

03272023 NEWS SPECIAL

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Russian operations speed up: Over 400 Ukrainians and mercenaries killed in 24 hours - Dozens of soldiers surrender (vid)

Ukrainian losses in Krasny Liman - Kherson

27/03/2023 - 20:53 in Main topics , Ukraine

The losses of the Armed Forces of Ukraine yesterday 26/3 amounted to more than 400 soldiers and mercenaries in the direction of Donetsk, announced the official representative of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, Lieutenant General I. Konashenkov.

"In the direction of Donetsk, during the active operations of the units of the Southern Group of Forces, airstrikes and artillery fire, the enemy's losses per day amounted to more than 400 Ukrainian soldiers and mercenaries, 4 armored fighting vehicles, 10 vehicles, 4 trucks, a Grad MLRS and a D-20 howitzer," Konashenkov specifically said.

At the same time, Russian forces foiled large-scale sabotage by 5 Ukrainian groups in the Kupyansk region, according to the Ministry of Defense.

Two Krab self-propelled artillery systems in the area of Petropavlovka and Revucheye settlements, one D-20 artillery system in the Prilipko area, as well as the enemy mortar crew in the area of the Olsana settlement were destroyed.

In more detail, the Western group of forces of Russia detected and destroyed five Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups in the Kupyansk region from the 14th and 92nd separate mechanized brigades, the representative of the group of forces of Western Russia, colonel Sergey Zybinsky, told TASS.

At the same time, around 70 Ukrainian military personnel have surrendered to the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) over the past two weeks, voluntarily laying down their weapons.

"About 70 Ukrainian servicemen have surrendered in the last two weeks. Most of them laid down their arms voluntarily, wishing to save their lives," the Russians said.

According to his data, most of them are fighting on the Avdeyevka, Donetsk and Ugledar fronts.

Ukrainian losses in Krasny Liman – Kherson

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Russia accepted China's proposal: Plan for demilitarized zones 100 km deep in Ukraine! – Will the conflict "freeze"?

Demilitarized Zone east of the Dnieper

27/03/2023 - 18:33 in Main topics , Ukraine



Russia wants to create demilitarized buffer zones inside Ukraine around the four regions it has annexed, President Vladimir Putin's close aide Dmitry Medvedev said, saying it may have to push deeper into Ukraine if such zones cannot be established.

N. Medvedev essentially revealed that the Chinese plan to resolve the Ukrainian issue was accepted, which provided for the creation of a demilitarized zone east of the Dnieper River.

This means that China did not present its plan randomly but took into account Russia's strategic goals.

N. Medvedev went one step further. If the plan is not accepted, then Russia will have no choice but to go all the way.

Also Read: [US/NATO Untied China's Hands: Rejected Ukraine Peace Plan With Partition Of Kyiv & Demilitarized Zone – Beijing's Fury](#)

In more detail, former president Dmitry Medvedev said that Russia needs demilitarized corridors around the areas it claims - and which Ukraine says it will never accept Russian control of.

"We must achieve all the goals set in order to protect our territories, that is, the territories of the Russian Federation," Medvedev, who is the vice-chairman of Russia's Security Council, said in an interview with Russian media posted on Telegram messaging app.

We must "**expel all foreigners who are there in the broadest sense of the word, create a neutral zone that will not allow the use of weapons of any kind that operate at medium and short distances, i.e. 70-100 kilometers, demilitarize it**," Medvedev said.

Russia will need to push further into Ukraine if such zones are not established, he said, seizing the capital Kiev or even the eastern Ukrainian city of Lviv.

Russia controls about 17-18% of Ukraine

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Case for Americans: USAF MQ-9 "Reaper" in Russian hands - "We are thoroughly analyzing the wreckage" - Confirmation WarNews247

Wreckage recovered - Official Russian statement

27/03/2023 - 19:08 in Main Topics , Russia

The wreckage of the US MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial vehicle that crashed in the Black Sea after being attacked by the Su-27 is the focus of studies and analysis by Russian defense industry experts, according to a spokesman for the state technology company Rostec.

WarNews247 had revealed from the beginning that the Russians had collected the MQ-9 Reaper debris.

