This document is a recommendation for awarding the Israel Prize for lifetime achievement to David Almog, a former IDF Major General, and chairman of Aleh Negev- Nahalat Eran. Doron Almog has come across as an outstanding individual in the Israeli milieu, a highly principled person and no-nonsense man of vision, whose life has been dedicated to some praiseworthy public activities: the concern for the well-being of children and adults who have special needs, and improving the quality of their lives as well as putting their issue on the public agenda in order to stop their social exclusion by being forced to the margins of society.

Doron’s accomplishments, which will be discussed later on, define a wide scope marked by multifarious activities and of an immeasurably great diversity. Yet Doron Almog deserves the Israel Prize for his lifetime achievement above all else: his hard-earned success due to his firm belief and strong determination in effecting great changes to the therapeutic, rehabilitative, and educational systems catering for individuals with special needs. All this has been accomplished by his struggle against the unjust treatment and indignity which these disadvantaged people have been subject to, and due to his unrelenting and increased efforts in raising public awareness and challenging widely-held public perceptions as well as mobilizing all available resources for developing educational frameworks and schooling facilities to comply with their special needs. Doron Almog’s crowning glory was the establishment of the village of Aleh-Negev – Nahalat Eran, named in memory of his son, Eran, and his unremitting efforts to promote the village and disseminate its message worldwide.

Born in 1951, Almog volunteered for the Paratroopers Brigade service after graduating from a military boarding school. He then launched an illustrious military M.B.A (Master of Business Administration) career that culminated in his appointment as the Major General of the Southern Command in 2000. In the academic field, Almog holds a Washington Institute degree in international affairs granted by Haifa University. He is also a Senior Research Associate at Howard University and holds an M.A degree in Business Management from Tel-Aviv University. He has published books and studies about security and strategy issues. He is married to Didi and father to Nitzan – a Ph.D in Special Education- and to Eran, his already deceased son, who suffered from a severe congenital mental retardation and was one of the first residents of the rehabilitation center of Aleh-Negev . He is also a bereaved father to Shoham Alomg whom he lost one month after birth.

The cornerstone laying of Aleh-Negev had taken place in 2003. Following this year, in 2004, Almog made up his mind to resign from his most promising military career in order to make great changes in a completely different area: catering for the special needs of the disadvantaged and developmentally delayed. Year 2006 had seen the first residents of the village, among whom had been Eran Almog, who died several months later from an incurable disease.

Doron Almog quit his military service after 35 years during which he had served both as a warrior and a commander of IDF elite units although being a member of a bereaved family. His brother Eran, whose namesake was Doron Almog’s own son, had been killed on the Yom-Kippur War. Doron served as the head of the Paratroopers Brigade commando unit , the elite Air Force commando unit called “ Shaldag “ , the [infantry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infantry) [brigade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brigade) unit of the [paratroopers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paratrooper), the Gaza Division, and the IDF Southern Command. Doron was always in the vanguard- right in the line of fire – be it in Tripoli when leading a task force against the perpetrators of the Munich massacre, or in Entebe when leading the first task force, or in the First Lebanon War, or when in charge of covert military operations to bring 6000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel- and so on and so forth. There is not enough space to cover it all. For all these reasons alone Almog deserves a special prize, but first and foremost on account of his lifetime achievement for which he dedicated so much time and energy to help people with special needs.

In the course of his military service, in between his official duties, Doron made it a rule to accompany his son for his medical treatments. His self-abnegation as a father to a child with special needs is something not to be taken for granted as can be evidenced by the painful reality in which these children are abandoned by their parents in the worst case, or, more tolerably, hidden from anyone’s view. Most parents are humbled by the circumstances and do nothing, whereas Doron took the initiative and enlisted to this end the help from government institutions and private individuals. Doron swore he would never abandon his beloved son during his life, and since his death he has pursued in his huge efforts to act on behalf of children in this condition, while doing his best to convey the message that there is nothing to be ashamed of, and that it is incumbent on us to enhance their personal development so that they can live a meaningful and decent life. In this respect we should perceive Doron as an opinion-maker and as a highly influential figure regarding the status of the disadvantaged and weak in our society – and for this reason alone he deserves to be cherished and respected.