

Saturday, October 14, 2023

To:

Ms. Mirjana Spoljarich Egger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

Mr. Fabrizio Carboni, regional director for the Near and Middle East, International Committee of the Red Cross

Ms. Alessandra Menegon, Head of the Delegation of the ICRC in Israel and the Occupied Territories

Mr. Alexander Breitegger, Legal Adviser, International Committee of the Red Cross

Re: Call for your urgent action to free all persons who were kidnapped by the Hamas organization and to put an immediate end to the vicious and inhumane capture and treatment of these people.

We, the undersigned organizations of persons with disabilities and disability advocacy organizations working to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, call for your urgent action to free all persons kidnapped by the Hamas, among them persons with disabilities, who were kidnapped by the Hamas and are held at the Gaza Strip.

As you are well aware, on Saturday, October 7th, during a barbaric Hamas attack, Israeli citizens as well as citizens of other nationalities, whose number according to official sources exceeds 120, were forcibly removed and abducted by armed militants to the Gaza Strip. Since then Hamas has not provided any information about the abductees, and details regarding their identities and exact number remain unknown. Partial information is currently being collected by the authorities of the State of Israel.

Nonetheless, we already know that among the abductees there are also persons with disabilities, including children and elderly, some of whom have invisible disabilities. These include at least two children with autism, a child with a life-threatening allergy, a person with special functional-related needs, a person with an autoimmune disease, and other individuals with a variety of illnesses, requiring daily medical treatment.

Abduction and the taking of hostages constitute gross violations of international human rights law and humanitarian law, amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The taking of hostages is a blatant violation of international law. From pictures and video clips published on social media and in the international media it appears that the captives have suffered torture and cruel, inhuman, brutal, and violent treatment during and after their abduction. The fact that their current status and conditions remain unknown raises serious concerns that they continue to suffer torture and cruel treatment by their captors, and that their lives are at immediate risk.

Given all the above, we urgently call on you to take immediate action, in any way possible, to bring about the release of all the abductees; and pending such release, to ascertain where they are being held, establish contact with them, and ensure their security and well-being, including the provision of full medical and caregiving support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Idit Saragusti,
Bizchut – The Israel
Human Rights Center for
People with Disabilities

Dr. Shiran Reichenberg, Adv.
Executive Director, Clinical
Legal Education Center, Hebrew
University

Prof. Roni Holler
Center for Disability
Studies, Hebrew
University of Jerusalem

And the following organizations:

ALUT - The Israeli Society for Autistic Children
ACI - Activists of the Autistic Community in Israel
AKIM Israel
Bizchut – The Israel Human Rights center for People with Disabilities
Beit Issie Shapiro
Center for Disability Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Clinical Legal Education Center, Hebrew University
Disabled, not a half person
Ehad Haam
ILAN-Isreal Association for Children with Disabilities
Link 20
Lishma Association
Malach Israel - Sign Language Interpreters
Mental health family members association

Contact: Dr. Idit Saragusti, telephone: (+) 972-54-5314830, Bizchut – Center for the Human Rights of People with Disabilities, idit@bizchut.org.il

Nedirim (R.A)

Ofek Liyladenu - Israel National Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairment

OTI - Autism Israeli Association

Parents of people with disability leadership in Tel Aviv

Special Education Recipients (S.E.R)

Spectrum of inclusion

The coalition of parents of children with disabilities

TSAI - Tourette Syndrome Association in Israel

Yated - the Down Syndrome Society of Israel

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