

Massive rallies held against Israeli prime minister's legal reforms for eighth straight week



Tel Aviv, February 26 (RHC)-- Tens of thousands of protesters have taken to the streets, holding massive rallies for the eighth straight week against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's planned "legal reforms." On Saturday, thousands-strong protests were held in the central part of Tel Aviv, with protesters blocking a main road.

Footage of the protest showed demonstrators lighting a fire and blocking the main road causing a traffic jam on one of the busiest roads in Tel Aviv. Israel's security forces were seen shoving and detaining protesters. At least 11 protesters were arrested for breaking through police barriers and blocking the Ayalon Highway.

The massive protest came after the regime's parliament took a step towards approving the so-called reforms planned by Netanyahu's extremist cabinet.

A similar protest was held in the occupied city of al-Quds, just outside the residence of Israel's president, Isaac Herzog. Earlier this week, the regime's Justice Minister Yariv Levin was cited as asserting that "nothing" would dissuade him from realizing the so-called judicial overhaul.

The protesters, however, say the alleged reforms are aimed at dismantling the regime's judicial system across multiple fronts. The reforms rob the regime's highest court of the ability to strike down decisions made by Netanyahu's far-right cabinet and Knesset (the Israeli parliament).

The parliament would, therefore, be empowered to amend the so-called Basic Laws -- which constitute the regime's quasi-constitution -- in any way it sees fit. The legislature will be also enabled to overrule the court's decisions with a simple majority of 61 votes in the 120-member body.

Opponents say the judicial overhaul is meant to help Netanyahu avoid the repercussions of his ongoing corruption cases. The prime minister is being sued for bribery, fraud, and breach of trust.

Netanyahu, however, has called the protesters "anarchists," claiming that they cannot come to terms with last November's election results, which helped him stage a comeback as prime minister.

The premier also alleges that the reforms are required to curtail the jurisdiction of the sitting judges, whom he accuses of having too much power. The president of Israel's Supreme Court, Esther Hayut, has condemned the so-called reforms as an assault on the independence of the judiciary.

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