

To the Honorable Israel Resilience Chairman, MK Benjamin Gantz

**Subject: Urgent Request to Stop Annexation Plans in the Next Government**

Greetings,

We, a coalition of heads of Israeli organizations that support the two-state solution and the achievement of a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, urge you to stop any annexation plans and to assure that in the next government's basic agreements that there will be no unilateral annexation of settlements and territory in the West Bank. This commitment must be clear and grounded in the basic agreements through granting you and the members of your party the right to veto on this subject.

From the reports of coalition-forming negotiations, there is concern that behind the smoke screen of the file-sharing battles, the Right has succeeded in adding to the coalition agreement a formula that would allow annexation through vague wording, voting freedom, or non-voting rights of coalition partners. This means establishing a government that for the first time in the history of the country will adopt an extreme right-wing agenda that promotes annexation of territories and settlements from the West Bank to Israel.

The issue of the Occupied Territories and settlements remains a main source of controversy in Israeli society. A government that annexes settlements to Israel is not a unity government. Rather it is a right-wing government that chooses to eliminate the chance of political separation into two states, endangering existing agreements between Israel and Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority, not to mention violating international obligations. To date, all Israeli governments, including right-wing governments, have refrained from making such a far-reaching move.

The annexation of settlements must be a red line that if crossed cannot allow for those who support peace and Israel as a Jewish and democratic state to remain in the government. In the current political environment, giving voting freedom or open wording on this issue is akin to the Israel Resilience Party's agreement adopting and implementing the right-wing's annexation plans.

Without going into the political and ethical questions of entering into this government, we believe that giving in on this paramount issue will be a thorn in Israel's side for generations, all the more so if Israel Resilience remains part of a government were it to go through with annexation. Blue and White voters have chosen you, believing that you would advance a peace process with the Palestinians for a two-state solution. We believe that you have an historical obligation to protect the prospect of peace and to preserve Israel as a Jewish and democratic state—not to be a signatory on its destruction.

We all hope that on this critical issue, you and your party members will be vigilant and stop any annexation and initiative that hurts the chances of realizing a solution of "two states for two peoples," and will work with the government to advance a political process toward this vision.

Sincerely,

*Yariv Oppenheimer - Director of the Two State Coalition*

*Gadi Baltiansky - CEO of the Geneva Initiative*

*Dr. Nimrod Goren - Head of Mitvim, The Israeli Institute for Regional and Foreign Policy*

*Shaqued Morag - CEO of Peace Now*

*Ori Kol - Founder and Director of MeHAZKIM*