



[Congress Invited Netanyahu to Speak Despite the ICC's War Crime Charges Against Him](#)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's controversial address to Congress this Wednesday afternoon was surrounded by a sea of opposition. The longstanding Israeli prime minister found himself facing criticism and denunciation on multiple fronts – both through large-scale protests and an array of boycotts against the speech and his visit to the nation's capital. The disapproval is based upon valid scrutiny regarding Israel's destructive Gaza War, which has garnered widespread condemnation from humanitarian groups, the United Nations, and political figures around the world. In addition to global outrage over egregious human rights violations and war crimes – which has even prompted an International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant request on war crime charges – Netanyahu also faces deepening dissent domestically, where a recent poll found that over two-thirds of Israelis want him to leave office. All of this is even further compounded by ongoing criminal corruption charges against Netanyahu in Israel, something that many analysts have contended is one of the core reasons for his desire to prolong the now nearly 10-month long devastating conflict in Gaza.

Criticisms of Netanyahu are nothing new, and he has spent much of his political life trying to shake these off at various times. However, they have now reached a fever pitch, due to the global spotlight on Israel's abusive actions in Gaza. This week, protesters gathered en masse in Washington D.C. to vocalize their collective distaste for the prime minister's visit, while over 60 members of Congress chose not to attend his address in an objection of their own. The absentees included several notable members of Congress like U.S. Representative and Former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and U.S. Representative Thomas Massie (R-KY), along with many others. Dozens of Democrats chose not to appear due to the humanitarian crisis and violations stemming from Israel's conduct during its military operations. Others such as U.S. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) also cited abstaining because of the outstanding criminal warrant request against Netanyahu. Massie appears to have been the lone Republican to have protested the address publicly, stating "I don't feel like being a prop, so I won't be attending." Many Democratic lawmakers found other ways to spend the time with Pelosi among them who, along with 100+ others, spoke with the families of hostages currently held by Hamas. Vice President Harris was not in attendance as well, while even some who did sit in on the speech were still dissatisfied with it, including U.S. Representative Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) who held up a sign with the words "war criminal" throughout the address.

Thousands took to the streets of the U.S. capital city on Wednesday to demonstrate their opposition to Netanyahu's visit and address too. The protests, organized by the ANSWER Coalition, the Palestinian Youth Movement, The People's Forum, and the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, were meant to draw attention to various issues. These include the lack of progress being made toward a long-standing peace and the release of hostages, the continuation of U.S. funding to the violent and bloody conflict, and the tens of thousands of innocent civilians who have been killed or displaced since the onset of the war. The demonstrations could be seen in many places throughout Washington D.C., including the Watergate Hotel where Netanyahu was staying, areas of downtown D.C., and outside of the U.S. Capitol building. Legislators and protesters were not the only ones who vocalized their dissent with the address. Over 200 Congressional staffers stood behind a letter delivered on the 17th of July as well. The letter confirmed the staffers' solidarity with the statements from U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and U.S. Representative and Former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) against the Israeli

prime minister's address. It stated that the acts in opposition to the speech and visit were ones of morality and thus called on other elected officials to follow suit.

For all of the effort put into showing Netanyahu the displeasure of much of the American public and political leaders regarding his war crimes and human rights abuses, the Israeli prime minister was outwardly obstinate and defiant during his speech. Shamelessly and immorally, Netanyahu attempted to downplay the tens of thousands of innocent civilians killed while also calling on the support of the American people until "the war is won." His fiery remarks did nothing to address the prescient and alarming concerns that scholars, lawyers, activists, lawmakers, human rights organizations, and ordinary citizens at-large have raised with Israel's actions.