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Abstract

The “law to promote the construction of preferred housing developments” (temporary ruling for four years; hereinafter the “PHC Law”), which was approved in August 2014, directed the establishment of a national committee for the planning and construction of preferred sites for housing. This step is an extension of the “law for design and construction procedures to accelerate residential construction (provisional), (hereinafter referred to as the “ARC Law”).

The aim of “law to promote the construction of preferred housing developments” (PHC law) is the quick and efficient promotion of housing construction plans with respect to land areas that have been decreed by the government to be “preferred housing sites,” being within the framework of a special planning procedure that gives clear priority to developing government-owned land. The committee was given most of the powers of the National Council for Planning and Construction, as well as the power to approve programs whose provisions override the permanent provisions specified in other national master plans, with the exception of the General National Master Plan for housing, development and conservation (GMP 35, Amendment 1).

Before submitting the Preferred Housing Plan to the Committee for Preferred Housing Projects, the government or the ministers’ committee appointed by the government (in this case, the Cabinet Housing Committee is the ministers’ committee) must declare the parcel of land to be a preferred site for housing. This declaration is made according to law, upon the recommendation of the Manager of Planning and Management. A preferred housing plan is a program that applies to land mostly deemed to be Israeli government-owned land and includes at least 750 housing units. In settlements with an Arab population, the preferred housing program may also apply to land that is not registered as government-owned land and includes at least 200 housing units.

This report shows the complexity of the planning process for the Committee for Preferred Housing Projects, which is a result of the committee's structure and how it functions. The committee has encountered many difficulties, both on the planning and legal levels, and public resistance to its activity is increasing daily. It is apparent that despite the many extensive powers it has been allotted, it is moving along a track that is similar to that of its predecessors, such as the ARC committee. Although it has approved a high number of housing units in a short time, these housing units do not meet adequate planning standards, do not match local and regional housing needs and, ultimately, are merely transferring design-stage issues to the execution stage.