



[Thousands of Israelis Protest Netanyahu's Far-Right Government](#)

Thousands of Israelis gathered in Tel Aviv to protest plans by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's newly elected far-right government. They protestors, led by left-wing and Palestinian members of the Knesset, are concerned the new government threatens the democracy and freedoms of the Israeli and Palestinian people. The most right-wing and religiously conservative government in the country's entire history has planned sweeping reforms, including the expansion of illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank and to weaken the power of the judiciary. The protestors could be seen carrying signs with slogans like "Democracy in danger" and "Together against fascism and apartheid"

Critics have accused the government of working to actively dismantle the judiciary in order to upend Israel's checks and balance. This will undermine democratic institutions in place and give nearly absolute power to Netanyahu's far-right government. The proposed policy was announced by Justice Minister Yariv Levin. His proposal calls for a series of sweeping changes aimed at weakening the Supreme court. One of the proposed changes would be to allow legislators to pass laws the court has struck down and deemed unconstitutional. Overriding the Supreme Court's decisions would only require a simple majority of 61 votes. His announcement came a day before the justices were to debate a controversial new law that will allow politicians convicted of tax offences to serve as Cabinet ministers.

Netanyahu's ultra-Orthodox and ultranationalist allies also hope to reverse the Supreme court ruling that outlawed Israeli outposts on private Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank. This reversal would allow Netanyahu to further expand settlements and continue the theft of Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank. Expansion will almost certainly lead to intensified violence. They also hope to continue the protracted detention of African asylum-seekers and official make the ultra-Orthodox population of the country exempt from the country's mandatory military service. He claims that this will strengthen the courts and restore the public's faith in the court. If history is any indicator, all this will do is weaken the courts and destroy the checks and balances system that keeps one portion of the government from gaining too much power. The Knesset, under the control of the far-right, will gain an unprecedented amount of power with no body to keep them in check. "It will be a hollow democracy," says Amir Fuchs, a senior researcher at the Israel Democracy Institute think-tank. There has also been talk of watering down the attorney general's authority by splitting the position into three roles, two of which would be political appointments.

The protestors also called for peace and coexistence between Jews and Palestinian residents in the country. "We are here to say loud and clear that all of us, Arabs and Jews and different various communities inside of Israel, demand peace, equality and justice." Says Rula Daoud of Standing Together, a grassroots movement of Palestinians and Jews. Many experts are not optimistic about the future of democracy in Israel as Netanyahu's far-right government continues to dismantle essential institutions. If something positive can be taken out of Israel situation, it is the growing unity among Palestinians and Israeli Jews who are becoming united in their fight for democracy.