

Netanyahu's Emerging Coalition

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Introduction

In the recent Israeli elections, the far-right enjoyed a significant win, giving Netanyahu and his ideological allies the probability of forming a strictly right-wing, nationalist government. This government is likely to be formed on the illiberal, anti-democratic, pro-annexation, racist, and homophobic common ground across the impending coalition. Unlike previous governments, which included right-wing, illiberal members along with more moderate parties, this emerging coalition is set to be based on a stronger far-right faction, joined by the ultra-Orthodox parties.

There has been concern in local and international arenas regarding the alliance's most extreme faction, the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** of Itamar Ben Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich (joined by the smaller, homophobic **Noam party**). Yet other partners in Netanyahu's coalition share strongly anti-democratic positions as part of their core ideology, and are set to serve in key positions in this government. While there is variation among the parties, we have witnessed a normalization of Kahanism in Israeli public discourse in recent years,¹ as racist and Kahanist ideology, as well as politicians, have been accepted as legitimate.² This process has culminated in the far-right bloc's unprecedented rise to power in the recent election, affording it strong influence in the imminent government.

While most of the coalition's parties maintained a staunch right-wing line in the elections, the head of **Otzma Yehudit Party** (in Hebrew - 'Jewish Power'), **Itamar Ben Gvir**, was clearly aware that his Kahanist positions could lead to legally preventing him from running in the elections, and would damage his image and the state's should he be elected, at least on the international level. Thus, over the course of the elections campaign, Ben Gvir presented himself to the public as a reformed and moderated leader who does not adhere to Kahane ideology in its entirety. However, Ben Gvir's past statements and statements given by his confidants make clear that he maintains the same agenda, while perhaps moderating the style and language. In fact, within a week from the elections, Ben Gvir attended a Kahane memorial. Although he tried

¹ Kahanism refers to an ideology that follows Meir Kahane, leader of an armed, far-right, theocratic, and racist movement in Israel. Kahane called for expulsion of all the Arabs from Israel and the Palestinian territories, and encouraged violence against them. He was elected as an MK in 1984, but outlawed in 1994 under Israeli anti-terrorism laws. In addition, his party, Kach, and affiliated movements, were labeled as terrorist organizations by the US government. See more [here](#).

² For example, recent research has shown that Itamar Ben Gvir gained significantly wider coverage and air time in Israeli media than all Arab MKs together in the months leading to the elections: The latter were mentioned all together only about a quarter of the total number of times Ben-Gvir was mentioned. See The Representation Index, [27.10.22](#).

to distance himself from aspects of Kahanism, his attendance to the event effectively legitimizes the ideology (see more examples below).

The Core Features of Netanyahu's Emerging Coalition

1. **Illiberalism:** members of the imminent coalition government have clearly expressed illiberal, anti-democratic positions, and declared concrete plans to undermine democratic norms. Challenging the separation of powers, Netanyahu and his partners display a deep hostility to both the judicial review process and the idea of a constitutional democracy with constitutional principles that are superior to regular legislation and protect fundamental rights. They have also stressed the exclusively Jewish nature of the state, some going as far as rejecting its democratic values altogether. In like manner, there is also a call to exclude all Others from the state, including calling for the expulsion of asylum seekers, and LGBTQIA phobia. Similar to previous Netanyahu governments, members of this coalition have expressed hostility towards civil society and opposition groups and called for censorship over them.
2. **Anti-Palestinian Incitement:** the impending coalition brings a significant escalation in incitement against Palestinians, including citizens of Israel. Building on Kahanist ideology, coalition members have justified violence against Palestinians and called for ethnic cleansing. Following Netanyahu's discourse, members of the coalition parties have delegitimized Palestinian citizenship in Israel and called for excluding them from the democratic process.
3. **Entrenching the Occupation and Settlements:** a significant component of Netanyahu's right-wing coalition's agenda focuses on the future status of the West Bank, and particularly Area C. Likud members, along with partners across the coalition, have stated their rejection to the Oslo Agreement, the concept of Palestinian statehood and any negotiations with the Palestinians. They openly declare their intentions to annex the West Bank and erase the Green Line; support the expansion of settlements; legalize outposts; prevent Palestinian sovereignty in Jerusalem; and limit the Palestinians' space and possibilities in the area. This also includes demands to forcefully transfer the village of [Khan al-Ahmar](#), which would amount to war crime if executed.

Sample Statements by Members of the Emerging Coalition

1. Illiberalism

Undermining the Rule of Law

The most important common factor on the agenda of all parties in the emerging coalition is restricting the power of the judiciary, through changing the appointment process for judges and the government's Attorney General. Central to this agenda is the "Supreme Court Override Clause", which would allow a simple majority in the Knesset to revive and enforce laws which were found to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. There is almost a consensus among the majority parties on this, each for their own interests: Netanyahu in anticipation of his criminal trials, and his partners in order to prevent the court from striking laws they intend to promote (exemption from army conscription to ultra-Orthodox Yeshiva students, religious status of Reform and Conservative Jews, retroactive legalization of outposts, and more).

