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1. Vorerst nur eine kleine Annexion

Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu hält ungeachtet der heftigen Kritik im In- und Ausland an dem Plan fest, Teile des besetzten Westjordanlandes zu annektieren. Allerdings scheint er angesichts des sich formierenden Widerstands zu zögern, alle Siedlungsblöcke und das Jordantal, rund 30 Prozent des palästinensischen Gebietes, annektieren zu wollen. Laut Koalitionsvereinbarung von Netanyahus rechtskonservativem Likud und dem Mitte-Bündnis Blau-Weiß könnten entsprechende Schritte schon am 1. Juli beginnen. Die Palästinenser_innen haben die Pläne scharf kritisiert, und auch die EU lehnt unilaterale Schritte ab. Bundesaußenminister Heiko Maas wiederholte im Verlauf seines Besuchs in Israel die Kritik an den Annexionsplänen. Er habe die „ehrlichen und ernsthaften Sorgen“ der Bundesregierung und der EU angesichts der möglichen Folgen eines solchen Schrittes dargelegt, sagte Maas. Über mögliche Sanktionen gegen Israel wollte er nichts sagen. Stattdessen sprach er sich gegenüber seinem israelischen Amtskollegen Gabi Ashkenazi für eine „verhandelte Zwei-Staaten-Lösung“ aus. Die palästinensischen Islamisten der Hamas riefen unterdessen zum Widerstand gegen Israels Annexionspläne auf.

The three most commonly held misconceptions about Israel's annexation plan

(...) applying Israeli law in the West Bank (...) will necessarily lead to the massive expropriation, auto-

matic in some cases, of Palestinian land and property, the subsequent expulsion of individuals, families and entire communities from the annexed territories and a dramatic rise in the power of the settlers' local governments, which today are a weak administrative entity that is controlled by the Israel Defense Forces. (...) One can, and must, oppose both the occupation and annexation. (...) what the Trump plan offers the Palestinians (...) is an entity that does not have control over the movement of people and goods to it or from it (...). It's a state the same way that a chicken is a bird: It has wings and a beak, but it can't really fly. (...) Only fundamentalists like the settler leaders, for whom symbols and symbolism are sacred, could object to the Trump plan on the grounds that it calls the Palestinian Bantustan that it envisions a "state." (...) The right has been insanely lucky during the recent few years: Trump became president of the United States, Europe has been weakened by Brexit and other crises, the criminal cases against Netanyahu changed his political calculations and the coronavirus pandemic diverted public attention a moment before Israel initiated a unilateral tectonic shift. (...) Now imagine if the annexation were to be thwarted. For right-wingers, it would be as if the Messiah came and knocked on their door, but they were unable to open it. How long would it take for such a perfect constellation to appear once again? If annexation doesn't happen within the next few months, it could very well disappear from the agenda for years, becoming irrelevant.

The day after annexation is stopped, the occupation will be the same bad old occupation that must be fought, but the political situation will be new. As with every change, it could open the door to new opportunities.

Michael Sfar, HAA, 03.06.20

Abbas wants annexation

There is one person who can stop Israel from annexing settlements and large swathes of the West Bank (...) and that is Mahmoud Abbas. (...) All he needs to do is call, text or email the White House to request a meeting with President Donald Trump at which he announces his willingness to resume peace talks with Israel on the basis of the "deal of the century." After a message like that, Trump will almost certainly ask Benjamin Netanyahu to freeze the annexation and enter into negotiations for a detailed final status accord, at the end of which a Palestinian state would be established. But Abbas (...) shows no sign, not a hint, no willingness to return to the negotiating table in return for halting the annexation. (...) Indubitably the gaps between the positions are (...) wide, international resolve to impose an accord is (...) weak, and trust between the parties is nil. But even in these difficult conditions, there is value to a diplomatic process, which would at least accentuate the differences between Likud and Kahol Lavan and kick-start anew the internal Israeli debate about the future of the territories and the occupation. In the absence of negotiations with the Palestinians, the political debate in Israel remains confined to the right, in the space between the prime minister and the Yesha Council (...) and hinges only on the question of whether, post-annexation, construction in the relatively isolated settlements can only rise high, or also spread out. Abbas doesn't seem to care about any of this. He would apparently prefer for Netanyahu to proceed with annexation just to spare himself the unpleasant encounter with the prime minister and with Trump. Maybe he is harboring illusions that annexation will hurt Israel, that Jordan will revoke the peace agreement, that the Arab world will again unite behind the Palestinians, that Joe Biden will void Trump's promises, that Gantz will replace Netanyahu. Perhaps he has just tired of it all. (...)

