



200,000 ultra-Orthodox protest in Jerusalem against military service

In Jerusalem on Thursday, 200,000 ultra-Orthodox Jews from a wide range of different movements protested against the fact that they are also required to perform military service in the Israeli army, the IDF. The Israeli Supreme Court had ruled in 2024 that the general [exemption of the Haredim \(ultra-Orthodox\) from compulsory service](#) should no longer be accepted and that the government should pass a corresponding law. Since then, there has been a tug-of-war in the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, over the wording of this decree law. The two ultra-Orthodox parties Shas and United Torah Judaism in particular oppose a law that would oblige the Haredim to perform military service.

The secular parties, however, including a considerable part of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party, demand that Haredim must also perform military service. But even within the ultra-Orthodox, opinions differ. At certain strictly religious schools, pupils complete military service of their own accord at the end of their education. And after the Hamas attack and massacre on October 7, 2023, in which 1,200 Israelis and nationals of other states were murdered, over 3,000 Haredim volunteered for the army. Immediately before the start of the major demonstration, members of this new ultra-Orthodox IDF brigade prayed at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

The demonstration by opponents of military service ended abruptly after a 20-year-old participant fell to his death from a building that was still under construction.