

As aid trickles into Gaza, Israel vows to eradicate Hamas

Malaysiakini

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The first two convoys carrying humanitarian aid into Gaza have been allowed through the Rafah crossing at the territory's border with Egypt, according to media reports, but aid agencies say much more will be needed.

The first convoy of 20 trucks reportedly made the crossing on Saturday, while another convoy of 14 trucks crossed last night. The supplies are a fraction of what has been waiting at the crossing for days while diplomats argued over what can be allowed to flow into Gaza and how.

Media reports say the trucks carried food, water, medicine and medical equipment, feminine hygiene products, and more. Crucially, however, Israel has forbidden fuel to be brought into Gaza over concerns Hamas may co-opt it for military purposes.

According to the New York Times, Israeli security personnel reportedly inspected the contents of the second convoy for arms and munitions, though the first convoy had undergone an expedited process that exempted it from inspection.

In a statement yesterday, the UN Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) welcomed the arrival of the aid convoy but said it is “far from enough”.

“To be meaningful, Gaza needs an uninterrupted and scaled-up humanitarian supply line,” said UNRWA commissioner-general Philippe Lazzarini.

He added that the agency will run out of fuel in three days, which is needed to run hospitals and bakeries and to provide clean water.

“I call on all parties and those with influence over them to immediately allow fuel supplies into the Gaza Strip and to ensure that fuel is strictly used to prevent a collapse of the humanitarian response,” he said.

Clashes intensify

Meanwhile, fighting continued in and around the Gaza Strip and far beyond.

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) today claimed to have struck 320 targets in the Gaza Strip over the past day, as well as several Hezbollah positions in Lebanon.

The New York Times noted that clashes along Israel’s northern border with Lebanon are intensifying and Israel has ordered the evacuation of more villages along the border.

Malaysia maintains a battalion of peacekeepers in Southern Lebanon as part of a UN mission to monitor a ceasefire deal between Lebanon and Israel.

Bernama quoted Malaysian Armed Forces chief Mohammad Ab Rahman saying that its members are safe and performing their assignments as usual.

Meanwhile, BBC reports that Israel has carried out an airstrike against a mosque in Jenin in the northern occupied West Bank on Sunday, claiming that Hamas was using it as a “terrorist compound”.

Major ground offensive

The Palestinian Authority - which governs the West Bank - was quoted as saying that two people died when the Al-Ansar mosque was struck. Israel claimed they were members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad who were plotting an “imminent terror attack”.

According to UNRWA’s daily report, as of 8pm on Saturday, Gaza’s Health Ministry reported 4,385 people killed in Gaza since the conflict escalated on Oct 7, including 1,756 children and 967 women.

The death toll in Israel is about 1,400 Israelis and foreign nationals, most of whom were killed during Hamas’ attack on Oct 7. It has also increased the tally of

people kidnapped during the attack to 222, as it gathers more intelligence on their situation.

As Israel builds up towards a major ground offensive into Gaza, its Defence Minister Yoav Gallant reportedly said in a video that the operation “may take a month, two, or three, but in the end, Hamas will no longer exist”.

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