



Background

This year, following Israel's third election within 10 months, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his political rival Benny Gantz formed a governing coalition under a unity deal. Included in this deal is an agreement allowing Israel's government to start the domestic process of "annexing" parts of the occupied West Bank that includes Israeli settlements and the area of the Jordan Valley. Furthermore, any plans for annexation would be in direct contradiction to international law. They would actively harm prospects for a future in which all Israelis and Palestinians can live with full equality, human rights and dignity.

West Bank annexation has the potential to undermine vital American and Israeli security relationships in a highly volatile region, and to prevent Israel from developing closer ties with currently-hostile Arab states. In particular, it could shake the foundations of Israel's essential peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan. Israel's continued pursuit of this policy further illustrates its cynical disregard for international law. Such policies do not change the legal status of the territory and its inhabitants under international law as occupied nor remove Israel's responsibilities as the occupying power under international humanitarian law— rather it points to the longstanding need for the international community to put an end to impunity for violations of international law by Israel.

It is evident that these plans are a measured attempt to prevent the creation of any future Palestinian state. Officially annexed or not, millions of Palestinians will continue to suffer under racist, undemocratic Israeli apartheid rule that steals their land and destroys their homes to make way for illegal Jewish settlements, imprisons them in a web of military checkpoints, preventing them from freely accessing education, medical treatment, or visiting family and friends.

Action

Unilateral annexation in the West Bank is in direct opposition to the principles of democracy and human rights that the United States of America is supposed to stand for. Members of Congress should not be expected to support an undemocratic system in which Israel would permanently rule over a Palestinian people denied self-determination or equal rights. Should the Israeli government continue down this path, Congress should work to ensure the following:

- Non-recognition of annexed territories
- Legislation that conditions the \$3.8 billion in U.S. military funding
- Ensure that U.S. taxpayers are not supporting annexation in any way
- Enforce international law and re-state that "annexation" of any part of the occupied West Bank is null and void

The United States must remain committed to a future in which all Israeli and Palestinians live with full rights, dignity and democracy. Congress must make clear to the Israeli government that such a move is unacceptable.