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Israel to release 400 prisoners

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30 May, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Israel to release 400 prisoners

BNE: Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his government have approved the release of 400 Palestinian prisoners from jail. The detainees are being set free as part of the Middle East peace process, also known as the "Road Map for Peace". Mr. Sharon and Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas agreed to a ceasefire in February, which included the release of 900 prisoners. Five hundred Palestinians were released in February. All of them had served more than two-thirds of their prison sentences and none was directly involved in killing Israeli citizens.

Mr. Sharon warned his government before it voted that it was essential for Israel to release the prisoners. He said Israel had to keep its promises to Mr. Abbas. Mr. Sharon said the prisoner release was vital to strengthen Mr. Mahmoud's political position in upcoming Palestinian elections. Israel is worried that militant groups such as Hamas might win the July 17 elections. Hamas is an organization branded as terrorists by the U.S. and the European Union. Mr. Sharon asked his people to understand that the prisoner release will "not strengthen the forces of extremist terrorism".

WARM-UPS

1. INFO SEARCH: Talk to different partners and find out all you know about Israeli-Palestinian relations. Ask for information on the people, the history and the situation today. After you have finished collecting information, sit with your partner / group. Tell each other what you found out. Was this activity difficult? Did you learn new things about the world?

2. ISRAEL: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with Israel. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them.

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Ariel Sharon / Mahmoud Abbas / Palestinian prisoners / the Middle East /
ceasefires / prison / Palestine / Hamas / terrorism*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. 2-MINUTE DEBATES: With a partner, engage in these fun 2-minute debates. Students A firmly believe in the opinions on the left, Students B support the opinions on the right. Change partners often.

- a. Prisoners should never be released early. vs. If it helps the peace process, it's OK.
- b. Israel is releasing terrorists. vs. Israel is releasing people who want their own country.
- c. Peace will never come to the Middle East. vs. Even the longest of conflicts always end in peace.
- d. Palestinians are terrorists. vs. Palestinians are fighting for their own country.
- e. The United Nations should solve the Middle East problem. vs. The situation in the Middle East is too difficult for the United Nations.
- f. Israel should withdraw from the Gaza Strip and West Bank. vs. It's Israeli land.
- g. Ariel Sharon and Mahmoud Abbas should get the Nobel Peace Prize. vs. It's way too early to award peace prizes.
- h. The Middle East is the most dangerous place in the world. vs. I disagree.
- i. Hamas members are terrorists. vs. Hamas members are freedom fighters.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Israel will release 400 Palestinian prisoners. | T / F |
| b. In February, Israel released 500 Palestinian prisoners. | T / F |
| c. The Middle East peace process is called the "Atlas for Peace". | T / F |
| d. All prisoners who have served 80% of their sentence will be released. | T / F |
| e. Ariel Sharon wants to make Mahmoud Abbas's position stronger. | T / F |
| f. Israel will hold elections on July 17. | T / F |
| g. The U.S. and European Union like an organization called Hamas. | T / F |
| h. Mr. Sharon said the prisoner releases will strengthen terrorism. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------|
| a. approved | aka |
| b. set free | labeled |
| c. also known as | fulfill |
| d. ceasefire | released |
| e. sentences | truce |
| f. keep | essential |
| g. vital | fanatical |
| h. worried | OK'd |
| i. branded | concerned |
| j. extremist | terms |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. approved the release | thirds of their prison sentences |
| b. set | Palestinian elections |
| c. Middle East peace | of 400 Palestinian prisoners |
| d. agreed to | political position |
| e. more than two- | terrorism |
| f. release | free |
| g. strengthen Mr. Mahmoud's | terrorists by the U.S. |
| h. upcoming | process |
| i. branded as | a ceasefire |
| j. extremist | the prisoners |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces.

Israel to release 400 prisoners

BNE: Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his government have _____ the release of 400 Palestinian prisoners from _____. The detainees are being _____ free as part of the Middle East peace process, also _____ as the "Road Map for Peace". Mr. Sharon and Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas agreed to a _____ in February, which _____ the release of 900 prisoners. Five hundred Palestinians were released in February. All of them had _____ more than two-thirds of their prison sentences and none was directly _____ in killing Israeli citizens.

served
jail
known
approved
included
involved
set
ceasefire

Mr. Sharon _____ his government before it voted that it was _____ for Israel to release the prisoners. He said Israel had to keep its _____ to Mr. Abbas. Mr. Sharon said the prisoner release was _____ to strengthen Mr. Mahmoud's political position in upcoming Palestinian _____. Israel is worried that _____ groups such as Hamas might win the July 17 elections. Hamas is an organization _____ as terrorists by the U.S. and the European Union. Mr. Sharon asked his people to understand that the prisoner release will "not strengthen the forces of extremist _____".

