**Mom Speaks Out On 3 Abducted Teens As Israeli PM Blames Hamas**

June 15, 2014

By Ralph Ellis and Michael Schwartz

CNN http://www.cnn.com/2014/06/15/world/meast/west-bank-jewish-teens-missing/

[Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu](http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/01/world/meast/benjamin-netanyahu---fast-facts/index.html) on Sunday blamed Hamas for abducting three teenagers who went missing in Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

"This morning I can say what I was unable to say yesterday before the extensive wave of arrests of Hamas members in Judea and Samaria," he said at the start of the weekly Cabinet meeting.

"Those who perpetrated the abduction of our youths were members of Hamas -- the same Hamas that Abu Mazen made a unity government with. This has severe repercussions."

Abu Mazen is another name for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Netanyahu said he asked Abbas "to do everything to help bring them back in peace." He's also given security forces orders to locate the teenagers and prevent them from being moved to Gaza or any other place.

One of three boys is a dual Israeli-American citizen, according to CNN affiliate Channel 10 Israel, which attributed the information to a source at Netanyahu's office. Israeli and U.S. officials have not publicly confirmed the report.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry called Sunday for the immediate release of the boys.

"We are still seeking details on the parties responsible for this despicable terrorist act, although many indications point to Hamas' involvement," Kerry said in a written statement that offered support to the Israeli government. "As we gather this information, we reiterate our position that Hamas is a terrorist organization known for its attacks on innocent civilians and which has used kidnapping in the past."

**'We'll hug them soon'**

Gilad Shaar, 16; Naftali Frenkel, 16; and Eyal Yifrach, 19, have been missing since late Thursday or Friday, and were last seen around Gush Etzion, according to the Israel Defense Forces.

The three "were just on their way home," Naftali's mother, Racheli Frankel, told reporters. "We trust" that they "will be with us here, and we'll hug them soon ... and God willing, we'll all be able to celebrate their return safely," she said.

Gilad Shaer, Naftali Frenkel and Eyal Yifrach.

She thanked the security forces for their efforts and the U.S. Embassy for its support. "We feel waves and waves of prayers and support and positive energy in this direction."

Israeli soldiers have detained about 80 Palestinian suspects in the search for the three teens, [the IDF said](https://twitter.com/IDFSpokesperson/status/478040453820841986) Sunday.

Netanyahu on Saturday gave security forces the OK to use "all measures" at their disposal to find the teenagers.

The Palestinian Ministry of Information said in a written statement that the arrests come under "flimsy pretexts" as a "continuation of the aggression" on Palestinians.

"The ministry also asserts that the Israeli military campaign has been on going for decades, during which (Israel) kidnapped the entire Palestinian people," it said.

**Hamas responds**

A Hamas spokesman in Gaza told CNN that Netanyahu's comments attributing blame were "stupid and baseless."

"The arrest campaign made by the Israeli occupation in the West Bank is targeted to break the backbone of Hamas and bring it down, but the Israelis will not succeed in achieving their goal," Sami Abu Zuhri said.

But Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon said the kidnappings are a reminder of Hamas' tactics. "When the Fatah-Hamas government was formed last month, the international community quickly recognized and welcomed it," he [wrote in a Facebook post](https://www.facebook.com/DannyAyalon/posts/10152297234371144).

"Suddenly, Hamas' cruel acts of terrorism were forgotten, their never-ending attempts to harm innocent civilians, along with the Hamas Charter, which calls for the total destruction of the state of Israel." Now, he wrote, "the international community has been given a second chance to correct its moral, diplomatic and strategic mistakes. Wall to wall condemnations of the kidnapping are called for, as well as placing responsibility on the Palestinian government, including the threat of taking physical, economic and diplomatic steps against it."

But, he wrote, the international community is "keeping silent, and by doing so, not only are the Palestinians receiving a false, lenient message, but Israel also understands again that she has no one to count on but herself, something that will not encourage further compromises on her part in the near future."

IDF spokesman Lt. Col. Peter Lerner said, "We are determined in bringing the boys home in a (hasty) manner, in safety and in good health. Palestinian terrorists will not feel safe, will not be able to hide and will feel the heavy arm of the Israeli military capabilities."

**'#BringBackOurBoys'**

The abduction of the three teens inspired social media users to use the hashtag #BringBackOurBoys, a reference to the #BringBackOurGirls campaign for more than 200 Nigerian school girls who were kidnapped by militants.

The thread quickly became contentious, with pro-Palestinian users alleging many Palestinian children have been kidnapped by Israeli soldiers and imprisoned.

A "Bring Back Our Boys" Facebook page calling for an end to "the terrorism against Israel" had more than 50,000 likes Sunday.