1983 Prisoner Exchange: Ansar Detainees and 65 Prisoners Freed for Six Soldiers

On 23 November 1983, in the port of Tripoli in northern Lebanon, six Israeli soldiers captured by Fatah at Bhamdoun were released in return for the detainees of the Ansar camp in southern Lebanon, 4,700 Palestinians and Lebanese, and 65 prisoners from Israeli prisons, together with the return of the PLO archives. [1][2]

Contents

1. The deal at a glance
2. Details of the deal
3. Timeline
4. Frequently asked questions about the 1983 exchange

The deal at a glance

Item	Details
Date of the deal	23 November 1983
Captor	The Fatah movement
Place of capture	Bhamdoun, Lebanon
Soldiers released	Six soldiers
Freed in return	The Ansar camp detainees (4,700 Palestinians and Lebanese) and 65 prisoners from Israeli prisons
Place of exchange	The port of Tripoli, through the Red Cross

[1][2]

Details of the deal

According to Al Jazeera Net, Fatah captured eight soldiers at Bhamdoun in Lebanon on 4 September 1982. According to WAFA, Ahmad Jibril's group asked for two of them, and the page says it had not captured them but took them from Fatah, and that the other six were the subject of the deal. [1][2]

All the detainees of the Ansar camp in southern Lebanon were freed, along with detainees in Nabatieh, Sidon and Tyre according to Al Jazeera Net, in addition to 65 prisoners from Israeli prisons and the return of the PLO archives. Al Jazeera Net says 3,500 of those freed chose to stay in Lebanon and the rest were taken to Algeria. The six soldiers were handed over through the Red Cross in the port of Tripoli: Eliyahu Avutbul, Danny Gilboa, Rafi Hazan, Reuven Cohen, Abraham Montblisky and Avi Kornfeld. [1][2]

Timeline

Date	Event
4 September 1982	Fatah captures eight soldiers at Bhamdoun [1]
23 November 1983	Six soldiers handed over at Tripoli and the Ansar detainees and 65 prisoners freed [1]

Frequently asked questions about the 1983 exchange

How many prisoners were freed in the 1983 deal?

4,700 Ansar detainees and 65 prisoners from Israeli prisons according to WAFA, and more than 5,000 according to Al Jazeera Net. [1][2]

How many soldiers were released?

Six soldiers. [1][2]

Where did the exchange take place?

In the port of Tripoli in northern Lebanon through the Red Cross. [1]

Sources and references

1. Al Jazeera Net (Encyclopedia), “The most prominent prisoner exchanges with Israel”, 9 November 2023 (in Arabic).
2. WAFA (Palestinian National Information Center), “Prisoner exchange operations” (in Arabic).