

Human Rights Council 51st Session (September 2022)

Agenda Item 3 – ID with: WG on enforced disappearances

NGO: IJL - The International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists

Representative delivering the statement: Gabriela Goncalves.

Mr. President,

Eight years ago, in September 2014, Mr. Avraham Mengistu, an Israeli citizen, crossed into the Gaza Strip and has been held incommunicado ever since. The same happened to Mr. Hisham al-Sayed in April 2015.

Both Mr. Mengistu and Mr. al-Sayed suffer from mental health conditions which prompted them to cross into the Gaza Strip, and they must receive proper medical treatment.

A few weeks ago, the Hamas authorities in the Gaza Strip published a short video in which Mr. al-Sayed is seen laying on a bed while connected to an oxygen mask. That was the first sign of life of Mr. al-Sayed since April 2015. No such information has ever been provided about Mr. Mengistu.

Enforced disappearance is one of the most serious violations of international human rights law. Holding persons with disabilities incommunicado is a cruel, inhumane, and cynical act.

Mr. President, we need to ensure that the families of Avera and Hisham are immediately informed of their status and condition.

It is time for the international community, Member States and the working group to take proactive measures to ensure the release of Avera and Hisham, and bring them home.

Thank you, Mr. President.