

September 25, 2024

World Lung Day 2024: A Tragic Year for the Israeli's Gaza's Hostages, Deprived of Air and Time!

On World Lung Day, we value every breath, think and encourage all those suffering from lung and respiratory diseases that prevent them from doing the most basic function of human existence – breathing. On this day, it is our humane duty to remember and remind all - the Israeli hostages and those from other nationalities, in Gaza's long array of war tunnels, where they lack even air—essential and so often taken for granted.

The Israeli Society of Pulmonary Medicine calls upon everyone who values human rights, freedom, and peace to remember our innocent brothers and sisters, men and women, adults and children, who were abducted from their homes or while celebrating life, in the brutal attack by Hamas. For nearly a year now, these individuals have been deprived of the most fundamental necessities of life—air to breathe—along with their rights to freedom, peace, and essential medical care.

This situation highlights the profound link between freedom and basic life necessities. As we cherish and appreciate those dealing with respiratory diseases and value physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, and many more who strive to make our world healthier and safer for everyone—we must also remember and support those who's right to breathe freely was violently taken from them. We implore the free world to think of them today, as we do every day, and to help us secure their fundamental right to breathe freely.

As we think about Pulmonary societies on World Lung Day, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the American Thoracic Society (ATS) for their clear and strong statement following October 7th, mentioning the unspeakable violence and human anguish wrought by Hamas terrorists on innocent men, women, children, defenseless citizens of Israel, and 35 other nations. We want to share our deep sorrow, surprise, and disappointment at the refusal of the European Respiratory Society (ERS) to act similarly despite our repeated requests. We urge both these important organizations dealing with lung diseases to assist us in allowing our hostages to get their right to breathe air. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "In the end, you will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends."

Please remember our 101 captives in Gaza, those who are surviving and hungry for the basic necessity of life: air, and help us do whatever possible to set them free.

Sincerely,

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