

May 11th, 2026

The Law as Brought to the First Vote

The Heritage Authority in Judea and Samaria Bill, 2026

Chapter A: Purpose and Interpretation

1. The purposes of this Law are to establish the direct responsibility of the State of Israel for the management of antiquities, heritage sites, and archaeology in Judea and Samaria, and for the enforcement of legislative provisions intended to prevent and reduce harm to them, taking into account the unique characteristics of these sites in Judea and Samaria.

2. Definitions In this Law:

"The Area" – Any territory in which the Officer in Charge under the Antiquities Order was authorized to operate on the eve of the commencement of this Law;

"Site" – A historical place as defined in the Antiquities Order;

"The Budget Foundations Law" – The Budget Foundations Law–1985;

"The Antiquities Authority Law" – The Antiquities Authority Law–1989;

"Recognized Institution" – A recognized institution under the Council for Higher Education Law–1958;

"The Council" – The Public Council of the Authority established under Section 6;

"The Director" – The Director of the Authority appointed under Section 18;

"Antiquity" – As defined in the Antiquities Order;

"The Antiquities Order" – The Order Concerning the Antiquities Law (Judea and Samaria) (No. 1166)–1986;

"The Heritage Authority" or "The Authority" – The Heritage Authority in Judea and Samaria established under Section 3;

"The Antiquities Authority" – The Authority as defined in the Antiquities Authority Law;

"Security Legislation" – The law and security legislation as defined in the Order Concerning Interpretation [Consolidated Version] (Judea and Samaria) (No. 1729)–2013;

"The Minister" – The Minister of Heritage.

Chapter B: The Heritage Authority in Judea and Samaria

3. (a) The Heritage Authority in Judea and Samaria is hereby established; the Authority is a corporate body, competent for any obligation, right, and legal action consistent with its character and nature as a corporate entity.

(b) The Heritage Authority is a critiqued body as defined in the State Comptroller Law–1958 [Consolidated Version].

(c) The Heritage Authority shall operate according to government policy and in accordance with the provisions of this Law.

(d) The Heritage Authority shall be the sole body responsible for managing all matters of heritage, antiquities, and archaeology in the Area, and shall possess all powers held by the Officer in Charge under the Antiquities Order on the eve of the commencement date, as well as powers under this Law, including:

- (1) Exposure and excavation of sites;
- (2) Conservation, restoration, and development of sites;
- (3) Management, maintenance, operation, and protection of sites;
- (4) Conservation and restoration of antiquities;
- (5) Management of the antiquity inventories of the Area, and the preservation, and supervision of them;
- (6) Supervision of archaeological excavations;
- (7) Supervision and enforcement of the orders of this law;
- (8) Conducting and promoting archaeological research;
- (9) Management and maintenance of a scientific library for archaeology and the history of the Land of Israel and its neighbors, regarding antiquities and heritage in the Area;
- (10) Consolidation, documentation, and registration of archaeological, antiquities and heritage information in the Area;
- (11) Conducting and encouraging educational and public relations activities;

(12) Maintaining international scientific relations in the field of archaeology;

(13) Authority to acquire real estate for the purpose of protection, conservation, research, and development of sites;

(14) Authority to expropriate real estate and antiquities for the purpose of protection, conservation, research, and development of sites.

(e) The Heritage Authority, its Director, and all its employees shall exercise these powers in the manners specified in the security legislation issued under the authority of the military commander.

4. (a) The powers of management, maintenance, and operation of a site located within a Park declared under the Order Concerning Parks (Judea and Samaria) (No. 373)–1970, or a Nature Reserve declared under the Order Concerning Nature Protection (Judea and Samaria) (No. 363)–1969, shall be exercised in accordance with Security Legislation; in the event of a conflict, the authority of the Heritage Authority shall prevail.

(b) The powers of protection, management, maintenance, and operation of a Holy Place under the Order Concerning the Protection of Holy Places (Judea and Samaria) (No. 327)–1969 (hereinafter – Holy Places Order), shall be exercised in accordance with Security Legislation; in the event of a dispute, the matter shall be brought before a committee consisting of the Head of the Heritage Authority, the Head of the Competent Authority under the Holy Places Order, and an additional member selected by the Ministerial Committee.

