

## **Ambassador: Ukraine cannot start evacuation from Gaza Strip as checkpoints closed**

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The Embassy of Ukraine in Israel has prepared everything necessary for the evacuation of 220 Ukrainians from the Gaza Strip, but it cannot begin because the checkpoints are not working.

"Unfortunately, the evacuation has not started as the only crossing point to Egypt, Rafah, remains closed, and we have no influence on this, nor do other embassies," Ambassador of Ukraine to the State of Israel Yevhen Korniychuk said during the United News telethon.

The diplomat noted that everything was ready from the Ukrainian side and the embassy staff in Egypt was ready to meet people at any time, check their documents, renew them if necessary. The lists were also transferred and agreed on with the Egyptian side.

"The problem is that the Egyptians say that Hamas does not allow [people go] from the Gaza Strip, and Hamas says that the Egyptians do not allow. It is not clear where the truth is," Korniychuk explained.

The Ambassador of Ukraine expressed hope that the importance of the evacuation of civilian foreigners will be conveyed to the Israeli side at the talks between US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

About 220 Ukrainians want to evacuate and their number is constantly increasing, Korniychuk said. Also, other embassies, in particular the embassy of Moldova, ask the Ukrainian side to help with the evacuation of their citizens.

"Our infrastructure is ready, but, unfortunately, it does not depend only on us. As soon as this crossing point or the crossing point towards Israel is unblocked, we will take people out," the diplomat concluded.

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