- Stressing the centrality of the Override Clause to his party's agenda, **Moshe Arbel of Shas** stated: *"We unequivocally...believe that it is imperative, to increase public trust in the legal system, to promote an override clause...without it, these elections have little significance."* ([20.10.22](#))
- In presenting his party as a leading actor against asylum seekers, **Simcha Rothman** of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list stressed: *"The Knesset has already passed four programs for transferring infiltrators but every time the Supreme Court canceled them."* Without the override clause, he argued, he cannot advance his party's agenda: *"Almost every program in every field, identity, infiltrators, security and others, all these would be like doing nothing if we didn't address the problem of governance and law. Whatever you legislate, the court will cancel. That's why we have to talk about an override clause..."* ([22.2.21](#))
- In fact, the override clause is so central to the coalition, that **Rabbi Yisroel Hager**, one of the heads of the **Yahadut HaTorah** (the United Torah Judaism) instructed his party's Members of Knesset (MK) not to join a future government unless the Likud commits to passing the override clause: *"I called you here to give you the strength to be strong and firm on Yiddishkite, to not enter the government without a clear undertaking to pass the override clause."* ([7.11.22](#)).
- One of the spiritual leaders of **Shas**, **Rabbi Yitzhak Yousef**, the Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel, also stressed this issue, calling on the ultra-Orthodox parties *"to seize the opportunity... We need to enact the override clause... a law that the Supreme Court can no longer determine."* ([13.11.22](#))
- **May Golan**, a **Likud** MK who started her political career as an activist against asylum seekers, tweeted in the run up to the elections: *"I believe that with painstaking field work over the coming months, we'll make it to 61 and pass the override clause that will have a direct impact on removing the infiltrators from the neighborhoods of southern Tel Aviv and others back to their countries of origin."* ([2.8.22](#))

Even in her early career, **Golan** already highlighted this issue: *"Today, elected officials cannot pass any moral and principled decision for the public who democratically elected them, and that is because a left-wing bureaucracy rules over us with an iron fist and on direct orders from the justices of the High Court of Justice.... I will work to pass the override clause to restore governance from a small, unelected, minority."* ([20.1.19](#))

Members of the coalition parties have been waging a vicious public campaign against the Supreme Court, undermining its legitimacy:

- **Tally Gotliv**, a new **Likud** MK, stated she did not believe in the need for the override clause, but instead declared she merely would ignore the Supreme Court: *"The override clause is a very fancy, beautiful title, but there is no need for it. Basic Law: The Judiciary does not give the Supreme Court the authority to repeal laws. As for myself, I ignore the [court's] rulings. It is a ruling without authority, I don't respect it."* ([8.11.22](#))

- In presenting her party's plan for legalizing outposts, **Orit Strook** of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** attacked the Supreme Court, arguing it was: *"the obstacle, and so long as we do not get it back down to its natural size, we will not be able to get anything done."* ([26.10.22](#))
- Going to further extremes, **Yitzhak Pindrus** of the **United Torah Judaism party**, stated *"My dream is to bring in a D9 and blow up that building [the Supreme Court]... That's my dream"* ([9.5.22](#)). When pressed on the matter, he refused to retract, insisting: *"The Supreme Court has to be knocked down, it is an institution that disrupts... There is a fundamental discussion here of how I see the State of Israel and what our vision is, and the Supreme Court is not a part of this vision."* ([9.5.22](#))
- **Likud MK David Amsalem** described his plans for when his party returns to power: *"We will also replace the justices there immediately, the day we win... We will bring down laws on their heads that they will not recover from for 20 years. To rule, we will erase the word 'justice'. It does not exist anymore..."* ([17.11.21](#))
- **Likud MK Miri Regev** stated: *"It is no secret... We have criticized the Supreme Court. I criticized the Supreme Court on [the] infiltrators law as well. Because of its decisions, we halted the welcome process of voluntary removal of hundreds of infiltrators."* ([29.7.15](#))
- Others also expressed distrust in the court, **MK Yinon Azoulay** of **Shas**: *"I personally have no faith in the court system, no faith in the Supreme Court - a system that has never done favors for the Haredi public."* ([10.8.21](#))

Prioritizing the Jewishness of the State over Democracy

The anti-democratic statements also extend to other fields beyond the rule of law. A central theme is rejecting the democracy of the state as far as it conflicts with the Jewishness of the state or in general:

