

01202025 NEWS SPECIAL

IDF reservist killed, senior officer seriously hurt by roadside bomb in West Bank

Sgt. First Class (res.) Eviatar Ben Yehuda, 31, killed in Palestinian town of Tamun during patrol; blast injures his battalion commander, 3 other soldiers

By [Emanuel Fabian](#) Today, 11:19 am



Sgt. First Class (res.) Eviatar Ben Yehuda, killed in the West Bank on January 20, 2025. (Courtesy)

An Israeli reservist soldier was killed and four others were wounded, including a senior officer in serious condition, when they were hit by a roadside bomb in the West Bank overnight, the military announced on Monday morning.

The slain soldier was named by the Israel Defense Forces as Sgt. First Class (res.) Eviatar Ben Yehuda, 31, of the Ephraim Regional Brigade's 8211th Reserve Battalion, from the southern town of Nitzan.

According to an initial IDF probe, the soldiers were in a David light armored vehicle part of a convoy during a patrol in the town of Tamun, in the northern West Bank, when a large explosive device was detonated.

The explosion killed Ben Yehuda, who was the driver, and seriously wounded his battalion commander, a reservist officer with the rank of lieutenant colonel, who was sitting next to him.

Three other soldiers in the back of the vehicle were also hurt and were listed in light and moderate condition.

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In the past year, [two soldiers](#) and a [police officer](#) have been killed by roadside bombs in the West Bank.

Armed groups in the West Bank [frequently plant improvised explosive devices](#) under roads to attack Israeli forces carrying out arrest raids. The military regularly rips up roads with armored bulldozers as a precautionary measure before entering with lighter-armed vehicles.



A convoy of Israeli security forces' vehicles drives through Aqaba village in the West Bank during a raid on November 9, 2024. (Jaafar ASHTIYEH / AFP)

Violence in the West Bank has mounted since October 7, 2023, when Hamas assaulted southern Israel, sparking war in Gaza and unrest across the region. Since then, 46 people, including Israeli security personnel, have been killed in Palestinian terror attacks in Israel and the West Bank, including some carried out by Israeli citizens.

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Another seven members of the security forces were killed in clashes with terror operatives in the West Bank.

Much of the violence has been concentrated near Nablus, Jenin and other Palestinian cities in the northern West Bank.

According to the Palestinian Authority Health Ministry, more than 858 West Bank Palestinians have been killed since October 7, 2023. The IDF says the vast majority of them were gunmen killed in exchanges of fire, rioters who clashed with troops, or terrorists carrying out attacks.

During the same period, troops have arrested some 6,000 wanted Palestinians across the West Bank, including more than 2,350 affiliated with Hamas.

Additionally, settler violence against Palestinians has soared since the Hamas massacre, with security forces accused of turning a blind eye to the attacks.

As ceasefire begins, Netanyahu faces critical 6 weeks for both country and coalition

At start of hostage-ceasefire process, prime minister offers assertions that seem to contradict some terms of the agreement, and could pose a major roadblock to the next round of talks

By [Amy Spiro](#) Today, 9:41 pm



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrives to his office at the Knesset in Jerusalem on January 20, 2025. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

In 41 days, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will likely be faced with a choice – move ahead with the next stage of the ceasefire-hostage release deal, or face the collapse of his coalition and an election that could potentially end his time in office.

And the prime minister has a history of waiting until the last minute to make major decisions.

The deal inked in Qatar last week is ostensibly designed to end the grueling 15-month war between

Hamas and Israel in Gaza. Negotiations on the next stage are slated to start on day 16 of the truce.

Former US president Joe Biden said the second phase would bring “a permanent end to the war,” Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani said he hoped the deal would spell “the last page of the war,” and US President Donald Trump, whose inauguration for his second term was Monday, [called it](#) “a first step toward lasting peace in the Middle East.”

In his public comments and behind the scenes promises, Netanyahu has expressed a fairly different sentiment.

Netanyahu has vowed since the start of the war that fighting will not end until Hamas no longer rules the Strip. If there was any doubt that the terror group still exercises power, video from the streets of Gaza on Sunday – where armed and masked Hamas gunmen put on a [show of force](#) for war-weary Gazans – put that to rest.



Fighters from Hamas's Qassam Brigades control the crowd as Red Cross vehicles arrive to collect Israeli hostages to be released under a ceasefire deal, in Gaza City, January 19, 2025. (AP/Abed Hajjar)

He has also promised to bring every last hostage – the living and the dead – home to Israel, something most defense officials see as an impossible task without some sort of agreement.

In his first [public comments](#) on the deal, the prime minister termed it on Saturday night a “temporary ceasefire,” proclaiming that both Biden and Trump “have

given full backing to Israel’s right to return to the fighting” if the negotiations do not advance.

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“If we need to go back to the fighting,” said Netanyahu, “we will do so in new ways and with great force.”

Netanyahu [has denied](#) that the IDF will decrease the number of troops in the Philadelphi Corridor throughout the six-week ceasefire, though the text of the deal says Israel will “gradually reduce the forces in the corridor area during stage 1.”

The deal also states that the IDF must complete its withdrawal from the corridor by day 50, regardless of any future stages, but a “senior diplomatic official” – generally code for a representative of the Prime Minister’s Office – [proclaimed that](#) “if Hamas does not agree to Israeli demands to end the war, Israel will remain in the Philadelphi Corridor also on the 42nd day and also the 50th day,” effectively leaving the IDF there “until further notice.”

Day 42 – on which the remaining 14 hostages of the 33 to be released are slated to be freed – could prove a

particularly critical day for the deal. If the IDF shows no sign of leaving Philadelphia, Hamas could easily argue a violation of the agreement and halt the release of the hostages.



Israelis watch the release of three hostages from captivity in Gaza as part of a deal with the Hamas terror group, on a screen at Hostages Square in Tel Aviv, January 19, 2025. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

Netanyahu also proclaimed in his Saturday night statement that “terrorists who committed murder” will not be released to the West Bank or Jerusalem, but sent to Gaza or abroad. That is true of convicted Palestinian murderers, although a number of prisoners serving serious time for terror convictions who were not found guilty of murder will be released to the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Between a rock and hard place

With the exit of Itamar Ben Gvir and his Otzma Yehudit party, the coalition is down to a razor-thin 62-seat majority in the 120-member Knesset. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has sworn that he will quit the government if Israel does not return to fighting Hamas in Gaza, which would end the ceasefire and make the release of the remaining 64 hostages increasingly unlikely.

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Both Ben Gvir and Opposition Leader Yair Lapid have vowed to provide outside support to the Netanyahu government, with very different motivations. Lapid – in the short term – to allow a hostage deal to go through, and Ben Gvir to prevent toppling a right-wing government and causing an election.

Netanyahu is faced with a limited set of options. He can, of course, hope that during the next stages of talks, Hamas agrees to end its military and political rule of the Strip. That does appear to be a pipe dream, however. And Netanyahu has adamantly refused to entertain the idea of the Palestinian Authority assuming control, which some had seen as the most likely and stable alternative.

The prime minister could also torpedo the second stage of talks, and return to full-scale fighting in the Gaza Strip after the end of the ceasefire’s six-week first stage, endangering the remaining hostages and returning Israel to a state of war, with an unknown outcome.



Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich (left) and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attend a vote in the Knesset plenum, Jerusalem, December 31, 2024. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

But Netanyahu is likely to be facing extraordinary pressure from Trump. The new US president is a man who likes to be known as a dealmaker, has [boasted](#) of managing to cinch the deal “in less than three months, without being president,” and [reportedly](#) has his eyes on a Nobel Prize.

In an interview on Saturday, [Trump said](#) the deal “better hold.... This has to end.” And in Sunday’s inauguration speech, he proclaimed: “We will measure our

success not only by the battles we win but also by the wars that we end and perhaps most importantly the wars we never get into. My proudest legacy will be that of a peacemaker.”

Though he clashed repeatedly with the Biden administration, Netanyahu is less likely to want to piss off Trump – a man known for holding petty grudges and making politics as personal as possible, who also, as US president, could likely otherwise provide Netanyahu with many things on his wish list.

