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Kadima's Platform



Sharon. Finally an official platform

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Kadima uncertain on depth of concessions

Political chapter of party's platform, officially approved Wednesday, does not define depth of withdrawal from PA territories; according to platform, Jerusalem will remain united, while new Palestinian state will be responsible for refugee problem

Ronny Sofer

Ever since Prime Minister Ariel Sharon established his new party Kadima, the polls have predicted that it would gain a decisive victory in the elections. The party's platform, however, remained unknown.

Only Wednesday, during a faction meeting, Kadima's Knesset members officially approved the platform's political chapter.

The platform creates a precedent when determining that the expected Palestinian state (which is also part of the platform) will be responsible for the refugee problem.

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Kadima supports Palestinian state / Ronny Sofer

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's party launches its campaign ahead of March elections. Party's platform states, 'Israel would only tolerate a peaceful and terror-free Palestinian sovereignty, and preserves the right to annex Palestinian territory it finds necessary for its security'

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In addition, Kadima does not define the depth of withdrawal from the West Bank and does not name the geographical areas from which Israel will withdraw when the time comes.

The party's only unequivocal demand is that Jerusalem will remain united under Israeli sovereignty.

The extent of Israel's concessions in the negotiations on a permanent

agreement remains vague. Apart from the issue of a united Jerusalem, the platform does not offer any definitions of the depth of withdrawal from the rest of the Palestinian Authority territories.

Moreover, the platform has no geographical definition concerning sensitive areas for the State of Israel, such as the Jordan Valley.

"Israel, as a democratic country, babbles too much," Justice Minister Tzipi Livni explained, when asked why there was no reference to the depth of withdrawal.

'Palestinian state to deal with refugee problem'

The absence of the Jordan Valley issue from the platform was not obvious. When the platform was discussed in the faction meeting, the question of the Valley's future was raised, but it was agreed that the issue is non-negotiable since it is a "security zone," as defined in the platform.

These security zones will be determined according to the State of Israel's interests, Kadima officials said.

Contrary to the vagueness around the depth of concessions, Kadima's platform explicitly defines the solution for the refugee problem.

"The solution for the Palestinian refugee problem is in the establishment of a state for them," Livni said, explaining that once there is such a state, the refugees will be a problem the Palestinian state will have to deal with, not Israel.

"Israel's agreement to establish such a state requires that this state would be the total and complete national solution for all Palestinians wherever they are, including the refugees. Therefore, under any agreement, the entry of refugees to Israel would be prohibited," she added.

The program evoked former prime minister Ehud Barak's agreement in Camp David to have a limited number of Palestinian refugees return to Israel, a plan supported by Meretz Chairman Yossi [Beilin](#).

The plight of Palestinian refugees created a fault-line in Kadima with some members saying the responsibility for dealing with millions of Palestinian refugees lies with the Palestinian Authority.

Territorial concessions secure Jewish majority

According to the platform, Israel would keep the large settlement blocks of Maale Adumim, Ariel and Gush Etzion under any final status agreement with the Palestinians, a decision that Israel refuses to negotiate with the Palestinian Authority.

Party members outlined the ideological disparity between Likud and Kadima, saying Likud is unwilling to make territorial concessions for the sake of preserving a Jewish majority within Israel.

Israel expects the Palestinians to reciprocate Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip by showing readiness to implement reforms in the Palestinian Authority and crackdown on terror organizations, Kadima officials said.

[Back](#)