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UN Secretary General Mr. Antonio Guterres

*An Open Letter to UN Institutions from the Israeli International Development and Humanitarian Community*

**We, the aforesigned Israeli organizations and individuals working in the humanitarian and international development sectors, wish to express the shock and deep disappointment we have felt in light of the long silence of the UN institutions, and our fellow international humanitarians since the October 7th massacre by Hamas.**

As professionals in humanitarian aid and development organizations, we are loyal to international conventions which carry the values of morality, humanity and ethics as beacons by which to adhere. We now find ourselves asking whether these standards are held in a different light when it comes to crimes against Israeli citizens and foreigners in Israel?

The lack of an outright meaningful condemnation by our counterparts in international organizations, both in official statements and on social media, of the Hamas attacks which took place on October 7th, has in turn equaled a double trauma - first with regards to the attacks themselves and second due to the lack of basic human recognition of our pain and suffering.

Among the acts of terror perpetrated by Hamas was horrific **violence specifically targeting civilians and causing both physical and psychological harm** toward men, women, teenagers, children, babies, sick people and the elderly, including mutilation, torture and humiliation.

*Among the 1,400 people brutally murdered by Hamas was Ms. Vivian Silver, a member of our community, who was a symbol of humanitarian action and a prominent peace activist.*

**Hamas kidnapped 240 men women, babies and the elderly into Gaza** - among them are sick and injured people, who have not been taken to the hospitals for treatment, nor received any visitation by the ICRC to date. Some of these hostages were also executed while in captivity by Hamas, which is responsible for their lives.

*Among the abductees was our community member, Dr. Shoshan Haran, who was kidnapped along with seven members of her family, including young children and released a few days ago, as part of hostage release. Shoshan is the founder of Fair Planet, an NGO providing smallholder farmers in developing countries with means to exit the cycle of malnutrition and poverty, through access to seeds of the highest quality. Over 150 more people are still held hostage by Hamas. **We urge you to pursue all means necessary to ensure that the ICRC visit the hostages; and continue to call for their immediate release.***

In their own words, Hamas terrorists perpetrated the most heinous acts of **sexual and gender-based violence**, including rape, torture and the desecration and mutilation of human bodies and purposely targeted women. **All these crimes and atrocities were documented by the terrorists themselves**, at times even broadcasting these horrors live and directly to the families of the casualties, adding to the sadistic nature of their gruesome massacre. These crimes have been shown by Israel to the world in closed-door presentations, in order to respect the families of the casualties and bring these horrors to light. We are positive that should you wish to pay your respects by viewing this documentation for yourself, such a presentation would be arranged.

As humanitarians, we work continuously around the world, striving to create a more equal and sustainable future, many of us providing emergency assistance to any community that faces existential challenges, even in countries with which Israel has no official diplomatic relations.

We are led by the basic principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence as well as non-discrimination. Now, during the most difficult days since the establishment of the State of Israel, we find ourselves betrayed by the international community. These core humanitarian principles are being undermined by the lack of meaningful recognition towards the crimes perpetrated by Hamas in Israel.

We are proud to partner time and again with the UN and international organizations in developing countries and in times of crisis around the world - therefore impartial statements by various UN agencies such as UN Women and UNICEF, which largely take their lead from the Secretary General's office, have severely damaged our trust in the intentions, values, and impartiality of the UN institutions, including the UN's ability to care for the wellbeing of our children and civilians.

Following your statement from November 29<sup>th</sup>, **we expect further unequivocal and meaningful condemnations by all relevant United Nations Institutions for the crimes committed by the Hamas murderers against Israeli citizens and foreigners in Israel**; a clear and unequivocal condemnation of the women's rights organizations for the acts of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence committed by Hamas; a clear and unequivocal condemnation of children's rights organizations for the kidnapping, murder and torture of babies and the abduction of children by Hamas.

As humanitarian and international development professionals, we cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering of Palestinian civilians in Gaza due to the military operation. We call upon all parties to do their utmost to keep civilians outside the cycle of violence.

Above all else, and for the avoidance of doubt, we, the Israeli humanitarian community, will continue to fulfill our moral duty and help wherever and whenever is needed around the world based on our core values of maintaining human rights and dignity, promoting gender equality, striving for peace and advancing global sustainability.

Our heart is broken but our spirit is strong!

**Organizations:** Society for International Development (SID) Israel | El HaLev (To the Heart) | Engineers Without Borders-Israel | Council of Women's Organizations in Israel | HalevAfrica | Operation Ethiopia | Eye from Zion | SDG Israel | Humans for Humans | Volcani International Partnerships | Early Starters International | ARDC Israel | NATAN Worldwide Disaster Relief | Topaz International - Leading Social Innovations | SHANITA **Individual Professionals:** Naama Shilo | Prof. Bruria Adini | Dan Catarivas | Kami Freedman, D.O | Zafrir Asaf | Ronnie-Lee Sneh | Or Mor-Yosef | Yotam Polizer | Natalie Silverlieb | Roni Levy | Marcelo Fridlender | Shirly Kalush | Ronit Romm | Gaya Loren | Yael Shapira | Danny Kahn | Gali Feldboy | Ester Rotem | Ruchama Golan | Keren-Or Rosner | Ophelie Namiech | Karen Bernstein