

To the Honorable Blue and White 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 the annexation plans and to assure that in the next government's basic agreements that there will be no unilateral annexation of settlements and territories from the West Bank to Israel. This commitment must be clear and grounded in the basic agreements through granting you and the members of your faction the right to veto on this subject.

From the reports of coalition 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 territories and settlements was and still is the main source of controversy in Israeli society. A government that annexes settlements to Israel is not a unity government, but a right-wing government that chooses to eliminate the chance of separating into two states, endangering existing agreements between Israel and Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority and violating its international obligations. To date, all Israeli governments, including right-wing governments, have refrained from making such a far-reaching move.

The annexation of the 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 that allows for this. In the current political circumstances, giving freedom of vote or open wording of the issue is the same as Blue and White's agreement for adoption and implementing the right-wing annexation programs.

Without going into the political and value-based questions of entering this government, we believe that giving up on this acute issue will be a cry for generations, all the more so when a faction like Blue and White remains part of a government that annexes. Blue and White voters have chosen you and your list, believing that you will advance a peace process between us and the Palestinians that ends in the two-state vision, we believe that you have a historical obligation to protect the prospect of peace and the preservation of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state and not to be signed on its destruction.

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

Best regards,

*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*