Read also: ["Stop" in a Romanian operation: The Russian Navy collected the wreckage of the MQ-9 Reaper - It had violated the Crimean EEZ \(vid\)](#)

The Russian official spoke to the Russian state news agency TASS and underlined how:

"The wreckage of the American MQ-9 Reaper drone is obviously of interest to the Russian defense industry.

Any find of this magnitude should be scrutinized and analyzed down to the last screw."

He also added that all the equipment, which has been recovered from the area where the incident happened, is in laboratories for a thorough examination.

"We closely monitor the achievements of the foreign defense industry. They have clear cases of success and clear failures. This is of course taken into account.

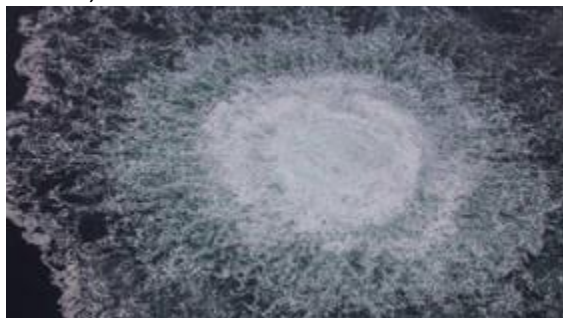
To create a successful product, one must understand the competition. This applies to drones, artillery, armored vehicles and other types of weapons," said the Rostec representative.

This is a serious technology leak from the US to Russia-China and Iran. It is a given that Moscow will transfer all the technology to its allied countries.

The units of the Russian Navy had started from the first moment the efforts to locate the wreckage of the drone, which was found at the bottom of the sea, 60 kilometers from Sevastopol, at a depth of 850-900 meters.

Moscow mulls demanding damages for Nord Stream blasts

Russia continues to call for a thorough international investigation into the sabotage, a senior diplomat has said
27 Mar, 2023 09:59



Gas emanating from a leak on the Nord Stream 1 gas pipeline, in the Swedish economic zone in the Baltic Sea, on September 28, 2022. © Handout / SWEDISH COAST GUARD / AFP

Moscow may insist on compensation for the blasts that ruptured the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines last autumn, Dmitry Birichevsky, head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's department for economic cooperation, said on Monday.

Speaking to RIA Novosti, the diplomat said that Russia did not rule out "the possibility of later raising the issue of compensatory damages over the explosion of the Nord Stream gas pipelines," which directly connected Russia and Germany under the Baltic Sea.

Birichevsky did not say from whom Russia would be demanding payment, nor did he specify in what form or amount it should be.

He noted that after veteran investigative journalist Seymour Hersh released his bombshell report last month pinning **the blame on the US for the sabotage – a claim dismissed in Washington – Russia prepared a resolution urging the UN Security Council to launch an independent international investigation into the matter.**

However, Birichevsky claimed that *"Western countries are actively sabotaging the work on the draft resolution,*

claiming that the international investigation lacks 'added value'."

Despite this opposition, Russia would continue to push for a “comprehensive and open international investigation,” he said, stressing that Moscow’s representatives should absolutely take part in the process.

Speaking to reporters on Monday, Kremlin Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov supported a possible push for compensation. He described the claim as “*justified*,” arguing that the available data “*indicate that... such a terrorist attack against critical infrastructure could not have been staged without the involvement of the state and intelligence services.*”

In an interview on Saturday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that he “fully agrees” with Hersh’s conclusions on who orchestrated the blasts. The American journalist alleged that US President Joe Biden ordered the attack because he did not like the German government’s reluctance to send more military support to Ukraine.

Western media, however, has presented another version of events. Earlier this month, the New York Times claimed, citing sources, that a “*pro-Ukrainian group*” may have been behind the attack on the pipelines while German media reported that a yacht allegedly used in the sabotage belonged to a Polish-based company owned by two Ukrainians.

