



By: TA | AP Insight

# Videos of emaciated Israeli hostages in Gaza increase pressure on Netanyahu for a ceasefire



New images of emaciated Israeli hostages held in Gaza have horrified Israelis and added pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to reach a ceasefire with Hamas, even as his government considers another expansion of the nearly 22-month war.

The videos released late last week by militant groups Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad show two skeletal hostages pleading for their lives. In one, Evyatar David says he is digging his own grave and speaks of days without food.

In the other, Rom Braslavski writhes in agony on a dirty mattress and says injuries in his foot prevent him from being able to stand.

The Associated Press does not normally publish videos of **hostages** filmed under duress, but is publishing brief excerpts after receiving consent from their families.

The videos led tens of thousands of Israelis to take to the streets on Saturday night and **demand** a ceasefire deal, in one of the largest turnouts for the weekly protests in recent months.

"In this new video, his eyes are extinguished. He is helpless, and so am I," Braslavski's mother, Tami, said in a statement.

## Warnings of famine in Gaza

The videos were released as warnings about **famine** among Palestinians are growing in Gaza. Images of **starving** Palestinians have drawn international condemnation of Israeli policies limiting aid deliveries into the territory.

Families of the hostages fear that the lack of food threatens the remaining hostages, too. Fewer than half of the 50 hostages are believed to be alive.

Netanyahu said he was shocked by the images of the two hostages and met with the Red Cross to ask that it bring hostages food and medicine — access that the organization says it has never been granted by Hamas.

"When I see these, I understand exactly what Hamas wants," Netanyahu said on Sunday. "They do not want a deal. They want to break us using these videos of horror."

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Netanyahu said the videos renewed his determination to release the hostages and eliminate Hamas. He added that the militant group is starving the hostages "like the Nazis starved the Jews."

The International Committee of the Red Cross said it was "appalled by the harrowing videos" and called for access to the hostages.

Hamas' military wing said it was ready to respond positively to Red Cross requests to deliver food to hostages, if humanitarian corridors for aid deliveries are **opened** in a "regular and permanent manner" in Gaza.

It also asserted that the hostages "eat the same food as our fighters and the general public" and denied any intentional starvation of them.

Israel's mission to the U.N. said it requested an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council on the hostages, which will take place Tuesday. Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar said he will travel to New York for the meeting.

The videos were being used by Hamas "to force upon us their conditions on remaining in power in Gaza," Sa'ar asserted.

Netanyahu on Monday said he will convene the Cabinet this week to instruct Israel's military on how to achieve the goals of defeating the enemy, releasing the hostages and assuring that Gaza will no longer pose a threat to Israel: "all of them, without exception."

## More starvation deaths

The videos of the hostages emerged as experts warn that Gaza faces “a worst-case scenario of **famine**” because of Israel’s blockade.

No aid entered Gaza between March 2 and May 19, and aid has been limited since then. The United Nations says at least 850 people have been killed attempting to access aid near chaotic and dangerous distribution sites set up by Israel and the United States in May.



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Gaza's Health Ministry said Monday that five more Palestinian adults died of malnutrition-related causes in the past 24 hours. A total of 87 adults have died of malnutrition-related issues since the ministry started counting such deaths in late June, it said.

Ninety-three children have died of malnutrition-related causes since the war in Gaza began, the ministry said. Israel's government has **denied** that people are starving to death in Gaza.

About 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed in the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on southern Israel that sparked the war, and another 251 were abducted. Israel's retaliatory military offensive has killed more than 60,900 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

The ministry, which doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count

but says women and children make up over half the dead, is part of the Hamas government and staffed by medical professionals.

The U.N. and other independent experts view its figures as the most reliable casualty count. Israel has disputed the figures but hasn't provided its own.