



מדעניות מדינה למען הדמוקרטיה הישראלית
Political Scientists for Israeli Democracy
علماء السياسة من أجل الديمقراطية الإسرائيلية

Anti-democratic legislation during the first winter session of the 25th Knesset

The 25th Knesset was sworn in on November 15, 2022, and its first winter session ended on April 2, 2023. During this period, the coalition promoted extensive anti-democratic legislation that followed the Hungarian Protocol, starting off with the judicial system reform.

The Hungarian Protocol includes five stages: abolishing the independence of the judiciary, undermining proper public administration and election provisions, takeover of public and free media, violation of individual and minority rights including women and LGBT, religious coercion, and limitations to freedom of expression – in academia, culture, and art. The forum of Political Scientists for Israeli Democracy monitored the anti-democratic legislation of the coalition during the Knesset session.

Our analysis of the legislation according to the Hungarian protocol led us to assess that the coalition's aim to pass the first part of the judicial reform by the end of the Knesset's winter session is the decisive point. Thereafter, the door would be opened for the implementation of the full Hungarian Protocol.

The persistent and unprecedented protest stopped this dangerous move just before the pivotal point, but anti-democratic legislation has not stopped completely. These bills set the Hungarian protocol for implementation at short notice.

All and all, 153 anti-democratic bills were tabled in the Knesset during the Winter session. Most bills are private bills, only 2 of them are government bills, and 4 of them are bills of the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee.

During the session, 20 bills were actively promoted. Among them is the separation of the DIP from the State Prosecutor's Office, the second Deri Law that restricts the Supreme Court intervention in appointments of ministers, the Gift Law that allows public servants to receive donations for health and legal procedures, the law expanding the powers of the rabbinical courts, the law subordinating the police to the Minister of National Security and his involvement in the police's policy of investigations; and the addition of representatives of the Minister of Settlement and National Tasks to district planning committees in the South and North districts. Some of these bills are already at advanced stages- under preparation for the second and third readings or are on the table of the Knesset for second and third reading.

5 bills were approved by the Knesset and added to the law book of the State of Israel, including the Incapacitation Law, the Chametz (Leaven) Law, and the postponement of the convening of the Judicial Appointments Committee.

A summary and examples of the coalition's anti-democratic legislation during the 25th Knesset first winter session:

1. Reducing the independence of the judiciary – 59 laws

In addition to the judicial reform bills:

- Restoring immunity to Knesset members
- Prohibition of criminal investigations against a sitting prime minister (the French law)
- Elimination of the fraud and breach of trust offense

2. Harm to proper public administration and election procedures – 20 laws

- Political appointments in government companies
- Failure to pass a budget will not lead to the dissolution of the Knesset
- Deputy director generals in government ministries as positions of trust
- The gift law that allows public servants to accept donations for health and legal procedures

3. Violation of Human and Civil Rights – 32 Laws

- Cancellation of Social Security benefits for those who offended the honor of the flag and state symbols
- Limiting the activities of civil society organizations supported by foreign entities
- ISA (Israel Security Authority) surveillance on criminal crimes
- Prohibition of strikes 30 days before general and local elections

4. Religious coercion, harm to women, LGBT people and minorities – 26 laws

- The Chametz (Leaven) Law that bans people from taking leavened food made from grain into public hospitals during Passover (passed by the Knesset)
- Expanding the powers of the rabbinical courts to civil matters
- Repeal of the grandson clause in the Law of Return
- Definition of nationality in the Population Authority according to Jewish law
- Prohibition of encouraging a person to leave Jewish orthodoxy

5. Limiting Freedom of Expression: Public Media, Academia, Culture and Art – 16 Laws

- Privatization of Public Broadcasting (Public Broadcasting Corporation, Galei Zahal)
- Prohibiting activities on sexual orientation and gender identity in elementary schools
- Prohibition to commemorate Nakba Day in institutions of higher education
- Prohibiting university students and professors to fly flags of enemy countries/the Palestinian Authority

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