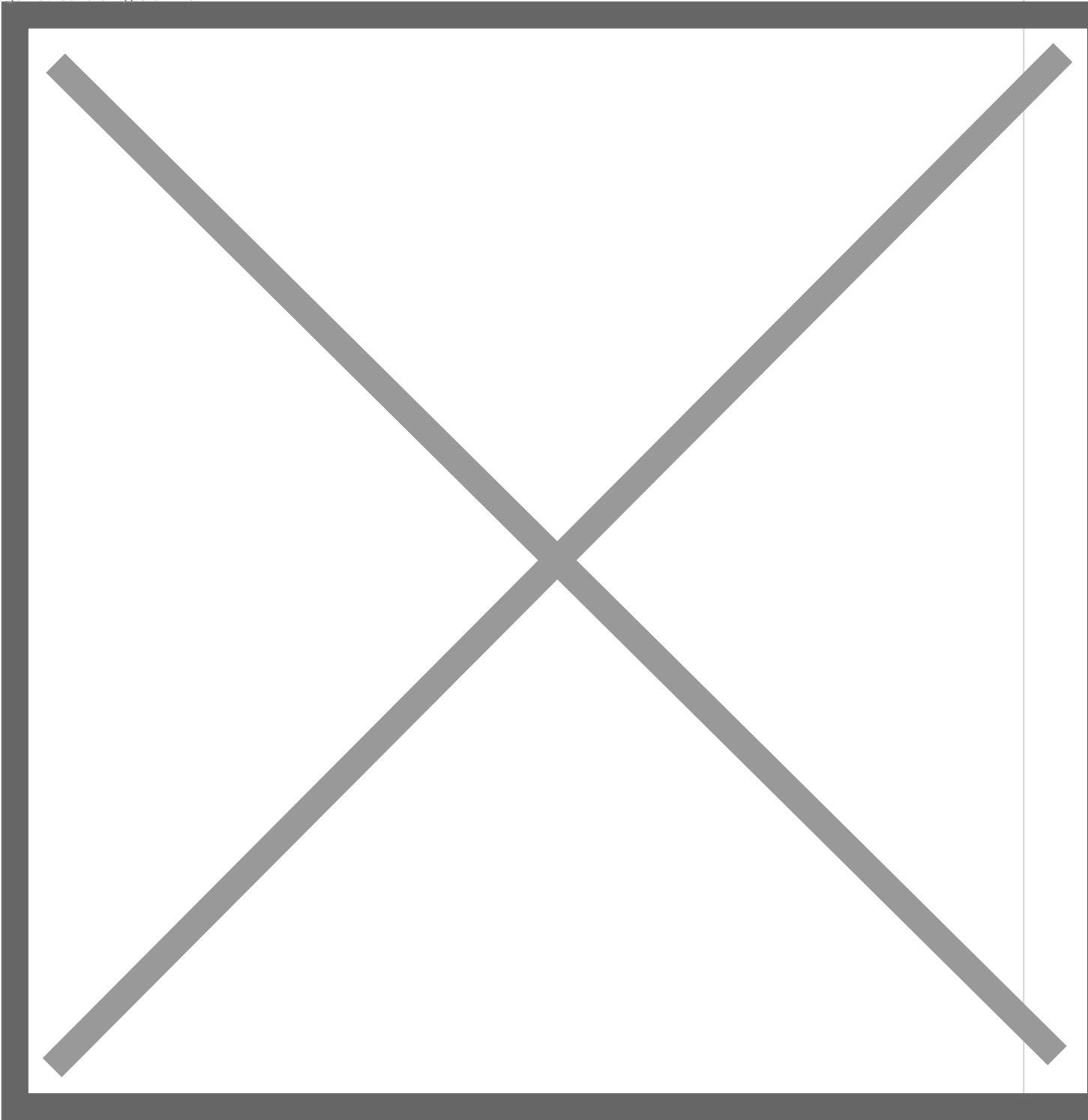


*Vessels supporting U.S.-built
Gaza aid pier wash away in heavy
seas*

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CENTCOM said that four vessels had broken free from their moorings, but that pier was still functional.

Washington, May 26 (RHC)-- Waves have swept away vessels supporting the United States-built pier installed to transfer aid to Gaza, the US Central Command (CENTCOM) has said.

In a statement on Saturday, CENTCOM noted that during the transportation of humanitarian aid, the US floating dock was disconnected from the small boat tugging it and the vessels broke free from their moorings with two of them now anchored on the beach near the pier.

Part of the dock later drifted towards Israel's Ashdod shore, while the third and fourth vessels have beached on the coast of Israel near Ashkelon, CENTCOM added. No injuries have been reported so far and efforts to recover the vessels are under way with assistance from the Israeli and U.S. navies.

Reporting from Washington DC, Al Jazeera's Heidi Zhou-Castro said that the Pentagon has stressed that the pier still remained fully functional. "They [the Department of Defense] emphasised that throughout this operation, no US personnel will enter Gaza," she added.

The construction of the \$320 million floating pier was completed in mid-May to provide aid to the Gaza Strip. The pier has been strongly criticized as a complicated and costly alternative that tries to deflect attention from demanding a much simpler solution – for Israel to fully open all land crossings to Gaza and to secure aid trucks going in.

But in March, U.S. President Joe Biden said in his State of the Union address that the pier would "receive large shipments carrying food, water, medicine and temporary shelter", a move largely seen as an attempt to appease his Democratic Party's base as he runs for re-election in November.

Meanwhile, on Friday, Stephane Dujarric, spokesperson of UN chief Antonio Guterres, said that the World Food Program (WFP) has "taken possession of 97 trucks since the floating dock came into operation."

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/355656-vessels-supporting-us-built-gaza-aid-pier-wash-away-in-heavy-seas>



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