

## **GNITN - Special Edition**

### **Israel At War – Day 326**

### **Another One Back Home**

#### **A Miracle**

In what I hope will be a consistent happening the IDF rescued one of the hostages as we read in a report from *The Times Of Israel*:

*His jallabiya flapping in the wind, Hatem al-Qadi raced across the manicured lawns and sun-drenched sidewalks of Soroka Hospital in Beersheba. Running alongside several other men, relatives mostly, al-Qadi sprinted through hospital corridors toward his goal.*

*It had been 326 days since he had seen his brother Farhan al-Qadi, over 7,800 hours since Farhan had been abducted while working as a guard in a kibbutz factory near the Gaza border, held captive in unimaginable conditions, some 470,000 gut-wrenching minutes that the al-Qadi clan had spent worrying he was being tortured, beaten or worse.*

The article continued the use of time references:

*Hatem did not intend to wait a second longer than necessary to be reunited with his brother. Back together in a hospital room, as more and more joyous relatives crowded in the hallways outside, Hatem pulled out his phone and snapped a selfie, his toothy grin filling the frame.*

The hostage appeared to be in good spirits all things considered:

*In the background Farhan, who hours earlier had been deep inside a tunnel in southern Gaza, even managed to crack a smile.*

The happiness with this one hostage being rescued sent rays of hope to the families of loved ones still being held:

*The news that Farhan had been rescued Tuesday by Israel Defense Forces troops sent shockwaves through the al-Qadi family, including his two wives and 11 children.*

*Across the country, word that one of the 100-plus hostages remaining in Gaza had been whisked to safety in an operation the army called “brave and complex” provided a rare bright spot after over 10 months of war, upheaval and grief.*

His brother likened the rescue like this:

*“It’s even better than the arrival of a new baby,” Hatem al-Qadi told Hebrew language media from the hospital, unable to stop smiling. “The truth is we didn’t think he would come back, but this is a great surprise, praise God.”*

Slowly details of the rescue came out:

*When he was found by troops in a tunnel in southern Gaza, alone without captors or fellow hostages, al-Qadi became just the eighth hostage to be rescued alive since the start of the war; military officials have made clear that recovering those remaining, including the remains of 34 hostages confirmed dead by the IDF, will likely require a swap agreement with the Hamas terror group.*

Al-Qadi was working as a guard on October 7<sup>th</sup>:

*Hailing from the Al Qasoum area near the predominantly Arab Bedouin city of Rahat in southern Israel, al-Qadi was working as a guard at the Kibbutz Magen packing house outside Gaza on October 7 when Hamas launched its unprecedented assault on Israel.*

*Some 1,200 people were killed as Hamas-led terrorists carried out brutal massacres across the south, and 251 people were abducted and taken to Gaza, among them al-Qadi, who was snatched from an area near the nearby community of Mivtahim.*

### **Hard To Believe**

With the current hostage deal waning, no one expected this turn of events:

*"We still don't believe it. Ten months we waited for something," a cousin of al-Qadi told Channel 12 news.*

All things considered al-Qadi is faring well. And he was very thankful to the PM:

*Soroka Hospital said al-Qadi appeared to be in good health, though additional checkups would be needed. In a video of him speaking by phone to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, he appeared in good spirits, telling the premier "I'm also happy, I waited for his moment, I swear." Referring to Netanyahu as "Abu Yair," in line with the Arabic naming conventions, al-Qadi thanked him "for this work, that you all got me to a situation where I can see my family and be here. You all did holy work, holy work you did. There are others who are waiting."*

He was careful to bring up those still in captivity:

*In a call with President Isaac Herzog, who earlier said he was "overjoyed" by the rescue, al-Qadi was less sanguine, praising Israel and the IDF for extricating him but also telling him that "people are suffering there, every minute... do everything to bring people home."*

*"People are suffering, suffering, you can't imagine it," he said.*

Doctors see a long time of mending ahead for him:

*Prof. Hagai Levine, head of the medical and resilience team of the Hostages and Missing Families Forum, said al-Qadi could expect a lengthy recovery process.*

*"After a few days, they start to realize what they've been through," he said of other hostages who had been rescued.*

al-Qadi wanted to know how his family was doing which would be expected:

*Hatem said his brother was feeling well, if a little thin, and had wanted to know how his family was. "He saw two or three of his brothers, asked after family, after his mother, I calmed him that everything was fine," he told the press after leaving his brother's room.*

Prof. Levine went on to bring up how the other hostages are doing:

*Levine called Fadi's rescue a "ray of light" but added, "We need to remember that we don't know what the health condition of the other 108 hostages is," and called for the government to reach a deal to free the remaining hostages.*

### **Politics As Usual**

Whether we like it or not, political feelings were intertwined with acknowledging the good news: *Politicians, campaigners and others were also swift to celebrate the rescue, even as the jubilation was tempered by the plight of those remaining in Gaza.*

The opposition party made sure to take the opportunity to also take shots at the PM:

*"Finally good news," Labor MK and former party chief Merav Michaeli tweeted, insisting that Israel "must not wait for more successful operations, a deal must be closed now and all 108 hostages returned home."*

*The message was repeated by other opposition politicians, including Yesh Atid MK Yoav Segalovitz, who highlighted the fact that al-Qadi was being reunited with his relatives while the*

*family of recovered hostage Haim Peri was burying their loved one who had been killed while in captivity.*

*“We need to remember that [Peri] was alive and we could have saved him,” Segalovitz told Army Radio. “Especially given the success of today’s operation, we need to say, rescues won’t bring home 108 hostages; a deal will.”*

Supporters of Netanyahu also got a little political:

*Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich of the far-right Religious Zionism party, who has threatened to bolt the government if fighting in Gaza ends as part of a hostage release deal, crowed over al-Qadi’s rescue, while also calling for increased military pressure to bring home the hostages.*

*“Each person is a whole world, and we have many more worlds to return home. We will do this with determination, courage and wisdom,” tweeted Likud MK Yuli Edelstein, the chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.*

One local politician was more congenial:

*Rahat mayor Talal al-Kranawi said he met with al-Qadi at the hospital, saying his rescue could give hope for others whose loved ones are in Gaza.*

*“We’re all happy; everyone in Israel is glad Farhan is home,” he said. “He spent a lot of time underground, but he is starting to see the light and the sun, and that gives him hope.”*

We turn to an [article](#), this time from *The Jerusalem Post* for the actual details of the operation: *The circumstances of his rescue are complex and remain open to interpretation.*

*The IDF has updated that it was searching for hostages in the area for a significant period of time.*

*Further, the IDF has confirmed that when it broke through parts of the tunnel complex into the tunnel room where Alkadi was being kept, which has been reported as being 20 meters deep, he was not being guarded at that moment.*

There are those who think that he could have escaped by himself:

*There are different interpretations about whether Alkadi might have been able to escape on his own, given that he was not being guarded, or whether he could not have broken out of the room where he was being held without the IDF finding him.*

The intelligence community gave little details on how they rescued him for a variety of reasons: *The IDF said that they had already gathered some intelligence from al-Kaadi both in the field and at Soroka.*

*IDF Chief Spokesman Daniel Hagari refused to share any details about the battle to free the hostage and how many Hamas forces it confronted, potentially suggesting that there are additional goals which may be achieved on an ongoing basis later Tuesday.*

*Questioned about whether Alkadi partially succeeded in escaping on his own, though with later aid by the IDF, Hagari did not deny the possibility, but did not confirm it and warned about informational security.*

*Alkadi is the first live hostage to be rescued from a tunnel, with all prior live hostage rescues taking place above ground.*

As I have been praying the remaining hostages will need to be rescued and locals who are harboring them may be the key. I certainly hope a hostage deal can work, but these people are living on borrowed time.