

Hamas dismisses fake news of imminent breakthrough in Gaza ceasefire talks



Palestinians make their way over the rubble of past destroyed buildings in the Shujaiya neighbourhood, east of Gaza City, on 11 July, 2024. (Photo by AFP)

Cairo, July 12 (RHC)-- The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has dismissed U.S. media reports that a breakthrough is imminent in negotiations with Israel over a ceasefire in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Sources in Hamas denied reports on Thursday that claimed a framework for the ceasefire had been agreed upon by the parties. They said there was "nothing new" to report and there was no impending so-called "breakthrough" in negotiations.

Several obstacles remained and Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu was obstructing the process as mediators again pushed for a deal, the sources added.

On Wednesday, the Washington Post reported, citing an unnamed U.S. official, that the framework for the ceasefire had been "agreed" upon and that the parties were "negotiating details of how it will be implemented."

However, the sources from Hamas said that "contrary to what David Ignatius [the Washington Post columnist] wrote, [there is] no progress in negotiations." "Parts of what was mentioned in David Ignatius's article were discussed and we did not reach an agreement on, some weren't discussed at all, and others mentioned in the piece are not even up for negotiations or discussions with the Israelis," one of the sources was quoted as saying by the Middle East Eye website.

Israel and Hamas have been engaged in indirect talks since January to reach a deal that ends the war on Gaza and swaps Israeli captives with Palestinian prisoners. The two sides have been back and forth over a three-phased proposed outline for the agreement presented by mediators.

The process involves a six-week pause in fighting, in which Hamas will release some Israeli captives it has held since October 7.

In exchange, Israel is expected to release several Palestinian prisoners, withdraw its troops from certain regions of the Gaza Strip and allow Palestinians to travel from the south of the territory to the north.

During the second phase, there would be a direct announcement of a permanent cessation of Israeli military operations before the remaining Israeli captives are exchanged for more Palestinian prisoners.

Hamas has accepted a UN Security Council resolution passed last month which said: "If the negotiations take longer than six weeks for phase one, the ceasefire will continue as long as negotiations continue."

The public masses in the US, Israel's closest ally and biggest arms supplier, have become sharply critical of the huge death toll in Gaza and the destruction wrought by the nine-month Israeli offensive.

Despite attempts to end the conflict, which has displaced 90 percent of Palestinians more than once, Israeli forces have continued to attack Gaza and issued new forced displacement orders for Palestinians

The orders, seen by Palestinians as an attempt to ethnically cleanse northern Gaza, come amid intensifying Israeli aerial and ground attacks in the besieged Palestinian territory.

Several Palestinians in Gaza City shrugged off the latest displacement orders, saying they would rather die in their destroyed homes than flee.

"We will remain steadfast in our homes. We will stay in them," Fatima Shaheen, in her 70s, was quoted as saying. "We die here or we triumph."

Israel's war on Gaza, now nearing its tenth month, has destroyed large swaths of the besieged territory. More than 38,300 people have been killed, the great majority of them women and children. Thousands more are missing or presumed to be dead under the rubble.

Francesca Albanese, the United Nations special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, recently called for the enforcement of a ceasefire in Gaza where people are trapped in a hell without comparison.

The war rages while ceasefire talks have been going on in Cairo and Doha. The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas warns that heavy Israeli strikes can torpedo the talks. Communicable diseases are rapidly spreading, and infant mortality has skyrocketed.

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