

Justice Minister Levin's Boycott of Supreme Court President

Assault on Human and Civil Rights and Direct Continuation of Judicial Revolution

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For nearly three years, Justice Minister Yariv Levin has pursued a deliberate policy of starving and paralyzing Israel's judicial system. This policy reached its peak in January 2025, when Levin announced that he did not recognize Justice Yitzhak Amit as President of the Supreme Court and would refuse to exercise dozens of statutory powers that require cooperation between them. This is a deliberate and direct continuation of the government's judicial revolution, aimed at incapacitating Israel's judiciary, and the Supreme Court in particular.

The immediate result has been a severe relentless violation of human and civil rights: prolonged delays and denial of timely justice throughout the court system, dramatic setbacks in parole and prisoner rehabilitation proceedings, and direct harm to essential services upon which millions of citizens depend. This marks a new and more extreme phase of the judicial revolution, with a senior government minister choosing which laws he will obey.

In light of these developments, Zulat petitioned the Supreme Court (through attorneys Dr. Hagai Kalai, Gal Barir, and Idan Seger) to order the minister to end his boycott of the Supreme Court President.¹ This step forms part of a broader series of legal proceedings dealing with the immobilization of the judicial system, including a petition filed by the Movement for Quality Government regarding Levin's refusal to convene the Judicial Selection Committee.

The two petitions complement one another. While the one filed by the Movement for Quality Government focuses on the specific failure to convene the Judicial Selection Committee and the resulting harm to the appointment of new judges, Zulat's petition

* English-language reference. All other references in this document are in Hebrew.

¹ Roy Silberstein, [*Petition to High Court: Justice Minister Levin Must Be Ordered to Stop the Boycott of Supreme Court President](#), *Zulat* (15 July 2025).

addresses the broader institutional paralysis caused by the minister's boycott of the Supreme Court President. Together, the petitions present a comprehensive picture of the same failure in governance: the Justice Minister's refusal to exercise his authority in order to prevent the proper functioning of the judicial system's appointment and administrative mechanisms.

Boycott of Supreme Court President

Since January 2025, Levin has maintained a sweeping boycott of Supreme Court President Amit, who assumed office in February 2025. In an official letter to the Director of Courts dated 26 January 2025, he affirmed that he would not cooperate with the President of the Supreme Court on any matter whatsoever.²

To understand the gravity of the situation, it is important to remember that Israel's law books contain dozens of statutory provisions calling for cooperation between the Justice Minister and the Supreme Court President, some requiring full agreement and others requiring consultation. In the absence of cooperation between the two, the minister cannot exercise the powers granted to him under those provisions.

When a cabinet minister declares a blanket boycott of another public authority because he refuses to recognize its legitimacy, this constitutes a complete abandonment of the rule of law and a blatant violation of the principle of separation of powers. It sets a precedent with potentially far-reaching consequences: a minister could boycott a municipality because he dislikes the mayor, government ministries could boycott one another over political disagreements, and every public authority could decide whom to recognize or not recognize in disregard of the law. The democratic system of checks and balances would collapse if each actor could choose which laws to obey.

Immediate Consequences for Human and Civil Rights

Beyond the constitutional implications, the Justice Minister's boycott of the Supreme Court President has been inflicting direct, measurable, and significant harm to the daily lives of millions of citizens. These systemic failures are not theoretical but are rather manifested in delays, backlogs, and disruptions to essential services, as evidenced by the data and

² [Justice Minister's Letter to Director of Courts](#), posted in *Calcalist* (26 January 2025).

information contained in the State's response to Zulat's petition (reflecting the situation as of 27 January 2025).³ The principal harms are outlined below.

- **Collapse of Parole/Rehabilitation System**

One of the powers the minister has refused to exercise is the appointment of judges to parole boards, which determine prisoners' eligibility for conditional release. Their decision has significant implications for both public safety and prisoners' right to rehabilitation.