Kremlin Press Secretary Peskov has dismissed those reports as “*a coordinated hoax*” meant to divert attention from the real culprits behind the blasts. <https://www.rt.com/russia/573661-moscow-damages-nord-stream-blasts/>

Russia won’t repeat economic mistakes of USSR – Medvedev

Former president warns those speculating on financial militarisation that it’s not going to happen

27 Mar, 2023 09:59

Russia’s economy will not be reduced to the defense industry alone, despite the conflict with Ukraine and Western sanctions, former President Dmitry Medvedev told journalists on Sunday. Imbalances in the economy will not be allowed to develop, he said, adding that the country is unlikely to suffer the fate of the Soviet Union.

“There is currently no threat of economic militarization in a way, in which it existed [in the USSR] in the 1970s and 1980s,” Medvedev said. The former president argued that the Soviet Union gave too much priority to the defense industry. To avoid an imbalance, “*priorities just need to be set correctly and major macroeconomic indicators monitored,*” he added.

Russia does actually need to boost its defense industry, he said, adding that it is necessary to “lay the groundwork for the future” even after the Ukraine conflict ends. However, taking these steps will not affect other economic sectors, he believes.

The **USSR lacked a market system and also the strong consumer goods sector that modern Russia has, Medvedev said,** adding that had the West imposed sanctions on the USSR at that time, “*we would have had a hard time.*”

Now, Russia’s “*market does not feel any colossal downturns even despite the sanctions,*” the former president said. **He lauded Russia’s agriculture sector, saying not only does it allow Russia to meet its own food supply needs, but also enables it to “feed others.”**

Russia has also managed to keep the inflation rate lower than in many European nations, Medvedev said. “*They instigated this campaign, started to fight us and now some nations have an inflation rate of between 15% and 20%,*” he said, noting that inflation in Russia is on track to come in at 6% in March and subsequently drop to 4%.

Earlier on Sunday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said the EU is increasing its dependence on Beijing much faster than Moscow is. RIA Novosti reported in March that Russia and China topped the list of nations with the biggest trade surpluses last year. <https://www.rt.com/russia/573639-medvedev-economy-remain-balanced/> f

De-dollarization being forced on Russia – Putin

The country would have continued to use the greenback but sanctions prevent it, the Russian leader has said

27 Mar, 2023 09:31

Russia’s growing use of the Chinese yuan and other currencies in transactions with foreign partners should not be seen as an attack on the US dollar, according to President Vladimir Putin. In a

weekend interview with the Russia 24 TV channel, Putin said the decision had been forced on his country by Western sanctions.

“We would use the dollar, but they won’t allow us to do that, so how do we make payments? In a currency that is acceptable to our trading partners. The yuan is one such currency, especially since it is also used by the International Monetary Fund,” the Russian leader stated.

The **numerous sanctions imposed on Moscow in response to its military operation in Ukraine include the blacklisting of a number of Russian banks and their removal from the SWIFT** interbank messaging system, as well as bans on transactions with Russian financial entities and the freezing of foreign exchange reserves. The restrictions have stripped Russia of the ability to conduct a wide range of international transactions in dollars and euros, which has caused Moscow to lose trust in these currencies.

While **Russia has been boosting the use of alternative currencies in transactions since last year, earlier this month Putin suggested that the Chinese yuan should be used more widely, not only in trade with China, but also in Russia’s transactions with countries in Africa and Latin America.**

Putin reiterated that Russia will continue to expand the use of currencies it considers reliable.

“Our partners are happy to agree to settle accounts in yuan with us. Oil-producing countries in the Middle East have said they also want to settle accounts in yuan. We will gradually expand its use, and expand the scope of currencies which we deem reliable. Yes, we understand there are certain advantages to the dollar today, there are certain limitations in the currencies that we use, not only the yuan, but other currencies as well. But every country is interested in strengthening its national currency, and all countries will strive to do so,” he said.

The **Russian leader claimed that the US is “cutting off the branch on which it is sitting”** by limiting the use of the dollar depending on the political situation. **[That is absolutely true. The situation the US created will destroy the petrodollar and sink the US economy - rdb**

“There is the very fact that they froze our foreign exchange reserves. All the world’s countries, I assure you – at least those that have reserves – all came to question how reliable America is as a partner. And everyone has come to the conclusion [that it is] unreliable,” Putin added. <https://www.rt.com/business/573659-us-dollar-russia-sanctions/>

UN sounds alarm over Ukraine church crackdown

Kiev’s actions targeting the largest religious denomination in the country “could be discriminatory”

27 Mar, 2023 08:07

The Ukrainian state may be discriminating against the nation’s largest religious denomination, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), the UN’s human rights watchdog said in a report published on Friday. The government of President Vladimir Zelensky is currently in the process of kicking UOC monks out of their homes.