5. (a) For the purpose of protecting, managing, maintaining, or operating a site in the Area, the Authority may, with the Council's approval, engage with a corporation or a local authority within whose jurisdiction the site is located (hereinafter – Operating Body).

(b) The period of engagement shall not exceed 5 years, renewable for additional periods not exceeding 5 years each.

(c) The engagement with an operating body shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of any law.

(d) The Operating Body shall act in accordance with the policies and directives set by the Authority, maintaining the public interest and the national character of the site.

Chapter C: The Council of the Heritage Authority

6. (a) The Council of the Heritage Authority shall consist of nine members appointed by the Minister, and they shall be:

(1) Four public representatives with expertise or significant experience in one of the following fields: antiquities, history, archaeology, or heritage, of whom at least one is a member of the academic faculty from one of the aforementioned fields in a recognized institution that holds degree programs in the field of history or archaeology, in consultation with the Council for Higher Education;

(2) A representative of the [Israel] Antiquities Authority according to the recommendation of the Chairperson of the Antiquities Authority Council;

(3) Two heads of local authorities in the Area, or two employees of the local authority appointed by the heads of those local authorities, one from each local authority;

(4) A representative of the Ministry of Defense, to be appointed according to the recommendation of the Minister of Defense from among the employees of the Ministry of Defense or employees of units subordinate to the Ministry of Defense;

(5) A representative of the Ministry of Heritage from among the employees of the Ministry of Heritage.

(b) The Minister, in consultation with the Council, shall appoint the Chairperson of the Council from among the Council members listed in paragraphs (1) and (2).

(c) A person who has been convicted of a criminal offense or a disciplinary offense which, by its nature, severity, or circumstances, renders them unfit to serve as a member of the Council, shall not be appointed.

(d) A Council member shall be appointed for a term of four years; the Minister may extend the term for one additional term, provided that they do not serve more than two consecutive terms.

7. (a) Without derogating from its other functions, the Council shall:

(1) Determine the general policy of the Authority within the scope of its duties;

(2) Approve the Authority's budget and the Authority's annual work plan;

(3) Supervise the implementation of the Authority's policy, plans, and budgets;

(4) Supervise the work of the Director General, including receiving reports regarding the Authority's activities;

(5) Discuss the financial reports submitted to it by the Director General.

(b) The Council, with the Minister's approval, shall establish rules for the operation of sites, their management, and supervision over them.

(c) The Council shall submit to the Minister, at least once a year, a report on the activities of the Heritage Authority and shall provide them, upon request, with any information regarding its activities.

8. (a) A Council member who is not a government representative shall cease to serve before the end of their term in any of the following cases:

(1) They resigned by submitting a letter of resignation to the Chairperson of the Council;

(2) One of the restrictions specified in Section 6 applies to them;

(3) They are permanently unable to fulfill their role, and the Minister, after consultation with the Chairperson of the Council, removed them from office via written notice;

(4) They retired from the position due to which they were appointed.

(b) The Chairperson of the Council shall forward the resignation letter as stated in subsection (a)(1) to the Minister within 96 hours of its submission; the resignation takes effect 48 hours after the letter is delivered to the Minister, unless the member withdrew the resignation by notifying the Minister in writing before then.

(c) A Council member who is not a state employee and is absent without a justified reason from four consecutive meetings of the Council may be removed from office or have their appointment canceled by the Minister, as applicable, via written notice, following consultation with the Chairperson of the Council.

9. (a) A Council member shall not receive a salary from the Authority for their services.

(b) A Council member shall be entitled to receive compensation from the Authority for participation in Council meetings in accordance with the provisions of subsection (d), provided they are not one of the following:

(1) A state employee;

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- (2) An employee of a budgeted body;
 - (3) An employee of a supported body;
 - (4) Entitled to receive compensation for participation in Council meetings from another source

For this purpose, "state employee," "employee of a budgeted body," and "employee of a supported body" are as defined in Section 32 of the Budget Foundations Law.

(c) A Council member who is not entitled to compensation under subsection (b) is entitled to receive reimbursement from the Authority for expenses incurred for the purpose of participating in Council meetings, according to subsection (d), provided they are not entitled to reimbursement from another source.

