



## Israel: New Discriminatory and Anti-Democratic Legislation

14 September 2017

This short report details newly enacted Israeli laws and pending bills that contain discriminatory and/or anti-democratic provisions which are liable to violate the rights of Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians living in the 1967 Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), as well as impose restrictions on those who seek to defend them. They undermine the most basic legal protections, rights and freedoms, including the rights to land, housing, and property ownership, and the rights to vote and stand for election; and the rights to freedom of political expression and association. While the discrimination inherent in some of these laws is clear and explicit, other legislation has been drafted using neutral language in order to obscure the discriminatory intentions of its drafters, but stands to have a disparate impact on Palestinians.

The report also includes examples of an alarming wave of bills that aim to annex Israeli settlements throughout occupied East Jerusalem and the wider West Bank to Israel, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. These bills are being promoted alongside other discriminatory and anti-democratic bills, such as the Basic Law: Jewish Nation State Bill, which denies Palestinians in Israel the right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel, by explicitly limiting that right to the Jewish people, and demotes the official status of the Arabic language in Israel. Members of the current Knesset have produced a plethora of discriminatory and anti-democratic bills, and the sample below is indicative rather than exhaustive of new legislation covering three main themes: (1) land use and ownership; (2) freedom of opinion, speech and association; and (3) civil and political rights.

### 1. Laws that threaten land use and ownership

#### **The Settlements Regularization Law<sup>1</sup>**

*Enacted by the Knesset on 6 February 2017*

This new law allows the State of Israel to expropriate vast tracts of private Palestinian lands in the West Bank for the purposes of settlement construction, in violation of international law and of Palestinians' property rights. The law establishes a mechanism through which Israeli settlements built on private Palestinian land in the West Bank can be "legalized" or "regularized" via retroactive expropriation, planning, and zoning regulations. The law sets out a new process to legalize about half of Israel's settlement outposts, as well as about 3,500 additional homes built illegally in settlements recognized as legal by Israel, against the international consensus. The transfer of the Occupying Power's civilian population into occupied territory is a war crime, according to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The land grab enabled by the law, for ethnic-ideological reasons, amounts to "domination" by one group over another group, which is also strictly prohibited under international law, including the Rome Statute. The exploitation of occupied territory for the political and civilian needs of

<sup>1</sup> The text of the law (English, translation by Adalah):

[https://www.adalah.org/uploads/uploads/Settlement\\_Regularization\\_Law\\_English\\_FINAL\\_05032017.pdf](https://www.adalah.org/uploads/uploads/Settlement_Regularization_Law_English_FINAL_05032017.pdf).

the Occupying Power and application of Israeli law in the OPT are further violations of international law. In the run-up to its enactment, Israel's Attorney General stated that in his opinion the law would not survive the test of the Israeli Supreme Court and that he would not defend it in court.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Kaminitz Law<sup>3</sup>**

*Enacted by the Knesset on 5 April 2017*

The Kaminitz law gives the state expanded administrative powers to demolish homes and seek prison sentences and more severe financial penalties as punitive measures for breaches of the state's discriminatory planning and building laws, while also limiting the judicial review of the courts.<sup>4</sup> The principal aim of the law is to increase the "enforcement and penalization of planning and building offenses", which it does via an amendment to Article 10 of the Planning and Building Law – 1965. While neutral on its face, the law will have a disparate impact on Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinian residents of Jerusalem because the new law is expected to be used almost exclusively against them. They are the groups most likely to build without the requisite official permits because they are technically unobtainable to them due to decades of systematic discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel in land allocation, and deliberate neglect of the land and housing rights and needs of the occupied Palestinian population in Jerusalem. The law further violates individuals' rights to contest demolition and evictions orders issued against them and their properties before the courts. While the law ostensibly seeks to increase enforcement of the rule of law, the rule of law also assumes that the person was given a reasonable possibility of acting according to the law but chose not to do so. In this case, the state itself is responsible for creating the planning and housing crisis, and failing to provide other housing solutions. The harsher penalties will unjustly sanction Palestinian citizens and residents who have been left with no option other than to build without a permit on their private property.<sup>5</sup>

