

Middle East

Israeli protests over judicial overhaul continue despite Netanyahu's pause

By Maytaal Angel

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JERUSALEM, April 1 (Reuters) - Protests against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's judicial overhaul showed no sign of abating on Saturday, despite its suspension by the embattled premier this week, as tens of thousands took to the streets to demand it be scrapped entirely.

Beset by the domestic upheaval and expressions of concern and disapproval in Washington, [Netanyahu on Monday](#) paused the overhaul to allow negotiations on a compromise between his religious-nationalist coalition and opposition parties.

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"We don't believe anything that comes out of Bibi's (Netanyahu) mouth. We believe it's just a political stunt aimed at stopping the protest," said Emanuel Keller, 30, at a protest outside the Israeli presidential residence hosting the talks.

One of the main points of contention is the ruling coalition's push for more power in appointing judges, including to the Supreme Court.



[1/9]A member of security forces gestures as demonstrators hold flags during a demonstration against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his nationalist coalition government's plan for judicial overhaul, in Tel Aviv, Israel April 1, 2023. REUTERS/Ronen Zvulun



Critics see [the government's drive](#) as a threat to the court's independence and an attempt at a legal coup. Proponents say it is seeking a less elitist, interventionist bench.

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Netanyahu, on trial on corruption charges he denies, says reforms are needed to balance the branches of government. His Likud party and political allies in the far-right have been calling on their political base to stage counter demonstrations.

Israeli media estimated more than 150,000 people attended anti-government protests nationwide on Saturday, the largest in commercial hub Tel Aviv.

"We're going to win because this is not something that we can live with. We cannot live in a state that is not democratic," said Limor Moyal, at the Tel Aviv demonstration.

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