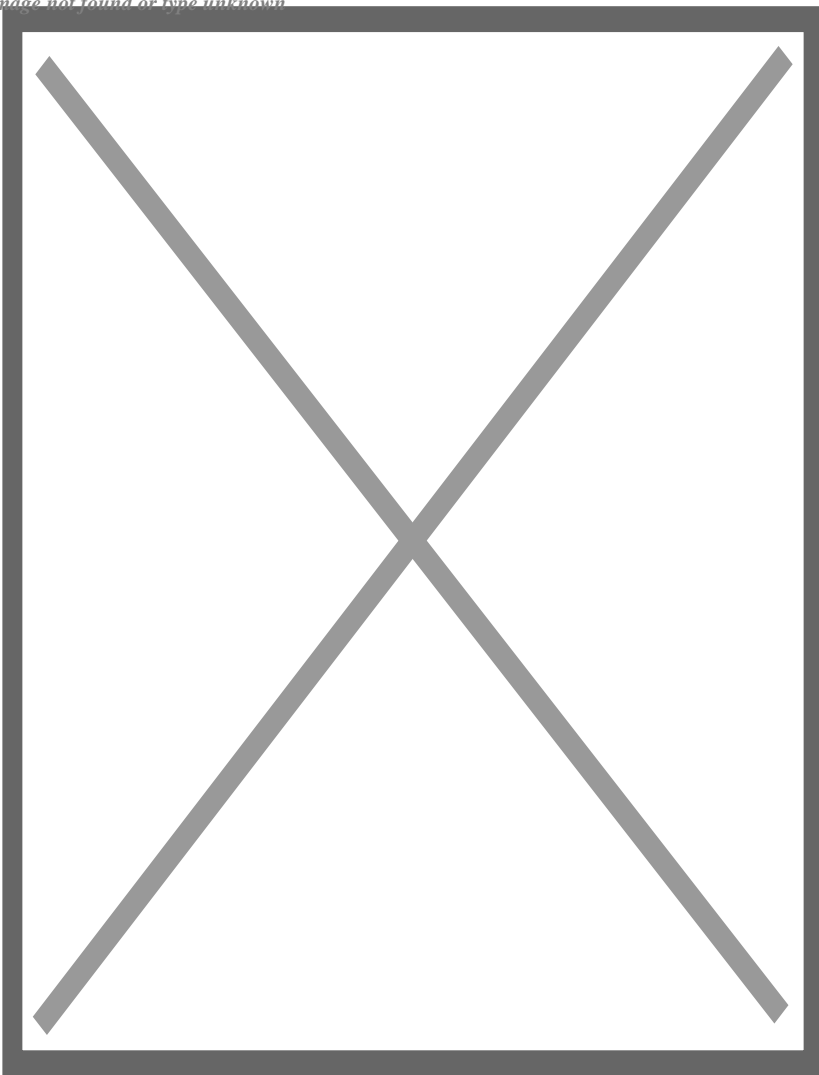


Extremist Israeli minister says his life's mission is to thwart Palestinian statehood

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Far-right Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich

Tel Aviv, September 9 (RHC)-- Far-right Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has repeated his disparaging remarks against the Palestinian nation, reiterating his intention to advance expansionist policies in the occupied West Bank and prevent the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

"The mission of my life is to build the land of Israel and thwart the establishment of a Palestinian state. That is why I have taken upon myself, in addition to the position of Minister of Finance, responsibility for civil issues in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank)," Smotrich wrote in a post on X on Monday.

"I will continue to work with all my might so that the half a million settlers who are on the front line and under fire enjoy the rights of every citizen in Israel and establish the facts on the ground," he added.

This is not the first time that Smotrich has declared his intention to annex the West Bank and prevent the creation of a Palestinian state. Back on June 23rd, the extremist Israeli minister responded to a report published by the American daily newspaper New York Times about his plan to expand the Tel Aviv regime's control over the occupied West Bank and thwart any attempt to make it part of the Palestinian state.

"My plan is not a secret. I will fight with all my might the danger of establishing a Palestinian state; for the sake of Israel and its citizens, I will continue, through my powers, to develop settlements in the West Bank and strengthen security," he said at the time.

More than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East al-Quds. The international community views the settlements – hundreds of which have been built across the West Bank since Tel Aviv's occupation of the territory in 1967 – as illegal under international law and the Geneva Conventions due to their construction on the occupied territories.

Palestinians want the West Bank to be part of a future independent state with East al-Quds as its capital.

Last July, the Knesset (the Israeli parliament) passed a resolution rejecting the establishment of a Palestinian state, calling it an "existential threat" to Israel.

Tensions have intensified throughout the occupied West Bank as Israel persists in its offensive on the Gaza Strip.

At least 692 Palestinians, including 158 minors, have been killed in the West Bank by Israeli forces or extremist Jewish settlers since the war began. More than 5,700 Palestinians have been wounded and at least 10,400 have been detained.

Since October 7th, at least 40,972 Palestinians, most of them women and children, have also been killed in Israeli attacks across the Gaza Strip during the regime's genocidal war.

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