

Karem Abu Salem crossing closed to humanitarian aid convoys

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Aid trucks carrying medicine and humanitarian aid to Gaza can no longer enter through the Karem Abu Salem crossing [File: Abed Rahim Khatib/Anadolu]

Tel Aviv, May 5 (RHC)-- Israel has closed the main crossing point for humanitarian aid to enter into Gaza after a Palestinian armed group fired rockets at a military base in southern Israel near the site killing three soldiers. The Israeli military said on Sunday that it closed the Karem Abu Salem crossing, which Israel calls the Kerem Shalom crossing, to aid convoys after the attack.

The Qassam Brigades, Hamas's armed wing, said the attack targeted a group of Israeli forces in the area of the crossing and its surroundings. In a video released later, it said the rockets hit Israeli military "command headquarters and mobilisations" at the crossing, "leaving soldiers dead and wounded."

The Israeli army said it detected 10 projectiles that were launched from Gaza's southern city of Rafah towards the area. It added that it detected and struck the source of fire and other Hamas military infrastructure.

The Eshkol Regional Council, quoted by the Israeli media, said the rockets hit an open area near a military position. The Israeli president claimed that Hamas "attacked humanitarian aid because they don't care for humanity".

The crossing was one of the key passages for aid entering the besieged Gaza Strip. Israeli authorities announced its reopening in mid-December following mounting pressure from the United States amid a dire humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Despite its reopening, Israeli authorities have allowed only a trickle of assistance needed to address the needs inside the Palestinian territory.

Al Jazeera's Tareq Abu Azzoum, reporting from Rafah in southern Gaza, said the targeted military base has been used as a launching pad for Israeli attacks on targets in Rafah. He said the attack came as ceasefire negotiations between Hamas and Israel in the Egyptian capital Cairo seemed to have reached an impasse. The attack "could be a sign that negotiations are really hitting a deadlock," Abu Azzoum said.

Egyptian and Qatari negotiators were in Egypt following renewed efforts to reach an agreement to halt the fighting and secure the release of more than 100 captives held by Palestinian groups in Gaza since October.

But sticking points have remained. Hamas wants a permanent ceasefire and guarantees that Israel will not launch a ground invasion in Rafah. Israel has long insisted the attack will happen regardless of whether a ceasefire deal is reached.

At least 34,683 people have been killed, mostly women and children, and 78,018 wounded in the Israeli assault on Gaza since October, according to Palestinian authorities.

Israel launched its war on Gaza after Hamas led an attack on southern Israel on October 7, killing at least 1,139 people, mostly civilians, according to an Al Jazeera tally based on Israeli statistics.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/353962-karem-abu-salem-crossing-closed-to-humanitarian-aid-convoys>



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