

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد  
بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم  
از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

By Natasha Roth-Rowland

19.01.2023

## Israeli far-right government affirms radicalization of trends already underway



**Sources:** A l'encontre

A concerted push to accelerate the annexation of the West Bank, led by a messianic settler [Bezalel Smotrich nde]. Even more immunity for Israeli soldiers who attack or kill Palestinians. The denial of medical services to LGBTQ people. A battered Supreme Court. A return to politics for previously banned Jewish terrorists.

All these policy proposals have been reported in the Israeli media in recent weeks, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new coalition took shape, the result of intense negotiations and sworn in on Thursday, December 29. Following the trajectory of recent decades, the new government is the most right-wing in the country to date, giving Netanyahu a relatively homogeneous cabinet from an ideological point of view, while

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

granting unprecedented power to extremist personalities who, until recently, were perceived as destined to remain on the margins of political life.

It remains to be seen what leeway Netanyahu and Likud will give their junior coalition partners to push the full scope of their fundamentalist vision of the country [of the 33 ministers, 30 of them with portfolios, 14 are openly far-right]. But the prime minister's weakness in returning to government in the face of the permanent threat of prosecution [among others for corruption], as well as the power and positions he has already entrusted to members of the far-right Religious Zionist Party [Bezael Smotrich], Otzma Yehudit [Itamar Ben-Gvir] and Noam [Avi Maoz], bode very badly. Benyamin Netanyahu's public insistence that he will not allow the religious extremists in his government to go unleashed, presenting himself, according to the well-known tradition of the Israeli far right, as a brake against those even further to the right, is belied by the complacency he has shown throughout the negotiations of recent weeks.

Now that the new government has been sworn in, let's look at a summary of some of the new coalition's most dangerous policies, proposals, and new powers.

### **An annexation of the West Bank in all but name**

While the informal annexation of the occupied West Bank has been an ongoing long-term project of successive Israeli governments, Israel has yet to officially annex the territories as it did for East Jerusalem and the Golan in the early 1980s, after its occupation during the 1967 war. Advancing this program remains a primary long-term goal for the Religious Zionist Party and its leader Bezael Smotrich, according to the party's coalition agreement with Likud. For the time being, however, emphasis is placed on accelerating de facto annexation.

The guiding principles of the new coalition promise to continue advancing a colonial project that extends beyond the Green Line and leads to its elimination. In its first part, the entire coalition agreement states: "The Jewish people have an exclusive and indisputable right over all regions of the Land of Israel. The government will promote and develop settlements in all parts of the Land of Israel, in the Galilee, Negev, the Golan Heights, Judea and Samaria."

Thanks to legislation adopted on Tuesday, December 27, by the Knesset, which places the civil administration and COGAT (Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories), units of the Ministry of Defense that manage the occupation and siege of Gaza, under the leadership of the Religious Zionist Party, Smotrich is now the "de facto sovereign" of the parts of the West Bank placed under full Israeli military and civilian

control and where the most of the settlements, in addition to having considerable power over the lives of Palestinians in Gaza.

Bezalel Smotrich and his party will have many ways to exercise this power, but whatever concrete forms their policies take, they will almost certainly involve optimizing the conditions of settlement expansion, in particular by legalizing outposts, making political appointments aimed at undermining the ability of Palestinians to enforce legal recognition of their private lands. proposing tax exemptions for settlers, giving the latter even more freedom to carry out their own acquisitions; and further harmonizing the laws of the colonies with those of the interior of the Green Line.

At the same time, Smotrich will be able to intensify so-called "coercive" measures and other punishments directed at Palestinians in Area C [this area is administered by the Israeli administration and very indirectly by the Palestinian Authority], either by denying building permits, demolishing houses and other structures, or restricting exit and work permits. Similarly, the party will determine who can enter and leave the Gaza Strip and when, and dictate what materials can enter and leave the enclave.