The **apparent mistreatment of the church, which has historic links to the Russian Orthodox Church,** was highlighted in a report released by the UN’s Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It cited several draft laws submitted to the Ukrainian parliament as well as the actions of the SBU, Ukraine’s domestic security agency, against the clergy.

The **UN body is “concerned that the State’s activities targeting the UOC could be discriminatory,”** it said. The report cited **“vague legal terminology and the absence of sufficient justification”** in proposed legislation, explaining why it drew the OHCHR’s negative attention.

The report covered the period between August 2022 and January 2023, but more recent acts by the government have deepened the saga of the UOC. **Earlier this month, the Ukrainian Culture Ministry ordered monks belonging to the jurisdiction to vacate their homes at the Kiev Pechersk Lavra, an iconic monastery** in the Ukrainian capital.

Zelensky described the move as strengthening Ukraine’s **“spiritual independence”** and implied that the UOC was a tool that Russia used **“to manipulate the spirituality of our people, to destroy our holy sites [and] to steal valuables from them.”**

The president **ignored pleas by UOC clergy to meet them and try to diffuse the situation.**

Kiev previously expelled the UOC from two of the cathedrals above the monastery. Within days of that decision, the government-backed Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) was allowed to hold services on the premises.

The OCU was created with the support of then-president Poroshenko in what many political observers perceived

as an attempt to bolster his re-election chances. Culture Minister Aleksandr Tkachenko said the expelled monks, who have until this Wednesday to move out, could stay in their homes by leaving the UOC and joining the OCU.

<https://www.rt.com/russia/573657-un-ukraine-church-discrimination/> [So the Ukraine is a democracy???? NOT on your life. Never has been. – rdb]

China could be 'safe haven' amid banking turmoil – Citi

More international capital is likely to flee from Western markets to Asia, according to experts

27 Mar, 2023 05:20

The unfolding banking crisis in the US and Europe, which has shattered investor confidence in the Western financial system, could highlight China as a “relative safe haven,” economists at Citi said in a note seen by CNBC.

The **Chinese economy could see accelerated expansion this year, giving the country a “hedge” for growth while economies in the US and Europe face heightened risk of financial disruption, according to the note.**

“We have long been discussing our view that China can be a major growth hedge this year – if anything, recent global banking stresses perhaps have strengthened this thesis,” a team led by Citi’s Chief China economist Xiangrong Yu reportedly stated.

“China could at least be a relative ‘safe haven’ given its growth premium, financial soundness, policy discipline and the new political economy cycle,” the economists argued.

They pointed to the recent decision by the People’s Bank of China (PBoC) to cut its reserve requirement ratio (RRR), saying the move showed *“reassurance of policy support amid global volatilities.”*

The regulator reduced the ratio for almost all banks by 25 basis points last week, with the move widely viewed as an attempt of ensuring liquidity in the banking system.

“Perhaps taking lessons from what the US has been going through in recent years, the PBoC has been prudent in easing even during the pandemic era and may quickly switch to a wait-and-see mode once growth is back on track,” the analysts wrote.

They also noted the Chinese government’s restructuring earlier this month as part of the effort to ease financial risks.

According to CNBC, Citi also expects to see the onshore yuan strengthening against the US dollar as soon as September, which would bring the renminbi to its strongest levels since April last year.

“With the unintended and undesirable from aggressive interest rate hikes surfacing abroad, capital inflows into China could resume after they reopen trade if the recovery thesis plays out and political rerating is steadily ongoing,” Citi concluded. <https://www.rt.com/business/573547-china-safe-haven-investors/> **Watching the demise of US Hegemony. Rdb]**

IMF issues warning on global economic stability

Interest rate hikes to battle inflation have created “stresses and vulnerabilities,” the fund’s head Kristalina Georgieva has said

26 Mar, 2023 13:55

The global economy faces a difficult year, as the fallout from the recent banking crises and the formation of rival economic blocs triggered by the Ukraine conflict threaten to undermine global economic stability. That’s according to **the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Kristalina Georgieva, who was speaking at the China Development Forum** in Beijing on Saturday.