Aluf Benn, HAA, 04.06.20

There's still time to fix the maps

Israel now has a historic opportunity (...) to make it clear that Israel is here for eternity. (...) It is important to remember that Trump won't always be

president. Agreement on a map brings us closer to a Palestinian state without the conditions being fulfilled if a less friendly president moves into the White House. A signed memorandum might not bind the hands of another president, but American tradition would make it very hard for that president to ignore it. The memorandum must also include a US commitment to respond appropriately in the case of irreversible Palestinian violations of the plan, either on the ground or in the International Criminal Court. (...) The current maps annex nearly 100,000 Arabs in the area of Biddu and Beit Lakiya to Israel and cut off entire cities from adjacent roads, as well as other elementary mistakes. To make the maps viable, there is no need to institute major changes. The conceptual map gives Israel 32.4% of Judea and Samaria. Maintaining that same percentage, we could apply Israeli law to all settlements and the Jordan Valley, including the allocation of land for settlements; corridors to connect communities, and major transportation arteries (...). None of this would require bringing any Arab village inside the new lines. (...) it is very important to insist on details when the maps are being charted. To make it clear that Israel will always remain here, we need to start the process with continuity and sustainability. A map that isn't contiguous or sustainable projects impermanence, thereby undermining the purpose of sovereignty. (...)

Moshe Koppel, IHY, 04.06.20

Netanyahu's annexation folly

Promises politicians make on the eve of an election tend to die as soon as the votes have been cast. And it is now looking likely that the same fate awaits Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's promise to annex at least 30% of the West Bank on July 1. (...) Netanyahu is a master of delays; they are part of the secret to his success. (...) In light of the complicated relations between Israel and the territories captured in the 1967 Six-Day War, the government has only two legitimate paths: It can leave things as they are or it can annex the land along with its Palestinian residents. (...) The option of leaving things as they are would be supported by most of the center-left electorate and the leadership of the settlement movement. The center-left still clings to the hope of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and regards annexation as the obliteration of even the slightest chance of ever achieving it. The far-right leaders of the settlement movement worry a partial annexation of the West Bank would mean the rest of the territory is up for grabs and would ulti-

mately become part of a Palestinian state with secluded enclaves of settlements within its borders. The option of annexing parts of the West Bank along with its Palestinian population is supported by many on the right, including President Reuven Rivlin, who believes there should be one egalitarian, Jewish and democratic state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. (...) Netanyahu, however, is suggesting another form of annexation, one he hopes would not exact a price. He would annex the land but not its population. That has been tried before. It was called Apartheid and we all know how that ended. (...)

Nahum Barnea, YED, 07.06.20

Annexation must wait

(...) Trump's plan grants Israel three additional territories in the shape of sovereignty over the Jordan Valley, sovereignty over all settlement clusters within the West Bank and sovereignty over the 19 isolated settlements to be located within in the heart of the Palestinian state. In return (and public debate tends to ignore this), the Palestinians will receive territory in the western Negev. This plan, despite its shortcomings, is undoubtedly better for Israel, and for this Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu deserves credit. Even more so, it was logical to assume that in January 2020, it would have been possible to exploit the window of time in which Trump is the president of the United States, and begin to implement said peace plan - that is, to annex all or part of the 30 percent of the West Bank designated for Israel. For now the circumstances have changed. First, Trump is in facing some major domestic problems and it's doubtful his support can be counted on. Secondly, the economic crisis in the moderate Arab states threatens the stability of their regimes, requiring them to take an outright stance against Israel if and when it decides to unilaterally annex. (...) Thirdly - and most significantly - is the crisis in which Israel now finds itself in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Annexation will surely worsen the country's security situation, and will, for the first time in a long time, give Abbas and Hamas a common goal to unite around. (...) In 2000, Israel's was in good economic shape, but that deteriorated due to the security crisis. Today (...) Israel is on the precipice of a major economic crisis, eating through its reserves quickly, but the worst is still ahead. The combination of an imminent economic crisis with the danger of a serious security crisis, and a fear of winter flu coupled with a second wave of the coronavirus, all create an unreasonable risk that does

