

Largest Anti-Hamas protest in Gaza Sparks Crackdown



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Hundreds of Palestinians in Gaza staged the biggest anti-Hamas demonstration since the war with Israel began, demanding the group's removal from power. Protesters in Beit Lahia chanted, "Out, out, out, Hamas out," before masked Hamas militants, some armed, forcibly dispersed the crowd, assaulting several demonstrators.

Footage of the protest spread on social media, with Hamas supporters downplaying its

significance and labeling participants as traitors. The unrest followed Islamic Jihad's rocket attacks on Israel, which led to Israeli evacuation orders for parts of Beit Lahia, fueling public anger.

Israel resumed its military operations in Gaza on March 18 after nearly two months of ceasefire, citing Hamas's rejection of a U.S.-brokered truce extension. Hamas, in turn, accused Israel of abandoning the January agreement. The renewed conflict has killed hundreds of Palestinians and displaced thousands.

Many Gazans, long fearful of criticizing Hamas openly, have grown more vocal since the war began. One protester, Mohammed Diab, who lost his home and brother in Israeli airstrikes, said, "Hamas must step down and listen to the voice of the grieving."

Since Hamas seized control of Gaza in 2007, dissent has been suppressed, but discontent is now emerging both in the streets and online. Some residents blame Hamas for the devastating toll of the war, as the humanitarian crisis in Gaza worsens with widespread destruction, food shortages, and collapsed infrastructure.