

## **Joe Biden speaks to Benjamin Netanyahu, says 'Israel has right to defend itself'**

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US President Joe Biden says that "Israel has a right to defend itself" amid a barrage of rockets fired by Hamas and other Palestinian groups from Gaza.

*Image Source : AP*

**Washington:** US President Joe Biden says that "Israel has a right to defend itself" amid a barrage of rockets fired by Hamas and other Palestinian groups from Gaza.

Biden says he spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu amid the dayslong outbreak of violence that has killed dozens.

"My expectation and hope is that this will be closing down sooner than later." He adds, "Israel has a right to defend itself when you have thousands of rockets flying into your territory."

Israel escalated its air campaign in Gaza on Wednesday, killing a string of senior Hamas military figures as it hammered the Gaza Strip with airstrikes. Militants in the territory fired rocket barrages into Israel.

Meanwhile, Russia is calling for a quick meeting of international mediators to help defuse the spiraling Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says it is necessary to call an urgent meeting of the so-called Quartet of mediators, which includes the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations. Lavrov made the statement after talking Wednesday with U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Lavrov says a quick ministerial meeting of the Quartet is "the most acute task now." He voices hope that Guterres can help convene such a meeting. Guterres says "we are totally committed to revitalizing the Quartet."

- AP