



**UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN ARRIA FORMULA MEETING ON
Humanitarian Aspects of Missing & Captive Persons in Gaza**

Co-Hosted by Ukraine and the United States of America

*22 December 2017
9:30-11:00 am
ECOSOC Chamber*

Background

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, “missing persons, regardless of their status – soldiers fallen or captured during the fighting, or civilians taken captive by an adverse party – are protected by humanitarian law... intentionally withholding information about missing persons is acting in violation of humanitarian law.”

During the 2014 conflict in the Gaza Strip, Hamas seized the remains of two Israel Defense Forces soldiers who were killed in the line of duty. One of these instances, the killing and capture of Second Lt. Hadar Goldin, took place during a United Nations-sanctioned ceasefire. Hamas continues to hold the remains of Second Lt. Goldin and Staff Sergeant Oron Shaul hostage in Gaza.

On two other occasions, Hamas captured Israeli civilians who inadvertently entered the Gaza Strip. Both of these Israelis, Abraham ‘Avre’ Mengistu and Hisham al-Sayed, are still held by Hamas. Both of them are mentally disabled, unaware of their surroundings, and in need of immediate medical attention.

In all these cases, Hamas has refused to provide the families of the victims with a sign of life or any update on the location or the wellbeing of those being held. Additionally, Hamas refuses to provide any updates to international humanitarian organizations or grant them access to the prisoners or the remains of the fallen Israeli soldiers.

As the representative of the ICRC to Israel and the Palestinian territories has noted, “Persons captured alive must be accounted for and treated humanely. Human remains, too, must be handled with dignity, identified and returned to the families concerned.”

Objective of the Meeting

The meeting will be an opportunity to discuss these violations of humanitarian obligations and international law, the effects on the families of those held, and the implications of

these acts on other countries fighting terrorism. Participants will also be encouraged to discuss ways in which international humanitarian organizations can fulfill their mandates and provide the answers, and eventual solutions, the families of the victims deserve.

Briefers

Dr. Leah Goldin is the mother of Second Lt. Hadar Goldin, an Israeli soldier who fell in battle with Hamas in August 2014, two hours after the onset of an internationally-sanctioned cease-fire. Hadar's remains, were captured by Hamas and are still being held by the terrorist organization. Dr. Goldin is an independent consultant specializing in Requirements Engineering, System Engineering, Software Engineering, and Process and Quality.

Irwin Cotler is the Founder and Chair of the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, an Emeritus Professor of Law at McGill University, former Member of Parliament, former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, and an international human rights lawyer.

Format

The meeting will be held on Friday 22 December 2017 from 09:30-11:00 at the United Nations Headquarters, in the ECOSOC Chamber.

All Members States of the United Nations, as well as permanent observers and non-governmental organizations accredited to the UN, as well as media are invited to attend.

Following introductory remarks by the co-chairs and the briefers, members of the Security Council will be invited to take the floor. They are encouraged to make their statements within five minutes each.

Then, selected relevant countries will also be invited to speak for five minutes each.

Interpretation will be provided in all official languages of the UN.

There will be a webcast of the meeting.