

Statement Against the Annexation of the West Bank

Passed by unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees of Kehilla Community Synagogue
May 26, 2020

Since 1985, Kehilla Community Synagogue has affirmed that Israelis and Palestinians must come to a resolution in a manner that honors the rights and the dignity of all the people living there. In 2016, we affirmed in the [Kehilla Statement of Values on Israel/Palestine](#) that the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and the siege of the Gaza Strip must come to an end in that they not only violate the dignity of the people subjected to these conditions but also can defeat the prospects for a just and lasting peace and do not ultimately benefit the security needs of the people of Israel.

The annexation of lands in the West Bank as contemplated by the new Israeli government, tentatively scheduled for July 1, 2020 will create or further an apartheid-like situation where Israeli Jews in the occupied territory will live with privileges and rights unavailable to the Palestinian people who will be surrounded by the land annexed to the State of Israel.

For the Palestinians under occupation, democracy is already highly limited, if not nonexistent. After annexation, we fear that any possibility of human rights and self-determination for those under occupation will be eliminated. This will make a peaceful resolution impossible and will create a total or near-total disenfranchisement of the Palestinian people defeating their hopes for self-determination.

In Kehilla, we aspire to live by these Jewish values that we have learned from the Tanakh and Talmud:

"Do not oppress the stranger, for you know the feelings of a stranger since you yourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 23:9).

וְגֵר לֹא תִלְחָצוּ וְאַתֶּם יָדַעְתֶּם אֶת-גִּוְשׁ הַגֵּר כִּי-גֵרִים הֵייתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

"There shall be one law for the citizen and for the stranger who lives among you" (Exod 12:48-49)

תּוֹרָה אֶחָת יִהְיֶה לְאִזְרַח וְלִגֵּר הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכְכֶם:

"That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. This is the entire Torah" (Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 31A)

דַּעֲלֹךְ סְנִי לְחִבְרֹךְ לֹא תַעֲבִיד — זֶה הוּא כָּל הַתּוֹרָה כּוּלָּה

Thus, as the Kehilla synagogue community, we cannot support annexation nor remain silent while maintaining any moral authority to teach Jewish values to our children.

The annexation plan represents an egregious violation of our fundamental Jewish values, and, we believe, is not in the best interest of our Jewish siblings in Israel / Palestine. We therefore oppose the annexation plan, and call on our government to do the same.