# Israeli PM Netanyahu suggests shift in military focus from Gaza to Hezbollah amid escalating tensions



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu indicated on Sunday that the ongoing military operations against Hamas in Gaza are nearing a transitional phase. This shift may allow Israel to reallocate troops to its northern border to address increasing tensions with Hezbollah, the Lebanese militant group.

Netanyahu's statement comes amid escalating hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, which began shortly after Hamas's October 7 attack, resulting in an immediate retaliatory strike by Hezbollah. Both sides have exchanged fire almost daily, prompting fears of a wider war involving Iranian-backed groups.

In a televised interview on Israel's Channel 14, Netanyahu mentioned the nearing completion of ground operations in Rafah, Gaza's southern city. Despite this, he emphasized that the broader conflict with Hamas is not over, but the changing dynamics would enable troop movements to the north "for defense" and to facilitate the return of displaced Israelis.

Hezbollah’s leader, Hassan Nasrallah, has pledged to continue battling Israel until a Gaza ceasefire is achieved, cautioning that Hezbollah possesses advanced weaponry and intelligence capabilities. In response, Israel has demonstrated its own military prowess and has prepared new operational plans for Lebanon.

Meanwhile, international efforts to reduce regional tensions are ongoing. U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein recently visited Israel and Lebanon, and Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant is currently in Washington for critical discussions with U.S. officials.

Netanyahu reiterated Israel’s stance against a truce until Hamas’s military infrastructure is dismantled and hostages are freed. Although the U.S. and other mediators are advocating for a ceasefire, Netanyahu insists on maintaining military oversight in Gaza post-war, dismissing the possibility of a long-term occupation.

Additionally, geopolitical strains have surfaced following threats by Hezbollah against Cyprus over alleged support for Israel. Greece's Foreign Minister George Gerapetritis condemned these threats, affirming the EU's solidarity with Cyprus.

This period of intensified conflict has resulted in significant casualties and heightened international scrutiny, spotlighting the fragile stability within the region.