**Mishy Harman (narration):** Hey listeners, it's Mishy. So obviously everything here has changed since Saturday when the horrific murderous attacks by Hamas began. The members of our team are safe, thank God. But all around us friends; family; colleagues; people have died; people are missing; people have been kidnapped. The extent of it all is just shocking. And there's still a lot of uncertainty of course. Like basically everyone else here, we're all involved in a million different initiatives: organizing housing, clothes, food, blood drives, preparing shelters. But in all of this we're also going together with some of Israel's other leading podcasters, to bring you some voices and testimonies that paint a picture or try to paint a picture of these devastating times. The voices you'll hear are raw: these aren't full stories. Most of them aren't even edited. Some of them contain views that aren't ours. But we're collecting them and releasing them as fast as we can, because we think it's crucial and central to our mission that you'll be able to hear what we're hearing now. This morning Sasha Ariev came into our studio. Here she is.

**Mishy Harman:** Hi, Sasha. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself.

**Sasha Ariev:** Yes, so my name is Sasha, I'm 24 years old, born and raised in Israel. And now currently, I'm a master student at the Hebrew University i Jerusalem. I'm studying biomedical research on the emphasis of neurobiology. And I have a little sister. This is me: this is how I want to present myself.

**Mishy Harman:** And tell me about your sister.

**Sasha Ariev:** So as I said, she's my little sister, she's 19. We have five year gap. And her name is Karina. And she's…she's all I have. I remember when she was born, and till today everything that we've been doing together since.

**Mishy Harman:** And she's a soldier.

**Sasha Ariev:** Yes, she is a soldier in the IDF, Israel Defense Forces.

**Mishy Harman:** And what does she do in the army?

**Sasha Ariev:** She's the one who sits near the borders and observe…observe the borders, and is contacting the combat soldiers who are on the field, or in the field: she's their eyes. Actually we were afraid that she will go to the army. But she said: “No, how can I not go, this is my country. I need to serve, everyone does this.” And when they were recruiting her the job that was given to her is to be the “eyes of the country,” this is the term of the observers on the borders. And she was really proud. It is a very hard work. The shifts are devastating: the hours. She serves at a very remote base. It's hard to get there. The conditions there are not so good. But she was very proud. She was sad when she was coming back home and had to go back to the army because she was far from us and it was hard. She was waiting for her…to end…her service. But she loved every second of it. And she had a lot of friends there who are currently murdered or are missing.

**Mishy Harman:** And when was the last time you spoke to Karina.

**Sasha Ariev:** The last time we spoke was the seventh of October at 6:30am. It was a phone call. And the last message of her was on 7:40 on WhatsApp. It was the last time. She called to say goodbye. She called to say that she loves us, and that if she won’t live so we will continue our lives and do not sink in sorrow. And she asked me to keep my parents together and safe. And on WhatsApp the last message was: “The terrorists they are here.” She told us their base was captured by terrorists and there was a raid on the base.

**Mishy Harman:** And what do you know at the moment about where she is?

**Sasha Ariev:** She was in a bomb shelter in the base because there were missiles fired from Gaza to Israel territory on all the Gaza Strip area. And she was there with other girls who served with her. And our hearts are with those families. We became one big family—all those people who are going through this horror. We saw a video on Telegram, and she was a probably kidnapped by some terror organization. She was in a jeep of them and we identified her. So she was taken from the base. She wasn't on the base anymore when we saw the video.

**Mishy Harman:** So she is currently missing.

**Sasha Ariev:** She's currently missing. The IDF soldiers, the officers, they came to our home and they said that she is officially held by a terror organization. But they can't confirm this because no humanitarian organization like the Red Cross have contacted Israel or Gaza about this, so they cannot confirm who is held there, who is the hostage. And maybe no, maybe she was alive at the time that we saw the video but then they shot her or something and just threw her to lie in some field. We don’t know. So they cannot confirm this. And we're asking them to keep checking the DNA samples with all the…sadly, unfortunately corpses that are found in the field. So we can get a bigger picture where is she. We cannot confirm anything.

**Mishy Harman:** Can you tell me something about her from before all this.

**Sasha Ariev:** Yes, something's that truly in my mind is that she had her birthday in August, but her friend from home, from school—she ordered her presents from abroad, from Shane or something. And they only arrived on Friday, the day before. And she asked to come to our house. She knew that my sister was in the army and she wanted to place the presents on her bed, so when my sister comes home…she was supposed to come home yesterday, so she can see it and she will feel nice, and see the presents and be happy. And they're still sitting on her bed and waiting for her. She told us: “Do not tell her that I was here. I want this to be a surprise.” And we didn't tell her of course. But now I think maybe maybe I shouldn't have listened to her. And maybe I should have said so maybe she knew something good that is waiting home beyond us the family, that her friends are thinking about her. And then all this horrible thing happened.

**Mishy Harman:** Can you describe what life is like at the moment for your family.

**Sasha Ariev:** We feel that the time has stopped. But I'm trying, you know. I'm always saying to myself that the world, our earth, is spinning and the sun comes up, and the moon goes up, and they're on their shifts, but we're standing now, and you feel like we're in the same video and it just plays in loops. It's the same routine: we fall asleep at night because we can't hold any more, then we can’t even sleep, we sleep a few hours, maybe one or two hours every day. And this is not a good sleep. My parents see bad dreams all the time. And come the morning, you know, maybe the sun is going through the window—the light—but we feel this emptiness inside. It's so hard…it's so hard to eat and do any basic stuff. But but we try to stay strong, and to continue to be optimistic and don't let someone to break our spirit because, you know, the hope it dies last and we're holding onto that.

**Mishy Harman:** Is there anything that you want to say to the world or to people listening?

**Sasha Ariev:** First, I want to ask everyone to pray for her in any kind of beliefs that you have, any kind of methods, we do not judge. We love everyone really. And we want you to be with us and raise awareness, to raise awareness and talk about it. There are hostages there. A lot of people were murdered. Hundreds of families are receiving…and they do not know where the beloved ones: are they missing, where are they, what happened to them. Make pressure on the governments of the world so they put all the efforts…to release the hostages, to send humanitarian organizations, there and to be in action to bring them back home.

**Mishy Harman:** Amen.

**Sasha Ariev:** Amen

**Mishy Harman:** *Toda* (Thank you) Sasha.

**Sasha Ariev:** *Toda* (Thank you).