

Hamas releases 24 captives from Gaza after truce comes into effect

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Gaza City, November 24 (RHC)-- The Palestinian armed group Hamas has released 24 hostages held captive by the group in Gaza for almost seven weeks, according to Qatar's foreign ministry and the International Red Cross (ICRC), hours after an Israel-Hamas truce mediated by Qatar came into effect.

Among the captives released were 13 Israelis, 10 Thai nationals and one Filipino citizen, Majed al-Ansari, a spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry in Qatar, said on Friday.

The ICRC in Israel and the occupied territories said that it transported the group of captives from Gaza to the Rafah border crossing with Egypt. “We are relieved to confirm the safe release of 24 hostages,” the ICRC wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

“We have facilitated this release by transporting them from Gaza to the Rafah border, marking the real-life impact of our role as a neutral intermediary between the parties.”

The release of the 24 captives — out of the roughly 240 taken hostage by Hamas during an assault on southern Israel on October 7 — comes as a deal between Israel and Hamas, which includes a four-day truce and exchange of captives for Palestinians held in Israeli prisons, takes effect.

Later on Friday, Qatar said 39 Palestinian women and children detained in Israeli jails were released as part of the deal. The ICRC confirmed on Friday that its teams were facilitating the release and transfer of hostages held in Gaza and of Palestinian detainees.

“The deep pain that family members separated from their loved ones feel is indescribable. We are relieved that some will be reunited after long agony,” said Fabrizio Carboni, the International Committee of the Red Cross’s regional director for the Near and Middle East.

According to the deal mediated by Qatar, Hamas will release 50 women and children, from about 240 people taken captive by the group during its assault on southern Israel on October 7.

In exchange, Israel will release a total of 150 Palestinian women and children held in Israeli prisons, whom Palestinians have long characterised as victims of an Israeli occupation that sweeps them into prisons with little pretence of due process.

The captives taken by Hamas on October 7 include Israeli soldiers and civilians, as well as people from dozens of foreign countries. In both Israel and abroad, the families of those held captive have pleaded for their release.

Qatar’s al-Ansari said that the 10 Thai nationals and Filipino citizen were freed outside the framework of the truce deal.

Earlier on Friday, Thailand’s Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin said 12 Thai nationals held captive in Gaza had been released. “It has been confirmed by the security side and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that 12 Thai hostages are already released,” he posted on X.

According to Thailand’s foreign ministry, about 30,000 Thais were employed in Israel, primarily in the country’s agricultural sector, at the time of the attack, in which at least 32 Thai workers were killed. Thais seeking work overseas often come to Israel under an arrangement in which they are paid minimum wage of about \$2,000 a month.

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