

Government in Israel Sharing Personal Information on Unvaccinated People

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A new law in Israel will allow the government to share a list of names of those who did not get the COVID-19 vaccine, along with other personal identifying information. The list, which will include the names, phone numbers, ID card numbers and addresses of the unvaccinated, can be shared with local government officials, including the director general of the education ministry and the welfare ministry for the purpose of encouraging citizens to get the vaccine.^{1 2} If a citizen fails to show up for their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, the date of their first dose would also be shared.³

The list reportedly will only be provided to local government officials who request it and advise the Health Ministry about how they will use the information.⁴ Lawmakers contend that the law would only allow “trustworthy sources” to contact unvaccinated individuals to encourage them to get the vaccine and not for any other purpose.^{5 6} The list of the unvaccinated along with their personal information must be deleted within 60 days of its use. When someone on the list is contacted by authorities they will have the right to demand they not to be contacted again and that their information be deleted.⁷

“Handing Over Such Data Is A Slippery Slope”

The new law passed with a vote of 30-13 after three rounds of votes using a special process that allowed the vote to be conducted much quicker than regular legislation.⁸ **Haim Katz** of Netanyahu’s Likud party defended the law stating, “I’ve been asked what about people’s privacy: Is privacy more important than life itself?”⁹

The law faced outspoken opposition. **Merav Michaeli**, Labor party leader, said that the Prime Minister is, “denying citizens their right to the privacy of their medical information.”¹⁰ **Tamar Zandberg**, a Knesset member of the Meretz party, was critical of the legislation warning that it would violate Israeli citizens privacy and that, “Handing over such data is a slippery slope,” and “it could fall into the wrong hands”¹¹

Public Health Physicians Lobbied Against the Legislation

The Israeli Association of Public Health Physicians lobbied against the legislation stating that it would undermine public trust in local governments, authorities and local councils and calling it, “an unprofessional action [that] could possibly cause serious harm.”¹² Doctors and physicians had similar concerns about the legislation and argued that it could violate medical privacy and confidentiality.¹³ The Doctors Association stated that it was a slippery slope and reasoned that if vaccination justified releasing a citizen’s private medical information then it should follow that their weight and smoking status should also be shared for the sake of health.¹⁴ The Physicians Association said:

Encouraging vaccination is the order of the day and a national goal, but hasty legislation that could harm individual rights will not contribute significantly to this goal, and may even cause harm. The bill would allow health maintenance organizations to pass on the medical information in their possession, which would be an explicit violation of the Basic Law on Human Dignity and Liberty, which enshrines the right to privacy, said the association. Such a law could be legitimate only if it could be proven that its purpose was appropriate and its application proportional.¹⁵

Growing Concern About the Rights of the Unvaccinated

According to officials, approximately 10 percent of Israeli citizens over the age of 16 do not plan to get the COVID-19 vaccine.¹⁶ A survey of 503 adults conducted by Channel 12 found the number of Israeli adults planning to forgo the vaccine to be as high as 25 percent (margin of error 4.4 percent).¹⁷ There is currently no legislation protecting the rights of those who choose not to be vaccinated and guaranteeing that they will not lose their job for exercising their informed consent rights.¹⁸ Furthermore, according to a poll conducted by the Rushinek Research Institute, 29 percent of parents do not intend on vaccinating their children ages 6-16, 30 percent are unsure and about 41 percent intend to vaccinate their children.¹⁹

Choosing to not vaccinate comes with harsh consequences. On Feb. 21, 2021, Israel officially implemented a “Vaccine Passport” called the green pass that restricts access to everyday activities, such as entry to restaurants, gyms and cultural events, only to the fully vaccinated or to those who have recovered from COVID-19.^{20 21 22} However, shops, malls, markets, museums and libraries will allow the unvaccinated, as well as the vaccinated, to enter.²³

By the end of February, 88.77 out of 100 people had received at least one dose of the vaccine.²⁴ So far, approximately 3.2 million Israeli citizens qualify for the green pass, which includes 2.5 million people who received two shots of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and 700,000 people who have recovered from the viral infection. The green pass can be printed out and carried or be used as a QR code on a smart phone and is valid for six months after the second shot.^{25 26} Health Minister Yuli Edelstein tweeted...

