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## Families urge ceasefire during U.S. envoy's Tel Aviv visit



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Tel Aviv – August 2, 2025-Dozens of families of Israeli hostages held in Gaza gathered at Tel Aviv's "Hostage Square" on Saturday, calling for an urgent ceasefire deal to bring their loved ones home.

The protest coincided with the visit of U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East, Steve Witkoff.

The demonstration came after the release of distressing videos by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, showing hostages Evyatar David and Rom Braslavski in deteriorating condition. The

Hostages and Missing Families Forum, which organized the protest, urged both the Israeli and U.S. governments to “stop this nightmare and bring them out of the tunnels and home.”

Witkoff met with families in the plaza, reaffirming the U.S. commitment to securing the release of all hostages. He called for a shift in the negotiation approach from phased talks to a comprehensive deal that secures everyone’s release in one go.

His visit follows rising international concern over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. On Friday, he visited a U.S.-backed aid site in Gaza, which has come under criticism amid worsening food insecurity. The UN’s Integrated Food Security Phase Classification warned that famine is already unfolding in the region.

Witkoff recently withdrew the U.S. team from ceasefire talks in Qatar, accusing Hamas of not negotiating in good faith. Despite this, he told families the U.S. would “get your children home,” hold Hamas accountable, and “do what’s right for the Gazan people.”

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump acknowledged the severe hunger crisis in Gaza and pledged new food distribution centers, overseen by Israel. However, Palestinian voices remain skeptical, calling the move a political gesture rather than real help.

Israel’s ongoing military campaign in Gaza has killed over 60,000 people and left more than 148,000 injured since October 2023.

