

Complex issues remain for Israel-Hamas ceasefire



Released Israeli hostage Evyatar David, front center, arrives Monday at Beilinson Hospital in the Rabin Medical Centre in Petah Tikva in central Israel. Israel said the last 20 living hostages released by Hamas on Monday had arrived in the country.

Hostages, prisoners freed, but governance, disarmament of Hamas still to be decided

By Melanie Lidman, Samy Magdy and Wafaa Shurafa
ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM — Israel and Hamas moved ahead on a key first step of the tenuous Gaza ceasefire agreement on Monday by freeing hostages and prisoners, raising hopes that the U.S.-brokered deal might lead to a permanent end to the two-year war that ravaged the Palestinian territory.

But thornier issues such as whether Hamas will disarm and who will govern Gaza — and the question of Palestinian statehood — remain unresolved, highlighting the fragility of an agreement that for now only pauses the deadliest conflict in the history of Israel and the Palestinians.

For Israelis, the release of the 20 remaining living hostages brought elation and a sense of closure to a war many felt they were forced into by Hamas, although many pledged to fight on for the return of deceased hostages still in Gaza. But with the living



A Palestinian prisoner, released in the prisoner-hostage swap, embraces a boy upon arrival by bus Monday at Ramallah Cultural Centre in Ramallah in the West Bank.

“Now it is time to translate these victories against terrorists on the battlefield into the ultimate prize of peace and prosperity for the entire Middle East.”

President Donald Trump

hostages freed, the urgency with which many were driven to call for an end to the war will likely diminish, easing pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to advance the next phases of the agreement.

Four deceased hostages were returned to Israel on Monday, and another 24 are supposed to be turned over as part of the first phase of the ceasefire, which also requires Israel to allow a surge of food and other humanitarian aid into Gaza.

While there was an outburst of joy in Gaza for prisoners returning from Israel and hope that the fighting may wind down for good, the torment drags on for war-weary Palestinians. Gaza has been decimated by Israeli bombardment; there is little left of its prewar economy, basic services are in disarray and many homes have been destroyed. It remains unclear who will pay for reconstruction, a process that could take years.

Ceasefire continues on A4

Cemetery on way to S. Side despite concerns

Site’s rezoning OK’d; neighbors fear drop in property values

By Megan Rodriguez
STAFF WRITER

A new 72-acre cemetery with a funeral home will open on San Antonio’s South Side despite strong opposition from neighbors and the Southside Independent School District.

Service Corporation International was expected to finalize its purchase of the vacant land sandwiched between U.S. 281 and FM 1937 on Friday. This month, the Houston-based funeral company got City Council’s approval to rezone the property, clearing the way for its acquisition of the property.

Construction of the funeral home is slated to begin mid-2026.

Texas law had long banned the establishment of new cemeteries within city limits, but legislation that went into effect in 2023 opened the door for cities to accept proposals for new graveyards.

Homeowners in the Mission del Lago neighborhood across U.S. 281 said they worry that the cemetery will hurt their property values. Many who have fought the development over the last year have said homes or retail — maybe a grocery store — should be built on the land.

Mission del Lago resident Maryann Smith collected hundreds of signatures in opposition.

Cemetery continues on A7

Program targets teachers unions

By Taylor Goldenstein
AUSTIN BUREAU

After years of working to dismantle diversity programs, ban books and rewrite classroom curriculum, conservatives are converging on a new battlefield in their push to overhaul public education: teachers unions.

This spring, a right-leaning think tank called the Freedom Foundation launched the Teacher Freedom Alliance as a free, national membership program meant to incentivize public educators to jump ship from traditional teachers unions.

The group, which is headquartered in Grapevine, encourages teachers to instead take advantage of its \$2 million liability insurance, professional development training and curriculum resources, including recommended learning from PragerU, a conservative group that produces free video content.

Unions continues on A4

Campaign funds seeded former lawmaker’s charity

By Taylor Goldenstein
AUSTIN BUREAU

Former state Rep. Chris Paddie had a \$450,000 dilemma.

It was early 2022, and he had recently announced he would be stepping down from the Texas House. Like many outgoing members, the East Texas Republican still had unspent campaign cash he would need to



Paddie

offload in the coming years — in his case, nearly a half million dollars.

Under Texas law, he could either return that money to donors, give it to political causes, donate it to a charity or surrender it to the state treasury.

Paddie opted for charity, but not just any.

The same day he resigned, he filed paperwork to launch his own nonprofit, and three weeks later he transferred \$450,000 to the newly formed Paddie Family Foundation, according to state records. Paddie now chairs the organization, his wife is vice chair and his adult son is secretary, according to tax filings.

While transferring money to a person’s own charity is not explicitly outlawed, some ethics experts say it highlights a glaring loophole in state rules meant to prevent former officeholders from personally benefiting off of unused funds.

Paddie is one of a handful of lawmakers, including a former

Donations continues on A7

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