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The High Court of Justice granted the government an additional six-month delay in the Khan al Ahmar case. Regavim: Kicking the can down the road isn't the solution, it's part of the problem.

This morning (Wednesday), the High Court of Justice approved the government's request for an additional six month extension of the deadline to present to the court its plan for the evacuation of Khan al Ahmar, an illegal Palestinian Authority/European Union – supported outpost in the Adumim Region. The decision is the most recent stage in the sixth petition filed by the Regavim Movement against what it has called “the Palestinian Authority's flagship outpost in the systematic takeover of Area C.” In 2009, Regavim filed the first petition against this Bedouin encampment on Route 1, a few short minutes' drive from Jerusalem, in an attempt to compel the Israeli government to enforce the law and block the PA's creeping annexation of state land throughout Judea and Samaria.

Presiding over the judicial panel, Justice Solberg's decision included harsh criticism of the government's conduct: “There is no doubt that the day is fast approaching when it will no longer be possible to accept the lack of clarity in this case, which requires a clear and decisive resolution – one way or the other. Even if the various proposed solutions were sufficient cause to postpone the inevitable, it is not possible to stall indefinitely. Even attempts to reach a consensual resolution must have limits. At a certain point, these attempts become a source of contempt, and this we must not accept. Our job as judges is to bring clarity to the petitions that are brought before us; this is our task, and this is our duty. We cannot sit idly by and do nothing in the face of this continued procrastination. We intend to complete the hearing process in this case soon after the government files its reply and after we consider any further responses to that reply; either way, this case must be resolved.”

Justice Stein joined Justice Solberg's decision, adding that “the principle of legality, which we have been entrusted to carry out and to encourage, does not allow the state to ‘sit on the fence’ for years at a time and gaze at illegal structures without taking a definitive decision to either regulate or demolish them.”

Justice George Kra expressed reservations regarding the criticism voiced by his fellow justices, noting that he “at this time I see no reason to tie the court's hands and limit our options regarding the continued adjudication of this petition.”

The Regavim Movement, which has been at the forefront of judicial and public opinion efforts to combat Palestinian annexation in Judea and Samaria, has been waging the battle for law enforcement in the Adumim Region through over a decade of Supreme Court petitions. Responding to this morning's decision, Meir Deutsch, Director General of Regavim, noted: “The chronic ‘after-the-holidays’ excuse isn't a solution – it's part of the problem. In the case of Khan al Ahmar, procrastination is an attempt to ignore reality and erase hard facts. The state is attempting, for the umpteenth time, to push off its commitment to evacuate Khan al Ahmar –

until after the next holiday, Passover. Procrastination won't change the bottom line: The State of Israel must take action against the ongoing Palestinian takeover of Judea and Samaria. Khan al Ahmar has been, and continues to be, the test case for the larger strategic challenge."

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