

# [***Netanyahu Faces Growing Pressure In Israel As Critics Call For New Elections***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BPW-BX31-DXVP-500B-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 694 words

**Byline:** James Farrell, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is facing new pressure at home as the Israel-Hamas war rages on.

**Body**

**Topline**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is facing growing pressure in Israel over his handling of the Israel-Hamas War, with protests calling for his ouster reaching the halls of Israeli Parliament Wednesday, and Netanyahu s political rivals calling for new, early elections.

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Police try to push back demonstrators in a protest against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government and call for the release of hostages held in the Gaza Strip by the Hamas militant group in Jerusalem, Tuesday, April 2, 2024. (AP Photo/Ohad Zwigenberg)

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**Key Facts**

During a televised briefing Wednesday, Benny Gantz, a centrist Netanyahu political rival whojoined Netanyahu s right-wing government in a show of unity after Hamas Oct. 7 attack on Israel,calledfor national elections this coming September Israeli parliament elections are scheduled forOctober 2026.

Gantz, a member of the Israeli war cabinet and leader of the National Unity party, said the proposed new elections would come just ahead of the year anniversary of the war and would allow Israel to continue the war while signaling to the citizens of Israel that we will soon renew their trust in us.

His comments come as days of protests across Israel have broughtthousandsout to the streets, calling for new elections, increased efforts to secure the release of Israeli hostages captured by Hamas and Netanyahu s ouster.

On Wednesday, protesters pushed past security inside the Israeli parliament tosmear yellow painton the windows inside the building, calling on the government to secure the release of hostages.

Protests escalated outside Netanyahu s Jerusalem home Tuesday evening into what Israeli police reportedly called a riot, promptingGantzto call for peace on social media.

**Chief Critic**

Yair Lapid, the centrist leader of the political opposition in Israel, appeared to respond to Gantz s calls for a new election but went even further,writingon X that Israel could not wait another six months, and calling for the most dangerous and failed government in the country s history to go home as soon as possible.

**Contra**

Netanyahu s own party, the Likud Party,reportedlyaccused Gantz of engaging in petty ***politics*** just because his party is disintegrating. The Likud Party pushed back on the idea of new elections, arguing they would inevitably lead to paralysis in the midst of a war. Netanyahu himself has not yet responded to calls for a new election, but has resisted similar calls in the past. Most recently, he alleged that U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer s calls before congress for a new Israeli election were totally inappropriate. Netanyahu was last elected in 2022 after briefly beingousted in 2021 amid corruption allegations. He has sinceassembledone of the most far-right governments in Israel s history.

**Key Background**

Anti-government protests were raging in Israel prior to the Oct. 7 attack and the start of the war, driven in large part by criticism over Netanyahu s controversial plan to weaken the country s Supreme Court. Last year,protestsdrew as many as half a million Israelis. The protests largely stopped in the wake of the Oct. 7 attack, but appear to berejuvenatedby the ongoing war. Meanwhile, localpollsin Israel have shown Gantz, the leader of Israel s National Unity party, as polling ahead of Netanyahu. Israel continues to face global scrutiny over its handling of the humanitarian aspect of the war, particularly after an Israeli air strike killed seven aid workers with the humanitarian organization theWorld Central Kitchen.

**Big Number**

130.That s how many hostages taken by Hamas on Oct. 7 are believed to still be held captive in Gaza.

**What To Watch For**

Biden is reportedly set to speak with Netanyahu by phone Thursday, after Biden said he was outraged by Israel s killing of the World Central Kitchen aid workers. Tensions between the world leaders have been growing in recent months, especially as Israel continues to signal its intention to invade the Gazan city of Rafah an invasion that aid organizations have said could lead to ahumanitarian disaster.

**Further Reading**

**Load-Date:** April 4, 2024

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