

Statement from Regavim on Kaminitz Law Freeze, November 12, 2020

MKs from the United Arab List and other left-wing parties welcomed today's announcement (Thursday) that Minister of Justice Nisenkorn and the United Arab List have reached an agreement to "freeze" the Kaminitz Law - while Regavim called upon Netanyahu to proactively protect "the Likud's most significant achievement in the area of governance in the past decade."

Minister of Justice Avi Nisenkorn is expected to present a policy outline that will effectively bypass the Kaminitz Law (Amendment 116 of Israel's Construction and Planning Code, which creates enforcement tools against illegal construction). The policy directive is the result of a series of meetings between MKs of the United Arab List, particularly MKs Osama Saadi, Ahmed Tibi and UAL Chairman Ayman Odeh.

Following a stormy plenum debate yesterday (Wednesday), the Knesset voted down a bill submitted by Yesh Atid MK Gadeer Kamal-Mreeh to repeal the Kaminitz Law. In the course of the plenum debate, however, MK Odeh revealed that discussions with MK and Alternative Prime Minister Beni Gantz (Blue and White) on the matter would likely result in "the law being 'frozen' within a few days."

The enforcement section of Israel Construction and Planning Code, known as the Kaminitz Law (a reference to the intense involvement of Deputy Attorney General Erez Kaminitz in the legislation of this cluster of amendments), creates an array of administrative tools for enforcement of building and construction laws. According to data presented in the Knesset this past December, illegal construction starts have dropped by some 50% since the law went into effect in 2017.

According to an expose in Globes, under the new Kaminitz-bypass policy agreed upon between Nisenkorn and the United Arab List, no fines will be issued and no demolitions of illegal structures will be carried out. While the UAL requested a five-year freeze, the Ministry of Justice intends to approve a shorter moratorium.

The United Arab List has been fighting the Kaminitz Law from the moment it was passed; the UAL conditioned its support for Blue and White during coalition negotiations on the law's repeal. In another bid, the UAL attempted to leverage the repeal of the Kaminitz Law in the vote to disband the government following the first round of elections in 2019.

Meir Deutsch, Director General of Regavim, congratulated the MKs who voted yesterday against Kamal-Mreeh's bill to repeal the Kaminitz Law, and called on Prime Minister Netanyahu to block the 'bypass arrangement.'

"The Kaminitz Law is one of the most significant achievements for governability that the Likud and the right-wing governments of the past decade have to show for themselves. Repealing this important legislation means a return to chaos in the Negev and the Galilee. I call upon Prime Minister Netanyahu to block this anti-Zionist back-door deal between Nisenkorn and the United Arab List. The government's own official data prove that the Kaminitz Law is effective in combatting illegal construction, and anyone who considers themselves a Zionist, anyone who cares about the future of the State of Israel, must continue to protect this law in the Knesset and in the cabinet.

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