

JANUARY 22, 2001

SCHAKOWSKY PROMISES ASSISTANCE TO FREE ISRAELI SOLDIERS

CHICAGO, IL - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today met with Eyal and Avi Avitan, brothers of Adi Avitan, one of three Israeli soldiers kidnapped last October Hezbollah.

The meeting, organized by the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, was also attended by Representative Mark Kirk (R-IL), Counsel General of Israel to the Midwest Tzipora Rimon, the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation president Steven Nasatir, and Howard Kaplan, Chair of the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish United Fund.

"It is with a heavy heart that I met with Adi's brothers, but with pride that Chicago has taken a lead in focusing attention on this serious situation. This is not just a family tragedy, but a violation of international agreements. It continues to be a top priority for Israeli government officials to bring these soldiers home and I will support their efforts in every possible way," Schakowsky said.

Eyal and Avi Avitan have traveled to Canada and the United States seeking international help and assistance from western lawmakers. Since the kidnapping on October 7, 2000, the captures have refused to provide information about the soldiers or to allow representatives of the Red Cross to examine them.

Schakowsky and Kirk promised to lead efforts on Capitol Hill to bring this matter to the attention of Secretary of State Colin Powell, circulating a letter to him among their colleagues.