



MEI MEDIA WATCH

(A Survey of Editorials)

No. 22

Wednesday, 16 November 2011

Shalit Swap, October 2011

[Note: 11 October 2011, the Government of Israel and Hamas reached an agreement for the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit who was abducted on 25 June 2006 near the Kerem Shalom crossing in Israel along the Gaza Strip. The agreement included the release of 1,027 Palestinian prisoners, including 27 women and a few Israeli citizens. On 15 October the Prison Authorities of Israel released the details of the 477 prisoners who were to be released initially while the remaining 550 would be freed subsequently. As per the agreement Shalit was handed over to the Egyptian authorities on 19 October and was brought home later in the day. The issue has been discussed internationally and editorial commentaries from the international and Middle Eastern media are reproduced here. Editor, MEI@ND]

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guardian.co.uk

London, Editorial, 12 October 2011, Wednesday

1. Palestinian prisoner swap: Rare outbreak of common sense

It is hard to read the prisoner swap agreement to free Gilad Shalit, as anything less than a victory for his captors, Hamas. It is hard to read the prisoner swap agreement to free Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier held in Gaza for five years, as anything less than a victory for his captors, Hamas. But it is a qualified one. Of the 1,027 prisoners Israel has agreed to release, 479 of the names have been nominated by Hamas (the rest will be chosen by Israel). Of the 479, 315

were serving life sentences for involvement in some of the bloodiest attacks on Israel, and most served over 20 years.

For the Full Text: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/oct/12/palestinian-prisoner-swap-gilad-shalit-editorial>

Khaleej Times ONLINE

Dubai, Editorial, 13 October 2011, Thursday

2. Hamas strikes a deal

The release of Gilad Shalit, the 25-year-old Israeli soldier, has at last been secured after Tel Aviv agreed to release 1,027 Palestinian prisoners. While Hamas, the militant Palestinian faction in control of Gaza and holding Shalit hostage since 2005, has called the prisoner swap a major victory, Israeli officials have rejected such claims.

For the Full Text:

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/editorial/2011/October/editorial_October25.xml§ion=editorial&col=

gulfnews.com

Dubai, Editorial, 13 October 2011, Thursday

3. Swap deal a chance to raise prisoners' woes

Arab Spring provides different setting for Shalit's release with new regional dynamics. There's a lot of hype surrounding the news of a prisoner swap deal between Hamas and Israel. More than 1,000 Palestinians are to be freed in exchange for one Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, who has been held in Gaza for more than five years. It's also been confirmed that Marwan Barghouti, the influential Fatah leader, and Ahmad Saadat, head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, will not be released as expected.

For the Full Text: <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/swap-deal-a-chance-to-raise-prisoners-woes-1.890671>

The National

Abu Dhabi, Editorial, 14 October 2011, Friday

4. Non-violence is the Palestinians' strongest force

The prisoner exchange deal between Hamas and Israel, which should see the release of 1,027 Palestinians in exchange for the captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, has been hailed as a victory for both sides. It should not, however, be confused with a major political breakthrough.

For the Full Text: <http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/editorial/non-violence-is-the-palestinians-strongest-force>



Editorial, 16 October 2011, Sunday

5. An age-old dilemma

Many of the moral deliberations surrounding the prisoner exchange deal to release Sgt. Gilad Shalit have been agonized over by Jewish sages for ages. During centuries of exile and wandering, the Jewish people have, sadly, accumulated immense experience with extortion and abductions. Wherever they went, Jews tended to excel but, unfortunately, often lacked the means to defend the fruits of their labour. Too often they became easy prey for kidnappers.

For the Full Text: <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Editorials/Article.aspx?id=241964>



Editorial, 16 October 2011, Sunday

6. A Soldier's Freedom

The agreement of the terrorist group Hamas to release an Israeli soldier held since 2006 in exchange for the release of 1,027 Palestinian prisoners by Israelis indeed a victory for terror, exactly as asserted by Israeli cabinet ministers who opposed the deal.

