

Hamas: Talk about a near exchange deal premature



GAZA, — The Hamas Movement has described the media reports on a near prisoners' exchange deal between Israel and the Palestinian resistance factions capturing Gilad Shalit as 'premature'.

Hamas's spokesman Dr. Sami Abu Zuhri, in a statement to the PIC on Monday, said that his Movement was hopeful that an 'honorable deal' would be concluded soon, but added that it was 'premature' to speak about specific results or inching closer to a deal.

He described the reports as 'Israeli leaked news reports' to weaken the Palestinian prisoners and their families' morale in addition to trying to influence the indirect negotiations through the German mediator.

Hamas is engaged in indirect negotiations to overcome obstacles created by the 'Israeli enemy', the spokesman concluded.

For its part, Wa'ed society for prisoners and ex-prisoners affairs denied press reports that prisoners were moved to and gathered in three jails in preparation for the deal.

It said in a statement on Monday night that a message from the prisoners indicated that no such thing had happened, and that the conditions within the Israeli occupation jails were normal with no change at all.

The society asked the media to be accurate in publishing news reports out of keenness on the feelings of those prisoners and their families.

For his part, Fuad Al-Khafsh, the director of the Ahrar center for prisoners' studies and human rights, said that the

German led negotiations on the swap deal were accelerating.

He told the PIC in an interview on Monday that the official media blackout on the part of Israel and Hamas coupled with reports published by major papers pointed to a near completion of the swap deal.

Khafsh hailed the Palestinian resistance factions, capturing Shalit, for their remarkable ability to conceal his whereabouts for three years in addition to their insistence on their demands regarding his freedom.

He urged those factions to stick to their "just demands" and to insist on freeing those serving high sentences.