

# THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

## Weekly hostage support rallies in Tel Aviv to end, family of slain captive says

Ran Gvili's family announces Friday afternoon 'Kabbalat Shabbat' events instead, as it 'adjusts to new reality' of only 2 captives still in Gaza, and thinning resources

By [JESSICA STEINBERG](#) and [TOI STAFF](#)<sup>1</sup> December 2025



*Itzik and Talik Gvili, parents of Ran Gvili, one of the remaining deceased hostages in Gaza, on November 22, 2025, at the Hostages Forum rally in Tel Aviv. (Paulina Patimer/Hostages Forum)*

The family of Ran Gvili, one of the two remaining deceased hostages held in Gaza, said Monday that the weekly Saturday night support rallies that have been held for two years at Hostages Square will end, as they pivot to pre-Sabbath gatherings held on Friday afternoons at the Tel Aviv plaza.

The family announced the change in a statement released by the Hostages and Missing Families Forum, the main organization that has supported the hostages' families throughout the war and organized the Saturday rallies, which drew tens of thousands of people.

The remains of two hostages killed on October 7, 2023, when the Palestinian terror group Hamas led an invasion of southern Israel, are still in Gaza: Gvili, a police officer who was killed fending off the Hamas-led invasion in Kibbutz Alumim; and Sudthisak Rinthalak, a Thai national murdered in Kibbutz Be'eri, where he worked in agriculture. During the Hamas attack, terrorists killed some 1,200 people and abducted 251 to the Gaza Strip.

"As a family, we know we can't keep fighting this battle the same way we have been," the Gvilis said.

The fight to bring back hundreds of hostages "is not the same as the fight to bring back the last two," it said. "We must keep demanding the return of Rani and Sudthisak, but we need to adjust to this new reality."

"The fight continues, but we're changing course," said the family.

The Friday rallies will also be held in Tel Aviv's Hostages Square, the focal point of the families' activities, and will be themed as a "Kabbalat Shabbat," it said, referring to the traditional Jewish service to welcome in the Sabbath that begins at dusk on Friday.

"Please keep the yellow flags flying," the Gvilis said. "Please keep Rani's posters up along the roads."



The two slain hostages whose bodies were still held captive in Gaza as of November 24, 2025: Sudthisak Rinthalak (left) and Ran Gvili. (Collage by Times of Israel; Photos: Courtesy)

“There will come a time for a rally of gratitude, a final gathering to thank the people of Israel for their incredible support throughout this journey,” they added.

Though the statement did not mention the government, it appeared to criticize the official efforts to return the hostages during the war.

“We never forget the 46 hostages who could have come home alive but were murdered in captivity,” it said.

The forum had long urged the government to agree to a ceasefire deal with Hamas, as the country’s leaders insisted on continuing the fighting. A US-brokered ceasefire deal was eventually reached in October.

Last week, the forum told The Times of Israel that it will be narrowing its activities greatly now that there are only two families left to support and far fewer donations to support them.

The forum had recommended stopping the rallies by the end of November, given the cost of around NIS 200,000 (\$61,000) each week to erect a stage with video and sound systems, adding that the events do not serve the current situation of terror groups apparently searching for and locating the remaining bodies in Gaza.

The Gvili family had previously said it understood the forum’s decision.

Itzik Gvili [spoke at the final rally](#) on Saturday night, saying that there must “no next phase” to the current Gaza ceasefire, and “no ‘day after’ in Gaza,” until Hamas returns the last two bodies.



Itzik Gvili, the father of slain hostage Ran Gvili, speaks at Hostages Square, in Tel Aviv, on November 29, 2025.  
(Uriel Even Sapir/The Hostages and Missing Families Forum)

Rinthalak’s family is located in Thailand, and, while the forum is in touch with the Thai embassy, it has not been involved in rallies.

The Gvili family belongs to both that forum and the right-wing Tikvah Forum, whose smaller number of hostages’ families advocated military pressure in Gaza, rather than ceasefire deals.

In their statement, the Gvilis said they are exhausted from waiting, but will not be worn down in the struggle for their son’s return.



Protesters unfurl a sign at a protest for the hostages at Hostages Square in Tel Aviv, September 20, 2025. (Lior Rotstein / Hostages and Missing Families Forum)

The family invited supporters to join them this Friday at Hostages Square for the Kabbalat Shabbat service, to hear about their son and to welcome the Sabbath.

Ran Gvili, a member of the police's Yasam counterterror unit, rushed to the frontlines the morning of October 7, 2023, heading to besieged Kibbutz Alumim. He fell in battle during the Hamas-led attack, and terrorists abducted his body into Gaza.

The Gvili family noted in the statement that Ran has been held in Gaza for 787 days, and urged that Israel not move to the second stage of the US peace plan for Gaza as long as even one hostage remains in the Strip.

"We wish to remind the mediators, led by the prime minister of Qatar, that the essence of the agreement is the return of the hostages," said the Gvilis. "Rani and Sudthisak are not bargaining chips, and we cannot abandon them — they must come home."

On Sunday, a spokesman for Qatar's Foreign Ministry [said](#) that the two deceased hostages whose bodies remain in Gaza should not be seen as grounds to delay the second phase of the US peace deal.



People protest at 'Hostages Square' in Tel Aviv, calling for the release of slain hostages Ran Gvili and Sudthisak Rinthalak, whose bodies are still held by Hamas in Gaza, November 29, 2025. (Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90)

The bodies of 26 deceased hostages have been returned gradually, without any assurances or fixed timeline, over the course of the past seven weeks, as part of the US-brokered ceasefire that halted the war.

The first phase of the deal, delineated in the [October 9 ceasefire agreement](#), includes the return of all hostages, living and deceased. The [rest of the US-backed plan](#), which has not been formally agreed on, would see Israeli troops withdraw further from Gaza as Hamas disarms and hands control over to a transitional governing body and multinational peacekeeping force.