

ChatGPT (12 June 2025)

PROMPTER

Write a story about present-day Gaza from the perspective of Benjamin Netanyahu

CHATGPT

Certainly. Here's a fictional narrative from the imagined perspective of Benjamin Netanyahu, focusing on present-day Gaza. Please note that this is a *creative exercise* intended to explore character and geopolitical complexity, not an endorsement of any political view.

Title: "Through the Glass, Darkly" By the Mind of Benjamin Netanyahu

The hum of the security briefing room at the Kirya in Tel Aviv was almost comforting in its predictability. Maps projected on screens, live drone feeds from the skies over Gaza, intelligence reports stacked like a funeral pyre on my desk. Another morning. Another crisis. Or perhaps the same crisis—only deepened, calcified into the bones of our existence. Gaza.

A name that conjures grief, fury, and weariness in equal measure. I have stood at the podium for decades, my face aging with each ceasefire, each strike, each condemnation. I have shaken hands under the watchful eyes of cameras and clenched fists in private. I have buried soldiers. I have listened to grieving mothers. I have read intercepted messages from tunnels that weave like veins through Gaza's underbelly. And through it all, I've asked myself the question that haunts every Israeli leader:

What does peace cost? And what does survival demand?

This morning, the room falls quiet as the Shin Bet director finishes his update. A tunnel was destroyed near Rafah—one of dozens we've located this month. A high-value Hamas commander is believed killed. Civilian casualties, of course. There always are. My aides glance at me, waiting for a response.

I stare at the screen. I see smoke curling above broken homes. Children running. Fighters blending into the debris. The heart clenches. But policy cannot be written from the heart. **Not here. Not now.**

People say history will judge me. Perhaps it already has. They call me hawk, opportunist, manipulator of crises. Others call me guardian, protector, bulwark against the abyss. The truth is rarely either. It's a cracked mirror.

I remember the Oslo Accords—the hope and the blood that followed. I remember 2005, when we disengaged from Gaza. There were those who believed giving it up would bring quiet. Instead, it brought rockets.

Each choice made in the name of security bears a cost in blood and international outrage. Each restraint earns me the ire of those who scream for vengeance. I cannot please either side.

That is not my role. I was not elected to be liked. I was elected to keep Israel alive.

Yet I wonder: **Is this cycle truly inescapable?** Is there a child in Gaza right now who will grow up to see Jews not as occupiers, but as neighbors? Is there a boy in Ashkelon who won't run for shelter every time sirens wail?

I light a candle in my office, a quiet ritual I've done for years. Not for symbolism, not for show. Just a flicker of something fragile—perhaps hope, perhaps memory.

"Prepare for a press conference," I say. "We reaffirm our right to defend ourselves. We mourn the innocent, but we cannot allow Hamas to rebuild."

The staff moves quickly. The machine of government spins on.

And I return to the screen. Gaza, again. A wound and a warning. A place where politics ends, and survival begins.

End of story.

Would you like a version from another point of view—perhaps a Gazan civilian, soldier, or journalist—to contrast the perspective?

PROMPTER

You imagine Netanyahu thinking 'I was elected to keep Israel alive'. Do you think, from his perspective, the continuing existence and future survival of the country has been seriously threatened? By whom and from when?

CHATGPT

Yes, from Benjamin Netanyahu's perspective—and more broadly from the viewpoint of many Israeli leaders and citizens—the survival of Israel has long felt seriously threatened. This fear is not purely rhetorical or symbolic; it is deeply rooted in both historical trauma and real, ongoing regional hostility. Here's how Netanyahu might see it, based on his public statements, policies, and worldview:

1. Historical Foundations of Threat Perception

Netanyahu often frames modern threats to Israel in the context of **Jewish history**, particularly the Holocaust and centuries of persecution. He was heavily influenced by his father, Benzion Netanyahu, a historian who focused on Jewish suffering and believed deeply in existential vigilance. This legacy is foundational to Netanyahu's political ethos.

In Netanyahu's mind, the **very creation of Israel in 1948** was a fragile miracle, surrounded by enemies at birth. The wars of 1948, 1967, and 1973—all fought against coalitions of Arab states—cemented the idea that Israel's existence could be snuffed out if it let its guard down.

