



Israel judges postpone key testimony in Netanyahu trial

Description

Netanyahu has been charged with bribery, fraud and breach of trust in three separate indictments that collectively accuse him of accepting improper gifts and illegally trading regulatory favour with media moguls in exchange for positive coverage.

Netanyahu is now opposition leader in parliament after he was ousted by a broad coalition of rivals in June [Getty]

Former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu returned to court for [his graft trial](#) on Tuesday, but judges granted a defence request to postpone highly anticipated testimony from his former spin doctor.

Netanyahu, now opposition leader in parliament after he was ousted by a broad coalition of rivals in June, arrived at the Jerusalem court house without the large security contingent and crowds of rival protesters that were on hand when he appeared as premier.

He has been charged with bribery, fraud and breach of trust in three separate indictments that collectively accuse him of accepting improper gifts and illegally trading regulatory favour with media moguls in exchange for positive coverage.

The testimony of his former spokesman Nir Hefetz had been expected to shed light on the ex-premier's dealings with the Bezeq telecommunications group.

In the Bezeq case, considered the most serious, Netanyahu is accused of offering regulatory benefits that could have been worth millions to the company in return for politically advantageous coverage on the group's *Walla* news site.

But Netanyahu's lawyers argued they were unprepared to respond to Hefetz's testimony following recent press revelations about new evidence he might share.

The prosecution said it regretted the leaks about Hefetz's expected testimony but urged the session to go ahead.

After a half-hour recess to consider the defence motion, judges postponed the trial until November 22.

Roughly 50 flag and placard waving Netanyahu supporters had gathered outside the courtroom to cheer the ex-premier ahead of his departure.

Netanyahu was Israel's longest serving prime minister, including a 1996-1999 term and a record 12-year tenure from 2009 to 2021.

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