(d) A Council member is entitled to compensation in an amount equal to the compensation to which a council member in another corporation that is a budgeted body (as defined in Section 21 of the Budget Foundations Law) is entitled, at a classification level identical to that of the Authority according to the decision of the Committee for the Classification of Statutory Corporations, or to expense reimbursement, as applicable, for each meeting attended, in accordance with the directives of the Commissioner of Wage and Labor Agreements in the Ministry of Finance regarding compensation and expense reimbursement for chairpersons and members of statutory corporations, including regarding the type of meeting and the maximum number of meetings. "The Committee for the Classification of Statutory Corporations" – The public committee for the classification of statutory corporations established by virtue of the decision of the Ministerial Committee for Economic Affairs No. KL/218.

10. (a) The Council shall determine its own work procedures and the conduct of its deliberations to the extent they are not determined in this Law or under it.

(b) A legal quorum at Council meetings consists of at least seven members; if there is no legal quorum at the opening of the meeting, the chairperson of the meeting may postpone it by thirty minutes; if a legal quorum is still not present after this period, the meeting shall take place if at least five members participate, including the Chairperson of the Council.

(c) Once a meeting has been opened lawfully according to subsection (b), its continuation shall be lawful with any number of members present.

(d) The Director, or whoever they authorize in their place, is entitled to be present at Council meetings.

(e) If the Minister or five Council members request a discussion on a specific subject, the subject shall be included in the Council's agenda for its next meeting.

(f) The Council may appoint from among its members a subcommittee for a specific matter within its authority, appoint its chairperson, and delegate its powers to it, except for the power to determine the general policy of the Authority and the power to approve its budget.

11. The existence of the Council, its powers, and the validity of its decisions shall not be affected due to the termination of a member's term or due to a flaw in their appointment or the continuation of their term, provided that the majority of Council members are serving lawfully.

12. (a) In this section –

"Family member" – spouse, parent, grandparent, son or daughter and their spouses, brother or sister and their children, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, uncle or aunt and their children, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandson or granddaughter, including a relative as mentioned who is a step-relative;

"Interested party" – as defined in the Securities Law-1968;

"Handling" – including making a decision, raising a topic for discussion, presence during a discussion, participation in a discussion or vote, or dealing with a subject outside of a discussion;

"Conflict of interest" of a Council member – a conflict of interest between the fulfillment of their duties on the Council and a personal interest or another role, of their own or of their relative;

"Relative" of a Council member – any of the following:

(1) A family member of the Council member;

(2) A person in whose financial status the Council member has an interest;

(3) A corporation in which the Council member, their family member, or a person as mentioned in paragraph (2) is an interested party;

(4) A body in which the Council member, their family member, or a person as mentioned in paragraph (2) is a manager or a responsible employee.

(b) A person shall not be appointed as a Council member and shall not serve as such if, by virtue of their tenure, they will frequently be in a state of conflict of interest that would prevent them from fulfilling the core of their duties on the Council.

(c) A Council member shall not handle, as part of their duties, any matter the handling of which will cause them to be in a state of conflict of interest.

(d) If a Council member becomes aware that they may be in a state of conflict of interest as stated in subsection (b) or (c), they shall notify the Chairperson of the Council as soon as possible; if the member in question is the Chairperson, they shall notify the Minister.

(e) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, a Council member appointed under Section 6(a)(1) and (3) may also take into account the interests of the body or the public they represent, insofar as they are related to the duties of the Council, and they shall not be considered in a state of conflict of interest for this reason alone.

13. Council members who are not state employees shall be treated, in their actions as Council members, as state employees regarding these enactments and regarding their actions on the Council:

- (1) Public Service Law (Gifts)–1979;
- (2) Penal Law–1977 – provisions relating to public servants;
- (3) Knesset Elections Law [Consolidated Version]–1969;
- (4) Evidence Ordinance [New Version]–1971;
- (5) Public Service Law (Restrictions after Retirement)–1969;
- (6) State Service Law (Classification of Party Activity and Fund Raising)–1959, except for Council members appointed under Section 6(a)(3).

14. The Council shall appoint an internal auditor for the Authority, who shall operate in accordance with the provisions of the Internal Audit Law–1992; the internal auditor shall submit a report on their findings to the Council.

