

Palestinians defy Israeli orders not to celebrate release of prisoners

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Ramallah, January 31 (RHC)-- Israeli authorities welcomed the release of three Israeli captives and five Thai nationals from Gaza on Thursday, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he was severely dismayed with the way Arbel Yehoud was released in southern Gaza's Khan Younis.

Thousands of Palestinians crowded the streets outside of the ruins of the home of slain Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar to see her release.

Netanyahu released a statement saying that he's going to hold off on the Palestinian prisoner release until he gets some sort of assurances from mediators that scenes like that won't happen again.

Israeli army spokesperson Daniel Hagari also spoke later in the evening, saying that Hamas is responsible for the safety of the captives during these releases and whoever harms the captives will be harmed by the state of Israel.

Nonetheless, Israel says they received those assurances from mediators and went ahead with the release of Palestinian prisoners.

But it didn't come without hardship. Israeli forces were firing at family members outside of the Ofer prison – who were waiting for their loved ones – and trying to do what they could to suppress any sort of expression of joy and celebration among Palestinians. Israeli forces said that they wanted to limit any sort of celebrations.

But those scenes still took place in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank.

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