

Israeli Annexation Explained: What Is Netanyahu Planning for the West Bank and What Does It Mean

Based on his agreement with Gantz, Netanyahu will be able to commence West Bank annexation plans on July 1. Will the U.S. require Israel to implement the less favorable parts of Trump's Mideast plan as well, and what are the consequences for the Palestinians?

The vast majority of the international community never recognized these moves, until the current U.S. administration headed by President Donald Trump changed American policy on the issue and recognized Israeli sovereignty in both the Golan Heights and Jerusalem. However, Trump stressed that this recognition did not preclude future negotiations over the fate of these territories. Now Netanyahu wants to declare – with U.S. backing – Israeli sovereignty over all of the Jewish settlements established in the West Bank since 1967, including the Jordan Valley. He has stated his intention to do this several times over the past three election campaigns. Initially, he focused on annexing the Jordan Valley, but later began to promise annexation of all the settlements in the West Bank, in accordance with the Trump Mideast Plan released in late January.

What areas can be annexed under the Trump plan?

On paper, the Trump plan is based on the two-state solution and sketches out a distant future in which there will be a Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel. But in terms of the territory on which this Palestinian state would be established, it proposes the most limited and noncontiguous territory ever offered to the Palestinians by the international community. The administration's guiding principle, according to Trump, is that "no Palestinians or Israelis will be uprooted from their homes." As a result, the map accompanying the plan allows Israel to annex all the existing settlements, in addition to the areas surrounding them and access roads.

According to the U.S. administration, Israel would be annexing around 30 percent of the West Bank. However, based on the maps presented by Netanyahu and the administration, experts estimate it would be 20 percent. This is in addition to the "exchange of territories and populations" that appear in the plan in the Negev and Galilee area known as The Triangle. However, it isn't clear if these will remain in the plan after they were so widely condemned in January.

Is annexation conditioned on Israeli acceptance of the whole plan, including a Palestinian state?

According to the Trump plan itself and senior U.S. officials, including Pompeo, Israeli annexation is dependent on acceptance of the entire plan, especially its agreement to conduct direct negotiations with the Palestinians for at least four years. During this period, Israel is asked to freeze all construction and demolitions in the territory earmarked for the Palestinian state, as well as possibly in other areas. The plan also includes the establishment of a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem neighborhoods and the release of Palestinian prisoners.

All these clauses are vehemently opposed by the settler leadership, which sees the plan as a significant compromise on its "Greater Israel" vision. It is deliberating whether to support annexation in the hope that the rest will never come to fruition. The plan also includes a long list of conditions the Palestinians must fulfill. As U.S. Ambassador David Friedman put it, there would only be a Palestinian state "when the Palestinians become Canadians."

However, while the U.S. administration has repeatedly stressed that Israel must accept the entire plan in order to annex, the committee drawing up the borders for annexation has already done a lot of work. In other words, practically speaking, both Israel and the United States are preparing to carry out a unilateral annexation. The argument is that since these territories will be Israeli in the future anyway according to Trump's plan, and the Palestinians aren't interested in negotiations, there is no impediment to annexing the territories in advance.

When will it happen?

Under the coalition agreement between Likud and Kahol Lavan, on July 1 – meaning in a month's time – Netanyahu will be able to "bring the agreement reached with the United States on the issue of applying sovereignty to a debate in the security cabinet and the full cabinet, and for the approval of the cabinet and/or the Knesset." On Monday, Netanyahu told a meeting of Likud's Knesset faction, in response to an MK's question, that "the target date for beginning annexation is July 1, and we don't intend to change it." He added that "this is an opportunity that can't be missed."

On the other hand, in all the coalition agreements, the substance of the exact agreement to be submitted for cabinet approval is deliberately vague. The coalition partners are totally subordinate to whatever agreement Netanyahu reaches with the U.S. administration, whether it involves annexation, delaying annexation, or partial or gradual annexation. In other words, it still isn't clear how Netanyahu plans to present and implement the process.

What might the consequences be of annexation in the West Bank?

Since 1967, Israel has taken many actions in the West Bank that are considered “creeping annexation” or “de facto annexation” – for example, the expansion of settlements and outposts, and their connection to Israel by infrastructures, along with restrictions on and demolition of Palestinian construction in Area C (the 60 percent of the West Bank under Israeli military control). The move under discussion would provide a legal framework for the reality on the ground, making it “de jure,” but would also deepen it. First and foremost, it would be possible to replace the military administration with Israeli law and administration. In principle, today the army is the ultimate legal authority in the occupied territories, answering to the Defense Ministry. This is partially done through laws that existed in the area before the Israeli occupation. However, as part of the same “creeping annexation,” Israeli law basically already applies to the settlers themselves (but not to Palestinians living in the same areas). It’s possible that Israeli annexation would provide a legal basis for the existing situation, in which there are separate legal systems for Israelis and Palestinians, but it could also include applying Israeli law to many areas where Palestinians now live. Their number would depend on the final map. The latter scenario raises some tough questions about these Palestinians’ status. Would Israel grant them citizenship? There could also be consequences for the Palestinian owners of annexed lands, who could lose their private property. According to Shaul Arieli, this would be 23 percent of the annexed land.

How has the world responded to possible Israeli annexation?