Netanyahu has a lot of decisions to make in the next six weeks – and he might want to consider picking up a copy of Trump’s “The Art of the Deal.” <https://www.timesofisrael.com/as-ceasefire-begins-netanyahu-faces-critical-6-weeks-for-both-country-and-coalition/>

Hamas forces parting ‘gift bags’ on freed hostages as mementos of hellish captivity

Paper bags with Hamas's armed wing logo said to contain pictures of the women from their time held in Gaza, official-looking 'release papers'

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 11:44 am



This image grab from a handout video released by the Hamas terror group shows Israeli hostages Emily Damari (L) and Romi Gonen, receiving a package bearing the logo of Hamas's armed wing, as they sit in a Hamas vehicle before being handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross in the Gaza Strip on January 19, 2025. (Screen capture: Hamas/AFP)

The three Israeli women freed Sunday after 471 days held hostage in Gaza were sent home by Hamas with “gift bags” and “Palestine” lanyards in a choreographed handover seemingly designed by the terror group for propaganda purposes.

Inside the bags given to Emily Damari, 28, Romi Gonen, 24, and Doron Steinbrecher, 31, were pictures of them in

captivity and “certificates,” according to reports in Hebrew-language media.

Damari, Gonen and Steinbrecher were reunited with their families on Sunday following a highly fraught release out of Hamas hands in Gaza City, the first among 33 hostages who are meant to be set free in the coming six weeks under a deal that includes a pause in fighting, the release of nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners and increased fuel and aid deliveries for Gaza.

In videos released by the Israel Defense Forces and Hamas itself, the three are seen being given paper bags decorated with the logo of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's armed wing.

Other photos and videos show Damari posing as a masked man holds a folder with papers in Hebrew and Arabic containing personal information about her, including her hometown, her Israeli ID number, and where she was “arrested,” presumably referring to Damari's abduction from her home in Kibbutz Kfar Aza on October 7, 2023. The paper is signed by “al-Qassam Brigades Command.”

Damari, Gonen and Steinbrecher are also seen in a propaganda video released by Hamas following the handoff holding up the gilded folder, which has the al-Qassam logo on the outside and text reading “Al-Aqsa Flood Deal, al-Qassam Brigades” along with the year.

???#كتائب القسام تنشر مشاهد من عملية تسليم الأسيرات الإسرائيليات الثلاث لليوم للصليب الأحمر في مدينة غزة.

pic.twitter.com/8T0LF4JWLu

— عربي بوست (@arabic_post) January 19, 2025

In the footage, a Red Cross official can be seen signing a similar-looking document in Arabic acknowledging receiving the hostages, and a masked Hamas man can be seen signing a “hand over certificate” in English with the names of Damari, Gonen and Steinbrecher.

In video released by the IDF, the three can be seen still holding the bags after the Red Cross transferred them to Israeli hands for initial checks before being whisked to hospitals in Israel.



This image grab from a handout video released by the Hamas terror group shows Israeli hostages Emily



This image grab from a handout video released by the Hamas terror group shows Israeli hostages Emily Damari (L), Romi Gonen, center, and Doron Steinbrecher wearing “Palestine” lanyards as they sit in a Hamas vehicle before being handed

Damari (L), Romi Gonen, center, and Doron Steinbrecher with bags and folders bearing the logo of Hamas's armed wing, as they sit in a Hamas vehicle before being handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross in the Gaza Strip on January 19, 2025. (Screen capture: Hamas/AFP)

over to the International Committee of the Red Cross in the Gaza Strip on January 19, 2025. (Screen capture: Hamas/AFP)

Hebrew media reports indicated that the bags also contained pictures of the hostages in captivity, but those could not be seen in any of the images.

The bags, lanyards and documents all appeared to be part of a media campaign by Hamas aimed at lending the terror group's abduction of civilians a veneer of legitimacy, in line with propaganda efforts during previous hostage releases.

The IDF releases footage showing the moment the Red Cross handed over hostages Romi Gonen, Emily Damari, and Doron Steinbrecher to special forces in the Gaza Strip.

pic.twitter.com/8Ht21aXRfM

— Emanuel (Mannie) Fabian (@manniefabian) [January 19, 2025](#)

In past cases, however, there have not been official-looking documents or signings, and it was unclear if they had any purpose other than attempting to validate their holding of the hostages.

Thousands of Gazans crowded the area where the handover was set to take place. Hamas gunmen appeared to briefly clear enough space for a table and chairs to be set up, indicating there had been plans for a more official-looking signing ceremony, but the forces appeared to be overwhelmed by the crowds, forcing a hectic and rushed handover.



People gather around a vehicle of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Saraya Square in western Gaza City for the handover of three Israeli hostages on January 19, 2025. (Omar Al-Qattaa/AFP)

There was no comment from Israeli authorities on the “gift” bags or other accessories foisted upon the freed hostages. In the past, Israel has decried propaganda efforts by Hamas and other Gazan terror groups as forms of psychological terror. During an initial truce and hostage release in late November 2023, when 105 civilians were released, Hamas used the opportunity to show off its continued control of Gaza City, putting on carefully choreographed handovers that

appeared designed to portray the hostages' captors as kind, caring jailers maintaining friendly relationships with their hostages.



Hamas terrorists accompany newly released Israeli hostages before handing them over to the Red Cross in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip on November 28, 2023. (Said Khatib / AFP)

In fact, freed hostages have described being subjected to sexual violence, torture, starvation, inhumane living conditions, psychological terror and other forms of torment while in captivity. Several hostages have been executed by their captors, according to the IDF.

In 2011, when soldier Gilad Shalit was exchanged for over 1,000 Palestinian prisoners, he was made to sit through an interview with a journalist before being handed over to Israel.

Though the interview was conducted by Egyptian state television, it was also filmed on site by a masked member of Hamas's armed wing.

Hamas is next slated to free hostages on Saturday, when four more women are set to be handed over.



Released hostages (L-R) Doron Steinbrecher, Emily Damari and Romi Gonen reunite with their mothers shortly after returning to Israel after 471 days in Hamas captivity in Gaza, January 19, 2025. (IDF)

All 33 hostages to be freed in the first phase of the deal are so-called humanitarian cases — women, children, men over 50, and ill or injured men. Most but not all of the 33 are believed to be alive.

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Of the 251 hostages abducted by Hamas during the October 7, 2023, invasion and massacre in southern Israel, 91 are now believed to remain in Gaza, including

the bodies of at least 34 confirmed dead by the IDF.



Hamas released 105 civilians during a weeklong truce in late November, and four hostages were released before that. Eight hostages have been rescued by troops alive, and the bodies of 40 hostages have also been recovered, including three mistakenly killed by the Israeli military as they tried to escape their captors.

A man walks past images of those held in Gaza at Hostage Square in Tel Aviv on January 19, 2025 (Miriam Alster/FLASH90)

Hamas is also holding two Israeli civilians who entered the Strip in 2014 and 2015, as well as the body of an IDF soldier who was killed in 2014. The body of another IDF soldier, also killed in 2014, was recovered on Sunday from

Gaza in a clandestine Israeli military operation. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-forces-parting-gift-bags-on-freed-hostages-as-mementos-of-hellish-captivity/>

Israel frees 90 Palestinian security prisoners, who are welcomed with Hamas flags

After 3 civilian hostages released from Gaza, Israel releases inmates, mostly female, to West Bank or East Jerusalem – first of up to 1,904 Palestinians to go free in phase one of deal

By [Tol Staff](#) and [Agencies](#) Today, 6:24 am



Palestinian youths raise national flags along with Hamas (green) and Hezbollah (yellow) banners as they sit atop a Red Cross bus carrying dozens of security prisoners set free by Israel in the early hours of January 20, 2025, in the West Bank town of Beitunia, on the outskirts of Ramallah. (Photo by Zain JAAFAR / AFP)

Israel released 90 Palestinian security prisoners early Monday morning, hours after Hamas released three civilian hostages Sunday on the first day of a ceasefire with the terror group in the Gaza Strip, the Israel Prison Service (IPS) said in a statement.

Most of the inmates, who included terror convicts but reportedly none convicted of murder, were taken to the

West Bank town of Beitunia, where a crowd of hundreds cheered and chanted and some climbed atop the lead bus and unfurled Hamas flags.

They were joined by others waving the flags of Fatah, Islamic Jihad and several other Palestinian factions, including terror groups, as well as the Palestinian flag and the flag of Lebanon's Hezbollah terror group.

The 90 Palestinian prisoners released on Monday included between 62 and 69 women, according to contradictory media reports. The IPS statement did not provide a breakdown.

