



### [As Israel Protests, Netanyahu Stalls](#)

The recent protests and strikes that have swept across Israel in opposition to a contentious judicial overhaul have sparked concern from the international community, including the United States and Germany. The massive protests throughout the country were triggered by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's dismissal of Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who had warned that Netanyahu's pursuit of judicial reform would harm national security. With universities, airports, and big businesses joining in the nationwide strikes, the message from the Israeli people is clear: they believe that the proposed judicial changes are undermining democracy.

The current judicial crisis in Israel shares some similarities with Poland's experience between 2016 and 2018, when a judicial overhaul put the independence of the courts at risk of political control. The proposed legislation in Israel would give the Knesset the power to reject Supreme Court decisions with a small majority vote and remove the Supreme Court's control over government legislation. This move is in attempt to further consolidate power within the ruling coalition, which is reminiscent of Poland's situation. As many Western countries express their concern over the developments in Israel, it is essential for the Israeli government to reflect on the importance of upholding democratic values and the independence of the judiciary. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's statement, emphasizing that "the independence of the judiciary is a high democratic good," should serve as a reminder for Israel to safeguard the democratic process for all its citizens.

In response to these protests, Netanyahu announced that he would pause the controversial reforms to "allow dialogue" and avoid a "civil war." This announcement came after growing pressure from both opposition parties and those within his coalition. Netanyahu portrayed the protestors as extremists, and said that he was "not ready to tear the country apart." There are those in Netanyahu's coalition that strongly opposed the pause, one being Itamar Ben-Gvir, the Israeli National Security Minister. Ben-Gvir has a long history of racism and Islamophobia, often promoting violent acts against Palestinians. He threatened to resign after Netanyahu paused the plan. To prevent his resignation, and the collapse of his government, a plan to create an Israeli national guard under the command of Ben-Gvir was implemented. Given his violent history, it is likely that this private militia will be used to further crush dissent and oppress Palestinians.

As the world watches these events unfold, it is crucial to remember that democracy in Israel has historically only been enjoyed by Jewish Israelis. To truly embrace democratic values and strengthen the US-Israel relationship, as the White House National Security Council urges, Israel must strive for a democracy that includes all its citizens, regardless of their background. The ongoing protests and strikes in Israel over proposed judicial reforms have implications not only for Israeli citizens but also for Palestinians living in the region. While the focus of the protests is on preserving democratic values within Israel, the outcome of these events may indirectly impact Palestinians in several ways. If the

protests lead to a shift in the political landscape within Israel, it could potentially result in a government more willing to engage in peace negotiations or adopt more conciliatory policies towards Palestinians. On the other hand, a government that feels threatened by domestic unrest may adopt a more hardline stance towards Palestinians as a means of consolidating power and diverting attention from internal issues. The protests and strikes in Israel, as well as the international community's response, may indirectly affect Palestine by influencing regional stability. If the situation in Israel escalates or leads to further unrest, it could potentially spill over into neighboring areas, including the Palestinian territories, exacerbating tensions, and complicating potential peace efforts. The ongoing unrest in Israel could either hinder or advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, depending on the outcome. A government that emerges from these protests with a renewed commitment to democratic values might be more open to engaging in constructive dialogue with the Palestinian leadership. Conversely, if the protests result in further polarization within Israeli society, it could make reaching a consensus on the peace process even more challenging. Another potential, albeit optimistic future, could also see liberal Israelis forming a coalition with Palestinian political parties to remove Netanyahu's extremist government from power. This would give the Palestinians a pathway to push the Israeli government into peace negotiations.

As things escalate in Israel amplifying the nation's call for democracy, it is a poignant reminder that the battle for a truly just and inclusive political system remains far from over. The proposed judicial reforms have ignited a firestorm of activism, illuminating the need for a democracy that transcends the boundaries opposed to the far-right movement they are currently installing. In these pivotal moments, the international community must rise to the occasion and offer their support for the Israeli people's pursuit of justice and equality for the indirect means of protecting Palestinians as well. By promoting dialogue, fostering cooperation, and advocating for the universal application of democratic principles, we can collectively pave the way for a brighter future.