

On Aug. 5, 2020

Other Israeli influencers voiced concerns about annexation harming relations with Jordan. One participant noted that annexation failed to mobilize the public in support of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as he had thought it would. Ultimately, the participant said, most of the Israeli public was not very interested in annexation and did not feel directly affected by it, underscoring a general lack of either knowledge or care about Palestinians. The proponents of annexation lost an important battle inside Israel.

Nevertheless, several participants felt that the debate around Trump's "deal" and annexation had moved the needle within the Israeli political establishment, as it has unmasked the realities of the occupation and the direction the country is heading, which they characterized as a form of apartheid. In general, many Israelis are unaware of the realities of the occupation and lack any interaction with Palestinians except during military service. But, participants said, the prospect of annexing land made it clearer than ever to the Israeli public that leaders were seeking to expand territory and have more than a "temporary" military occupation for reasons of "security." Importantly, some in Israeli civil society are leveraging the openings – and realizations – that the debate around annexation has created to strengthen their human rights advocacy within Israeli society.

Yet one participant raised concerns that the reaction of the Palestinian Authority – specifically the suspension of security coordination – is having unintended negative consequences for Palestinians

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The discussions underscored the evolving dynamics in Israel and the role Israeli civil society is playing in framing emerging trends and the opportunities they present. Participants expressed the opinion that it was not the time to debate alternatives to the moribund two-state solution. There is no interest from Israeli political leaders in negotiating with Palestinians on statehood, and “we are already living in a one-state reality where the Israelis controls one half of the population.” Rather, participants emphasized the need to focus on Israel’s obligations under international law, increase international involvement to end the “colonial situation” in Israel/Palestine, and work to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the political moment to increase understanding among Israelis about what is happening to Palestinians.

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