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## 'NO PROGRESS' MADE IN PUTIN CALL – TRUMP

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# Israeli ministers call on Netanyahu to annex West Bank

The Settlement Administration in the area is ready to follow such an order “immediately,” Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has said



FILE PHOTO: An Israeli settlement is seen in the occupied West Bank. © Global Look Press / Mohammed Nasser

A group of Israeli ministers from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party have called on him to annex the West Bank before the end of the month. A total of 15 cabinet ministers, as well as the parliamentary speaker, Amir Ohana, signed a letter arguing that the creation of a Palestinian state in the area would pose an “*existential threat*” to

Israel and its settlement policy.

The move should be made before the end of the parliament's summer session on June 27, the letter released on Wednesday stated, adding that West Jerusalem should seize the moment following the weakening of Iran and its allies in the region in the recent conflicts with Israel.

*“The October 7 massacre proved that the doctrine of settlement blocs and the establishment of a Palestinian state in the remaining territory is an existential danger to Israel. It's time for sovereignty,”* the ministers wrote, referring to the 2023 attack by the Gaza-based Hamas militant organization, which led to the latest conflict between Israel and the Palestinian group.

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Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, himself not a member of the Likud Party, praised the initiative and claimed that the Israeli Settlement Administration in the West Bank would be ready to follow a government order and establish West Jerusalem's control over the West Bank at any moment.

*"On the day he [Netanyahu] gives the order, the Settlement Administration under my leadership is ready ... to implement the application of sovereignty immediately,"* said the minister, who also holds a position within the Defense Ministry on issues related to the West Bank.



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The authors of the petition also argued that it was the right moment for such a move because of the *"strategic partnership, backing and support of the US and President Donald Trump."* The development came ahead of Netanyahu's meeting with Trump scheduled for next week. They are expected to discuss a potential Gaza ceasefire and a hostage deal with Hamas.

During his first presidential term, Trump moved the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and recognized Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights, sparking waves of international condemnation in both cases.

Before the letter's release, Justice Minister Yariv Levin made a similar call, drawing condemnation from Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Riyadh called it a *"violation of legitimate international resolutions,"* while Cairo urged the international community to intervene.

Israel seized the West Bank from Jordan in the 1967 War and has been actively building settlements there – something that is widely regarded as illegal by the international community. West Jerusalem moved closer to its annexation in 2020 but dropped the idea at the time in exchange for normalization of relations with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

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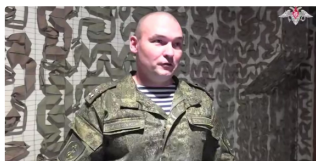


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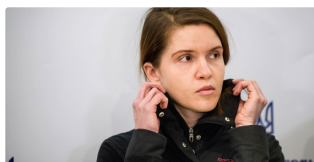
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