

COVID-19 REPORT

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Israel's Public Sector Under Fire – Histadrut Fires Back

The Histadrut approved a labour dispute in all jobs in the public sector. This step follows the Ministry of Finance's intention to reduce wages of workers in the public sector and its threats to violate the rights of the Histadrut | Arnon Bar-David: "The Minister of Finance is trying to get out of the political and public crisis he is in by attacking the workers."

The Histadrut Coordination and Execution Committee and the Histadrut Leadership Forum convened this week and unanimously approved the declaration of a general labor dispute in all public sector workplaces. The declaration follows the Ministry of Finance's intention to cut

salaries of 700,000 workers in the public sector, and following the deadlock in the negotiations on the issue. According to Israeli law, within 14 days of the dispute's declaration, the Histadrut can begin to take organizational measures in the public sector.

"We are convening to decide on a labour dispute in the public sector due to measures by the Minister of Finance to harm the Public Sector," Histadrut chairman Arnon Bar-David opened the discussion. "Last week the Finance Minister decided to attack the public sector. He made a simple decision that he is doing public relations for himself to try and get out of the political and public crisis he is in by attacking the public sector in all media stations."

"This sector, yes, the one that ran the economy in times of crisis, managed the corona crisis, and saved the citizens during the corona period. The same sector that treated the ill and treated the unemployed," Bar David added. "all over the world, people in the public sector are being saluted

or at least thanked, only in Israel there is a method: if someone hurts them, let's set the public against one another, followed by a method of harassment, threats, intimidation, and contempt."

"In the public sector, no one expects to be thanked anymore," he claimed, "but this outburst? We conducted ourselves throughout the entire crisis as the responsible adult. The Finance Minister does not understand that on the 10th of March, the public sector gave Prime Minister Netanyahu peace and room to quietly maneuver and manage this crisis. "Imagine we were in the streets then? In the beginning? And not getting beneath stretcher for a month and a half vacations at our expense to create a maneuvering space for the country and the Prime Minister to manage the biggest crisis in the country's history? Public sector workers worked around the clock."

"Let the Minister of Finance go where he wants and try to legislate whatever laws he wants. We will declare a labor dispute and be prepared," he said. "If the Ministry of Finance approaches the government and asks for such measures, we will activate the labor dispute. We will be prepared on the 17th of September. If things go against us, and we are forced to activate it, we will activate the labor dispute. It will of course depend on what will happen and what will arise. I am sure we are all united."

He said, "Can we afford under the auspices of the Corona crisis a blood bath of workers' wages in the State of Israel? The answer is no. Will we allow the pension rights we have accumulated in the Histadrut's century to be violated? The answer is no. Can we sit at a round table with the government and employers to make a plan that will help the State of Israel

- the answer is yes. But I want to see a budget and an all-inclusive budgetary program. I will not allow money to be distributed to both those who need it and those who do not. "

"I, the chairman of the Histadrut, salute the entire public sector for its commitment during the Corona period and the difficult period that awaits us. We will continue to bear every job and carry the burden of the Israeli economy. Anyone who wants to try to harm us will find us as a reinforced wall and as one man standing against these intentions."