For the Full Text:

http://bostonherlad.com/news/opinion/editorials/view/2011_1016a_soldiers_freedom/



Editorial, 17 October 2011, Monday

7. Mixed emotions on Shalit deal

While the most common feeling among Israelis is joy, many also report they are worried, nervous and angry as well as proud. As we anxiously await the release of Gilad Shalit, national sentiments are mixed.

For the Full Text: <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Editorials/Article.aspx?id=242129>



Toronto, Editorial, 18 October 2011, Tuesday

8. Sgt. Shalit's exodus

After five gruelling years as a captive in Gaza, Israeli Army Sgt. Gilad Shalit came out of Egypt on Tuesday (18 October) voicing hopes for peace. And the first of 1,027 Palestinian prisoners, including notorious killers, also tasted freedom as the price of his safe return.

For the Full Text: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/article/1072163--sgt-shalit-s-exodus>



Editorial, 18 October 2011, Tuesday

9. Gilad Shalit's Release

We share the joy of Israelis over the release of Sgt. First Class Gilad Shalit, who was held by Hamas for five years. We will leave it to the Israeli people to debate whether the deal — which includes the release of more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners — will make their country safer or lead to more violence or more abductions of Israeli soldiers or other citizens.

For the Full Text: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/19/opinion/gilad-shalits-release.html?_r=1&ref=editorials

HAARETZ.com

Tel Aviv, Editorial, 19 October 2011, Wednesday

10. Shalit deal signals return of the will of the people

The fact that Benjamin Netanyahu agreed to sign the Shalit swap deal, a contradiction of his stated worldview, indicates that while the hand that signed the deal was indeed the PM's, the strings were pulled by the Israeli public.

For the Full Text: <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/shalit-deal-signals-return-of-the-will-of-the-people-1.390878>

gulfnews.com

Dubai, Editorial, 19 October 2011, Wednesday

11. Prisoner swap about scoring political points

Shalit's release could enable Hamas to extend its sphere of influence outside Gaza. Yesterday's (18 October) successful prisoner swap between the Israelis and Hamas was not a humanitarian gesture by either side. The Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was captured by Hamas more than five years (2006) ago, and some of the hundreds of Palestinians have been in Israeli hands for much longer than that. Their release could have happened at any time, but the present moment suited both sides for their own political advantage.

For the Full Text: <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/prisoner-swap-about-scoring-political-points-1.903120>

Khaleej Times
ONLINE

Dubai, Editorial, 19 October 2011, Wednesday

12. The prisoner swap

The release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in exchange of the first batch of 477 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel has prompted celebrations on both sides. The deal brokered by Egypt finally came through five years after Shalit's capture by the Palestinian militant group Hamas. While other prominent Palestinian prisoners such as Marwan Barghouti among others still remain in the custody of Israel, the Palestinians are thrilled at securing the release of their people.

For the Full Text:

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/editorial/2011/October/editorial_October35.xml§ion=editorial&col=



Muscat, Editorial, 19 October 2011, Wednesday

13. Futile Hopes

There is ample reason for jubilation among the Palestinians. Israel has freed 477 Palestinian prisoners in exchange for Gilad Shalit, a soldier captured by Hamas. The bargaining for their release was between Hamas and Israel, with Turkish mediation, without the involvement of the government of President Mahmoud Abbas. As far as the tension-ridden Middle East is concerned, the release is a momentous event that should normally result in new hopes for peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

For the Full Text:

http://www.omantribune.com/archives/index.php?page=editorial_details&id=2112&heading=EDITORIALS&archdate=2011-10-19



Beirut, Editorial, 19 October 2011, Wednesday

14. Make Israel comply

The international media focused Tuesday (18 October) on the prisoner swap between Israel and the Palestinians, highlighting the theme of an end to a five-year saga. The release of more than 1,000 Palestinian detainees and prisoners is certainly a welcome sight, but one must remember that around 10,000 more such cases remain. Commentators have been enthusiastic in citing the huge number of Palestinians swapped for a single Israeli soldier; they're not nearly as enthusiastic in talking about the huge number of prisoners who are behind bars in the first place, swept up under the category of "terrorist" while most are simply fighting an unjust foreign occupation.

