

Hamas Deploys Forces to Gaza-Egypt Border



Gaza City, April 22 (RHC)-- Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has dispatched forces to the Gaza Strip's frontier with Egypt in a confidence-building measure aimed at boosting security in the border area. Hamas officials said that four battalions were deployed along the 13-kilometer border "at Egypt's request." The Gazan military said that the measure was aimed at strengthening "positive neighborly relations."

An Egyptian security official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, also said that the deployment was part of an agreement, under which Hamas stops building underground tunnels connecting the Israeli-besieged territory to Egypt, and Cairo, in return, reopens the Rafah border crossing.

Hamas-Egypt ties have been tense in recent years as Cairo accuses the Palestinian resistance group of backing the militants in Sinai Peninsula, an allegation strongly rejected by Hamas. The underground tunnels are used by residents of Gaza to transfer essential supplies, including food and fuel, into the Israeli-blockaded coastal enclave. Israeli and the Egyptian army forces have, however, launched a campaign to destroy the tunnels.



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