

Is now the time to press Hamas to free the captives from Gaza?

NATIONAL AFFAIRS: In aftermath of the Gaza war, is there a window of opportunity for the release of Israeli captives?

By Tovah Lazaroff / May 27, 2021

Leah Goldin has waited seven years to bury her son Hadar.

“It is my responsibility as a mother” to do this, and it is “my human right,” she told The Jerusalem Post this week, as her voice broke slightly.

Lt. Hadar Goldin was killed by Hamas on August 1, 2014, at age 23, while serving in the IDF during that summer’s Gaza war, but his body is believed held by Hamas. He was killed two hours into a brief US-brokered truce that had been erroneously expected to halt hostilities.

[...]

BRIG.-GEN. (ret.) **Shlomo Brom**, who is a senior researcher at **Tel Aviv University’s Institute for National Security Studies**, told the Post that he believes there is an opportunity now for a more formal ceasefire with Gaza, and that it could include the captives.

Such a possibility, he said, is contingent on the scale of the damage the IDF caused to Hamas and whether it was extensive enough to act as a deterrent against further violence, **Brom** said.

Large-scale aid packages will also play a factor, he said.

Then there is the issue of how much each side is willing to give, but there is certainly a moment here that could be seized, and that moment could and should include the return of the captives, he said.

US involvement is of particular importance, he said, because it has a lot of leverage.

He spoke, however, as the possibility of formal ceasefire talks were still in its infancy and the possibility of renewed conflict or even an informal understanding still remained. Even if talks were to push forward, the lack of relations between Israel and Hamas and the substantive issues between them would make it difficult to conclude a deal.

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