

October 9, 2023

Open letter from Israeli international law experts

In the early morning hours of October 7, 2023, Hamas militants entered Israel. They intentionally killed hundreds of civilians. They also took dozens of hostages to the Gaza strip, including women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

These actions constitute gross violations of international human rights law and humanitarian law, amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. We stress that **all parties** to an armed conflict must comply with norms of international law in general and the law of armed conflict in particular, including the prohibition on indiscriminate attacks and measures targeting civilians.

The taking of hostages is a blatant violation of international law. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. Pending their release, they are all entitled to be treated with humanity and respect. This includes the receipt of proper medical care and supply of essential medication for those who need it, and the provision of information regarding the hostages and means of communication with them.

We call upon the international community, including all states and relevant international organizations to pressure those holding the hostages to release them all immediately.

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