According to Georgieva, 2023 will be “challenging” and is likely to see global growth slowing to below 3% “as scarring from the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and monetary tightening weigh on economic activity.”

“Uncertainties are exceptionally high, including because of risks of geo-economic fragmentation which could mean a world split into rival economic blocs – a ‘dangerous division’ that would leave everyone poorer and less secure. Together, these factors mean that the outlook for the global economy over the medium-term is likely to remain weak,” she warned.

Georgieva also noted that the recent troubles in the banking sector, from the collapse of several lenders in the US to the near-insolvency of Switzerland’s second-largest bank, Credit Suisse, exposed vulnerabilities in the global financial system, which will need to be addressed as the year

progresses.

“Risks to financial stability have increased. At a time of higher debt levels, the rapid transition from a prolonged period of low interest rates to much higher rates – necessary to fight inflation – inevitably generates stresses and vulnerabilities, as evidenced by recent developments in the banking sector in some advanced economies.”

Georgieva praised the recent efforts of policymakers to support the global banking system by [enhancing](#) the provision of US dollar liquidity, saying they “have acted decisively in response to financial stability risks.” She noted, however, that the measures have only “eased market stress to some extent, but uncertainty is high, which underscores the need for vigilance.”

Georgieva noted, however, that the outlook for the global economy is not “all bad.”

“We can see some ‘green shoots’, including in China. Here the economy is seeing a strong rebound, and the IMF’s January forecast puts GDP growth at 5.2% this year... Driving this growth is the anticipated rebound of private consumption as the economy has reopened and activity has normalized,” she stated. The IMF head added that China is set to account for around one third of global growth in 2023, which would give “a welcome lift to the world economy.”

“And beyond the direct contribution to global growth, our analysis shows that a 1% increase in GDP growth in China leads to 0.3% increase in growth in other Asian economies, on average – a welcome boost.”

<https://www.rt.com/business/573615-imf-warning-economic-stability/> **This is a rather ominous outlook from the IMF. Watch your dollars. – rdbj**

US democracy ‘a facade’ – Russian security chief

Washington was captured by corporate interests and is pushing their agenda on the world stage, Nikolay Patrushev has said

27 Mar, 2023 10:20



Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolay Patrushev. © Sputnik/Pavel Bednyakov

The US is not really a democracy, nor does it seek to promote democracy in its relations with other nations, contrary to Washington’s claims, senior Russian security official Nikolay Patrushev has said. He made the remarks while commenting on the upcoming ‘Summit for Democracy’ hosted by the US government.

Patrushev, who is the secretary of the Russian Security Council, described the US economy as “dependent on corruption and lobbying connections going to the White

House and Capitol Hill.”

Corporate interests have hijacked the levers of political power in the US and use the country’s international clout to pursue their own agenda, he said in an interview with Rossiyskaya Gazeta newspaper, to be published in full later today.

Their democracy is a pretty facade for the political system, which serves to hide the neglect of the rights of ordinary Americans.

Washington pursues the same approach in the international arena, where it claims to be the champion of democracy but disregards other nations’ sovereignty, Patrushev said. He believes that this “hypocrisy” will be on display at the Summit for Democracy, which will kick off this week in Washington.

The event will be “a gathering to support a world order in which Washington wants to play the central role forever. Dissenters will be labeled ‘undemocratic states,’” he predicted. The US, which “appointed itself the dictator of the world, will harass the nations whose sovereignties and democracies were undermined,” by Washington.

The **reality is that “Washington has long been a leader in violating the sovereignty of other nations, in the number of wars and conflicts it has unleashed,” the security chief said. He** called the nations that support this arrangement “vassals” that are constantly “humiliated” in their abusive relationships with the US.

