



# From Heartbreak to Hope: Messages of Gratitude

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(IDFWO UPDATE)

*Dear Friends of Israel,*

*the following letters come from two women whose lives were forever changed by war and loss. Michal and Revital lost their husbands—men who gave their lives to protect others. Their families were thrown from one moment to the next into deep grief and uncertainty.*

*And yet, their words reveal something profoundly moving, as they testify to how deeply support carries, how powerfully closeness heals, and how important it is not to leave one another alone—especially in times of great darkness.*

***Read their letters below and experience how even in the darkest hour, light emerges.***

***To all who donated: you made this possible.*** Through your generosity, you give families like theirs hope, stability, and the courage to move forward step by step. ***Thank you—from the bottom of our hearts!***

*Yours,*

***Brigitte Chaya & Harald***

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***P.S.*** As Chanukah and Christmas approaches, on December 14, we will once again transfer a larger donation. If you would like to participate, please mark „IDFWO“ as the purpose of your donation.

**Donate**





My name is **Michal Zmora**. On June 8, 2024, my life, and the lives of my two young children, was shattered. That day, **my husband Arnon Zmora, a commander in the elite counter-terror unit Yamam, was killed during a courageous rescue mission to free four hostages held in Gaza: Noa Argamani, Almog Meir Jan, Andrey Kozlov, and Shlomi Ziv.** The operation was later named *Operation Arnon*, in his memory.

To the world, Arnon is remembered as a hero. To us, he was so much more - a loving partner, a devoted father, a gentle and steady presence in our lives.

In the days, weeks, and months that followed his sacrifice, I struggled to understand how to move forward, how to build a new life for my children and myself without him. Like so many families since October 7, we found a source of strength and support through the **IDF Widows & Orphans Organization**. Through their care, we discovered a community that holds us, accompanies us through grief, and helps us take slow, fragile steps toward healing.

To those who have supported families like mine through the IDFWO - with generosity, compassion, and quiet strength - I want to say thank you. Your support has already made a real and tangible difference in our lives. Your help ensures that widows and orphaned children receive not only practical assistance, but also stability, dignity, and human warmth along a very long road of recovery. This support is real. It changes lives. It carries families through the darkest moments and reminds us **that we are not alone**.

With deepest thanks,  
*Michal*



My name is **Revital Djaoui Ben Yaakov**. My life - and the lives of my three children - changed forever on October 7, 2023.

My husband, **Lior, deputy head of our community's security team** in our small moshav, rushed out that morning to defend us from a terrorist infiltration. **Just steps from our home, he was killed protecting our community and our family.** I was in the safe room with our children - Ella, Ziv, and Itamar - trying to keep them calm as our world was shattering.

In the days that followed, I didn't know how to face a reality without Lior, let alone rebuild a life. The **IDF Widows & Orphans Organization** became our lifeline. For the past two years they have given us emotional support, practical help, and - most importantly - a community where my children did not have to explain their pain. Through their **Otzma programs**, my children slowly found friendship, and even moments of laughter again. And I, through their healing programs, found a group of new sisters.

Since October 7, hundreds of new widows and children have entered this painful reality. Families, just like mine, are facing shock, fear, and grief - and they need this support just as desperately.

From my own experience, I assure you that your gift via the IDFWO provides real, life-changing support - community and healing - and tells families like mine what we so desperately needed to hear: ***there are people who care and support for you!***

With gratitude,

Revital

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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## Amon Zmora

(Husband of Michal Zmora)



Former hostages Shlomi Ziv, Andrey Kozlov, Almog Meir Jan, and Noa Argamani were all rescued in the operation that was led by Amon Zmora.

## Lior Ben Yaakov

(Husband of Revital Djaoui Ben Yaakov)



### LIOR BEN YAAKOV ז"ל

On October 7, 2023, Lior Ben Yaakov was killed while defending Moshav Mivtahim from Hamas terrorists. He was 44 years old. Lior served as the deputy chief of his community's local security team and was posthumously recognized as a fallen soldier with the rank of sergeant major in the IDF reserves.

Lior is remembered as a man of deep responsibility and quiet leadership - a devoted father, loving husband, and tireless community member. He was equally at home changing diapers and making ponytails as he was leading community initiatives and developing entrepreneurial projects for the benefit of others.