
The Churches oppose Israel's "unilateral annexation" of parts of the West Bank

It's just a matter of hours: Israel's announced annexation of parts of the West Bank where more than 130 settlements, deemed illegal by the international community, have been built, is supposed to begin on July 1st. It was announced by Prime Minister Benjamin Bibi Netanyahu and agreed, when forming the new government, with his former opponent, now ally, Binyamin Benny Gantz. In fact, the annexation plan is included in the so-called 'government agreement' stipulated by the two main coalition parties, Netanyahu's Likud and the Blue and White centrist party led by former army chief Benny Gantz. The latter is due to replace "Bibi" himself at the helm of the Government at the end of 2021. A specific bill needs to be promulgated by the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) for the annexation to be confirmed. If this were to happen, July 1st could become a historic date in the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict, bound to deal a final blow to the "Two Peoples, Two States" solution, supported by the international community, notably by the Holy See. The alternative could be the suspension of the measure or a 'symbolic' annexation, restricted to the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, which in fact Israel already considers part of its territory.



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[said the Israeli plan is "illegal." "We can no longer speak honestly and concretely about the 'Two People Two States' solution, that is proving increasingly challenging in technical terms. If the annexation should take place, the situation will be irreversible."](#) denounced [Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa](#), Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, during a live broadcast. [For the archbishop "to speak of peace, of negotiations, within both the Palestinian and Israeli society, is not very realistic."](#) The [Patriarchs and heads of the Churches of the Holy Land](#), including [Pizzaballa himself, the Custos of the Holy Land, Father Francesco Patton and the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilus III, share the same view.](#)



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[. the parish priest, told SIR - the population has grown used to conflict and violence and perhaps also for this reason they are inclined to think that annexation is yet another excuse to trigger a new war that nobody wants here."](#)



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