



With talks on hold, Hamas publishes videos of emaciated hostage in Gaza



A screen shot of David from one of the videos, alongside notes detailing which days he ate.

Bar Peleg, Liza Rozovsky and Jack Khoury

Hamas published two videos of hostage Evyatar David in captivity in Gaza over the weekend. In the videos, David appears emaciated and says he hasn't eaten in days. On Friday, an Israeli source

told Haaretz that it's questionable whether talks over a cease-fire and a deal to free the hostages could resume at the moment.

According to the source, the climate is not conducive to renewed negotiations, particularly in light of public statements by senior Israeli

officials opposing partial hostage release deals and Hamas' demand for a significant increase in humanitarian aid to Gaza.

"At the moment, there is no atmosphere for returning to negotiations," the source said. "But ultimately, it's a matter of alterna-

tives. We've seen sudden shifts here before."

Following the videos' release, U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff met with families of hostages held in the Gaza Strip during an emergency protest at Hostage Square in Tel Aviv on Saturday. Family mem-

bers who met with Witkoff said the envoy assured them that the U.S. plans to push for a single hostage deal, with Hamas agreeing to disarm and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu committed to ending the war in Gaza. "We are very, very close to a solution to end this war," Witkoff

said. (See story, below.)

The Hamas-run Health Ministry said on Saturday that 83 people were killed and 1,079 wounded by Israel Defense Forces fire in the Gaza Strip over the past day, including 39 who were killed

See **VIDEOS**, Page 3

How we got from bad to worse

If there was any doubt, it turns out that things can still get worse. After very immoderate American pressure, Israel lifted the siege on the Gaza Strip and allowed goods to enter through entities other than that failed American project, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. But the international shock from the pictures showing starvation in Gaza has now torpedoed any progress toward a hostage deal, and if there is no direct and determined intervention by U.S. President Donald Trump, the hostages' fate may be sealed. Two propaganda videos released by Hamas and Islamic Jihad show two hostages, Evyatar

David and Rom Braslavski, starved and desperate, underscoring the serious risk to their lives.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu deliberately created difficulties in the negotiations in July. The accepted theory in the media contends that he was only waiting for the Knesset's summer recess, that the moment the immediate danger to his coalition passed, he would exploit the recess – when it's not possible to topple the government – to draw up an interim deal, despite the objections of the messianic right-wing partners.

See **WORSE**, Page 2

Amir Tibon

A Trump intervention can save the hostages

President Trump's Special Envoy, Steven Witkoff, deserves respect for his decision on Saturday to show up at Hostage Square in Tel Aviv and face the tough questions, desperate pleas and raging speeches of the families who still have loved ones held hostage in Gaza, after almost 670 days of war. Members of the Israeli government, most notably Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, pass by this square on a regular basis, but have never bothered to stop, visit and meet the families there. This is another example of Witkoff, and other Trump administration

officials, showing greater empathy and care for the hostage families than the Israeli government, which is supposed to represent them.

Witkoff came to meet the families at the end of a short visit to the Middle East, despite the fact that he had no significant news to share with them. The negotiations to save their loved ones had been stuck for months after Netanyahu decided in March to break the terms of the January 2025 cease-fire and restart the war. By doing so, Netanyahu destroyed an agreement that

See **TRUMP**, Page 2



Witkoff in Hostage Square, Saturday.

Moti Milrod

Witkoff to hostage families: 'Very close' to Gaza truce

Bar Peleg

U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff met with families of hostages held in the Gaza Strip during an emergency protest at Hostage Square in Tel Aviv on Saturday.

The visit came amid the release of footage showing emaciated hostages Evyatar David and Rom Braslavski,

and ahead of the weekly nationwide protests held to demand a deal to release all the hostages held in Gaza.

Family members who met with Witkoff said the envoy assured them that the U.S. plans to push for a single hostage deal, with Hamas agreeing to disarm and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu committed to ending the war in Gaza.

In a recording of the meeting, Witkoff can be heard saying, "Hamas has said that they are prepared to be demilitarized" and that "Multiple Arab governments are now demanding Hamas demilitarize."

"We are very, very close to a solution to end this war," Witkoff can be heard saying. "We don't believe that Hamas speaks for the people ... We

believe that they have very little political support."

Responding to the father of hostage Nimrod Cohen, who asked how the Gaza war is going to end, Witkoff said: "We have to shift this negotiation to 'all or nothing.' Everybody comes home. And we think it's going to be successful, and we have a plan around it."

"President Donald Trump ... I can promise you, cares as

much about your children ... as he would about any American child that was in there," Witkoff added. "It is his mission statement that everybody comes home."

