

*Netanyahu signs off on plans for
military aggression on Rafah
despite global warnings*

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Tel Aviv, March 16 (RHC)-- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has approved plans for a military attack on the southern Gaza Strip city of Rafah, the last major population center to be subjected to a

ground invasion in the regime's genocidal war on the besieged Palestinian territory.

Netanyahu's office announced in a statement on Friday that he "approved plans for a military operation in Rafah, and the army is operationally preparing for it and for the evacuation of residents."

The statement provided no details on the exact time and date of the assault, and rejected the latest ceasefire proposal put forward by the Gaza-based Palestinian resistance movement Hamas as "unrealistic."

The provision of humanitarian aid to the Palestinians in the besieged territory and the release of Israeli captives were among the terms of the truce deal, which has several times been discussed in the Egyptian capital of Cairo.

The potential aggression on Rafah comes despite the international community's warnings against the attack in the southern city, which houses more than 1.4 million Palestinians.

Dominic Allen, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) representative for Palestine, said in a news briefing on Friday that the situation in Gaza is "beyond catastrophic." "It's a nightmare, which is much more than a humanitarian crisis. It is a crisis of humanity," said Allen. "And having left Gaza this week, I can assure you that it's worse than I can describe, or the pictures can show, or that you can imagine."

The German foreign ministry said in a post on its X social media account that "a large-scale offensive in Rafah cannot be justified." "Over a million people have sought refuge there and have nowhere to go," the ministry said. "We need a humanitarian ceasefire now, so that the dying ends and the hostages are finally released."

The office of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas "expressed deep concern over an imminent Israeli military offensive in Rafah, which could result in a new massacre and further displacement of the Palestinian people in Gaza." "The presidency underscored the urgency for swift intervention by... the international community to avert this military attack, which could add to the already immense suffering of the Palestinian people," the office said.

The Israeli war has pushed 85% of Gaza's 2.3 million population into internal displacement amid a crippling blockade of most food, clean water, and medicine, while 60% of the enclave's infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, according to the UN.

Israel waged its genocidal war on Gaza on October 7 after the Hamas-led Palestinian resistance groups carried out Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the usurping entity in retaliation for its intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

At least 31,490 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have since been killed in Israeli strikes in Gaza, and 73,439 others injured amid mass destruction and shortages of necessities.

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