# Israeli PM Netanyahu signals shift in focus to Lebanon border amid Gaza assault nearing end



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that the most intense phase of the assault against Hamas in Gaza is nearing its end. Speaking on Israel’s rightwing Channel 14, Netanyahu indicated that this would allow Israeli forces to shift focus to the Lebanese border where escalations with Hezbollah have raised the possibility of a wider conflict.

Netanyahu's comments mark his first public interview with a Hebrew-language outlet in over eight months of conflict. During the interview, Netanyahu stepped back from committing to a US-backed ceasefire proposal with Hamas, suggesting a more limited agreement instead. He emphasized that while a diplomatic solution is preferred, Israel is prepared to handle conflicts on multiple fronts if necessary.

Amid warnings from international officials, including US military leaders, about the risk of Iran entering the conflict alongside Hezbollah, Netanyahu stated that Israel is ready to transfer some forces north for defensive purposes. Netanyahu also mentioned that operations in Gaza would continue to prevent Hamas from regrouping.

Netanyahu's remarks have complicated the US-backed ceasefire proposal, which involves the release of hostages held by Hamas in exchange for Palestinian prisoners. Despite the conflict's broad impacts, Netanyahu underscored his commitment to the war's goals, which include eliminating Hamas. This stance has caused friction with the US and dissatisfaction among the families of hostages in Israel.

Elsewhere, fighting continues unabated in Gaza, with Israeli strikes targeting militants and UN facilities. Meanwhile, Hezbollah has also conducted attacks on Israeli positions from Lebanon, contributing to the heightened tensions.

Netanyahu's latest remarks contrast significantly with the ceasefire plan outlined by US President Joe Biden, which proposed a step-by-step approach to ending the conflict. Israel's military campaign in Gaza has resulted in significant casualties, with over 37,000 Palestinians reportedly killed according to Gaza's health ministry, and continues to displace the territory's population.