

Hostage

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A hostage is a person seized by an abductor in order to compel another party, one which places a high value on the liberty, well-being and safety of the person seized—such as a relative, employer, law enforcement, or government—to act, or refrain from acting, in a certain way, often under threat of serious physical harm or death to the hostage(s) after expiration of an ultimatum. The Encyclopædia Britannica Eleventh Edition defines a hostage as "a person who is handed over by one of two belligerent parties to the other or seized as security for the carrying out of an agreement, or as a preventive measure against certain acts of war."

A party who seizes one or more hostages is known as a hostage-taker; if the hostages are present voluntarily, then the receiver is known as a host.

In civil society, along with kidnapping for ransom and human trafficking (often willing to ransom its captives when lucrative or to trade on influence), hostage taking is a criminal activity. In the military context, hostages are distinct from prisoners of war—despite prisoners being used as collateral in prisoner exchange—and hostage taking is regarded as a war crime.

Hostage taking and kidnapping are prone to blend together. When the goal is strictly financial, the primary lens is one of extortion, even in the face of a severe threat to the safety of the captive person if the financial negotiation fails; conversely, when the goal is political or geopolitical, the primary lens is terrorism.

When looking at hostage-taking from the primary lens of terrorism, there are reasons to believe that certain government types are more susceptible to hostage-taking terrorism than others. In democratic governments, for example, elements related to their democratic ideals such as freedom of the press, constraints on the executive, free elections, and higher levels of civil liberties create favorable outcomes that enable hostage-takers to target these countries specifically. Hostage-takers understand that by targeting democratic governments, they are more likely to seek concessions and/or negotiate with them based on the level of accountability they must face from their citizens who elect them into office, and the media within the country which reports on such events in a capacity independent from the state.

Hostage (disambiguation)

hostage in Wiktionary, the free dictionary. A hostage is a person or entity held by a captor. Hostage or The Hostage may also refer to: The Hostage (1917

A hostage is a person or entity held by a captor.

Hostage or The Hostage may also refer to:

Hostage (TV series)

Hostage is a British political thriller miniseries written by Matt Charman and directed by Isabelle Sieb Amy Nail, starring Suranne Jones and Julie Delpy

Hostage is a British political thriller miniseries written by Matt Charman and directed by Isabelle Sieb Amy Nail, starring Suranne Jones and Julie Delpy as the fictional British prime minister and French president respectively. It premiered on Netflix on 21 August 2025. The author was initially inspired to create a

Formula 1 story after watching the six-episode miniseries dedicated to Ayrton Senna, but eventually chose to create a thriller one.

Iran hostage crisis

The Iran hostage crisis (Persian: ????? ????????????? ????? ??????) began on November 4, 1979, when 66 Americans, including diplomats and other civilian

The Iran hostage crisis (Persian: ????? ????????????? ????? ??????) began on November 4, 1979, when 66 Americans, including diplomats and other civilian personnel, were taken hostage at the Embassy of the United States in Tehran, with 52 of them being held until January 20, 1981. The incident occurred after the Muslim Student Followers of the Imam's Line stormed and occupied the building in the months following the Iranian Revolution. With support from Ruhollah Khomeini, who had led the Iranian Revolution and would eventually establish the present-day Islamic Republic of Iran, the hostage-takers demanded that the United States extradite Iranian king Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, who had been granted asylum by the Carter administration for cancer treatment. Notable among the assailants were Hossein Dehghan (future Minister of Defense of Iran), Mohammad Ali Jafari (future Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps), and Mohammad Bagheri (future Chief of the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces). The hostage crisis was a pivotal episode in the history of Iran–United States relations, formally sparking the ongoing Iran–United States conflict. After 444 days, it came to an end with the signing of the Algiers Accords between the Iranian and American governments; Iran's king had died in Cairo, Egypt, on July 27, 1980.

The American magazine Time described the Iran hostage crisis as an entanglement of vengeance and mutual incomprehension. American president Jimmy Carter called the hostage-taking an act of "blackmail" and the hostages "victims of terrorism and anarchy." Among proponents of the Iranian Revolution, it was seen as an act against perceived attempts by the United States to undermine the uprising against Iran's king, who had been accused of committing numerous human rights abuses against Iranian dissidents through his Bureau for Intelligence and Security of the State. The Carter administration's refusal to extradite Pahlavi was cited by the hostage-takers as proof of complicity on the part of the United States, which, in turn, denounced the Iranians' hostage-taking as an egregious violation of the principles of international law, such as the Vienna Convention, under which diplomats and diplomatic compounds are to be granted immunity from coercion and harassment.