- **Zvika Fogel** of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list tweeted: *"Until when will we act like the poor child who needs positive reinforcement and hugs. When will we internalize the fact that we are strong and right and defend our interests. I want to take care of the Jews from all over the world who are interested in coming to Israel. The rest, they can go to other places."* ([11.3.22](#))
- To encourage Jewish voters on election day, **Aryeh Deri**, the leader of the **Shas** party, warned: *"This is the fateful battle. The fight is between a Jewish state or an Israeli state. Anyone who wants a Jewish state - let them wake up and vote. They [the previous government] invested tens of millions in the Arab sector so that there would not be a Jewish state here but a state for all its citizens."* ([1.11.22](#))
- **Shas MK Haim Biton** expressed a similar position: *"The religious-nationalist public, even the "light" public, do not want a state of all its citizens to be formed here. Our right to the land of Israel stems entirely from the Torah."* ([23.10.22](#))
- **Likud MK Amichai Chikli** stated, *"We are in the midst of a campaign to shape the image of the State of Israel. On the question of whether it will be the nation-state of the*

Jewish people, unflinchingly and without talking nonsense, if we are the masters of the house in Lod and Judea and Samaria.” ([10.6.21](#)) [Chikli was elected as member of Bennet’s party Yamina in March 2021, but repeatedly voted against the Bennet-Lapid government, eventually splitting-off to join Netanyahu].

- In his inaugural speech in the Knesset, April 2021, **Avi Maoz**, head of the party **Noam** which ran under the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list, declared, *“The dream is establishing the kingdom of the Jewish people in their own land... the dream of the Jewish state in the Land of Israel is what all the generations have dreamt of and fought for. They did not dream of a state of all its citizens nor of the only democracy in the Middle East.”* ([21.4.21](#))
- **Likud MK Miri Regev** insisted that only Israel is a Jewish state: *“The State of Israel is the nation state of the Jewish people only. Only the Jewish people have national rights between the [Mediterranean] sea and Jordan [River].”* ([1.8.18](#))

Rejection of Asylum Seekers

The far-right’s illiberalism has targeted African asylum seekers (referred to as ‘infiltrators’ in this jargon). In these attacks, the Supreme Court is often blamed for preventing the expulsion.

- **Likud MK Miri Regev** put it bluntly: *“The Sudanese are a cancer in our body.”* ([2.11.17](#))
- **Bezalel Smotrich**, co-leader of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list, stated in presenting a “100 day plan for handling infiltrators and illegal immigration to the State of Israel” that, *“Returning the infiltrators to their countries is a Zionist and social task of the first order. This is a strategic issue and as such we will make it our top priority, we will demand concrete steps as a condition for joining the government in order to fix the situation.”* ([22.2.21](#))
- **Yitzhak Wasserlauf** of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list has long been an activist for the expulsion of asylum seekers. Speaking about the area of South Tel Aviv, where a significant number of asylum seekers live, and which has become the focal point of racist campaigns, he declared: *“The difficult state of the residents of South Tel Aviv is intolerable, the judicial system which let infiltrators enter Israel en masse must undergo change.”* He added, *“In the next Knesset we will God willing create a strong right-wing government and act to deport the infiltrators back to their countries of origin.”* ([22.9.22](#))

Wasserlauf had previously posted on Facebook: *“Now they must go. They are people and we need to help them to leave. We will not be a state of all its citizens even if they turn into magical fairies.”* ([2.9.19](#))

- **Likud MK May Golan** rejected the Ministry of Interior’s decision to allow family reunification for those recognized as refugees in Israel, stating that: *“If family reunification becomes a routine procedure, we will find ourselves in less than a decade with hundreds of thousands of infiltrators from around the world and their families here in the Land of Israel, the haven of the Jewish people.”* ([30.3.21](#))

Homophobia

The Israeli far-right has expressed extremely intolerant and homophobic views, threatening to ban pride parades; to nullify a directive of the previous government banning conversion therapy; to limit access to gender transition medication; and to roll back advances in marriage and adoption rights for LGBTQIA+ families.

- **Bezalel Smotrich**, co-leader of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list, stated: *"I am a proud homophobe."* He added: *"At home, everyone can be abnormal and people can form whatever family unit they want...But they can't make demands from me, as the state."* ([23.2.15](#))
- **Shas MK Moshe Abutbul**, while he was mayor of Bet Shemesh, was asked about LGBTQIA+ people in his town. He responded: *"We do not have such things...Thank god, this town is holy and pure."* ([9.11.13](#))
- **Avi Maoz** of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list (part of the anti-LGBTQIA+ faction Noam) stated, *"We are acting against what in our view threatens the Jewish people and the Israeli public, and one of the areas ...is the realm of the family. That is why I will fight this agenda of different kinds of families."* In another interview he said, *"When a man comes and says 'I'm not a man – I'm a woman,' and when a woman comes and says she's a man, fine, so you have said it. I do not accept it, this is a peculiar person."* ([28.10.22](#))
- Rabbi **Amichai Eliyahu**, another member of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list, stated: *"It is hard to understand how activist organizations managed to take something that was defined medically as a disease, something that opposes the most basic nature of humanity – and turn it into an international norm. Under the umbrella of an aggressive campaign for human rights, they turned the people in the community into a national underdog, into miserable people, underprivileged and persecuted, whose lives are not lives."* ([28.10.22](#))
- The Pride Parade has become a focal point to attack and demonize LGBTQIA+ community. **Almog Cohen** of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** party stated, *"The pride parade is absolutely a parade of depravity of unbridled and unrestrained sex parties, while harrasing boys and those underage, and mostly a horrifying spectacle of hard and sick porn."* ([22.9.22](#))
- **Likud MK Shlomo Karhi** expressed similar positions, *"I think that the pride parades are totally wrong, it is unnatural, it supposedly comes to legitimize something that goes against the natural family unit."* ([10.2.19](#))
- **Likud MK Miki Zohar** said, *"The pride parades arouse hatred, incitement and acts of violence. In my view they cause much more harm than good ... I did not write the Torah. The creator of the world wrote the Torah and things are written clearly there about this subject. The public sphere in a Jewish state such as ours must be preserved and anything that could cause provocation and things of that kind can only cause a rift and spread the hate."* ([19.3.19](#))