When Trump’s plan was released, most of the world supported in principle the notion of bring the two sides back to the negotiating table. But shortly afterward, when Israeli declarations regarding annexation gained steam, most countries expressed strong opposition to any unilateral move – and this is the prevailing line of thought in the international arena at the moment. Most countries have noted that unilateral Israeli annexation would be a violation of international law and would be the end of the two-state solution and with it the prospect of Palestinian national self-determination.

The European Union is leading the global opposition on this issue, along with Jordan, which would suffer concrete damage from the annexation of the Jordan Valley. Most countries in the Muslim world are also standing by Jordan and the Palestinians. Earlier this month, after the new Israeli government was formed, EU member states started discussing possible sanctions against Israel in the event that it annexes the settlements.

Israel’s annexation plans

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced his intention to annex the Jordan Valley, a large swathe of the occupied West Bank, if he wins the September elections. He also reaffirmed a pledge to annex all of the settlements Israel has established in the West Bank.

- AREAS ‘A’ AND ‘B’
Controlled by Palestinian Authority
- AREA ‘C’
Controlled by Israel
- PROPOSED ANNEXATION
- NO MAN’S LAND

1949 Armistice Lines, known as the **Green Line**, separated the Israeli from the Jordanian- and Egyptian-held territories.

During the 1967 Six Day War Israel captured most of the Golan Heights from Syria, later annexing it.



Note: Part of the western boundary of the proposed annexation is defined by the Allon Road. The remaining exact boundaries are unknown.

Sources: B'Tselem; Peace Now; Economic Cooperation Foundation; Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Planning; MapsNews; OpenStreetMap; Reuters

P.K. Duma, 13/09/2019

REUTERS

Report: Gantz opposes annexing areas

'largely populated by Palestinians'

Defense Minister Benny Gantz will not support annexing parts of the West Bank containing "a large Palestinian population," reported by Channel 12, on June 18th, citing unnamed defense ministry officials.

"Prior to any measure, we will make sure all professional ranks voice their opinion," Gantz said during a recent security meeting.

"In any scenario, we will not support applying sovereignty to areas with a Palestinian population in order to prevent friction."

"I am sure Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will not jeopardize the peace treaty with Jordan and the strategic relations of the State of Israel with the U.S. with an irresponsible move," he added.

Gantz has reportedly been hesitant to fast-track the annexation process, which the government is free to pursue after July 1 as per a coalition agreement between Gantz's Blue & White and Netanyahu's Likud parties. According to reports, Gantz prefers a multi-lateral diplomatic initiative, with benefits given to Palestinians as well, as opposed to a unilateral move that could see up to 30% of the West Bank come under Israeli sovereignty. Concerns over security issues have also given members of the government pause, especially after the Palestinian Authority, which rules over large areas of the West Bank, announced last month it would no longer coordinate with Israel on security matters in light of the potential move.

Top Health Ministry official: Israel at start of second

coronavirus wave

As rate of new infections continues to climb, Prof. Sadetzki warns of dangers of ignoring directives for face masks, social distancing and hygiene; Health Ministry official says emergency legislation has lapsed, leaving country at risk of 'being like Brazil'

"From a three-week period in which we were seeing 20 [new] patients a day, and things seemed to be improving, we are gradually increasing. When you look at it, it looks like the beginning of a wave," she said.

The number of Israel's active coronavirus patients passes 4,000, with 39 people in serious condition, including 32 patients on ventilators. To date, the virus has claimed 302 lives in Israel.

The number of coronavirus patients in Israel has for the first time in weeks passed the threshold of 4,000, health officials confirmed on June 17th.

Israel over the past few weeks has seen a resurgence of COVID-19 as more and more businesses reopen, with the daily toll topping 200 new cases last week for the first time since April.

The Health Ministry reported that 257 have been diagnosed with the virus over the past 24 hours, with total number of active patients currently standing at 4,092.

Although no death from coronavirus-related complications have been recorded in the past 24 hours, the number of patients in serious condition has increased to 39, with 32 of them needing ventilator support.

The ministry said medical officials conducted 14,676 COVID-19 tests on June 17th, bringing the contagion rate to 2%.

The number of patients recovering from the virus has also slowed down, with only 12 recoveries reported in the past 24 hours, bringing the total to 15,499.

Since the start of the epidemic in Israel, 19,894 people have tested positive for the pathogen.

Professor Sadetzki said that the rise in coronavirus infections is different to the first wave, pointing out that since the economy reopened, Israel has seen the number of new virus patients doubling daily.

"We anticipated the first wave, we were prepared for it," Sadetzki told the Knesset members on the committee to deal with the coronavirus pandemic.



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"My Israel" - New website!

I've created a website that is all about Israel! You can find on the website a fun escape room, activities you can do from home, Israeli music, movies, TV shows and so much more! Check it out and add it to your bookmarks!



Pizza on a pan:

Ingredients:

Dough –

1. 3 cups all-purpose flour
2. 1 tbsp. dry yeast
3. 1 tsp. salt
4. ¼ cup olive oil
5. Almost a full cup of room temperature water

Other ingredients -

1. Tomato sauce/ketchup
2. Any type of pizza cheese
3. Optional – toppings
4. Frying pan and a pan cover

How to make it?

1. Mix the dough ingredients, put in a bowl, cover with a towel and let it rise for an hour or more.
2. After the dough is ready cut the pizza to 4 balls
3. Heat a frying pan, on medium heat, put 1 tbsp. oil.
4. Fry one side until receiving a golden color, flip the dough, lower the heat and add all the toppings on top of the dough. Cover the pan and wait until the cheese is melted

