



Yesh Din

Volunteers for Human Rights

The intention to annex the West Bank and apply Israeli sovereignty there is explicitly anchored in the government's basic guidelines and in its coalition agreement with the Religious Zionism party. Since taking office - and even more so under the cover of the war in Gaza - the government has worked vigorously to advance this agenda. Beyond the structural and bureaucratic overhaul of how Israel governs the West Bank, it has driven dramatic changes on the ground: a massive expansion of the settlement enterprise, authorization of illegal outposts, construction of new road systems, and the proliferation of violent farm outposts that have forced the expulsion of dozens of Palestinian communities.

The declared plan to apply sovereignty marks a decisive leap from the ongoing reality of annexation already taking place on the ground.

Recent Steps Taken Towards Applying Sovereignty to the West Bank

July 23, 2025

The Knesset approved a declaration in support of applying sovereignty, by a huge majority of 71 supporters and only 13 who opposed.

July 29, 2025

The Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee in the Knesset dedicated a discussion to *"Implications of a Scenario of Applying Sovereignty in Judea and Samaria"*. Important points from the discussion:

- Yehuda Eliyahu, Head of the Settlement Administration in the Ministry of Defense, reported that the Settlement Administration has a plan and professional infrastructure for applying sovereignty within 24 hours of a decision being made by the government. Their work includes the preparation of maps showing various geographic alternative proposals, land surveys, and draft orders for the various ministers (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, and others). He also reported that they are working with most government ministries in preparation for sovereignty.
- According to Eliyahu, they prepared for several scenarios - from their optimal scenario, in which Area C and "open lands" are annexed, down to the minimal scenario of annexation of the Jordan Valley or major settlement blocs.
- Smotrich said, in the same discussion, that they are preparing to allocate a budget for the issue of sovereignty in the 2026 state budget.
- The Civil Deputy Head of the Civil Administration, Hillel Roth, said that the Civil Administration "will know how to plan and implement" the decision of the political echelon. [Watch the video of this discussion in the Knesset Committee](#) (Hebrew).

Toward the end of August, Netanyahu convened a small forum of ministers to discuss advancing sovereignty, possibly already in the coming weeks. Participants included: Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer, Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar, Finance Minister and Minister in the Ministry of Defence Betzalel Smotrich, National Security Advisor

Tzachi Hanegbi, and Government Secretary Yossi Fuchs. According to reports, the discussion focused on questions such as whether sovereignty should be applied only to the settlement blocs, to all settlements, to all of Area C, or perhaps only to the “open lands” or the Jordan Valley. Another question was whether to promote the move as a response to recognition of a Palestinian state, or earlier, as a preventive step.

September 3, 2025:

Smotrich presented a plan (including a map with Israel’s official symbol on it - see below) for annexing 82% of the territory - Areas B and C - and defined “*Maximum land – Minimum Arabs*” as a main motto.

Quotes and main points from Smotrich’s public statement:

- *“The Arabs of Judea and Samaria will continue to manage their lives independently in the immediate stage, through the PA [...] later, through alternative regional-civil management frameworks that we will need to establish, without a collective that preserves a national aspiration [...] Judea and Samaria are not disputed territory; they are our ancestral homeland for generations. There is and never will be an Arab state on our land.”*
- He called on Netanyahu to convene the government and apply sovereignty “*over all the open lands in the West Bank*”. [Link to the video](#) (Hebrew).



Assesment

It is impossible to predict the probability or the scope of future steps. However, there is a great concern that some form of sovereignty will be applied in the coming weeks.

It is most likely that sovereignty will be applied by means of a government order rather than through primary legislation. This stems from the government's authority to determine where Israeli law will take effect within the territory once governed under the British Mandate. In

1967, such an order was used to apply Israeli law to East Jerusalem. By contrast, when annexing the Golan Heights, which had not been under the Mandate, the Knesset was required to pass a regular law. Once such an order is issued, the army immediately loses its authority, though it is probable that certain powers will remain in its hands (through delegation of authority) for an initial period to prevent chaos.

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