not justify the dubious benefits of unilateral annexation.

Giora Eiland, YED, 14.06.20

Avoiding a small annexation will not prevent the larger occupation

(...) Israel is moving slowly – and if annexation occurs, swiftly – toward the creation of one state (...). Since their capture in 1967, the occupied territories, and especially the West Bank, have been a divisive issue among proponents and opponents of Jewish settlement there. The resulting status quo policy de facto sanctioned the creeping takeover of lands, although no government has ever approved a strategic decision to settle or annex the West Bank. (...) Division of the Land of Israel (Palestine) has always been the widely accepted solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. (...) Over 80 years after the partition idea was first broached, Israel is purposely and adamantly working to bury it. Annexation of parts of the West Bank – whether of a few percent of the area (only the settlements), 17% (the Jordan Valley) or the entire 30% allocated under the Trump blueprint – means that Israel is in effect destroying the two-state option. (...) Netanyahu, who will not want to violate his annexation pledge, (...) could push for a mini-annexation, attesting to his determination but also to his responsibility as a leader attentive to criticism. Such a decision could turn out to be a Pyrrhic victory, leaving annexation advocates unsatisfied and opponents viewing it as an aggressive and threatening move, requiring response. However, even if the Israeli government (...) eventually makes a rational decision and avoids annexation, the conclusion will invariably be that Israel does not want a Palestinian state. (...) The only good news to come out of the annexation crisis is the renewed discourse about the future of the occupied territories. From now on, the debate should focus on resolution of the Palestinian problem. (...)

Elie Podeh, JPO, 15.06.20

2. Ein Fall wie der von Georg Floyd in Israel?

Die israelische Polizei hat in der Altstadt von Jerusalem einen unbewaffneten Palästinenser erschossen. Der autistische Palästinenser Eyad Hallaq soll auf dem Weg zu seiner therapeutischen Einrichtung gewesen sein. Einem Polizeibericht zufolge missachtete er mehrere Aufforderungen stehenzubleiben. Die Sicherheitskräfte waren eigenen Berichten zufolge davon ausgegangen, der 32-Jährige halte eine Waffe in der Hand. Der

Gegenstand entpuppte sich später als sein Handy. Palästinenser verurteilten die Tötung als "Kriegsverbrechen". Israelische Politiker_innen bezeichneten den Tod des Unschuldigen als Tragödie. In sozialen Medien wurde die Tat mit dem brutalen Tod des Schwarzen George Floyd in den USA verglichen, der Ende Mai bei einem Polizeieinsatz starb. Israels Justizministerium leitete eine Untersuchung ein.

On the brink of the American nightmare

(...) In Israel things are different, we say. Cops don't choke people to death, and violent riots, like the ones currently unfolding on our television screens, don't really happen here. (...) still, patting ourselves on the back on this issue might conceal a bitter truth which must be addressed: police violence in Israel is a real problem for many of us. (...) There's no justification for violence, but the moment that populations and people feel no one hears them and they have nothing to lose, things become dangerous for us all. (...) We don't tend to view Israeli society as Haredi, Arab or Ethiopian- only if we were born into one of these groups. Therefore, the struggles these communities have with police violence are often "secluded." (...) There is terrible police violence in Israel. We give the police its legal authority, which it sometimes abuses. (...) It happens here, in our exemplary little country. The bad news is: It could get worse. Our situation could become similar to the situation in US. The good news: We can fix what we've ruined. We fix it through proper training and education. We can create a new "spirit of leadership." (...) We are on the brink of the American abyss. Let's take a few steps back.
Avi Dabush, IHY, 03.06.20

