Israeli family marks hostage’s 9th birthday with call for solidarity

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<https://www.jns.org/israeli-family-marks-hostages-9th-birthday-with-call-for-solidarity/>

Ohad Monder’s family “celebrated” his ninth birthday on Monday by asking people to hang a balloon in solidarity with the Israeli hostages being held by terrorists in the Gaza Strip.

Ohad, who lives in Kfar Saba, northeast of Tel Aviv, was kidnapped along with his mother, Keren, on Oct. 7 while visiting his grandparents in Kibbutz Nir Oz. The grandparents were also abducted while an uncle was killed in the attack.

Keren’s partner, Avi Zachary, in collaboration with Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Herzog, created a digital greeting book for Ohad in which children and adults worldwide can send birthday greetings. They hope to get one million greetings, and for Hamas to be pressured by the public awareness so created.

The family held a birthday party at the Hamed Etzion special education school in Bnei Brak, where Keren works as a teacher.

Ohad’s favorite soccer team, Hapoel Beersheva, showed solidarity with its young fan.

“At the request of the family, the team’s coach and players rallied and wished the fan a happy birthday, hoping that he would see it as soon as possible,” the team said. “In addition, we opened our morning practice with a prayer and a call for his speedy return. We all wish that [Ohad] and his family will soon return safe and sound.”

Israel Defense Forces Spokesperson Rear Adm. [Daniel Hagari](https://www.jns.org/cohen-bringing-families-of-kidnapped-israelis-to-un/) said on Monday that the military has so far confirmed that the Gazan terrorists kidnapped 222 persons.