

Netanyahu asks for immunity from prosecution in corruption cases



Tel Aviv, January 2 (RHC)-- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has officially requested parliamentary immunity from prosecution in multiple corruption cases hanging over him ahead of upcoming March elections.

Netanyahu submitted the request to Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein on Wednesday night, stressing that he was not asking for "everlasting immunity."

Earlier, in a speech at Jerusalem's Orient Hotel, Netanyahu clarified his intention to seek immunity, saying it would only be "temporary" and last the duration of the next parliamentary session. "There is no possibility for anyone to avoid standing trial," he said.

The prime minister claimed that he had never promoted or altered any law in an effort to avoid standing trial and that the immunity law exists to "protect elected officials from political lawsuits."

Israeli court dismisses attempts to block Netanyahu's reelection campaign over charges
Netanyahu slammed the corruption charges against him as being politically motivated and pushed by

people with “hidden motivations.” He said it was “very difficult” for his opponents and enemies to witness achievements under his leadership that made Israel the “eighth superpower in the world.”

Netanyahu spent the remainder of his speech targeting political rivals including Blue and White party leader Benny Gantz. Neither Netanyahu or Gantz was able to form a government after elections last year.

On Tuesday, Israeli High Court judges rejected a petition filed by academics, former defense officials and other public figures attempting to ban Netanyahu from seeking re-election due to the corruption charges leveled against him.

He is charged with bribery, fraud and breach of public trust in three cases.

Responding to Netanyahu's speech on Wednesday night, Gantz said the PM's intention to seek immunity indicated that he was clearly guilty, adding that Israel now faced a choice between “the Kingdom of Netanyahu... or the State of Israel.”

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