Teaching racism

Racism against blacks is not unique to the United States; in Petah Tikva, the school doors are slammed shut to children of African asylum seekers. The (...) municipality is again preventing children of asylum seekers from registering for preschools and elementary schools in the city. (...) Last year, too, the city tried to prevent 135 of them from registering for school. And it would surely have succeeded were it not for a ruling by the Lod District Court. (...) Israeli law on this matter leaves no room for interpretation. An Education Ministry circular from 2000 says the compulsory education law applies to every child over the age of three who has resided in Israel for more than three months, regardless of his status in Israel or how he is listed in the population registry.

This directive also applies to foreigners' children of compulsory education age who reside in Israel, regardless of their parents' formal status. (...) Racism is racism, whether it occurs in America or Israel, whether it is manifested in police brutality against citizens or in denying children an education.
Editorial, HAA, 04.06.20

Leave Palestine out of Black Lives Matter. For now

(...) the United States has struggled with racism throughout its history. Black Americans still face systematic discrimination (...). There are many parallels to draw between the experience of Black Americans and Palestinians living under oppressive conditions (...) systematic inequality, discrimination, lack of justice, and fear of the police. (...) Less than 72 hours after Floyd was killed, Israeli police murdered another unarmed Palestinian, an autistic 32-year-old man, in broad daylight. We have many reasons to fear for our own lives. (...) out of the respect for this watershed moment in Black American history (...) focus on the lived injustices of Black American communities (...). It is not a moment to divert attention from this struggle. We should not highlight the similarities during the peak of a certain struggle. (...) Right now is an opportunity for Palestinians to confront ourselves and our own prejudices, not seek a leading role in the protests and slogans in America. This is how we truly build an honest, intersectional, grassroots, anti-oppression movement that will in the future amplify our own voices about injustice in Palestine.
George Zeidan, HAA, 04.06.20

Exploiting the Floyd protests to demonize Israel

As usual, anti-Israel extremists, especially some on the hard left, are trying to exploit the tragic and inexcusable death of George Floyd to level their typical baseless charges against Israel. (...) A painting of George Floyd wearing a Palestinian keffiyeh is (...) being circulated, and BDS proponents at the University of California are accusing Israel of training racist American policemen. (...) This "blame it on Israel" or "blame it on the Jews" bigotry is common throughout the world at demonstrations for legitimate causes, that are unrelated to the Mid-East. (...) Antisemitic extremists from the hard right have always tried to blame the Jews for all of the world's evils. (...) The organization "Black Lives Matter," which does much good, is not immune from this bigotry. Its own platform blames Israel for police violence against African Americans and compares such violence to what

it falsely calls the “genocide” of the Palestinian people. (...) Historically, the Jews have always been caught between the black of Fascism and the red of Communism. (...) Those of us who are both Jewish and Liberal (...) must be willing to participate and encourage legitimate protests against police violence (...). We must stand up and be heard in condemnation of such violations – but we must stand up and be heard against those who would exploit tragedies to foment violence against Jews and the nation state of the Jewish people. (...) we cannot ignore those (...) who would turn these protests into bigoted attacks against Israel. Bigotry unanswered grows in size and intensity. (...)

Alan Dershowitz, JPO, 08.06.20

The makeover of the United States of America

(...) racism is not only just localized in the police force. (...) Labor relations are still slavery inspired. Admitting and regretting that American society was built by slave labor will transform present labor relations. The US also missed the socialist development that did some good to European society. (...) Millions without health care is beyond belief. Working life will become more relaxed when sick days are paid for and in case of disability, you won't end up starving or homeless. (...) The level of weapon possession by regular citizens in the US is only a reflection of the fear and selfishness that the weapon industry sows. (...) The US is a very violent society. Not only racism is not exclusively found in the police force. So is violence. (...) the dearest you have, your kids, are never really safe in, before, or after school. This got to stop too. When all the above starts shifting, so will the violence for children stop also. And everyone will gain! Women will be safer too. And when the stress levels go down, so will drug use, depressions, and suicides. (...) In summary, ending the racism, making work relationships humane, demilitarizing society, and reducing the level of personal violence between people will really remake American society. Interestingly, this is all happening on the watch of, under the nose of, the most violent, nationalistic, supremacist, bullying US president ever. (...)

