

# Israeli Referendum Measure Blocks Land for Peace

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

Netanyahu heads Israel's worst government in history. It's hardline. It's extremist. It's fascist. It spurns Palestinian rights. It deplores peace. It enforces occupation harshness.

On August 1, [Haaretz](#) headlined "Bill requiring referendum on ceding land passes first Knesset reading."

Doing so lacks legitimacy. Israelis have no legal authority. Palestinians alone may vote up or down on issues relating to their land.

Israelis have no right to decide for them. Territorial residents have sole authority. A previous article explained. Netanyahu called enactment essential, saying:

"Any agreement, if it is achieved in negotiations, will be brought as a referendum."

"It is important that every citizen will directly vote on fateful decisions like these that determine the future of the state."

Doing so effectively blocks land for peace. Netanyahu and other hardliners want all parts of Judea and Samaria Judaized. They want Jerusalem as Israel's exclusive capital. They want Palestinians denied all rights.

The referendum law puts another nail in the peace process. It was already dead on arrival. Claims otherwise ring hollow.

The measure requires referendum approval on ceding territory. Doing so assures Palestinians won't get areas Israel wants. They include resource rich and other valued parts.

East Jerusalem, Golan, and pre-1967 territory are excluded. Netanyahu, Economy Minister Naftali Bennett, and other hardliners endorsed it.

Israel's High Court will address current referendum law. "Critics say the current law contradicts four Basic Laws."

They include the 1958 Basic Law on the Knesset and 1992 Basic Law on the Government. They do so by improperly letting referendum authority countermand fundamental Israeli law.

Israel has no constitution. Basic Laws substitute. "Referendum law as a Basic Law would need 61 of the Knesset's 120 MKs to be revoked."

Preliminary voting occurred before parliament recessed at week's end. Second and third readings will follow. Knesset hardliners want the measure toughened. They oppose land swaps.

Many want Greater Israel Judaized. They want apartheid and then some. They want Palestinians denied all rights.

They want stiffer police state laws. They approve state terror. They enact racist laws. The Pravar Plan passed its first reading. It targets 40,000 Palestinian Bedouins.

If enacted, they'll be ethnically cleansed. They'll be displaced from their homes. Their villages will be destroyed.

They'll lose their land, property and historical rights. Exclusive Jewish development will replace them. Its happening across the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Free expression in Israel is threatened. Independent NGOs are targeted. Advocacy for right over wrong is endangered. Israel wants critics silenced.

At issue is wanting Israeli war criminals tried in international courts, supporting BDS activism, denying Israel's right to exist as a Jewish democratic state, and/or resisting occupation harshness.

According to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, Palestinians and Israeli Arab citizens "face entrenched discrimination in all fields of life."

Racist hate is virulent. Arabs are considered a fifth column and demographic threat. They're treated like subhumans.

They're denied fundamental rights. They're victimized by racial profiling. They're treated like aliens on their own land.

Glaring socioeconomic differences exist between Jews and Arabs "with regard to land, urban planning, housing, infrastructure, economic development," education, healthcare, and other life essentials.

Institutionalized racism makes peace impossible. Proposed Knesset legislation aims to limit or eliminate Arab party representation.

It raises the electoral threshold from 2 to 4%. Doing so effectively eliminates small Arab parties. A Knesset panel approved the bill. Doing so reinforces Jewish exclusivity.

"Governance legislation" goes back to Knesset committees. Amendments may be added. Second and third readings will follow. Enactment seems likely.

Legislative and numerous other examples are important. They show the enormous cross Palestinians bear. They're unwanted. They're denied fundamental rights. They're viciously persecuted.

Peace for our time is more illusion than reality. It's perhaps the greatest hoax in modern times.

Separately, Shin Bet summoned political activists for "warning conversations." They're

unrelated to criminal activity. They're about silencing dissent.

Shin Bet intimidates. It threatens. It warns activists against participating in "disturbances of the peace." [Association for Civil Rights in Israel](#) (ACRI) attorneys Lila Margalit and Karen Tamir petitioned Israel's High Court.

They did so for injunctive relief. They want intimidating "warning conversations" prohibited. They exceed Shin Bet's authority. They violate fundamental Israeli and international laws.

They include free expression, the right to dignity, privacy, equity, due process and judicial fairness.

According to ACRI, "Shin Bet tap(s) citizens' phones (with approval of the Prime Minister) and use(s) communications metadata without judicial oversight."

"In a democratic society, political activity does not constitute a 'security threat' that justifies the intervention of an organization like the Shin Bet."

"Any concerns about violations of the law during political protests should be addressed by the police within the confines of the regular criminal law."

ACRI's petition cites a section from Shin Bet's 2012 Annual Summary. Under the heading "Radical Right and Left," Shin Bet obtains information lawlessly. State authorities use it illegitimately. Doing so contributes to Israel's delegitimization.

According to Margalit:

"Calling political activists in for friendly conversations over a cup of tea with undercover Shin Bet agents is not a practice that characterizes a democratic regime."

"The Shin Bet, entrusted to deal with serious security threats, possesses far-reaching powers, some of which are very problematic."

