

I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 1359, which calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Gilad Shalit and other Israeli soldiers who are being held illegally by terrorist organizations. On June 25, 2006, Hamas terrorists based in Gaza led an illegal raid into Israel, where they attacked a military post and killed two Israeli soldiers before kidnapping then-corporal Gilad Shalit. Since then, Hamas has held Mr. Shalit without access to medical treatment, legal counsel, or humanitarian organizations.

For 4 years, Mr. Shalit has been kept from his family, which has had to watch helplessly as Hamas cynically exploited videos of their loved one. As I have said many times before, only a just, permanent, and peaceful settlement between Israelis and Palestinians can ensure the security and welfare of both peoples. The way forward in the Middle East will require compromises by all parties, but certain things are nonnegotiable. Hamas must end terrorist activities, renounce violence, and recognize Israel. Human rights and international humanitarian law must be respected by all, and Hamas bears the responsibility to meet this standard by immediately and unconditionally releasing Gilad Shalit. I stand firmly with his family and all Israelis who continue to suffer until justice is done.