# Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu Declares Intense Phase in Gaza Nearing End, Focus May Shift to Lebanon Border



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that the "intense phase" of the conflict in Gaza’s Rafah is nearing its conclusion, but this does not indicate an end to the overall war. Speaking to Channel 14 Television, Netanyahu asserted that Israel would maintain operations in Gaza until Hamas is entirely eliminated. He noted that the Israeli military's focus may shift to the northern border with Lebanon, where clashes with Hezbollah have been escalating.

Netanyahu indicated a readiness for a partial hostage release deal with Hamas but rejected the idea that the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority should take over Gaza. Across Israel, large-scale protests demand a ceasefire and the return of hostages.

Conditions in Rafah have worsened amid intense fighting, with the UN describing the situation as "apocalyptic." A significant number of Palestinians have been displaced, and the city’s vital Egyptian border crossing remains closed. International pressure has increased, with the UN's top court calling Israel’s military actions “disastrous.”

Hezbollah has issued threats to attack critical Israeli infrastructure, and exchanges of fire between Hezbollah and Israeli forces continue. Tensions have resulted in significant evacuations in northern Israel and southern Lebanon. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant is currently in Washington for discussions on Gaza, Lebanon, and the release of Israeli hostages.

In a related incident, pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli demonstrators clashed outside a synagogue in Los Angeles, leading to one arrest and several scuffles, but no reported injuries. This event is part of a broader series of protests in the US related to the ongoing conflict in Gaza.