

Yedioth Achronoth – February 22, 2023

## Judicial Reforms Lay Groundwork for Apartheid

By Ron Ben-Yishai

- The Israeli public must understand that the proposed judicial reforms, apart from its stated goals, also secretly intend to lay the legal groundwork to serve two political processes that will dramatically change the State of Israel and our lives. The first process aims to annex the entire West Bank without giving citizenship to the Palestinians, and the detailed outline of this plan is found in a document called "The Ruling Plan." It was drafted back in 2017 by today's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich. The other process, through the Basic Law, aims to divide Israelis into three sectors, where only one - the secular-traditional (including Druze and other minorities) - carries the burden of security, labor, and economic growth, which includes paying taxes.
- The other two sectors, the Arab and the Haredi, won't bear the burden of security at all and won't fully contribute to the labor market or pay taxes, but they will draw a hefty chunk of the welfare budget for their own purposes. This process is led by Chairman of the Finance Committee MK Moshe Gafni, leader of the United Torah Judaism party. The signs of these political processes - which in fact will turn Israel into an apartheid state - appear in the coalition agreement clauses. It should be mentioned that Gafni and his colleagues are not even trying to hide their intentions. Thus, for example, the intention to grant the rabbinical courts jurisdiction is almost similar to the civil courts that rule based on Knesset laws. This will allow rulings to be made according to the Halakhah (Jewish religious laws) - even on civil and economic matters.
- They claim the citizen will be able to choose the legal system that is convenient for them, but this is the first step in promoting a state of Halakhah over secular values, such as democracy. At the moment, only the Supreme Court can prevent that from happening; hence they are interested in neutralizing it. But what is even more dangerous is Smotrich's plans. He argues that the Palestinians are unwilling under any circumstances to agree to Jews fulfilling their national right to self-determination. Therefore,

according to Smotrich, all outlines made for a solution based on territorial concessions are irrelevant.

- Instead of a two-state solution, Smotrich proposes a multi-stage plan to resolve the conflict without allowing the Jews to become a demographic minority. The price for such a plan - restricting the civil liberties of the Palestinians. This would be a blow to the democratic regime in Israel and the state's image around the world. According to Smotrich's plan, once Israel annexes the West Bank territories, the Palestinians will have the opportunity to choose one of three alternatives: The first: Stay in the West Bank and live under Israeli rule and sovereignty. The Palestinians would not be citizens of Israel but would have the status of residents (such as Arabs living in east Jerusalem). The second: Palestinians who would not want to live under Israeli rule would voluntarily emigrate, and Israel would encourage this through financial aid.
- The third option is intended to deal thoroughly with Palestinians who would not agree to the previous two alternatives: "Given an unequivocal directive, the IDF will work to overpower the terrorists in a short amount of time; kill those who need to be killed, collect all the weapons to the last bullet, and restore security to the citizens of the State of Israel." The keywords for this paragraph lie in the words "given an unequivocal directive," meaning that the government will order the security forces to act aggressively in the West Bank with almost no restrictions.
- According to Smotrich, an action is measured by the end result. This means brutality and cruelty are justified and would be considered moral if it achieves the desired goal. In order to understand what is happening in the defense and finance ministries, one must read the first phase of the Smotrich plan, titled: "Decisive Settlement." The first phase entails the government flooding the West Bank with Jewish settlements and settlers. When that happens, the Palestinians are supposed to understand that they have no chance of getting their own state and would have to choose one of the three alternatives – a life of oppression under Israeli rule, emigration, or becoming a martyr.

