

Israel in Chaos as Largest Protests Since 7 October Erupt

The families of Israeli prisoners have recently shown extreme frustration over Netanyahu's sabotaging of an exchange deal with Hamas

By [The Cradle](#)

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Tens of thousands of Israelis [gathered](#) across Tel Aviv and other occupied cities on the evening of 30 March for protests against their Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

Tens of thousands of Israelis are demonstrating in Tel Aviv tonight, calling on Netanyahu to do more to release the hostages held by Hamas in Gaza. This is the biggest demonstration since October 7 pic.twitter.com/Qs9cWUYcts

— Barak Ravid (@BarakRavid) [March 30, 2024](#)

For the first time, the families of the Israeli prisoners being held by the resistance in Gaza, who normally hold separate rallies, joined the massive crowds of anti-government protesters – whose movement initially started with the prime minister's controversial overhaul initiative last year.

"The rallies are over, the protests have just begun," said the spokesman for the Hostages and Missing Families Forum, Haim Rubinstein.

[#ISRAEL](#) PROTEST 🇮🇱

Large-Scale Protests are ongoing tonight in Tel Aviv. Israelis are marching along Tel Aviv's Dizengoff Street urging the release of the hostages. pic.twitter.com/quCH2Vyl5D

Israeli police detained over a dozen people and used water cannons against the protesters – who had blocked major roads in Tel Aviv.

Around a thousand protested outside the Israeli defense ministry in Tel Aviv, demanding an immediate prisoner exchange deal.

Demonstrators also clashed with police in Jerusalem, where around 200 rampaged through police barricades in order to protest outside Netanyahu's home in the occupied holy city. In occupied Caesaria, protesters were arrested while cutting off roads near the prime minister's residence.

Protests erupted in a number of other occupied cities, including Sderot, Or Akiva, and Beersheba. These were the largest demonstrations since the outbreak of the war on 7 October, *The Times of Israel* reported.

Representatives of the anti-government protesters held a [meeting](#) last month with members of the Shin Bet security service – which aimed to “prevent the crossing of Red Lines,” as the Shin Bet warned at the time that protesters trying to break through the perimeter of Netanyahu's private home could be shot, according to *Haaretz*.

The demonstrations followed a statement released by prisoners' families labeling the Israeli premier an “obstacle to a deal.” Members of the [families](#) of imprisoned soldiers in Gaza met with [Netanyahu](#) on 28 March, expressing deep annoyance and anger over the failure to reach an agreement.

A senior intelligence source on the team of Israeli negotiator Nitzan Alon was cited by *Haaretz* as saying,

“There are increasing signs that [Netanyahu is] doing almost everything possible to postpone, delay and ruin the chance of a deal to release the hostages.”

The frustration comes as Netanyahu has just walked away from the latest rounds of negotiations in Qatar, aimed at reaching a truce and prisoner exchange agreement.

Hamas has continued to stand by its terms for a permanent end to hostilities, a withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza, allowing the distribution of aid across the Gaza Strip, and the return of the displaced, which Israel has repeatedly rejected throughout talks in recent months.

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