

Israeli lawmaker says he'd like to just press a button and have all Palestinians go away



Matan Kahana, right, is a part of Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's far-right Yamina party, and was recently a religious affairs minister [File: Amir Cohen/Reuters]

Tel Aviv, June 15 (RHC)-- An Israeli member of parliament has received backlash after saying he wished that he could press a button that would expel Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Israel.

"If there was a button that could be pressed, that would remove all the Arabs from here, send them on an express train to Switzerland ... I would press that button," legislator Matan Kahana said in a video aired by a local Israeli broadcaster on Tuesday.

Kahana is a part of Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's far-right Yamina party, and was recently a religious affairs minister. "The Arabs are telling themselves a different story. We know it's untrue and nonsense," Kahana said in remarks made to secondary school students. "They are telling themselves that they are the ones who always lived here and we came and expelled them."

The comments angered Palestinian lawmakers in the Knesset, some of whom are part of a fragile governing coalition made up of eight ideologically distinct parties.

"Matan Kahana, we are here because this is our homeland," said Walid Taha, a member of the United Arab List (Ra'am) party which is part of the coalition.

"You, and those who think like you, will keep dragging your frustration because we simply won't go away!"

Prominent Palestinian Knesset member Ahmad Tibi, wrote: "There is a button that will remove you from the government and the Knesset. I'll press it soon."

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