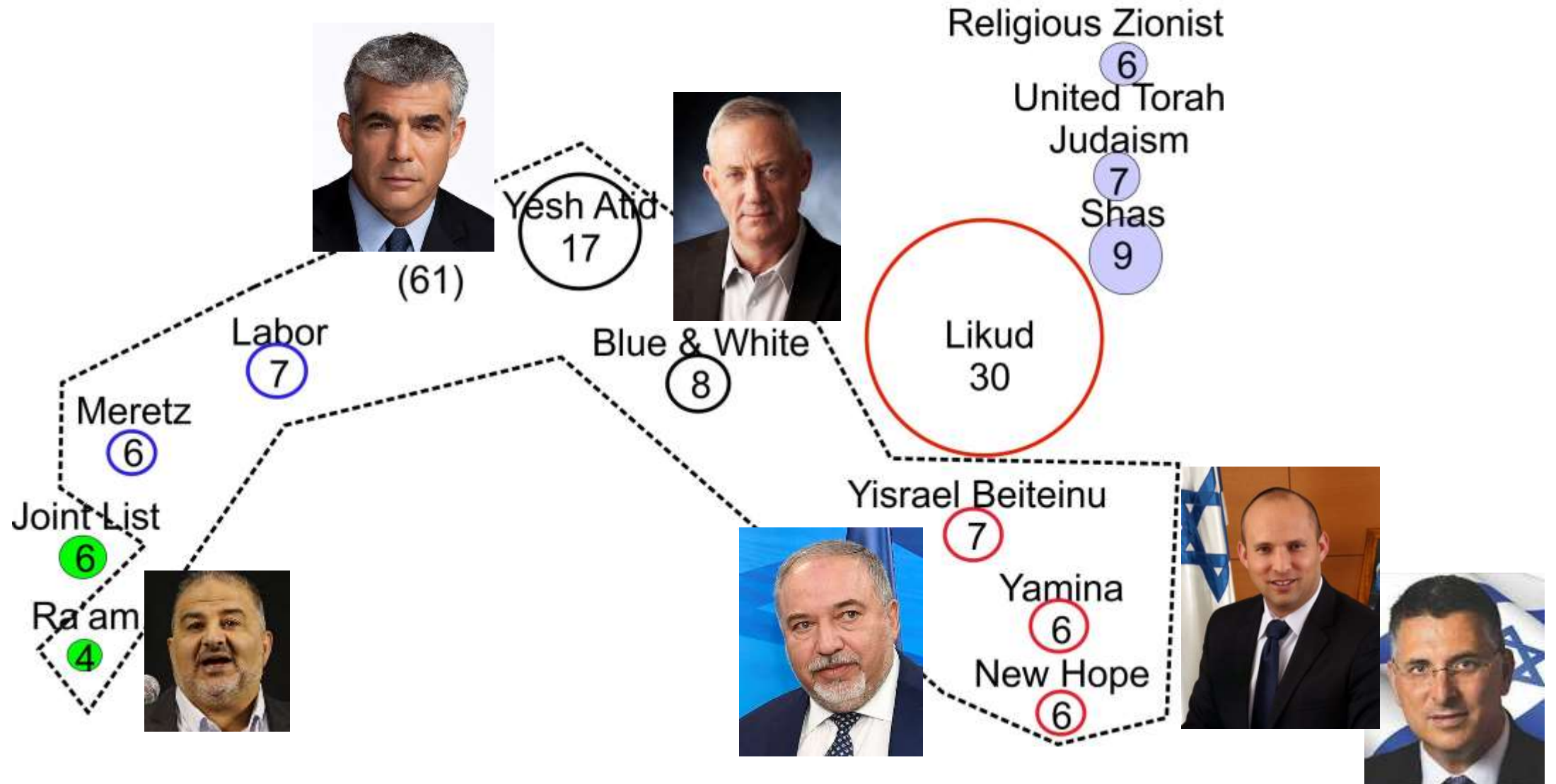
Houses in the unrecognized Bedouin village of Sawaneen in Israel's southern Negev Desert on June 8, 2021. - HAZEM BADER/AFP via Getty Images.

24th Knesset, elected March 23, 2021

Liberal/Left-wing

Centrist

Conservative/Right-wing



Haaretz: www.Haaretz.com

Jerusalem Post: www.jpost.com

Al Monitor: www.al-monitor.com

Media Line: www.themedialine.org

Al Jazeera: www.aljazeera.com

Israel Political Update

Chris Schaefer

Chris.Schaefer@bataandiary.com

832-428-1977



www.bataandiary.com/IPM