

Netanyahu: Israel preparing for wide-scale campaign in Gaza

Netanyahu's comments came after he convened a security cabinet meeting at the IDF Gaza Division headquarters to discuss the situation in the Gaza Strip.



PRIME MINISTER Benjamin Netanyahu. . (photo credit: REUTERS)

Israel wants to restore calm to the South, but at the same time is preparing for a wide-scale military campaign inside the Gaza Strip, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday.

Netanyahu's comments came after he convened a security cabinet meeting at the IDF Gaza Division headquarters to discuss the situation in the Strip, followed by a meeting with local and regional council heads, some of whom left the meeting in protest.

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"Our policy is clear: we want to restore the calm, but at the same time we are preparing for a large-scale military operation if such an action is required," Netanyahu said. "Those are my instructions to the army."

A few local council heads most affected by the violence who were invited to the meeting did not attend, with Gadi Yarkoni and Ofir Lieberman, heads of the Eshkol and Sha'ar Hanegev regional councils, walking out when they saw that there were a number of other local and regional heads from the South in attendance.

"The prime minister had no intention of holding a special meeting on the Gaza

envelope area as expected and as requested today,” they said. “We respect the heads of the local authorities in the South who are also dealing with difficult situations, but we are convinced beyond any doubt that the challenges, needs, and realities in the Gaza vicinity are completely different from the other authorities.”

Sderot Mayor Alon Davidi also did not attend, citing a previous commitment and saying beforehand that he would be unable to attend, and Sdot Negev Regional Council head Tamar Idan was out of the country.

Regarding the local council heads who left the meeting, Netanyahu said that he was sorry that “some of the mayors who always say that they are not being listened to” left the meeting.

Sources in the Prime Minister’s Office said that those who left did so for “political reasons.”

“It is odd that they say they are not being heard, but then when we come to hear them, they leave,” the sources said.

Source:

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