

Cracks are emerging in Israel's military: Reservists threaten not to serve if government plan passes

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JERUSALEM—Cracks are emerging in Israel's military. The Middle East's best equipped and most powerful force is under one of the worst assaults it has encountered—a battle within its own ranks.

through.

[...]

IF the government moves ahead with the legislation, more refusals are expected. If these take root, and especially in the air force, the military's performance will take a hit, said **Idit Shafran Gittleman, a senior researcher at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies.**

How big of a hit will depend on how widespread the refusals become and how the military responds to them, she added.

For the near term, if pilots don't show up for training or service, strikes on Syria might be delayed, Shafran Gittleman said.

The military will also need to think hard about whether taking harsh punitive steps against pilots is the right move, considering the time and expense to train others to fill in.

Perhaps most significantly, the ethnic, economic and religious divisions being torn open by the overhaul in civilian life are being carried over in the military, testing cohesions in an institution that often serves as a melting pot as Israel faces multiple external threats.

"It's setting off a vibe of tensions between crews that are meant to work together," said Shafran Gittleman. "That's a catastrophe for the military."

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