



Written by [D. Michael DeRidder](#) on July 24, 2024

Bipartisan Opposition to Netanyahu's "War Rally" Address to Congress

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [is addressing](#) a Joint Meeting of Congress today, and is expected to [warn the U.S. about Iranian hostility](#) and call for military action against Iran.

Members of Congress who oppose the speech have been warned by House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) they will be subject to arrest if they cause any disturbances during Netanyahu's speech. Johnson stated in a [letter to colleagues](#):

In the interests of all involved, we will enforce a zero-tolerance policy for disturbances in the building.... If any disturbance does occur, the Sergeant at Arms and Capitol Police will remove the offending visitor(s) from the gallery and subject them to arrest.... If any Member creates a disturbance, the Sergeant at Arms will request that such action be ceased immediately, and we trust that request will be heeded.



AP Images
Benjamin Netanyahu addressing Congress

Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) previously said he would not attend Netanyahu's address, insisting he should not be welcomed and his policies in Gaza and the West Bank should be condemned, [stating on X](#):

As I stated last month, I will not be attending the address of Benjamin Netanyahu to Congress on Wednesday.... I agree with both the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the United Nations independent commission that both Benjamin Netanyahu and Yahya Sinwar are war criminals.... Netanyahu should not be welcomed into the United States Congress.

Representative Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) [stated on X](#) that the speech would be political theater, and that he would not attend:

Today Congress will undertake political theater on behalf of the State Department. The purpose of having Netanyahu address Congress is to bolster his political standing in Israel and to quell int'l opposition to his war. I don't feel like being a prop so I won't be attending.



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AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, [responded](#) to Massie's post saying, "Once again, @RepThomasMassie is standing with @AOC and @BernieSanders against our ally Israel." In return, Massie [responded](#), "Call me anything you want. I still won't be attending your war rally."

Over a dozen Democrats had planned to stay away, and Vice President Kamala Harris [was expected to be absent](#) due to her presidential campaign schedule. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) said yesterday that he would not attend the speech. He [stated on X](#) that he would stand by Israel and its right to defense, but would not stand by Netanyahu:

I am committed to Israel and its right to defend its people. The Hamas attack on October 7 was unprovoked and cowardly, and its continued holding of hostages unconscionable. However, Israel's execution of its war in Gaza under the direction of Prime Minister Netanyahu with 39,000 Palestinians dead and 90,000 injured is a brutal strategy beyond any acceptable level of self-defense.... I will stand by Israel, but I will not stand and cheer its current Prime Minister at [Wednesday's] Joint Session.



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