

Thousands protest against hard-right Israeli cabinet's policies for 31st straight week

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Tel Aviv, August 6 (RHC)-- Tens of thousands of protesters have rallied for the 31st straight week against the policies of Israel's hard-right cabinet, including the highly controversial judicial overhaul bill. The latest rallies took place on Saturday in around 150 locations throughout the occupied territories, local media outlets said.

As was the case in previous weeks, the coastal city of Tel Aviv hosted the largest protest rally, where one of the protest leaders said, "Netanyahu ... [is] orchestrating the systematic dismantling of the judicial system. It's all meticulously planned and executed according to his playbook."

"We are going to continue until they will stop ... the law ... and this is all, we are not going to give up, until we win," a protester was quoted by Reuters as saying.

Thousands of protesters held similar rallies in other cities across the occupied territories, including the holy city of al-Quds. The Saturday rallies were described as some of the biggest-ever to take place across the occupied territories.

The protests have been a fixture since January, when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced his so-called judicial overhaul scheme as means of currying favor with his coalition's extreme-right parties.

His scheme, which has been presented to the Knesset as a bill, seeks to render the regime's Supreme Court incapable of striking down politicians' decisions and give the cabinet more say in the makeup of the court's judges.

Public outrage against the regime's policies has grown since last month, when the Knesset passed the first bill of the judicial overhaul plan after opposition lawmakers left the session. The bill scrapped the "reasonableness" law, through which the Supreme Court can overturn decisions made by Israeli cabinet such as ministerial appointments.

The remaining parts of the overhaul package will be discussed after the Knesset returns from summer recess in October.

Netanyahu, who is fighting corruption charges in court, has said he would be willing to negotiate with the opposition, though previous mediation efforts, including by the regime's president, have failed.

New protests came after earlier on Saturday, hundreds of former senior Israeli military officials held an emergency conference, warning of the collapse of the regime amid the mass protests.

According to Israeli daily newspaper, Yedioth Ahronoth, participants discussed action plans to defend the Supreme Court, the military, and the police "in crisis situations within the Israeli entity, particularly if the Supreme Court annuls government decisions, resulting in an unprecedented constitutional crisis in Israel."

The conference was attended by Israeli intelligence agencies, Mossad and Shin Bet, as well as Israel's police and military officials, including major generals, brigadier generals, and senior commanders.

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