Those who are not vaccinated will be left behind. The coronavirus cabinet has confirmed our stance that only vaccinated and recovering people will enjoy

gyms and leisure culture. Go get vaccinated!²⁷

Approximately one-third of the nine million people living in Israel have received two shots of the Pfizer/Biotech vaccine.²⁸ The country plans to vaccinate 6.2 million by the start of April.²⁹ According to Johns Hopkins, more than 5,600 people have died of COVID-19 in Israel.³⁰

Officials in the United Kingdom are closely monitoring Israel's green pass system because they are considering implementing a similar program in the U.K. But, Dave Archard, Chair of the U.K.'s Nuffield Council on Bioethics questioned the scientific validity of program, referring to the fact that it is unknown how protective the COVID vaccines are against infection and transmission of the virus rather than only preventing severe COVID disease.³¹ He stated:

The whole point of the vaccine certificate is to show that the holder of it, in virtue of having been vaccinated, will not transmit COVID-19 or its variants. At the moment, the evidence is not in.³²

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Notes

¹ [Israel adopts law allowing sharing names of the unvaccinated.](#) *i24news* Feb. 24, 2021.

² Lis J. [‘Slippery Slope’: Israeli Doctors Association Blasts Bill That Would Hand Over Details of Unvaccinated.](#) *Haaretz* Feb. 23, 2021.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Wilkinson J. [Israeli government to share names of unvaccinated people.](#) *Daily News* Feb. 24, 2021.

⁶ [Israel approves bill allowing names of unvaccinated to be shared with authorities.](#) *Middleeasteye* Feb. 25, 2021.

⁷ Steinbuch Y. [Israel to share names of people not vaccinated against COVID-19.](#) *New York Post* Feb. 25, 2021.

⁸ Lis J. [‘Slippery Slope’: Israeli Doctors Association Blasts Bill That Would Hand Over Details of Unvaccinated.](#) *Haaretz* Feb. 23, 2021.

⁹ [Israel adopts law allowing sharing names of the unvaccinated.](#) *i24news* Feb. 24, 2021.

- ¹⁰ Steinbuch Y. [Israel to share names of people not vaccinated against COVID-19](#). *New York Post* Feb. 25, 2021.
- ¹¹ Lis J. [‘Slippery Slope’: Israeli Doctors Association Blasts Bill That Would Hand Over Details of Unvaccinated](#). *Haaretz* Feb. 23, 2021.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Lis J. [‘Slippery Slope’: Israeli Doctors Association Blasts Bill That Would Hand Over Details of Unvaccinated](#). *Haaretz* Feb. 23, 2021.
- ¹⁶ [Israel’s unvaccinated Fear Exclusion](#). *Yahoo! News* Feb. 26, 2021.
- ¹⁷ [Poll: Some 25% of Israelis who haven’t vaccinated have no intention of doing so](#). *The Times of Israel* Feb. 17, 2021.
- ¹⁸ [Israel’s unvaccinated Fear Exclusion](#). *Yahoo! News* Feb. 26, 2021.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ [Israel adopts law allowing sharing names of the unvaccinated](#). *i24news* Feb. 24, 2021.
- ²¹ [Netanyahu says Israel could see economy completely reopen by April](#). *i24News* Feb. 24, 2021.
- ²² [Poll: Some 25% of Israelis who haven’t vaccinated have no intention of doing so](#). *The Times of Israel* Feb. 17, 2021.
- ²³ [Israel’s unvaccinated Fear Exclusion](#). *Yahoo! News* Feb. 26, 2021.
- ²⁴ Stikings T, Jewers C. [Israel passes law allowing names and phone numbers of anyone who has not been vaccinated to be shared by the government](#). *Daily Mail* Feb. 24, 2021.
- ²⁵ Guenot M. [Israel is waging a war on the unvaccinated as it races to be the world’s first inoculated nation](#). *Insider* Feb. 19, 2021.
- ²⁶ [Israel lifts Covid restrictions as ‘green passport’ system introduced](#). *Jewish News* Feb. 23, 2021.
- ²⁷ Stikings T, Jewers C. [Israel passes law allowing names and phone numbers of anyone who has not been vaccinated to be shared by the government](#). *Daily Mail* Feb. 24, 2021.
- ²⁸ [Israel adopts law allowing sharing names of the unvaccinated](#). *i24news* Feb. 24, 2021.

²⁹ Steinbuch Y. [Israel to share names of people not vaccinated against COVID-19](#). *New York Post* Feb. 25, 2021.

³⁰ Wilkinon J. [Israeli government to share names of unvaccinated people](#). *Daily News* Feb. 24, 2021.

³¹ Plater R. [You Can Still Spread, Develop COVID-19 After Getting a Vaccine: What to Know](#). *Healthline* Jan. 19, 2021.

³² Stikings T, Jewers C. [Israel passes law allowing names and phone numbers of anyone who has not been vaccinated to be shared by the government](#). *Daily Mail* Feb. 24, 2021.

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