



The Sabra Report

Knesset Repeals Disengagement Law

Ynetnews, March 22nd, 2023

Recap:

The Knesset voted to repeal Israel's 2005 Disengagement Law, allowing Israelis to return to previously evacuated settlements in the northern West Bank. The move came just two days after Israel reaffirmed a pledge to pause discussion of new settlements [1].

The Context:

- ✧ Since 1967, Israel has established around 140 settlements that house more than 500,000 Israelis [2]. Many Israelis view the West Bank as a fundamental part of the Jewish state while most Palestinians see the West Bank as the core of their future state.
- ✧ The Disengagement Plan was conceived by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and endorsed by President George W. Bush. Its main component was the eviction of thousands of settlers from the Gaza Strip in the hopes of stopping Hamas' rocket attacks. It also included a similar measure in the northern West Bank which involved the razing of Jewish communities. In total, Israel evacuated 21 settlements in Gaza and four in the West Bank [3].
- ✧ The repeal of certain clauses in the disengagement law would allow Jewish residents to return to the West Bank settlements [4]. As opposition members were mostly absent, the motion passed by a 31 to 18 majority. The Supreme Court still must rule on a pending motion by Palestinian residents of a nearby village. Passage of the bill will not impact the 2005 withdrawal from Gaza, which remains in force [5].
- ✧ Supporters of the motion hail it as "the first and significant step towards the establishment of Israel in the territories of the homeland " [6]. Critics say the move "will increase the already tense situation between Israelis and Palestinians and compromise the IDF's ability to protect them all." The Biden administration slammed the vote as "a clear contradiction of understandings the Israeli government made to the United States [7]."

Conversation Points:

- ✧ Should Israel be held accountable for implementing the disengagement plan, even if Palestinian groups continue to engage in acts of terrorism?
- ✧ Does Israel's presence in the West Bank impede progress towards a two-state solution?
- ✧ Would it be beneficial to establish a minimum threshold for votes needed to repeal legislation?
- ✧ To what extent should Israel consider the United States' position in a situation like this?

Notes:

1. [Amid US rebuke, PM says Disengagement Law repeal won't result in new settlements](#), Israel Hayom, March 21st, 2023.
2. [Israeli government lifts ban on return to West Bank settlements](#), Reuters, March 22nd, 2023.
3. [US opposes Israeli bill to repeal Disengagement in northern Samaria](#), Tovah Lazaroff, Jerusalem Post, March 22nd, 2023.
4. [Israeli government lifts ban on return to West Bank settlements](#), Reuters, March 22nd, 2023.
5. [US opposes Israeli bill to repeal Disengagement in northern Samaria](#), Tovah Lazaroff, Jerusalem Post, March 22nd, 2023.
6. [Israeli government lifts ban on return to West Bank settlements](#), Reuters, March 22nd, 2023.
7. [Israeli envoy called to US State Department in protest of Disengagement Law's repeal](#), JACOB MAGID, Times of Israel, March 22nd, 2023.

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