

Israel awaits revised Hamas demands

by UPI

JERUSALEM - Israel has refused to free most of the 350 Palestinian prisoners Hamas wants released in exchange for kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

Israeli officials passed on the approved names, reportedly only a few dozen from the list, to an Egyptian mediator to pass them on to Hamas and it is awaiting a revised list from Hamas, Haaretz reported Friday.

A source involved in the mediation efforts said very few of the prisoners approved for release by Israel are serving life sentences.

Israeli security sources said negotiations stalled due to increased fighting between Israeli forces and Hamas. The sources said the Egyptian mediator is having trouble progressing with Hamas because many of the party's leaders have gone underground to avoid being targeted by Israeli forces, Haaretz said.

Shalit was kidnapped by Palestinian militants June 25, 2006, in the Gaza Strip.

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