15. (a) The Council shall appoint from among its members an Audit Committee consisting of 3 members, provided that one of them is a Council member from among state employees, and 2 are Council members appointed under Section 6(a)(1) and (2) – one of whom shall be

the Chairperson of the committee; the Chairperson of the Council shall not be a member of the Audit Committee.

(b) The Audit Committee shall:

(1) Monitor deficiencies in the management of the Authority and propose ways for their correction to the Council;

(2) Examine the Authority's internal audit system and the functioning of the internal auditor, and whether they have the resources and tools necessary to fulfill their role;

(3) Examine the internal auditor's work plan and the reports submitted, and forward them to the Council along with its comments and recommendations;

(4) Establish arrangements regarding the handling of complaints from Authority employees and the protection to be given to employees who have complained; such arrangements shall be published on the Authority's website.

(c) The Chairperson of the Audit Committee shall convene the Audit Committee for discussion on topics placed on its agenda by them, by another committee member, by the Council, by the Director, or by the internal auditor.

(d) Anyone who is not a member of the Audit Committee shall not be present during committee meetings during discussions or the making of decisions, unless the Chairperson of the committee or the committee determines that they are required for the presentation of a specific topic; notwithstanding, the internal auditor of the Authority shall receive notices of Audit Committee meetings and shall be entitled to participate in them.

(e) The Audit Committee shall submit a report on its activities to the Council and the Director at least once a year.

Chapter D: Director and Employees of the Authority

16. (a) The Council, upon the proposal of the Minister, shall appoint a General Manager for the Heritage Authority; the Director shall be appointed for a period of four years, and the Council may reappoint them, according to the provisions of this section, for two additional terms.

(b) A person who has been convicted of a criminal offense or disciplinary offenses which, by their nature, severity, or circumstances, renders them unfit to serve as Director, shall not be appointed.

(c) The Director's tenure shall expire in one of the following cases:

- (1) They resigned by written notice submitted to the Minister through the Council;
- (2) They are permanently unable to fulfill their role;
- (3) They were convicted of a criminal offense or a disciplinary offense which, by its nature, severity, or circumstances, renders them unfit to serve as Director;
- (4) The Minister, with the Council's approval, decided to remove them from office for special reasons to be detailed.

(d) A decision to terminate the Director's tenure under subsection (c)(3) or (4) shall not be made until they have been given an opportunity to present their claims.

(e) Without derogating from other powers and roles granted to the Director under this Law and any other enactment, the Director shall be in charge of implementing the Authority's duties, including:

- (1) Responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Authority's affairs in accordance with the Council's decisions, including preparing the financial reports and the budget proposal and submitting them to the Council;
- (2) Being granted the powers necessary for managing the Authority, including representing the Authority in any of its roles and signing agreements or other documents on behalf of the Authority, subject to the provisions of this Law and the Council's decisions.

17. (a) The Minister may authorize inspectors, from among the employees of the Authority or employees of the Antiquities Authority, who shall be granted the powers provided under Security Legislation and for the supervision of antiquities as defined in the Antiquities Order, for the purpose of implementing the provisions of this Law, in whole or in part.

(b) An inspector shall not be appointed unless they meet all of the following:

- (1) The Israel Police announced, no later than three months from receiving the employee's details, that it does not object to the appointment for reasons of public safety, including due to their criminal record;
- (2) They received appropriate training in the field of powers to be granted to them as directed by the Minister, with the consent of the Minister of National Security;

(3) They meet additional eligibility conditions as directed by the Minister, in consultation with the Minister of National Security.

Chapter E: Appeals Committee

18. (a) An Appeals Committee of three members shall be established, of whom two members shall be appointed by the Council not from among its members, who possess significant experience or expertise in one of the following fields: antiquities, history, archaeology, or heritage; and a judge or a person qualified to be a judge appointed by the Minister of Justice, who shall be the Chairperson of the committee.

(b) Anyone who considers themselves aggrieved by the following decisions may appeal them before the Appeals Committee:

- (1) Refusal to grant an excavation license, its cancellation, suspension, or conditioning;
- (2) Refusal to approve the execution of an action at a site;
- (3) A decision that an object, place, or structure is an antiquity;
- (4) Refusal to grant an export license, its cancellation, or conditioning.

