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Education Minister Gideon Sa'ar's announcement that starting in the upcoming school year, his ministry will make student trips to the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron part of a new curriculum is cause for serious concern. In his decision to bring schoolchildren to the heart of the most violent and problematic settlement in the territories, the education minister took a controversial political step - not a pedagogic one.

Sa'ar's desire to promote knowledge of the historic roots of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel is understandable. It is also possible to see why the Tomb of the Patriarchs could be designated a Jewish heritage site. But the problematic political context of the trips cannot be overlooked.

The Tomb of the Patriarchs is today next to a settlement housing a handful of Jews, who have forced thousands of Palestinians to abandon their homes and shops, turning the place they lived into a ghost town. There is no other place in the occupied territories where injustice is so blatant.

Visits by schoolchildren to this place, while ignoring what Israel and the settlers have done there, is anti-educational. The visits will intensify nationalist feelings, faith in power and blindness to the injustices of the occupation. They will also promote the effective annexation of the Hebron settlement.

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