### **Continuing the colonization of the Naqab/Negev and Galilee**

The Naqab and Galilee, which are home to major Palestinian population centers in the south and north of the country respectively, have long been the pillar of the government's efforts to Judaize the country within the Green Line. For the far right in particular, they consider themselves part of the front line, along with the so-called "mixed cities," of the Israeli push aimed at "recolonizing" areas that, in their eyes, are not Jewish enough due to the importance of their Palestinian population. Therefore, these two parts of the country have received considerable attention in negotiations between the Likud, the Religious Zionist Party, and Otzma Yehudit, with each party gaining significant control over these areas.

Otzma Yehudit's coalition deal gave him control of the Negev and Galilee Development Ministry, which was expanded to include West Bank outposts, another act of informal annexation. Ben Gvir, meanwhile, as Minister of National Security, will have control of the executive bodies of the different branches of government related to land and the environment, including the Nature and Parks Authority and the Israel Land Authority. It will therefore have a significant influence on the allocation of state land and how it is affected. This will surely be used as a weapon against Palestinian communities in the areas that the state seeks to colonize intensely with Jewish Israelis.

In addition, the Religious Zionist Party obtained from the Likud a commitment to further expand the Judaization of the Negev and Galilee. He was also granted some power within the Israel Lands Authority, with Knesset member Orit Strook on its council.

### **Threats against the LGBTQ community**

The common electoral list of the Religious Zionist Party, which won the third-largest number of votes in last month's election, allowed the far-right Noam party to win a seat and bring its speaker, Avi Maoz, to the Knesset. This party, which is only a few years old, has always relied on a mostly anti-LGBTQ platform. The day after the elections, as soon as it became clear that Avi Maoz was going to be part of the government coalition, he began to make homophobic political proposals, especially to ban Pride parades in the country, especially in Jerusalem.

Benyamin Netanyahu did not follow up on this idea, at least in public, but shortly thereafter appointed Avi Maoz as deputy minister in the Prime Minister's cabinet, charged with overseeing "Jewish identity," with related responsibility for non-public [foreign-funded] school programs. The appointment provoked negative reactions from some mayors and local authorities, but in the meantime, homophobic statements by Avi Maoz and his ideological clan continued, while reports indicate that his party had previously drawn up lists of LGBTQ media personalities, prompting LGBTQ activists to issue warnings against homophobic violence.

Part of the coalition agreement between Likud and the Religious Zionist Party also allowed the latter to win a culture war like the one waged in the United States, allowing it to try to amend an anti-discrimination law that would authorize service providers to refuse to work with certain people because of their religious beliefs. (This is also part of the Likud's agreement with the haredi [ultra-orthodox] United Torah Judaism party.) MP Orit Stroock of the Religious Zionist Party suggested that under the new law, doctors could refuse to treat LGBTQ patients, while lawyer Simcha Rothman, also of the Religious Zionist Party, said hotel owners would have the right to refuse rooms to gay guests.

There has also been talk of reversing a recent ban on so-called "conversion therapy," reinstating a ban on homosexuals donating blood, and reimposing barriers to access to sex reassignment surgery.

### **Radicalization of police forces from above**

The creation of a new Ministry of National Security led by Otzma Yehudit President Itamar Ben-Gvir has already provoked a wave of shock in the Israeli police. This ministry, which is an expanded version of the Ministry of National and Public Security, gives Ben

Gvir, a convicted terrorist sympathizer with a long history of violence and incitement to violence, mainly against Palestinians, dictatorial powers over Israeli police forces on both sides of the Green Line. According to the coalition agreement between Likud and Otzma Yehudit, which was adopted by the Knesset on Wednesday, December 28, the Border Police, which patrols the West Bank and East Jerusalem, has been removed from Israeli police authority and now reports directly to Ben Gvir's ministry.

