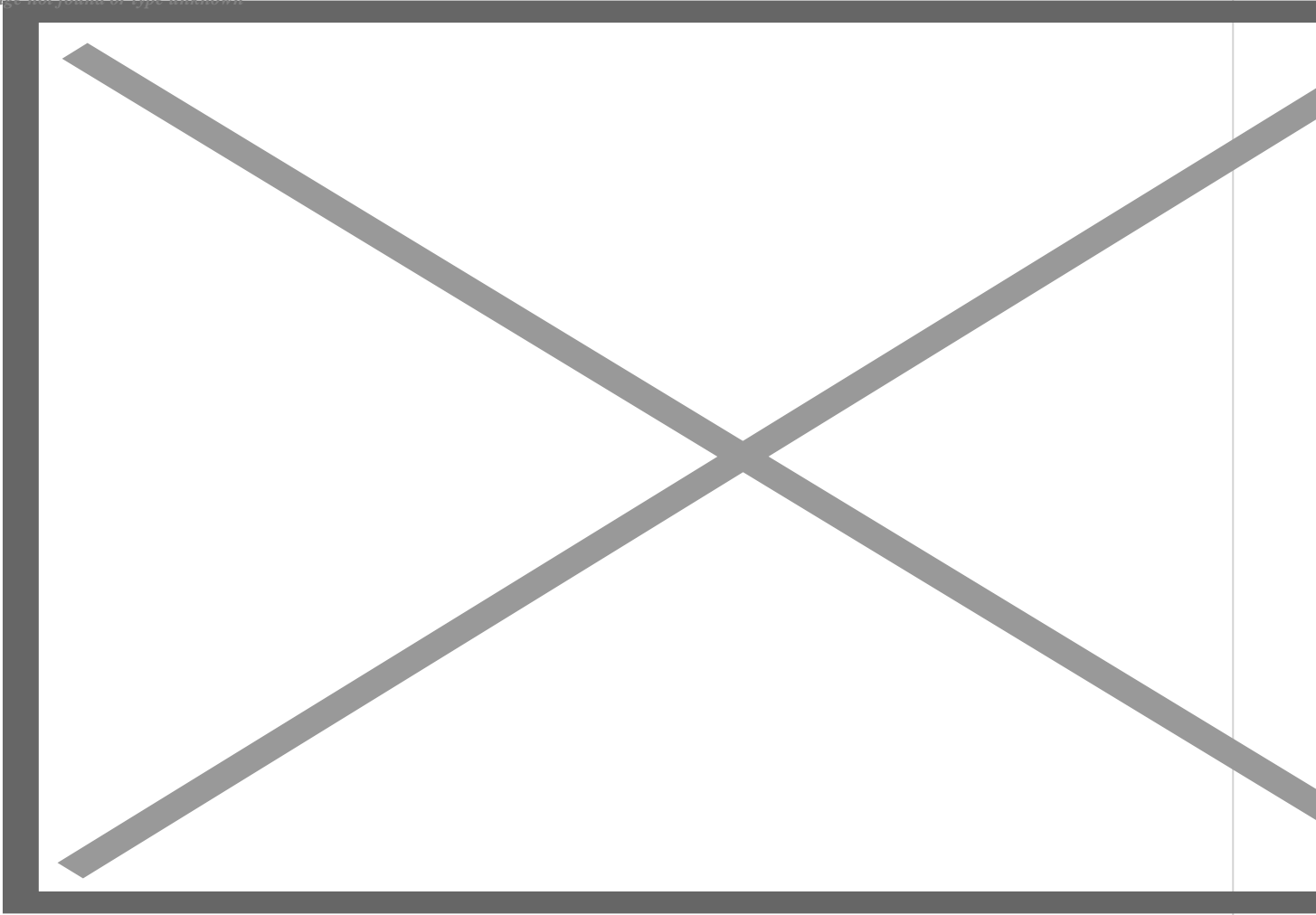


Israeli ground forces reportedly attacking Gaza

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Israeli tanks firing toward Gaza in the early hours of Friday, May 14. (Photo: The New York Times)

Gaza City, May 13 (RHC)-- The Israeli military's "air and ground troops are currently attacking in the Gaza Strip," the Israel ministry of military affairs tweeted late Thursday. It was unclear if Israeli troops had actually entered Gazan territory or are firing from the border line into Gaza.

Israel's military now claims that its ground forces were newly involved in fighting with Palestinian militants, but had not entered Gaza. The New York Times deleted an earlier tweet based on the military's statement that troops were "attacking in the Gaza Strip."

Hamas had earlier warned the regime of a "heavy response" in case it launched such incursion following many days of airstrikes against the enclave.

The regime's war minister Benny Gantz though sent a whopping 9,000 reservists to the occupied territories' border with Gaza in an "exceptional call-up," the Associated Press reported. It had earlier been reported that 5,000 such reservists had been dispatched to the border area. It was not clear if there was any overlap between the two numbers.

So far, as many as 109 Palestinians, including 28 children, have been martyred in the Israeli attacks since Monday, and more than 580 others wounded. "The use of artillery fire in Israel's four-day-old offensive raised the likelihood of civilian casualties," AP said.

The regime has waged three wholesale wars against the territory so far, killing thousands of Palestinians in each. The latest escalation has raised fears of another warfare.

The Zionist regime started the escalation against the coastal sliver after Gazans rose up in protest against its serious violations in the nearby Tel Aviv-occupied territory of the West Bank, especially the holy city of al-Quds.

The violations have seen the Israeli forces and illegal settlers attacking Palestinian worshippers throughout al-Quds, including on the al-Aqsa Mosque Compound -- Islam's third-holiest site -- that is located in al-Quds' Old City. The forces have also been trying to forcibly remove Palestinian residents from their homes in the city's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood.

Scores of others have died during the regime's brutality across the West Bank. The combination of atrocities has incurred far-and-wide international ire.

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