

# *Over 100,000 march in Tel Aviv against Netanyahu*

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Tel Aviv, January 15 (RHC)-- Over 100,000 Israelis marched in central Tel Aviv and in two other major cities on Saturday night, protesting far rightwing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plan to overhaul the legal system and weaken the Supreme Court — undermining democratic rule just weeks after his election.

Despite cold, rainy weather, marchers, many covered with umbrellas, held Israeli flags and placards saying "Criminal Government," "The End of Democracy," and "We Are Preserving Our Shared Home." Netanyahu was guilty of a "legal putsch," read another.

Critics say Netanyahu's would cripple judicial independence, foster corruption, set back minority rights, and deprive Israel's court system of credibility. Netanyahu and his ultranationalist security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir ordered police to take tough action if protesters displayed Palestinian flags at Saturday's protest. Social media footage showed a number of Palestinian flags on display in defiance of Netanyahu.

"Elections do not give anyone the power to destroy democracy itself," said former Justice Minister Tzipi Livni as she addressed the protest in Tel Aviv, adding that Israel's far-right government is "carrying out a political takeover of the country and waging a war against its democratic institutions."

"Spilled poison, lies, slandering one's brother, marking as an enemy anyone who thinks differently. [They are doing] everything so that we crumble from the inside and weaken as a society before the big attack," she said.

"We will stop you, and we will not compromise because democracy in Israel, our freedom and our rights are not political trade," Livni said. "They can call us traitors, but we are the ones who protect the motherland from them. They can threaten handcuffs – we are not afraid," she said.

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