(c) The filing of an appeal does not cancel the validity of the decision against which it was filed.

(d) The Appeals Committee may accept an appeal, reject it, or make any other decision. (e) The Appeals Committee shall have all the powers granted to a commission of inquiry as defined in the Commissions of Inquiry Law-1969, with the necessary changes.

(f) The provisions under the Administrative Tribunals Law-1992, except for sections 5, 6, 7, 13, 37, 38, 45, 54(b)(3), (7), and (9), and (c), shall apply to an appeal filed under this Law and to the Appeals Committee, with the necessary changes and with this change: the powers granted to a District Court under section 28(d) and (e) of the said Law shall be granted to the Court for Administrative Matters in Jerusalem.

(g) An administrative appeal regarding matters of the Area may be filed against the decision of the Appeals Committee to the Court for Administrative Matters in Jerusalem.

Chapter F: Budget and Assets

19. (a) The Authority shall submit an annual budget plan to the Minister of Finance, which shall detail the financial needs required for its operation, including current expenses,

personnel expenses, equipment purchase, enforcement, and supervision; the annual budget plan shall also include a special budget for security force assistance and for special supervision of sites of special importance and sensitivity, as required; the special budget shall be formulated in coordination with the Ministry of Defense.

(b) The annual budget for the Authority's activities shall be funded from the State Budget and from the Authority's income; the portion of the annual budget funded from the State Budget shall be determined in the Annual Budget Law within the framework of the Ministry of Heritage budget.

(c) For the purpose of performing its duties, the Authority may receive donations and establish research funds.

20. Fees collected by the Authority for entrance to a site or for other actions shall be paid into the Authority's coffers.

21. (a) The Authority shall not be entitled to sell or otherwise transfer an asset in its ownership, except for assets whose details, including their type and value, have been set in regulations, except with the Minister's approval.

(b) The Authority shall not be entitled to mortgage an asset in its possession or lease it for a period exceeding ten years, except with the Minister's approval; for this purpose, "leasing it for a period exceeding ten years" – includes a lease granting a right to renew or extend it, or a lease for an additional period which, when added to the previous lease periods, exceeds ten years.

(c) The Authority shall not take a loan exceeding an amount set by the Minister in regulations, except with the approval of the Minister and the Minister of Finance.

(d) Nothing in the provisions of this section shall derogate from the provisions of Section 5.

Chapter G: Miscellaneous Provisions

22. Nothing in the provisions of this Law shall derogate from any power granted to the security forces under any law and to the Commander under Security Legislation issued under the authority of the military commander; however, if there is a contradiction between the provisions of this Law and the provisions of any other law, including Security Legislation, the provisions of this Law shall prevail.

23. The Minister of Heritage is charged with the implementation of this Law, and they may, after consultation with the Council, install regulations for its implementation.

24. In the Antiquities Authority Law 1989 –

(1) In section 1(a), in the definition of "The Minister," instead of "Minister of Culture and Sport" shall come "Minister of Heritage";

(2) In section 6(a)(1) –

(a) In sub-paragraph (a), instead of "Ministry of Culture and Sport" shall come "Ministry of Heritage";

(b) In sub-paragraph (b), instead of "Head of Culture Administration in the Ministry of Culture and Sport" shall come "Director of Senior Department for Heritage Infrastructure in the Ministry of Heritage";

(c) In sub-paragraph (c), instead of "Head of Senior Department – Budgets, Planning and Work Plan in the Ministry of Culture and Sport" shall come "VP Planning and Budgeting in the Ministry of Heritage."

25. In the Administrative Matters Courts Law-2000 –

(1) In the Fourth Schedule, after item (3) shall come:

"(4) A decision of an authority under the Heritage Authority in Judea and Samaria Law-2026."

(2) In the Fifth Schedule, after item (1) shall come: "(2) An appeal against a decision of an Appeals Committee under Section 18 of the Heritage Authority in Judea and Samaria Law-2026."

26. The commencement of this Law....

27. (a) Whoever served as the Officer in Charge under the Antiquities Order (in this section – the Officer in Charge) on the eve of the commencement of this Law, shall be seen as if appointed as the Director of the Authority under this Law, for one term of office beginning on the day of the commencement of this Law (hereinafter – the Commencement Day).