### **Bills to Watch**

- **The Negev Development Authority Bill<sup>6</sup>**

A proposed amendment to the Negev (Naqab) Development Authority Law seeks to give settlements equal legal status to that of communities in the Naqab, effectively annexing parts of the southern West Bank to Israel. According to the proposed amendment, the law is to be applied to certain areas of the West Bank, thereby rendering the legal status of settlements equal to that of towns and villages in the Naqab region of southern Israel. As well as contradicting provisions of Israeli domestic law, the bill also violates international humanitarian law and stands to exacerbate the human rights violations that accompany the establishment and existence of the settlements. The extensive expropriation of

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<sup>2</sup> Adalah, together with the Jerusalem Legal Aid Center and Al Mezan Center for Human Rights petitioned the Supreme Court against the law on 8 February 2017 on behalf of 17 Palestinian local councils. See Adalah press release, "17 West Bank Palestinian municipalities, 3 human rights groups petition Supreme Court against Settlements Law," 10 February 2017: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/9030>. See HCJ 1308/17, *Silwad Municipality, et. al. v. The Knesset, et. al* (case pending). Yesh Din, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and Peace Now also petitioned against the law.

<sup>3</sup> The text of the law (Hebrew): [http://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20\\_Isr\\_382860.pdf](http://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20_Isr_382860.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Adalah press release, "Knesset 'adding insult to injury' with approval of Kaminitz Law," 12 April 2017: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/9074>.

<sup>5</sup> Adalah position paper, "Adalah's Objections to Discriminatory 'Kaminitz Bill' for Harsh Enforcement of Planning & Building Law in Israel," 30 March 2017: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/9068>.

<sup>6</sup> Bill no. P/4014/20, dated 14 March 2017.

properties of the protected Palestinian population and the construction of settlements constitute a gross violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Further, the transfer by the Occupying Power of its civilian population to the occupied territory is defined as a war crime in the Rome Statute. The bill was scheduled to be discussed by the Ministerial Committee on Legislation on 25 June 2017 but was removed from the schedule. Adalah is monitoring the progress of the bill.

- **Other bills that aim at the *de-facto* annexation of the West Bank settlements to Israel**

A slew of other bills that are at various stages of the legislative process similarly seek to *de facto* annex Jewish Israeli settlements to Israel, either *en masse* or at the level of single settlements or settlement blocs. They do this using several means, including the application of Israeli domestic law to the settlements, as does a bill which aims to apply the entire body of Israeli domestic law to the Israeli settlements in the West Bank,<sup>7</sup> and other bills that seek to apply specific laws, e.g. the Law and Administration Ordinance<sup>8</sup> and Israel's planning and building laws.<sup>9</sup> *It should be stressed in this regard that Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967 was achieved via the same mechanism, i.e. the application of Israel domestic law to the area.* At least 20 bills, some of which are near and exact duplicates submitted by different MKs, aim to apply Israeli domestic law to the settlements one settlement or one bloc at a time. A few examples are bills that specifically target the Jordan Valley settlements,<sup>10</sup> Hebron and surrounding settlements,<sup>11</sup> Ariel,<sup>12</sup> Modi'in,<sup>13</sup> and Gush Etzion,<sup>14</sup> as well as the "Ma'ale Adumim Sovereignty" Bill,<sup>15</sup> and the "Jerusalem and its Daughters" Bill,<sup>16</sup> which seeks to annex settlements around Jerusalem that contain over 230,000 settlers.

## **2. Laws that threaten freedom of opinion, speech and association**

### **Law Banning BDS Supporters from Entering Israel<sup>17</sup>**

*Enacted by the Knesset on 6 March 2017*

This law bans entry of foreign nationals and of Palestinians from the West Bank if they or the organizations they belong to publicly expressed support for a boycott against the State of Israel or against Israeli settlements. It violates most basic tenets of democracy by making political opinions a consideration that may prevent non-citizens from entering Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). The new law has particularly grave implications for many Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem whose spouses hold a temporary residency status or a temporary military-issued permit. The spouses (if vocal BDS supporters) will now be vulnerable to a revocation of their status and permits based on their political opinions, therefore creating an additional threat to the family unification of Palestinians in East Jerusalem. The text of the law reads: "No visa and residency permit of any type will be given to a person who is not an Israeli citizen or does not have a permit for permanent residency in the State of Israel if

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<sup>7</sup> Bill no. P/2574/20, dated 2 February 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Bill no. P/3046/20, dated 20 June 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Bill no. P/2226/20, dated 23 November 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Bill no. P/3598/20, dated 27 December 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Bill no. P/156/20, dated 4 May 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Bill no. P/4040/20, dated 30 March 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Bill no. P/260/20, dated 7 May 2015.

