

Netanyahu suspends judicial reform: I will not lead Israel to civil war

President Herzog called on the government to freeze the legislation on Monday morning • Smotrich and Ben-Gvir expected to attend counter protests.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on Monday evening that he was temporarily freezing the bill that would alter the makeup of the Judicial Appointments Committee and was willing to give a “real opportunity to real dialogue” over the government’s judicial reforms, which have thrown the country into turmoil and unprecedented civil unrest.

The statement came after hours of tense negotiations as National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir threatened to quit the government if the legislation did not proceed on schedule, and as tens of thousands of judicial reform opponents protested outside the Knesset. Netanyahu ended up ensuring Ben-Gvir’s approval after pledging that the cabinet in its coming meeting on Sunday would approve the transfer of Israel’s National Guard to Ben-Gvir’s ministry.

Netanyahu said that either way, his government would bring a reform that will “return the balance that was lost between the [government] branches,” while “safeguarding and even strengthening individual rights.”

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