"It is intolerable for civil protest or political activism - even if it involves disruptions of the peace - to be classified as a security threat."

"The policy of calling in activists for warnings violates the constitutional rights not just of the activists actually called in, but also of all those individuals who refrain from political involvement as a result."

Israel's a racist police state. It threatens world peace and security. It's a global menace. It partners with Washington's worst crimes. It supports the worst regional despots.

It seeks regional domination. It's waging war on Palestine. It's a major weapons producer. It's the world's sixth largest arms exporter. Since 2008, sales increased 74%.

In 2012, exports totaled \$7.5 billion. Most were aerial defense systems, missiles, other high-tech equipment, and sophisticated state terror instruments.

Israeli technology is valued. It drives economic growth. It does so destructively. It terrorizes Palestinians. It destroys hope for peace.

Israel's a warrior state. It's a modern day Sparta. It deplores peace. It menaces humanity. It lives by the sword. Doing so risks perishing by it.

A Final Comment

AP's Matthew Lee continues to challenge State Department spokespersons. Few do. He does. On July 30, [excerpts](#) from his Q & A with Jennifer Psaki went as follows:

ML: So what do you mean when you say that the next meeting is going to be to begin the formal process?

JP: Well, Matt, I apologize if I caused – any confusion. Today was the beginning of the formal process.

ML: Okay.

JP: The agreement just a few weeks ago was to move forward on final status negotiations.

ML: Okay. So –

JP: That's exactly what they did today. It's only natural that the first part of the discussion would be on putting a work plan together and making plans for the months ahead.

ML: Okay. So they did put a work plan together.

JP: That was the goal of today, yes.

ML: And so they succeeded in that?

JP: I will defer to our officials who will be briefing you later on more specifics.

ML: Okay. All right. Will they be able to offer us more specifics, or will they say it's a secret?

JP: I will. We'll discuss after the briefing.

ML: Okay. Then, you also said that the Secretary's comments about him being the only person who would comment, quickly followed by him saying he would never comment – (laughter) – so I'm not sure if that was very helpful at all that you said the point was that, 'Don't believe everything you read or every rumor that you hear.'

I'm assuming that that's going to go for your comments and the Secretary's comments claims that progress is being made when there is absolutely no evidence that any progress is being made. Is that correct?

JP: Well, Matt – we'll let the final results – we'll let you judge the final results. Our goal here is to move to a final agreement.

And obviously, we know – or the Secretary strongly believes, as do both parties, that in order to do that, we need to give the process the room and the space to make progress.

ML: Right. Okay. There was a lot of complaining upstairs about cynics and people who are skeptics and how they shouldn't be.

I'm assuming that you agree with all that, and I particularly want to point out that last line that (Israeli) Justice Minister (Tzipi) Livni said: 'I believe that history is not made by cynics. It is made by realists who are not afraid to dream.'

You don't think that the dreamer – you think the dreamers are realists?

I'm serious. I want to know what you think – why you think that all of the skepticism and all of the cynicism is misplaced.

JP: Because they're here today. You heard all parties speak about how they're committed to taking this process seriously and pursuing it in the weeks and months ahead...

The Secretary has spoken a bit about how, in order to make progress and hopefully achieve a successful outcome, you need to take a different approach.

And part of that is certainly keeping the negotiations and the discussions quiet...

ML: Sorry. Taking a new approach is keeping everything quiet? That's been an approach that's been used every time going back to 1999, keeping everything secret.

That's not a new approach. The attempt to keep it quiet is not a new approach.

But since you raised this idea of the fact that people who are up there and are being involved have done this again, I wanted to go back to yesterday's announcement of Ambassador (Martin) Indyk and the Secretary's quotation from the Coleridge poem that is in the preface.

Is the Secretary aware of the three lines that follow the line that he read?

JP: I'm sure you're going to provide them to all of us right now.

ML: Well, the first line, which he did read, is: 'If men could learn from history, what lessons would it teach us!' That's where he ended.

But the line goes on: 'But passion and party blind our eyes, and the light which experience gives us is a lantern on the stern, which shines only on the waves behind us,' which doesn't really lead – is not particularly an optimistic comment.

Was he aware of the rest of the lines from that stanza? (Laughter.)

JP: He's been pretty busy.

ML: So no?

JP: I'm not sure how much time for a poetry reading he's had in the last couple of days.

Lee's [AP report](#) added:

"Despite words of encouragement, deep skepticism about the prospects for success surrounded the initial discussions."

"Despite the presence of so many people whose past experience does not include success, Kerry and other officials voiced cautious optimism about the resumption of talks which he

painstakingly negotiated during six months of shuttle diplomacy that began with Obama's own trip to Israel in March."

"Previous attempts to get talks started have foundered on Israel's continued construction of Jewish settlements on land claimed by the Palestinians and Palestinian attempts to win international recognition as a sovereign state in the absence of a peace deal.

Actual negotiations have died because the two sides have been unable to compromise on the most serious disagreements between them: borders, the status of Jerusalem, refugees and security.

"With a US-imposed gag order on revealing any details about the substance or framework of the talks, gauging progress will be difficult."

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