

Israeli MP Presents Bills to Annex Jordan Valley, Impose Death Penalty on Palestinians

By [Middle East Eye](#)

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A right-wing Israeli parliamentarian submitted two bills to the Knesset on Wednesday seeking to permanently annex the Jordan Valley, the northern Dead Sea and the Hebron desert in the occupied West Bank to Israel, as well as impose the death penalty on Palestinian political prisoners.

Miki Zohar, the head of the Likud faction in the Knesset, said that the two bills he submitted would “embarrass” former army general Benny Gantz of the Blue and White party and Avigdor Lieberman of Yisrael Beiteinu.

Gantz is currently speaking with Israeli parties to form a coalition government after receiving a thin majority last week from Israeli Knesset members.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of Likud party, is maintaining contact with Gantz in a bid to form a national unity government, though the chances are slim that the two rivals will find common ground.

Netanyahu is facing corruption charges and he could be sentenced to up to ten years in prison if convicted. Due to the [coronavirus pandemic](#), the first court hearing for Netanyahu’s case was postponed this week to May.

Gantz is still examining the possibility to enter an alliance with Lieberman and the Arab Joint List, a political coalition of parties representing Palestinian citizens of Israel, in order to form a government.

Lieberman has long depicted the Palestinian community inside Israel as a “fifth column” and called them “enemies”. Nonetheless, he agreed with Gantz for the Joint List to provide parliamentary support to the coalition but not participate in the government.

The Joint List opposes the annexation of occupied Palestinian lands and the death penalty.

[Newspaper Israel Hayom](#) quoted Zohar as saying that his aim was to weaken Gantz’s bloc.

“Let’s see this wonderful cooperation between the Joint List, Yisrael Beiteinu and Blue and White. We will see how they will work together [with] those who work against the state,” Zohar said. “Shall we see [Gantz and Lieberman] oppose these legislations in order to please their new friends from the Joint List?”

In [December 2017](#), Lieberman - who then served as defence minister - introduced a bill allowing the use of the death penalty against Palestinian prisoners. The bill did not go through the Knesset.

Israel has not carried out any executions since 1962, when Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann was hanged.

Israel abolished the use of capital punishment for murder in civil courts in 1954, though it can still in theory be applied for war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, treason and crimes against the Jewish people.

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