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Shalom Achshav Peace Foundation**

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## NEWS

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### PEACE NOW CONFERENCE: KADIMA MK'S SPEAK OUT

Peace Now conferences make an impact: this one provided a forum for dissident Kadima MKs who care about the peace process.

#### AMID FEARS OF PARTY SPLIT, KADIMA MKS LAMBASTE NETANYAHU-MOFAZ UNITY CABINET

By Ophir Bar-Zohar and Barak Ravid

Kadima MKs explicitly expressed their discontent following a surprise deal that introduced the party into Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition on Friday, with a split in the one-time opposition faction seeming likelier than ever. The party officials spoke at a Tel Aviv conference organized by left-wing NGO Peace Now.

Kadima MK Shlomo Molla said that if his party "doesn't condition its being part of the coalition in advancing the peace process, then we have nothing to do there. If that doesn't happen we need to admit that we're the Likud's useless baggage. I can certainly say that I personally won't be there," he said, adding: "There are bad winds blowing through Israeli society – there's a lot of racism, discrimination of minorities, wronging refugees."

Molla said it was the "spirit of the radical right which joins this entire atmosphere, offering to confront the Palestinians, to avoid peace, and to make [Palestinians] disappear from the public eye. Netanyahu is both running away and covering up."

Molla also referred to a meeting held earlier in the day, in which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's top cabinet ministers – including new Vice Prime Minister and Kadima chief Shaul Mofaz – discussed the fate of the Ulpana Hill outpost in the West Bank.

"If Mofaz didn't draw a red line in today's meeting, saying that a discussion to legitimize West Bank outposts shouldn't even take place, then we're just the Likud and we were introduced to make the Likud look better," Moll said.

The Kadima MK added: "We have nothing to do there, that should be clear," saying that the "first test is the [outpost] regulating law. It's a stain on this government that there's even a discussion of the possibility of creating a High Court-bypassing law."

Meanwhile, the chairman of the Kadima Council and one of the party's founders, Haim Ramon, announced he was leaving the party. He is expected to join Livni in founding a new party.

"Kadima is at the end of the road in terms of what it was supposed to be - an alternative to the government," Ramon said on Thursday. Ramon said he believed Kadima would disappear into Likud in the next elections.

Also referring to the stalled Mideast peace process in the wake of the new unity cabinet, would-be politician and former news anchor Yair Lapid told a gathering in the city of Kfar Sava that the Israeli leadership "took its most urgent problem and decided we don't want to mess with it since it causes inconvenience in the party."

"Everyone knows how the conflict with the Palestinians is going to end, but we don't know how long it will take and how much blood will be spilled, and we're still staying away from the negotiations table," Lapid said, adding: "It's irresponsible."

The former journalist added: "We need to topple this bad government."