According to the Haaretz daily, Israel freed 62 women — including one minor — and 28 men, including eight

teenagers. The Ynet news site reported that 69 women were set free, including one minor, alongside eight male minors and 13 adult men. Similarly, the Associated Press said before the release that it had seen a list of inmates set for release that included 69 women.

Ahead of the return of the Israeli hostages, the IPS bused the first round of Palestinian prisoners to Ofer Prison in the West Bank, where Israeli security forces and Red Cross representatives verified each prisoner's identity and performed medical checks on them before releasing them in coordination with security forces and the government.



Freed Palestinian security prisoners wave to the crowd from a Red Cross bus that drove them out of the Israeli Ofer military prison in the West Bank, as they arrive in Beitunia, on the outskirts of Ramallah, in the early hours of January 20, 2025. (Photo by JOHN WESSELS / AFP)

The prisoners include 78 West Bank residents, released at the Beitunia Checkpoint near Ofer Prison.

The remaining 12 East Jerusalem residents were transported to the city and released back to their homes from the Russian Compound detention center.

As the release was delayed by several hours, Ynet reported that Israeli security officials were blaming the Red Cross, accusing the organization's staff of deliberately

stalling the process with the purported motive of making Israel seem like it was not complying with the deal's terms. But after a short while, the release went ahead.



Palestinian men waving Hamas (green) and Hezbollah (yellow) flags sit on top of a Red Cross bus carrying released security prisoners from Ofer military prison in the West Bank are met by a crowd of family members and friends in Beitunia, outside Ramallah, in the early hours of January 20, 2025. (Photo by John Wessels / AFP)

The deal, signed Friday, is broken into three phases. During the first, 42-day phase, Hamas will release a total of 33 Israeli hostages — women, children, and elderly, wounded, or sick men — not all of whom are alive. Israel, in return, will release up to 1,904 Palestinian security prisoners and detainees, including more than 150 terrorists convicted of murder and several serving multiple life

sentences for deadly terror attacks.

The next release of hostages and prisoners is due Saturday. In just over two weeks, talks are to begin on the far more challenging second phase of the ceasefire agreement.



Members of the Red Cross at the entrance to the Ofer Prison, in the West Bank, outside of Jerusalem, from where Palestinian security prisoners were set to be released as part of a hostage deal between Israel and Hamas, January 19, 2025. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

The youngest prisoner freed Monday was Mahmoud Aliowat, 15, who was convicted of carrying out a shooting attack in the City of David area of Jerusalem, wounding two people, when he was 13.

The list also included, according to AP, Khalida Jarrar, 62, a leading member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a terror group that carried out attacks on Israelis decades ago, including plane hijackings.



Palestinian Parliament member Khalida Jarrar of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) attends a court session at the Israeli Ofer military base near the West Bank city of Ramallah on May 21, 2015. (AP Photo/Majdi Mohammed)

Jarrar was accused of masterminding the 2019 [bombing](#) that killed 17-year-old Rina Shnerb at a spring in the West Bank. As part of a plea deal, Jarrar was charged with “illegal association” and sentenced to two years in prison in 2021.

Jarrar, 62, was again arrested in late 2023 and since held under indefinitely renewable administrative detention — a controversial tool enabling detention without charge

that Israel uses against terror suspects in cases where disclosing the evidence against them in court could harm national security. The practice, primarily used against Palestinians, has been criticized by rights groups.



Rina Shnerb, 17, who was killed in a terror attack in the West Bank on August 23, 2019 (courtesy)

Dalal Khaseeb, 53, the sister of former Hamas second-in-command Saleh Arouri, was also on the list, which was provided by Hamas. Arouri was killed in an Israeli strike in a southern Beirut suburb in January 2024. Also listed for release, according to AP, was Abla Abdelrasoul, 68, the wife of detained PFLP leader Ahmad Saadat who ordered the assassination of Israeli tourism minister Rehavam Ze'evi in 2001 and has been serving a 30-year sentence.

Haaretz also noted the inclusion on the list of East Jerusalem residents Nawal Abed Fatiha, an Israeli citizen who in 2020 stabbed a 70-year-old Israeli man with a knife in Jerusalem, and Ibrahim Zamar, who in April 2023, when he was 15, [shot two people](#) at the entrance to the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood.

[@HGoldich](#) יורה מטווח אפס ובורח: תיעוד הפיגוע בירושלים

(צילום: חיים גולדברג, כיכר השבת) pic.twitter.com/L71fppNmR8

— כאן חדשות (@kann_news) April 18, 2023

A 2015 shooting attack in Jerusalem’s Sheik Jarrah neighborhood; Ibrahim Zamar, who carried out the attack, is to be released on January 19, 2025 in exchange for three Israeli women taken hostage by the Hamas terror group.

None of the inmates set free in the first batch have been convicted of murder, Haaretz reported. The adult men were being held for relatively minor offenses like incitement, identifying with terrorism and disorderly conduct, according to Ynet.

Almost all the hostages set for release by Hamas were abducted from Israel during the October 7, 2023, onslaught led by the Palestinian terror group, in which 1,200 people were killed, mostly civilians, and 251 taken hostage into the Strip.

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For each of the living women, children and elderly, 30 Palestinian prisoners will be released; for all nine sick hostages, 110 prisoners will be released; for each of the female IDF soldiers, 50 prisoners will be released; for hostages Avera Mengistu and Hisham al-Sayed, who have been held in Gaza for a decade, 30 prisoners will be released for each, in addition to 47 Palestinians released in the 2011 Shalit deal and since rearrested; and for the bodies of hostages in the first stage, Israel will release the more than 1,000 Gazan detainees.



The 33 hostages set to be returned in phase one of the Gaza ceasefire deal. Row 1 (L-R): Romi Gonen, Emily Damari, Arbel Yehud, Doron Steinbrecher, Ariel Bibas, Kfir Bibas, Shiri Bibas; Row 2: Liri Albag, Karina Ariev, Agam Berger, Danielle Gilboa, Naama Levy, Ohad Ben-Ami, Gadi Moshe Moses; Row 3: Keith Siegel, Ofer Calderon, Eli Sharabi, Itzik Elgarat, Shlomo Mansour, Ohad Yahalomi, Oded Lifshitz; Row 4: Tsahi Idan, Hisham al-Sayed, Yarden Bibas, Sagui Dekel-Chen, Yair Horn, Omer Wenkert, Sasha Trufanov; Row 5: Eliya Cohen, Or Levy, Avera Mengistu, Tal Shoham, Omer Shem-Tov (all photos courtesy)

Following the first phase of the deal, Israel and Hamas are to engage in continued negotiations over a permanent ceasefire, as the terror group releases the remaining hostages and Israel releases more Palestinian security prisoners.

It is believed that 91 of the 251 hostages abducted by Hamas on October 7 remain in Gaza, including the bodies of at least 34 confirmed dead by the IDF.

Hamas released 105 civilians during a weeklong truce in late November 2023, and four hostages were released before that. Eight hostages have been rescued by troops alive, and the bodies of 40 hostages have also been recovered, including three mistakenly killed by the Israeli military as they tried to escape their captors.

Hamas is also holding two Israeli civilians who entered the Strip in 2014 and 2015, as well as the body of an IDF soldier who was killed in 2014. The body of another IDF soldier killed in 2014, Oron Shaul, was recovered from Gaza in an Israeli military operation announced on Sunday. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-frees-90-palestinian-security-prisoners-who-are-welcomed-with-hamas-flags/>

Hamas backtracks, confirms second hostage exchange to proceed Saturday

Israel prepares for second hostage release phase as Hamas reverses plans to delay it to Sunday, confirming it will proceed Saturday; release expected to include 1 civilian and 3 female observer soldiers

Einav Halabi, Itamar Eichner | Updated: 14:52

Hamas announced Monday night that the second phase of the hostage exchange will take place as originally scheduled on Saturday, January 25, 2025.

The group had earlier said the release would happen on Sunday, in violation of the hostage-to-prisoner swap agreement, but later backtracked, reaffirming the original timeline.

First batch of hostages handed over to Red Cross in Gaza, Sunday (Photo: Hamas Military Wing/Handout via REUTERS)



Earlier Monday, Hamas spokesperson Nahed Fakhoury outlined the revised plan, saying, "The second part of the initial phase will begin implementation on Saturday, January 25, 2025. On that day, the resistance will present the names of Israeli captives to be released, and in return, Israel will provide a list of Palestinian prisoners to be freed. Based on these lists, the actual exchange will take place on Sunday, January 26, 2025."