2. Contemporary Threats (as seen by Netanyahu)

A. Iran

For Netanyahu, Iran is the primary existential threat. He has repeatedly stated that a nuclear-armed Iran would pose a potential second Holocaust. He has likened the Iranian regime to Nazi Germany and has spent much of his political capital opposing the 2015 Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA), which he argued only delayed rather than eliminated the threat.

B. Hamas and Hezbollah

Netanyahu sees **Hamas in Gaza** and **Hezbollah in Lebanon** as Iranian proxies aimed at Israel's destruction. Their charters, weapons stockpiles, and repeated rocket attacks reinforce

this perspective. In his view, these groups aren't just tactical enemies but ideological ones—committed to Israel's eradication.

C. Political and Diplomatic Isolation

He has often warned that **international pressure**, especially from the UN or European powers, can be dangerous when it delegitimizes Israeli self-defense. He fears that global opinion could one day strip Israel of its ability to respond militarily to real threats, leaving it vulnerable.

3. Inflection Points: When Has He Felt Most Threatened?

- **2000s – Second Intifada:** Suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv hardened his sense that Palestinian leadership cannot be trusted as peace partners.
- **2005 – Gaza Disengagement:** The withdrawal from Gaza and the rise of Hamas led Netanyahu to claim that territorial concessions bring not peace, but more rockets.
- **2015 – Iran Deal:** He believed the deal legitimized Iran's nuclear aspirations and was willing to confront the Obama administration publicly over it.
- **2023–2024 – October 7 and Beyond:** The Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, profoundly shook Israeli society. For Netanyahu, this likely confirmed his lifelong belief that existential threats remain and that deterrence, not diplomacy, must be Israel's cornerstone.

Conclusion:

From Netanyahu's point of view, **yes, Israel's survival has been and continues to be seriously threatened**—not abstractly, but materially, militarily, and ideologically. The threats he perceives come not only from specific groups like Hamas or Hezbollah, but from a broader geopolitical architecture he believes seeks to undermine or eliminate the Jewish state. Critics argue that this worldview encourages perpetual conflict and inhibits compromise. Supporters argue it's a realist view in a hostile region. Either way, Netanyahu's political identity is inseparable from this sense of existential peril.

PROMPTER

From his perspective, is the current action in Gaza designed to overcome political and diplomatic isolation?

CHATGPT

From **Benjamin Netanyahu's perspective**, the current military action in Gaza (post-October 7, 2023) is *not primarily* about overcoming political or diplomatic isolation—at least not on the surface. Rather, he would likely frame it as a **necessary, existential military response** to a direct, unprecedented threat: the Hamas-led attack that killed over 1,000 Israelis, including civilians, on Israeli soil.

However, beneath that framing, the **political and diplomatic implications** are very real—and he is certainly aware of them. Let's break this down into **how he likely sees it** and **what strategic side effects it may serve**:

1. Core Justification (In Netanyahu's Framing): National Survival and Deterrence

Netanyahu would argue that:

- **The goal is to destroy Hamas as a military and governing force** in Gaza so it can never again carry out an attack like October 7.
- **Military action is not about diplomacy, but necessity.**

- Allowing Hamas to survive and rearm would not only threaten Israel's citizens, but also embolden Hezbollah, Iran, and others.
- A perceived weak or incomplete response would project vulnerability, inviting further attacks and chaos.

In this sense, **overcoming isolation is secondary**—the military operation is justified on national security grounds first and foremost.

2. Political Calculus: Isolation vs. Legitimacy

That said, Netanyahu is a deeply political actor and understands **international perception** is not a sideshow—it can shape battlefield outcomes and Israel's long-term global position.

From his perspective:

- International criticism (especially from liberal democracies and the UN) is a predictable cost, but not a decisive factor in Israeli policy.
- He likely believes Western allies ultimately depend on Israel's intelligence and regional stability, and will tolerate short-term criticism as long as Israel frames its actions as part of the broader war on terror or Iranian expansionism.
- Domestically, military action helps rally national unity, shift focus from his own political crises (e.g., judicial reform protests, corruption trial), and reassert his leadership as the “Mr. Security” figure.

