

Blinken says Israeli military has so far achieved real success, but cannot win Gaza war without so-called Day-After Plan

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U.S. secretary of state says the Israeli military has achieved “real success”

Chisinau, May 30 (RHC)-- The United States has once again issued a warning to Israel over its lack of a post-war strategy for Gaza, leaving open questions about how the territory will be governed and occupied.

Speaking at a news conference in the Moldovan capital Chisinau on Wednesday, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said it was “imperative” for Israel to have a plan to ensure the defeat of Hamas and restore security and governance in Gaza.

“In the absence of a plan for the day after, there won’t be a day after,” Blinken told reporters. He added that the Israeli military has achieved “real success” in its effort to destroy Hamas’s military capacity, but he warned that Israel should not be directly responsible for the future of Gaza.

“If it is, it will simply have an enduring insurgency on its hands for as far as we can see into the future,” Blinken said. In the absence of a post-war plan, Blinken added: “Hamas will be left in charge, which is unacceptable. Or if not, we’ll have chaos, lawlessness and a vacuum that eventually will be filled again by Hamas or maybe something — if it’s possible to imagine — even worse.”

US officials have been publicly pressing Israel for a so-called “day-after plan.” But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly rejected the notion of leaving Gaza in the hands of Palestinians, stressing that Israel will maintain security control over the occupied Palestinian territories, including the West Bank and Gaza.

While the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden has placed significant emphasis on what will happen to Gaza after the war, it remains unclear when or how the violence will end.

On Wednesday, Israel’s National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi said the war will not conclude before the end of the year. “The fighting in Gaza will continue for at least another seven months,” he told Israel’s public radio, according to the Jerusalem Post newspaper.

The war began on October 7, 2023, and after nearly eight months of fighting, Hamas remains active throughout Gaza. Israel is in the process of invading Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, which it describes as the last Hamas stronghold in the territory.

The international community, however, has warned Israel against a military offensive in Rafah, where an estimated 1.5 million civilians previously fled to avoid bombing elsewhere in the enclave.

This month’s fighting has nevertheless displaced more than one million people from the city, according to United Nations estimates. Despite portraying Rafah as the final front, Israeli forces have also been engaging in fierce battles with Palestinian fighters in Jabalia and Gaza City in northern Gaza, where the Israeli army claimed in January that it had dismantled Hamas’s military infrastructure.

On Tuesday, Israeli officials said three of its soldiers were killed in fighting Rafah, and Hamas claimed credit for an attack on an Israeli infantry unit in the city that it said killed and injured 15 troops with explosives.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces have been levelling entire neighbourhoods in northern and southern Gaza in what critics say is a systemic push to make the territory uninhabitable. Israel has also put most hospitals in Gaza out of commission and destroyed dozens of schools and universities in the enclave.

Moreover, the U.S. ally is imposing a strict blockade on Gaza, bringing it to the verge of famine. Rights experts have accused Israel of using hunger as a weapon of war.

On Sunday, an Israeli attack against a camp for displaced people in Rafah killed 50 people, including children, many who were burned alive. A similar Israeli bombing in southern Gaza claimed the lives of at least 21 Palestinians on Tuesday.

Blinken said on Wednesday that the images of carnage from Sunday's attack hurt on a "basic human level."

"We have been very clear with Israel [that] the imperative in this instance, as in other instances, [is] to immediately investigate and determine exactly what happened and why it happened — and if accountability is necessary, to make sure that there is accountability," the U.S. top diplomat said.

Blinken's U.S. Department of State has approved the transfer of billions of dollars in weapons to Israel during the war, which has killed more than 36,000 Palestinians. So much for hurting a "basic human level."

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