Six American diplomats who had evaded capture were rescued by the "Canadian Caper" on January 27, 1980. As Iran hostage crisis negotiations dragged out and did not secure the release of the remaining hostages, Carter approved Operation Eagle Claw on April 24, 1980. The effort failed, however, resulting in the death of one Iranian civilian and eight American soldiers, prompting Secretary of State Cyrus Vance to resign from his position. By September 1980, the beginning of the Iraqi invasion of Iran spurred the Iranian government to negotiate with the United States as part of an initiative mediated by Algeria.

Political analysts cited the standoff as a major factor in the downfall of Carter's presidency, culminating in his landslide loss in the 1980 presidential election. The hostages were formally released into American custody one day after the Algiers Accords were signed, just minutes following the first inauguration of Ronald Reagan. In Iran, the crisis strengthened the prestige of Khomeini and the political power of theocrats who opposed normalization with the Western world. Since then, the United States has enforced international sanctions against Iran, which further weakened ties between the two countries.

Gaza war hostage crisis

elderly people. Almost half of the hostages were foreign nationals or have multiple citizenships, and some hostages were Negev Bedouins. The captives are

In 2023, as part of the October 7 attacks which initiated the Gaza war, Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups abducted 251 people from Israel to the Gaza Strip, including children, women, and elderly people. Almost half of the hostages were foreign nationals or have multiple citizenships, and some hostages were Negev Bedouins. The captives are likely being held in different locations in the Gaza Strip. Of all the hostages presumed alive in October 2024, 53 were civilians and 11 were military personnel according to the Agence France-Presse news agency.

As of 23 June 2025, 148 hostages had been returned alive to Israel, with 105 released in the 2023 Gaza war ceasefire, five released by Hamas outside the framework of any ceasefire agreement, eight rescued by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and 30 released during the 2025 Gaza war ceasefire. The bodies of 56 hostages were repatriated to Israel, with three of the hostages killed by friendly fire after escaping captivity and being mistaken for enemy fighters by IDF troops, the bodies of 45 other hostages repatriated through military operations and eight returned in the same 2025 prisoner exchange deal. According to Israel, 75 hostages were killed on 7 October 2023 or in Hamas captivity. There are 50 hostages remaining in captivity in the Gaza Strip, 49 of whom had been abducted on 7 October 2023, and the other hostage captured earlier. Based on intelligence, the IDF has concluded that at least 27 of the remaining hostages are dead.

The return of the hostages has been a goal of the Israeli operation in Gaza. The question of whether this should be the main goal has been at the heart of a controversy in Israeli politics.

At the start of the war, Hamas offered to release all hostages in exchange for Israel releasing all Palestinian prisoners. In October 2023, Israel held 5,200 Palestinians, including 170 children (under 18), in its prisons. Several countries have been involved in negotiations between Israel and Hamas, with Qatar taking the lead.

On 22 November 2023, Israel and Hamas agreed to the release of 150 Palestinian prisoners and a four-day cease-fire in exchange for Hamas's release of approximately 50 of the hostages. The exchange involved hostages from the categories of women and children. As of 30 November 2023, the last day of the ceasefire, 105 civilian hostages had been released, which included 81 people from Israel, 23 Thais and 1 Filipino. On 12 February 2024, two Argentinian-Israeli civilians were rescued in Operation Golden Hand. On 2 September 2024, Hamas released statements which strongly insinuated that they now had a new policy of killing any hostage that the IDF attempted to rescue with military force, so that Israel could only receive the hostages back by negotiating a prisoners exchange. On 15 January 2025, it was announced that a hostage return agreement had been reached between Hamas and Israel, under which Hamas would release 33 out of 98 hostages in the first phase, including infants, children, women, and elderly men, as well as younger men with injuries or health issues. In exchange, Israel released more than 1,000 Palestinians being held in Israeli prisons.

Manila hostage crisis

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The Manila hostage crisis, officially known as the Rizal Park hostage-taking incident (Tagalog: Pagbibihag ng bus sa Maynila), took place when a disgruntled former Philippine National Police officer named Rolando Mendoza hijacked a tourist bus in Rizal Park, Manila, Philippines, on August 23, 2010. The bus carried 25 people: 20 tourists, a tour guide from Hong Kong, and four local Filipinos. Mendoza claimed that he had been unfairly dismissed from his job, and demanded a fair hearing to defend himself.