So while overcoming diplomatic isolation may not be the primary motive, he might see a successful Gaza campaign as a way to re-legitimize Israel's security doctrine and his leadership in the eyes of hesitant allies.

3. Diplomatic Leverage: Realpolitik

There's also a broader view Netanyahu may hold:

- Normalization with Arab states (e.g., Saudi Arabia) is threatened by the war, but not necessarily killed. He may believe that a decisive defeat of Hamas, which is also an enemy of Arab regimes, could reshape the region in Israel's favor if framed correctly.
- He may calculate that a weak or unfinished war would strengthen Iran's hand, and that by confronting Hamas now, he is setting the stage for future realignment of regional powers around a post-Hamas reality.

Conclusion

From Netanyahu's perspective:

- The primary aim of the Gaza war is military and existential—defeating Hamas and reasserting deterrence.
- Political and diplomatic isolation is an accepted (even expected) cost, not a motivating factor.
- However, the strategic byproduct of reasserting strength—both internationally and domestically—may serve to stabilize his leadership, reaffirm alliances, and rebuild Israel's position in the region.

So while he would deny that the war is about political survival or diplomacy, he likely sees its success as vital to both.

PROMPTER

How does Netanyahu conceive of Israel? What sort of political entity is it?

CHATGPT

Benjamin Netanyahu's conception of Israel is multifaceted, shaped by ideology, history, and security. While he is a pragmatist in many respects, his vision of Israel rests on **a few key pillars** that he has consistently emphasized throughout his political career. From his perspective, **Israel is not just a state—it is a unique, historically burdened, and strategically indispensable homeland for the Jewish people.**

Here's how he appears to conceive of Israel:

1. A Nation-State of the Jewish People

At the core of Netanyahu's view is the idea that **Israel is, and must remain, a Jewish state.** This is not only an ethnic or religious assertion—it is a civilizational one. In his view:

- **Jewish identity and national sovereignty are inseparable.**
- He sees Israel as the **culmination of 2,000 years of exile, persecution, and yearning**, rooted in historical claims to the land of Israel (Eretz Yisrael).
- The **2018 Nation-State Law**, passed under his government, formalized this ideology by declaring Israel the “nation-state of the Jewish people,” and affirming that only Jews have the right to national self-determination in Israel.

To Netanyahu, preserving this character is non-negotiable—even if it comes at the cost of liberal democratic ideals like absolute equality for all citizens.

2. A Fortress Democracy in a Hostile Region

Netanyahu often frames Israel as **a Western-aligned liberal democracy** surrounded by threats—geopolitical (Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah), ideological (Islamist extremism), and diplomatic (international delegitimization efforts). He sees Israel as:

- **A beacon of stability and democracy** in the Middle East,
- **A technologically advanced military and intelligence power**, vital to Western interests,
- **A country with unshakable moral legitimacy**, due to the Holocaust and the long arc of Jewish history.

He views **military strength and intelligence superiority as essential** to preserving Israel's democratic character and physical survival.

3. A Pragmatic Economic and Technological Powerhouse

While ideologically nationalist, Netanyahu is also a neoliberal economic thinker. He has long believed in:

- **Free markets**, privatization, and reduced government regulation.
- Turning Israel into a “**start-up nation**”, leveraging tech and innovation to elevate its global status.
- Using **economic success to build alliances**—e.g., peace and normalization deals with Arab states (the Abraham Accords) based partly on mutual economic interest.

To him, a strong, secure, capitalist Israel is not just preferable—it's strategic.

4. A State With Permanent Security Challenges

Unlike leaders who have staked their legacies on peace processes (e.g., Rabin, Peres, or even Olmert), Netanyahu **does not believe in a final peace agreement with the Palestinians in the foreseeable future**. Instead, he sees Israel as a state:

- **Locked in a long-term conflict with intractable enemies**,
- That must **control security indefinitely, including in the West Bank**, regardless of political arrangements,

- That may offer economic incentives or autonomy to Palestinians, but **not full sovereignty or a capital in East Jerusalem.**

He sees statehood for Palestinians as a **danger to Israeli security and Jewish identity**, especially if it means giving up territory or control of borders.

