

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update October 13, 2025 (Tishrei 21, 5786)

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Israel-Hamas War 738 Days, The last 20 living hostages taken by Hamas on October 7 were released from Gaza on Monday under the cease-fire deal, bringing to an end 738 days of captivity that began with the deadliest attack in Israel's history. 28 hostages remain in Gaza. Their bodies are expected to be returned soon

- *Hamas says 20 living hostages ready for release; Gaza rescuers recover 117 bodies from rubble*
- *JD Vance: U.S. troops already in Middle East, 'not our intention' to have troops in Israel, Gaza*
 - *Report: Remains of Israeli spy Eli Cohen may soon be returned to Israel*
- *Netanyahu seeks to cancel his trial testimony Wednesday due to 'urgent visit by president of Cyprus'*

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They're Coming Home: Israel's Hostages Finally Freed

The Hostages are finally coming home. In this late-breaking VFI News update, Barry Siegel reports on the historic peace agreement between Israel and Hamas, brokered with the help of President Donald Trump. Trump is expected to visit Egypt and Israel to speak in the Knesset as part of the deal's fulfillment. Families across Israel are holding their breath as the long-awaited release of captives begins — an emotional moment of answered prayers and national relief. *Isaiah 61:1–3*: “***The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to console those who mourn in Zion; to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.*”**

Hostages expected to be released:

Alon Ohel, Guy Gilboa Dallal, Eviatar David, Rom Breslevsky, Yoseph Haim Ochana, Avinatan Or, Matan Engrest, Gali and Ziv Berman, Elkana Buchbut, Eitan Horn, Maxim Harkin, Nimrod Cohen, Segev Chalfon, Eitan Mor, Omri Meiran, Matan Tzangaer, Ariel Konio, David Konio, Bar Kuperstein, Tamir Nimrodi, and Bipin Joshi.

Murdered in captivity:

Assaf Hamami, Omer Nautra, Ran Go'eeli, Oz Daniel, Tal Haimi, Itai Chen, Daniel Peretz, Tamir Adar, Lior Roda'if, Ronen Engel, Inbar Heiman, Meni Godard, Muhamad Al Atrash, Oriel Baruch, Eitan Levi, Eliyahu Margalit, Dror Or.

Murdered while kidnapped by Hamas:

Sahar Baruch, Guy Iloz, Aryeh Zalmanovich, Amiram Cooper, and Yossi Sharabi. As Israel gives thanks for the release of captives and mourns those who will not return alive, this report connects faith, prophecy, and politics in a moment that may redefine the future of the Middle East. Is this the dawn of true peace, or just political fantasy?

Ceasefire Takes Effect After Israeli Gov't Votes To Approve Gaza Deal; After hours of cabinet debate on Thursday, October 9, 2025, Israel's government voted to approve a Gaza ceasefire-and-hostage framework. The decision set in motion an initial halt to fighting, a phased IDF repositioning inside Gaza, and a quiet sequence of exchanges intended to bring captives home and return remains. Implementation is designed to proceed without public ceremonies. The first transfers are expected within days once military benchmarks are met, with international organizations facilitating handovers and verification. In parallel, Israel will release designated prisoners under agreed conditions. Ministers expressed both relief and concern as the plan moved forward, with backers emphasizing the urgency of reuniting families and critics

warning of risks to deterrence. With approval secured, authorities now focus on sensitive logistics and strict security through each step. (*JPost/VFI News*)

Gaza Ceasefire Plan Marks ‘National Triumph,’ Says Netanyahu; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hailed the hostage-ceasefire agreement on Thursday, October 9, 2025, calling it a national and moral victory and vowing not to rest until every hostage returns and Israel’s security goals are fulfilled. He described the outcome as the result of sustained military pressure, determined leadership, and strong backing from the United States. Statements from Jerusalem highlighted phased IDF repositioning to enable transfers, restrictions on public ceremonies, and rigorous verification at each stage. Leaders across the spectrum voiced reactions ranging from gratitude and cautious optimism to concern over the plan’s long-term implications, with an emphasis on safeguarding Israel’s freedom of action. (*i365/VFI News*)

Dead Hostages’ Families Worry About The Condition In Which They Will Be Returned, If At All; As hostage family members gathered in Tel Aviv’s Hostages Square at 3:30 a.m. Thursday, October 9, 2025, to celebrate the announcement of a deal to imminently free their loved ones, relatives of those killed or believed to have died in captivity expressed different hopes and fears. “Our Matans are coming back,” one mother said to another, as families embraced in the square. “We’re putting the living first,” said one bereaved father, “and then, after that, when they return the corpses, we’ll mourn our personal losses.” Loved ones voiced the urgent need for dignified identification, care, and support when remains are returned, even as they stood in solidarity with families expecting reunions. Across the plaza, parents and siblings spoke of closure and of the long struggle to advocate for their loved ones’ return for proper burial. The moment brought relief and renewed pain, as celebrations unfolded alongside the sober reality that not all families would be reunited in the same way. (*TOI/VFI News*)

