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**Subject:** Israel's Regulation Law: 'land grab' or just politics?

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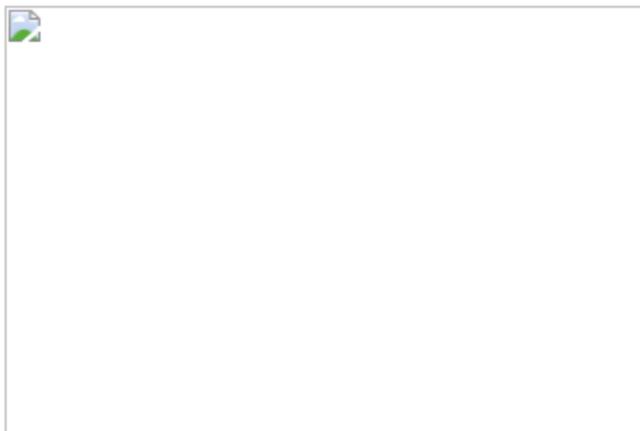


**Israel's Regulation Law: 'land grab' or just politics?**

**Filmmaker's expose of Israeli checkpoints stirs controversy**

**What you need to know about trees, Tu B'Shvat and the Jewish National Fund**

**In surprise discovery, Israeli archaeologists uncover 12th Dead Sea Scrolls cave**



*A demonstration against the planned demolition of nine homes in the Israeli settlement of Ofra.*

## Israel's Regulation Law: 'land grab' or just politics?

**By Alex Traiman/JNS.org**

Days after the settlement outpost of Amona was evacuated by order of Israel's High Court of Justice, the Knesset passed legislation to retroactively legalize all settlement housing sitting on property that has been identified as private Palestinian land. The law is being hailed by supporters of the settlement movement as a step toward extending full Israeli sovereignty over the disputed territories, while opponents have called the law a "land grab" that violates international law. Yet several leading legal scholars say the "Regulation Law" does not contradict Israeli law, and that precedents both inside and outside Israel can justify its passage within the context of international law. "I wouldn't call it a land grab," Alan Baker, a former legal adviser to Israel's Foreign Ministry and Israel's former ambassador to Canada. "These people have been already living where they are living for many years. The opposition to this law is more of a political issue."

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## Filmmaker's expose of Israeli checkpoints stirs controversy

By **Rafael Medoff/JNS.org**

The controversy over Israel's security checkpoints is heating up in the wake of a new investigative report showing that the perceived hardships endured by Palestinian travelers are much less severe than critics of Israel have charged. Human Rights Watch asserted in its most recent annual report that waiting times at the checkpoints are "onerous," and Amnesty International claimed the waiting times constitute "collective punishment." But filmmaker Ami Horowitz, in the "Palestinian Road Trip" video, presented interviews he conducted at the Kalandia checkpoint with Palestinian travelers who all said it took 10 minutes or less to get through the checkpoint. "That included waiting time and the time it took for the Israeli soldiers to check their identity papers," Horowitz told JNS.org.

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*Palestinians cross the Kalandia checkpoint June 10, 2016, on their way to Jerusalem's Old City for Friday prayers during Ramadan.*

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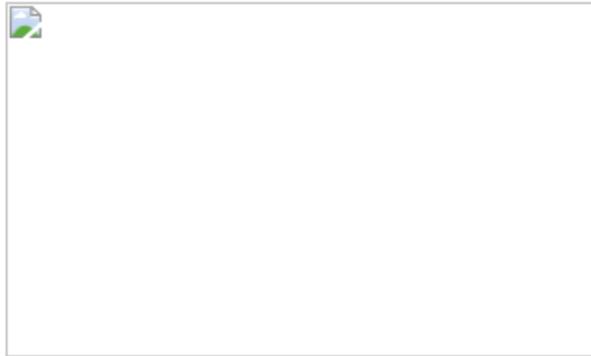
## What you need to know about trees, Tu B'Shvat and the Jewish National Fund

By **Alina Sharon/JNS.org**

"Be careful not to spoil or destroy my world—for if you do, there will be nobody after you to repair it," God says in a Midrash in Kohelet Rabbah. For more than a century, Keren Kayemet LeIsrael-Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF), which calls itself "Israel's largest environmental organization," has

followed that tenet by preserving nature in the Jewish state. The organization, which marked its 115th anniversary last month, launched a nationwide campaign for the Tu B'Shvat holiday in which more than half a million people are expected to participate in planting events through Feb. 17. JNS.org recounts the history behind how both the Tu B'Shvat holiday and the KKL-JNF organization have become synonymous with planting trees in Israel.

[Read more.](#)



*Planting in Israel as part of the monthlong nationwide campaign organized by KKL-JNF in advance of Tu B'Shvat.*

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## In surprise discovery, Israeli archaeologists uncover 12th Dead Sea Scrolls cave

*(JNS.org)* In a surprise discovery, Israeli archaeologists have uncovered a 12th cave in the Qumran region of the northern Judean Desert that once held portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls, until they were likely looted in the mid-20th century.

Hebrew University of Jerusalem archaeologists Dr. Oren Gutfeld and Ahiad Ovadia made the discovery with the help of Dr. Randall Price and students from Virginia-based Liberty University.

During the excavation of the cave, archaeologists found that numerous storage jars and lids from the Second Temple period were found hidden along the cave's walls and deep inside a tunnel in the back of the cave. But the jars were all broken and their contents were removed. The archaeologists also uncovered an iron pickaxe head from the 1950s, which suggests that the cave was looted.

"This exciting excavation is the closest we've come to discovering new Dead Sea scrolls in 60 years. Until now, it was accepted that Dead Sea scrolls were found only in 11 caves at Qumran, but now there is no doubt that this is the 12th cave," said Gutfeld.

"Although at the end of the day no scroll was found, and instead we 'only' found a piece of parchment rolled up in a jug that was being processed for writing, the findings indicate beyond any doubt that the cave contained scrolls that were stolen," he said. "The findings include the jars in which the scrolls and their covering were hidden, a leather strap for binding the scroll, a cloth that wrapped the scrolls, tendons and pieces of skin connecting fragments, and more." This excavation was the first to take place in the northern portion of the Judean Desert as part of the "Operation Scroll" program, which was launched by the Israel Antiquities Authority to improve the understanding and excavation of caves in the region.



*Archaeologist  
Ahiad Ovadia  
(in front) digs  
at the newly  
discovered  
12th Dead  
Sea Scrolls  
cave.*

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