2. Anti-Palestinian Incitement

Anti-Arab Racism

Members from all coalition parties have expressed explicitly anti-Arab positions repeatedly. These positions mostly target Palestinians, including Palestinian citizens of Israel.

- **Likud MK David Amsalem** tweeted, *"A people who sanctifies joy and life –versus a people who sanctifies destruction and death...This is the painful reality of our lives – but they will not break us, never."* ([6.5.22](#))
- **Almog Cohen** of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list tweeted, *"Murder stems from Arabs, stop being Arab."* ([3.11.22](#))
- **Likud MK Amichai Chikli** stated, *"Palestinians – enemy, their identity is built on the denial of Zionism and beyond this they have nothing of their own"* ([24.3.22](#)). Speaking at a Knesset special event about the Detention of Palestinian children, **Chikli** said: *"There is not a single Israeli Jew whose teachers taught them to hate Arabs and hurt them, to stab them, to murder them. But from the Palestinian Authority we continue to witness education the likes of which the world has not seen since the thirties – no less than Goebbelsian anti-Semitism, that brain-washes the minds and souls of Arab youths. Anti-Semitic indoctrination that, shamefully, is represented in this very hall [the Knesset]."* ([24.11.21](#))
- **Bezalel Smotrich**, co-leader of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit**, justified segregating Arab and Jewish mothers in hospitals. He tweeted, *"It is only natural my wife would not want to lie next to someone who just gave birth to a baby that might murder her baby in another 20 years."* He added, *"My wife is really no racist, but after giving birth she wants rest and not the mass feasts that are common among Arab mothers."* ([5.4.16](#))
- **Miki Zohar** of the **Likud** party stated in an interview, *"The public in Israel belongs to the Jewish race. The entire Jewish race is the highest human capital, the smartest and the one that understands most."* ([13.6.18](#))

Threats of Expulsion ('Transfer')

In its most extreme and violent form, anti-Palestinian hatred is expressed in terms of threatening, calling for, or justifying the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

In the context of rising Israeli discussion about the Palestinian *Nakba* (meaning 'catastrophe', the term Palestinians use to describe the events of 1948), several politicians of the right have threatened to repeat the events.

- In a speech in the Knesset, **Israel Katz** of the **Likud** party, warned Palestinian lawmakers, *"Remember '48. Remember our War of Independence and your Nakba... Do not pull the rope too much ... If you do not calm down, we will teach you a lesson that will not be forgotten."* ([6.10.22](#))
- Another **Likud** member, **Avi Dichter**, said, *"Those who sit year after year and cry about the Nakba, should not be surprised if in the end they do have a Nakba."* ([24.5.22](#))

- **Yoav Gallant**, also of the **Likud** party, cautioned that if Arabs repeat the “mistake” of 1948, the Jews would “take their hands out of their pockets ... and the price will be very high.” ([24.5.22](#))
- In its platform in the previous elections, **Otzma Yehudit** includes a plan to expel Palestinians and incitement to violence: “*War on Israel’s enemies will be total and without negotiation, concession, or compromise ... The establishment of sovereignty over all parts of Eretz Israel liberated in the Six-Day War and **settlement of the enemies of Israel in the Arab countries** that surround our small land.*” ([28.1.20](#))
- Addressing Palestinian MKs, **Bezalel Smotrich**, co-leader of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list, also referenced the Nakba, stating, “*You are here by accident – because Ben Gurion did not finish the work and did not throw you out in ‘48.*” ([26.4.21](#))

Beyond reference to 1948, coalition members repeatedly called for the expulsion (transfer) of Palestinians:

- **Itamar Ben Gvir**, co-leader of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list, promised to pursue an expulsion agenda once in power, though not limited to Palestinians and also including Leftist Israeli Jews: “*When we form the government, I will promote the Deportation Law that will deport from here anyone who works against the State of Israel... Those who throw stones and Molotov cocktails will be deported from here. Those who work against the state like Ofer Cassif will be deported. Maybe to Europe, they need working hands there.*” ([16.8.22](#)) [Ofer Cassif is a Jewish MK for the predominantly-Palestinian list Hadash-Ta’al].

