

Netanyahu to Launch New Gaza Phase Amid Hostage Crisis

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to authorise an expanded military operation in Gaza as the conflict with Hamas enters a critical stage. A key cabinet meeting, currently underway in Jerusalem, is focusing on the next phase of Israel's campaign, alongside renewed efforts to rescue the 50 Israeli hostages still believed to be held by Hamas.

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) have been conducting targeted strikes across the Gaza Strip for several months, following the October 2023 attacks by Hamas, which sparked the most serious escalation in the region in years. According to Israeli officials, the latest phase will involve intensified ground operations in central and southern Gaza, aimed at dismantling Hamas's remaining infrastructure and securing the release of hostages.

This move comes amid growing international scrutiny, including calls for a ceasefire from some Western governments and humanitarian organisations. However, Israeli leadership remains firm on the need to restore long-term security. The situation has once again raised broader geopolitical concerns, particularly around civilian displacement and regional stability. While humanitarian corridors have been opened in recent weeks, aid access remains a challenge due to ongoing hostilities and security concerns.

Analysts suggest Netanyahu's decision may also be influenced by domestic political pressure, with public support waning amid fears of a prolonged conflict. Previous rescue operations have been hailed as national successes, but the fate of the remaining hostages remains a critical issue for the Israeli government.

The outcome of today's cabinet meeting is expected to set the tone for Israel's military and diplomatic posture in the weeks ahead.