

Israeli Cabinet Approves Expanded Gaza Offensive and Military Control of Strip

The Israeli Cabinet voted unanimously on Sunday evening to approve the expansion of military operations in the Gaza Strip, according to Hebrew media reports.

The Cabinet's decision comes after the Israeli military began distributing call-up notices to tens of thousands of reserve soldiers on Saturday evening.

With the Cabinet's official approval, the IDF is now free to begin planning and implementing the expanded military operations in Gaza.

Additionally, it was reported that the Cabinet also approved initial plans to begin distributing humanitarian aid in Gaza, which would be handled by private foreign companies in compounds controlled by the IDF.

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The IDF's new plan for operations in Gaza will reportedly differ from previous campaigns by involving the capture and holding of territory within the Strip.

The IDF previously conducted raids in areas controlled by Hamas, often killing scores of terrorists, but also having to re-enter some sites multiple times after Hamas re-established itself following the Israeli withdrawal.

The new plan will instead focus on capturing and holding territory, with some areas potentially designated as Israeli-controlled humanitarian zones where aid can be distributed independently of Hamas. As of now, the government has not

released specific details of the plan.

According to the reports, National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir objected to the proposal, saying, "I don't understand why they should be given humanitarian aid. They have enough food there. Hamas's food stockpiles must be bombed."

IDF Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir allegedly replied, "These ideas endanger us! There is an international law that is binding. We cannot starve Gaza."

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When the two began arguing over the issue, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly told Zamir that "ministers are allowed to express views that differ from those of military officers," and asked for clarification from Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara in her role as legal advisor to the government.

Baharav-Miara reaffirmed Israel's commitment to uphold international law regarding humanitarian aid. The Cabinet secretary then noted, "For the sake of clarity, no minister has proposed starving them."

A final decision on the provision of humanitarian aid in Gaza was not confirmed during the Cabinet meeting.

At the same time, reports indicated that the Cabinet decided to delay any significant expansion of fighting in the Strip until after the expected visit of U.S. President Donald Trump to the region, where he is expected to visit several Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

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The American president is not expected to visit Israel on this trip.

Netanyahu reaffirmed the goals of defeating Hamas and freeing the remaining hostages. He also reportedly told the Cabinet that he remains committed to advancing the Trump Gaza proposal, which calls for the voluntary departure of many Gaza residents, and reiterated that the government is in talks with several countries about accepting Palestinians who wish to leave the Strip.

Several Hebrew media outlets reported that, in a recent security meeting, Zamir warned that renewed intense fighting in Gaza could endanger the remaining hostages.”

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“With a plan for full maneuvers, we will not necessarily reach the hostages,” Zamir reportedly told the ministers. “Keep in mind that we can lose them.”

The IDF chief added, “You have set two war goals – they are each problematic for the other.”

Following the Cabinet meeting, the Hostages and Missing Families Forum expressed outrage at the decision, saying the plan to resume fighting “deserves the name ‘Smotrich-Netanyahu plan’ for giving up on the kidnapped and abandoning national and security resilience.”

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich recently triggered a political storm by stating that the return of the hostages is not the state’s most important goal in the Gaza War.

“The government admits that it is choosing territories over hostages – against the will of over 70% of the people,” the Forum members claimed. “This choice will be remembered as a cry for generations.”

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