Eliya Cohen and Ziv Abud





Kidnapped on October 7 from the Nova music festival, Eliya Cohen was held in Hamas captivity for 505 days, much of that time in underground tunnels, cut off from the outside world and living in extreme conditions.

For months, he did not know whether his then-fiancée, Ziv Abud, had survived the attack, while she fought publicly for his release, carrying their shared story in his absence.

Eliya was released in February 2025. Since his return, he continued fighting until others who were held with him are brought home.

Eliya Cohen and Ziv Abud, now married, survived the same attack on October 7th. They share a story shaped by tragedy, love, separation, and an ongoing fight for freedom, both personal and collective.

Before he was kidnapped, Eliya Cohen barely spoke English. During his captivity, he received an English book from Hersh Goldberg-Polin and read it again and again, more than a dozen times. With the help of fellow hostages, he taught himself the words he did not know and gradually learned to speak English while in captivity.

Today, Eliya travels the world sharing his story in fluent English, whether through a keynote address or a moderated conversation on stage.