Moshe-Mordechai van Zuiden, TOI, 12.06.20

Unlike George Floyd, the Arab world largely ignores the latest Palestinian victim of police brutality

When I think about the murder of Eyad Hallaq, I don't have to imagine his last moments the way another Haaretz columnist did earlier this month.

Such moments are daily fare for both me and many Palestinians trying to survive Israel's armed police, Border Police, soldiers and security guards. (...) So what do I imagine? I imagine Eyad's murderers getting together for a beer at a Tel Aviv pub, boasting, laughing, raising glass after glass. And in this space free of Arabs, one of them lets the sentence slip, “What a great guy you are, bro! You took down an Arab!” Yes, members of the Border Police view Palestinians as live targets that are necessary, beneficial and entertaining to take down. (...) The bullets that killed Eyad in cold blood were fired in border policemen's minds before being fired from their guns. In this way Eyad penetrated mainstream Israel's political and media conversation as a sad, tragic story, a terrible mistake devoid of any of the history, causality or political context that sustains similar crimes day and night. Unlike Eyad Hallaq, George Floyd, who was murdered by a policeman in the United States, is viewed by the mainstream Israeli media as part of a broader story of oppression, the story of black people as an ethnic group and their social and political oppression by every branch of the white establishment. That's also how it's seen by the Palestinians and the wider Arab world – as a story of widespread, systematic, institutionalized collective oppression. (...) In contrast, Hallaq is absent – not just from the sociopolitical conversation in the United States but from the cultural conversation in the Arab world. Most Arab artists haven't commented on the crime or on Hallaq's killers. There are many reasons for this – fear of political persecution in their own countries, antagonism toward the Palestinian issue, a desire to ride popular trends on social media or simply a lack of interest. (...) Who's interested in an autistic man being murdered in a trash room in East Jerusalem? Above all, this attests to the erasure of the Palestinians and their struggle from the consciousness of artists and opinion leaders in the Arab world. (...)

Rajaa Natour, HAA, 15.06.20

3. Trotz steigender Neuinfektionen sind wieder Hochzeitsfeiern und Bar Mitzwas erlaubt

Trotz der jüngst wieder steigenden Fallzahlen hat die israelische Regierung die Corona-Beschränkungen für Hochzeiten und Bar Mitzwas gelockert. Bis zu 250 Menschen dürfen wieder zusammenkommen, vorausgesetzt, dass sich nur jeweils eine Person auf zwei Quadratmeter Fläche aufhält. Die Gäste sind zudem aufgefordert, sich in

Listen einzutragen. Gut einen Monat nach der Wiedereröffnung der Schulen in Israel, wurden kurz vor Ende des Schuljahres weit über 100 Schulen und Kindergärten wegen eines kontinuierlichen Neuanstiegs von Corona-Infektionen erneut geschlossen. An die 20.000 Schüler_innen mussten vorübergehend in häusliche Quarantäne. Besonders in Jerusalem und Tel Aviv zeichnen sich die Schulen als die neuen Infektionsherde ab. Das Gesundheitsministerium schreibt vor, dass bei nur einem Krankheitsfall bereits die gesamte Schule geschlossen werden muss. Schüler_innen aller Altersklassen klagten unterdessen über Atembeschwerden, Konzentrationsprobleme und Kopfschmerzen, wenn sie den ganzen Tag und bei großer Hitze die Masken tragen müssen. Viele halten sich deshalb nicht an die Vorschriften.

