

Hamas cannot pay full salaries for second month in a row

Deputy Finance Minister Ismail Mahfouz says Hamas is having trouble getting money into blockaded Gaza.

- AP
- Published: 17:58 May 2, 2010

Gaza City: An official says Gaza's Hamas government can't pay its 32,000 employees in full for the second straight month.

Deputy Finance Minister Ismail Mahfouz denied on Sunday that the Islamic militants are caught in a cash crunch, but says Hamas is having trouble getting money into blockaded Gaza.

Hamas is believed to get aid from Iran and foreign donations. Smuggling tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border are the main conduit for cash.

Israel and Egypt have enforced a strict border blockade since Hamas seized Gaza by force in 2007. Egypt has clamped down recently on smuggling by building an underground steel wall and seizing contraband.

Mahfouz says all government employees will get \$400 for April, including those who earn up to \$1,000.

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