<sup>14</sup> Bill no. 4039/20, dated 7 March 2017, and bill no.3947/20, dated 4 May 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Bill no. P/3244/20, dated 1 August 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Bill no. 4109/20, dated 20 March 2017.

<sup>17</sup> The text of the law (Hebrew): [http://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20\\_Isr\\_381202.pdf](http://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20_Isr_381202.pdf).

he, [or] the organization or entity for which he works, has knowingly issued a public call to impose a boycott on the State of Israel, as defined in the Preventing Harm to the State of Israel through Boycott Law, 5771-2011, or has committed to participate in such a boycott.”<sup>18</sup>

### NGO “Foreign Funding” Law<sup>19</sup>

Enacted on 11 July 2016

This new law requires NGOs that receive more than 50% of their annual budget from foreign governments to declare their sources of funding in all publications, including letters to government and public officials, and in reports to the Registrar of Non-Profit Associations.<sup>20</sup> As 25 of the 27 Israeli organizations that currently receive more than half their budget from foreign governments are human rights organizations, it is clear that these groups, which are highly critical of the Israeli government’s policies particularly in the OPT, were targeted by the law.<sup>21</sup>

The US, the EU, numerous legislators in EU member state parliaments including the German Parliament, among others, criticized the law and called on the Israeli government not to support its passage.<sup>22</sup> At the end of June 2016, three UN human rights experts urged MKs not to approve the law. The experts expressed grave concern that the legislation would chill the speech of human rights NGOs.<sup>23</sup>

The political motivations behind the bill are clear since all registered NGOs are already legally required to comply with invasive reporting requirements that mandate them to publish quarterly reports on any funding received from foreign governments or publicly-funded foreign donors. Thus, this information is already publicly available and can even be found on the websites of the targeted human rights organizations and the Registrar of Associations. Significantly, the law does not require transparency of donations received from private individuals, leaving right-wing, settler organizations, which are heavily funded by private US donors, unaffected.<sup>24</sup> Financial assistance from international sources is legitimate and necessary in states where serious human rights violations occur, in Adalah’s view.

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<sup>18</sup> Adalah press release, “Knesset approves law barring boycott supporters from entering Israel and the OPT,” 7 March 2017: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/9057>.

<sup>19</sup> The text of the law (Hebrew): [http://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20\\_lsr\\_346561.pdf](http://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20_lsr_346561.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> According to the new law, those organizations that fail to abide by these regulations will be fined ₪29,200 (US\$7,540). The new law will go into effect on 1 January 2017 and will not retroactively consider donations made prior to this date. NGOs will have until 30 June 2018 to file their first report – six months following the conclusion of 2017 – to the Registrar of Non-Profit Associations.

<sup>21</sup> See Adalah press release, “Approval of NGO Law part of grotesque game aimed at human rights organizations,” 12 July 2016: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/8848>.

<sup>22</sup> See Statement of US Embassy in Tel Aviv, “Information on U.S. Foreign Agents Registration Act,” 11 January 2016: <http://israel.usembassy.gov/press11012016c.html>. See also, “MEPS send an open letter on Israeli Government NGO bill,” 8 February 2016:

[www.juliewardmep.eu/meps\\_send\\_an\\_open\\_letter\\_on\\_israeli\\_government\\_ngo\\_bill](http://www.juliewardmep.eu/meps_send_an_open_letter_on_israeli_government_ngo_bill); Barak Ravid, “German MPs Implore Netanyahu to Bury NGO ‘Transparency’ Bill,” *Haaretz*, 3 December 2015: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.689735?date=1449134456871>.