Earlier, in responding to a question on Facebook, **Ben Gvir** said: “*If you do not want one and a half million Arabs with us, then vote for us. We are the only ones who talk about the Arabs in Umm al-Fahm, Arabs in Sakhnin, we say so that it is clear, whoever is loyal, hello and welcome... whoever is not loyal should be sent away from here and moved to other countries.*” ([30.3.19](#))

- **Bezalel Smotrich**, co-leader of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list, in presenting what he called the “Decisive Plan” stated, “*...Those who want and can give up on realizing their national aspirations – will be able to stay here and live as an individual in the Jewish state ... Those who do not want or cannot shelve their national aspirations – will receive assistance from us to leave ... Those who have continued to use violence against the IDF, the State of Israel and the Jewish population – these terrorists will be dealt with resolutely by the security forces, with greater force than we currently do and under conditions more favorable to us.*” ([1.9.17](#))
- Yet another member of **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list, **Yitzhak Wasserlauf**, also called for transfer, “*It is simple, anyone who is an enemy of the state...they should not be here. How do you decide who is deported... we will need to do it in an organized way, to define things...will create a plan to deport the enemies and those who actively work against the existence of the State of Israel and for its destruction.... There is no shortage of places, the starting assumption is that they do not need to be here, I am sure we will find the places for them to go.*” ([23.8.22](#))

Calls for Violence against Palestinians

The right-wing's incitement against Palestinians is also expressed by calls for and justification of violence against Palestinians.

- **Zvika Fogel** of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** tweeted, *"An Arab who throws a stone at a soldier should get a bullet to the head, a Jew who throws a stone at a soldier needs to be educated."* ([20.10.22](#))
- **Almog Cohen** of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** stated in an interview after the elections, *"The most moral thing to do to a terrorist is to kill him."* ([2.11.22](#)) In May 2021, after confrontations with the Palestinians in the Negev, he stated, *"If the gloves are not removed as the Commissioner [of police] declared, we will remove the gloves. This is Kristallnacht, the Negev version."* ([22.9.22](#))
- **Bezalel Smotrich**, co-leader of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit**, when referring to the 2015 arson attack in the village of Duma in the West Bank whereby three members of the Palestinian Dawabsheh family were killed by Israelis, argued: *"Terrorism is only violence carried out by an enemy within the framework of war against us, and only that justifies taking severe steps who are out of place in normal situations. All the rest are serious crimes, abominable crime, nationalist crime, but not terrorism."* ([10.12.15](#))

Attacks on the Rights of Palestinian Citizens in Israel

The anti-Palestinian attacks are also tied to deep anti-democratic tendencies, which reject the right of Palestinians to be citizens in the State of Israel (referenced as 'Arab Israelis'). The Right also rejects the legitimacy of their participation in the democratic process, challenging their rights to elect:

- **Bezalel Smotrich**, co-leader of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit**, stated, *"The Arabs are citizens of Israel, at least for now, and they have representatives in the Knesset, at least for now."* ([26.4.21](#))
- **Avi Maoz** of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list said in an interview, *"On the individual level the Arabs have equal rights and on the national level they do not – they have no rights over this land. It is a Jewish country. We have the right from the days of the creation of the world."* ([17.6.21](#))
- **Ben Gvir**, co-leader of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list, said, *"There are very many Arabs – I did not say all the Arabs but very many Arabs who are not loyal to the State of Israel. Of course their voting endangers the Israeli democracy ... Any normal country would not allow them to vote."* ([11.12.16](#))
- Rejecting the legitimacy of Arab parties, **Miri Regev** of the **Likud** tweeted, *"Lapid is trying to legitimize terrorism supporters and extollers of martyrs, all the Ayman Odehs and Ofer Cassifs and Ahmad Tibis."* ([18.9.22](#)) [Ayman Odeh and Ahmad Tibi are MKs of the predominantly-Palestinian list Hadash-Ta'al].
- **Shas** MK **Ya'akov Margi**, when asked about the competition with the Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit list, stated that, *"Ben Gvir is more legitimate than all the*

people on the Left ... The radical Left has been arousing the Arab street [to go vote] with a lot of money from Europeans." ([31.10.22](#))

The right-wing also spoke against the legitimacy of Palestinian representatives' participation in the Knesset or government, repeatedly referring to them as 'terrorists' and 'terrorist facilitators'. In fact, they undermined the validity of the outgoing government because, for the first time in Israeli history, it included an Arab party, The United Arab List (Ra'am, the political wing of the Southern Branch of the Islamic movement in Israel).

