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Israeli legislature votes to seize East Jerusalem

Wednesday November 14, 2007 18:47 by Saed Bannoura - IMEMC [saed at imemc dot org](mailto:saed@imemc dot org)

The Israeli Knesset (Parliament) gave preliminary approval on Wednesday to a bill that would seize East Jerusalem, in contravention of international law and UN resolutions, and make it part of Israel.



Jerusalem's cityscape, with the al-Aqsa mosque in the foreground

The move comes just after the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas pledged that the Palestinians would never give up East Jerusalem, as it is an integral part of a future Palestinian state.

In addition, Palestinian and Israeli leaders are gearing up for a peace conference that will take place on November 26th in Annapolis, MD, in the U.S.

Before being passed into law, the proposed bill must be approved by a parliamentary committee and go to three more votes -- a process that could take months.

"(Preliminary) passage of the legislation, two weeks before the Annapolis conference, sends an important and clear signal to the entire international community that all of the people of Israel and parliament oppose concessions in Jerusalem," said Gideon Saar, the Likud lawmaker who sponsored the bill.

When Israel was created after a UN recommendation in 1948, the United Nations recommended that Palestine be split 50/50, with half of the land being given to Israel to establish the Jewish homeland. The city of Jerusalem was to remain an international city under UN control.

In the 1948 war, in which Jewish militias displaced 700,000 Palestinians from their homes in order to establish the Jewish homeland there, Israel took control of more than 60% of historical Palestine, but Jerusalem remained under Palestinian control.

In the 1967 war, preemptively started by Israel, Israeli forces took control of Jerusalem, and 78% of historical Palestine. Since that time, Israeli settlements and military attacks have forced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, many of them from Jerusalem, to become refugees.

Although many Palestinians have been forced from their homes in Jerusalem, the city still remains a majority Palestinian city. But the Israeli Knesset, along with a majority of the Israeli population, want to kick the Palestinians out to make Jerusalem a Jewish city.

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