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Sigh of relief

We can begin breathing again
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Giant shadow casted

Diane Keaton dies at 79
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Simchat Torah special:

Exclusive Yuval Rapahel interview



WELCOME HOME

A neon sign reads: 'Welcome back home,' in place of the 'Bring them home' slogan, at Habima Square in Tel Aviv, ahead of the expected release of the remaining hostages from Hamas captivity, yesterday. (Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90)

Nation awaits 20 live hostages' freedom

PM: A historic event in Israeli history

• By AMICHAEL STEIN,
YONAH JEREMY BOB,
and Jerusalem Post Staff

After more than two years in Hamas captivity, 20 living hostages were set to reunite with their families in Israel early this morning, while the remains of some 28 killed in captivity were being retrieved, bringing a long-awaited, painful closure to families who have waited in anguish since Hamas's

October 7 massacre.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the Israeli public Sunday night, thanking the IDF for bringing about the return of the Israeli hostages from Gaza and warned that the threat to Israel's security has not ended.

"Citizens of Israel, my brothers and sisters. This is an emotional evening. An evening of tears, an evening

of joy. Because tomorrow the sons will return to their border," he said.

"This is a historic event that is filled with sadness over the release of murderers – and joy over the return of hostages. This is a historic event that some didn't believe would happen. But our warriors believed. Many in the nation believed. And I believed."

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These are the 20 Israeli hostages expected to return alive today

EXPLAINER

• By DANIELLE GREYMAN-KENNARD

Some 20 living hostages are set to return to Israel early on Monday as part of the first phase of US President Donald Trump's ceasefire and hostage release agreement between Israel and Hamas.

Here are their names, faces, and stories.

Avinatan Or

Avinatan Or, the 32-year-old partner of rescued hostage Noa Argamani, was abducted from the Nova Music Festival on October 7, 2023. The couple had spent hours hiding in a ditch after trying to flee by car when Hamas discovered them.



TWENTY LIVE hostages are expected to be released from Gaza today. (Flash90/Hostages and Missing Families Forum)

Or had reportedly had the opportunity to escape but did not want to leave behind his girlfriend "at the hands of the monsters," his mother, Ditza Or, told *The Jewish Chronicle*.

Or, an electrical engineer for Nvidia and a graduate of Ben-Gurion Uni-

versity, was seen alive by one of the released hostages secured in the last Israel-Hamas ceasefire. His family has received several signs of life throughout his captivity.

Ariel Cunio

Argentinian-Israeli national Ariel Cunio, the 28-year-old brother of fellow hostage David Cunio, was abducted from his home on Kibbutz Nir Oz with his partner, Arbel Yehoud.

Little has been shared about Ariel's time in captivity, though a released hostage confirmed in February that he was still alive.

David Cunio

David Cunio, 33, was kidnapped from

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The embedded irony at Hostage Square

ANALYSIS

• By HERB KEINON

Tens of thousands of people cheered at the mere mention of US President Donald Trump's name at Saturday night's rally at the Hostage Square in Tel Aviv. Many in that same crowd then booed at the mention of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

There is a deep dissonance between how the Trump administration views Netanyahu and how the crowd at Hostage Square views him, booing every time US envoy Steve Witkoff mentioned his name, as if Netanyahu were Haman and this were Purim, not Sukkot.

So what will they do – or think – when Trump himself praises Netanyahu, which he almost certainly will, during

his lightning visit to Israel on Monday morning and in his speech to the Knesset?

Will Trump's praise of Netanyahu sway the prime minister's detractors? Obviously not. But it will make for a fascinating moment: the man they cheered most loudly lauding the man they booed most ferociously – Trump's applause colliding head-on with their contempt for Netanyahu.

"All of our hearts beating as one gathered here in Tel Aviv for peace, for unity, and for hope in this sacred place we call Hostage Square," Witkoff said at the start of his remarks Saturday night.

Nice sentiment, although it is detached from reality. A crowd gathered for "unity" would not boo at the mere mention of the prime minis-

ter's name alone.

The return of the hostages is a blessed event, and Trump deserves considerable credit for making it happen. Netanyahu, however, also had something to do with it. So to boo him?

Yes, the prime minister bears enormous responsibility for October 7. It happened on his watch. Hamas's build-up and Gaza's transformation into an armed fortress took place during his years in power. He owns the policy toward Hamas and Gaza before October 7.

But by the same token, his decisions and actions since that day are also responsible for Israel's remarkable turnaround – standing firm against international pressure, devastating Hamas, decapitating Hezbollah

(thereby leading to Bashar Assad's fall in Syria), and significantly setting back Iran's nuclear and ballistic capabilities.

Even *Islamic Republic*, a newspaper considered a mouthpiece of Tehran's regime, admitted that the October 7 attack was a mistake that set back the regime's "axis of resistance" against Israel.

This all happened because of the decisions made by Netanyahu and his government. Those same decisions created the conditions that led Hamas to agree to release the hostages and sign an agreement that effectively acknowledged defeat.

That the crowd in Hostage Square still booed Netanyahu

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'Waiting with bated breath': Preparations underway for Trump's Knesset speech

• By KESHET NEEV

The Knesset is set to host US President Donald Trump for his historic speech at the plenum on Monday morning, marking the occasion of brokering Israel's ceasefire deal with Hamas, and making him the fourth American president to ever speak before the country's parliament.

Trump's visit to the country comes as Israel braces to receive the hostages as part of

the deal, after they have been held in Hamas captivity since the October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks.

The US president was invited by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu after his peace deal was agreed upon by Israel and Hamas. The hostages are expected to be returned by the terror group near the time of Trump's visit, on Monday.

The Knesset will be Trump's only stop on the brief trip,

scheduled to take place throughout Monday morning. He will return to Ben-Gurion Airport to depart from Israel at 1 p.m.

Upon Trump's arrival at the Knesset, he is slated to first meet with Netanyahu in his office. A trumpet fanfare is expected to sound in the Knesset upon his entrance to the building.

Trump and Netanyahu, together with Sara Netanyahu, will then meet with hos-

tage families before entering the plenum.

Trump will address the Knesset's plenum, as will Netanyahu, Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana, and Opposition leader MK Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid).

The Knesset's House Committee was required to approve the special session and to allow Trump to speak in English at the plenum on

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COMMENT

• By ZVIKA KLEIN

Mr. President, you are slated to touch down in Israel for only a few hours before moving on to Sharm el-Sheikh. It may be a brief stop, but its significance looms large.

Families of the Israeli hostages in Gaza have endured agony for two years – mothers, fathers, and children waiting for news of loved ones. Now, as Hamas is reportedly set to hand over all remaining captives by Monday, our nation is breathing a cautious sigh of relief.

We welcome your role in helping broker this deal and your presence here to mark the moment. In these precious hours on our soil, however, we implore you, Trump: don't forget Israel.

Don't forget that for us, these hostages are not just bargaining chips or headlines; they are our people, and their freedom is our ultimate victory, far more important than



A BILLBOARD displays a picture of US President Donald Trump amid the ensuing ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Tel Aviv yesterday. (Hannah McKay/Reuters)

any blow dealt to Hamas.

Indeed, Israel has long placed an "extraordinary value" on each individual life, having released over 7,000 prisoners to secure the freedom of just 16 Israelis over the decades.

As you stand with our leaders amid the celebration of returning hostages, remem-

ber that this joy is tempered by lessons from history. Other American presidents have stood at similar crossroads, faced with decisions that tested their moral resolve and their loyalty to allies.

We ask you to learn from their experiences – the good

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