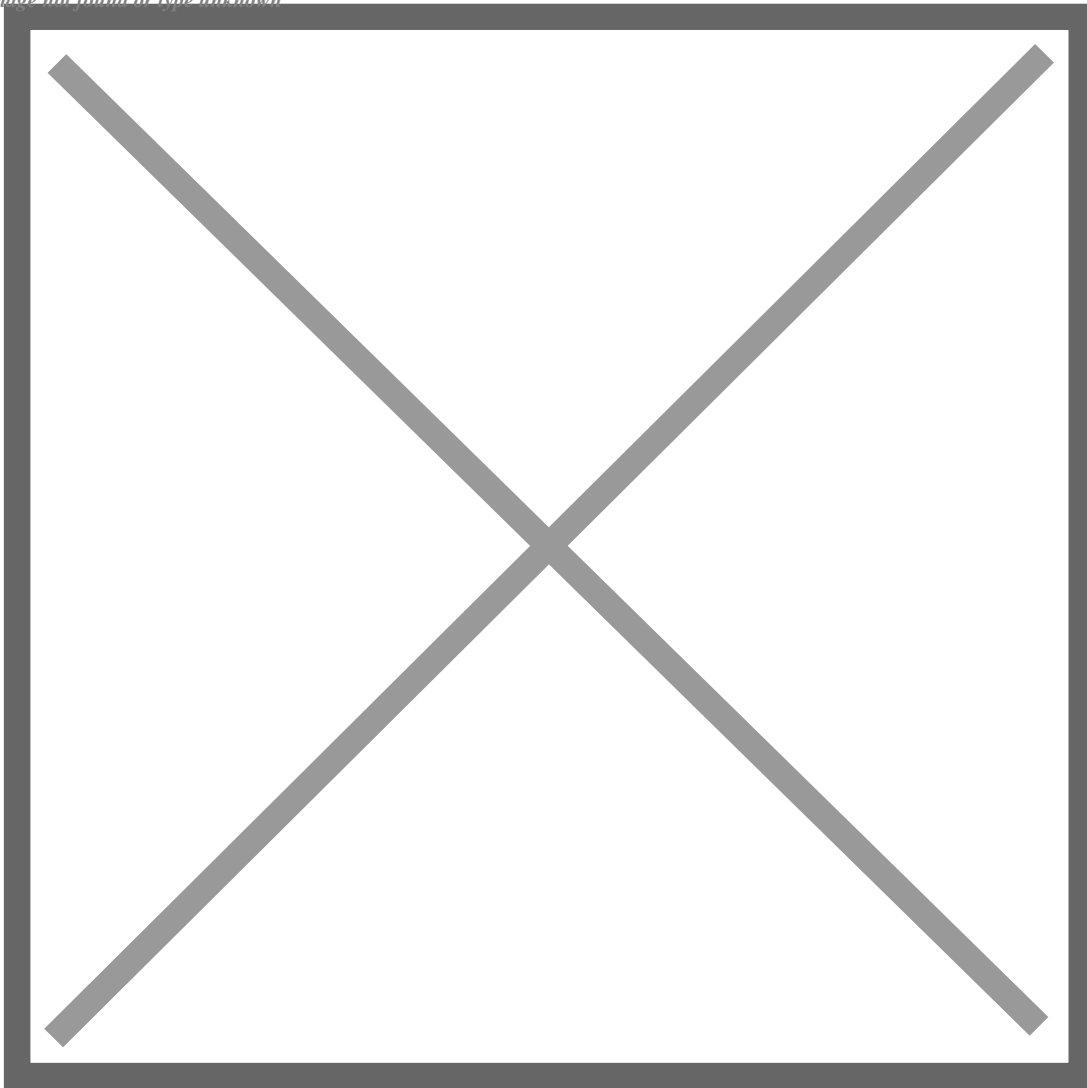


Qatar says truce not imminent in Gaza despite Ramadan

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Qatar's Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari

Doha, March 12 (RHC)-- Qatar has ruled out suggestions of an imminent ceasefire in Gaza where the Israeli regime continues killing people despite the start of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

Qatar's foreign ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari said on Tuesday that there was no prospect of an imminent truce for Gaza despite extensive mediation efforts in recent weeks. "We are not near a deal, meaning that we are not seeing both sides converging on language that can resolve the current disagreement over the implementation of a deal," said al-Ansari.

He said, however, that indirect negotiations involving Qatari, Egyptian and U.S. mediators were continuing to work out a ceasefire deal "hopefully within the confines of Ramadan."

Some 2.3 million people in Gaza started Ramadan on Monday as Israel continued with a merciless offensive that has killed more than 31,000 people since it started in early October after Hamas led an unprecedented operation against Israeli settlers and military forces.

International organizations had aimed for a ceasefire that could allow the delivery of aid into Gaza and the freedom of Palestinian prisoners in return for release of captives taken by Hamas during its October 7th blitz. That comes as sources close to the negotiations say that Israel's refusal to accept key conditions set by Hamas is the main obstacle in the way to reach a ceasefire agreement for Gaza.

Hamas authorities have said they would not agree to anything short of a permanent ceasefire while calling for a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the unconditional return of displaced people to their homes.

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