The Israeli government seeks continuous coronavirus emergency

The amendments made to the coronavirus bill (...) are cosmetic changes. (...) the bill authorizes the government to promulgate emergency regulations that critically undermine basic rights (...). The process of putting a law through three votes is not just a bureaucratic exercise. It's crucial to a democratic regime. A debate in some Knesset committee doesn't fulfill the need for Knesset oversight of the executive. The fact that the cabinet prefers that it be authorized to issue emergency regulations, rather than pass laws, is the best proof that it knows that the Knesset won't rush to approve every draconian restriction it comes up with. (...) the cabinet is always trying to blur the distinction between an emergency and normal routine. It is seeking "continuity" in the restrictions – in other words, the ability to establish an ongoing emergency situation. Practically speaking, at issue is a package of (...) anti-democratic bills being submitted as an "emergency package." Every fair-minded MK for whom the public good is a priority must oppose them.

Editorial, HAA, 09.06.20

Wear Your Mask!

(...) as the numbers of daily infections dropped, and as it became clear that Israel was spared the fate of Italy and New York, Israelis began to cast aside the safety precautions, ignoring "social distancing" and removing their masks. (...) And now the number of cases rises daily, approaching 200 new cases each day. To be honest, we apparently still don't really understand much about this virus. It appears not to

be on our groceries, outdoors seems to be much safer than indoors, and jogging in a public area will probably not infect anyone. (...) There are hundreds of thousands of Israelis who need to return to their jobs. Our children need to return to school and to be educated in a healthy environment. (...) There appears to be only one obstacle to returning to some form of normal life: non-compliance. Close, social contact without proper precautions endangers our livelihood and will delay our return to normal life. (...) So please, just wear your masks!

David Brofsky, TOI, 10.06.20

Netanyahu loses interest in coronavirus

It's impossible to compare between the prime minister we had at the beginning of the coronavirus epidemic and the one we have now. (...) several events occurred, among them the alternative leadership of Benny Gantz folding under the pressure of an "emergency" government and the start of a corruption trial for bribery, fraud, and breach of trust for a person some might have heard of. Add to that Netanyahu, who defined the epidemic as the "worst crisis humanity has faced since the Dark Ages," the kind of emergency which causes an unprecedented economic fallout, has decided that the most necessary thing to do is to annex parts of the West Bank. It's interesting how a man who works within the equation of "the state and I are one" is wasting a sizeable amount of energy and resources on an issue - annexation - which according to public polls, is at the very bottom of citizens' priorities. (...) a leadership vacuum has emerged in the complicated and delicate management of the virus crisis which has rocked the foundations of so many nations worldwide. The nearly month-long delay in restarting the country's railways, oxygen for much of the nation's workforce, is merely a metaphor for the fiasco that is Netanyahu's "an exit strategy." (...) people see their representatives ignore public health orders while businesses and shops are slapped with fines for the most ridiculous infractions. (...) Israelis are sick and tired of the restrictions and the illogical handling of the epidemic. (...)

Einav Schiff, YED, 11.06.20

4. Medienquerschnitt

Staat aller Juden

Israeli citizenship should not be conditional on aliyah

(...) This crisis has destabilized the position of the Law of Return as a cornerstone of the Zionist endeavor. Israelis were permitted to enter Israel even if they had no homes there, but Diaspora Jews... No! Israel, the state of the Jewish people, where Jews throughout the world believe that they will always be welcomed in time of danger, did not agree to grant them refuge during this deadly epidemic. (...) Our feeling of belonging to the Children of Israel could not and should not be actualized only by aliyah, because since the creation of Israel in 1948, only those Jews who have settled in Israel have all automatically obtained citizenship. And even if the great majority of Diaspora Jews have two loves, two homelands – the one where they reside and Israel – that double appreciation ultimately comes to resemble a rupture more than a rapport. This fact of psychology must be addressed in terms of administration and of practical politics. If Israel is the country of all Jews, why should that double affection not express itself in the form of a right to dual citizenship without people having to leave their current homes? (...) Dual citizenship will bring the clarity and peace of mind that is often missing among Diaspora Jews. (...) Realizing that new challenges await the Jewish people, and valuing its unity, the new government should reaffirm the principles of Zionism by granting Israeli citizenship to every Jew who desires it.