<sup>23</sup> See OHCHR, “UN experts urge Knesset not to adopt pending legislation that could target critical NGOs”, 24 June 2016: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20177&LangID=E>.

<sup>24</sup> See Uri Blau, “Haaretz Investigation: U.S. Donors Gave Settlements More Than \$220 Million in Tax-exempt Funds Over Five Years”, *Haaretz*, 7 December 2015: <http://www.haaretz.com/settlementdollars/1.689683>.

## **Bills to Watch**

- **Bill denying Tax-Exempt Status to NGOs that Criticize the State of Israel Abroad**<sup>25</sup>

This bill seeks to amend the Income Tax Ordinance to revoke the tax exempt status of “public organizations” that, “act against the State of Israel abroad”. The regular exemption, amounting to 35%, applies to charitable donations made to public organizations. According to the bill, a relevant “act” would include publishing a claim that Israel has committed war crimes or calling for a boycott of Israel or its citizens (including Israeli settlers in the West Bank). The purpose of the bill is to reduce donations to the human rights organizations and therefore impair their ability to continue their operations. The legislation passed a preliminary reading on 8 March 2017 and is now being prepared for a first reading.

- **Denial of Freedom of Information Bill**<sup>26</sup>

This bill targets NGOs, which receive their source of funding from foreign states, almost all human rights organizations. It removes such organizations from the existing exemption from paying fees for Freedom of Information Act requests from state authorities, and imposes on them a charge that is double the amount of the regular fee paid for such requests by private bodies and individuals.

- **Cultural Loyalty Bill**<sup>27</sup>

This bill would require cultural institutions and artists seeking state funding to declare their loyalty to the State of Israel and its laws. Culture Minister Miri Regev, who is seeking through this legislation to control funding decisions to cultural institutions and artists in Israel, initiated this bill.<sup>28</sup> The bill further seeks to expand the Culture Minister’s powers over the funding and the withdrawal of state funding to artistic and cultural institutions. The bill particularly targets Palestinian Arab cultural and artistic institutions in Israel and threatens to place illegitimate restrictions on freedoms of creativity and artistic production, which form integral parts of the constitutional right to express an opinion, on the basis of political considerations.

- **The State Education Bill, Amendment to Ban Educational Activities that Discourage Military Service**<sup>29</sup>

This bill seeks to amend the State Education Law by: (1) Authorizing the Minister of Education to promulgate regulations in order to prevent an individual or external body from if their actions “contradict the goals” of the law; and (2) Adding a new goal to the list of existing goals of the State Education Law, namely: “To educate students to serve in the Israeli military and to safeguard its status and dignity within Israeli society.” The legislation could be used, inter alia, to ban NGOs and other speakers who oppose the conscription of Arab citizens of Israel into the Israeli army for mandatory or voluntary military service, for example. The bill passed a preliminary reading on 11 January 2017 and is currently being prepared for a first reading in the Knesset.

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<sup>25</sup> Bill no. P/3667/20, dated 9 January 2017.

<sup>26</sup> The bill has not been officially promoted yet.

<sup>27</sup> The bill has not been officially promoted yet.

<sup>28</sup> Adalah sent a letter to the Chairmen of the Knesset’s Education Committee demanding immediate action to stop the bill on 26 January 2016. See Adalah Press Release, “Knesset’s Education Committee must reject Culture Minister’s bill requiring cultural centers and artists to declare loyalty to the state,” 29 January 2016: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/8741>.

<sup>29</sup> Bill no. P/3643/20, dated 2 January 2017.

### **3. Laws that threaten civil and political rights**

#### **The “Expulsion of MKs” Law<sup>30</sup>**

*Enacted by the Knesset on 20 July 2016*

This law allows a majority of 90 Knesset Members (MKs) to oust a serving MK for the full period of the Knesset’s remaining term on the following two grounds, as enumerated in Section 7A of the Basic Law: The Knesset: (1) incitement to racism; and/or (2) support for armed struggle of an enemy state or a terrorist organization against Israel. It presents a grave danger to the most basic civil rights in a democratic society: the right to vote and the right to be elected, and threatens to further restrict the space currently allowed for freedom of expression.<sup>31</sup>

The law stipulates that when the Knesset decides on an expulsion, the statements of the “suspect” MK will also be examined and not only their aims or actions. It would therefore allow the Israeli Jewish majority in the Knesset to oust elected Arab MKs and political lists on the basis of purely political/ideological considerations, despite the clear conflict of interest entailed in MKs voting to unseat their political rivals. In the case of a criminal offense, standing MKs can already be expelled from the Knesset for a conviction with moral turpitude under existing provisions of the Basic Law: The Knesset and the law is therefore superfluous and not fit for this purpose.

