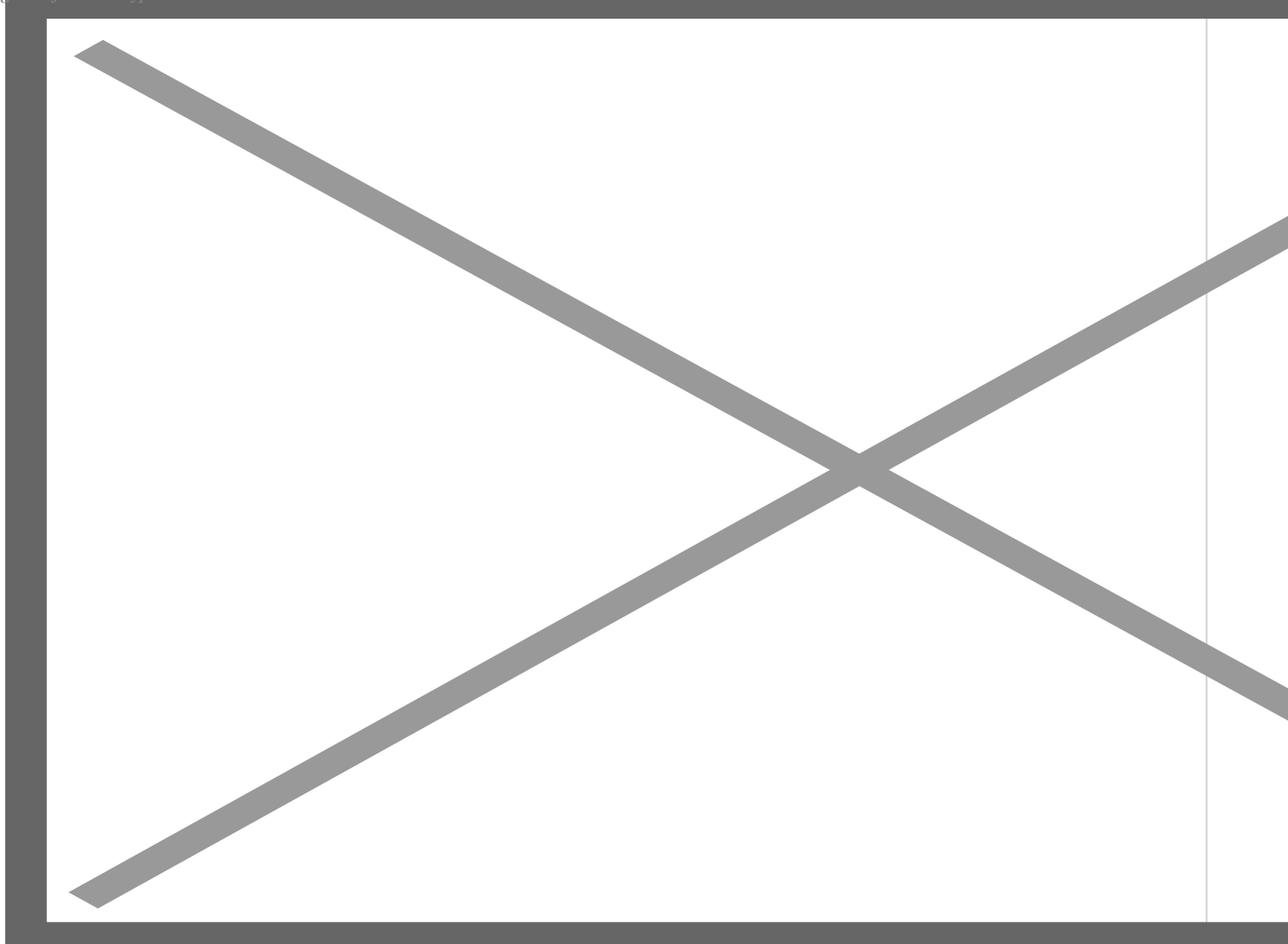


Israeli police fire stun grenades, tear gas as anti-regime protests rage on

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Israeli demonstrators block a road and clash with police who use tear gas as they protest against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's planned judicial reforms, in Tel Aviv, on March 1,

Tel Aviv, March 2 (RHC)-- Israeli police have used tear gas, water cannons and stun grenades to disperse protesters against highly-contested plans by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right cabinet to reform the occupying regime's judiciary.

The violence broke out after hundreds of demonstrators blocked roads and chanted anti-Netanyahu slogans in central Tel Aviv and other places across the occupied territories as part of "Disruption Day" protests on Wednesday.

Police on horseback tried to stop demonstrators breaching barricades in Tel Aviv, with footage showing the regime's forces dragging protesters off the road as demonstrators called out "shame," and "we are the majority and we are out on the streets."

Israeli media said the police, for the first time since protests began some two months ago, deployed tear gas, stun grenades and water cannons to disperse demonstrators, adding that at least 11 people sustained injuries in altercations with police and 39 others were arrested in the mass rallies. In one video widely shared online, an Israeli cop was seen to kneel on the neck of a protester to subdue him while several others held him down.

Following the police dispersing of protesters in Tel Aviv, the Israeli regime's opposition leader Yair Lapid informed the press that he had left the Knesset (the Israeli parliament) in order to join the protests, with Netanyahu accusing him of sowing anarchy.

Protests have taken place across the occupied territories since Netanyahu's controversial move to reform the judiciary. Opponents argue that the legal changes threaten the independence of judges and weaken oversight of the ruling cabinet and parliament. They say the plan will undermine the rights of minorities and open the door to more corruption.

Opponents also say the judicial overhaul is meant to help Netanyahu avoid the repercussions of his ongoing corruption cases, including bribery, fraud, and breach of trust.

Netanyahu, however, has called the protesters "anarchists," claiming that they cannot come to terms with last November's election results, which helped him stage a comeback as prime minister. The embattled premier also alleges that the reforms are required to curtail the jurisdiction of the sitting judges, whom he accuses of having too much power.

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