The **international event, which is being held for the second time, is meant to promote democracy against what Washington increasingly sees as assertive “authoritarian” states.** The US reportedly invited all participants of the first summit, which was held in 2021, including the administration of the self-governed Chinese island of Taiwan. NATO members Hungary and Türkiye were snubbed once again, according to Foreign Policy magazine. <https://www.rt.com/russia/573658-patrushev-american-democracy-facade/> **[What is really**

disturbing is that much of what Patrushev said is true. Currently US 'democracy' is an illusion –rdj]

Ben Gurion departures halted as Histadrut declares 'historic' strike against overhaul Union chief says labor action meant to 'stop the madness' after Netanyahu's firing of defense minister; doctors, local authorities, students and universities also strike

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 8:29 am Updated at 2:25 pm



Passengers look at the monitor displaying delayed flights at Ben Gurion airport, March 27, 2023 (AP Photo/Oren Ziv)

The head of the Histadrut labor federation on Monday declared a "historic" labor strike in an attempt to "stop the madness" of the government's controversial judicial overhaul, ramping up demonstrations after Defense Minister Yoav Gallant was fired for speaking out against the planned changes.

As part of the labor action, workers at Ben Gurion Airport swiftly announced they would prevent departures. Other organizations also declared they

were joining the strike.

"We are all worried about Israel's fate," Histadrut chief Arnon Bar-David said during a press conference alongside business leaders and public officials. "Together we say, enough!"

"We have lost our way — this is not about left or right," he continued. "We can no longer polarize the nation."

The announcement came ahead of an expected statement by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that he is freezing the legislation.

The union boss said he had done "everything" in recent weeks "to stop the situation," but the efforts came to naught. "We are all joining hands to shut down the State of Israel," Bar-David said. "The malls and the factories will close." **MORE** - <https://www.timesofisrael.com/histadrut-labor-chief-to-make-special-announcement-amid-growing-calls-for-strike/>

Ousted defense minister says overhaul rift is an opportunity for Israel's enemies

Gallant issues warning in closed meeting of Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, whose chairman Edelstein says: 'We heard alarming things'

By [Emanuel Fabian](#) Today, 10:44 am



Defense Minister Yoav Gallant arrives for a meeting at the Knesset on March 27, 2023 (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

Ousted Defense Minister Yoav Gallant warned on Monday morning in a closed meeting of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that Israel's security was in danger amid the judicial overhaul legislation.

"According to intelligence reports, there is a clear identification of the situation being an opportunity [for our enemies] to attack Israel," Gallant was quoted as saying in reports.

"The rift in Israeli society can bring our enemies to a prime opportunity," he reportedly added. "The Iranians are trying to erode relations between Israel and Arab countries."

Israel's Judiciary: Reform or Ruin?

In a statement following the closed meeting, the chairman of the committee, Likud MK Yuli Edelstein said: "We have heard alarming things. This is not the time to replace the defense minister."

On Sunday evening Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fired Gallant, a day after the Likud member called for pausing the advance of legislation in the government's judicial overhaul.

Hours before Gallant was fired, a senior defense official speaking to reporters on condition of anonymity said the tensions over the judicial overhaul have led to Israel being viewed “as weak” in the eye of its foes. The official said his view was shared by military chief Herzi Halevi, Shin Bet head Ronen Bar, and Mossad chief David Barnea. **MORE** - <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ousted-defense-minister-says-overhaul-rift-is-an-opportunity-for-israels-enemies/>

Amid protests after Gallant fired, calls grow in coalition to halt judicial overhaul

Barkat says ‘reform’ needed but ‘not at price of civil war’; Shas, UTJ indicate they’ll back whatever Netanyahu decides; Levin said threatening to quit; Otzma Yehudit says press on

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 3:52 am

As mass protests broke out across Israel Sunday night, calls from within the coalition grew to consider a stop to the relentless legislative effort by the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to upend the judiciary.

In a move that sent shockwaves through the country, Netanyahu fired his defense minister, Yoav Gallant, a day after Gallant called in a primetime TV address to stop the government’s push to overhaul the judiciary and work toward a compromise. The news prompted huge numbers of protesters to pour into the streets of Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, Beersheba, and elsewhere late Sunday, with demonstrators vowing to stay in the roads into the night.

In Tel Aviv, protesters lit bonfires on the Ayalon Highway and blocked the main thoroughway in both directions while chanting for “democracy.”

