

Israel Judicial Crisis: White House and Jewish Groups Express ‘Profound’ Disappointment

In a statement, the White House said it will continue to support President Isaac Herzog to build a broader consensus

By [Middle East Eye](#)

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The White House called it “unfortunate” after Israel’s parliament passed a law diminishing the powers of the courts and endorsing comprehensive reforms to overhaul the judicial system.

“As a lifelong friend of Israel, President [Joe] Biden has publicly and privately expressed his views that major changes in a democracy to be enduring must have as broad a consensus as possible,” White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement.

“It is unfortunate that the vote today took place with the slimmest possible majority,” she added.

Supported by legislatures from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s ultra-nationalist coalition government, the “Reasonable Standard Law” was approved with a 64-to-0 vote. Opposition members left the session in protest, shouting “shame” and “government of destruction” before the vote took place.

The new [law](#) abolishes Israel’s “reasonableness standard”, eliminating the Supreme Court’s ability to block government decisions it deems unreasonable.

It’s part of a package of bills proposed by the government earlier this year, seeking to overhaul the judicial system in the country.

“We understand talks are ongoing and likely to continue over the coming weeks and months to forge a broader compromise even with the Knesset in recess,” Jean-Pierre

said.

“The United States will continue to support the efforts of President [Isaac] Herzog and other Israeli leaders as they seek to build a broader consensus through political dialogue.”

Disappointed Jewish Organisations

The American Jewish Committee expressed its “profound disappointment over the passage of the law”. According to a statement, the organisation said that this deepened the divisions in Israeli society as evidenced by the hundreds of thousands of people who have taken to the streets.

“The continued effort to press forward on judicial reform rather than seeking compromise has sown discord within the Israeli Defense Forces at a time of elevated threats to the Jewish homeland and has strained the vital relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jewry,” the statement read.

“Dramatic changes to Israel’s judicial system should result from a deliberative and inclusive process that upholds the democratic values of maintaining checks and balances, respecting minority rights and civil liberties, and preserving essential judicial independence.”

The National Council of Jewish Women put out a statement saying that for the past six months, Israelis have protested in the streets, culminating in tens of thousands walking from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem over the weekend in a five-day [trek](#).

“We believe in a secure, Jewish, and democratic Israel – and the move to limit the power of the Supreme Court’s abilities to provide checks and balances on the government undermines that vision,” the council wrote on Twitter.

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