However, following Israeli appeals to mediators, Hamas reversed course, officially confirming that the exchange will proceed on Saturday as originally planned, with the list of hostages to be submitted on Friday.

The second stage of the initial phase of the hostage deal will see four additional Israeli hostages released from Hamas captivity.

Israeli officials anticipate the release of one civilian and three female soldiers, believed to be observers abducted from the Nahal Oz base on October 7. The release is expected late Sunday afternoon, when Hamas will hand over the hostages to the Red Cross, which will transfer them to Israeli forces inside Gaza. From there, they will be transported into Israel, reunited with their families and flown to a hospital for medical care.

Meanwhile, Israel is preparing for negotiations on the second phase of the deal. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to establish working teams in the coming days. Talks are set to begin on February 4, the 16th day of the agreement, during which Israel will finalize its positions on the next steps.



First hostages released from Hamas captivity in new deal: Emily Damari, Doron Steinbrecher and Romi Gonen (Photo: IDF)

The international community is hopeful the cease-fire will be extended, potentially allowing for the release of more than the 33 hostages included in the first phase. In the November 2023 deal, the number of hostages freed exceeded initial expectations, with 105 captives released, including 81 Israelis and 24 foreign nationals. However,

Hamas has indicated it may not agree to an expanded release this time without a permanent cease-fire that ends the war in Gaza.

French and German officials have expressed optimism to families of the hostages, hoping the ongoing momentum of the cease-fire and hostage releases will result in an expanded list of freed captives.

The second phase of the hostage deal is set to be an early test for U.S. President Donald Trump's relationship with Israel. During the Security Cabinet's dramatic session approving the deal, [Netanyahu claimed to have assurances from Trump](#) that if negotiations on the second phase fail, the U.S. would back a return to military action. However, sources familiar with the details believe Netanyahu's promises to the political right were intended to secure support for the deal.

These sources suggest that Trump is likely to pressure Netanyahu to extend negotiations, possibly offering incentives such as additional hostage releases, progress on Iran or normalization with Saudi Arabia. While Trump has declared his intent to end wars rather than start them, he is expected to prioritize outcomes favorable to Israel. Observers believe Trump will exert significant pressure on Netanyahu to avoid a swift return to fighting and focus on diplomacy. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/hy9ijwnpyg>

'Terrified, underground,' First details of Emily, Doron and Romi's time in captivity



Even though the women did sometimes receive medical help or medications, they spent significant stretches of time without daylight, confined to underground space, N12 added.

By [MATHILDA HELLER](#) JANUARY 20, 2025 22:02

Israeli forces collect released Gaza hostages Emily Damari, Romi Gonen and Doron Steinbrecher on January 19, 2025 (photo credit: IDF SPOKESPERSON'S UNIT)

The [three women released from Hamas captivity](#) on Sunday shared their first testimonies from their captivity with N12 exclusively on Monday, cleared for publication by the military censor.

Doron Steinbrecher, Romi Gonen, and Emily Damari relayed

that they were initially held together but were later separated. They revealed that they were only informed of [their release](#) on Sunday morning: "We couldn't believe it when we were told we were about to go home."

According to their testimonies, they were at times housed in humanitarian shelters designated for displaced Gazans.

Even though the women did sometimes receive medical help or medications, they spent significant stretches of time without daylight, confined to underground space, N12 added.

One of the women underwent a medical procedure without anesthesia. She told N12 she thought she would die in Gaza.



(L-R) Emily Damari, Romi Gonen, and Doron Steinbrecher. (credit: Courtesy, Hostages Families Forum)

The women said that they spent 15 months cooking and supporting each other.

They also added that throughout their 471 days in Gaza, they were exposed to television and radio broadcasts and were able to follow their families' struggles for their release.

"We saw your fight; we heard our families battling for us," they recounted.

This meant they also learned of the October 7 massacre.

One of the women told N12, "We understood that our families survived, but we discovered we had lost many

friends."

Final moments in captivity

They also spoke of their terror in the final moments of captivity as they were transferred to the Red Cross. "We were terrified during the transition from the terrorists' hands to the Red Cross," they told N12, and mentioned being surrounded by the hostile Gazan crowd.

The testimonies given to N12 also revealed new details about [Emily Damari's](#) time in captivity. Emily spent significant amounts of time with Romi Gonen, being transferred together dozens of times between various hiding places, both above and below ground.

Romi, a trained medic, provided critical care to Emily's injuries, including two lost fingers from being shot during the October 7th massacre and a leg injury. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-838439>

IDF fires warning shots on Hamas forces in Gaza moving in its vicinity

Hamas terrorists began approaching IDF soldiers, testing the boundaries of the ceasefire.

By [YONAH JEREMY BOB](#), [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) JANUARY 20, 2025 15:45 **Updated:** JANUARY 20, 2025 16:45



Israeli military vehicles drive through the Philadelphi Corridor area in southern Gaza, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas in the Gaza Strip, September 13, 2024. (photo credit: REUTERS/AMIR COHEN)

[The IDF](#) fired warning shots on [Hamas](#) forces operating in the vicinity of its new defensive ceasefire lines during the late morning, the *Jerusalem Post* learned on Monday.

Although the IDF has not yet issued a public statement on the issue and generally all signs are that Hamas is seeking to maintain the conditions of the [ceasefire](#) which went into effect on Sunday at 11:15 a.m., not everything is quiet.

According to the IDF, when the Hamas forces started to approach closer to their position and the IDF fired warning shots,

the Gazans retreated and moved away from the Israeli forces without any counterfire or resistance.

Holding down the defenses

Further, the IDF said it remained committed to holding all defense lines set down by the ceasefire and would respond with force to any Gazans who approached those lines in any potentially threatening way.

During the ceasefire with Hezbollah which started on November 27, the IDF eliminated around 50 of the Lebanese terror group's forces when they tried to violate the ceasefire conditions in one way or another.



Palestinian Hamas terrorists parade as they prepare to hand over hostages kidnapped during the October 7, 2023, attack on Israel by Hamas, to the Red Cross as part of a ceasefire and a hostages-prisoners swap deal between Hamas and Israel, in Gaza City, January 19, 2025. (credit: Dawoud Abu Alkas/Reuters)

Some anticipated that Hamas would do the same and try to regularly test whether IDF forces at their defense lines would hold their ground, however, the IDF is due to start larger withdrawals already this coming Saturday whereas Hezbollah had to wait for a longer period.

As such, it is possible that Hamas will show more patience with testing the IDF, given that it has a shorter wait for the intermediate IDF withdrawals.

There are larger questions about whether the IDF will fully withdraw from Gaza during Phase 2 of the ceasefire deal, after 42 days have passed, or whether Israel and Hamas may return to war at that point.

מנכ"ל משרד הביטחון, אלוף (מיל') אייל זמיר, סייר היום לאורך גבול עזה בפרויקטי הבינוי והתשתית, שמבצע המשרד לתמיכה בפריסת צה"ל במרחב, לחיזוק ההגנה על היישובים והצירים ובמתווה לשחרור החטופים. <<
pic.twitter.com/sLUP25k0pb

— משרד הביטחון (@MoDIIsrael) January 20, 2025

On Monday, Defense Ministry Director-General Eyal Zamir toured the construction projects along the Gaza border, which the ministry is carrying out to support the IDF's deployment in the region. The aim is to strengthen the defense of border communities and highways.

Zamir also visited the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-838371>

Israeli extremists torch Palestinian homes, cars in outburst of violence in West Bank

IDF: Troops arrested 2, dispersed rioters; watchdog disputes latter claim; ultranationalists say will 'spoil' Palestinian prisoner release celebrations if authorities don't clamp down

By [Jeremy Sharon](#) and [Tol Staff](#) Today, 4:26 pm



Images from a video taken of fires in the Palestinian West Bank village of Sinjil, after Israeli extremists set vehicles and homes ablaze, January 19, 2025. (Screenshots, courtesy Sinjil Municipal Authority)

Israeli assailants set homes and vehicles ablaze in three West Bank Palestinian villages and pelted Palestinian cars with rocks on Sunday night, apparently in violent protest over the release of Palestinian prisoners within the framework of the hostage-ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas.

