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*Translation: IATF*

## **Wasserlauf and Ben-Gvir demand a renewed discussion of the development plan for Arab society**

Shahar Ilan, Zvi Zarhia

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Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir and Minister of Negev and Galilee Affairs Yitzhak Wasserlauf of Otzma Yehudit demand reconsideration of the program for socioeconomic development of Arab society, Takadum (GR-550). This is on the grounds that these funds were allocated within the priorities of the previous government.

Since the establishment of the government, there has been no significant challenge to the Takadum (GR-550) plan to allocate NIS 30 billion for the purpose of economic and social development of Arab society. This is partly because it is a continuation of GR-922 initiated by Prime Minister Netanyahu himself in the middle of the previous decade. The logic underlying both plans is that the Arab public is one of the main possible sources of growth in the economy. Yes, promoting his economy is essential for the growth of the entire economy. And that logic hasn't changed today.

Recently, the Ministerial Committee on Arab Society met and sought to amend a clause in Resolution 550. Such decisions are usually approved without discussion. However, Otzma Yehudit ministers took the opportunity to request a comprehensive discussion of the entire plan. In a letter to Cabinet Secretary Yossi Fuchs, they claim that "Resolution 550 is an inheritance from the Lapid-Bennett-Abbas government as part of the implementation of the coalition agreement of factions, in which huge budgets were allocated to the Arab sector in a wide variety of areas."

"It is inconceivable that a right-wing government would act to continue the implementation of the coalition agreements granted by the previous government to the Muslim Brotherhood and their representatives instead of changing and amending the letter of the same decision that granted unprecedented budgets and powers through anti-Zionist elements." Among other things, they argue against a number of clauses set forth in Resolution 550 including: subjecting activities and budgets in the Arab sector to a standing committee that, as far as they are concerned, constitutes "a serious and unacceptable blow to the independence of ministers and their ministries"; Setting a minimum allocation of 30% to Arab society in some government ministries as part of the desire to create affirmative action.

Ben-Gvir and Wasserlauf write that "subordinating the activities of government ministries and ministers to the previous government's policy, its priorities, and the oversight committee they established, constitutes a problematic continuation of the policy of discrimination against Jews, while granting unprecedented control to anti-Zionist elements in the management of government ministries." They note that according to Article 94 of the current coalition agreements, a team will be established to amend Resolution 550, and therefore the decision of the current ministerial committee contradicts the coalition agreement.

The issue was raised in a discussion held by the Finance Committee this morning. MK Ahmad Tibi (Ta'al) addressed the committee's Deputy Chairman, MK Yinon Azoulay: "Yesterday it was reported that the budget source of NIS 130 million for Avraham [*Married Yeshiva students*] will come from the budget of the development plan for Arab society. I will ask every ultra-Orthodox MK to hear his position on whether morally you agree that money intended for Arab society should be transferred to Haredi society."

Former Minister for Social Equality MK Merav Cohen, Yesh Atid, whose ministry formulated the Takaddum plan, said: "The five-year plan for the economic development of Arab society is one of the most important plans currently in the country in order to reduce social gaps, encourage education and employment and economic growth, and reduce unemployment and crime. To cancel it is an economic and social attack on the Israeli economy. It is not surprising that the person making this delusional proposal is Minister Ben-Gvir, who is a well-known pyromaniac and has failed miserably in the fight against crime in Arab society."

The proposed resolution, which Otzma Yehudit opposes, deals with the establishment of a sub-team to remove barriers to marketing housing units in Arab localities, due to the many difficulties encountered by plans for high-density construction in these communities. The team's roles will be to identify and characterize marketing barriers and create an outline for their removal. It is explained that "the main consideration underlying Resolution 550 is the need to reduce gaps between Arab society and the general population. Within the framework of the housing and housing chapter, targets were set for marketing housing units in Arab localities – 35 thousand housing units." The explanatory notes reveal that "at the end of the first year of implementation, there is a failure to meet the marketing targets, so that out of a target of 5000 housing units, tenders were published for 3377 apartments."