



Security Council

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Identical letters dated 18 March 2025 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

As I write this letter, 59 hostages are still in captivity in the hands of the terrorist organization Hamas in the Gaza Strip. They are held in inhumane conditions, exposed to torture and starvation, and treated in blatant violation of international law.

Hamas has exploited the period of the ceasefire since 19 January 2025 to rebuild its strength, replenish weapon stockpiles, repair launch positions, recruit terrorists, man combat facilities and prepare to launch attacks against Israel. It repeatedly violated the terms of the ceasefire by transferring weapons and militants to the northern Gaza Strip under the guise of population return, planting explosive devices along roads and gathering intelligence in preparation to launch attacks against Israel Defense Forces (IDF) forces.

As a result, and due to Hamas's refusal to release additional hostages, the IDF launched last night, 18 March 2025, 17 days after the completion of the first phase of the hostage release agreement, a military operation in the Gaza Strip aimed at thwarting Hamas' plans for terrorist activity and preventing harm to our citizens from the Gaza Strip. The operation is fully coordinated with the United States and is based on a shared understanding of the situation on the ground and a strong alliance. Israel is targeting Hamas' terror facilities and operatives. It operates in accordance with international law and makes every effort to avoid harming civilians. In this regard, we call upon the international community not to cooperate with Hamas' propaganda and not to rely on information provided by this terrorist organization. We expect our friends in the international community to support Israel and to support the call for the immediate release of all hostages.

During the period of the ceasefire, Israel has facilitated the unprecedented provision of aid into the Gaza Strip and complied with its commitments under the framework for the release of the hostages. Over 25,200 trucks of aid entered Gaza during the six weeks of this process. However, in contradiction to the manner in which Israel honoured its commitments, Hamas acted with deliberate cruelty to attempt psychological warfare against the hostages and the Israeli people.

All those who witnessed the barbaric "ceremonies" in which Hamas paraded the bodies of murdered Israeli hostages, as trophies to cheering Gazans, were shocked by these atrocities. The contrast between the starving hostages and the seemingly unaffected captors and audience is striking. The heinous use of living hostages as part of a staged "ceremony" further exemplifies the depths of Hamas' brutality. Moreover, the physical appearance of the released hostages and the testimonies they provide



reveal the brutal conditions they endured. These included imprisonment in chains, prolonged isolation, deliberate starvation, physical mistreatment and psychological abuse. Such actions stand contrary to every principle of human dignity and are a blatant violation of international law. The murder of the Bibas children, Ariel and Kfir, and their mother Shiri, as well as Hamas' sadistic actions regarding the return of their remains, including the switching of Shiri Bibas' body with the remains of an anonymous Gazan woman, were especially horrific and defy basic human decency.

Israel agreed to two proposals put forward by President Trump's Special Envoy, Steve Witkoff, to extend the temporary ceasefire. However, Hamas, which has repeatedly violated prior agreements, rejected both proposals. As a result, Israel has suspended the entry of goods into Gaza. The decision to suspend at this time the entry of goods and supplies into Gaza is consistent with Israel's obligations under international law. It should be emphasized that there are currently sufficient amounts of aid in the Gaza Strip. It is Hamas that is harming the Gazan population by systematically taking over humanitarian aid and turning it into a financial asset. The diverted aid has become a primary revenue source for Hamas. It enables Hamas to allocate funds specifically for its military efforts and reinvest them into further terrorism, bolster their capabilities and recruit additional terrorists to their ranks. Against this background, Israel's decision to suspend the entry of goods into Gaza is both necessary and justified.

Israel remains steadfast in its commitment to achieve the objectives of the war, namely, securing the return of all hostages, dismantling Hamas's military and governing capabilities and removing the terrorist threat from Gaza to its citizens. This should be clear: Israel will not allow Hamas to remain in power in Gaza, nor will it permit a return to the pre-7 October 2023 reality. It will take all necessary actions to protect its citizens.

Hamas destabilizes the region through its ongoing terrorist activities, while harming the local population of Gaza. Instead of investing in a better future for its people, Hamas misuses resources and power to worsen their conditions and fosters violence that endangers them and leads to widespread suffering.

Israel urges the international community to focus on supporting the efforts to return the hostages, to exert pressure on Hamas and to unequivocally condemn its actions and its inhumane treatment of both living and deceased hostages, in contravention to international law and in violation of all humanitarian principles.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council. I would like to inform you that an identical letter has been sent to the Secretary-General.

(Signed) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations
