

Israel's greatest threat in 2023 is 'breakdown of relations with West': Report

INSS report warns against steps 'damaging to democracy' as new government attempts to overhaul judiciary

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The biggest strategic threat currently facing Israel is a deterioration in its foreign relations, particularly with the United States, mainly due to the new government's attempts to weaken the judiciary, a leading Israeli security think tank has warned.

Every year, the Institute for National Security Studies releases a report detailing what it deems to be the greatest threat Israel is facing. In previous years the renowned institute, affiliated with Tel Aviv University, has cited Iran, the Syrian war, and Hezbollah's precision missile project.

This year, its annual assessment, released on Monday, warned that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right government may take measures that will be perceived by the West as damaging to democracy, which could endanger Israel's relations with Washington and its security in the long run.

[...]

Tamir Hayman, the managing director of INSS, said that while Israel currently "has a stronger military and international standing" than its external enemies, "2023 poses a host of challenges liable to upset this balance".

The assessment highlights the rise in competition between world powers, saying that it could force Israel to "adhere to higher norms of liberal democracy" as the US "may be less tolerant of states challenging liberal democratic values".

The report said this could be Netanyahu's most significant political challenge, and warned that any damage to relations with Washington would "directly impact Israel's management of other fronts".

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