As the protests swelled, a number of Likud MKs and coalition partners called to consider freezing the legislative push while others urged Netanyahu to double down and move ahead swiftly with legislation that will bring judicial appointments, including to the Supreme Court presidency, under political control.

MK **Miki Zohar, the Likud’s culture and sports minister, called the current situation untenable** and said “if Netanyahu decides to stop the legislation, he should be backed... That’s the imperative of the hour.” While the legislation should be paused now “to allow things to calm down,” Zohar said, nonetheless, “we have to complete this reform — with intelligence... and better explanation.”

Half the country elected the coalition to carry out the reform, Zohar said, but not now — “not with the streets on fire. You don’t burn down the home on its residents.”



Israelis block the Ayalon highway in Tel Aviv during a protest against the Israeli government’s planned judicial overhaul on March 26, 2023. (Tomer Neuberger/Flash90)

Zohar said he favored discussions with the opposition on the reform, but “if we can’t reach agreements we have to complete the reform that we were elected to carry out.”

Economy Minister Nir Barkat, also Likud, issued a statement that appeared to assume Netanyahu would halt the judicial overhaul legislation and offered support. **MORE** - <https://www.timesofisrael.com/amid-mass-protests-calls-grow-from-inside-coalition-to-reconsider-judicial-overhaul/>

[overhaul/](#)

Netanyahu says he’s delaying overhaul to allow dialogue, but vows reform will happen

PM says he’s pausing judicial revamp to avoid ‘civil war,’ asserts ‘extreme minority tearing Israel to shreds’; opposition heads offer wary approval for talks, warn against bluff

By [Jeremy Sharon](#) Today, 10:47 pm



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks to the nation, March 27, 2023. (GPO Screenshot)

In a prickly speech Monday night, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced he was temporarily delaying his government’s highly contentious judicial overhaul legislation to allow time for dialogue over the far-reaching reforms.

After immense public pressure that has seen 12 weeks of

massive demonstrations, and, on Monday, the announcement of general strikes by the country's top labor federation and local councils, the prime minister said he was allowing for "a delay" to provide "a real opportunity for real dialogue," but stressed that "either way," a reform would be passed to "restore the balance" that he said had been lost between the branches of government in Israel.

The premier indicated the "time out" would last until the beginning of the Knesset's summer session, which starts April 30.

President Isaac Herzog welcomed the pause and said it was "time for frank, serious and responsible discussion that will lead urgently to calming spirits and lowering the flames."

Netanyahu specifically referred to National Unity party leader Benny Gantz as a potential partner for dialogue, and said he was extending his hand to him and others who want to enter into "good faith" talks (though he did not mention opposition leader Yair Lapid). **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-says-hes-delaying-overhaul-to-allow-dialogue-but-vows-reform-will-happen/>

In first, tens of thousands rally to back overhaul; ministers promise it will pass

As PM announces delay, protesters demand judicial reform move forward, rail against 'elites,' claim election 'stolen' from them

By [Carrie Keller-Lynn](#) and [Tol Staff](#) Today, 11:33 pm



Protesters attend a rally in support of the government's planned judicial overhaul, in Jerusalem on March 27, 2023. (Arie Leib Abrams/Flash90)

Tens of thousands of government supporters demonstrated in Jerusalem on Monday in favor of its judicial overhaul and against its planned halt, shortly before Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced it was being put on hold.

The rally was the largest event of its kind since the government launched its far-reaching legislative plan in January. The past months have seen massive anti-overhaul protests, but supporters' rallies were few and far between until it became clear Monday

that the plan was being delayed.

Netanyahu said he was pausing the effort to reform the judiciary to allow a potential compromise deal with the opposition.

At the pro-overhaul rally at Jerusalem's Sacher Park, protesters chanted "Our voice isn't less important than a pilot's," a reference to widespread warnings by Air Force reserve pilots that they would not serve if Israel's democracy was harmed, as they contended the overhaul will do. Others cried, "We know exactly who we voted for."

Some held signs reading, "Second-class citizen" and "They're stealing the election from us." Many chanted, "The people want judicial reform," while some also shouted: "Where were you in Gush Katif," recalling Israel's settlement bloc in Gaza before the 2005 Disengagement.

