



Israel's official days of rest? These are among the law's handful of statutes

In fact, the hyperbolic reactions to the nation-state law in the West—like that of the Federation CEO—generally level no specific objections to any legal principles or outcomes of the law.

Rather, they resemble the whining we hear daily from the left—based on fundamental opposition to Israel as a Jewish state—or a search for excuses by squeamish American Jews for abandoning loyalty to *Eretz Yisrael*, because it's too assertive (or too Jewish).

One "controversial" section of the law names Hebrew as Israel's official language, while now classifying Arabic "only" as having "special status." California's population is 20% Hispanic, many of whom speak Spanish—yet Spanish has no special legal status in California. Nor does Russian have special status in Latvia, though 25% of its population speaks Russian. Call out the demonstrators and outraged *New York Times* reporters! Minority languages matter!

Likewise, the law in no way diminishes Arab rights or changes Arabs' status in Israel.

As for Israel's relation to Diaspora Jews, the law grants Israel zero power over Jews in the *galut*, nor gives Jews outside Israel any power over the State. In short, nothing will change—though Jews discomfited by fearless expressions of Zionism from Israel will no doubt continue to squirm.

In this week's featured article (see below), Judith Bergman, Israeli writer and political analyst at Jerusalem's Haym Saloman Center, accuses those criticizing the nation-state bill of unfair attacks—no less so than the constant carping of biased U.N. agencies against the Jewish state.

Indeed, while some have called Israel's new law simply unnecessary, the hysterical cries from the media and some American Jews rather reinforce the wisdom of having passed it. It would seem that a bold declaration of Israel's Jewishness is quite in order.

I hope you'll forward Bergman's concise, hard-hitting op-ed to friends, family and fellow congregants to help them understand why response to Israel's nation-state law says more about the critics and complainers than it does about the law itself—which is innocuous.

I hope you'll also visit FLAME's new [Facebook page](#), as well as read the P.S. below, which highlights FLAME's *hasbarah* message on why dysfunctional Palestinian dictatorships doom the Trump administration's rumored Israel-Palestinian peace plan before it's unveiled.

editorial *hasbarah* messages placed in media nationwide every month: The dire threats from Iran, Hamas and Hizbollah, the injustice of BDS, Palestinian anti-Semitism and more. If you support a bold voice that tells the truth about Israel in American media, please donate now.

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Best regards,

Ken Cohen

Editor, Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. You've probably read about the new peace plan expected from the Trump administration, possibly coming in next few weeks or months. We at FLAME believe such a proposal—no matter what its tenets—will be a mistake, if for no other reason than that the autocratic governments of both Palestinian factions are currently unequipped and unsuited to be Israel's partners in peace. That's why FLAME has created a new *editorial message*—“[Peace with Palestinian Dictators?](#)”—*which will soon run in mainstream magazines and newspapers, including college newspapers, with a combined readership of some 10 million people. In addition, it will be sent to every member of the U.S. Congress and President Trump. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to support us. Remember: FLAME's powerful ability to influence public opinion—and U.S. support of Israel—comes from individuals like you, one by one. I hope you'll consider giving a donation now, as you're able—with \$500, \$250, \$100, or even \$18. (Remember, your donation to FLAME is tax deductible.) To donate online, just go to [donate now](#). Now, more than ever, we need your support to ensure that the American people, the U.S. Congress and President Trump stay focused on the true obstacle to peace, which is the lack of a credible Palestinian peace partner.*

As of today, more than 15,000 Israel supporters receive the FLAME Hotline [at no charge](#) every week. If you're not yet a subscriber, won't you join us in receiving these timely updates, so you can more effectively [tell the truth about Israel?](#) Just go to [free subscription](#).

## **The discriminatory attacks on Israel's nation-state law**

By Judith Bergman, *New York Daily News*, July 24, 2018

**Israel's nation-state law has been widely condemned**—with the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and a number of American Jewish organizations leading the denunciations.

But is the international outrage really about the law itself, or is it actually about the problem the international community has with

accepting the reality of a Jewish state?

The EU expressed concern that the law would "complicate or prevent" the two-state solution, whereas the OIC called the law "racist, void and illegitimate." The ADL said that elements in the law "could undermine Israel's cherished democratic character," whereas the Union for Reform Judaism declared that the law would do "enormous damage . . . to the values of the state of Israel as a democratic and Jewish nation."

**The denunciations of the law have centered on two elements:**

The first is section 4 of the law, which says, "The state's language is Hebrew." This is no different from the French constitution, which provides that French is the language of France, or the Spanish constitution stipulating that Castilian is the official language of Spain.

The concern that the law will lead to discrimination of the Arab minority in Israel flies in the face of the guarantee contained within the law that the status given to the Arabic language before the law came into effect will not be harmed and that Arabic has a special status within the state. The international hysteria surrounding the provision is not based on facts, but on suppositions fueled by political agendas, which lead us to the second point of criticism.

The second point centers on the unique right to the exercise of self-determination in the state of Israel that the law bestows on the Jewish people. It is, again, completely uncontroversial under international law that the majority nationality of a nation-state enjoys the unique right to exercise its self-determination and the national sovereignty that flows from it.

It simply means that Israel is the sovereign state of the Jewish people—hardly a legal innovation. In Spain, for example, the constitution specifies that national sovereignty belongs to the Spanish people, and this principle—whether codified or not—is generally followed by European nation-states, which do not, as a rule, grant self-determination to the various minorities, even large ones, who are living in their territories.

**The international community, however, is outraged that the Jews** would apply to themselves the same principle that is considered perfectly acceptable for the rest of the world.

Crucially, Arabs enjoy full state sovereignty in 21 Arab states, covering the territory of more than 13 million square kilometers (5 million square miles). In contrast, there is one Jewish state covering a territory of 22,000 square kilometers (8500 square miles). The international community, evidently, is finding it hard to stomach the existence of that minuscule Jewish state as an equal sovereign state.

The problem, therefore, is not that the nation-state law is discriminatory, or unique to Israel, but that large segments of the international community are determined to treat Israel in a unique and discriminatory manner, compared to how it treats all other nation-states.

**The uproar over the nation-state law, in this sense, is no different** from the constant singling out of Israel for condemnation at the United Nations, especially at the UN Human Rights Council, a discriminatory practice that contributed to the decision of the U.S. to withdraw from the organization.

The Palestinian Authority, with PLO Secretary General Saeb Erekat at the forefront, has seized the momentum of the international condemnations and is reportedly planning to take the law to the UN, claiming it violates the UN charter, and planning to petition the International Court of Justice for an opinion on it.

The international community has once again done what it does best, when it comes to Israel: Fueled the conflict.

The logo for FLAME, featuring the word "FLAME" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letter "A" is stylized with a flame icon integrated into its top curve.

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