



### [Israeli Cabinet Approves a Resolution Fast Tracking Illegal Settlement Construction](#)

The Israeli cabinet recently approved a resolution that will speed up the process of constructing illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank. This decision amends a previous law created in 1996 that required the defense minister to approve intermediate steps of the process of planning and construction. Now only initial approval will be required. Israel's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich now has a majority of the authority in approving housing plans. Smotrich is part of the far-right coalition that makes up Prime Minister Netanyahu's government. A settler himself, Smotrich has repeatedly made racist remarks about Palestinians, claiming that the Palestinian people are "an invention" from the last century. Putting a settler in charge of settlements in conflict of interest. Smotrich also serves as a minister in the Defense Ministry and will surely use this dual position to force Palestinian residents from their homes. His connection to armed forces will allow Smotrich to utilize the Israeli military to kill any Palestinians who attempt to prevent the destruction of their homes.

This change in procedure will streamline the process in which existing settlements are expanded and new settlements are created. It will make it virtually as easy to build in occupied Palestine as it would be to build in Israel. This policy change will have wide-reaching consequences. It will lead to the creation of more settlements, forcing more Palestinians from their homes. The Israeli government has already announced that it plans to build 4,650 new housing units throughout the West Bank. The Civil Administration's Higher Planning Committee is set to meet on June 26 to approve the construction. This illegal and inhumane treatment of the Palestinian people will only increase tensions between Israel and Palestine and will likely lead to more bloodshed. Israel will likely use this to justify killing more Palestinians. Already, violence has been worsening, with Israelis killing 5 Palestinians including a 15-year-old. 4 settlers were also killed in attacks recently. This new move will destroy any hope for a 2 state-solution. It is impossible for Palestine to reach any form of a peace agreement with Israel while they are actively stealing Palestinian land. Outside actors will also have a significantly more difficult time getting the two sides to negotiate at all.

The decision to remove any red tape also continues the Israeli government's degradation of checks and balances. Its moves towards full authoritarianism will continue to destabilize the entire region. As oversight is dismantled and dissenting voices are silenced, Israel will begin to act with renewed aggression. Netanyahu's extremist far-right government has already made moves to dismantle checks and balances. He has recently put the controversial judicial overhaul back on the agenda. This overhaul will essentially eliminate judicial oversight. The lack of oversight will allow Netanyahu's extremist government to implement policies that will have negative effects on both Palestinians and Israelis. It is unlikely that the removal of guardrails will affect its relationship with the United States immediately. Support for Israel is still strong among most policymakers and the American public. Over time, however, it may have negative effects. As they continue to slide towards authoritarianism, it makes openly criticizing Israel more palatable for policymakers. There is also a small but growing portion of the

American public that is voicing their disdain for Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. The size of this group could serve as a bellwether for the support they enjoy in the United States. It is not likely that these two groups will grow quickly enough to have any impact on American support for them in the near future. Still, the existence and growth of these groups do suggest that American support for Israel is not entirely secure if they continue down this path.