Israeli human rights groups and Palestinian activists reported attacks, apparently by extremist settlers, in the

town of Turmus Ayya, the villages of Sinjil and Ein Sinya, and along Route 60 close to the village of Luban e-Sharkiya, all in the central West Bank north of Ramallah.

The Israel Defense Forces said its forces swiftly entered the Palestinian villages and dispersed rioters, arresting two people in the process. But the Yesh Din organization which campaigns against the settlements said its field researchers reported that no crowd dispersal tactics were used against the assailants.

The incidents came as the IDF said it was bolstering troop numbers and ramping up defensive efforts in the West Bank to prepare for the expected release of nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners under the deal, amid fears that those freed could return to violence or spur others to do so.

Footage published by Yesh Din Sunday night showed vehicles on fire in Sinjil; buildings set ablaze in Ein

Sinya; and masked men, some of whom were wearing tzitzit – Jewish ritual fringes – hurling rocks at homes in Turmus Ayya.

In Sinjil, at least two homes and four vehicles were torched, including one carrying several gas tanks, causing a large explosion. Video from the scene showed at least a dozen young Palestinian men attempting to unload the gas tanks before they caught fire.

According to Palestinian media reports, an 86-year-old man was hospitalized following the attack.



A group of Israeli rioters approach the West Bank Palestinian town of Turmus Ayya and throw rocks at homes, January 19, 2025. (Screenshot, courtesy Yesh Din)

Additionally, rocks were thrown by extremist settlers at passing vehicles on Route 60, Yesh Din stated, while the official Palestinian news agency Wafa reported stoning attacks on cars in several other locations as well, including near Nablus. No injuries were reported in the attacks.

“This is what the message of the government of Israel and Defense Minister [Israel] Katz to ‘strengthen and encourage’ settlements looks like – settler violence against innocent

Palestinians without a response from the security forces,” Yesh Din said in a statement following the attacks.

The military said in response, however: “IDF and police forces rushed to the villages several minutes after receiving reports [of riots], used crowd dispersal methods, and broke up the riots and violence,” the IDF said.

“The forces are working to identify and arrest those involved,” the IDF added, noting that two suspects had been detained.

Yesh Din insisted although the IDF entered Sinjil and Ein Sinya, the forces did not use crowd dispersal methods against the settler rioters.

In Turmus Ayya, Yesh Din’s field researchers said that the army did succeed in preventing a massive infiltration of settlers in vehicles into the town, but that dozens of them nevertheless managed to enter on foot. In a separate attack by Israeli extremists against Turmus Ayya earlier this month, a 16-year old Palestinian boy was struck by a rock that smashed his skull.

Israeli ultranationalist organization “Fighting for Life,” which supports population transfer of Palestinians from the West Bank, sent out a statement following the settler attacks saying that celebrations and parades had been held in several West Bank towns and villages for the Palestinian prisoners – including convicted terrorists – who had been released from prison on Sunday under the agreement between Israel and Hamas.

The occupied West Bank witnessed celebrations in the late hours of Sunday as Israel released 90 Palestinian prisoners under the [#Gaza](#) ceasefire deal between [#Hamas](#) and [#Israel](#).

Earlier, Israeli occupation forces had raided the homes of some of the prisoners before their release... pic.twitter.com/Xt2m82Kt2

— Doha News (@dohanews) [January 20, 2025](#)

The organization said that the agreement had given “a glimmer of light” to terrorists, and that “this is the time for an offensive initiative in Judea and Samaria, to destroy their celebrations with an attack against the strongholds of the enemy in the villages and the cities, to eradicate terrorism, and expel them far from here.”

The group was seemingly calling on the security services and Israeli authorities to carry out such actions,

though it also insisted that the IDF had not sufficiently suppressed the celebrations of the returning Palestinian prisoners.

“But the residents of Judea and Samaria and the entire people of Israel will not let this lawlessness continue, and if needed will come to spoil the celebration of the enemy by themselves,” the organization warned.



A crowd gathers around a bus carrying released Palestinian security prisoners as it arrives in the West Bank city of Beitunia, early Monday, January 20, 2025. (AP Photo/Leo Correa)

Israeli authorities have been accused of turning a blind eye to claims of rampant settler violence, with many attributing the lack of response to the government's far-right flank, including outgoing police minister Itamar Ben Gvir, a lawyer known for defending settlers accused of violent attacks. There have been few arrests and even fewer convictions, according to observers.

On Friday, Defense Minister Israel Katz announced that all seven Jewish Israelis held on allegations of settler violence under administrative detention orders would be freed, tying it to the release of Palestinian terror convicts as part of the hostage-ceasefire deal signed in Qatar last week.

"It is better for the families of Jewish settlers to be happy than the families of released terrorists," he said in a statement.

Administrative detention sees individuals held without charge for up to six months at a time, under limited court review. The detentions can be renewed indefinitely while allowing military prosecutors to keep suspects from being able to see the evidence against them.

While the practice is primarily deployed against Palestinians, it has also been used against extremist Jewish Israelis, which has drawn increasing criticism of the ruling Likud party by its far-right coalition allies.

Katz's move followed reports that the government would take additional measures to combat terrorism in the West Bank as part of efforts to convince Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, head of the far-right Religious Zionism party, not to follow Ben Gvir out of the coalition in protest of the Gaza deal.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-extremists-torch-palestinian-homes-cars-in-outburst-of-violence-in-west-bank/>

WATCH: Inauguration Day: Donald Trump is officially America's 47th president

Trump to take the oath of office at 7:00 p.m. Israel time • Javier Milei and Giorgia Meloni among world leaders who attended inauguration

By REUTERS JANUARY 20, 2025 16:13 Updated: JANUARY 20, 2025 19:46



Donald Trump is sworn in as the 47th US President in the US Capitol Rotunda in Washington, DC, on January 20, 2025. (photo credit: SAUL LOEB/Pool via REUTERS)

Donald Trump pledged to rescue America from what he described as years of betrayal and decline in his inaugural address on Monday, prioritizing a crackdown on illegal immigration and portraying himself as a national savior chosen by God.

"First, I will declare a national emergency at our southern border," he said. "All illegal entry will be immediately halted and we will begin the process of returning millions and millions of criminal aliens back to the places from which they came."

The speech echoed many of the themes he sounded at his first inauguration in 2017 when he spoke darkly of the "American carnage" of crime and job loss that he said had ravaged the country.

Trump, 78, took the oath of office to "preserve, protect and defend" the US Constitution at 12:01 p.m. ET (1701 GMT) inside the US Capitol, administered by Chief Justice John Roberts. His vice president, JD Vance, was sworn in just before him.

Trump will be the first felon to occupy the White House after a New York jury found him guilty of falsifying business records to cover up hush money paid to a porn star.

Trump intends to sign a raft of executive actions in his first hours as president, incoming White House officials said on Monday, including 10 focused on border security and immigration, his top priority.

In addition to declaring an emergency, the president will send armed troops there and resume a policy forcing asylum seekers to wait in Mexico for their US court dates, officials told reporters.

He will also seek to end so-called birthright citizenship for US-born children whose parents lack legal status, a move some legal scholars have said would be unconstitutional.

The inauguration completes a triumphant comeback for a political disruptor who survived two impeachment trials, a felony conviction, two assassination attempts and an indictment for attempting to overturn his 2020 election loss.

"The journey to reclaim our republic has not been an easy one, that I can tell you," Trump said, before referring to the assassin's bullet that grazed his ear in July. "I was saved by God to make America great again."

Details of the ceremony

The ceremony was moved inside the Capitol due to the cold, four years after a mob of Trump supporters breached the building, a symbol of American democracy, in an unsuccessful effort to forestall Trump's loss to Democrat Joe Biden, 82.

Biden and outgoing Vice President Kamala Harris, who lost to Trump in November, were on hand inside the Capitol's Rotunda, along with former Presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who lost to Trump in 2016, arrived with her husband Bill, but Obama's wife, Michelle, chose not to attend.

Numerous tech executives who have sought to curry favor with the incoming administration - including the three richest men in the world, Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos and Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg - had prominent seats on stage, next to cabinet nominees and members of Trump's family.

Trump, the first US president since the 19th century to win a second term after losing the White House, has said he would pardon "on Day One" many of the more than 1,500 people charged in connection with the Jan. 6, 2021, attack. He skipped Biden's inauguration and has continued to claim falsely that the 2020 election he lost to Biden was rigged.