5. A State in Need of Global Legitimacy—on Israeli Terms

Netanyahu wants international recognition of Israel's:

- **Right to exist as a Jewish state,**
- **Sovereignty over Jerusalem** (united, not divided),
- And, in his view, **defensible borders**, which often means **retaining significant parts of the West Bank.**

He seeks **normalization with Arab states not through resolving the Palestinian conflict**, but by **bypassing it**—showing that Israel can be accepted in the region as-is.

Summary: Netanyahu's Israel

From Netanyahu's perspective, Israel is:

- **A Jewish nation-state** with a unique moral and historical claim to sovereignty;
- **A fortress democracy**, where military and intelligence strength safeguard freedom;
- **A pragmatic power** leveraging innovation and diplomacy to secure its future;
- **A state in perpetual conflict**, where peace must never come at the cost of security;
- And a **legitimate actor on the world stage**, whose concessions must be earned, not demanded.

This vision has critics—many argue it promotes inequality, annexation, and illiberal governance—but for Netanyahu, it represents the hard-won realism of Jewish history and survival in a dangerous region.

Would you like a comparison between this vision and that of his political rivals or predecessors (like Rabin, Lapid, or Ben-Gurion)?

PROMPTER

So, from this perspective: Israel is an ethnically defined nation, perpetually militarised?

CHATGPT

Yes, from **Benjamin Netanyahu's perspective**, Israel is fundamentally:

👉 **An Ethnically Defined Nation-State**

and

👉 **A Perpetually Militarized Society for Survival**

But to unpack that clearly and fairly:

1. Ethnically (or Nationally) Defined: Yes, Deliberately So

Netanyahu sees **Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people**, not merely a civic democracy where everyone holds equal cultural or national status.

- He has championed the view that **Jewish self-determination is central** to Israel's identity.
- This includes **Jewish symbols, Jewish immigration priority (the Law of Return), and Hebrew as the official language.**
- The **2018 Nation-State Law**, passed under his leadership, states explicitly: “The right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish

people.” While Arab citizens of Israel (roughly 20% of the population) **have voting rights and civil status**, Netanyahu does **not** endorse a binational model where Jewish and Arab identities are given equal national weight.

- He would argue this **ethno-national definition** is not racism, but **historic justice**: a protected homeland for a people long persecuted and nearly exterminated.

2. Perpetually Militarized: Also Yes, but Seen as Necessary, Not Desired

Netanyahu doesn’t *celebrate* militarization in a cultural sense (e.g., glorifying war), but he sees it as **inevitable and essential** due to Israel’s geography, enemies, and history.

- Israel is surrounded by states and non-state actors—**Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran**—many of whom he sees as **dedicated to Israel’s destruction**.
- The country’s narrow borders, small size, and volatile neighbors **require a permanent high-alert security posture**.
- Mandatory military service, a robust intelligence apparatus (Mossad, Shin Bet), and advanced military tech (Iron Dome, cyber operations) are **not luxuries, but necessities** in this worldview.

In his eyes, Israel’s militarization is **defensive**, not expansionist—designed to **prevent annihilation**, not to conquer.

However, he resists pressures to **demilitarize or cede strategic territory** (like parts of the West Bank or control of Gaza’s borders), because he believes **doing so invites catastrophe**.

3. So Yes, in Summary:

From Netanyahu’s perspective, **Israel is a state founded on Jewish national identity, which must remain permanently strong and militarily prepared** to survive in a hostile region.

Critics say this has made Israel:

- Ethnocratic: privileging one ethnicity over others;
- Inflexible: unable or unwilling to move toward a negotiated peace;
- Perpetually mobilized: normalized around conflict, rather than peace-building.

Netanyahu would argue the **alternative is naïveté**—that history has taught Jews the cost of weakness, and the Middle East is not forgiving of idealists.

Would you like to explore how this contrasts with more civic-national or liberal democratic visions of Israel from other Israeli leaders or thinkers?

PROMPTER

In your story and in the conversation so far, the enemy that Netanyahu is seemingly fighting against in Gaza at the present juncture seems unclear. Could you clarify his view of this enemy?

