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Fight using aliya, not concessions, says Hotovely

• By HERB KEINON

Ingathering the exiles is the answer to the “demographic demon” constantly waved before Israel, Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely said Monday.

Hotovely, speaking at the Herzliya Interdisciplinary Center Conference, said that saying Israel needs to make concessions because of a concern about demography is a defeatist approach.

“Demography you fight by encouraging aliya, not making concessions,” she said.

Hotovely was referring to the oft-heard argument that the demographic reality makes it necessary for Israel to facilitate the establishment of a Palestinian state. If it does not, according to this argument, then within a short period there will be more Arabs than Jews between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, something that will force Israel to choose whether it wants to be a Jewish state or a democratic one.

“Israel has to return to its vision of ingathering of the exiles,” she said. “There are 9 million Jews in the world. When Yitzhak Rabin said give me another million Jews and there will be no problem in our being the sovereign in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, all of a sudden a million Jews came from the former Soviet Union and there was great excitement.



TZIPI HOTOVELY speaks at the IDC’s Herzliya Conference yesterday. (Erez Harodi/Osim Tzilum)

These things happened in the past and can happen against today – certainly considering internal process taking place inside US and French Jewry.”

“There is a real ingathering of the exiles option,” she said. “Despairing of world Jewry is pessimistic and anti-Zionist, and I am not willing to go there.”

Hotovely said that when David Ben-Gurion declared the state in 1948, there were 660,000 Jews and 450,000 Arabs.

“He saw world Jewry as the solution to the demographic problem,” she said. “Within a few years this small and threatened country absorbed a million refugees from Europe.”

Israel has passed the demographic point of no return, she said, asserting that the “demographic demon does not exist.”