- Rejecting the candidacy of Palestinian MK Ahmad Tibi to be the temporary Deputy Speaker of the Knesset, **Likud's Nissim Vaturi** said, *"It will not happen, we learned from the previous term and we will not legitimize a single Arab in the Knesset."* ([17.11.22](#)) [Ahmad Tibi is an MK of the predominantly-Palestinian list Hadash-Ta'al].
- **Yitzhak Goldknopf** of the **United Torah Judaism party**, when asked if he was willing to join a government with Ra'am, said, *"It makes me shudder when people talk to me about it, I am reminded of terror attacks in Elad and Bnei Brak – the terrorists do not come from our study halls, they come from there... we need to stay away from people called Arabs."* ([2.8.22](#))
- Clearly implying Ra'am were terrorist supporters, **Orit Strock** of the **Religious Zionist- Otzma Yehudit** party said, *"When a terrorist knows that inside Israel's government there are some who agree with his way, he tells himself, 'I am closer to my goal,' and that definitely fuels him."* ([2.6.22](#))
- Further making this claim, **Simcha Rothman**, also of **Religious Zionist- Otzma Yehudit** said, *"This government's innovation was to move the taxpayers' money to support terrorism. They relied on supporters of terrorism and became supporters of terrorism themselves."* ([21.8.22](#))
- **Nir Barkat** of the **Likud** party, argued that Ra'am were "terrorism supporters." When pushed to explain how he can argue that, he answered, *"They [Ra'am] more than once sat with terrorists... I have not seen them go out against terrorists the way we do... they are an anti-Zionist movement ...and we will not cooperate."* ([28.6.22](#))
- **Likud MK Shlomo Karhi** expressed similar positions, *"It is very important that the people of Israel recognize and accept they are being lied to, that the Israeli government is being held at the neck by supporters of terrorism... whose sweetness of lips and the niceness are a way of hiding... their desire to eliminate Israel."* ([3.11.21](#))
- **Yariv Levin**, another **Likud** member, made similar claims, *"Benny Gantz relies on a coalition with supporters of terrorism. Can the citizens of Israel be secure when Israel's security is in the hands of Ayman Odeh and Ahmad Tibi?"* ([22.9.19](#))
- **Likud MK David Amsalem** described the Israeli government as, *"A crazy, Bolshevik, anti-Zionist gang which has taken over the country. The government of Palestine, pushovers, a bunch of kids run by the arch-terrorist Mansour Abbas."* ([17.11.21](#))

3. Entrenching the Occupation and Settlements

Expansion of Settlements

In addition to expanding the settlements, coalition members have highlighted legalizing outposts (often referred to in Hebrew as the “young settlements”, these are settlements established in the West Bank even contrary to Israeli planning regulations). A key component in this program is passing [The Law for the Regularization of Settlement in Judea and Samaria](#), which was struck down by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional in June 2020. The law would have instructed military commanders to expropriate Palestinian privately-owned lands and allocate them for the use of the settlers who have trespassed onto them, and legalized outposts and settlements built illegally on Palestinian privately-owned lands.

- In September 2022, during an event held in the illegal outpost of Givat Harel, several members of the anticipated coalition reiterated their commitment to settlements and particularly to the legalization of the outposts.

Orit Strook of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list, and Director of the Knesset ‘Land of Israel Lobby’, declared, *“The settlers of the young settlement [illegal outposts] are pioneers of our generation, the regulation [legalization] of their settlements is a moral and Zionist duty of the first order, and its delay is an injustice that cannot be put up with.”* ([18.9.22](#))

Yitzhak Wasserlauf of the same party stated, *“The young settlement should and must be developed, the settlement throughout Judea and Samaria prevents the continuation of the Palestinian takeover in the way towards statehood in the territory.”* ([18.9.22](#))

Moshe Arbel of **Shas** stated, *“Shas’ commitment to the young settlement is not in doubt. We are speaking of a deep and significant connection to the advancement of the commitment. The establishment of the Amichai settlement is thanks to the then Minister of the Interior Aryeh Deri. We will continue on this path.”* ([18.9.22](#)) [Amichai is a settlement established in 2017. The Israeli government approved its construction to compensate the evacuees of the Amona outpost, which was illegally built on Palestinian privately-owned land and evacuated following a Supreme Court verdict.