(b) A budget determined in the Budget Law for the current fiscal year for the unit headed by the Officer in Charge, which has not been utilized by the Commencement Day, shall be transferred to the Authority; for this purpose, "current fiscal year" – the fiscal year in which the Commencement Day occurs.

(c) Engagements made before the Commencement Day by the Officer in Charge shall be seen as if made by the Authority.

(d) A historical place declared under Security Legislation on the eve of the Commencement Day shall be seen as a Site under the provisions of this Law.

28. The Minister shall report to the Knesset Education, Culture, and Sports Committee, in writing, once a year, on the implementation of the provisions of this Law in the year preceding the reporting date, and among other things on these matters:

- (1) Staffing of the Council and its activities;
- (2) The Authority's budget, including funding sources and budget utilization;
- (3) The Authority's activity.

General Explanatory Notes

In light of continuous and extensive acts of damage to antiquities and heritage sites in Judea and Samaria, and the looting of antiquities, the Government passed Resolution No. 90 on January 29, 2023. Accordingly, a plan was formulated for the rescue, preservation, and development of heritage and archaeological sites in Judea and Samaria, in order to improve and streamline their handling and reduce damage to them. In Government Resolution No. 786 from July 17, 2023, the plan was approved and the necessary budgets for its implementation were allocated.

Currently, the handling of antiquities sites in Israel is within the responsibility of the Antiquities Authority, whereas the handling of antiquities and heritage sites in Judea and Samaria is under the responsibility of the Archaeology Staff Officer unit in the Civil Administration, which operates according to the laws of the region.

The purpose of the proposed bill published herein is to establish in primary legislation the direct responsibility of the State for handling antiquities and preventing the looting and destruction of antiquities at heritage sites in the Judea and Samaria region. It is proposed to establish a professional and independent authority that will be responsible for this issue, to grant it all the necessary powers for this purpose and allow it to exercise them in accordance with the security legislation, and to ensure a regular budget to fund the Authority's activities within the budget of the Ministry of Heritage.

Explanatory Notes

- **Sections 1–2:** Proposes defining the bill's purpose and key terms, such as "Region" (areas where the Archaeology Staff Officer previously operated) and "Site".
- **Sections 3, 4, 5:** Proposes establishing the Judea and Samaria Heritage Authority as a statutory corporation under the Ministry of Heritage. It details the

Authority's duties and powers, including excavation, conservation, site management, enforcement, and public education. It also regulates coordination with other regional bodies and allows the Authority to contract local authorities or corporations to manage sites for periods of up to five years, subject to ongoing supervision.

- **Sections 6–16:** Proposes provisions for the Authority's structure, including establishing a 9-member council with representatives from the Ministries of Heritage and Defense, the Antiquities Authority, academics, and local authorities. The Minister of Heritage will oversee the law's implementation, appoint the council, and approve the budget.
- **Section 17:** Proposes empowering the Minister of Heritage to appoint inspectors with enforcement powers to reduce damage to heritage sites and enforce the law in the region.
- **Sections 18, 24, 25:** Proposes establishing a 3-member appeals committee headed by a judge to hear appeals regarding licensing, excavations, and site operations. It also suggests amending the Courts Law so the Jerusalem Court for Administrative Affairs can handle appeals against this committee.
- **Sections 19–21:** Proposes that the Authority's activities be funded by the state budget (via the Ministry of Heritage) and its own revenues from fees. The Authority will also be able to receive donations and establish research funds.
- **Section 24:** Proposes amending the Antiquities Authority Law so that the Minister of Heritage replaces the Minister of Culture and Sport as the responsible minister for antiquities, reflecting recent government resolutions.
- **Sections 27–28 & Budgetary Cost:** Proposes transitional provisions to ensure the continuity of the Civil Administration's Archaeology unit by transferring its activities, budget, and contracts to the new Authority. It requires the Minister of Heritage to report annually to the Knesset's Education Committee on the Authority's activities and budget utilization. The Ministry of Finance estimates the budgetary cost of this bill at approximately 30 million New Israeli Shekels per year.