For the Full Text: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Editorial/2011/Oct-19/151640-make-israel-comply.ashx#axzz1bNnsfDvg>



Abu Dhabi, Editorial, 19 October 2011, Wednesday

15. Prisoner release will be judged in the coming days

Every side will take its own lesson from yesterday's (18 October) events. The scenes of joyous crowds receiving the first several hundred Palestinian prisoners could be seen as an historic victory, for which Hamas will certainly claim credit. Some will see it as a vindication of hostage-taking and the armed struggle; others will champion a return to the negotiating table.

For the Full Text: <http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/editorial/prisoner-release-will-be-judged-in-the-coming-days>



Cairo, Editorial, 20-26 October 2011

16. The power of resistance

It was not due to the many channels of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations or the influence of international human rights organisations that Israel agreed to reduce the severity of the near decade-long blockade it has been imposing on Gaza. It was due to the prisoners' swap deal by which Israel freed its soldier Gilad Shalit, taken hostage by the Hamas Islamist group in Gaza, in return for the release of a few hundred Palestinians. An additional factor was the reduction of the hardship imposed on the Palestinians in the already impoverished Gaza Strip.

For the Full Text: <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2011/1069/ed.htm>



Editorial, 20 October 2011, Thursday

17. The Israeli-Palestinian prisoner swap offers little new hope for peace

The jubilation and relief that greeted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit and hundreds of Palestinian prisoners as they returned home Tuesday (18 October) superficially suggested a breakthrough in long-stalled relations between Israelis and Palestinians. The opposite is more likely. On closer inspection, the deal between Hamas and the government of Binyamin Netanyahu looks likely to inject more poison into an already bitter standoff.

For the Full Text: http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-israeli-palestinian-prisoner-swap-offers-little-new-hope-for-peace/2011/10/19/gIQArgEkyL_story.html



Editorial, 20 October 2011, Thursday

18. Israel's joy, and foreboding

Many people not connected at all with the Middle East will share the mixed feelings of Israelis as they welcome back their soldier Gilad Shalit from five years in solitary confinement as prisoner of the Palestinian movement Hamas. There is joy, in this tight-knit nation, at being able to deliver on the implicit promise to its conscripts that no effort will be spared to get them home - and gloom at the vastly asymmetric swap of 1027 Palestinian prisoners convicted for specific crimes including multiple murders, and the jubilant boast of the Hamas armed wing that the efficacy of hostage-taking is now proven.

For the Full Text: <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/editorial/israels-joy-and-foreboding-20111019-1m839.html>

HAARETZ.com

Tel Aviv, Editorial, 21 October 2011, Friday

19. After Shalit deal, Netanyahu must bolster Abbas

With his decision to pay the necessary price to free Shalit, Netanyahu showed leadership and determination, standing up to the extreme right-wing bloc. He should involve Abbas in a discussion on the composition of the 550 prisoners to be released in the deal's second phase.

For the Full Text: <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/after-shalit-deal-netanyahu-must-bolster-abbas-1.391190>

The World's Window on Japan
The Japan Times
 ONLINE

Tokyo, Editorial, 27 October 2011, Thursday

20. A prisoner swap in Israel

The exchange of some 1,000 Palestinian prisoners for one kidnapped Israeli soldier is a victory for humanitarianism in a region too often characterized by brutality. The decision by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to make the deal goes against every one of his impulses, which were over-ridden in this case by his political pragmatism. Especially difficult for him to swallow is the boost it gives to Hamas, the Islamist group that controls the Gaza Strip: It is considerably strengthened by having negotiated the exchange.

For the Full Text: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/ed20111027a1.html>

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