- **Simcha Rothman** of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** party said, *“After the Palestinian Authority repeatedly violated the Oslo agreements by making unilateral moves on the ground... It is time to say that Oslo is dead, and if Oslo is dead, its divisions are also dead. We have one Land of Israel, and we will settle in all of it, Areas A, B, and C.”* ([15.3.21](#))
- **Yinon Azulai** of **Shas** stated, *The settlements are the backbone of the people of Israel and the State of Israel. These are the places that strengthen us, because if we are not there, the country will be lost because little by little they will come and take over the whole country.”* Going even further, he stated that the outposts are “engaging in righteous settlement there and everything must be done to keep them there.” ([28.6.21](#))
- **Nir Barkat**, **Likud** MK and former mayor of Jerusalem, presented an extensive

program for expanding and deepening Israeli control over the West Bank, asserting that, *“Since time immemorial the territories of Judea and Samaria and the Jordan Valley have been an essential part of the history and heritage of the Jewish people and an integral part of the Land of Israel. Now is the time to take a big leap forward, realize the great potential of the region, and develop the economic growth engines inherent in these regions of the country.”* ([1.11.21](#))

- **Likud MK Miki Zohar** stated his party’s support to the settlement project, *“The Likud party is for the settlements in Judea and Samaria! As we promised, we have now passed ‘The Law for the Regularization’ of Settlement in Judea and Samaria in the plenary... I will keep working on this issue until the legislation is completed.”* ([16.12.20](#))

The commitment to the settlement project includes wide support for re-establishing the settlement Homesh located between Nablus and Jenin, which was built on Palestinian privately-owned land seized for security purposes, and was evacuated during the 2005 “Disengagement Plan”.

- In announcing her nomination as part of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list, **Limor Son Har-Melech**, who was herself a resident of Homesh, stated, *“Among the issues I will work to promote: a return to Homesh and... to all parts of our country, the repeal of the disengagement law [Disengagement Plan Implementation Law (2005)] and the strengthening of the young settlement.”* ([1.11.22](#)).

Many members of the impending coalition joined her by signing a statement in support of the return to Homesh - from the **Likud**, Nir Barkat, Yuli Edelstein, Eli Cohen, Yoav Gallant, Boaz Bismuth, and Hanoach Milwidsky; from the **United Torah Judaism party**, Yitzhak Goldknopf; from **Shas**, Aryeh Deri and Moshe Abutbul; and from **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** Orit Strock, Itamar Ben Gvir, Bezalel Smotrich, Simcha Rothman, and Avi Maoz. ([28.10.22](#))

- **Bezalel Smotrich**, co-leader of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit**, went so far as to state that, *“The cancellation of the law of secession should be part of the basic guidelines of the next government and there is a consensus between the parties.”* ([10.11.22](#)) For him and others in his party, these plans also include returning Israeli settlements to the Gaza Strip, *“It should be understood that the demand to return to Homesh is a deep repentance process for the sin of expelling Gush Katif. We emphasize Homesh first, but the goal is also to return to Gush Katif.”* ([19.10.22](#))

[Annexation of the West Bank](#)

- **Zvika Fogel** of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** list said last week, *“I will let them [the Palestinians in the West Bank] lead their lives in civilian colonies, without an army... I do not want to lead their daily lives... I am not in favor of the division of the State of Israel...”* ([17.11.22](#))
- **Shlomo Karhi** of the **Likud** party stated *“When you swore to our forefathers – it was not more or less, nor a green line and nor a civil administration. Hebron is ours. Hebron has always been. Hebron forever and God-willing under Israeli sovereignty soon.”* ([15.9.22](#))

Karhi also tweeted, *"I will work toward implementing full Israeli sovereignty in Judea and Samaria. We will roll back the Arab takeover of the open spaces... We will build extensively in the E1 area and create an unbreakable connection between Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim, to the point of destroying the mad dream of the Palestinian state."* ([9.8.22](#))

- **Likud MK Amichai Chikli** stated, *"Judea and Samaria – our ancestral lands, the most important land reserve for the future of Israel and its security which is being stolen from us by the European Union and the Palestinian Authority, day by day, hour by hour. Palestinians – enemy, their identity is built on the denial of Zionism and beyond this they have nothing of their own."* ([24.3.22](#))
- Another **Likud** member, **Ofir Akunis**, stated, *"A large majority of the Likud faction is here which means - the Likud is with Samaria; Samaria is with the Likud. This is not a political issue but an ideological issue. The Likud has no existence without supporting Greater Israel. The mainstream right-wing movement has no validity if it does not support the integrity of the country in Samaria, Judea, and the Golan Heights. You are part of the Likud and we are part of you."* ([9.12.21](#))
- **Likud MK Nir Barkat** said, *"We will not give up sovereignty, and now more than ever we need to expand the construction in Judea and Samaria, in order to send a clear message to the whole world that we will continue to stand for our historical right to the land."* ([13.8.20](#))
- **Meir Porush** of the **United Torah Judaism party**, said, *"We, as Jews who believe in the Torah, that the whole Land of Israel is ours, so it does not matter if you give them A or B or C. Not an inch of the Land of Israel. We cannot give up and agree to such a thing and surrender Territories."* ([18.2.20](#))
- **Miki Zohar** of the **Likud** stated, *"What I care about is what the public wants. The public does not want a Palestinian state here and the public wants to enforce [Israeli] sovereignty."* ([12.9.18](#))

Zohar had previously stated, *"The two-state solution is dead.... The Arabs will not receive full citizenship status, because this would mean that they would vote for the Knesset. They will be granted all the rights that citizens have, except voting for the Knesset."* ([6.3.17](#))

