

LA Jews for Peace Policy Statement

Los Angeles, CA. March.6, 2023 Contact: info@LAJewsforPeace.org

Israel's Judicial Crisis is Inducing Political Enlightenment

Israel's current judicial crisis was triggered by a package of laws being rushed through the Knesset that would bring Israel's Supreme Court under full control of the Israeli government. The two most important laws are: (1) change the method of choosing justices so that the government has full control and can appoint its lackeys, and (2) provide that a 61-vote Knesset majority can override any Supreme Court decision.

LA Jews for Peace fears that these laws will pass in spite of condemnation by a broad range of Israeli elites in finance, high-tech business, legal, and the military and massive protests in Israel and in Jewish communities around the world. Why? Because law 1, above, passed its first reading with an overwhelming majority, suggesting that it will easily pass its second and third readings and become law. Law 2, above, will likely also receive an overwhelming majority and become law.

LA Jews for Peace fears the package of judicial "reforms" will have broader implications than just turning Israel from a liberal "democracy" with separation of powers into an illiberal one with a single center of political power.

The judicial "reforms" are testing the strength of Israeli Ministers Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir and other far right-wing elements of the present government coalition. If the "reforms" are enacted, Smotrich and Ben-Gvir will be encouraged to move ahead with their stated goal to expel Palestinians out of the West Bank. And that will surely be a crime against humanity. Already Smotrich, whose portfolio includes civilian rule in the West Bank, insisted that "the village of Huwara needs to be wiped out."¹ Huwara is the West Bank Palestinian town heavily damaged by a settler-terrorist-mob. And already Ben-Gvir, whose portfolio includes Israeli police, ordered aggressive police tactics (normally used to control West Bank Palestinians) used against Israeli Jews protesting judicial "reforms."² **LA Jews for Peace** condemns these and similar actions.

LA Jews for Peace sees and supports political evolution in Israel associated with protesting against the judicial "reforms." Late January protests excluded Palestinians and their flags and anti-occupation Jews, but that is changing. Palestinians and their flags were present in recent protests in Haifa and Beer Sheva, and recent protests included an "anti-occupation block." These changes suggest that ordinary Israeli Jews recognize that the occupation is undermining their democracy. They are realizing that to fight judicial "reforms" they must fight for equality for all people under Israeli control including Palestinians from River to Sea. Even Benny Gantz called for equality for all Israelis, including Palestinians, at his March 3 speech to the Beer Sheva protest.

¹ Haaretz, Mar.1, 2023. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-03-02/ty-article/.premium/u-s-jewish-community-slams-smotrich-over-repugnant-comment-as-washington-visit-looms/00000186-a1bc-dec4-abfe-b3fd0ca80000>

² Haaretz, Mar.3 2023. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-03-03/ty-article/.premium/far-right-ben-gvir-orders-top-cop-to-ensure-tough-handling-of-tel-aviv-rally/00000186-a87c-de2a-a1ee-aa7f64bc0000>