

Russian-Israeli Hostage to Be Freed in First Stage of Hamas-Israel Peace Deal

January 17, 2025



Alexander Trufanov. **Video grab**

Russian-Israeli Alexander Trufanov is expected to be among the first group of hostages released by the Hamas militant group this weekend, according to a list of names [published](#) by The Times of Israel on Friday.

Trufanov's name appears alongside 33 hostages who were forcibly taken to Gaza during the Hamas-led assault on Israel in October 2023.

The attack, the deadliest in Israeli history, saw Hamas militants kill 1,200 people and abduct 251 others. According to the Israeli military, 94 hostages remain in Gaza, including 34 who are presumed dead.

Israel's subsequent military campaign has devastated much of Gaza, with 46,788 people killed, most of them civilians, according to Palestinian health authorities.

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Qatar, a key mediator in the conflict, announced Wednesday that Israel and Hamas had agreed to a ceasefire in Gaza starting Sunday, alongside a hostage and prisoner exchange after over 15 months of war.

Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said the initial 42-day ceasefire would include the release of 33 hostages, including women, children, elderly people and those who are ill or injured. Israel will release Palestinian prisoners as part of the deal.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office confirmed that the first group of hostages is expected to be freed on Sunday.

Russia, which has called for the release of Trufanov and another Russian-Israeli hostage, Maxim Kharkiv, welcomed the ceasefire deal on Thursday.

The Times of Israel noted that its list of hostages does not confirm their condition but said Israel believes “most” of the 33 hostages are alive.

Trufanov [appeared](#) in a video released by a Hamas affiliate last November, urging the Israeli government to secure the release of hostages.

He was abducted alongside his girlfriend, Sapir Cohen, from the Nir Oz kibbutz near the Gaza Strip. Cohen, along with Trufanov's mother and grandmother, were freed during a brief ceasefire and prisoner exchange in November 2023.

Trufanov's father, Vitaly, was killed during the Oct. 7, 2023, attack.

AFP contributed reporting.

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