Biden, in one of his last official acts, pardoned several people whom Trump has targeted for retaliation, including former White House chief medical adviser Anthony Fauci, former Republican US Representative Liz Cheney and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley.

[Trump](#) will restore the federal death penalty, which Biden had suspended, and require that official US documents such as passports reflect citizens' gender as assigned at birth, incoming administration officials told reporters.

They said he will also sign an order ending diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in the federal government on Monday, which is also Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a national holiday in memory of America's most famous civil rights leader.

But Trump will not immediately impose new tariffs on Monday, instead directing federal agencies to evaluate trade relationships with Canada, China and Mexico, a Trump official said, an unexpected development that unleashed a broad slide in the US dollar and a rally in global stock markets on a day when US financial markets are closed.

Some of the executive orders are likely to face legal challenges.

Even as he prepared to retake office, Trump continued to expand his business ventures, raising billions in market value by launching a "meme coin" crypto token over the weekend that prompted ethical and regulatory questions.

Earlier Trump and incoming first lady Melania Trump arrived at the White House, where Biden and outgoing first lady Jill Biden greeted them with handshakes.

"Welcome home," Biden said.

Disruptive force

As he did in 2017, Trump enters office as a chaotic and disruptive force, vowing to remake the federal government and expressing deep skepticism about the US-led alliances that have shaped post-World War Two global politics.

The former president returns to Washington emboldened after winning the national popular vote over Harris by more than 2 million votes thanks to a groundswell of voter frustration over persistent inflation, though he still fell just short of a 50% majority.

In 2016, Trump won the Electoral College - and the presidency - despite receiving nearly 3 million fewer votes than Hillary Clinton.

Trump, who surpassed Biden as the oldest president ever to be sworn into office, will enjoy Republican majorities in both chambers of Congress that have been almost entirely purged of any intra-party dissenters. His advisers have outlined plans to replace nonpartisan bureaucrats with hand-picked loyalists.

Even before taking office, Trump established a rival power center in the weeks after his election victory, meeting world leaders and causing consternation by musing aloud about seizing the Panama Canal, taking control of NATO ally Denmark's territory of Greenland and imposing tariffs on the biggest US trading partners.

His influence has already been felt in the Israel-Hamas announcement last week of a ceasefire deal. Trump, whose envoy joined the negotiations in Qatar, had warned of "hell to pay" if Hamas did not release its hostages before the inauguration.

Unlike in 2017, when he filled many top jobs with institutionalists, Trump has prioritized fealty over experience in nominating a bevy of controversial cabinet picks, some of whom are outspoken critics of the agencies they have been tapped to lead.

The inauguration took place amid heavy security after a campaign highlighted by an increase in political violence that included two assassination attempts against Trump, including one in which a bullet grazed his ear.

The traditional parade down Pennsylvania Avenue past the White House will now take place indoors at the Capital One Arena, where Trump held his victory rally on Sunday. Trump will also attend three inaugural balls in the evening.

Some diehard Trump followers slept in the street in frigid conditions to make sure they were in line to get a seat at the arena.

A desk and chair sat on the stage, where Trump was expected to sign some of his first executive orders in front of his supporters before heading to the White House.

<https://www.jpost.com/american-politics/article-838375>

Anti-Israel Wikipedia editors face bans after spreading hate, misinformation

The users would be banned from editing any topics surrounding Israel, following an investigation by the the Wikipedia arbitration board.

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) JANUARY 20, 2025 07:52 **Updated:** JANUARY 20, 2025 14:54

Multiple [anti-Israel](#) Wikipedia editors are likely to be topic-banned after spreading misinformation and hate across the site, the [Anti-Defamation League \(ADL\)](#) announced on Friday.

The users have been under investigation by the [Wikipedia](#) arbitration board following 'disruptive behavior' surrounding their edits on the discussion of Israel and Palestine, according to the *Jewish Journal*.

Two Pro-Israel editors face being topic-banned as well, the *Jewish Journal* noted, adding that the bans have yet to be voted on, but will likely occur within the next few days.

The ADL said it welcomed this potential decision, as the multiple users also enacted a 'bad-faith' campaign against the organization, undermining their credibility by editing their page on Wikipedia and claiming they were 'generally unreliable' when it came to the Middle East topic.

"We're pleased that the Wikipedia arbitration board has taken disciplinary action against some editors who, in our view, have spread malicious, false, and biased information about Zionism and Israel across the platform," Jonathan Greenblatt, ADL CEO and National Director, said.

Greenblatt continued, "It's worth noting that several of the chief instigators of the campaign against ADL are among those now facing topic bans or outright bans for their behavior"

Imperative to 'undo the harm'

"In light of this, it is now imperative for Wikipedia to begin work immediately to undo the harm caused by these rogue but prolific editors who literally have wreaked havoc across the platform, causing untold harm to potentially hundreds of entries about Israel, the Oct. 7 massacre, Zionism and topics relating to antisemitism.

"As we have said before, Wikipedia needs to wake up to the reality that this is a systemic problem across the platform that needs immediate action. There is still a lot more that must be done to ensure that Wikipedia can live up to its policy around the encyclopedia holding a neutral point of view."

<https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-838298>

21% of American voters back Hamas over Israel — poll



Support for terror group highest among Democrats; 82% of all respondents back the ceasefire-hostage release agreement
By [Luke Tress](#) Today, 7:25 pm

A man in a Hamas headband at an anti-Israel protest in New York City, January 6, 2025. (Luke Tress/Times of Israel)

Twenty-one percent of US voters support the Hamas terrorist group over Israel, according to a Harvard/Harris [poll](#) conducted as the two sides agreed to a ceasefire.

One-quarter of US Democrats supported Hamas, according to the survey released over the weekend. For

Republicans, 19% backed the terror group, and for independent voters the number was 20%, the survey said.

Support for the terrorists was highest among 25- to 34-year-olds, at 32%. Among 18- to 24-year-olds, 21% backed Hamas; in the 35-44 age group, 29%; in the 45-54 age group, 23%; in the 55-64 age group, 17%; and among those over 65, 10%.

Eighty-two percent of respondents backed the ceasefire deal. Democrats were most in favor of the agreement, at 87%, followed by Republicans, 81%, and independents, 78%. Older voters were more supportive, with 64% of 18- to 24-year-olds in favor, versus 88% of those 65 and above.

Among all voters, 57% believed Hamas agreed to the hostage deal because of the incoming Trump administration, and 43% credited the Biden administration.

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Support for US President Joe Biden's handling of the war declined since the conflict started, with 44% in favor in October 2023, down to 33% this month.

The poll asked Americans about their opinions on 19 domestic and foreign entities. The three least popular were Hamas, Russia and the Palestinian Authority. Israel was ranked in the middle.



A pro-Israel counter-protester at an anti-Israel demonstration in Times Square, New York City, January 1, 2025. (Luke Tress/Times of Israel)

The Israel-Hamas conflict was the top personal issue for 2% of voters, and 2% said antisemitism was the most important issue facing the US.

Advertisement

Respondents favored the incoming Trump administration, at 53% approval rating, over Biden, whose approval rating was 39%. Support for the Republican party was 52%, compared to 41% for Democrats.

Support for Hamas has remained relatively steady throughout the war. In [October 2023](#), shortly after the

Hamas invasion of Israel that started the war, 16% of voters sided more with Hamas than Israel.

The monthly poll was carried out by Harvard University's Center for American Political Studies and The Harris Poll, a US survey company.

The survey was conducted on January 15-16 and questioned 2,650 registered voters. The margin of error was 1.9%. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/21-of-american-voters-back-hamas-over-israel-poll/>

Lavrov weighs in on Trump's return to White House

The new US administration's foreign policy course will define the global order, according to the Russian foreign minister

20 Jan, 2025 19:08



FILE PHOTO: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov © Sputnik / Sergey Guneev

The new US administration's policies will largely determine the world order, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Monday. Moscow is open to contact with Washington, according to the top diplomat.

Lavrov made the remarks during a meeting of the Russian National Security Council hosted by President Vladimir Putin.

The Russian FM stated that in light of Donald Trump's return to the White House as the 47th US president, speculation is growing about his influence on the Middle East and Ukraine conflicts, among other issues.

