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Netanyahu Defends Gaza Occupation Plan Amid Global Backlash

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu defended his government's plan to assume military control of Gaza City during a press conference for foreign media in Jerusalem on August 10, 2025. He described criticism of the plan as misleading and stated that the strategy, approved by Israel's security cabinet, is aimed at ending the conflict with Hamas. Netanyahu said the objectives include demilitarizing Gaza and establishing a civilian administration not controlled by Hamas. He also announced plans to increase access for foreign journalists to Gaza, reversing a 22-month restriction on independent reporting.

Since October 7, 2023, the Gaza Health Ministry has reported approximately 61,400 Palestinian deaths related to the conflict. These figures include both civilians and combatants and have not been independently verified by international organizations. The ministry has noted that about half of those killed are women and children. The conflict began following Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, which resulted in over 1,200 Israeli deaths and the abduction of 251 people.

International reactions to Israel's plan have been mixed. Australia, along with Canada and the United Kingdom, supported a United Nations resolution recognizing Palestinian statehood in September 2025. Netanyahu criticized these moves, stating that they would empower Hamas and hinder peace efforts. The Australian Labor government has condemned the Israeli military offensive, joining Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom in a joint statement expressing concern about the humanitarian situation and risks to hostages.

Within Israel, some military officials have voiced concerns about the plan. Israel Defence Forces Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir warned that the offensive could endanger hostage lives and overstretch military resources.

The planned operation involves displacing up to one million residents of Gaza City by October 7, 2025, while maintaining a siege aimed at Hamas fighters. The United Nations Security Council has expressed concern over potential catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Since the start of the conflict, reports indicate that more than 100 children have died due to malnutrition and related causes, though verifying these figures remains challenging due to limited access and ongoing conflict.

In response to the situation, Germany has suspended military exports to Israel. The Israeli government's insistence on full military control of Gaza highlights ongoing divisions over how to resolve the conflict and address its humanitarian impact.

Australia's Liberal National Party has criticized the Labor government for its approach to Israel, calling for clearer actions in response to the conflict.