

Gideon Sa'ar

Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs



Gideon Sa'ar is an Israeli politician, currently serving as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chairman of the United Right Party, and a member of the Knesset and the Security Cabinet. Previously, he held various positions, including Minister of Justice and Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Minister of the Interior, member of five security cabinets, member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, and member of its subcommittees for intelligence and secret services. Sa'ar has served as a Member of the Knesset since 2003, with one break, first representing the Likud and then the New Hope party. Sa'ar is a lawyer by profession.

Sa'ar was born on December 9, 1966, in Tel Aviv, the eldest of three children to Bruria, a teacher, and Dr. Sergio Samuel Surchansky, a pediatrician who immigrated to Israel from Argentina. As a child, he lived for five years in Sde Boker, where his father served as the kibbutz doctor and personal physician to Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion. The family later returned to Tel Aviv.

From a young age, Sa'ar was active in political movements and organizations. In 1984, he enlisted in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) as a combat soldier. Following an injury during training, he transitioned to intelligence roles in his infantry brigade and continued to serve in the reserves until the age of 36. After his discharge, he earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Tel Aviv University with honors in just two years while beginning his career as a journalist in major Israeli media outlets. Sa'ar later completed an additional bachelor's degree in law (LL.B) at Tel Aviv University and interned with the Tel Aviv District Attorney for Civil Affairs. He worked as an assistant to the Attorney General and then as an assistant to the State Attorney before joining the Tel Aviv District Attorney for Civil Affairs' Office as a prosecutor.

In early 1999, Sa'ar was appointed Cabinet Secretary in Netanyahu's first government. He subsequently founded a law firm, which he left after two years to serve as Cabinet Secretary

under Ariel Sharon. In February 2003, Sa'ar was elected to the 16th Knesset in the Likud list. He served as the party's faction chair and coalition chair. During his tenure, he opposed the Gaza Disengagement Plan. In 2006, Sa'ar became the first man elected to chair the Committee for the Advancement of the Status of Women since its establishment. Over the years, he passed dozens of laws and is regarded as one of Israel's most successful legislators in terms of legislative activity. Upon the formation of Israel's 32nd government in 2009, Sa'ar was appointed Minister of Education. During his tenure, a number of major reforms were enacted and Israeli students demonstrated significant improvements in international test scores.

On March 18, 2013, he was appointed Minister of the Interior. On September 17, 2014, Sa'ar announced a hiatus from political life, resigning from the Knesset and the government. In 2015, Sa'ar joined the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) as a senior fellow, publishing policy papers and articles. He also began teaching a master's course at an academic college. In April 2017, Sa'ar announced his return to politics and resumed activity at the Likud Party. In February 2019, ahead of the elections for the 21st Knesset, he was elected in Likud's primaries. Following the elections, he served on the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and chaired its subcommittee on foreign policy until the Knesset's dissolution.

Over the years, Sa'ar has consistently taken a hawkish stance against the Hamas and Hezbollah terrorist organizations and opposed the establishment of a Palestinian state. On December 8, 2020, Sa'ar announced his departure from Likud to establish a new party, New Hope, which he described as a "liberal center-right party." In the new government sworn in 2021, Sa'ar became Minister of Justice and Deputy Prime Minister and was considered an effective and influential minister.

Ahead of the 25th Knesset elections, Sa'ar and Benny Gantz announced a joint run of their parties. Initially, the "National Unity" faction was in the opposition. Following the outbreak of war, the faction joined Israel's 37th government, and Sa'ar was appointed a member of the Security Cabinet. In March 2024, Sa'ar announced the separation of his United Right faction from the National Unity faction. In September 2024, Sa'ar was offered the position of Minister of Defense by Prime Minister Netanyahu but declined. On November 7, 2024, the Knesset approved his appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and he assumed the role.

Sa'ar is married to Geula, a journalist and news anchor. The couple has two children together. Sa'ar also has two daughters from his previous marriage.