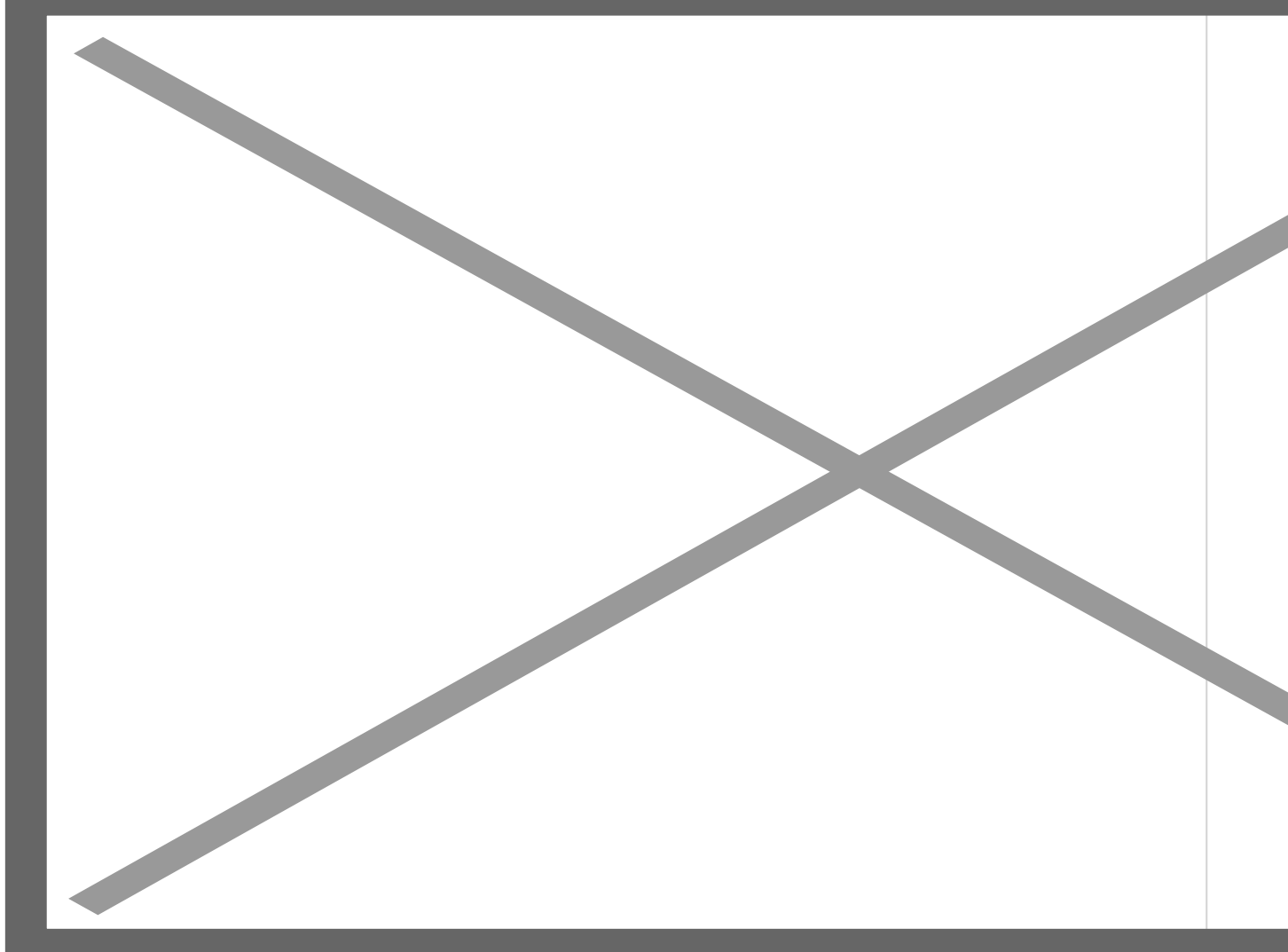


# *Reports say Israel downplays chances of ending Gaza war as Rafah invasion looms*

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The photo shows the aftermath of Israel's months-long aggression on the southern besieged Gaza Strip on May 4, 2024. (By Palestinian Wafa news agency)

Cairo, May 5 (RHC)-- The Israeli regime has reportedly ruled out the possibility of ending its nearly seven-month-long genocidal war on Gaza despite ongoing ceasefire talks in Egypt as the occupying entity persists in invading the densely-populated southern city of Rafah.

The development was reported by the Associated Press and confirmed by the Israeli media on Sunday as Egyptian-brokered negotiations are underway in the capital Cairo to reach a binding ceasefire agreement in war-ravaged Gaza.

While a delegation of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas was in Cairo and reports indicated “noticeable progress” in ceasefire talks for Gaza, Israel has so far declined to send a delegation.

The report quoted a senior Israeli official as saying that the occupying regime was “committed” to the Rafah invasion and would not end the months-long war as part of a proposed deal that also included the release of Israeli captives in exchange for Palestinian prisoners. “A senior Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing negotiations, played down the prospects for a full end to the war,” the report said.

“The official said Israel was committed to the Rafah invasion and that it will not agree in any circumstance to end the war as part of a deal to release hostages,” it added.

Israeli media also confirmed that Tel Aviv had rejected a truce agreement with Hamas and that the invasion of Rafah was imminent. “Israel will under no circumstances agree to end the war as part of an agreement to free our abductees,” said a report by the Times of Israel, referring to the Israeli captives held in Gaza.

The report also claimed that the regime’s forces “will enter Rafah and destroy the remaining Hamas battalions there — whether there is a temporary pause to free our captives or not.”

The proposed deal by the American and Egyptian mediators reportedly sets out a three-stage process that would result in an immediate and temporary ceasefire as well as a partial release of Israeli captives and would include the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from Gaza.

The initial stage would last for 40 days, with Hamas starting to free female Israeli captives in exchange for Palestinian prisoners held illegally in Israeli jails.

The Palestinian resistance movement announced on Saturday that it would not accept a truce deal that did not completely end the Israeli regime’s nearly seven-month-long genocidal war against the Gaza Strip.

Hamas said the Israeli regime was trying to secure a deal that would enable the release of those who were taken captive during Operation Al-Aqsa Storm “without linking it to ending the aggression on Gaza.” It added that the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was “personally hindering” efforts to reach a truce due to “personal interests.”

Israel waged its U.S.-backed brutal war on besieged Gaza on October 7 after Hamas-led resistance groups carried out a historic operation against the occupying entity in retaliation for its intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

Tel Aviv, however, has failed to achieve its objectives in Gaza despite killing more than 34,600 Palestinians, mostly women and children.

The U.S. is a partner in the Gaza carnage as it has offered untrammelled support for Israel during the devastating onslaught, and blocked UN resolutions calling for a humanitarian ceasefire in the Palestinian territory.

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