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RELEASE IN FULL

From: Sent: To: Subject: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov> Monday, July 16, 2012 1:53 AM H

Fw: Families to visit Gaza prisoners in Israel (AP)

From: OpsNewsTicker@state.gov [mailto:OpsNewsTicker@state.gov] Sent: Monday, July 16, 2012 01:45 AM To: NEWS-Mahogany Subject: Families to visit Gaza prisoners in Israel (AP)

GAZA CITY (AP) - Relatives of Gaza prisoners held in Israel are headed for their first visit with them in more than six years.

Israel agreed to the visits in May as part of a deal to end a mass hunger strike by Palestinian prisoners. Abdullah Qandil, a leader of a prisoners affairs group, says relatives of 26 Palestinian prisoners have gathered

at the passenger crossing between Israel and Gaza on Monday with a Red Cross escort.

He says they'll go from there to the prison where their relatives are being held.

Israel is holding 450 prisoners from Gaza in all.

It stopped the family visits after Hamas militants captured an Israeli soldier in 2006. The soldier came home in a prisoner swap last October, and the hunger strikers had demanded the visits resume.

NewsTickers alert senior Department officials to breaking news. This item appears as it did in its original publication and does not contain analysis or commentary by Department sources.

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