

An annexation announced by Israel of its colonies in the West Bank and in the Jordan Valley contradicts international law

At the end of three consecutive legislative elections, creating an unprecedented political crisis in Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu and his opponent Benny Gantz have entered an alliance to form a government of national union. One of the « axis » of this government is to start the operations of annexation of the Jordan valley and of the Israeli colonies of the West Bank for the 1st July 2020. This would mean reducing by a third the remaining territory of the West Bank. This “axis” is largely shared by the Israeli political world, in any trends, and by most of the Jewish Israeli public opinion, and the agreement of the Netanyahu government - Gantz has been validated by the Supreme Court of Israel on 7th May 2020 and ratified by the Knesset 8th May 2020.

This objective has been prepared for several months by the alliance Israel-United States. On 18th November 2019, the American Secretary of State declared that the Israeli settlements in Israel did not contradict international law, contradicting several decades of American positions and the point of view of most of the other states. The « Trump Plan », revealed on 28th January 2020, foresees the annexation of the Jordan valley and of the Israeli colonies of the West Bank.

The Israeli government to be formed on 13th May 2020 enjoys a period of several months to successfully lead this operation : until next November, it can indeed count on the unconditional support of the Trump administration, the government most fond of the Zionist thesis executed by the State of Israel, of the whole history of the United States. The summer truce, the coronavirus crisis, are also favourable circumstances, diverting the world attention towards other concerns.

Facing this threat, Pax Christi France, faithful to its position concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict expressed on 28th November 2018, reasserts the following points:

1 The International Law.

The world must be governed by a world governance and by international law and not by power relationships or by the law of the strongest. Pax Christi France is in this regard greatly worried by the battering by the current American administration of the multilateral world organization in place since the end of the Second World War (denunciation by the United States of several international treaties, retreat from several organizations and institutions of international governance), and fears that this development might be lethal to a world governance which, despite its flaws, has contributed for the past sixty years, to reducing the risks of conflicts and promoting their regulation.

In this regard, the annexation of the Jordan valley and of the Israeli colonies of the West Bank still contradicts international law, which cannot be defined unilaterally by one country according to its own sole interests. If implemented, this annexation would be null and void and would not constitute a recognized situation.

Pax Christi France wants France and the European Union to strongly underline this principle and, in a case of annexation, to take adapted sanctions towards Israel, exactly as they did towards Russia after it annexed Crimea, the Ukrainian territory.

2 The “two States” solution.

Pax Christi France remains partisan to the solution said of the « Two States », an Israeli State and a Palestinian State within the frontiers accepted by international law and in peace with one another.

If Israeli colonies in the West Bank are established and consolidated, if the control exercised by Israel on the Jordan valley is largely operative, this does not mean that the « fait accompli » demonstrates compliance with international law, on the contrary. Their transformation into an annexation by the State of Israel would represent an additional step, highly detrimental to the Israeli populations, such as underlined by a report by the Israeli NGO Yesh Din:

- It would probably mean the end of hope for a solution of two States, relentlessly contributing to preventing an independent Palestinian state from being economically viable.
- It would open the right to expropriate Palestinian territories and an even more massive monopolization of Palestinian territories and resources for the sole profit of Israel.
- It would introduce new constraints for the Palestinian populations: difficulties of movements, of work...

Pax Christi France wants France and the European union to take as of now all the measures to prevent the Netanyahu-Gantz government to implement its action : this is not because the government has the support of the parliament and of the Israeli population that this action is legitimate in regard to the principles of international law and to human rights !

For this purpose, France and the European Union must without delay:

- **declare that they will never recognize the annexations,**
- **as the case may be recall their ambassadors from Israel as a sign of protest,**
- **prompt a resolution by the Security Council of the United Nations in accordance with the article 39 of the Charter of the United Nations**
- **recognize the Palestinian State to protect it from the irreparable consequences of the unilateral act of Israel, if need be.**

Finally, Pax Christi France invites the European and French parliamentarians to remain cautious regarding this question, on behalf of the constituting principles and values of the European and international law.

Done at Paris, 14 May 2020