

84

SHARES

ShareTweetEmail

The families of Israeli captives held in Gaza by Hamas have demanded the Israeli government seek to return their loved ones "alive and not in bags," following the killing of three Israeli captives in Gaza by the Israeli army itself.

The families made the demand after a meeting held on 16 December in Tel Aviv, where they issued a message to the war cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to make an immediate offer to exchange hostages for Palestinian prisoners.

The Saturday meeting followed the killing of three Israeli captives by the Israeli army on Friday. The three men emerged from a building shirtless and holding a make-shift white flag when a soldier shot and killed two of them. The third was wounded but managed to escape back into the building until the shooting ceased. He then came out of the building once again, calling for help in Hebrew, when another soldier shot and killed him.

The captives may have escaped or had been abandoned by their captors, said an Israeli military official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to the New York Times.

The deaths of the three captives took place in the Gaza City neighborhood of Shujaiya, a known stronghold of the Palestinian armed resistance, near where Hamas fighters ambushed and killed nine Israeli soldiers, including high ranking officers, earlier in the week.

The killed captives were among 240 Israeli soldiers, civilians, and foreigners taken by Hamas back to Gaza during the 7 October Al-Aqsa Flood operation.

Since that time, the families and friends of the captives have lobbied the government to reach a deal with Hamas to exchange them for some of the thousands of Palestinians currently held captive in Israeli prisons.

However, the government has prioritized prosecuting the war, which has caused massive destruction and killed almost 20,000 Palestinians through indiscriminate bombing from warplanes in the air and artillery launched from the ground.

"We knew this was going to happen, says Guy Levi, who has been protesting the government's policy in Tel Aviv on behalf of two of his two captive friends. "That's why we implore for a ceasefire, but the government prefers to keep fighting because politics is more important to them than getting them out. Hostages are not on the agenda of the government, which only understands force and military power."

But the killings also raised questions about Israeli policy regarding the terms of engagement in Gaza itself.

Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevy, the Israeli military chief of staff, said on Saturday that the three Israeli captives had done "everything so that we would understand" that they were harmless, including removing their shirts to show they bore no explosives.

"The shooting of the hostages was carried out contrary to the open-fire regulations," he said. "It is forbidden to shoot at those who raise a white flag and seek to surrender."

But Akram Attaallah, a columnist for Al-Ayyam, a Palestinian newspaper in the West Bank, said that the episode was a "condemnation of the Israeli army."

"Israel kills even those who surrender and raise the white flag," said Mr. Attaallah, who is from Gaza.

This suggests that Israeli troops do not discriminate between fighters and civilians while fighting on the ground, just as video of Israeli bombing of entire Gaza neighborhoods shows the army does not discriminate from the sky.

Source: The Cradle

Share this:

[Click to share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\)](#)

[Click to share on X \(Opens in new window\)](#)

[Click to email a link to a friend \(Opens in new window\)](#)

[Click to share on LinkedIn \(Opens in new window\)](#)

[Click to share on Telegram \(Opens in new window\)](#)

[Click to share on WhatsApp \(Opens in new window\)](#)

[Click to share on Twitter \(Opens in new window\)](#)

84

SHARES

ShareTweetEmail