"Therefore, much depends on the US, first of all, because the Europeans and Asian allies of the US –

Australia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand – are fully oriented to the position of the White House, and in this sense, they are waiting to see what this position will be in its final form,” Lavrov explained.

The minister also said that it remains unclear whether Trump’s promises will coincide with his actions.

Trump has repeatedly vowed to bring an end to ongoing conflicts and has criticized the Biden administration for policies that he claimed led to the escalation of global tensions and pushed the world closer to the brink of World War III.

Last week, while discussing the transition in Washington, Lavrov said that the outgoing administration was trying to “*spoil the whole thing for the next administration before the end of their mandate.*” He denounced the perceived sabotage as inappropriate “*from the moral point of view.*”

Trump has also signaled his intent to engage in talks with Putin, particularly with the aim of bringing the Ukraine conflict to an end. He has described the hostilities between Moscow and Kiev as a product of President Biden’s diplomatic blunders, which he said had had serious repercussions for all parties, including the US.

Last week, Trump announced that he planned to meet with Putin “*very quickly*” after getting sworn in.

On Monday, the Russian leader expressed good wishes for Trump ahead of the inauguration and said that Moscow “*welcomes*” his statements about wanting to restore relations with Russia and prevent the proxy conflict over Ukraine from developing into a world war.

Putin and Trump have met several times in the past, the last occasion being at the 2019 G20 summit in Japan. <https://www.rt.com/news/611318-lavrov-trump-us-politics/>

When Mike Johnson Realized Biden Was Not in Control of His Own Administration



[Leah Barkoukis](#) | January 20, 2025 8:15 AM

AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite

On Friday, with just days left in the White House, The New York Times ran a piece on how those closest to President Biden protected him as age caught up with him—mentally and physically. Much of it has already been covered previously—staffers began walking with him from Marine One so his stiff gait wasn’t as obvious. They’d

rearrange meetings to when he was at his best. Teleprompters were used even at small fundraising events at the homes of wealthy donors, and press had to submit questions ahead of time. While many of these issues were highlighted by conservatives early in Biden’s presidency—and in the 2020 campaign—House Speaker Mike Johnson recently revealed in an interview with Bari Weiss the moment he realized that Biden was not actually running the show.

One year ago, Johnson met with Biden in the Oval Office to discuss national security issues but first wanted to ask him about a recent executive order that cut off liquified natural gas to Europe.

“Can I ask you a question? I cannot answer this from my constituents in Louisiana,” Johnson recalled telling Biden. “Sir, why did you pause LNG exports to Europe? Liquefied natural gas is in great demand by our allies. Why would you do that? Cause you understand we just talked about Ukraine, you understand you are fueling Vladimir Putin’s war machine, because they gotta get their gas from him.”

Biden, according to Johnson, was stunned. “I didn’t do that,” Biden said. Johnson responded, “Mr. President, yes you did. It was an executive order like three weeks ago.” Biden continued to deny that he paused the LNG exports. At that point, Johnson suggested that the president ask the president’s secretary to print out the executive order, so the two could read it together.

Biden then recalled that he had signed an executive order, but it only called for a study on the effects of LNG. Johnson was firm. “Sir, you paused it, I know. I have the export terminals in my state. I talked to those people in my state, I’ve talked to those people this morning, this is doing massive damage to our economy, national security.”

In this exchange, Johnson said he realized that Biden was not lying to him. “He genuinely did not know what he had signed,” Johnson said. “And I walked out of that meeting with fear and loathing because I thought, “We are in serious trouble—who is running the country?” Like, I don’t know who put the paper in front of him, but he didn’t know.” ([The Free Press](#))

So, who was running his administration? Later in the interview Johnson said he didn’t know the answer to that, but he suspected Biden agreed to have progressives in key roles in exchange for his primary opponents exiting the race.

Mike Johnson tells a wild story about how Biden had no idea he paused LNG exports to Europe.

"He obviously has not been in charge for some time."

(Via @TheFP) pic.twitter.com/gERM1alhzc

— The Maine Wire (@TheMaineWire) January 18, 2025

https://townhall.com/tipsheet/leahbarkoukis/2025/01/20/when-mike-johnson-realized-biden-was-not-in-control-of-his-own-administration-n2650797?utm_source=breakingemail&utm_medium=email&tpcc=breaking012025

'Irrational and unjustifiable': Christian banned from military leadership, now all hell breaks loose

One enlisted man 'claims to be homosexual and is ideologically opposed to his religious beliefs'

By [Bob Unruh](#) January 19, 2025

A lawsuit has been filed against Idaho Gov. Brad Little and couple of the state's National Guard leaders for removing a Christian officer from command "solely due to his personal Christian expression on biblical sexuality made outside of the military environment."

The action is coming from Liberty Counsel, which has reported on facts of the situation.

"The 'No Christians in Command' policy constitutes a religious gerrymander by unconstitutionally orphaning sincerely held religious beliefs while permitting the more favored nonreligious value systems," the case charges. "On its face and as applied, [the policy] lacks any rational basis and is irrational and unjustifiable."

Mat Staver, founder and chief, said, "The U.S. Supreme Court has long held that military members do not shed their constitutional rights when they step forward to serve the nation. Nor are the military departments immune to the laws protecting their individual freedoms. By suspending and removing Major David Worley from command over his Christian beliefs, the Idaho Army National Guard informally adopted an unconstitutional 'No Christians in Command' policy.

"The Constitution simply does not allow the military to punish those with sincerely held religious beliefs or to specifically target religion for disparate and discriminatory treatment. Governor Brad Little must ensure that the Idaho Army National Guard upholds federal and state law and protects the free speech of its service members. This discrimination against Major Worley must stop and his record must be cleared and his career restored."

The dispute is over the state's attacks on Maj. David Worley, an infantry officer who ran for mayor in Pocatello, Idaho.

"During Worley's political campaign, which he conducted strictly outside his military duties, he expressed his religious convictions and moral objections to certain issues relevant to political discourse in his community. He expressed his opposition to issues involving so-called 'Drag Queen Story Hours,' pornographic material for minors in public libraries, and the medical mutilation of gender-confused children. All of Worley's protected speech occurred off-duty in his private capacity and before he took command of the Idaho Army National Guard's Recruiting and Retention unit," the legal team said.

But then one enlisted man, "who claims to be homosexual and is ideologically opposed to Worley's religious beliefs," complained about discrimination because he felt "threatened and unsafe" due to Worley's beliefs.

The Idaho Army National Guard suspended Worley from command in July 2023, the pressured him to resign, a move that was rescinded within hours.

Finally, when the National Guard investigated and found the complaints were unsubstantiated, it concluded with the recommendation that "all candidates for command be scrutinized to ensure any concerning expression is discovered, reported to the Department of Defense, and investigated for extremist activity."

Liberty Counsel said the National Guard then claimed Worley's beliefs were "toxic" and removed him from command, "solely due to those protected religious views."

Other defendants are Adjutant General of the Idaho National Guard Major General Timothy J. Donnellan and the Assistant Adjutant General for the Idaho Army National Guard Brigadier General James C. Packwood.

The lawsuit charges that the punishment violates the First Amendment, Fourteenth Amendment, Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and the Idaho Free Exercise of Religious Protection Act.

<https://www.wnd.com/2025/01/irrational-and-unjustifiable-christian-banned-from-military-leadership-now-all-hell-breaks-loose/>

SARS-CoV-2 mRNA vaccine-related myocarditis and pericarditis: An analysis of the Japanese Adverse Drug Event Report database

Keisuke Takada¹, Kazuaki Taguchi², Masaru Samura³, Yuki Igarashi⁴, Yuko Okamoto⁵, Yuki Enoki⁵, Koji Tanikawa⁴, Kazuaki Matsumoto⁵

Affiliations

- PMID: 39103148
- DOI: [10.1016/j.jiac.2024.07.025](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jiac.2024.07.025)

Abstract

Background: The association between severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) mRNA vaccines and myocarditis/pericarditis in the Japanese population has not been systematically investigated. This study was aimed at clarifying the association between SARS-CoV-2 mRNA vaccines (BNT162b2 and mRNA-1273) and myocarditis/pericarditis as well as influencing factors by using the Japanese Adverse Drug Event Report database.

Methods: Reporting odds ratios (RORs) and 95 % confidence intervals (95 % CIs) for the association between the vaccines and myocarditis/pericarditis were calculated using data from the database (April 2004-December 2023). Age, sex, onset time, and outcomes in symptomatic patients were evaluated.

