

Israel to mount emergency international PR effort in wake of Gaza campaign

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Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni on Saturday instructed the Foreign Ministry to take emergency measures to adapt Israel's international public relations to the ongoing escalation in the Gaza Strip.

Livni instructed senior ministry officials to open an aggressive and diplomatic international public relations campaign, in order to gain greater international support for Israel Defense Forces operations in the Gaza Strip.

Israel launched Saturday morning the start of a massive offensive against Qassam rocket and mortar fire on its southern communities, targeting dozens of buildings belonging to the ruling Hamas militant group. Advertisement

Palestinian medical sources said that at least 230 people had been killed in the strikes, which began at around 11:30 A.M.

Livni instructed ministry officials currently on vacation in Israel to return immediately to their posts abroad, and to immediately mount public relations campaigns in their station countries, focusing on local media and public officials.

In addition, Israeli officials stationed abroad have been put on high alert.

Livni will hold a series of talks with foreign officials in the coming days, in which she will attempt to explain the rationale for the expanded IDF operations in the Gaza Strip.

The Foreign Ministry is also looking to recruit speakers of foreign languages, in particular Arabic, Italian, Spanish, and German, in order to expand Israel's public relations campaign with the representatives of foreign media outlets currently in Israel.

An international media broadcast outlet will be opened in Sderot on Sunday, and the Foreign Ministry will organize a series of tours of Sderot and the Gaza envelope communities for foreign media and diplomatic figures.

Speaking in English at a press conference Saturday, Livni said Israel "expects the support and understanding of the international community, as it confronts terror, and advances the interest of all those who wish the forces of peace and co existence to determine the agenda of this region."

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