

Trump's WARNING to Terrorists: Daughter of Americans Held Hostage Reacts

Virginia Allen | December 24, 2024



President Donald Trump attends an Oct. 7 remembrance event at the Trump National Doral Golf Club in Doral, Florida, Oct. 7, 2024.

In one day, 117 of the people Iris Weinstein Haggai grew up with, including her parents, “vanished.” Among the 400 residents living in Kibbutz Nir Oz, one mile from the border of Gaza, one in every four were either killed or taken hostage during the terrorist attack on Oct. 7, 2023.

Like so many in Israel, Haggai has been waiting for world leaders to take action to see the hostages freed, which is why she says she is encouraged by President-elect Donald Trump's recent statement on Truth Social. “I cannot tell you how long I've been waiting for a statement like President-elect Trump's,” Haggai, 39, told The Daily Signal.

“Everybody is talking about the hostages who are being held so violently, inhumanely, and against the will of the entire World, in the Middle East – But it's all talk, and no action,” Trump wrote on Truth Social on Dec. 2.

Trump pledged that “there will be ALL HELL TO PAY in the Middle East, and for those in charge who perpetrated these atrocities against Humanity” if the hostages are not released by Jan. 20, the day he is sworn into office.

“Those responsible will be hit harder than anybody has been hit in the long and storied History of the United States of America. **RELEASE THE HOSTAGES NOW,**” Trump wrote.

“You don’t even know the power that statement made,” said Haggai, the daughter of U.S.-Israeli hostages Judi Weinstein Haggai and Gad Haggai.

If on Oct. 8, 2023, one day after the attack, “all world leaders” would have made a statement like the one Trump made, “our world would be so different right now,” Haggai said.

“Not only we would save ... the hostages’ lives ... but we would also save so many Palestinian lives in Gaza,” she said. “And yet, for some reason, this whole time, the fingers were pointed at Israel, a democratic ally, instead of [at] actual terrorists.”

In November, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, claiming that Netanyahu, along with the former defense minister of Israel and the military commander of Hamas, were guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

A cease-fire was in place on Oct. 6, but Hamas broke that cease-fire on Oct. 7, and every day the hostages are held is a violation of international law, according to Haggai. “The fact that it took this long to make a statement like President-elect Trump made is a huge failure of the international community,” Haggai argues. It has been over 14 months since the attack, and still about 100 people remain hostage in Gaza, including seven American citizens, two of whom are Haggai’s deceased mother and father. “I can’t even start the mourning process because I need the people that I love to come back so I can even start,” Haggai said.



Iris Weinstein Haggai, center, with her parents Gad and Judi Weinstein Haggai.

Gad Haggai was a jazz musician, and his wife was a teacher. The couple were “health addicts,” according to their daughter, and every day began for them with meditation, a cup of coffee, and an early morning walk.

Haggai was home in Singapore, where she moved in 2016, when she began getting “red alerts” about a situation in Israel on the morning of Oct. 7. She was not overly concerned because it is not unusual for Hamas to fire rockets over the border, but she still texted her parents, who lived in the community she grew up in, to make sure they were OK.

The couple was on their morning walk and told their daughter “they were laying face down in the fields” as they watched “hundreds of rockets over their heads.” Haggai asked her parents to let her know when they made it home, but “they never replied.”

It took about three weeks of searching for answers for Haggai to learn that terrorists on motorcycles shot her father in the head and her mother in the face and arm on Oct. 7, but she still did not know where her parents were or if they had survived. Eventually, authorities discovered a video in which Gad Haggai’s body was seen in the back of a truck being driven back to Gaza on Oct. 7. The fate of Judi Weinstein Haggai remained unknown.

When authorities reached a hostage deal in November 2023 to release many of the women and children being held in Gaza, Haggai went to Israel in hopes that her mom would be one of the freed hostages. “Every night I would wait in this dark hotel room waiting for a list that Hamas would release,” Haggai said. Yet her mother’s name never appeared, and the hostages that were released, 40 of whom Haggai knew, said they had not seen her mother or her father in Gaza. Haggai did not understand why her 70-year-old mother, who had American and Canadian citizenship, was not released, but after 83 days of waiting, enough intelligence was discovered to confirm that both of her parents were killed on Oct. 7 and their bodies were taken back to “Gaza as bargaining chips where they remain until today.”

This year, the first day of Hanukkah falls on Christmas Day and Haggai is asking “all Americans to please pray for us and our families.”

“We have had too many holidays, too many birthdays and anniversaries without real closure and without our loved ones,” she said. “Please pray with us so we can have our miracle before Jan. 20.”