Negotiations (which were broadcast live on television and the internet) broke down dramatically about ten hours into the stand-off, when the police arrested Mendoza's brother and thus incited Mendoza to open fire. The bus driver managed to escape, and declared "Everyone is dead" before he was moved away by policemen. Following a 90-minute gun battle, Mendoza and eight of the hostages were killed and several others injured.

The Philippine and Hong Kong governments conducted separate investigations into the incident. Both inquiries concluded that the Philippine officials' poor handling of the situation caused the eight hostages' deaths. The assault mounted by the Manila Police District (MPD), and the resulting shoot-out, have been widely criticized by pundits as "bungled" and "incompetent", and the Hong Kong Government has issued a "black" travel alert for the Philippines as a result of the incident.

Several of Mendoza's family members and Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada apologized to Hong Kong for the incident, while President Benigno Aquino III "begged for understanding" from Hong Kong. President Aquino, however, would decide against issuing a formal apology to Hong Kong or China due to the incident being "the act of one individual", which should "not be construed as the act of the entire country". On April 12, 2018, Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte publicly apologized for the incident on behalf of his country.

Israeli hostage deal protests

handling of the Gaza war and the hostage crisis. The protests aim to pressure Netanyahu to accept a ceasefire and reach a hostage deal. The protests began sporadically

Since November 2023, a series of demonstrations, instances of civil disorder, and riots have taken place in Israel against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government, primarily in response to the handling of the Gaza war and the hostage crisis. The protests aim to pressure Netanyahu to accept a ceasefire and reach a hostage deal. The protests began sporadically at the onset of the war but have grown significantly in size and intensity, culminating in massive gatherings across various Israeli cities.

On 1 September 2024, following the discovery of six hostages killed in the Gaza Strip, protest organizations declared a nationwide strike and day of demonstrations, with more than 500,000 people participating across Israel and abroad to demand a hostage deal. A subsequent strike was announced on 17 August 2025, drawing hundreds of thousands of demonstrators.

Hostage (2005 film)

Hostage is a 2005 action thriller film directed by Florent Siri from the screenplay by Doug Richardson. It is based on the 2001 novel of the same name

Hostage is a 2005 action thriller film directed by Florent Siri from the screenplay by Doug Richardson. It is based on the 2001 novel of the same name by Robert Crais. The film stars Bruce Willis (who co-produced the film), Kevin Pollak, Ben Foster, and Jonathan Tucker and follows the police chief who takes place as the negotiator when the family of a wealthy accountant is held hostage by three teenagers. The film earned negative reviews from critics and grossed \$77 million.

Hostages Trial

United States of America v. Wilhelm List, et al., commonly known as the Hostages Trial, was the seventh of the twelve "Subsequent Nuremberg trials" for

The United States of America v. Wilhelm List, et al., commonly known as the Hostages Trial, was the seventh of the twelve "Subsequent Nuremberg trials" for war crimes and crimes against humanity after the end of World War II between 1947 and 1948. The accused were 12 Wehrmacht generals of the Balkan Campaign charged with ordering the hostage-taking of civilians, wanton shootings of these hostages, the reprisal killings of civilians, and the execution without trial of captured "partisans" (both real and suspected) perpetrated by German troops in occupied Greece, Albania and Yugoslavia. The defendant Lothar Rendulic was further charged for using scorched earth in Finland during the Lapland War in 1944.

The Hostages Trial was held by United States authorities at the Palace of Justice in Nuremberg in the American occupation zone before US military courts, not before the International Military Tribunal. Two

were found guilty of 3 counts, four of 2 counts, and two of 1 count, receiving prison sentences ranging from seven years to life imprisonment, and four were acquitted of all charges. Franz Böhme committed suicide before the arraignment, and Maximilian von Weichs was severed from the trial for medical reasons.

The judges in this case, heard before Military Tribunal V, were Charles F. Wennerstrum (presiding judge) from Iowa, George J. Burke from Michigan, and Edward F. Carter from Nebraska. The Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution was Telford Taylor, the chief prosecutor for this case was Theodore Fenstermacher. The indictment was filed on May 10, 1947; the trial lasted from July 8, 1947, until February 19, 1948.

Hostages Convention

The Hostages Convention (formally the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages) is a United Nations treaty by which states agree to prohibit

The Hostages Convention (formally the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages) is a United Nations treaty by which states agree to prohibit and punish hostage taking. The treaty includes definitions of "hostage" and "hostage taking" and sets out the principle of aut dedere aut judicare: a party to the treaty must prosecute a hostage taker if no other state requests extradition for prosecution of the same crime.

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