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Likud said to weigh residency, not citizenship, for 'grandchild clause' immigrants

«Лікуд» сказав, що для іммігрантів із «застереженням про онуків» потрібно зважувати право на проживання, а не громадянство

Новий уряд Ізраїлю розглядає можливість зміни Закону ДІ «Про повернення», щоб надати посвідку на проживання, але не громадянство, онукам євреїв, викликало обурення серед членів коаліції. Партії, які закликають до змін, вважають імміграцію неєвреїв до Ізраїлю загрозою для демографії країни та її єврейської ідентичності. Більшість таких іммігрантів до Ізраїлю походять із колишнього Радянського Союзу і багато хто прибув з України та росії цього року після вторгнення росії.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/likud-said-to-weigh-residency-not-citizenship-for-grandchild-clause-immigrants/>

A Thursday report indicating that the incoming government is considering altering the Law of Return to offer residency but not citizenship to grandchildren of Jews sparked outrage among members of the outgoing coalition.

According to Ynet, the Likud party is working to negotiate an agreement with its expected coalition partners that would grant people who have only one Jewish grandparent, and who are not considered Jewish under Orthodox interpretation of Jewish law, the status of permanent resident but not full citizenship.

The religious parties in the presumed next government have demanded the cancellation of the so-called grandchild clause of the Law of Return, which effectively guarantees citizenship to anyone with at least one Jewish grandparent so long as they do not practice another religion.

The parties calling for the change, chiefly the Religious Zionism party, consider the immigration of non-Jews to Israel a threat to the country's demographics and its Jewish identity. Most such immigrants to Israel come from the former Soviet Union, and many have arrived from Ukraine and Russia this year following Russia's invasion.

Yesh Atid's outgoing Tourism Minister Yoel Razvozov, a native of Russia, called such a compromise "shameful."

"The emerging compromise over the 'grandchild clause' — providing them with 'permanent resident' status — is shameful to anyone who has ever immigrated to Israel," said Razvozov. "If in the past immigrants to Israel have felt like second-class citizens, today we realize that they won't even be citizens."

Yesh Atid MK Tatiana Mazarsky, a Russian-speaking immigrant, suggested that the religious parties feel electorally threatened by demographic shifts.

“The secular and immigrant electorate’s right to vote is disturbing Shas, United Torah Judaism and Religious Zionism,” she tweeted. “What to do? Prevent them from voting by making them residents [instead of citizens].”

In a statement issued in response to the Ynet report, the Reform movement in Israel warned that such a change would fundamentally alter the country.

“Changing the grandchild clause in the Law of Return would cause the State of Israel to cease being the nation of the entire Jewish people,” the group said.

Granting certain people the status of permanent resident instead of citizen “is invalid and must not be implemented,” the organization added, saying it would “lead to an irreversible rift with Diaspora Jewry and a decrease in the motivation of Jewish boys and girls from all over the world to immigrate to Israel.”

Discussion over altering the Law of Return is an enormously touchy issue when it comes to Israel-Diaspora relations, as well as within the nascent government coalition. While members of Religious Zionism, Otzma Yehudit, Shas and United Torah Judaism largely back amending the “grandchild clause,” much of Likud is not thought to be in favor.

Last week, senior Likud MK Yuli Edelstein, an immigrant from the Soviet Union, warned against efforts to alter the Law of Return. “Let’s not turn it into a Basic Law. Let’s not try to change part of it. Let’s not try to improve it. Leave it in peace,” he urged.

Prime minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu vowed earlier this week that the next government “will maintain the status quo” on issues of religion and state, after a report about far-reaching UTJ demands on religious issues.

On Tuesday, MKs and ministers in the outgoing coalition held an “emergency conference” in the Knesset on issues of immigration and ties with world Jewry, speaking in near-apocalyptic terms in light of proposals to alter the Law of Return.

“Anyone who raises a hand against the ‘grandchild clause’ raises a hand against the future of the Jewish people,” said Labor MK Gilad Kariv, a Reform rabbi, at the hearing.

Labor leader Merav Michaeli similarly warned that such a move would cut off masses of people who identify as Jews and who have a connection to Israel and Judaism.

“The Law of Return is the door to the Jewish people. Who would lock that door to half of the Jewish people?” she said.

Outgoing Housing Minister Ze’ev Elkin of National Unity, who was born and raised in Ukraine and is a practicing Orthodox Jew, said any changes to the law “will have repercussions on every non-Orthodox Jewish community in the Diaspora.”