

Israel's High Court rules government must begin drafting ultra-religious students into military

June 25 (UPI) — Israel's Supreme Court ordered a full draft of ultra-Orthodox Jewish men into the country's military Tuesday and an immediate freeze on government funding of religious educational institutions, or yeshivas, that do not comply.

The unanimous decision by an extended nine-judge panel of the High Court of Justice in Jerusalem is likely to force a change in Israeli politics — and maybe fresh elections — over the issue that pits an influential minority of ultra-Orthodox adherents of Judaism who believe they should be exempt from conscription against secular society which argues the burden should be shared by all.

The government and the Knesset have been grappling with the issue for years but the ruling places renewed pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition government, propped up by the two biggest ultra-Orthodox parties, which is already scrambling to avert a crisis to come up with a solution and quickly.

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