

Protest

**20**

FEB

8:09 UTC

Israel Tactical: Gatherings slated in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem on February 20-21, as Red Cross receives bodies of four slain hostages; maintain heightened vigilance

Current Situation:

Handover of bodies of slain hostages:

- The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) stated that the Red Cross has confirmed the reception of four caskets of deceased Israeli hostages that are now being transferred to Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip during the morning hours (local time) on February 20.
- A short ceremony will reportedly be held inside the Gaza Strip before the bodies are transferred to Israel for identification.
- An IDF convoy is reportedly slated to depart from the Kerem Shalom Border Crossing to Tel Aviv's Abu Kabir Forensic Institute.

Calls for gatherings/protests:

- Civil society groups representing the families of hostages are calling on the public to participate in gatherings on February 20-21.
- Citizens are invited to gather with Israeli flags along the route of the convoy that will transfer the bodies of the slain hostages from the Kerem Shalom Border Crossing to Tel Aviv's Abu Kabir

Forensic Institute, located on Derekh Ben Zvi, during the morning hours. The convoy will travel along Route 232, Route 34, and Route 4, passing through the Ashdod Interchange and the Holot Interchange near Rishon LeTsiyon.

- Protesters will also gather on **Tel Aviv's Hostage Square** (outside the Tel Aviv Museum of Art) from the morning hours of February 20. A formal ceremony is slated to occur at 19:00.
- Activists are calling on the public to join the relatives of Israeli hostages at the protest camp in front of the Prime Minister's (PM) Residence on **Jerusalem's Azza Street**. On February 20, protesters are slated to join between 17:00-19:00, and between 12:00-14:00 on February 21.

Source: [Bring Them Home Now](#)

Assessments & Forecast:

1. This marks the first handover of slain Israeli hostages from Hamas to Israel under the first phase of the ceasefire. **FORECAST:** In this context, the calls for participation in gatherings throughout February 20 will likely mobilize a high number of participants given significant compassion among broad segments of the populace for the deceased hostages and their families. Activists will likely gather at key junctions along the convoy's route from Kerem Shalom to Tel Aviv. However, this is unlikely to cause significant traffic disruptions.
2. **FORECAST:** The event at Tel Aviv's Hostages Square is likely to attract a steady number of participants throughout February 20, likely in the dozens. The turnout is liable to reach the high hundreds at least toward the evening hours and ahead of the slated formal ceremony. Activists may stage marches from Hostages Square to protest focal points in Tel Aviv, including the Kirya Complex, Menachem Begin Street, or HaBima Square to pressure the government to advance negotiations for the second phase of the ceasefire. Such a scenario would likely prompt traffic disruptions and localized instances of unrest cannot be entirely excluded.
3. **FORECAST:** In Jerusalem, the slated protests in front of the PM's Residence are liable to attract a turnout in the dozens at least. Police personnel will likely be deployed in the area to prevent participants from approaching the PM's residence. Scuffles between unruly protesters and security forces cannot be entirely excluded. More broadly, gatherings may also materialize in other areas of the country on February 20, including in major cities.

Recommendations:

Those operating or residing in Israel on February 20-21 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance and allot for disruptions to travel due to the slated gatherings and the associated risk of localized unrest.