בית הנשיא
ديوان الرئيس
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

The Presidential Award for Civilian Heroism
Rules and Regulations

Background

"...So as to teach that losing just one life is regarded as losing an entire world; and saving one life, is regarded as saving an entire world." (Mishna Sanhedrin)

"Every person is obligated to risk his own life to save another person from danger... This derives from public obligation to the welfare of the state and the common good." (Responsa, "Tziz Eliezer" of Rabbi Eliezer Yehuda Waldenberg)

"Because this type of brotherhood-in-arms will never allow our hearts to forget; love, sanctified by blood, you will be back to blossom amongst us." ('The Song of Friendship,' Haim Gouri)

The vicious terror attack on October 7th 2023, Simchat Torah 5784, was one of the most dramatic and disturbing events in the history of the State of Israel, with unprecedented effects on the battlefront and the home front alike. It took the lives of more than 1,200 Israelis, including hundreds of men and women in the line of duty within the police force and the IDF, and left thousands injured, while over 200 people were taken hostage by Hamas terrorists, many of them still in captivity.

While marking 100 days to the attack, President Isaac Herzog wrote of the challenges posed by the war, while also highlighting the heroic Israeli spirit: "100 days have passed since life came to a standstill. Since the sky turned black and we were all exposed to the outpour of the scorching, searing lava of terror and abysmal hatred."

One hundred days of a war justified like no other, that have tested the entire nation. A test of courage, of strength, of determination, of tenacity, of power, of social responsibility, of unity, of the commitment that we have as a society to the values and principles that define us as a nation.
We will yet mourn the brilliance of youth, the precious courage, the sacred desire and self-sacrifice that were taken in the difficult battle. We will yet cry for the lives of so many, too many, that were cruelly robbed – victims of unbridled monstrous, antisemitic violence. And yet, we recall that even in the darkest hours, we were witness to displays of enormous strength, courage, resilience and compassion –the very qualities that made us a people; to the infiniteness of the Israeli spirit, which refuses to be broken.

The full force of our nation's power erupted in remarkable fashion. "An early generation, an ancient nation adorned with brazen power," whose courage is forever etched into the annals of Israel. No-one can topple a nation with sons and daughters like these; No-one can topple our united and unified people."

These acts of heroism , carried out for the most part by ordinary Israeli citizens, who operated courageously in a moment of tangible risk to their own life, out of a sense of shared fate and mutual responsibility, with the goal of saving human lives, are at the core of **"The Presidential Award for Civilian Heroism"**

Throughout the history of the State of Israel, like countless other countries and nations, a custom was formed in which awards, decorations and medals were presented to the deserving, especially in the wake of watershed national events that were the backdrop for acts of transcendence and heroism on the part of exceptional individuals. Thus, the "Israeli Hero Award" emerged following the War of Independence; the "Law of Decorations in the Israeli Army" following the Six Day War; and the "Presidential Award for Volunteerism" (originally, "The Presidential Award for Volunteers") introduced by President Efraim Katzir following the Yom Kippur War, as a result of the exceptional Israeli spirit of volunteerism spurred by that difficult war.

As such, with due attention to the unbearably difficult circumstances of the cruel and destructive terror attack, and the displays of heroism and mutual responsibility exhibited by many citizens, who risked their lives- and often paid with their lives- to save others, the President has elected to establish an appropriate state framework that will highlight the mutual responsibility and heroism of Israeli society, and reflect the nation's recognition of these Israeli heroes. This recognition will find expression in the form of **"The Presidential Award for Civilian Heroism,"** which will convey respect toward and acknowledgement of its recipients and, no less important, will afford honor, pride and hope to Israeli society and the entire State of Israel.

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Introduction

"The Presidential Award for Civilian Heroism" (Hereafter: "The award") is a mark of heroism conferred by the President of the State of Israel to individuals who showed exceptional heroism, mutual responsibility and self-sacrifice with the aim of saving human life. The purpose of the award is to acknowledge and express the appreciation of the country and the nation vis-à-vis people beyond the ranks of Israel's law enforcement, the police force or the military, who exhibited exceptional heroism and/or exceptional courage, while acting out of a sense of mutual responsibility and self-sacrifice to save human life.

In determining eligibility for the award, the President will consult with an advisory board which makes recommendations for candidates.

