

1322

Robert the Bruce of Scotland defeats King Edward II of England at the Battle of Old Byland, forcing Edward to accept Scotland's independence

1774

First Continental Congress makes Declaration of Colonial Rights in Philadelphia



1884

George Eastman patents paper strip photographic film

1933

Nazi Germany announces its withdrawal from the League of Nations



A woman reacts as people celebrate at Hostage Square in Tel Aviv as news came out that a Red Cross convoy is on its way to pick up a second group of Israeli hostages to be freed by Hamas



Israeli hostage Matan Zangauker (L)



Israeli hostage Evyatar David



Israeli hostage Guy Gilboa Dalal



Israeli hostage Ziv (L) and Gali (R) Berman



Israeli hostage Omri Miran (R)



Released Israeli hostage Alon Ohel



Israeli hostage Eitan Mor (C)



Elkana Bohbot is greeted upon his arrival



Israeli soldiers and medics accompany Ariel Cunio (2L)

Tears of joy

Freed Israeli hostages hug loved ones

AFP | Tel Aviv, Israel

Freed Israeli hostages and their family and friends bounded into one another's arms yesterday, beaming and crying with joy at the end of the captives' two-year ordeal in Gaza.

Wrapped in blue and white Israeli flags, those returning waved and smiled as military helicopters landed them back in Israel, AFP reporters saw, after Hamas freed the remaining 20 living hostages from the Palestinian territory under a US-backed ceasefire deal.

None of the hostages spoke directly to AFP immediately after their return, but videos filmed and released by the Israeli military captured some of the raw emotion of the reunions.

"My life, you are my life... you are a hero," cried Einav Zangauker as she embraced her smiling son Matan, in one video.

"Love of your mother, bless you, bless you, my dear."

Eitan Mor's father waited in relief as the young man's mother squeezed him tight, the footage showed.

Other young hostages such as Bar Kuperstein and Yosef Haim Ohana waved from the windows of vans that brought them to the Sheba medical centre near Tel Aviv, as cheering crowds nearby raised Israeli flags.

Freed Israeli-German twins Gali and Ziv Berman smiled and gave the thumbs-up, wearing the yellow and blue shirts of their favourite football team, Maccabi Tel Aviv.

Hostages' families rejoice

In nearby Tel Aviv, hundreds



Family and friends of Israeli hostage Eitan Horn react to the news of his release at their house in the central Israeli city of Rosh Haayin

of people erupted in joy, tears and song on Tel Aviv's Hostages Square Monday as news of the releases broke. Many had come at sunrise, carrying pictures of the hostages and waving Israeli flags bearing a yellow ribbon, a symbol of the movement calling for their release.

"It's so exciting and overwhelming that it's finally happening," said Shelly Bar Nir, 34. "What we've been fighting for, for over two years -- finally our hostages are coming home."

Another woman on the square, Noga, who wore a badge that read "Last day", shared her pain and joy with AFP.

"I'm torn between emotion and sadness for those who won't be coming back," she said.

Hamas and its militant allies

took 251 hostages into Gaza during the unprecedented October 7, 2023 attack. Many of them were released in earlier truces, but 47 people seized on October 7 remained in Gaza. Only 20 of them are alive.

Since that day, Noga has worn a small badge each day, counting the days of their captivity.

'Welcome home'

For the past two years, people have held frequent rallies and gatherings on this spot in Tel Aviv that has become known as Hostages Square.

When the news broke that the first seven of the remaining hostages had been released on Monday, the square broke out in cheers and song.

Israel later confirmed all liv-



Israeli army identifies the twenty released Israeli hostages

ing 20 hostages had returned to the country, with a series of posts on X that read: "Welcome home". The Hostages and Missing Families Forum, the main organisation representing their relatives, had called on people to gather at the site with the yellow ribbons.

As the war in the Gaza Strip has dragged on, the ribbons became ubiquitous in public spaces in Israel, from roundabouts to car door handles and stroller grips. Israel did not expect all of the dead hostages to be returned on Monday. The families' forum branded it "a blatant breach of the agreement by Hamas".

"Our struggle is not over. It will not end until the last hostage is located and returned for proper burial," the forum said in

a statement.

"Only then will the people of Israel be whole."



In exchange for the hostages, Israel is due to free nearly 2,000 prisoners held in its jails, most of them Gazans detained since the start of the war.



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TWEETS

01



We welcome the release of all hostages after over two years of captivity. Their freedom stands as a tribute to the courage of their families, the unwavering peace efforts of President Trump and the strong resolve of Prime Minister Netanyahu. We support President Trump's sincere efforts to bring peace to the region.

@narendramodi

02



I very much welcome the release of the Israeli hostages held in Gaza. I am profoundly relieved that they have regained their freedom & will soon be reunited with their loved ones after the immense suffering they have endured. I reiterate my call for the release of the remains of the deceased hostages.

@antonioгутеррес

03



Today, our Epidemic and Pandemic Intelligence Hub in Berlin launched Epidemic Intelligence from Open Sources (EIOS) system 2.0. This enables all countries to detect and respond to potential threats daily by analyzing large

@DrTedros

04



President Donald J. Trump, alongside the leaders of Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey, signs the Gaza Peace Plan for peace in the Middle East.

@POTUS

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