

January 19, 2017

Ir Amim's Position on the Proposed Legislation to Annex Ma'ale Adumim

The proposed legislation to annex Ma'ale Adumim being promoted by right wing leaders would apply Israeli law over the city, as well as the E1 area which is included in its municipal boundaries.

The annexation of Ma'ale Adumim would substantially harm the existential interests of Israel. It would perpetuate a settlement bloc in the heart of the West Bank and irreparably damage territorial contiguity between the northern and southern West Bank. Equally damaging, the annexation of Ma'ale Adumim and E1 will block East Jerusalem on its eastern side, swallow up its last development reserves and deepen its detachment from the West Bank. Given Ma'ale Adumim's critical location in the heart of the West Bank, the international community has for years been following with special concern all developments in this area, seen as a touchstone for the viability of a two-state solution. The international community is further concerned by the situation of thousands of Bedouins who reside in the area and suffer harsh treatment as a result. Indeed, the Clinton Parameters (2001) included Ma'ale Adumim within the area to remain under Israeli sovereignty following the signing of an agreement and land swap. Yet this area is a substantially smaller one than today's built-up area of Ma'ale Adumim, and in any event such a move is possible only in the framework of a comprehensive agreed resolution. Moreover, the area which right-wing leaders wish to annex includes E1 to the north of Ma'ale Adumim, which effectively doubles the size of Ma'ale Adumim in a manner which completely alters the local geo-political situation and transforms the areas of the future Palestinian state into separated cantons while essentially emptying it of all meaning. The annexation of E1 would further cut off East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, precluding the possibility of its functioning as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

Resolution 2334 of the United Nations Security Council, which was subsequently adopted by the foreign ministers of 70 countries in the Paris Conference, reiterates past resolutions (224, 338 and others) that the UN "will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations." The resolution again urges the sides to return to the negotiating table. The proposed legislation counts on support of the new US administration, although policies of the latter are as yet unknown and the consistent American position for three decades has been particularly firm opposition against additional unilateral steps by Israel in the area of Ma'ale Adumim. In any event the international interests of Israel are bilateral and complex. The proposed legislation harms the deepest interests of Israel to exist as a democratic state in secure borders, alongside an organic and functioning Palestinian state. The legislation is also a provocative move against the international community and will heighten Israel's isolation in the world. The right wing leadership is motivated by short-term electoral interests, and it is gambling on the future and security of Israel and its democratic character. Permitting the annexation of Ma'ale Adumim is likely to be interpreted as an Israeli declaration that it is abandoning the path of a two-state solution, even if the people in Israel make a future democratic choice to adopt this very solution.

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