

Netanyahu orders military to beef up troops around Gaza, threatens to end truce deal

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Israeli soldiers and tanks gather in a field in the south of the occupied territories. (Photo by

AFP)

Tel Aviv, February 12 (RHC)-- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has threatened to end the Gaza ceasefire if the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas does not release the captives by high noon on Saturday, ordering the military to beef up troops in and around the besieged territory.

Netanyahu made the threat in a video message on Tuesday, a day after his partner in crime, Donald Trump, made a similar threat. Hamas said it would postpone the next scheduled release of Israeli captives until further notice due to the Israeli regime's repeated violations of the ceasefire agreement.

An Israeli official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, also noted that Netanyahu has ordered the military to add more troops in and around the Gaza Strip.

Netanyahu also ordered officials "to prepare for every scenario" if Hamas doesn't release the captives by the Saturday deadline, the official added.

On Monday evening, Hamas said it would delay the release of more Israeli captives planned for Saturday "until further notice," as the Israeli regime continues to violate the terms of the agreement.

Abu Obeida, spokesman for the Qassam Brigades, Hamas' armed wing, reaffirmed the group's "commitment to the terms of the agreement as long as the occupation adheres to them."

In response to Hamas's announcement, Israeli war minister Israel Katz said he had instructed the military to "prepare at the highest level of alert for any possible scenario in Gaza."

U.S. President Donald Trump also issued an ultimatum late Monday, saying if all the Israeli captives held by Hamas in Gaza were not released by Saturday at noon, he would propose canceling the ceasefire and "let all hell break loose."

Ever since its onset, the Gaza ceasefire deal has witnessed numerous Israeli violations that have claimed the lives of hundreds more Palestinians. The agreement has mandated the phased release of Israeli captives in exchange for Palestinian prisoners.

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