

What's New in Planning 2023-24: Planning "Under Fire"

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ABSTRACT

The world of planning is constantly evolving, requiring planners to address shifting challenges and an increasingly complex reality worldwide. However, it seems that in Israel, planning challenges are especially complex. Here, the planning system faces extraordinary crises and challenges stemming from the country's unique conditions and circumstances: war, rehabilitation of various regions, one of the highest population densities among Western countries, a high population growth rate, waves of immigration demanding rapid housing solutions, a diverse population with different spatial needs, stringent demands and restrictions imposed by the defense establishment, and more. This article presents some of the rapid and widespread changes in spatial planning in Israel, particularly following the events of October 2023. These include shortcuts that compromise planning quality, harm open spaces, and weaken the role of local government. The acceleration of planning and construction processes comes at the cost of transparency, public participation and environmental preservation. These changes raise concerns about the potential breach of national planning principles and the harm to Israel's unique rural fabric resulting from uncontrolled expansion of rural settlements.

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keywords: Israel, planning, spatial planning, Israel's planning challenges, NSP35