A disciple of extremist Rabbi Meir Kahane and a longtime admirer of the 1994 Hebron mass murderer Baruch Goldstein, Itamar Ben-Gvir has vowed to push for security forces accused of killing or assaulting Palestinians, especially soldiers, to receive greater immunity and, thanks to his party's coalition agreement, it has the authority to make even more permissible the rules for resorting to the use of firearms. The control it exercises over the border police means that it now has a handle on the forces that violently suppress Palestinian demonstrations, engage in house demolitions and control majority Palestinian areas within the Green Line. Ben Gvir also has the power to appoint police commissioners, a privilege denied to his predecessor, as well as to increase his control over the police in areas where there are political and religious objectives, such as, for example, the extension of Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif, which has traditionally been restricted by the police. albeit to an increasingly limited degree.

### **The war against – and over – the judicial system**

At the heart of Netanyahu's negotiations, and as part of his acceptance of his partners' demands, is a willingness to undermine the Israeli judicial system in order to succeed in his various corruption trials. This is a reciprocal goal: the Religious Zionist Party, Otzma Yehudit and other far-right formations want the judicial system to submit to the will of the government, pushing for a "derogatory clause" that would allow the ruling coalition to overturn Supreme Court rulings, which would deprive the country's highest jurisdiction of all power. In practice, this could allow a very small majority of the Knesset, for example 61 out of 120 MPs, to annul a Supreme Court decision, for example, to annul a discriminatory law adopted by the Knesset. Such an option would greatly facilitate the codification of far-right policies, from racial and religious discrimination to land grabbing and the extent of criminalization of Palestinian civil society and human rights NGOs.

A related, if discreet, coalition agreement involves the annulment of the disqualification of potential Knesset members previously charged or convicted of incitement to violence and hatred. This move was orchestrated by Ben Gvir, ostensibly to allow his former fellow Kahanists [who claim to share Rabbi Meir Kahane's ideology] – Michael Ben-Ari, Baruch

Marzel, and Bentzi Gopstein – to once again attempt to enter the Knesset. At the same time, Ben Gvir made it clear that his party would use the law to try to prevent Palestinian politicians from entering the Knesset.

Another sign of the Supreme Court's weakening power, the coalition agreement between Likud and the Religious Zionist Party relaunches previous attempts to indefinitely detain asylum seekers in the camps, with the proposal for a new Basic Law based on legislation that the Court has struck down in the past.

The Likud and Otzma Yehudit also agreed to pass, over the next year, a bill that would institute the death penalty for "terrorists" (Palestinians).

### **Repression of civil society**

Even before the new coalition was sworn in, the Israeli state's already repressive treatment of activists, journalists and civil society groups has become even more acute. In recent weeks, soldiers have assaulted left-wing activists in the West Bank while welcoming the role Ben Gvir will play in their mission. A journalist was detained on provocation after congratulating a Palestinian from the West Bank for trying to attack Israeli security forces instead of civilians. And a Likud deputy called for "jailing" the head of Breaking the Silence [an Israeli organization of soldiers and veterans that denounces the actions of the army], Avner Gvanyahu.

The new coalition appears poised to further criminalize, persecute and obstruct human and civil rights actors, as well as journalists, on both sides of the Green Line. Smotrich has called for human rights groups to continue to be persecuted "on legal and security grounds," calling them an "existential threat to the State of Israel," and plans are underway to tax donations from foreign governments to left-wing NGOs. A years-old initiative to criminalize the filming of Israeli soldiers in the line of duty is being resurrected, while the Likud revives threats to shut down the news section of Israeli public broadcaster, which Netanyahu has already judged too far to the left. (Article published on the Israeli site +972, December 29, 2022).

*Natasha Roth-Rowland is editor of the +972 website. He is a doctoral student in history at the University of Virginia. His research and writing focus on the Jewish far right in Israel-Palestine and the United States.*

Source: <https://alencontre.org/moyenorient/israel/israel-le-gouvernement-dextreme-droite-affirme-la-radicalisation-des-tendances-deja-a-loeuvre.html>

Translation: Faustino Eguberri for **south wind**

**Rebellion 18.01.2023**