



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LAWYERS AND JURISTS

U.S. Affiliate of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists

November 22, 2023

Gail McGovern, President
The American Red Cross
Bonnie McElveen-Hunter, Chairman of the Board
By Email to: gail.mcgovern@redcross.org

Re: The Continuing Abduction of Those Taken on October 7th

Dear Ms. McGovern and Ms. McElveen-Hunter:

Congratulations, Ms. McGovern, on your upcoming retirement. You have demonstrated tremendous leadership in the for-profit and charitable arenas, and you and Ms. McElveen-Hunter have led the honorable Red Cross through many national and international disasters with courage and dignity. The Red Cross has historically played an invaluable role in guiding the world through incomprehensible humanitarian crises.

We implore you and the Red Cross to do what individuals and organizations expect of you in times of tragedy, which is seemingly lacking to date, as despite a deal that may be in place, the Red Cross had not confirmed sight or status of the hostages, with the exception of a vague reference to (ICRC) as being on the ground and having helped facilitate the release of some hostages. The Red Cross must:

- 1) Secure the release of all of the hostages and ensure that they are unharmed sexually, physically or psychologically abused, tortured or killed. The Third Geneva Convention sets out specific rules for the “Treatment of Prisoners of War,” and requires that POWs be treated humanely, receive sufficient food, clothing and medical care, and be adequately housed
- 2) Mention Hamas by name as the perpetrator of the atrocities. As you know, Hamas’ actions are in violation of the Geneva Conventions. In particular, the Fourth Geneva Convention protects “Civilian Persons in Time of War.” Attacks on civilians are forbidden; civilians are to be protected from murder, torture or brutality; and civilians are not to be subjected to discrimination on the basis of nationality or religion. In violation of the Geneva Conventions, Hamas not only targeted Israeli civilians, but also took innocent civilians of varying nationalities as hostages;



- 3) Inform the public of any communications you have had with or about the hostages, including information regarding whether the hostages are receiving food, water, and medical care and any information about proof of life for each hostage. It is our understanding that the Red Cross inquired about the hostages over a month ago;
- 4) Demand that the ICRC stop using inaccurate and inflammatory language such as, “Occupied Territories,” and insist that the ICRC assume a leadership role in securing the safe release of the hostages, as it has done before in Columbia, Afghanistan, Nigeria, and elsewhere;
- 5) Support the IDF in rescuing the hostages and removing all the ordnance from the tunnels. Soldiers are sacrificing their lives to demilitarize Hamas for the safety of Israeli citizens as well as Gazans;
- 6) Remind the world that the IDF has been securing humanitarian passage for the Gazans to safely evacuate to the south of Gaza;

The world is waiting eagerly for you to facilitate the safe return of the hostages, and to ensure the safety and security of all people in the region. We urge you to take immediate action.

Thank you,

Robert Garson
President

Rhonda Lees
Vice President



About the AAJLJ

The AAJLJ is a national nonprofit association that represents the American Jewish legal community on issues of importance such as freedom of religion, civil rights, human rights, access to justice, and defense of the rule of law. The AAJLJ also advocates on matters affecting the global Jewish community, in particular, the scourge of antisemitism, including antisemitism disguised as antipathy toward Israel.