Witkoff also said that "Hamas has shown, very, very clearly, that they can't keep their word."

Hamas responded to Witkoff: "We reiterate that resistance and disarmament

are a national and legal right as long as the occupation continues."

"This right is recognized in international treaties and norms, and cannot be waived except upon the achievement of all our national rights, foremost among them the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian

See **WITKOFF**, Page 2

Einhorn questioned in Qatargate affair

PM ex-aide's Serbian firm was paid for Qatari PR aimed at Israelis

Bar Peleg, Avi Scharf and Omer Benjakob

Payment for a Qatari influence campaign targeting Israeli journalists was transferred to a Serbian company owned by Israel (Shrulik) Einhorn, a close associate of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Likud advisor, sources familiar with the matter told Haaretz.

Einhorn's questioning in the "Qatargate affair" – in

which ties between Qatar and Netanyahu's aides are under investigation – also covered the activities of the strategic consulting firm Insight Partners, whose existence was first revealed in a joint investigation by Haaretz and the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network. Earlier this month, it was reported that the firm received over \$2 million in 2024 from outside Serbia.

Einhorn admitted to running two campaigns aimed

at improving Qatar's public image. His company Perception, where Netanyahu's top media advisor Yonathan Urlich also worked, launched an extensive campaign dubbed "Lighthouse" ahead of the 2022 World Cup, portraying Qatar as a friendly nation. Payments for that campaign – which continued during the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza – were funneled to Perception through

See **QATARI**, Page 4

Trump signs order imposing 15 percent tariff on Israeli imports

The Associated Press

U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order Thursday evening that will impose a 15 percent tariff on imports from Israel, along with goods from dozens of other countries. The tariffs will take effect on August 7, following a one-week delay to allow for regulatory adjustments, according to a senior U.S. official.

The new tariffs will apply to 68 countries, includ-

ing all 27 members of the European Union. Israel joins other nations targeted by the 15 percent tariff, such as Ecuador, Ghana, Fiji and Iceland. Countries not listed will face a baseline 10 percent tariff.

The official said the delay was necessary to harmonize tariff categories across industries. Some countries, including Taiwan and Cambodia, have already entered negotiations for reduced tariff rates; no

such talks have been reported between Israel and U.S. trade officials.

The move is expected to have significant economic and diplomatic repercussions, testing Washington's relations with key allies amid ongoing global trade uncertainties. It comes as the Trump administration continues to push a broad agenda, including contentious judicial appointments, Senate battles, and expanded immigration enforcement.

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'You don't understand how burned out we are': In Gaza with soldiers

Yaniv Kubovich

BEIT HANOUN – The Aroma Café at the entrance to Kibbutz Kfar Azza was packed on Wednesday with dusty Israeli soldiers waiting for coffee. At one of the outdoor tables in the smoking area, four reservists in their 40s were deep in debate.

Where would they prefer to travel to unwind after the current round of fighting? Should they spend a few weeks touring the U.S., stopping in New Orleans and Las Vegas, or would an off-road jeep trip in Georgia be better? Before they reached an agreement, several Israel Defense Forces soldiers arrived in three Hummers and urged them to get ready and board the vehicles.

From there, they made their way to Beit Hanoun, the northernmost city in the Gaza Strip.

Even before entering Gaza, during a press tour organized by the IDF in Beit Hanoun, reporters could see the black smoke plumes from Israel Air Force strikes – now a permanent feature of the Israeli Gaza-border skyline. Huge dust clouds accompanied them, kicked up by bulldozers that continued to demolish buildings in Beit Hanoun.



IDF soldiers walking by ruins in Beit Hanoun, Wednesday.

Yaniv Kubovich

Golani Brigade forces escorted the journalists to a briefing with Givati Brigade Commander Col. Netanel Shamaka. Until last month, Shamaka led a brigade in the West Bank and is now commanding in Gaza for the first time. By contrast, his soldiers are in Beit Hanoun for the fifth time since the war began.

Many buildings in Beit Hanoun have been completely destroyed. The city

lies flattened, allowing for long-distance views once blocked off by buildings. The commander pointed out the chimneys of Ashkelon and the buildings of Ashdod in southern Israel.

While commanders in Gaza can see miles ahead, it sometimes seems they are missing what's right in front of them: the exhaustion of their own troops.

Next to a crater created by an airstrike that killed five

Palestinian militants hiding in a tunnel, reservists from the IDF's Engineering Corps stood watch. This is their third deployment in Gaza, and they previously fought in Lebanon.

"Don't forget to talk about the reservists, about the active-duty soldiers who are burned out from doing everything," said one. "Once I finish this round, I'm done with

See **SOLDIERS**, Page 2