



**I.D.F.  
Widows &  
Orphans Org.**

# **IDFWO News: From Shlomi's Desk**



Dear friends,

Today's newsletter will be different. You will not read about IDF's tireless efforts to bring them back and keep our borders safe and our sky clear from rockets. You will not read about IDFWO's amazing work taking care of the families of our fallen heroes. I will not ask anyone to proof read it so I don't sound too Israeli. This one's from the heart, and though I never met some of you personally, the support you have poured on us since the war started in that dark, dark day made me want to share this with you.

On the morning of Saturday October 7, about an hour after I woke up to the siren and ran with my wife and kids to shelter, I texted Ido, my oldest nephew who is a soldier based at the Re'im base near Gaza. Rumors say there is a terrorists invasion, I wrote. Be careful. It's not just rumors he replied, if anything happens please take good care of mom and the girls. Nothing will happen, I wrote, knowing I have no way stand behind my words. In the moments after, my phone went crazy with push notifications from various news apps, whatsapp and telegram groups and I began realizing this is something different than anything I've ever known. Fast forward, Ido was injured from a Hamas terrorist's hand grenade which killed his best friend, but he was able to shoot and kill him despite of the injury. I met him briefly at his friend's funeral but haven't seen him since, he refuses to leave his fellow soldiers until the war is over.

On that day, when I realized that this war is not a wave, it's a tsunami, I made a decision. I took my sensitivity, hung it in the closet, and said not to meet with it again until it's safe. I knew I need to stay strong for our community, for my staff, for my family. Mor, my wife, was entering the last month of pregnancy. Since the war started she had to carry most of our family's tasks, the usual ones and the new ones, like running with 3 little children to the shelter when I was away running from one funeral to another, from one home visit to a headquarter meeting.

Mor gave birth on Saturday the 11th, at 2:54 AM to our new baby girl Ronnie. It was a magical moment, that I will never forget. I was afraid that I became too numb, but the joy of bringing new life, new hope, overtook everything else. Ronnie is my 4th child, and though every one of them coming out to this world brought happiness with them, it seems like this time people around me really wanted to hold on to this moment of happiness, as it is something we miss so much nowadays. I took a day off and returned to the office.

A couple of days later, we learned that one of the women abducted by Hamas was pregnant and gave birth in captivity, a newborn baby, just like mine, was born to be the 240th captured Israeli held in Gaza. This broke my heart into pieces. I keep thinking about my little Ronnie, and about

the poor baby boy or girl, about the poor mother, and how is it possible that the world continues to turn with such pure evil just taking place.

Last Thursday morning Eyar, our youth director, came into my office and said 'Yoni is injured'. Yoni lost his mother in line of duty while she served in the Israeli Police when he was 12. We celebrated his Bar Mitzvah together, he attended all our youth programs and when it was his time to go to service, he chose an elite unit and joined it. Once discharged, he immediately joined our OTZMA Camps logistics team, and is loved by all. After October 7, he joined his unit as a reserved soldier, and injured as he walked into a booby trapped building in Gaza. He will be ok, some damage to his ears, hopefully nothing permanent with the heart. We need you next month, I told him when I visited him at the hospital, he smiled and said that if not Gaza and if discharged from the hospital, he is in.

Next month we will hold a special OTZMA Camp for Hanukkah, together with our pre October 7 children, and families who joined that on and after this cursed day.

I no longer ask to hide my sensitivity. I ask for strength, for courage, for wisdom and yes, for the sensitivity I need to do what Hanukkah is all about, bringing light into the darkness.

Thank you for allowing me to share this, and thank you so much for your ongoing support since the beginning of the war. Every one of you is pure light in this difficult time.

With hope,

Shlomi Nahumson, CEO  
IDF Widows & Orphans Organization

