



Written by [D. Michael DeRidder](#) on February 9, 2024

## Netanyahu Orders Evacuation of Civilians in Rafah

Israeli Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) announced today that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have been ordered to evacuate civilians sheltering in the Gazan city of Rafah as part of a push to eliminate four Hamas battalions — the last remaining members of Hamas — in Gaza.

Netanyahu said [in a statement](#): “Our soldiers are now in Khan Yunis, Hamas’s main stronghold. They’ll soon go into Rafah, Hamas’s last bastion. They will do so, as they have done up to now, by providing the civilian population safe passage to safe zones, and they’ll do so in spite of Hamas’ evil attempts to stop the civilians from leaving at gunpoint.”



AP Images  
Benjamin Netanyahu

Earlier today, the IDF reported the use of a school by Hamas [for storage of rocket launchers, stating on X](#), “Once again Hamas continues to show their blunt abuse of civilians in Gaza placing rocket launchers near a kindergarten. In addition, during searches of a civilian water facility IDF forces found a tunnel shaft leading to an underground tunnel route. Operations inside the tunnel revealed 2 eliminated terrorists.”

UNICEF called on Israel to refrain from the military offensive in Rafah, claiming more than 600,000 children and their families are sheltering there. UNICEF Executive Director [Catherine Russell said in her statement today](#):

UNICEF is urgently calling on the parties to refrain from military escalation in Rafah Governorate in Gaza where over 600,000 children and their families have been displaced — many of them more than once.

An escalation of the fighting in Rafah, which is already straining under the extraordinary number of people who have been displaced from other parts of Gaza, will mark another devastating turn in a war that has reportedly killed over 27,000 people — most of them women and children.



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