



UK's Cameron: Israel Should Think Before Further Action in Rafah

Israel should stop and think seriously before taking any further action in Rafah, British Foreign Secretary David Cameron said on Monday after airstrikes in the southern Gaza city, which is the last refuge for around one million displaced civilians.

Local health officials claimed 67 Palestinians were killed and dozens injured in the airstrikes, during which Israel liberated two hostages.

Questioned about the situation in Rafah and whether Israel had gone beyond international law, Cameron told reporters, "We think it is impossible to see how you can fight a war amongst these people. There's nowhere for them to go."

"We are very concerned about the situation and we want Israel to stop and think very seriously before it takes any further action. But above all, what we want is an immediate pause in the fighting and we want that pause to lead to a ceasefire."

Supplies of weapons to Israel should be reduced as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has dismissed international calls to avert civilian casualties during the IDF's military operation in Gaza, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said.

Based on the latest figures from Gaza's health ministry, 28,473 people have been killed and 68,146 more injured in Israeli airstrikes and the ground offensive against the Palestinian enclave. The IDF has been attacking Gaza since the Palestinian armed group Hamas launched its October 7 strike on Israel, in which around 1,200 people lost their lives and some 240 were taken hostage.

During a press conference on February 12, Borrell recalled the words of U.S. President Joe Biden, who said last week that the Israeli response to the Hamas terrorist attack had been "over the top." Besides, he pointed out that other high-ranking Western officials have been making similar statements recently.

"Well, if you believe that too many people are being killed, maybe you should provide less arms in order to prevent the killing of so many people," the diplomat suggested.

"If the international community believes that this is a slaughter, that too many people are being killed, maybe we have to think about [stopping] the provision of arms," he added.

Borrell then slammed the Israeli PM personally, saying "everybody goes to Tel Aviv, begging: 'Please don't do that, protect civilians, don't kill so many.' How many is too many? What is the standard?" But all the pleading remains in vain, because "Netanyahu doesn't listen to anyone," he stated.

Israel claims that it is doing everything possible to decrease civilian casualties, while blaming the deaths on Hamas, which it says uses the residents of Gaza as human shields.



AP Images
David Cameron



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NBC reported on February 12, citing multiple sources, that Biden has also been incensed by Netanyahu's insistence on continuing attacks on Gaza. The U.S. leader allegedly has called the Israeli PM an "assh*le" and "a pain in my ass" in private conversations.

The Israeli media reported in late December that the IDF had received 230 planes and 20 ships loaded with U.S. arms amid the conflict in Gaza. The deliveries allegedly entailed artillery shells, armored vehicles, and basic combat tools for soldiers.

On February 13, the U.S. Senate passed a \$95 billion emergency spending bill, which includes another \$14.1 billion in security assistance for Israel. The legislation still needs approval from the House, where it's expected to face strong opposition from Republicans, who want more money to be allocated to the security of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Also, on February 12, the Associated Press reported that Egypt has threatened to suspend the Camp David treaty, a decades-old peace accord that it signed with Israel, if the latter continues with its ground offensive in southern Gaza.

Egypt — which per the UN already hosts around nine million migrants and refugees — has repeatedly said an exodus of besieged Palestinians into its territory will be banned.

The North African nation and Israel have fought four major wars, the most recent being the so-called Yom Kippur War in 1973. The two countries signed the Camp David Accords in September 1978, which led to a peace deal the following year. The agreement, mediated by then-U.S. President Jimmy Carter, saw both countries establish full diplomatic relations, making it Israel's first peace treaty with an Arab country.

On February 11, two unnamed Egyptian officials and a Western diplomat, also speaking anonymously, told AP that the Egyptian government could halt the pact in response to Israeli military action in Rafah.

"The Camp David Accords were led by three brave men who took a bold stance because they knew the lasting effects for peace and security, both then and for the future. We need the same kind of leadership today, and that is currently lacking," Paige Alexander, chief executive of the Carter Center, told the news agency.

Alexander cautioned that any action that would draw Egypt into the war "would be catastrophic for the entire region." Furthermore, Damascus is fully prepared to defend its territory in a potential military conflict with Israel, Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad said on February 11.

Mekdad was speaking at a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in Damascus, where they discussed joint support for Palestinians during Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza.

Mekdad said that Syria "has been resisting" Israel since 1948, when the first full-blown war broke out between several Arab nations and the newly established Jewish state.

"Syria has fought wars against the Israeli occupation, and is ready to fight wars, but it will decide when and how," the foreign minister stressed, noting the importance of the Golan Heights — a part of southwestern Syria controlled by Israel since 1967.

Ending the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights is "at the top of our priorities," Makded posited, adding that "Syria is ready to pay the price for all these liberation operations."

Syria's top diplomat emphasized that the presence of U.S. and Turkish forces in his country is also "illegitimate" and must come to an end.



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Amir-Abdollahian went on to denounce the “illegal presence of foreign troops in Syria,” and accused the United States and Israel of committing “genocide” against the Palestinians.

The United States staged airstrikes in Syria this month in response to rocket and drone attacks on American bases in the region.

Additionally, the Pentagon said that it was targeting Iran-linked militant groups that were behind the January 28 bombing of an outpost in Jordan known as Tower 22, where three American soldiers were killed. Syria has slammed the strikes on its territory as “illegal” under international law.



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