

Thousands hold protests against Netanyahu for 18th straight week

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Israelis protest against plans by prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet to overhaul Israel's judicial system, in Tel Aviv, on March 18, 2023. (Photo by AP)

Tel Aviv, May 7 (RHC)-- Thousands of Israelis have taken to the streets across the occupied Palestinian territories for the 18th straight week to protest against the Israeli extremist cabinet's controversial "judicial

reforms."

Protesters gathered in the Habima Square in Tel Aviv on Saturday, waving flags and chanting slogans against Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu as they prepared to march on Kaplan Street, a major thoroughfare in the central section of the city. A demonstrator held up a picture of far-right Israeli minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, with a caption reading "the minister of national failure."

In the central city of Rehovot, hundreds of protesters rallied as they waved flags and blocked a major road junction.

Protest organizers said in a statement released earlier that Netanyahu's cabinet is waiting to turn Israel into a "messianic and dangerous dictatorship," while underlying the economic cost of the regime's refusal to ditch the reforms altogether. "As long as the deliberations in the president's house continue, no investment is entering Israel and the Israeli economy is crashing," the organizers said.

The rallies have been a weekly fixture since January when the regime announced the reforms that also seek to give Netanyahu's extremist cabinet effective control over the appointment of the Supreme Court's judges.

Netanyahu's coalition, a combination struck between his Likud party and extreme-right and ultra-Orthodox political allies, argues that changes are needed to rebalance power between the executive and judicial branches of the regime.

Saturday's rallies were held despite Netanyahu announcing a pause in legislation for the reforms more than a month ago, following weeks of mass protests and a general strike. The general public, however, is still skeptical of the premier's intentions as seen by monumental rallies across the occupied territories since January, when the Israeli regime's cabinet started paving the way for the implementation of the changes.

Earlier this month, Israeli President Isaac Herzog began hosting cross-party talks aimed at reaching a compromise on the reform package. The weekly protests have, meanwhile, been met with sporadic counter-rallies in favor of Netanyahu's proposed reforms.

Meanwhile, 74 percent of Israelis have expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of Netanyahu's cabinet, a new poll shows. In the poll, conducted by Israeli television channel KAN 11, 74 percent of the respondents described the performance of Netanyahu's cabinet as "not good" at all. The survey also found that 50 percent of those who voted for parties that are part of the coalition were also dissatisfied with the regime's performance.

Moreover, 67 percent of the respondents believed Netanyahu's performance is "bad", while only 26 percent supported his performance. Ben-Gvir received the highest level of dissatisfaction among the cabinet's ministers, with 72 percent of the Israelis describing his performance as "unacceptable."

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