



## Yesh Din

Volunteers for Human Rights

### **Update and Analysis: The Cabinet Approved a Series of Dramatic Annexation Decisions**

**On February 8, 2026, The Political–Security Cabinet approved a series of dramatic decisions that fundamentally alter the legal framework in the West Bank, which are expected to result in violations of the human rights of the Palestinian population.**

The measures, formulated under the leadership of the Settlement Administration in the Ministry of Defense, are intended to remove obstacles and enable the accelerated development of settlements on the ground. While the manner in which the decisions will be applied is not specified by the Cabinet, they will be implemented through military orders issued by the military commander.

The decision is part of the government's annexation policy, and follows previous steps and decisions that have led to changes in the legal reality in the West Bank and to far-reaching changes on the ground entrenching Israeli control over the West Bank and facilitating its annexation to Israel.

#### **1. De-Classifying the Land Registry in the West Bank**

The Cabinet has now ordered the removal of the classification of land registries in the West Bank that are classified. The publication of land registries will make it easier for settlers to purchase land and expand the settlement enterprise. This will also make it easier to forge purchase transactions.

While transparency in land administration can, in theory, reduce fraud and clarify ownership, the unique legal, social, and political context of the West Bank raises various risks. Public land registries typically contain sensitive information about landowners and details about property, including absentees. Making this information easily accessible can expose Palestinians to privacy violations, harassment, or targeted intimidation. In the context of the WB, personal ownership data could be misused by non-state actors, private individuals, or extremist groups to intimidate, extort, or otherwise threaten property owners whose names appear in the registry.

## **2. Repeal of the Jordanian Law Prohibiting the Sale of Real Estate to Foreigners, and Repeal of the Requirement for a Transaction Permit**

The Jordanian law in question is the Law on the Leasing and Real Estate to Foreigners, (No. 40 of 1953) that limits the sale of land in the West Bank to Jordanian or Palestinian parties, or to persons of Arab origin. Contrary to the claims by the Cabinet, the Jordanian Law does not specifically restrict Israelis or Jews. Rather, it seeks to reserve such transactions for Jordanian or Palestinian citizens or persons of similar origin (Including jews from Arab origins). The restriction applies equally to Israelis, Norwegian, Australian, Italian, Brazilian, and other foreign nationals. Such provisions are not unusual and allow authorities oversight and control over the sale of and transactions in real estate involving foreign parties. A similar provision also exists in Israeli law with respect to the purchase of land (for example, Section 2A of the

Israel Lands Law, 1960, entitled “Restriction on the Acquisition or Transfer of Rights in Immovable Property to Foreigners”).

At present, transactions in the WB require a permit from the Staff Officer for Land Registration in the CA. Without granting such a permit, the transactions are not valid. The removal of any involvement of the CA in such purchases effectively removes the military commander’s regulatory authority over land acquisition in the West Bank – reportedly in areas A, B and C. In effect, this means stripping the military commander – acting as the sovereign’s substitute in the West Bank – of his authority.

The repeal of the Jordanian law is intended to facilitate and even encourage Israeli citizens to purchase land in the West Bank. It will further entrench and intensify the existing discrimination within a land regime that is already deeply and blatantly discriminatory against Palestinian residents and in favor of Israeli settlers.

### **3. Renewal of the Land Acquisition Committee**

The land acquisition mechanism in the West Bank in charge of identifying land for purchase by the state that halted its work some two decades ago will be revived. In the past, the Acquisition Committee was composed of representatives from the Israel Land Authority, the Ministry of Defense, a representative from the Ministry of Finance, and a legal advisor. Renewing the committee's work will enable the State of Israel to acquire land in the area, allowing the State to carry out proactive land purchases to expand state land reserves for settlement expansion.

### **4. Expanding Israeli Supervision and Law Enforcement actions in Areas A and B**

Following the Cabinet decision of June 27, 2024, to instruct the enforcement authorities to carry out law enforcement and supervision

in Area B, the Cabinet decided to implement a similar arrangement in Area A. This means that Israel reclaimed authorities delegated to the Palestinian Authority in the Interim Agreements in areas A and B over water-related offenses, illegal Palestinian construction in heritage and archaeological sites, and environmental hazards.

Expanding Israel' s authorities to area A and B is a violation of the Interim Agreement and indicates intention to perpetuate Israeli control over the entire WB.

#### **5. Transfer of Building Permit Authority for the Jewish settlement in Hebron and the Cave of the Patriarchs from the Hebron Municipality to the Planning Institutions of the Civil Administration**

Transfer of building-permit authorities in the Jewish settlement in Hebron, at the Cave of the Patriarchs, and at other holy sites in the city from the Palestinian Hebron Municipality directly to the planning institutions of the Civil Administration.

This step is meant to address the need to receive a building permit from Hebron Municipality in relation to government property or the Cave of the Patriarchs. Currently, because of difficulties to receive such permits from the Hebron Municipality, the Higher Planning Council is currently “pulling” authority ad-hoc from the Hebron Municipality to issue permits. This was, for example, the case regarding the construction of an elevator at the Cave of the Patriarchs, the issuance of a building permit in the Hezekiah Quarter, and the building permit for the wholesale market. The new decision means there will no longer be a need for such “pulling of authorities” for access to the Cave or construction for Jews. This is aimed at making planning procedures for Hebron settlement efficient and independent.

In addition, it was decided to grant full municipal powers to the Hebron Administration, an Israeli government body responsible for managing the city of Hebron and the areas around the Cave of the Patriarchs, primarily concerning Israeli citizens (settlers) and their protection, within the Oslo Accords and the Hebron Protocols. The Hebron Administration will now be able to address the settlers' needs directly, without dependence on Palestinian mechanisms.

According to the Interim Agreements and the Hebron Protocol, building permit authority in the city was transferred to the Hebron Municipality, except regarding Israelis and their property. The Cabinet decision contradicts these agreements.

These steps are meant to increase Israel's control over holy sites and will heighten religious tensions, endangering the security of the entire region.

## **6. Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem – Establishment of a Municipal Administration**

Establishment a municipal administration that will handle all local matters related to the operation of the Rachel's Tomb compound and the nearby Jewish religious school (yeshiva) - including cleaning, garbage removal, gardening, and routine maintenance. Rachel's Tomb is located within the municipal boundaries of Bethlehem.

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For more information contact: Shira Livne at [Shiral@yesh-din.org](mailto:Shiral@yesh-din.org)

For media inquiries contact: Uri Cirlin at +972 54-559-6178

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