essential
warned
branded
vital
militant
promises
terrorism
elections

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'set' and 'free'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words in the gap fill. Which were new, interesting, unusual, difficult...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT MIDDLE EAST SURVEY: In pairs / groups write down questions about the Middle East.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make a mini-presentation to another group / the class on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

approved
set
map
ceasefire
February
two-thirds

warned
keep
vital
elections
Hamam
extremist

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What did you think the article would be about when you read the headline?
- b. Did you want to read the article after you saw the headline?
- c. Are you interested in the Middle East?
- d. What do you know about Ariel Sharon?
- e. Do you think Mr. Sharon is a good man?
- f. Do you think it's OK to release the prisoners?
- g. Do you think releasing the prisoners will move the peace process forward?
- h. Should the U.S. and the European brand Hamas as terrorists?
- i. Will peace come to the Middle East one day?
- j. Would you like to visit Israel?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading the article?
- b. What did you think of this news?
- c. What do you know about the Palestinians?
- d. What do you know about Mahmoud Abbas?
- e. Do you think the Palestinians should have their own country?
- f. What are the biggest problems between Israel and the Palestinians?
- g. Is the prisoner release a victory for the terrorists?
- h. Should Ariel Sharon and Mahmoud Abbas the Nobel Peace Prize?
- i. Will the world be different when Israel and Palestine are at peace?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

PEACEMAKERS: You are the head of a new organization called "International Peacemakers Inc." that finds answers to any problems. It is your job to create a masterplan (in pairs or groups) to bring peace to a current dispute. It can be a world, national, regional, school, family or friends dispute. Prepare your notes and suggestions in this table:

| | |
|--|--|
| The dispute is between _____ and _____ | |
| Describe the two sides | |
| Explain the history of "Side A" | |
| Explain the history of "Side B" | |
| What does "Side A" want? | |
| What does "Side B" want? | |
| What are your suggestions to make the two sides totally happy? | |

After you have finished, tell the whole situation and your suggestions to a different partner / group. They will provide you with feedback. You comment on that feedback.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Israel to release 400 prisoners

BNE: Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his government have _____ of 400 Palestinian prisoners from jail. The detainees are _____ as part of the Middle East peace process, _____ the "Road Map for Peace". Mr. Sharon and Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas agreed _____ in February, which included the release of 900 prisoners. Five hundred Palestinians were released in February. All of them had served more _____ their prison sentences and none was directly involved in killing Israeli citizens.

Mr. Sharon _____ before it voted that it was essential for Israel to release the prisoners. He said Israel _____ promises to Mr. Abbas. Mr. Sharon said the prisoner release _____ strengthen Mr. Mahmoud's political position in upcoming Palestinian elections. Israel is worried that militant groups such as Hamas might win the July 17 elections. Hamas is an organization _____ by the U.S. and the European Union. Mr. Sharon asked his people to understand that the prisoner release will "not strengthen _____ extremist terrorism".

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the Palestinian prisoner release. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. THE ROAD MAP: Write down some suggestions that might help to create peace between Israel and Palestine. Show them to your classmates in your next lesson.

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon telling him what you think of the prisoner releases. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did your classmates have similar opinions?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. T c. F d. F e. T f. F g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| a. approved | OK'd |
| b. set free | released |
| c. also known as | aka |
| d. ceasefire | truce |
| e. sentences | terms |
| f. keep | fulfill |
| g. vital | essential |
| h. worried | concerned |
| i. branded | labeled |
| j. extremist | fanatical |

PHRASE MATCH:

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. approved the release | of 400 Palestinian prisoners |
| b. set | free |
| c. Middle East peace | process |
| d. agreed to | a ceasefire |
| e. more than two- | thirds of their prison sentences |
| f. release | the prisoners |
| g. strengthen Mr. Mahmoud's | political position |
| h. upcoming | Palestinian elections |
| i. branded as | terrorists by the U.S. |
| j. extremist | terrorism |

GAP FILL:

Israel to release 400 prisoners

BNE: Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his government have **approved** the release of 400 Palestinian prisoners from **jail**. The detainees are being **set** free as part of the Middle East peace process, also **known** as the "Road Map for Peace". Mr. Sharon and Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas agreed to a **ceasefire** in February, which **included** the release of 900 prisoners. Five hundred Palestinians were released in February. All of them had **served** more than two-thirds of their prison sentences and none was directly **involved** in killing Israeli citizens.

Mr. Sharon **warned** his government before it voted that it was **essential** for Israel to release the prisoners. He said Israel had to keep its **promises** to Mr. Abbas. Mr. Sharon said the prisoner release was **vital** to strengthen Mr. Mahmoud's political position in upcoming Palestinian **elections**. Israel is worried that **militant** groups such as Hamas might win the July 17 elections. Hamas is an organization **branded** as terrorists by the U.S. and the European Union. Mr. Sharon asked his people to understand that the prisoner release will "not strengthen the forces of extremist **terrorism**".