

Netanyahu hints at new Gaza invasion amid night of cross-border fire



Tel Aviv, March 27 (RHC)-- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the Israeli military may launch a full-scale offensive on Gaza in response to missile strikes into its territory, prompting massive retaliatory fire from Israel.

Netanyahu, who was supposed to speak at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) policy conference on Tuesday, wrapped up his visit to Washington early due to the reports of rockets being launched from Hamas-controlled Gaza into Israel.

As he was boarding a plane back to Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu made a thinly-veiled threat to stage a full-fledged invasion of Gaza. "We gave a very, very strong response, and Hamas needs to know that we will not hesitate to enter and do all the necessary steps."

Israel has mounted retaliatory strikes on what it claimed were elements of Hamas infrastructure within Gaza. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said it destroyed the office of the group's leader Ismail Haniyeh, as well as an alleged military intelligence headquarters and internal security service offices.

The spike in violence has reignited fears of a new, large-scale Gaza war looming in the region less than two weeks before the Israeli general elections.

Military spokeswoman Maj. Mika Lifshitz said on Monday that Israel would move two armored and infantry brigades to the Gaza front and was calling up reserve soldiers.

The last time the Israeli military invaded Gaza was in July 2014, when Tel Aviv blamed Hamas for the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli students found killed in the West Bank. The seven-week ground incursion resulted in multiple casualties among Palestinians. According to various estimates, over 2,100 Palestinians and 71 Israelis were killed and thousands of Palestinians were injured.

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