

Hamas threatens Shalit amid talk delays

by UPI

GAZA -- Detained Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit's future could be threatened if prisoner release talks don't move forward, senior Hamas officials say.

Haaretz reported Thursday that Hamas officials said delays in the Israel-Palestinian talks could result in Shalit ending up like Ron Arad, a missing-in-action Israeli navigator who is presumed dead. Arad has been missing since 1986.

Hamas official Osama Mzeini said the negotiations for Shalit's release remain stuck on which Palestinian prisoners Israel will set free and how many of those detainees will have to be deported.

Shalit was captured in June 2006 in the Gaza Strip and has remained at the center of prisoner exchange talks between Israeli and Palestinian officials.

A Hamas source quoted Hamas military head Ahmed Jabari as saying the paramilitary organization will continue to hold Shalit for another year if necessary, Haaretz said.

"I have no problem holding Shalit for another whole year, as long as Hamas' demands are not met," Jabari reportedly said.

Copyright © 2009, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Hamas threatens Shalit amid talk delays by UPI