Police worked to keep pro-reform protesters and anti-overhaul protesters who had also [gathered outside](#) the Knesset separate to avoid violence between the two sides. Some 100,000 anti-overhaul protesters had gathered near the Knesset in the afternoon, though by the time of the right-wing rally, most had dispersed. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-first-tens-of-thousands-rally-to-back-overhaul-ministers-promise-it-will-pass/>

To okay overhaul delay, Ben Gvir gets promise for 'national guard' under his control

Deal cut after national security minister reportedly threatened to quit coalition over decision to halt judicial legislation; critics slam move as handing Ben Gvir private militia

By [Tol Staff](#) 28 March 2023, 12:18 am

National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir announced Monday that he had agreed to back Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's call for a pause on judicial overhaul legislation in exchange for a promise to create his long-sought "national guard."

Ben Gvir circulated a letter to media outlets dated Monday and signed by Netanyahu, in which the prime minister vowed to raise the issue of forming such a body within the National Security Ministry in the upcoming cabinet meeting this Sunday.

The announcement came after Ben Gvir reportedly threatened to quit the government, endangering the coalition, if Netanyahu moved ahead with a plan to halt the judicial overhaul legislation.

Netanyahu, however, did not make any reference to such a deal in his speech Monday evening, when he announced a halt to the legislation until the Knesset returns from its Passover recess.

“The reform will pass. The national guard will be established. The budget that I demanded for the National Security Ministry will pass in full,” Ben Gvir tweeted on Monday evening. “Nobody will scare us. Nobody will succeed in changing the decision of the people.”

Labor MK Gilad Kariv criticized Netanyahu’s promise to Ben Gvir, tweeting: “The national guard must be under the police, rather than under the control of [far-right group] Lehava and the rest of the Kahanists” — a reference to followers of extremist anti-Arab rabbi Meir Kahane. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/to-okay-overhaul-delay-ben-gvir-gets-promise-for-national-guard-under-his-control/>

Polish deputy FM: Israel consulted with us on overhauling judiciary

Pawel Jablonski says Poland, which has seen democratic backsliding since government curbed courts’ independence, ‘shared our experiences in this regard’

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 2:18 pm



Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Pawel Jablonski is interviewed by Polish radio on March 27, 2023. (Twitter screenshot, used in accordance with Clause 27a of the Copyright Law)

Poland’s deputy foreign minister on Monday said Israel consulted with his country about overhauling the judicial system, following past Polish moves to curb the judiciary’s authority.

“Of course, we are talking with Israel, and to some extent we shared our experiences in this regard,” Pawel Jablonski told a Polish radio station. “I’m telling the honest truth. Israel was interested in what was happening in Poland. We were interested in what was happening in Israel.”

Jablonski said any change to the courts is a domestic matter, noting the Knesset’s advancement of the judicial bills and resulting mass protests against the proposals.

“This is a democracy — just like any democracy, with various problems — but I am convinced that it will manage,” he said in reference to Israel.

His remarks came a day after a constitutional scholar from Poland, which has undergone democratic backsliding in recent years, warned that Israel was facing the same dangers from the judicial overhaul being advanced by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government.

Prof. Tomasz Tadeusz Koncewicz, director of the Department of European and Comparative Law at the University of Gdansk in Poland, **said there has been a process of “constitutional capture” in his country since the ruling Law and Justice party took power in 2015.**

“It all started with the Polish constitutional court. And this is a major takeaway lesson for Israel,” he told a conference of the Israel Democracy Institute on Sunday.

In Poland, Koncewicz said, the ruling Law and Justice party “ripped out” the heart of the constitutional court by appointing political allies of the party to the bench, so that the court now sees itself as “as ally of parliament” and “an enabler of political power” instead of an institution designed to check legislative power. **MORE -**

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/polish-deputy-fm-israel-consulted-with-us-on-overhauling-judiciary/>

The situation in Israel is critical currently. They are approaching Passover which can be a difficult time and then have Yom yom ha'atzmaut, Yom Hashoah, Yom Yerushalmi and they have a country that is being split mainly because of outside influences pushing for a regime change. Reminds you a bit of the Trump problems. Independent thinkers not welcome in the new world order. – rdb]