

## **Israel's judicial overhaul pits defense establishment against Netanyahu**

By Shira Rubin and Steve Hendrix / July 23, 2023

TEL AVIV — Tensions between Israel's citizens and their politicians are surging after thousands of military reservists issued an ultimatum over the country's plans to weaken the judiciary, and hundreds of thousands of protesters pleaded with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who was fitted with a pacemaker early Sunday morning, to halt the legislation.

[...]

“The professionals and the conscripts are there to hold to the line, but you need the reservists to win the war,” said **Chuck Freilich**, a former deputy head of Israel's National Security Council and a **senior fellow at the Tel Aviv-based Institute for National Security Studies** in Tel Aviv.

Reserve pilots in particular are central to keeping Israel on a war footing, he said, estimating that about 60 percent of air force flyers are reservists who spend a day or two each week keeping their skills honed. Losing the several thousand flyers and senior operational commanders that have pledged to step aside if the legislation become law would be a “body blow” to the IDF, he said.

“If they don't have the pilots and the operational staff, their ability to function decreases immediately,” Freilich said. “Smalls things can still be done, but it would impair the ability to conduct major operations, of launch a strike against Iran, should that prove necessary.”

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