

Mr. President Rosen Plevneliev,
Mr. Vice Prime Minister of Israel – Moshe Bugi Ayalon
Mr. Minister of Tourism Delian Dobrev
Mr. Israeli Ambassador in Bulgaria Saul Kamisa
President of Jewish Community “Shalom” Maxim Benvenisty
Rabbi Yosef Solomon of Habad,
Israeli embassy team

Dear families,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Itzik, Amir, Kohava, Maor, Elior and Mustafa are no longer with us. We still refuse to believe. The days of anguish and grief are passing. Long moments of pain and loss, unbearable for our loved ones trapped in a horrible inferno - the place, where hate and revenge met and exploded. In one terrible moment the reality our lives has changed forever. Beyond their wish, Itzik, Amir, Kohava, Maor and Elior have made us one large and sad family, Israeli-Bulgarian bereaved family.

Here in Bulgaria, we lost five children, spouses, precious and beloved brothers. Each one have a life story, each one is a whole world; every one of them had plans, ambitions and goals.

Itzik, Amir, Kohava, Maor and Elior we raised and grew up with us, we laughed with them and they cheered us, worried us and upset us, comforted and hugged us, and we love them so much, more than our souls. All of them in the beginning of their way, paving their future, meeting for a holiday full of anticipation and hope, together with Mustafa the Bulgarian driver who had to drive them... suddenly became victims.

More victims of a hostile action and terror.
For us, the families, it changed the world order.
For us, time stood still.

More than 67 years ago my father lost his entire family in the Holocaust of European Jewry. Forty-two days ago, my father, the grandfather of Elior, here in Europe, became bereaved grandparent. Seven decades, three generations, twenty first century, the state is created, and as Jews we are still downtrodden.

And yes, this is holocaust, at least for us, the families and friends left.

While rampant in a new wave of anti-Semitism, and the educational institutions in the countries aiming destruction of the State of Israel, are openly preaching hate and demolition to the Jewish people we raise our children with the values of respect, acceptance and equal rights. Our children are educated in schools who believe that peace and coexistence are the way to a better future, a safer future.

How much more we will be asked to sacrifice? How long it will take? When they will wake -up? When they will understand that state talks, secret meetings and negotiations alone would not lead us to peace and understanding? The countries of the civilized world must form a united front, unambiguous, uncompromising and firm against global terrorism. We must act against countries and organizations that do not respect the other's right to live his life and its part of their beliefs that spill our blood is permitted. Stand up against anyone who acts or preaches to attack innocent people. Do all possible against terror using citizens. Citizens who have chosen to live anonymously, along with family and friends. Beloved ones, who wanted to just live, but the terrorist murdered them in the name of a radical ideology, evil and cruel.

We are people of peace. We have no feelings of revenge. The pain and our personal loss are merging with the pain of the Jewish people and the Israeli bereavement. Together, they are so big, too big and heavy to bear. All we knew and what we wanted fell and was taken from us, but we still try somehow to breathe in the huge hollowness we hang now.

Here, in Bulgaria, in Sofia, I want to ask you honorable people, from the bottom of my heart: The fire in Bourgas extinguished, the bus was repatriated, and the remains were removed. But the fire, the flame rekindled by our beloved ones, away from home, on their vacation, this sign of their hopes and heart passions, this fire, we request nobody to extinguish. It will be besieged by eternal commemoration.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank, on behalf of the families, to the Israeli ambassador in Bulgaria, Mr. Saul Kamisa for the idea, attention and initiative to organize this ceremony here. Special thanks for Rabbi Solomon for his devotion to commemorate the victims' names in the synagogue. Thanks to everyone who was concerned, contributed and cared for us in this emotional moment.

There are no words to condole
and a lot of words are eager to be said
Each word in the flow of tears mixes
May I found the strength to overcome

Translation from Hebrew – Ivan Bassan