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Gaza City, May 21 (RHC)-- Thousands of people in the Gaza Strip and across the occupied Palestinian territory poured into the streets to celebrate a ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian armed groups.

The ceasefire, which was welcomed internationally, was brokered by Egypt in the early hours of Friday after 11 days of relentless bombing of the besieged enclave and thousands of rockets launched into Israel by Hamas, the group ruling the Strip.

A statement from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said late on Thursday the security cabinet had "unanimously accepted the recommendations to accept an Egyptian initiative for an unconditional ... ceasefire."

Palestinian groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad then confirmed the ceasefire in a statement, saying it would come into force at 2am on Friday (23:00 GMT on Thursday). Israel's bombardment of Gaza killed at least 243 Palestinians, including 66 children, and brought widespread devastation to the already impoverished territory. On the Israeli side, 12 people, including two children, were killed.

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