CHATGPT

Absolutely—this is a crucial point.

From **Benjamin Netanyahu’s perspective**, the **enemy in Gaza** right now is **Hamas**, but more broadly, he sees the conflict as part of a **larger ideological and strategic war** involving several layers of enemies. His conception of the enemy is complex and deliberate, and it operates at **multiple levels**:

1. The Immediate Enemy: Hamas

Hamas is the governing authority in Gaza and is designated a terrorist organization by Israel, the U.S., the EU, and others. Netanyahu sees Hamas not just as:

- A **military threat** (rockets, tunnels, raids, etc.),
- But as an **ideological enemy**—a jihadist movement rooted in **Islamist fundamentalism** that denies Israel's right to exist.

He views Hamas as:

- **Irredeemably hostile:** Its founding charter calls for Israel's destruction.
- **Non-partnerable:** It cannot be negotiated with, only deterred or dismantled.
- **A proxy of Iran:** Both financially and ideologically aligned with Iran's goal of erasing Israel from the map.

The **October 7, 2023 attack**—a surprise invasion that killed over a thousand Israeli civilians—reaffirmed for Netanyahu the idea that **Hamas must be eradicated, not contained**. He now argues that **Hamas is no longer just a terrorist group—it is Israel's ISIS**, and must be treated accordingly.

2. The Regional Threat Network: The “Axis of Resistance”

Netanyahu places Hamas within a broader “**axis of terror**” or “**Axis of Resistance**,” which includes:

- **Hezbollah in Lebanon**, with tens of thousands of missiles pointed at Israel.
- **Islamic Jihad**, also operating in Gaza.
- **Iran**, the ideological and financial backer of these groups.

In his view, these actors form a **coherent, Iran-led coalition** aimed at surrounding and weakening Israel through **asymmetric warfare**, media manipulation, and regional destabilization. So for Netanyahu, **Gaza is not just a local war—it's a front in a regional containment strategy against Iranian hegemony**.

3. The Ideological Enemy: Militant Islamism

More abstractly, Netanyahu often frames the conflict as part of a **global struggle against militant Islamism**, akin to how the U.S. framed its war on terror post-9/11. He sees groups like:

- Hamas,
- ISIS,
- Al-Qaeda,
- And others

as ideological cousins—**religiously motivated movements that cannot coexist with liberal democracy, pluralism, or Jewish sovereignty**. This framing allows him to align Israel with **Western powers**, emphasizing that **what Israel faces is what Europe and America could face if they allow radical Islam to flourish**.

4. The Narrative and Political Battlefield: Delegitimizers

There's also a **soft-power enemy**, in Netanyahu's eyes—what he views as:

- **International NGOs**, human rights groups, and some **UN bodies**,
- **Progressive movements in the West** that accuse Israel of apartheid or colonialism,
- Some **journalistic and academic voices** that, in his view, uncritically accept Hamas's narrative or deny Israel's right to self-defense.

He doesn't see these actors as military threats, but as part of a **delegitimization campaign** that aims to weaken Israel diplomatically and morally—ultimately making it more vulnerable to physical threats.

Summary: Netanyahu's View of the Enemy in Gaza

The enemy in Gaza is **Hamas**, which he sees as:

- A terrorist army,
- An Iranian proxy,
- A jihadist regime that must be destroyed—not negotiated with,
- A node in a larger ideological and strategic war against Jewish sovereignty.

To Netanyahu, the war in Gaza is not just about territorial control or even retaliation. It's about **defeating a movement that, if left standing, proves Israel can be attacked and survive**—a precedent he sees as existentially unacceptable.

Would you like a look at how this view differs from other Israeli or international assessments of Hamas or the conflict in Gaza?

PROMPTER

That is quite a lot of enemies. From this perspective, what would be secure and at-peace Israel look like? What might be the end as he sees or imagines it, how would that seem within Israel and in the international domain?

CHATGPT

You're right—**Netanyahu's worldview is structured around a dense web of enemies**, which creates a high threshold for what “peace” or “security” might look like from his perspective. In a way, the logic of his position makes **true, final peace almost unreachable**—but not necessarily undesired. It's just that **peace, in his framing, must come through dominance, deterrence, and strategic patience**, not through mutual concessions or reconciliation.

