

Israel Plans Gaza City Offensive Amid War Escalation

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Israel's security cabinet has approved a military operation to retake parts of Gaza City, intensifying the ongoing conflict with Hamas. The decision, announced early Friday following extended late-night discussions, was confirmed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office.

The new operation focuses on Gaza's largest city but stops short of a full-scale reoccupation of the Gaza Strip, which had previously been raised as a possibility. According to Israeli authorities, the aim is to dismantle Hamas command centres and restore control in urban zones considered critical to national security.

Fighting in the region has continued for nearly a year, with thousands displaced and key infrastructure severely damaged. The Israeli military said operations are being conducted with caution to minimise civilian harm, though the scale of destruction has drawn international concern.

Humanitarian agencies have reported rising civilian casualties and worsening conditions for families remaining in central Gaza. Aid groups continue to call for humanitarian access and temporary ceasefires to deliver food, medical supplies, and other essential assistance.

The renewed push into Gaza City is expected to intensify the conflict, as urban warfare presents challenges for both military strategy and civilian safety. Despite these risks, the Israeli government maintains that military pressure is necessary to eliminate armed threats posed by Hamas, which is designated as a terrorist organisation by the UK and several other countries.

Diplomatic efforts are ongoing to negotiate a ceasefire and secure the release of hostages still believed to be held in Gaza. International mediators, including representatives from Egypt and Qatar, have held recent talks aimed at de-escalating the conflict and supporting longer-term peace frameworks.

The conflict began in October 2023 following a series of deadly Hamas-led attacks on Israeli communities near the Gaza border. In response, Israel launched a large-scale military campaign targeting militant infrastructure throughout the enclave.