

Israeli leaders agree on plan to annex parts of the West Bank



Tel Aviv, April 7 (RHC)-- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his main rival, Blue and White party chief Benny Gantz, agreed Monday on a proposal that would allow Israel to annex portions of the West Bank under a unity government led by their two parties, Haaretz reported.

The Israeli leaders, until now political rivals, agreed that Netanyahu would bring the proposal to be voted this summer, provided that it is accepted by the United States (U.S.) and other international players.

The U.S. under the administration of President Donald Trump has already demonstrated its promptness to back any plan that could pave the way for the annexation of Israel's illegal settlements and the Jordan Valley in the West Bank.

Trump had unveiled in January his plan dubbed "Deal of the Century" for the decades-long conflict in the Middle East. The proposal -- overwhelmingly rejected by the Palestinians -- gives Israel the green light to annex large sections of the West Bank.

Monday's agreement came after months of a political deadlock resulting from three elections that did not produce a clear winner. Following the March 2nd elections, Gantz nominated himself speaker of the Knesset (parliament) in a surprise move that suggested a soon to be formed unity government between his party and Netanyahu's Likud. Meanwhile, law experts say annexing Palestinian territories would be

illegal under international law.

Israel annexed East Jerusalem in the 1967 war, declared the entire Jerusalem city as its “eternal indivisible” capital in 1980 and annexed the Golan Heights one year later. But these moves have never been recognized by most of the international community, including Washington.

Yet, after he came into power, Trump declared Jerusalem the capital of Israel, and last year, he recognized Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights. "For 70 years, the entire international order has been built on the principle that you cannot acquire someone else's land by force and annex it," Human rights lawyer Jonathan Kuttub told the Middle East Eye following Trump’s announcement of his so-called "deal."

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