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April 6, 2020

MK Benjamin Gantz
The Knesset,
Kiryat Ben Gurion,
Jerusalem 9195016

Dear MK Benjamin Gantz and MK Gabi Ashkenazi:

We write to you as American Jewish communal leaders who are proudly Zionist, unquestionably pro-Israel, and who have devoted our lives to supporting the State of Israel and ensuring an ironclad relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jewry.

In the midst of this unprecedented health and financial crisis for Israel, we respectfully urge you not to use the need for unity in the face of emergency to create a different crisis for Israel by moving forward on unilateral annexation.

We have strongly objected to Israel unilaterally annexing West Bank territory and applying sovereignty to Jewish settlements, whether according to the parameters of the Trump plan or any other similar proposal, at any point in time. To unilaterally move forward with such a plan now would be particularly damaging. It will call into question the Israeli government's priorities during a global and national emergency, shine a spotlight on controversial Israeli policies rather than highlight valiant Israeli efforts to develop a coronavirus vaccine, or laudable Israeli cooperation with the Palestinians on health and safety measures, and could create a rupture inside of Congress and in the upcoming presidential campaign during a volatile election season. It will be viewed as political opportunism by proponents of annexation during the worst possible moment and will make it more challenging for American Jewish leaders as they seek to maintain strong support for Israel and pro-Israel policies at this time.

Should annexation be advanced, the majority of American Jews who oppose such a policy will feel more alienated from Israel as a result. Just as we expect that our own government focus on the crisis at hand without using the fear and uncertainty felt by Americans to push through harmful and unrelated policies, we ask that the leaders of the Jewish state to which we are all so committed do the same.

We therefore urge you to remain steadfast in your opposition to unilateral annexation.

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