

July 22, 2009

Dear Friends,

You stand here today in front of a great challenge that requires not only physical competence but also, and perhaps even more, mental strength.

You of all people surely have a better understanding of what our son, Gilad, experiences over 1122 days in captivity.

There are many similarities between a Marathon and being in captivity. Both require patience, endurance, optimism and respect of body and mind. However, there are two enormous differences. The runner prepares himself gradually over a long period, and even more important, the finish line is known. Our Gilad, did not have the luxury of preparation nor the privilege to know when it ends.

It is common to say that each morning you wake up and it is the first day of the rest of your life. This is an optimistic saying, and true. For our son, each day is another day in captivity and a continuation of his ongoing uncertainty, far from home and far from hope.

I wonder where those people are, individual non-official and official persons, countries, leaders and international organizations. Where have they disappeared when our son has not seen daylight for over three years? Why are they silent when Gilad is denied visits he so rightly deserves, according to international law? We recall them all being very active and vocal in other cases.

You, more than others, could appreciate the freedom of movement, the freedom of making your own choices, the freedom to be in company of those you want to be.

Please, I ask you to raise your voice, here and in your home countries, to allow my son to receive his rights under international law standards. Please raise your voice in your home country, approach your leaders and ask them to urge the Red Cross to fulfill its duty.

I wish to thank you all - the city council, the organizing committee and the runners, to allow us to bring our message to you. Good luck with your Marathon !

Noam & Aviva – Gilad's parents