Results: The total number of reports was 880,999 (myocarditis: 1846; pericarditis: 761). The adverse events associated with the vaccines included myocarditis (919 cases) and pericarditis (321 cases), with the ROR [95 % CIs] being significant for both (myocarditis: 30.51 [27.82-33.45], pericarditis: 21.99 [19.03-25.40]). Furthermore, the ROR [95 % CIs] of BNT162b2 and mRNA-1273 were 15.64 [14.15-17.28] and 54.23 [48.13-61.10], respectively, for myocarditis, and 15.78 [13.52-18.42] and 27.03 [21.58-33.87], respectively, for pericarditis. Furthermore, most cases were ≤30 years or male. The period from vaccination to onset was ≤8 days, corresponding to early failure type based on analysis using the Weibull distribution. Outcomes were recovery or remission for most cases; however, they were severe or caused death in some cases.

Conclusion: In the Japanese population, SARS-CoV-2 mRNA vaccination was significantly associated with the onset of myocarditis/pericarditis. The influencing factors included age of ≤30 years and male. Furthermore, although most adverse events occurred early after vaccination, overall outcomes were good.

Keywords: BNT162b2; Japanese Adverse Drug Event Report database; Myocarditis; Pericarditis; mRNA-1273. Copyright © 2024 Japanese Society of Chemotherapy, Japanese Association for Infectious Diseases, and Japanese Society for Infection Prevention and Control. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

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This is similar to what has been observed in the US as well. AVOID these JABBS rdb

This is 50 minutes but if you want to see the problems going on in the US and world listen to this rdb

Israeli Expert Sounds Alarm Over Qatar's Double-Game |
The Caroline Glick Show

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TD3iOB0htn8>

OP ED

The Imam on Trump's Inauguration Program

Sat, 18 Jan 2025 6:46 PM PST by Daniel Greenfield



“The time may be soon to go back home,” Imam Husham Al-Husainy told CBS News. The year was 2003 and Al-Husainy, along with the other Iraqi Shiite ‘refugees’ filling Dearborn’s Muslim community, had gotten their fondest wish when the United States removed Saddam Hussein.

Imam Husham Al-Husainy never did “go back home” to his native Iraq. Instead, alongside urging his congregants to vote in Iraq’s elections, spent the next 20 years interfering in ours, exploiting faked

hate crimes to call for Sharia law, and moving back and forth between parties.

While the Iraq War would in retrospect be blamed on conservatives and Jews, it was the Shiite lobby in Dearborn, Michigan that was the most vocal in keeping the pressure on in Iraq. After the first Bush administration’s failed regime change operation to remove Saddam in 1991, the U.S. imposed a ‘No Fly Zone’ to protect the Shiite rebels, some of whom fled to Dearborn.

Dearborn, once the center of a thriving industry, became the American capital of a Shiite Jihadist movement where Hezbollah flags were flown and “Death to America” was chanted. Even their initial enthusiasm for America’s overthrow of Saddam gave way to support for Shiite supremacy against Iraq’s minorities along with Israel and the United States of America.

And the Iraqis who had backed Republicans to overthrow Saddam turned around and supported the Democrats so that their fellow Shiites would be able to take over Iraq after Saddam’s fall.

That also explains how Imam Al-Husainy ended up being scheduled to deliver a ‘benediction’ on the leaked program for the Trump inauguration. Dearborn’s Shiite vote has swung back and forth between Democrats and Republicans based on what they wanted to see happen in the Middle East. After Oct 7, Dearborn cast its bet on the GOP to stop Israel and save Hamas.

Imam Al-Husainy’s inclusion on the inauguration program signaled the Shiite Lobby’s new power. That power was meant to be used not so much for Dearborn, as for Iran’s agenda.

In 2022, Al-Husayini gloated over the [expansionism](#) of Iran or “the Islamic Republic. They are now the light going into Lebanon, to Syria, to Iraq, to Yemen.” Back in 2003 Al-Husainy [was in Iran](#), after representing Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim who had “15,000 Iraqi troops armed and trained by Iran’s Revolutionary Guard”. The IRGC, Iran’s global terrorist arm, was behind Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis and countless other Islamic terrorist groups.

Hakim’s Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq would later seize power. Its Badr Brigade would spawn Jihadists at war with America including Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the terror leader known as ‘The Engineer’, who would be taken out by the Trump administration in the same airstrike that also took out Iran’s IRGC terror boss Qasem Soleimani.

Like many Shiites, Imam Al-Husainy stewed over the deaths of Soleimani and ‘The Engineer’.

Al-Husainy’s Facebook page and that of his Dearborn mosque, the Karbalaa Islamic Education Center, put up posters and images praising the dead terrorists. “They killed me on Friday, so they rose up for me on Friday,” a caption for Al-Muhandis read. His personal Facebook page published a picture of the terrorist under the caption of “I died for you to live free” and pictures praising Soleimani. A post speculated that the incorrectly reported death of CIA agent Michael D’Andrea was Allah’s revenge for Soleimani’s death. Another called the terrorists “martyrs”.

Whether it was Iran, Iraq, Syria, Yemen or Gaza, the chief consideration for Dearborn’s Shiite Lobby was the victory of Iran and its Shiite Jihadis. Alongside funerals and fasts, Imam Husham Al-Husainy rallied his mosquegoers in the streets waving Iraqi flags when Shiites hung Saddam, or to curse and denounce the Saudis, Israel or Turkey for interfering with Shiite ambitions.

“Death to the impure house of Saud,” Al-Husainy [could be heard](#) yelling at one of the Karbalaa’s centers’ many rallies. “O agents of the Jews. Stop the killing in Yemen.”

The Shiite mosque was outraged because the Houthi Jihadists in Yemen were being bombed. Once the bombings would end, the Houthis would fight the US Navy in keeping with their motto, “Death to America, Death to Israel and a Curse Upon the Jews”.

Dearborn’s Shiite lobby proved adept at entryism into American politics. Al-Husayini popped up at the DNC’s Winter Meeting to [deliver a](#) ‘prayer’ to stop “oppression and occupation.” The ‘prayer’, widely seen as being aimed at America and Israel led to [Al-Husainy’s](#) appearances on Sean Hannity’s show where he [screamed for 5](#)

[minutes](#) to avoid answering whether he supported Hezbollah. On Hannity's Fox News show, he appeared to [admit that he did](#).

A media account described him [as having](#) "held up a portrait of Hezbollah leader Nasrallah." His Facebook page included a description of Hezbollah as part of the "axis of resistance".

When Shaima Alawadi, an Iraqi Shiite refugee, was beaten to death by her husband in a staged hate crime, Islamists rushed to blame Islamophobia and enlist BLM. In Dearborn, Al-Husainy led a protest chanting, "Shaima and Trayvon are the same, the only difference is the name."

And after Muslim mobs murdered Americans in Benghazi, which was falsely blamed on a movie about Mohammed, Imam Al-Husayini [insisted that](#) "they should put a law not to insult a spiritual leader". Imposing Sharia law on Americans was a theme he returned to again when Korans were found burned in front of Al-Husayini's Karbalaa mosque. The Iraqi imam soon claimed to be consulting with lawyers [to create a law](#) banning the burning of the Koran. The Sharia bid however fell apart when the Koran-burner [turned out](#) to be Ali Al-Asaidi: a local Muslim.

But Imam Al-Husayini proved nothing if not flexible. After appearing at the DNC, denouncing Republicans for opposing Shiite supremacism in Iraq and then becoming the public face of an anti-Trump campaign during the Muslim travel ban, he flipped once again, attending a Trump rally in Dearborn and appearing on the program to deliver a benediction at the inauguration.

Since Al-Husayini's history of extremism was exposed, reports are that his appearance has been pulled from Trump's program, but he will undoubtedly appear again at Democrat or Republican events whom Dearborn's Shiite Lobby sees as tools for implementing Iran's agenda.

The cost of taking in Shiite Muslim 'refugees' from Iraq for humanitarian reasons has proven to be quite high. After the Iraq War took thousands of American lives, the Shiites not only pulled off a coup in Iraq, but are trying to pull one off in America using Dearborn votes as their leverage.

A generation later, the Shiite Muslim refugees who pleaded with us to remove Saddam have not only failed to go home, but are lying, manipulating and corrupting our political system for Iran.

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