

Time is running out for mother desperate to hug Chinese-Israeli hostage in Gaza

- Liora Argamani is battling terminal illness as she pleads with international leaders and China's online community for support
- Academics and people with China connections in Israel are also lobbying for the return of 24-year-old Noa Argamani, captured by Hamas on October 7

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Galia Lavi, deputy director of the Diane and Guilford Glazer Israel-China Policy Centre at the Institute for National Security Studies, said Netanyahu's message to Argamani's supporters was likely to be "political posturing" and unlikely to bring her home.

"I think Netanyahu spoke mainly to his own base, the Israeli base, telling them, 'I'm doing whatever I can for the hostages.' I don't think he actually meant that China will help rescue this poor girl because we are already 80-plus days after the [start of the] war."

Lavi was one of a group of Israeli scholars and think tankers who began appealing to the Chinese embassy in Israel immediately after hearing the news of Argamani's disappearance.

According to Lavi, a "very high-level diplomatic official" told her that there was little China could do about Argamani's case, since she had Israeli citizenship, not Chinese.

China's positioning of itself as the antithesis of US military power in the Middle East also made it unlikely Beijing would get involved in hostage negotiations, she said.

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