

Fatah to join Hamas if Israel attacks Gaza

by UPI

JERUSALEM -- A Palestinian official says the ruling Fatah party would join forces with rival Hamas if Israel invades the Gaza Strip. "Fatah won't remain idle in the face of an Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip," the official said. "We will definitely fight together with Hamas against the Israeli army. It's our duty to defend our people against the occupiers." The official statement comes as Arab leaders lobbied for negotiations to end the conflict between Fatah and Hamas as part of the wider diplomatic effort in the wake of Tuesday's peace conference in the Annapolis, Md., The Jerusalem Post said Friday. The diplomatic efforts come as Hamas prepared for an Israeli invasion into the Gaza Strip in response to Qassam rocket attacks directed at the Israelis. Hamas controls Gaza, while the official Fatah government controls the West Bank. Senior Hamas officials said the Israeli invasion is intended to overshadow what Hamas sees as a failure in Annapolis. "The Annapolis conference has failed," said Hamas spokesman Ismail Radwan in the Post. "This conference was nothing but an attempt to impose the American and Israeli agenda on the Palestinians. The conference also gave a green light to Israel to launch a big military operation in the Gaza Strip."

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