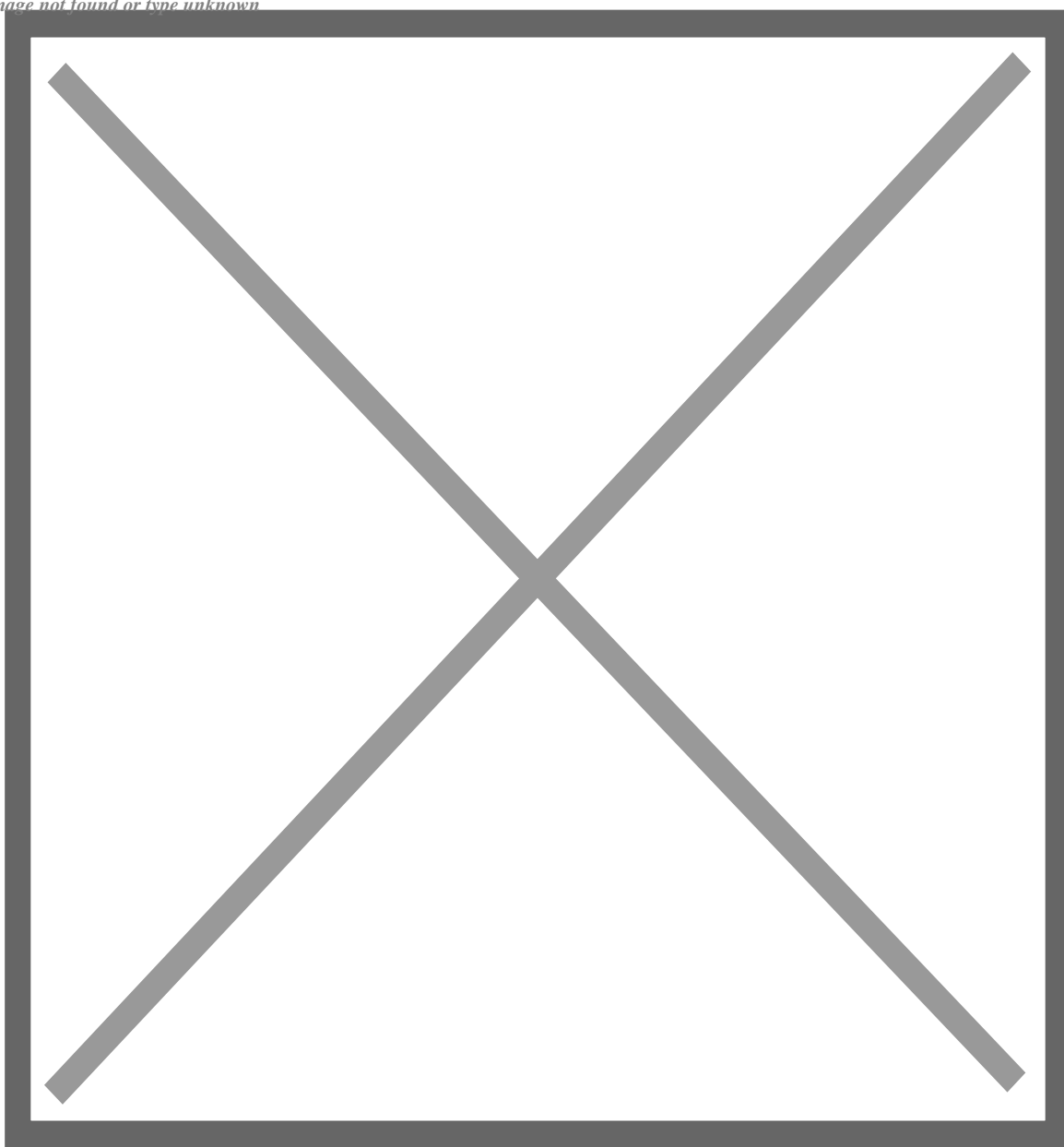


Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh reaffirms Palestinians' right to resist

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Ismail Haniyeh (File photo)

Cairo, August 1 (RHC)-- The head of the political bureau of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has reaffirmed Palestinians' right to resist and fight against the Israeli regime, amid Tel Aviv's ongoing aggression in the occupied territories.

Ismail Haniyeh made the remarks at a meeting of the Palestinian factions' general secretaries in the Egyptian coastal city of el-Alamein on Sunday, calling for strengthening the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in countering Israeli crimes in the occupied cities of West Bank and al-Quds.

The top Hamas official went on to say that all the commitments that contradict the Palestinian people's right to resist the Israeli occupation should be renounced. Haniyeh further stressed the need to rebuild and develop the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), adding that a new national council should be formed that encompasses all Palestinian parties for free democratic elections.

He also called for forming Palestinian institutions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for presidential and legislative elections, while urging immediate action to end the Israeli blockade on the besieged coastal enclave.

On Sunday, Palestinian factions met in Egypt to discuss reconciliation efforts as violence surges between Israel and Palestinian fighters in the West Bank. According to Palestinian media, the gathering will discuss "ways to restore national unity and end the division" between the Palestinian resistance groups.

Hamas and the Palestinian Fatah resistance movement have been split since 2007. Egypt has for years acted as a mediator to try to end the infighting between Palestinian factions. It has also helped broker truces in multiple rounds of fighting between Israel and Hamas.

Tensions are running high across the occupied West Bank in recent months, with the Israeli military carrying out near-nightly raids and the Palestinians responding with retaliatory attacks. More than 200 Palestinians have been killed by Israel since the beginning of this year.

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