



To: Catherine Russell,
Executive Director of UNICEF
3 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, United States

Date: October 26, 2023

Dear Executive Director Russell,

We write to you with profound concern regarding UNICEF's apparent lack of intervention in addressing the distressing situation of Israeli children who have suffered grave harm, including abductions, brutal murders, and kidnappings by Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups. As you have rightly stated, "A child is a child. Children everywhere must be protected at all times and must never come under attack."

While UNICEF has made public statements about supporting children in the Gaza Strip and emphasizing the critical need to protect them, we earnestly implore that equal attention and support be extended to Israeli children who are not collateral damage of the conflict but rather a deliberate target of these terrorist groups.

UNICEF's fundamental role is to advocate for the protection of the rights of **ALL children**. Hamas and other armed groups have demonstrated a significant disregard for innocent lives by kidnapping and holding children, including babies, hostage in the Gaza Strip. We bring to your attention the abduction of Doron Asher Katz and her two daughters, Aviv Asher and Raz Asher (aged 2 and 5, respectively), who are being held hostage by Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Shiri Silberman-Bibas was also abducted, along with her two small boys (9 months and 3 years old), and is being held hostage in the Gaza Strip.

Disturbingly, numerous Israeli children, including infants, have lost their parents due to heinous acts of terrorism. This is the case of the 10-month-old twins of Itay and Hadar Berdichevsky, a young couple of 30, who placed their children in a hidden shelter when they heard terrorists at their door. The couple valiantly attempted to shield their babies from harm, but tragically, they were murdered during the attack. The twins survived the ordeal, left orphaned by this senseless act of violence.

Moreover, children, including babies, have been horrifically murdered by Hamas, as verified by various reliable sources, including U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who confirmed that dozens of Israeli babies were murdered, beheaded, and burnt by Hamas terrorists.

The lack of UNICEF's involvement in the protection of Israeli children is perplexing and unacceptable.



We urgently call upon UNICEF to uphold the principles outlined in the United Nations Convention On The Rights Of The Child, which guides UNICEF's mandate. Specifically, we emphasize that according to the Convention, UNICEF must ensure that no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment (article 37) and take all feasible measures to ensure the protection and care of children affected by an armed conflict (article 38).

We urge you to take immediate and decisive action to protect the children's rights and lives, provide them the safety and support they urgently need, and **issue an immediate condemnation** of the atrocities committed by Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups. We also request UNICEF to **implement its Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism** in relation to the violations committed against children by the abovementioned terrorists.

We look to UNICEF to demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the protection and well-being of ALL children in the region.

Sincerely,



Flavia Sevald
Chief Executive Officer



Adv. Uri Morad, Director of the International
Law & Public Diplomacy Department

CC: Adele Khodr, UNICEF Regional Director the Middle East and North Africa