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Watch: Moment Thai hostages reunite with families after 15 months

Five Thai farm workers released by Hamas in Gaza last month have arrived home in Bangkok, after spending nearly 500 days in captivity. Pongsak Thaenna, Sathian Suwannakham, Watchara Sriaoun, Bannawat Saethao and Surasak Lamnao had all been working in southern Israel when they were kidnapped during the attacks by Hamas on 7 October 2023. There were emotional scenes on Sunday morning as the five men were embraced by tearful relatives at Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport's arrivals hall.

"I don't know how to put it into words," released hostage Mr Pongsak said. I'd like to thank all the officials who were involved in helping us out until we're standing here. we wouldn't be here without you helping us. We're very touched and very glad to have returned to our homeland. I am truly grateful." Somboon Saethao, the father of Mr Bannawat, said he was "so happy" and that his family would welcome his son home with a traditional Thai ceremony. I don't think I want him to be far from home again," his father told AFP.

Mr Bannawat moved to Israel nine months before his kidnap in search of a better income for the family, he added. His wife, Wiayada Saethao, told BBC Thai reporters that the 15 months her husband was held hostage were a period of suffering. Don't be afraid anymore. We're home now. We're in Thailand. We're going back home," she said.