

Citing 'pro-Palestinian provocations,' Israeli minister pushes to nix funding for Jerusalem gallery - Israel News - [Haaretz.com](https://www.haaretz.com)

07.06.2018 | 06:16



Barbur Gallery from the outside, 2006 Tali Shani

Citing 'pro-Palestinian Provocations,' Israeli Minister Pushes to Nix Funding for Jerusalem Gallery

Miri Regev accuses Barbour Gallery of seeking to 'subvert the state's existence and nurture fairy tales about the Nakba'

[Maya Asheri](#)

07.06.2018 | 06:16

Culture Minister Miri Regev has sent an urgent letter to Attorney General Avihai Mandelblit asking him to immediately advance legislation to permit cancellation of funding for Barbour Gallery in Jerusalem. The request came in the wake of a plan by the gallery,

which is housed in a municipality building and funded by the Culture Ministry, to host a book launch event for the Zochrot organization, which advocates the right of return for Palestinian refugees, about the Nakba.

“I request your immediate intervention to advance legislation that would enable us to cease supporting once and for all cultural institutions that use their public spaces to provide a platform for relentless subversion against our very existence, symbols and values,” Regev wrote.

Regev referred to the government’s inability, under existing legislation, to significantly deny funding to cultural institutions because of the content they present.

“In the past two years, the Barbour Gallery in Jerusalem time after time has exploited this legal loophole and the fact that our hands are legally tied to continue its ‘ceaseless pro-Palestinian provocations’ that seek to subvert the state’s existence and nurture fairy tales about the Nakba,” Regev wrote. “We have tried repeatedly over the past two years to halt this subversive activity in the Barbour Gallery, but we’ve run into a legal wall.”

Regev went on to say that she had spoken with Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat about the event and that they would seek a court injunction against the event, “but that the bad experience of the last two years shows that this move [will be] blocked by the court.” Two months ago, the court rejected a similar request from the Jerusalem municipality, which sought to prevent a seminar event in preparation of the Israeli-Palestinian alternative Memorial Day ceremony. Regev sent a similar request to the attorney general then, too, but nothing has been done about it since then.

The event at the center of the dispute is the launch of the book “Nakba in Hebrew – A Political Journey” by Eitan Bronstein Aparicio and Eléonore Marza Bronstein, a summation of “the transformation of the Nakba discourse in Israel since Zochrot’s establishment in 2001.”

The Barbour Gallery offered this statement: “We are hosting a book launch as part of our regular cultural activity. We are not doing anything illegal, as Minister Regev herself acknowledges. Our role also is to present positions that are outside of the consensus.”

The Jerusalem municipality said: “At the instruction of the mayor, the city plans to ask the court to issue an urgent injunction against the holding of the event. The municipality has been pursuing legal action to evict the Barbour Gallery, which is improperly occupying the premises, and essentially trespassing there. We take a very dim view of the prohibited and cynical use made by the gallery of this municipal property, and the municipality expects the court to put an end to the NGO’s flagrant conduct that flouts the law and values.”

The Attorney General’s Office and Zochrot have yet to comment.