The following rules and regulations outline the manner in which the award is conferred.

1. "The Presidential Award for Civilian Heroism" will be given to individuals who showed exceptional heroism, mutual responsibility and self-sacrifice to the end of saving human life. As a rule, security forces, members of the police force or the military will not be eligible for the award, as other medals are designated for decorating members of these bodies.
2. The award will be conferred as determined by the President to recipients, following the recommendations of the Advisory Board.
3. The award can be conferred posthumously as well. Likewise, a shared medal can be awarded to more than one candidate for the same event.

Candidacy

4. Every person is free to submit nominations for award recipients. Individuals, however, may not nominate themselves.
5. Nominations must be submitted along with supporting details as per the timeline published by the Office of the President, via the following form:
https://govforms.gov.il/mw/forms/CivilHeroism@president.gov.il#!personalInformation1
6. Nominations for the award must include a well-reasoned explanation, as well as a detailed account of the heroism story, and tangible supporting evidence (such as: footage, eyewitness accounts, documentation). Please note that to confirm heroism stories, the Office of the President will be assisted by an investigative team that will verify the accuracy of the details outlined in the nominations, and may, likewise, reach out to the party recommending the candidate and/or to the eyewitnesses and/or to others to verify the details outlined in the nomination.
7. A public notice announcing deadlines for nominations (Herein: "The notice") will be published in the media and on the President's Residence's website. The notice will include contact information and information on accessing the Rules and Regulations.
8. The President and members of the Advisory Board may nominate candidates for the award. These nominations will also be subject to all of the Rules and Regulations outlined herein, including Article 1, but excepting Article 5.

Coordination, Examination and Verification of Nominations

9. The Director General of the Office of the President will appoint a staff member as supervisor to oversee the award and coordinate the advisory board.
10. Nominations for the award will first be reviewed by the supervisor alongside the Office of the President's legal bureau, to ensure that all relevant information has been submitted and examine the need for supplemental information as per Rules and Regulations outlined herein.
11. Following the review of nominations as per Article 10, above, they will be passed on for reviewal by the Advisory Board.
12. Prior to making its recommendations to the President on the list of awardees, an investigative team contracted by the Office of the President will execute a professional investigation to establish a factual base for the story of heroism described in the nomination.

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The Advisory Board

13. The President will appoint the members of the Advisory Board and its chair.
14. The Advisory Board will be composed of public figures, academics, legal experts and security forces retirees, one of whom will serve as chair of the Advisory Board.
15. Members of the Advisory Board will number no less than five and no more than nine, and, regardless, total an odd number.
16. Members of the Advisory Board will sign a form committing to avoid conflicts of interest.

The Work of the Advisory Board

17. In making its recommendations, the Advisory Board shall consider every aspect of the act of heroism (including the personal risk, the courage and the emotional and physical effort that the act required).
18. The Advisory Board may consider past decorations or medals as a factor in its recommendations?
19. The Advisory Board may set internal work procedures that help it perform its role, beyond what is detailed in these Rules and Regulations, as long as they do not contradict them.
20. Proceedings of the Advisory Board and any subcommittees will be confidential.
21. The chair of the Advisory Board will lead the Advisory Board meetings and determine its agenda.
22. Decisions with regard to the candidates selected for recommendation to the President will be reached by majority vote. In the instance of a tie, the chairperson's vote will be the determining vote. The Advisory Board's recommendations for conferring the award will include an explanation of the recommendation, and will be passed along to the President.
23. The supervisor in charge of the award for the President's Office, as well as a representative from the legal bureau within the Office of the President will be present at meetings but will not be accorded voting rights.
24. In reviewing nominations, the Advisory Board may reach out to any party to request further details or corroborating documentation and may further request additional opinions, recommendations, etc. Likewise, the Advisory Board, or a party acting on its behalf, may ask the candidate or other relevant parties referenced in the nomination to appear for a personal interview.

Miscellaneous

25. The award will be given by the President at the President's Residence or at another site of his choosing.
26. The award supervisor within the President's Office will be charged with notifying candidates of the President's decision.
27. Until the President's decision is officially announced, everyone, including the award recipients, members of the Advisory Board and staff at the President's Residence, are required to maintain strict confidentiality with regard to the decision.
28. These Rules and Regulations will be permanently available on the website of the Office of the President.