The law is the latest attempt by the government to delegitimize the elected political representatives of the Palestinian minority in Israel, including repeated attempts to disqualify Arab MKs and political parties from Knesset elections, the government’s decision to outlaw the Islamic Movement in 2015, and the Knesset’s passage of a series of laws such as the “Electoral Threshold Law” (2014), the “Nakba Law” (2011), and the “Boycott Law” (2011), all intended to silence the Arab public.

#### **Basic Law: The Knesset – Expansion of Grounds for Disqualifying Candidates from Knesset Elections<sup>32</sup>**

*Enacted by the Knesset on 14 March 2017*

This law amends Article 7A of the Basic Law to expand the grounds on which political parties and individual candidates can be disqualified from elections to the Knesset to include not only their goals and actions, but also their statements. Under the law, parties and individual candidates can be disqualified if their goals/actions – explicitly or implicitly – negate the existence of the State of Israel as a “Jewish and democratic state”; or incite to racism; or support armed struggle by a hostile state or terrorist organization against the State of Israel. The amendment makes it easier to disqualify candidates and parties from the Knesset by including statements among the accepted grounds, which are by their nature more liable to overly-broad interpretation.

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<sup>30</sup> The text of the law (Hebrew): [http://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20\\_Isr\\_347851.pdf](http://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20_Isr_347851.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> See Adalah press release, “Israeli Knesset’s approval of ‘Expulsion Law’ poses grave danger to basic democratic rights,” 20 July 2016: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/8866>. MK Yousef Jabareen, Adalah and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel are challenging this law before the Israeli Supreme Court. The case is set to be heard before an expanded judicial panel in November 2017. See Adalah press release, “MK Jabareen, Adalah, ACRI petition Israeli Supreme Court against Expulsion of Members of Knesset Law,” 2 January 2017: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/8987>; HCJ 10214/16, *MK Yousef Jabareen, et al. v. The Knesset (pending)*.

<sup>32</sup> The text of the law (Hebrew): [http://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20\\_Isr\\_382385.pdf](http://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20_Isr_382385.pdf).

## The “Anti-Terror” Law<sup>33</sup>

Enacted on 15 June 2016

The new Anti-Terror Law substantially expands the scope of the Israeli penal law by incorporating severe provisions of the British Mandate Emergency Regulations and other emergency orders. It contains broad and vague definitions of terrorism and terrorist organizations, which may be exploited by the police and the General Security Services (‘Shabak’ or Shin Bet) to suppress and criminalize legitimate political action, and even humanitarian and cultural activities, by Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians in the OPT against Israeli policies and the Occupation. The law establishes new criminal offenses such as public expressions of “support” or “empathy” for terror organizations, and significantly increases the maximum sentences for such offenses.<sup>34</sup>

The new law, which spans over 100 pages, is expected to significantly harm the rights of Palestinians detained for suspected security-related offenses, for example by allowing the widespread use of “secret evidence” by the state prosecution, thereby impeding the possibility of substantively objecting to repressive decisions based on their merits before the judiciary. It further contains draconian measures for investigating security detainees, adding to a pre-existing system that provides fertile ground for the security agencies to employ illegal methods in the interrogation room; removes essential procedural safeguards from security detainees that are provided to criminal suspects, including prompt access to a lawyer and judicial review; and lowers the evidentiary requirements of the state in such cases. It is liable to result in serious human rights violations and to further undermine democratic principles in Israel.

