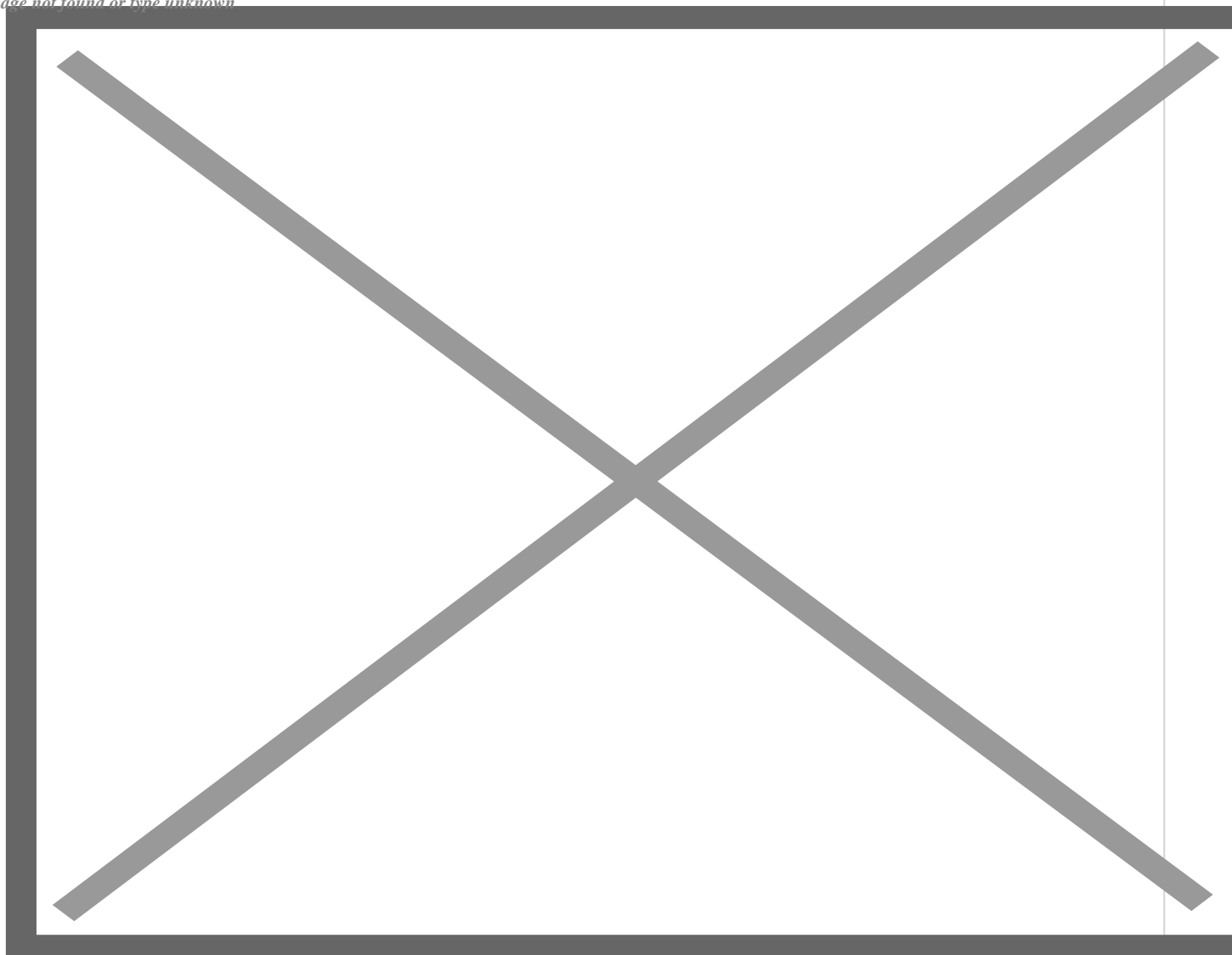


Israel intensifies barbaric strikes on Gaza, openly defying UN court ruling

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Rafah, May 24 (RHC)-- Israel has intensified its deadly strikes on the besieged Gaza Strip, as the UN's top court ruled to halt the genocidal war on the besieged strip. Palestinian sources said Friday Israel intensified aerial and artillery strikes on Rafah and moved deeper into the southern city.

The Israeli military confirmed in a statement that the regime's "troops are continuing operations" in the southern city of Rafah. Fierce clashes with Palestinian resistance fighters were also reported in the southern part of the city.

Reuters said Israeli tanks "advanced in Rafah's southeast, edged towards the city's western district of Yibna and continued to operate in three eastern suburbs."

"The occupation (Israeli forces) is trying to move further to the west, they are on the edge of Yibna, which is densely populated. They didn't invade it yet," one resident, who asked not to be named, told Reuters via a chat app.

"We hear explosions and we see black smoke coming up from the areas where the army has invaded. It was another very difficult night," he added.

Overnight air and naval strikes were also reported in Gaza City, which left several casualties. Fighting also flared again in the northern areas of Gaza where Israel previously claimed to have "dismantled" the command structure of Hamas resistance movement.

"We hear nothing but the sound of explosions and gunfire," Mahmud al-Sharif, 31, in the Jabalia refugee camp told AFP.

A local source on Friday reported helicopters firing at the camp and renewed artillery shelling in the area.

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