Pierre Besnainou, JPO, 02.06.20

Oberstes Gericht lehnt retroaktive Legalisierung von wildem Hausbau im Westjordanland ab

High Court nixing of settlement law keeps Israel out of ICC

(...) eight members of a nine justice-panel voted down the law to legalize thousands of homes in West Bank settlements. (...) The law to retroactively recognize settlements built on private Palestinian land (...) was meant to legitimize illegal construction in the West Bank and would have set to approved more than 2,000 settler homes built on private Palestinian land. (...) the panel (...) decided that an infringement on the right to property and equality is severe, disproportional and causes more harm than good. (...) The panel also noted that the Palestini-

ans of the West Bank have a special status as "Protected Residents", due to their residence in an area under belligerent occupation. The law, the judges said, gives clear priority to the interests of Israeli settlers, and forcefully and illegally takes the rights of the Palestinians without any specific examination of circumstances. Hence the international aspect of this important verdict. The International Criminal Court in The Hague is authorized to investigate and prosecute only when a country fails to follow state process or its judicial system is proven to be biased or malfunctioning. It acts as a supplemental residual judicial institution. In other words, the tribunal has secondary authority over national jurisdiction.

Gilead Sher, YED, 10.06.20

Netanyahu versus Drucker

It's only a matter of time until a journalist is jailed

The urge to censor is growing. (...) Freedom of expression is under siege, assaulted in a pincer movement by authoritarian leaders like Netanyahu (...). In fact, censorship of opinions is now considered a basic human right. Anyone on social media has the right to block and silence users whose opinions grate on them or threaten their worldview. (...) Opponents of the lockdown were systematically silenced on establishment media, and silenced on social media by social censorship, as opposed to technological censorship: The lynch. The lynch isn't an algorithm; it's a common tool of social punishment the purpose of which is to shame, persecute, make miserable and blacken the names of those who express opinions that oppose what one's homogenous newsfeed is willing to stand for. The lynch conveys a message of deterrence. And the deterrence works: Most people are afraid to express unpopular opinions on social media and they apologize for them ahead of time. The distance between the fear of expressing unpopular opinions and the fear of thinking them is not great. (...) In such a public climate, Netanyahu's call to jail Drucker is considered legitimate. (...) At a time when anyone on Facebook or Twitter is a little censor, the big censors gain acceptance. Emergency regulations already give the Israel Police the power to interrogate people who promulgate what is defined as fake news. It's only a matter of time until a journalist is jailed here.

Rogel Alpher, HAA, 15.06.20

Im Auftrag der Frauen

When most committees are men's committees

(...) Israel made headlines for the selection of a man, MK Oded Forer (Yisrael Beytenu), as the head of the Knesset Committee for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality, only the second man ever to hold the position. At a time when issues of domestic violence and femicide are increasing, and women's representation in leadership positions (...) is far from progressive, Israeli political parties continue to send a clear message to the public: that women's representation, indeed even women's issues, are not something they take seriously. (...) Indeed, Forer has no experience or involvement with women's issues. In fact, he previously voted against proposed bills advancing women's rights, including voting against an amendment of the Women's Equal Rights Law mandating appropriate representation for women in the workplace. When interviewed about his new position (...) Forer awkwardly stated "I'm someone for whom equality is important, I don't know what a feminist is. (...)" Someone who "doesn't know what a feminist is" has absolutely no business leading the Knesset Committee for the Advancement of Women in Israeli society. (...) the fact that he has already demonstrated a lack of understanding of the issues at a time when women's rights and equality are actually deteriorating is very concerning. (...) That is not to say that women always act in the interest of women either, but the lack of a decision-making voice does make a difference (...). Forer's appointment is (...) just another step in the wrong direction. (...)

Emily Schrader, JPO, 15.06.20

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