

Israel MP Says He Wishes There Was “A Button” to Get Rid of Palestinian Citizens

Coalition's Matan Kahana said if he could he would take all the Palestinians citizens of Israel and put them on a train to Switzerland

By [Middle East Eye](#)

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A senior member of [Israel](#)’s coalition sparked anger on Tuesday after a recording was released of him saying he wished there was a button he could press to send all Palestinian citizens in Israel to Switzerland.

Deputy Religious Affairs Minister Matan Kahana, a member of Prime Minister Naftali Bennett’s right-wing Yamina Party, made the remarks in a speech to religious high school boys in Efrat on Monday.

In a clip broadcast by Israel’s public broadcaster Kan, Kahana said: “If there was a button I could press that would take all the Arabs and put them on a train to Switzerland, I would.

“A button like that does not exist. Apparently we were destined to exist here [together] on this land in some form.”

Attempting to later clarify his remarks on Twitter, Kahana said:

“Conversing with students yesterday, I referenced that both Jewish and Arab populations aren’t going anywhere.

“As such, we must work to live in coexistence. Our coalition is a courageous step towards this goal. Within this larger discussion, a few of my statements were worded poorly.”

‘Terrible statement’

Kahana’s words brought criticism from across Israel’s political spectrum.

“No one is leaving, not to Switzerland and not to anywhere else,” tweeted MP Mossi Raz, from the left-wing Meretz Party, “we are staying here together to build a democratic and equal society.”

MP Eli Avidar, from the right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu party, tweeted:

“This was a terrible statement, it’s a shame it was said.

“Israeli-Arabs are here and they are here to stay. We need to be done with stances like these.”

MP Aida Touma-Sliman, from the predominantly Arab Joint List, wrote in a tweet:

“The Kahanist apple didn’t fall far from the tree... and in this government, they are still talking about Arab-Israeli cooperation.”

Fellow Joint List MP Ahmad Tibi said:

“There is a button that will take you from this government and the Knesset; I’ll press it soon.”

According to Israeli media, Kahana telephoned Tibi to apologise for his remarks, but the latter demanded that he make a public apology and said: “There is a conflict, but I would never say Jews should be transported by trains. That’s terrible.”

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