



Yesh Din

Volunteers for Human Rights

The Knesset Advances a Bill Signifying Annexation and Intensified Discrimination Against Palestinians, Claiming It Aims to Address Discrimination Against Settlers

On January 29, 2025, the Knesset will hold a preliminary vote on the proposed Bill to Eliminate Discrimination in Real Estate Purchases in Judea and Samaria, 2023. The bill is designed to make it easier and even encourage Israeli settlers to purchase land in the West Bank.

According to the explanatory notes accompanying the bill, it aims to address an alleged ongoing injustice of discrimination against settlers. In reality, however, there is a deep and blatant discrimination in the West Bank's land regime - but it operates explicitly against Palestinians and in favor of Israeli settlers. If this legislation is enacted, it will exacerbate the already existing discrimination.

Moreover, and equally importantly, legislation by the Knesset concerning the occupied Palestinian territory constitutes an assertion of the Knesset's sovereignty over that territory, violating international law, which prohibits annexation.

The bill is being promoted by the **Caucus for the Land of Israel**, whose members include a broad coalition of Knesset members, with the

Regavim Movement as one of the driving forces behind its advancement.

The Current Legal Situation Regarding Land Purchases

The Jordanian law permits the sale of land in the West Bank only to Arab parties or companies registered with the Companies Registry operating in the West Bank.

In 1971, the Military Commander issued an order as a way to bypass the prohibition, allowing Jews to purchase land in the West Bank through companies registered with the Companies Registry in the Civil Administration.

Currently, Israelis cannot directly purchase land in the West Bank. Instead, they must do so through companies registered with the Civil Administration's Companies Registry and they are subject to issuing a transaction permit and close supervision by Civil Administration officials.

The Proposed Legislation

The bill includes two main sections:

Section 1 repeals the Jordanian law (and the 1971 amendment by the Military Commander) that permits land sales in the West Bank only to companies registered in the territory.

Section 2 allows any individual to purchase land in the West Bank.

Implications and Consequences

Annexation

Repealing a military order (which holds the status of law) by the Knesset constitutes legislation by the Knesset in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, over which it is not the sovereign authority. This reflects an assertion of sovereignty over the occupied territory, in violation of international law, which prohibits applying sovereignty to territory seized during armed conflict. The Military Commander, as the temporary sovereign, is supposed to balance military needs with the benefit of the protected local population. However, the Knesset disregards these principles and acts solely to advance Israeli settlement expansion. This legislation seeks to assert the Knesset's authority as the ultimate legislative power in the territory.

The proposed law would have a direct territorial impact on the occupied area.

Expanding Settlement Enterprises

The bill aims to ease settlers' ability to purchase land in the occupied territory, for the purpose of expanding Israeli settlement enterprises.

Long-term Changes in the Occupied Territory – Entrenching Jewish Ownership of Land

Contrary to international law, the bill seeks to create a permanent shift in land ownership in the West Bank. While most land for settlements today is registered as public (state) land and not private land, which are temporarily allocated to settlers by the Civil Administration, the proposed bill will inherently change the situation. This legislation aims to encourage settlers to buy land, which will significantly increase the

proportion of land privately and permanently owned by Jews in the West Bank. This means that the ownership of the land would remain with companies operating under Israeli regulation even if non-Israeli sovereignty is established in the West Bank in the future (for example, a Palestinian state). In other words, this represents another dimension of entrenching Israeli presence.

Deepening Discrimination Against Palestinians and Reinforcing Jewish Supremacy

Israeli land regime in the West Bank, implemented through the Civil Administration, is characterized by blatant discrimination favoring settlements while systematically disadvantaging Palestinians. For instance, between 1967 and 2011, only 0.7% of public land in Area C was allocated to Palestinians, while over 99% was allocated to Israeli settlements. This is further compounded by land confiscations, dispossession of Palestinians and other practices. More on the ways Israel discriminate Palestinians [here](#):

[*The Occupation of the West Bank and the Crime of Apartheid: Legal Opinion*](#)

Removing Oversight and Facilitating Forged Transactions

There have been numerous cases of suspected land purchase fraud in the West Bank, often to retroactively legitimize illegal outposts, as seen in the case of the illegal outpost of *Amona*. More on the *Amona* case [here](#).

Visit Yesh Din's Annexation Legislation Database

Yesh Din urges the international community to pressure the Israeli government not to approve this bill, which will advance annexation, and create irreversible changes on the ground.

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For more information contact: Yahav Erez || Yahave@yesh-din.org || +972 (0)54.759.2456

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

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