

# Netanyahu Approves Death Penalty Targeting Palestinian Prisoners

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Global Research, November 09, 2018

[Ma'an News Agency](#) 5 November 2018

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

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*The Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, approved passing a bill into law that allows execution of Palestinian prisoners, Hebrew-language news sites reported on Monday. Netanyahu reportedly gave the green light, on Sunday, to members of his Likud political party to support the law on the execution of Palestinian prisoners, a law introduced in 2017 by the Yisrael Beiteinu party, which is headed by the Israeli Defense Minister, Avigdor Lieberman.*

At the time, Lieberman said that the bill would be a powerful deterrent to Palestinians,

“We must not allow terrorists to know that after a murder they have committed, they will sit in prison, enjoy the conditions and may be released in the future.”

Despite that Israel currently has a law allowing death penalty, it has not been carried out since 1962 when the Jewish state executed Nazi SS officer Adolf Eichmann. However, the current law allows Israeli military courts to only hand down the death penalty if a panel of three judges impose a unanimous decision. The proposed bill would remove this condition which would allow Israeli civilian and military courts to carry out executions against Palestinians convicted of murder. In addition, it would require military courts to carry out executions by a majority of only two judges instead of full consensus by all judges.

Many Palestinian politicians and human rights activists have already denounced the bill and expressed concern that it will give Israel “legal cover to target Palestinians,” and argued that although it does not define a specific group, it is “intended mainly for the Palestinian people.” The controversial bill had previously passed its preliminary vote in January with 52 votes in favor and 49 opposing.

According to prisoners rights group Addameer, currently there are 5,640 Palestinian prisoners currently being held in Israeli prisons, of whom 465 are in administrative detention, 53 are female prisoners, 270 are child prisoners, and 50 are under the age of 16.

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