

Executive Council of Australian Jewry Inc.

הוועד הכועל של
יהודי אוסטרליה

The Representative Organisation of Australian Jewry

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TO VARIOUS POLITICIANS

I write on behalf of the Australian Jewish community to thank you for your principled participation in the motion relating to the kidnap by Hamas terrorists of Corporal Gilad Shalit into Gaza and by Hizbollah terrorists of Israeli Defence Force Reservists Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev.

It is both significant and heartening that all participants in the debate recognised the following issues:

First and foremost, of course, is the human element, the acknowledgement of Mr Goldwasser's anguish as a parent who has not heard from his missing child for 15 months and indeed, who is in the terrible position of not knowing whether Ehud is in fact alive.

Secondly, the debate noted that the kidnappers abducted the three young men on sovereign Israeli territory, thus violating international law. They have compounded this breach by also being in violation of Security Resolution 1701 which calls for the unconditional release of the detainees. And even more vile is the kidnappers' refusal to allow the Red Cross and Red Crescent access to determine Gilad's, Ehud's and Eldad's health, offer them humanitarian assistance and enable them to communicate with their families. This cruel, mean-spirited action is not only in contravention of the laws of war; it is quite simply immoral and inhuman.

Thirdly, Parliamentarians were keenly aware that these kidnappings took place shortly after Israel had withdrawn from Gaza. Instead of seizing the opportunity to progress the complex relationship between Israel and the Palestinians and other of its neighbours, Hamas and Hezbollah chose to further the agendas of Iran and Syria in undertaking this action. Another setback for peace, another setback for the welfare of ordinary Israelis, Palestinians and Lebanese.

Our community shares with you and other people of good will the fervent hope for the speedy release of Gilad Shalit, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, unharmed and well. Our hope is based not only on concern for these innocents and their families, but also as a major step towards peace.

Thank you once again.

Yours sincerely

Grahame J. Leonard
President