

HOROWITZ: 'OUTRAGEOUS LAW' IS UNJUST TO NON-JEWISH CITIZENS

As calls to amend Nation-State Law gather steam, Shaked says Yamina will veto plans

Minister calls on fellow lawmakers to not 'amuse themselves' with moves that violate the coalition agreement, as Blue and White pledges to bring equality bill to committee debate

By **TOI STAFF**

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Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked holds a press conference at Ben Gurion Airport on March 13, 2022. (Roy Alima/Flash90)

Amid growing [calls to amend the Nation-State Law](#), including from several ministers, Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked said on Monday that her Yamina party would veto any such plans.

"I recommend that my friends in the coalition stop amusing themselves by thinking they can make changes in Basic Laws that are not agreed upon," Shaked tweeted Monday morning. "It won't happen, as is set in the coalition agreement."

Shaked was also backed by fellow Yamina MKs Nir Orbach and Abir Kara, who both stated on Twitter that the party's official stance remains opposed to any changes to the controversial 2018 law, which enshrined Israel as a Jewish state.

Shaked's comments came a day after Finance Minister Avigdor Liberman [declared](#) that the government should amend the current law, due to what he called its "contradictions."

Liberman was addressing the recently released [identity of Lt. Col. Mahmoud Kheir el-Din](#), 41, an Israeli special forces officer who was killed in a covert operation in the Gaza Strip in November 2018.

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Kheir el-Din, a member of the Druze community, joined the Israeli military in 1999 and served in the Paratroopers Brigade for three years before joining the Military Intelligence's Special Operations Division, where he served until his death.



Lt. Col. Mahmoud Khir al-Din (right) and his wife Nahed, in an undated photograph published by the military on May 15, 2022. (Israel Defense Forces)

“There is a clear contradiction between the Nation-State Law in its current form and the praise given to Lt. Col. Mahmoud Kheir el-Din,” Liberman (Yisrael Beytenu) wrote in a tweet on Sunday.

In the wake of Liberman's declaration, the Blue and White party declared on Sunday that it planned to bring a equality bill that would amend the Basic Law for review by the Ministerial Committee for Legislation as early as next week.

Joint List head Ayman Odeh on Monday said the coalition could count on his predominantly Arab party for support in passing the proposed legislation.

“I call on the coalition to work with the Joint List in order to pass the bill despite Shaked's opposition,” Odeh said, noting that the interior minister had pushed for the passage of a controversial ban on Palestinian family unification despite the objections of fellow coalition party Meretz.



Yisrael Beytenu party chairman Avigdor Liberman speaks during a faction meeting at the Knesset, on January 31, 2022. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

Critics say the current law discriminates against minorities and especially against Druze citizens, many of whom serve in senior positions in the Israeli military and other state agencies.

“We have an opportunity to fix the Nation-State Law and formalize the Declaration of Independence as a Basic Law,” Liberman argued on Sunday, calling on both the opposition and coalition to reevaluate the contested law and “to do what's necessary rather than settling for words like ‘brothers in arms’ in regard to the Druze community.”

Foreign Minister Yair Lapid backed Liberman, tweeting “I agree with every word.”

Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz, leader of the left-wing Meretz party, tweeted Sunday evening that the Nation-State law should be “canceled,” calling it an “outrageous law that creates injustice against the non-Jewish citizens of Israel.”

Quasi-constitutional Basic Laws, of which the Nation-State Law is an example, serve as Israel’s constitution and guide the country’s legal system. They are usually more difficult to repeal in a legislative process than regular laws.