
UN Human Rights Council
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ID with the WG on Enforced Disappearances

Delivered by Ambassador Aviva Raz Shechter
Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations in Geneva

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

I would like to thank the members of the Working Group for their presentation, and take this opportunity to bring to their attention the case of four Israeli individuals who are illegally held by Hamas, the radical Islamist terror group that controls the Gaza Strip.

One of them is Avera Mengistu, an Israeli civilian of Ethiopian descent suffering from severe mental health conditions, who was captured by Hamas five years ago, after crossing the border from Israel into the Gaza Strip. Security cameras documented Avera being captured by members of Hamas. But until this very day the terror group has not released any information regarding Avera's fate or whereabouts, in utter disregard of international law .

Just try to imagine a person, suffering from a severe mental disorder, who for five years has had no access to medical assistance.

We call on the Working Group on Enforced Disappearances to do its utmost to bring about the immediate release of Avera, putting an end to years of inhumane captivity and deprivation of his most basic human rights.

We call on the Human Rights Council, which during this September session is set to adopt a resolution on "the right to mental health", to do everything within its power to denounce Hamas's breach of every basic standard of international law, and call for Avera's immediate release .

Likewise, we call on the international community to accelerate its efforts to implement UN Security Council resolution 2474 about missing persons in situations of armed conflict, in the case Avera Mengistu, as well as that of the three other Israelis in the hands of Hamas: Hadar Goldin, Oron Shaul, and Hisham Al-Sayed.

I thank you Mr. President.