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## Israeli attack on Rafah has US blessing – media

Washington has reportedly given Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu “several days” to achieve a symbolic victory in the Palestinian city



Israeli tanks enter the Palestinian side of the Rafah border crossing in Gaza, May 7, 2024 © AFP / Israel Defense Forces

Israel’s invasion of Rafah is being carried out “with full American coordination,” Qatari news site Al Araby reported on Tuesday. While Washington has publicly refused to back the operation, Al Araby’s sources say the White House gave Israel the green light so it could score a symbolic victory before signing a ceasefire deal.

After pounding the densely-populated city with airstrikes, Israeli tanks and troops entered the eastern districts of Rafah on Monday night. As of Tuesday morning, the Israeli military said that it had taken “operational control” of the Gaza side of the Rafah border crossing, which links the Palestinian enclave with Egypt.

The operation, which involves Israeli armor and special forces, “came after the Egyptian side was notified of it, and with full American coordination,” Al Araby reported, citing anonymous sources.

Hours before the IDF began its attack on Rafah, US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller told reporters that Washington does “not support Israel launching a full-scale military

*operation in Rafah.” With around 1.4 million displaced Palestinians sheltering there, Miller said that “a military operation in Rafah right now would dramatically increase the suffering of the Palestinian people.”*



Behind the scenes, however, American officials gave Israel a different message. *“The American administration has given [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu a green light for a limited, short-term operation, which may take several days, to achieve an image of victory that he can market to far-right ministers,”* an unnamed Western source in Cairo told Al Araby.

When the operation concludes, the source claimed, Netanyahu will approve a Qatari- and Egyptian-brokered ceasefire deal okayed by Hamas earlier on Monday,

Previous attempts to negotiate a ceasefire have been hamstrung by Hamas’ insistence that any truce be permanent and include a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, and Netanyahu’s refusal to accept these terms. Netanyahu’s right-wing coalition allies have argued that any agreement with Hamas amounts to a surrender, and that the Israeli leader must press ahead with an invasion of Rafah despite objections from the US, EU, and scores of other countries and international organizations.

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