

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 7<sup>th</sup>, 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](mailto: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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