Let's explore **what a “secure and at-peace Israel” might look like to Netanyahu**—what he considers the **“end” of the conflict**, or at least a sustainable resolution.

① 1. Military and Strategic Peace: Peace Through Strength

From Netanyahu's view, **security is a prerequisite for peace—not the other way around**.

That means:

- **No significant threat from Hamas, Hezbollah, or other Iranian proxies.** Ideally, these groups are **dismantled or permanently deterred**.
- Israel maintains **military superiority** in the region, including freedom of action in Syria, Gaza, and the West Bank.
- **Gaza is demilitarized**, and Israel (not the Palestinian Authority, and certainly not Hamas) retains **security control**—directly or indirectly.

He sees peace as **an enforced condition**, not a negotiated utopia. Any peace is only durable if **Israel retains overwhelming military deterrence**.

IL 2. Domestic Shape of a "Secure Israel"

Internally, in Netanyahu's imagined secure Israel:

- **The Jewish character of the state is constitutionally protected**—as codified in the 2018 Nation-State Law.
- There is **no Palestinian state** with sovereign military or border powers. Perhaps a **demilitarized autonomy** exists in parts of the West Bank and a pacified Gaza.
- **Jerusalem remains undivided** under Israeli sovereignty.
- Israeli Arabs may enjoy civil rights, but **national rights are reserved for Jews**.

- National service, high-tech economic dominance, and military vigilance continue as cornerstones of civic life.

In short, a “**secure Israel**” remains on a war footing, but the external threats are managed and minimized.

3. International Domain: Recognition Without Concession

On the international stage, Netanyahu imagines a future where:

- Israel is **normalized in the region** without having to first resolve the Palestinian issue (as the Abraham Accords began to show).
- **Arab states accept Israel's Jewish identity and borders** in exchange for security cooperation, economic ties, and mutual interest in deterring Iran.
- Western powers **respect Israel's red lines**, including:
 - Not forcing a withdrawal to 1967 borders,
 - Not recognizing Hamas or radical Palestinian factions,
 - Supporting Israeli military action against Iran if necessary.

He imagines **Israel as a respected, resilient regional power**, rather than a country dependent on international approval.

4. What This “Peace” Is Not

This vision **does not involve**:

- A two-state solution in the form envisioned by most of the international community.
- Equal national status for Palestinians.
- A withdrawal from the West Bank to pre-1967 borders.
- Shared sovereignty in Jerusalem.

In Netanyahu’s eyes, these are not paths to peace but to **national suicide**.

Summary: The “End” According to Netanyahu

A secure and at-peace Israel, in Netanyahu’s perspective, is not post-conflict. It is post-victory. Victory doesn’t mean conquest—it means:

- Enemies like Hamas are neutralized or irrelevant;
- Israel’s military and diplomatic deterrence is unshakable;
- The international community accepts Israel’s red lines;
- And peace is maintained not by treaties alone, but by power.

This view is **cynical but consistent**. It reflects a belief that **history is shaped by strength**, not idealism. His critics say this worldview **sacrifices moral clarity, human rights, and the possibility of coexistence**. His supporters say it is **the only view rooted in the hard truths of Jewish history and Middle Eastern geopolitics**.

Would you like a comparison of this vision with that of other Israeli leaders (e.g., Yitzhak Rabin, Ehud Barak, Naftali Bennett, or Yair Lapid)?

PROMPTER

You keep suggesting, in the story and in the conversation so far, that Netanyahu's critics and supporters are more or less evenly balanced and have more or less equal weight? Is that the case within Israel and is that the case internationally?

CHATGPT

No, they are not evenly balanced—either within Israel or internationally—and it's important to clarify that. The impression of equal weight can be misleading, especially when looking at public opinion, political institutions, and the international landscape.

