

# Let Israel's Ban on Family Unification Expire!

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*Israel's ban on the family unification of its Palestinian Arab citizens is a stain on the country, an offense to democracy, and must be allowed to finally expire on Tuesday, July 6.*

In 2003, amid the extreme violence of the Second Intifada, Israel's Knesset approved an expressly temporary one-year provision, an amendment to its "Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law," which proscribed the granting of citizenship, or even residency, to a spouse of an Israeli citizen if the former was a Palestinian from the occupied West Bank or Gaza Strip. This provision, originally presented as short-term and instituted in the wake of a security emergency—and, even then, fundamentally discriminatory—has since been extended time and time again by Israel's lawmakers. It will lapse after July 6 if it is not further extended.

While Israel's Justice Ministry wishes to [argue](#) that the law "does not discriminate between Israeli citizens... as it applies to all," Jewish and Arab, it is clear that, in practice, the law targets Israel's Palestinian Arab citizens and violates their basic right to family life and equality.

In theory, women over 25 and men over 35 are not proscribed from citizenship. In practice, those who attempt to exercise this "right" find it impossible to complete the process successfully.

Thankfully, Israeli civilians no longer suffer from the indiscriminate suicide bombings that characterized the period when the emergency provision was enacted; chaos no longer reigns. Any specific concerns raised by the formidable Israeli security establishment, therefore, can and should be addressed on a case-by-case basis, rather than through an arbitrary and draconian statute that entrenches the status of one group of citizens as secondary.

We applaud our friends in the Meretz party, who have declared that they will continue to oppose this sweeping, racist family unification ban, as they have in the past, and who have made clear that their participation in the government will not come at the price of compromising their core principles. We fully hope and expect that the rightwing parties within the coalition will not induce the government's collapse over the law's expiration.