Vatican

Vatican News



Pope Francis gestures as he shakes hands with Yelena Troufanov, who was part of a delegation of Israelis who were freed after being held hostage in Gaza, during a meeting at the Vatican Nov. 14, 2024. Yelena was freed last November, but her son, Alexander, 29, is still being held hostage. (CNS/Vatican Media)

Carol Glatz

View Author Profile

Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Vatican City — November 14, 2024
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Pope Francis met with a group of Israelis and their family members who were freed after being held hostage in Gaza by Hamas and other Palestinian militants.

The private meeting with 16 people, including two children, took place at the Vatican Nov. 14. A few members held posters with the faces and names of men still held in captivity.

Yaron Sideman, Israel's ambassador to the Holy See, said on X, "The meeting was moving and showed the Pope's closeness to the victims of that horrible day and his commitment to their release."

Advertisement

When Hamas led an attack on Israel Oct. 7, 2023, militant groups also abducted 251 people from Israel, including women, children and the elderly. The majority of those kidnapped were Israeli citizens, but they included foreign nationals and people with multiple citizenship.

Hamas released 109 civilians by last November and eight hostages were rescued alive by troops. The bodies of dozens of hostages who died have also been recovered.

It is estimated that 97 of those abducted Oct. 7 are still in Gaza, including the bodies of at least 34 people confirmed dead by the Israeli Defense Forces.