

**To the Secretary-General of the largest humanitarian organization in the world,  
"The United Nations"**

Hello,

My name is Itamar, I'm 19 years old, living in Israel and a soldier in the Israeli air force.

Truthfully, I don't really care to tell you all that I went through on this small patch of land as a boy.

But then again, shortly:

At age 15 I was wounded in a terrorist bombing right outside my home. (Yes! A 15 year old boy, scared, in the place he should feel the most protected. Hi Home.) But our country, as small as it is, is surrounded by enemies...

I finished the 12<sup>th</sup> grade at age 18. Instead of enjoying the short vacation I had between finishing school and enlisting in the army I spent it running from shelter to shelter. I assume you know... The Second Lebanon War.

And it's because of this war that I'm writing you this letter. In this war 3 soldiers were abducted: Gilead Shalit, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev.

I wanted to tell you that Gilead, a soldier on active duty, just 20 years old. His whole life is ahead of him. But his life is currently on hold. He's a hostage now. All because he obeyed an order whose purpose is to prevent attempts to harm the security of the people of Israel. Yes, the same security enjoyed by the people of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, The Netherlands, Italy, The US, Switzerland, and everywhere else.

Eldad Regev, a law student. 26 years old, a great guy, really! Called for reserve duty and was abducted when the Hezbollah attacked the patrol he was on. The patrol was inside Israel. Its mission was to ensure the peace and quiet of Israel's northern border. Ehud Goldwasser, 31 years old, a very educated man. Married to Karnit, their love was not broken by his abduction nor by the months of endless expectations. Their love is sacred. Ehud married Karnit on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2005. They have not had their chance to raise a family because someone truncated their mutual life.

In our religion the emphasis of the holidays is the unity of the family. This "togetherness" makes the holidays so special. Sadly, the tables of these families will have an empty chair. For ever!

And now I have a question for you, honored Secretary-General!

You are familiar with the Geneva Convention?! I'm sure you know it much better than me.

So here's a short excerpt from it:

**Article 34:  
The taking of hostages is prohibited!**

So why do the families of these soldiers need to keep on waiting, possibly in vain, for the day that their sons return home?

We have a saying that goes: "And sons returned to their borders..." Will we get to see that day?

I wish to remind you that before being soldiers they are citizens in every way.

There's no reason that their freedom should be taken away from them. Every man wants to be free. (And I don't need to remind you of all the wars fought for freedom. I'm sure you know this history much better than me too.)

But what do I know? I'm just a 19 year old kid.

There's nothing to know. Their natural place is here, with us. Not somewhere out there, in captivity.

I may not be a part of their families. I'm just a citizen who also happens to be a soldier.

I wanted to tell you that although we have a strong army, we have one arm stretched out for peace and the other in self defense.

Our people have suffered enough through the history. We want to live in peace.

So I'm not asking you for world peace now. I know it's not that easy. But please, try and return these three to their home soon so I could say:

"And sons returned to their borders..."

Thank you for your time spent reading this letter,  
I thank you whole-heartedly.

Itamar Hepter,

Haifa,

Israel