



# Advocacy Update

Sent June 1, 2011

## **Reserve a Chair for Gilad Shalit**

Gilad Shalit, a soldier of the Israel Defense Forces, was kidnapped by Hamas from inside Israeli territory on June 25, 2006. Twenty-four years of age, he has been held in captivity – probably in the Gaza Strip – for almost five years, and the International Committee of the Red Cross has been refused visits to see him. Although negotiations to free Gilad Shalit have been attempted, they have been unsuccessful. Elie Wiesel has spoken of captivity itself as torture.

Gilad's parents, Noam and Aviva Shalit, have erected a tent in Jerusalem in which they daily seek to focus public attention on their son's plight. [An article on a German effort to free Gilad](#) describes the tent, which is across from the prime minister's residence, and states, "Shalit points to a white plastic chair in the tent. A note on the chair reads: 'Reserved for Gilad Shalit' . . . The father says that he will not leave until his son has been returned to him."

The symbol of the reserved chair has been used by many groups in Israel. Resa Davids, leader of WRJ's Israel Committee, and her daughter Aviva Levin have designed and provided WRJ with a poster (with instructions for printing) calling for freedom for Gilad Shalit and others "entrapped or in captivity" to be placed on an empty chair at your meetings or at your temple's services. The poster and instructions for its printing are attached.

A January 2011 Unity Mission, comprised of Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, and Renewal Rabbis from Northern California, visited Noam and Aviva Shalit's tent. Noam Shalit asked that they begin a letter writing campaign to Prime Minister Netanyahu calling for Gilad's release. Sign their linked letter which will automatically be emailed to Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Reserve a chair for the release of Gilad Shalit at your meetings until we hear that he is free! Share background about his plight and the link to the letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu.