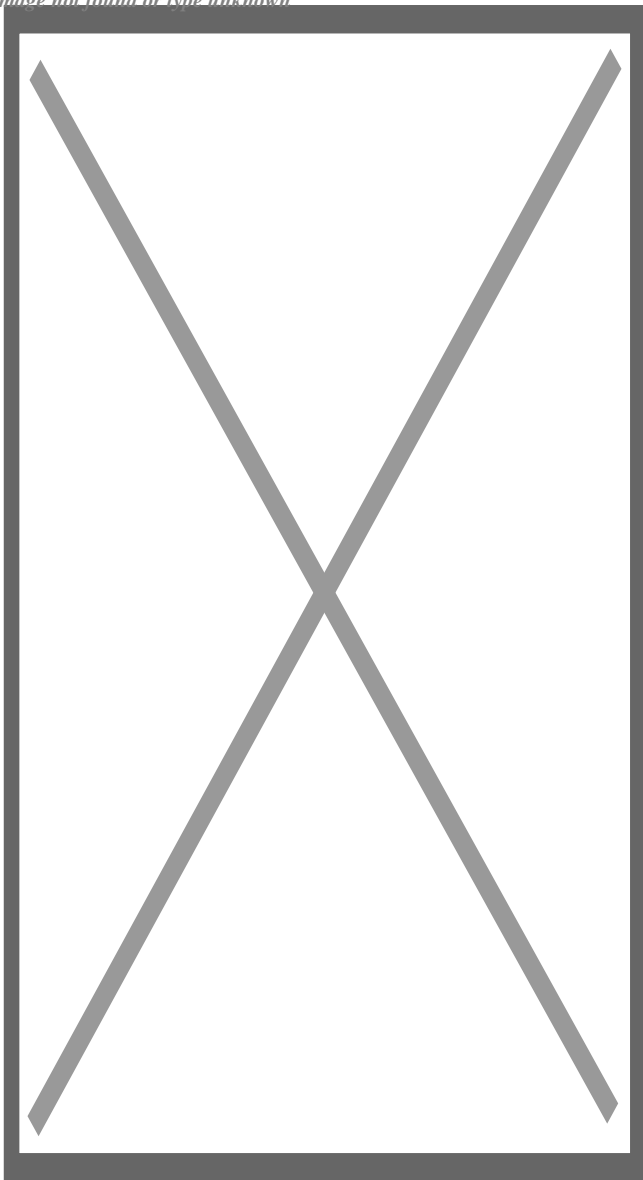


Arab states seek extension of Gaza truce

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Cairo, November 24 (RHC)-- Arab foreign ministers say a temporary truce between Israel and the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas should be extended and become a first step toward a full

cessation of hostilities.

In a statement released in Cairo, the Egyptian capital, Hamas said the deal, mediated by Qatar and Egypt, will see the release of 50 Israeli war prisoners in exchange for the release of 150 Palestinian women and children from the occupying entity's jails.

Reacting to the deal, the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan told a media briefing in London that the agreement should also ultimately lead to a resumption of talks for a two-state solution.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said the humanitarian aid should be sustained and expanded.

"Whatever humanitarian access now increases as a result of this hostage deal must remain in place and must be built upon," he said. "There must at no point be a reduction in this access based on progress for further release of hostages... Punishing the civilian population of Gaza for the holding of those hostages is absolutely not acceptable."

The Arab foreign ministers are leading a so-called contact group of mostly Muslim countries that are pursuing Israel's major allies and the UN Security Council to bring about an end to the Gaza war and move towards a permanent solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

Hamas earlier emphasized that any agreement is necessarily based on the conditions of the Palestinian resistance.

During the truce, the Israeli regime is also supposed to stop arresting or attacking anyone across the besieged territory. Qatar and Israel have confirmed the agreement as well. The truce will take effect on Thursday morning and could be extended.

Political commentators argue that the Israeli regime had no choice but to accept the truce as it failed to achieve its stated goals in the Gaza Strip.

The ceasefire, hailed as a victory for Hamas, came on the 47th day of the war, with Israel having failed to reach its declared objective of destroying the resistance group.

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