

Hamas affirms Antony Blinken part of problem in Gaza ceasefire talks

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Beirut, June 12 (RHC)-- The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has slammed remarks by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken blaming the movement for the Gaza ceasefire stalemate, saying the remarks show he's part of the problem and not the solution to the conflict.

Osama Hamdan, the senior Hamas representative in Lebanon, said that the Israeli occupation is the one hindering the ceasefire in Gaza. "We told the mediators that the side rejecting the proposals is the Israeli side," he said in an interview with the Al-Araby television on Wednesday. "The American administration is complicit with Israel in evading any commitment to a permanent ceasefire proposal," he said.

Blinken had earlier on Wednesday criticized Hamas's response to the ceasefire plan outlined by U.S. President Joe Biden and said some of the group's demands are not workable. "We believe that some of the requested changes are workable and some are not," Blinken told reporters in Doha.

The top American diplomat said they would continue to work to seal a ceasefire agreement, but that the onus was on Hamas. The plan Biden laid out on May 31st calls for an Israeli withdrawal from "major population centers" and a ceasefire for six weeks, which could then be extended if negotiators need more time to seek a permanent deal.

Hamas has reportedly proposed amendments including a clear ceasefire timeline and the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza, according to sources.

In his remarks, Blinken also said that they'll put forward proposals for the administration of Gaza following the ongoing war in the coming weeks. Blinken said the proposals would cover how to handle Gaza governance, security, and reconstruction.

Hamdan rejected Blinken's remarks on planning for the governance of post-war Gaza, saying that the "day after the war will be a Palestinian day in which we will decide our reality and our future."

The Hamas official said they demand guarantees from the mediators to prevent the Israeli occupation from evading its responsibilities. "The Israeli proposal seeks a temporary ceasefire to catch its breath before resuming the war," he said, referring to the Biden plan, which the US says has the regime's support.

Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, speaking alongside Blinken in a joint presser, acknowledged that one key divide between the Israeli regime and Hamas was on whether a ceasefire would be temporary or permanent.

Al-Thani said the emirate would keep working with Egypt and the United States to "bridge the gap to find a way to end the war as soon as possible."

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