- **May Golan** of the **Likud** party said, *"The same thing that applies to south Tel Aviv applies to Hebron. It is very important to me to strengthen settlements wherever they are. My essence is the Greater Land of Israel."* ([10.4.19](#))

The Fiction of a Reformed and Moderate Itamar Ben Gvir

Over the course of the election campaign, the co-leader of **Otzma Yehudit Party**, **Itamar Ben Gvir**, presented himself to the public as a more moderate leader, who is no longer a proponent of Kahanism. However, statements by Ben Gvir and his confidants make clear that he maintains the same agenda, while perhaps moderating the style and language. Thus, Ben Gvir's reformed and moderate self-presentation was merely a show to guarantee the party's ability to participate

in the elections and become an influential part in Israeli politics (in previous iterations, Ben Gvir's allies Michael Ben Ari and Baruch Marzel were banned from the elections in 2019 because of incitement to racism).

- In an expose by Israeli Channel 13, **Almog Cohen** of the **Religious Zionism-Otzma Yehudit** explained to a party activist the attempts to display 'moderation', *"For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war" [Proverbs 24:6], whoever does not use trickery loses... It is a trick - like a Trojan horse. You have to be smart and right.*" ([20.9.22](#))
- **Zvika Fogel**, who attended the above-mentioned Kahane memorial, stated, *"I came to honor the head of my party."* Highlighting the extent of their legitimization for Kahane's legacy, he added, *"but I also came to honor a Jewish leader who was killed by an Arab, the same as I would have honored a memorial for Gandhi [Rehavam Ze'evi]³ or as I would have attended Rabin's memorial. I came unapologetically and without making excuses."* ([11.11.22](#))
- On [14.11.22](#), it was revealed that Ben Gvir's close advisor and member of his coalition negotiation team, **Chanamel Dorfman**, has been the legal advisor for an association that provides assistance for extreme right-wing Jewish prisoners who targeted Palestinians, including the [murderer of Mohammed Abu Khdeir](#), Yaakov Teitel (known as the [Jewish Terrorist](#)), and [Amiram ben Uliel](#), who firebombed the Dawabsheh family house, killing three of its members and severely injuring their infant child. The list also includes Yigal Amir, the assassin of Yitzhak Rabin. Dorfman had previously said, *"My only problem with the Nazis is that I was on the losing side."* ([11.12.12](#))

Itamar Ben Gvir himself has repeatedly made statements that show his continuing admiration for and adherence to Kahane's legacy, and that the difference between the two extreme far-right figures is merely in style:

- In announcing his intention to attend Kahane memorial, Ben Gvir tweeted, *"I will attend the memorial service for the 32nd anniversary of Rabbi Meir Kahane, may the Lord avenge his death... It is no secret that today, I do not agree with all his opinions, but I appreciate the Rabbi's love for Israel."* ([10.11.22](#))
- Responding to an article in Haaretz newspaper, Ben Gvir said, *"I want to tell you, Haaretz, thank you that you have made it clear that I am on the right path and that Rabbi Kahane, may his blood be avenged, is smiling down on me."* ([10.11.22](#))
- In a previous Kahane memorial, Ben Gvir said that attending was *"not just for remembering the person... It is a kind of oath of allegiance... To the way, to the continuity [of Kahane's ideology]. We hear more people who believe that Rabbi Kahane was right."* ([1.7.22](#))
- When asked about the comparison that is being made between himself and Kahane, Ben Gvir responded that their ideology was in fact similar, but that the *"big difference"* is that now *"they give us a microphone."* ([21.2.19](#))

³ Rehavam Ze'evi was an Israeli extreme right-wing politician who founded the party Moledet. He is considered the "father of the 'transfer' idea," advocating for the expulsion of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Ha'aretz, [17.10.01](#))

- Responding to the claim that Ben Gvir has moderated himself, scholar Tomer Persico reminds that, “Seven years ago, in [an interview](#) with Hanoach Daum, Ben Gvir said that the difference between him and Kahane was “not in views or attributes, but maybe in style. The style is a little different.” ([30.8.22](#))
- Five years ago, at a memorial for Kahane, Ben Gvir said that “every word [of Kahane is] actual, sharp, meant for the reality we have today.” ([30.8.22](#))
- In a Kahane memorial in 2017, Ben Gvir said, “They are scared because they know that Rabbi Kahane was right. They are scared because we are not Bennett who says that 99 percent of the Arabs are loyal to the State of Israel ... We do not pretend anything, we do not suck up, we tell the truth... In the light of the holy Rabbi and his words that never, ever lose their relevance.” ([12.11.17](#))
- In a Kahane memorial in 2016, Ben Gvir said, “The public in Israel is not stupid, everyone knows that Rabbi Kahane was right. Rabbi Kahane was a man of truth, he meant every word, every comma, every statement.” ([18.11.16](#))