### Bills to Watch

- **The Anti-Terror Bill – “The Remaining Section”, concerning Administrative Powers**

This bill expands the powers of the Minister of Defense under the Emergency Powers (Detentions) Law – 1979 to hold individuals in administrative detention and impose other administrative restrictions on them by allowing the minister to do so without the existence of a declared “state of emergency”.<sup>35</sup> Currently, the powers to hold an individual in administrative detention are contingent on a state of emergency – under which Israel has officially existed since its establishment in 1948 – but this bill seeks to turn them into permanent powers held indefinitely by the Minister of Defense. The bill consists of sections of the original Anti-Terror Law that were removed from the legislation prior to its enactment in order to facilitate its own passage into law. The bill has passed a first reading in the Knesset, and is now under discussions ahead of its preparation for its second and third readings.

- **Basic Law: Jewish Nation State Bill<sup>36</sup>**

The purpose of this bill is to constitutionally enshrine – for the first time – the identity of the State of Israel as the national home of the Jewish people. The declared purpose of the bill is to “defend the

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<sup>33</sup> The text of the law (Hebrew): [http://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20\\_Is2\\_pb\\_342150.pdf](http://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20_Is2_pb_342150.pdf). The text of the law in English:

<http://www.justice.gov.il/Units/YeutzVehakika/InternationalLaw/MainDocs1/TheCounterTerrorismLaw.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> See Adalah press release, “Israel’s Anti-Terror Law violates Arab citizens’ human rights”, 19 June 2016: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/8834>.

<sup>35</sup> Jonathan Lis, Bill Would Give Defense Minister Broad Powers Against Israelis Deemed ‘Public Safety’ Threat, Ha’aretz, 27 October 2016: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.749400>

<sup>36</sup> Bill no. P/1989/20, dated 29 July 2015.

character of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people”, and it further specifies that “the right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish people.” The bill states that the official language of the state is Hebrew, demoting Arabic, which is currently a second official language in the state, to a language with “a special status.” Unlike an earlier draft of the bill, this version does not seek to explicitly make the democratic character of the state subordinate to its Jewish character. Because the proposed legislation has the status of a Basic Law, its enactment could be used to justify through law widespread discrimination against Arab citizens of Israel, as non-Jews, and is therefore highly dangerous.<sup>37</sup> On 7 May 2017, the Ministerial Committee for Legislation voted in favor of the bill and it now has the support of the government. The Knesset voted in favor of it in a preliminary reading on 10 May 2017 and it is currently being prepared for a first reading.

- **The “Muezzin” Bill**<sup>38</sup>

This bill targets Muslim citizens of Israel, aiming to silence Muslim calls to prayer at mosques around the country via a blanket categorization of mosque calls to prayer as “unreasonable noise”. While the text of the bill refers to “unreasonable noise” caused by loudspeaker systems in “houses of worship,” defined so that it could ostensibly apply also to synagogues, churches and any other buildings used for prayer or religious ritual, its purpose is to prevent calls over loudspeakers specifically from mosques: earlier drafts of the bill explicitly stated that citizens were suffering “as a result of noise caused by muezzins in mosques.” The bill is also crafted to apply to Muslim houses of worship only, since only mosques make use of loudspeaker systems between the hours of 23:00 and 07:00, the hours specified in the bill. The Muezzin bill threatens to offend the religious sentiment of the Muslim public, and also to impede the fulfillment of their basic religious obligations, since the call to Morning Prayer issued by the muezzin is a central tenet of Islam. On 12 February 2017, an Israeli ministerial committee voted to proceed with legislating the controversial bill, following which it passed a preliminary reading, and is now due to be prepared for its first hearing before the Knesset.

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<sup>37</sup> See Hassan Jabareen, “The Real Debate Over Israel’s ‘Jewish Nation-State’ Bill,” *The Nation*, 29 January 2015, available at: <https://www.thenation.com/article/real-debate-over-israels-jewish-nation-state-bill/>. See also Sawsan Zaher, “Israel’s Message to Its Palestinian Citizens: Jewish Rights Are Superior,” *Ha’aretz*, 11 May 2017, available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.788728>

<sup>38</sup> Bill no. P/2316/20, dated 7 December 2015, and bill no. P/3590/20, dated 19 December 2016 (duplicate bills).