As of November 2025, some 60 judges served as chairs of general parole boards, 9 chaired juvenile parole boards, 10 chaired special parole boards, 8 chaired sentence-reduction committees, and 4 judges served as members of sentence-reduction committees.

As of September 2025, the head of the Courts Administration's Parole Boards Department had requested the appointment of six additional judges to ensure the proper functioning of the boards: three judges for general parole boards, one for a sentence-reduction committee, and two as committee members. In response to these requests, Levin signed only three appointment letters in October 2025.

By the end of 2025, 21 judicial positions on parole boards remained unfilled: 13 chairs for general parole boards, four for special parole boards, three for sentence-reduction committees, and one committee member.

The exercise of these powers is contingent upon the joint approval of the Supreme Court President and the Justice Minister. In the absence of the latter's cooperation, the appointments cannot be finalized.

This amounts to a deliberate disruption of the entire system. At present, parole boards are operating with nearly half the required workforce. As a result, prisoners eligible for rehabilitation and conditional release will remain incarcerated for months or years longer than necessary, already overcrowded prisons will face even greater strain, public funds will be used inefficiently, and the remaining judges will be forced to deal with excessive workloads, compromising the quality of their decision-making.

³ Unless otherwise indicated, all of the data presented below are drawn from the State's response to Zulat's petition. See [State's Response to Supreme Court Case HCJ 27381-07-25 Zulat for Equality and Human Rights v. Government of Israel et al, Zulat](#) (27 November 2025).

- **Collapse of Recall Judges Program**

Recall judges are retired judges who are called back to active service to help manage court backlogs and whose appointment is made jointly by "the Justice Minister and the Supreme Court President."⁴ In the first quarter of 2024, there were 33 recall judges serving in the court system, but that number had fallen to 24 by January 2025. By the end of 2025, only 16 remained, with two more expected to retire for good in 2026. In addition, four current recall judges are eligible for an extension of their tenure, which also requires approval from the Justice Minister and the Supreme Court President.⁵

Under established procedures, requests from the Supreme Court President to appoint recall judges are submitted to the Director of Courts. After receiving the latter's approval in principle, these requests are discussed in working meetings of the Supreme Court President and the Justice Minister, who then jointly notify the Judicial Selection Committee of their intention to appoint a recall judge.

The last appointment of recall judges took place in January 2024, despite 12 requests submitted by court presidents from across the judicial system for additional nominations. Funding currently exists both for extending current tenures and for making new appointments. However, in the absence of regular working meetings between Amit and Levin, these requests cannot be advanced. Court presidents are aware that appointments are currently not being processed and may therefore be refraining from submitting additional requests.

As a result, courts are forced to operate with reduced personnel, leading to delays in proceedings, infringements on litigants' fundamental rights, and a dramatic increase in the workload of sitting judges.

- **Shortage of Local Court Judges**

With the approval of the Supreme Court President, the Justice Minister has the authority to appoint judges to local courts for fixed terms.⁶ Because such appointments are currently not being made, magistrates' court judges are effectively serving simultaneously as judges of local courts, placing a significant burden on both court systems and harming litigants.

⁴ [Section 10A\(a\) of Courts Law \[Consolidated Version\], 1984](#), *Nevo* (last updated 11 June 2026).

⁵ [Section 10A\(c\) of Courts Law \[Consolidated Version\], 1984](#), *Nevo* (last updated 11 June 2026).

⁶ [Section 57\(a\) of Courts Law \[Consolidated Version\], 1984](#), *Nevo* (last updated 11 June 2026).

- **Shortage of Court Presidents**

The law stipulates that presidents and vice presidents of district and magistrates' courts are appointed by the Justice Minister with the consent of the Supreme Court President.⁷ The Central District Court currently has no president, after Ruth Lorch completed her term in September 2025. Despite repeated requests to Levin, no replacement appointment process has been advanced.

