Medical Xpress

Israeli ministers endorse bill to export medicinal cannabis

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Israeli ministers on Sunday endorsed a draft bill to legalise export of cannabis for approved medical use, Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked's office said, without elaborating.

Adoption by the ministerial committee on legislation, which meets outside the full cabinet, means that the draft will now move forward as a government bill.

No date was set for a first reading.

Shaked's office said that a scheduled debate on decriminalising marijuana use in favour of fines and treatment was put back until next Sunday.

Although the recreational use of cannabis is currently illegal in the Jewish state, for the past 10 years its therapeutic use has not only been permitted but encouraged.

In 2015, doctors prescribed the herb to about 25,000 patients suffering from cancer, epilepsy, post-traumatic stress and degenerative diseases.

The purpose is not to cure them but to alleviate their symptoms.

In January, the agriculture ministry said it planned to invest eight million shekels ($2 million, 1.98 million euros) into medical cannabis research projects.

In January last year, US tobacco giant Philip Morris ploughed $20 million into Israeli company Syke, which produces precision inhalers for medical cannabis.

Last month, Israeli public security minister Gilad Erdan announced his support for decriminalising recreational use.

He said that he had adopted the conclusions of a commission created to study the issue and which recommended the move.

Shaked has reportedly indicated she will support it.

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