

Israel warns of Rafah invasion within weeks as Egypt fears mass exodus from Gaza

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Tel Aviv, February 19 (RHC)-- Israeli war cabinet member Benny Gantz has warned that Israeli troops will launch its ground offensive in Rafah unless Hamas frees all hostages by March 10th, the start of the holy month of Ramadan.

Some 1.5 million displaced Palestinians are now sheltering in Rafah. Rasheed Abu Eda, who was forced to flee Jabaliya, told reporters: "We are fleeing to safety, the safety of our children, our women and ourselves. And today we have reached the closest place to the border. I am around 50 meters away from the border with Egypt. After here, where can I go? I am 50 meters away from Egypt's border, and they said Rafah was the safest place. We came to Rafah, and now the Israelis want to enter Rafah. Where should we go?"

The group Sinai for Human Rights has released video which appears to show the construction of a large area enclosed by concrete walls on the Egyptian side of the border with Gaza. The group says the construction is "in preparation for the reception of Palestinian refugees in the case of mass exodus."

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