Let's break this down in two parts:

II Within Israel: A Deeply Divided but Uneven Landscape

1. Electoral Support: Substantial but Narrow

Netanyahu has been **Israel's longest-serving prime minister**, elected multiple times across decades. This is not because he has majority support in the population at all times, but because:

- **Israel's political system is parliamentary and fragmented**, allowing him to govern through coalitions with small but ideologically rigid partners.
- He commands a **loyal political base** on the right, especially among:
 - Religious Zionists,
 - Ultra-Orthodox Jews,
 - Mizrahi Jews (Jews of Middle Eastern origin),
 - Russian-speaking immigrants,
 - Israelis who prioritize security and Jewish nationalism over liberal values.

However, his **personal approval ratings fluctuate significantly**, and since the judicial overhaul protests in 2023 and the war in Gaza, **his popularity has plummeted** among many sectors of Israeli society.

- As of mid-2024 and into 2025, a **majority of Israelis polled** have consistently **opposed Netanyahu remaining in power**, especially due to:
 - The failure to prevent the Oct 7 attacks,
 - The ongoing war's cost in lives and reputation,
 - The perception that he prioritizes political survival over national unity.

So while he still retains a significant bloc of support, especially on the right, **his critics are currently more numerous and more vocal**—particularly among:

- Secular Israelis,
- The business and tech sectors,
- Israel's academic and cultural elite,
- Many military veterans and security officials,
- Protest movements calling for democratic reforms and his resignation.

2. Institutional Control vs. Public Legitimacy

Even when unpopular, Netanyahu has often remained in power by **dominating coalition politics and shaping institutions**. But public legitimacy is another matter:

- The **judicial overhaul crisis** in 2023 severely damaged his image as a steward of democracy.
- The **2023–2025 war in Gaza**, while supported by some Israelis for its military goals, has **deepened internal division** over ethics, leadership, and the lack of an “endgame.”
- Former generals, intelligence officials, and legal scholars—many once sympathetic—have turned sharply against him.

So: **He retains real power, but not broad legitimacy across society.**

🌐 Internationally: Much Less Balanced, Increasingly Isolated

1. In the West: Growing Criticism

Netanyahu still receives **diplomatic support from key allies like the U.S.**, especially under security frameworks. But:

- His **approach to the Palestinians**, including opposition to a two-state solution and expanded settlement activity, has alienated much of Europe and many in Washington.
- His government's **alignment with far-right and ultra-Orthodox parties**, especially figures with extreme or racist views, has **raised alarms globally**.
- The war in Gaza, with extremely high civilian casualties and mounting international outrage, has **eroded Israel's moral standing**, especially under Netanyahu's leadership.

The **Biden administration**, while continuing to supply arms, had increasingly criticized Netanyahu personally, especially for:

- Failing to articulate a clear post-war plan for Gaza,
- Rejecting a Palestinian Authority role,
- Undermining ceasefire efforts.

Among younger Western publics, especially in the U.S. and UK, **Netanyahu is widely viewed as a hardliner and an obstacle to peace**. College campuses, NGOs, and progressive political leaders increasingly frame him as the architect of a **long-term occupation regime**.

2. In the Global South and UN: Deep Criticism

In many parts of the world—especially the **Global South, Muslim-majority nations, and the UN system**—Netanyahu is:

- **Viewed as a symbol of militarized ethnonationalism**, and
- **Blamed for perpetuating Palestinian suffering** and resisting international consensus on a fair resolution.

International courts and UN bodies have launched **formal investigations** into Israeli conduct under his leadership. **South Africa, Ireland, Brazil, and others** have become openly hostile to Netanyahu's government.

So: **He is much more widely criticized than supported internationally**, especially beyond the narrow frame of realpolitik.

⊗ Summary

No, Netanyahu's supporters and critics are not equally balanced—especially not today.

- **Inside Israel**, he commands a powerful but shrinking political base, while large parts of the public, military establishment, and civil society have turned against him.
- **Outside Israel**, he is increasingly isolated, facing strong criticism not only from traditional adversaries, but from allies and global institutions as well.

The apparent balance in some analyses stems from the fact that **he still holds formal power**, has a dedicated media ecosystem, and commands strong loyalty from specific political and ideological blocs. But in terms of **moral legitimacy, public support, and international consensus**, **his critics far outnumber his defenders today**.