

Netanyahu to appear in court to stand trial for corruption in February



Jerusalem, January 12 (RHC)-- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's corruption trial is to resume next month after being postponed over coronavirus restrictions. A district court in the occupied Jerusalem al-Qus on Monday announced that the prime minister's trial will resume February 8th, with Netanyahu expected to appear in court.

Israel heads to the polls on March 23 in its fourth elections in two years. The incumbent prime minister is to see his legal woes out in the open during election campaign.

Netanyahu's trial for bribery, fraud and breach of trust began in May 2020. He was excused from subsequent hearings as lawyers demanded more time for prosecution evidence review. The prosecution has assembled more than 300 witnesses to back its allegations.

As the most serious case of charges, Netanyahu has been accused of offering regulatory favors for media executives worth about 500 million dollars in return for securing positive press coverage that helped him win re-election twice.

In lesser charges of fraud and breach of trust, he is indicted for negotiating a deal with the owner of the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth for better coverage. In return, the prime minister allegedly promoted legislation that would slow the growth of a rival newspaper.

And, Netanyahu and his wife have been charged with receiving expensive jewelry, cigars and champagne as gifts from a Hollywood producer and Israeli 'citizen,' and an Australian billionaire.

Bribery charges carry a sentence of up to 10 years in jail and a fine; fraud and breach of trust a prison sentence of up to three years. If convicted, Netanyahu can appeal. Should he lose the appeal, he will be required to leave office. But observers say it could take several years before a verdict.

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