It should also be noted that in January 2026, after the State submitted its response to Zulat's petition, Beersheba District Court President Benny Sagi was killed in a traffic accident. Given Levin's refusal to cooperate in appointing a president for the Central District Court, the Beersheba District Court is also expected to remain without a president in the near future.

- **Shortage of Supreme Court Registrars**

Candidates for registrar positions across the judiciary are selected jointly by the Supreme Court President and the Justice Minister at the recommendation of a search committee.⁸ After Supreme Court Registrar Lior Mishali-Shlomai's appointment as a magistrates' court judge in June 2024, the advisory committee for selecting registrars convened and submitted its recommendations to then-Acting Supreme Court President Uzi Vogelmann on 12 August 2024. The appointment of another registrar was raised several times in meetings between the Director of Courts and the Justice Minister, but no appointment has been made because Levin refuses to sign the appointment letter.

Due to the failure to appoint a new Supreme Court Registrar, Mishali-Shlomai's tenure was extended until 5 September 2024 as a temporary measure, and beginning 9 July 2025, Judge Ron Goldstein (a Supreme Court Registrar in the past and currently a Tel Aviv Magistrates' Court judge) has been assisting with the Supreme Court Registrar's duties in addition to his regular judicial responsibilities.

The failure to appoint an additional registrar directly harms public access to justice and the right to a fair legal process. Supreme Court registrars play a central role in managing proceedings, making procedural decisions, and ensuring the court's efficient operation. The fact that only temporary and improvised solutions have been adopted underscores the fact that improper considerations are delaying permanent

⁷ [Section 9 of Courts Law \[Consolidated Version\], 1984, Nevo](#) (last updated 11 June 2026).

⁸ [*Selection and Appointment of Registrars, Israeli Judicial Authority](#) (last updated 28 May 2023).

appointments and that the real cost of this institutional paralysis is ultimately borne by the public and litigants.

- **More Examples of Judiciary's Appointment/Management Mechanisms**

The Justice Minister holds numerous non-discretionary and discretionary powers pertaining to judicial appointments and administration of the courts that require the consent of the Supreme Court President. In the absence of such cooperation, these powers remain unused, thereby causing severe backlogs, operational paralysis, and harm to litigants.

His non-discretionary powers include making the following appointments: a retired district court judge as chair of the committee selecting enforcement officers, a retired Supreme Court justice as chair of the advisory committee operating under the Counter-Terrorism Law, a judge as chair of the public committees under the 1993 Bank Shares Arrangement Law, members of the bar examination committee, chair of the search committee selecting an independent director for the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, presiding officers of panels in administrative tribunals, and district court judges as chairs of special psychiatric committees under the 1991 Mental Health Treatment Law.

Additional discretionary powers requiring the two men's cooperation include assigning judges to serve simultaneously in multiple courts, increasing the monetary jurisdiction of magistrates' courts, appointing the judiciary's chief security officer, authorizing magistrates' courts to operate as community courts and defining their jurisdiction, and appointing district and magistrates' court judges to serve as juvenile court judges.

The breadth of legislation requiring cooperation between the Justice Minister and the Supreme Court President demonstrates that such coordination is essential to the proper functioning of the judicial system. Refusal to exercise these powers halts critical appointments, creates extraordinary workloads, and direct harms litigants' rights and access to efficient legal proceedings.

Race Against Time

Every month the boycott continues means more parole board judges reaching the end of their terms with no one appointed to replace them, more recall judges retiring without successors, more prisoners remaining behind bars longer than necessary, more court cases

delayed, and more irreversible damage to the judicial system and citizens' rights. The human, social, and democratic toll exacted by this paralysis grows by the day.

The rule of law is not an abstract concept. It means that a person entitled to parole is released on time, that legal proceedings move forward without undue delay, and that the judicial system is able to function and protect individual rights. Yet the Justice Minister's boycott of the Supreme Court President emasculates the rule of law. By deliberately refusing to perform the duties for which he was elected, Levin is crippling entire systems and harming the lives of millions of citizens who depend on them.