

Egypt warns of military response after Israel's seizure of sensitive buffer zone on its border



Israeli armored vehicles operate near the fence separating the occupied territories from the Gaza

Strip on May 30, 2024. (Photo by AFP)

Cairo, May 31 (RHC)-- Egypt has warned it's ready to respond militarily after Israeli troops seized a sensitive corridor of land along its border with the Gaza Strip. According to the Wall Street Journal, ties between Tel Aviv and Cairo are now fraying, with Egypt having told Israel it will not hesitate to respond militarily if it feels its security has been threatened.

It came after the Israeli military said the regime's forces had taken "operational" control over the 14 km-long corridor along Gaza's border with Egypt. "The Philadelphi Corridor served as an oxygen line for Hamas, which it regularly used to smuggle weapons into the area of the Gaza Strip," Daniel Hagari, Israel's chief military spokesperson, claimed, using the Israeli military's code name for the 14 buffer zone.

An Israeli military official has clarified that there were Israeli "boots on the ground" along parts of the corridor. Israel has claimed there are at least 20 tunnels in the Philadelphi corridor, but Egypt has denied the existence of the tunnel network linking Egypt's Sinai and the Gaza Strip.

"Israel is using these allegations to justify continuing the operation on the Palestinian city of Rafah and prolonging the war for political purposes," a high-level Egyptian source said, according to state-linked Al-Qahera News.

Earlier this year, Egypt said that an Israeli military presence there would violate the 1979 peace treaty between the two regimes.

The seizure of the corridor came as part of the Israeli onslaught on Gaza's southern city of Rafah, where more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million population had sought shelter from Israeli strikes elsewhere in the besieged Palestinian territory before the ground invasion of the city.

The invasion continues unabated despite an order from the UN's top court for Israel to "immediately halt" its military aggression against the southern city. The assault has forced more than one million Palestinians to "flee" the city, according to the United Nations.

In early May, Israel captured the Gaza side of the vital Rafah border crossing, a lifeline to the outside world for Palestinians in Gaza, and it has been closed since then.

Just days ago, an Egyptian soldier was killed in an exchange of fire with the Israeli forces near the crossing. Both sides said they were investigating the incident, which is believed to have been a revenge attack for the massacres committed in Gaza.

Israel launched the war on Gaza on October 7 after the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas mounted the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying entity in response to the Israeli regime's decades-long campaign of bloodletting and devastation against Palestinians.

Tel Aviv has also blocked water, food, and electricity to Gaza, plunging the coastal strip into a humanitarian crisis.

Since the start of the offensive, the Tel Aviv regime has killed at least 36,224 Palestinians and injured 81,777 more.

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