Palestinian Authority Plans For Major Role In Post-War Gaza Despite US Blueprint; Senior Palestinian Authority figures indicated on Thursday, October 9, 2025, that they intend to play a central role in Gaza once the ceasefire holds, even as Washington’s plan conditions any PA involvement on deep reforms. Officials privately expressed disappointment with provisions that would limit their authority until benchmarks are met, yet signaled readiness to assume responsibilities in coordination with mediators and regional partners. The debate touches directly on security handover, governance, and reconstruction timelines. Israeli officials remain skeptical of the PA’s capacity, citing persistent challenges in Gaza and in Judea and Samaria. Some argue that transitional technocratic arrangements may better fit the first phase outlined by mediators. As the framework advances, questions over border management, demilitarization, and oversight of aid will shape any future PA role. For now, the immediate test is safe implementation of the present deal and the environment it creates for longer-term decisions. (*JPost/VFI News*)

Hezbollah Marks One Year Since Longtime Terror Leader Nasrallah Was Killed By IDF; Lebanon’s Iran-backed terror group Hezbollah, on Saturday, September 27, 2025, will commemorate one year since its longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah was killed by Israel. Crowds are expected to gather in Hezbollah strongholds in the southern suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon’s south and east, with secretary-general Naim Qassem slated to speak. Tensions over the commemoration mounted throughout the week after Hezbollah projected portraits of Nasrallah and slain designated successor Hashem Safieddine on the famed Raouche sea rocks off Beirut’s coast. Despite orders by Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam and the Beirut governor, the display proceeded, angering Lebanese opponents of Hezbollah who said the cliffs should not be used for political displays. Nasrallah’s killing came on September 27, 2024, amid an escalation of IDF operations in Lebanon. Israel’s ensuing campaign prevented a formal burial for months, and followers later flocked to his grave to pray. (*TOI/VFI News*)

Houthis Claim To Hold 10 Crew Members From Cargo Ship They Sank In Red Sea; Yemen’s Iran-backed Houthis said on Monday, July 29, 2025, that they had “rescued” 10 seafarers from the Greek-operated cargo ship Eternity C, which they attacked and sank in the Red Sea earlier in the month. The Liberia-flagged vessel was the second ship to go down off Yemen in July after repeated attacks. Officials in Manila confirmed that nine of the rescued seafarers were Filipinos and said they were working to secure their release and safe return. The incidents marked a revival of attacks on shipping by the Houthis, who hit more than 100 vessels between November 2023 and December 2024 in what they described as solidarity with Palestinians during the Gaza war. In a video, the Houthis showed images of the 10 crew members and claimed the ship had been heading to Israel’s Eilat Port. The group also warned it would broaden attacks to target any ships belonging to companies doing business with Israeli ports, regardless of nationality. (TOI/VFI News)

Israel Adds Billions To Defense Spending Amid Ongoing Wars, Growing Challenges; Israel will raise defense spending by NIS 42 billion (\$12.5 billion) in 2025–2026, with officials citing ongoing wars and regional threats. The additional funding will enable urgent procurement to replenish munitions, strengthen air and missile defenses, and accelerate production of Arrow interceptors after months of heavy use against Iran-backed attacks. Leaders emphasized the need for “complete military, technological and operational superiority,” as the defense establishment prepares for multiple scenarios across the south, the north, and more distant arenas. Current annual defense spending stands at roughly NIS 110 billion, or about 9% of GDP, underscoring the scale of the challenge. The supplement aims to secure both immediate readiness and long-term qualitative edge, with investments in ground forces and advanced systems. Officials said the moves are designed to deter adversaries while sustaining operational tempo and safeguarding civilians. (TOI/VFI News)

Facing Drought, Israel To Direct Desalinated Water To Sea of Galilee, In World First; With the Sea of Galilee below the lower red line, Israel plans to channel desalinated water into the northern lake beginning in November, a first-of-its-kind operation aimed at protecting the ecosystem while ensuring national supply. Authorities said only 10% of the usual quantity will be drawn into the national water carrier this year as the country braces for another dry winter. Last winter brought roughly half the average rainfall, and the lake’s surface rose just 15 centimeters—far short of the typical 1.6 meters. Officials outlined a broader plan to meet demand through six operating desalination plants (a seventh due in 2027), expanded wastewater recycling for agriculture, and targeted use of aquifers and reservoirs. Water planners warned that long dry spells punctuated by intense downpours are increasingly characteristic of climate change, driving the need for resilient infrastructure from the Negev to the Golan and the Jordan Valley. The initiative reflects a national push to secure drinking water while stabilizing agricultural output amid prolonged drought. (TOI/VFI News)

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