

Israel on the Brink of Constitutional Anarchy

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Despite massive street protests since January, and international pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to throw out the bill, the judicial reform measure is now law. It passed on a vote of 64-0 amid an opposition boycott. The bill removes the "Reasonability Clause" from being used by the Supreme Court to strike down improper government appointments and executive decisions.

The government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is the most extreme right-wing religious government in Israeli history. Israelis are fearful that the religious extremists in the Netanyahu ruling alliance will railroad bills through the Knesset which will strip away rights from a mainly secular society. Minister of National Security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, formerly convicted on eight counts of terrorism and hate crimes, threatens this bill is just the beginning in a process to change the secular fabric of Israel.

Activists in [women's rights](#) are most concerned with the prospect of new laws which will make it difficult for a woman to get a divorce, or an [abortion](#). Ben-Gvir and his ultra-religious allies want to institute laws in which Jewish religious law is used for women's issues instead of the secular civil law and massively expand the power of state-run religious courts. The rabbinic courts would be granted the power to officiate on civil issues for the first time in 15 years, giving them equal status to the secular justice system.

Rabbinic courts do not allow female judges, and at times will not allow female witnesses even in the case of domestic abuse. Abortions had been usually approved by a committee, but the religious parties now in control are against abortion. With the Supreme Court made impotent, women could be stripped of the right to choose.

With the Supreme Court now sidelined from dissent, the government led by the extremist parties can transform Israel into an authoritarian form of government. Netanyahu is powerless to rein in the extremists because his alliance with them is the only thing keeping

him out of prison on corruption charges.

Israeli society usually stands united amid Palestinian resistance, but this time the water cannons have been turned on peaceful Jewish protesters, not Arabs. Ben-Gvir described the demonstrators as anarchists who posed a danger to the state and even to the lives of individual politicians, and he ordered a zero-tolerance policy.

The new law has split the country, with even the military taking a political position. Hundreds of Israeli military personnel have pledged to not perform their duties in opposition to the judicial reform law, and are joined by the medical association and labor union.

Former President Reuven Rivlin begged Netanyahu to stop the judicial reform law, and warned of impending civil war. Former Prime Minister Yair Lapid, the centrist opposition leader, said

“The government has declared a war of attrition against its own citizens.”

Netanyahu, along with his son and brother, have pointed a finger at US President Joe Biden as the instigator and financier of the massive street protests against the law.

[Ben-Gvir](#), known for his radicalism, has been convicted of sedition and membership in a terrorist group. He has called for a religious Jewish state including the Palestinian territories and rejected democracy as ‘un-Jewish’. He hates Arabs and said they must be expelled. He follows a political doctrine that says a fist in the face of a non-Jew is praise to God.

Ben-Gvir and his Jewish Power party advocate ‘total war’ against Israel’s enemies and believe that the Palestinians should be made to leave the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. The possibility of mass deportations of Palestinians exists now that the judicial reform bill has passed.

The Biden administration, along with Trump, Obama, and Bush has abdicated any role in the advancement of the Two-State Solution which is a UN resolution, and the official US policy.

The Israeli public has been content to stand by and watch the Palestinians among them suffer the lack of human rights and freedom, but now the table has turned. Palestinians will never have freedom until their Jewish neighbors demand it and are willing to fight for democracy and freedom for all the people living in Israel and the Palestinian Occupied Territories.

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