



# Israel at War

No Vulnerable Community Left Behind



November 2, 2023

*On Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>, Israel experienced the unimaginable. Hamas launched a surprise attack – rockets, abductions, murders. Four weeks later, the nightmare continues. Over 1,400 Israelis have been murdered, thousands more wounded, and 242 taken hostage in Gaza. Entire communities have been devastated.*

*Trauma is everywhere. Needs grow daily. Since day one, JDC has been on the ground assisting and serving Israel's most vulnerable populations.*

*The program directions highlighted in this proposal offer a 6-month outlook (October 2023 to March 2024) and draw on information available at the time of its writing.*

*Given the uncertainty and volatility of the situation, the projections within, including the timeframe, are subject to change and will be updated as necessary.*

## **JDC's Response to Emergency Needs**

Within hours of the initial ambush in Israel's south, JDC launched its emergency response – rushing to help those in need and creating immediate action plans. Since then, we have been providing immediate social assistance while also laying the groundwork for more long-term care.

**JDC's current response leverages our decades of experience providing critical relief services to vulnerable communities and focuses on five key areas:**



- **Trauma and Mental Health Support**
- **Ensuring Provision of Pre-War Services**
- **Economic Relief and Resilience**
- **Supporting Volunteerism and Civil Society**
- **Rehabilitation of Israel's South**

## Trauma and Mental Health Support

The conflict has shaken Israel to its core, spurring unprecedented levels of trauma. Children and front-line responders have been especially hard hit. Hundreds of thousands of people need mental health support. JDC is providing immediate assistance including:

- **Therapy for pre-school and school-aged children** suffering from acute trauma across Israel's south.
- **Strengthening frontline responders** including social workers, youth counselors, and more who are dealing with the unimaginable. They need immediate skills to help traumatized children, elderly, and other extremely vulnerable people. JDC is giving them support skills to help those in need while the emotional wounds are still fresh, as well as emotional support and counseling to maintain their own mental health.
- **Training caregivers** to support themselves, the elderly, and people with disabilities during wartime.
- **Launching a trauma relief website** <https://www.nafshi.info/> that provides access to available mental health services, with filter options so users can search by location, type of trauma, psychological service and more.



JDC is bringing its *Hibuki* ("hug" in Hebrew) doll to thousands of children reeling from the trauma of the war. JDC first introduced *Hibuki* in 2011 to help children in southern Israel cope with rocket attacks and has since used it around the world. JDC will distribute 10,000 *Hibuki* dolls to child survivors and others during this war. We are also training teachers and early childhood professionals in its use.

## Ensuring Provision of Pre-War Services

Before the war, one million Israelis benefited from JDC programs every week. When these already vulnerable people flee danger, are evacuated, or remain under attack - their needs only deepen. In times of war, maintaining services in a traumatizing, dynamic, and uncertain reality is, in and of itself, an existential challenge. This challenge is compounded by the fact that many of these vulnerable individuals are displaced, in new and unfamiliar settings. JDC is maintaining its crucial services for these populations, whether they are at home or displaced.

As vulnerable people across Israel reel from the war, JDC is on the ground, ensuring we continue to meet their growing needs. This means:

- **Developing activities that provide mental stimulation and daily structure** for displaced elderly.
- **Placing community caseworkers** in local authorities to locate older adults and people with disabilities who have no support network, provide immediate emotional support, and connect them to community-based services to ensure their needs are being met.
- **Developing a one-stop-shop digital platform** that provides distressed residents of the south with information on rights, benefits and services, and how to access them, as well as a **mobile benefits unit** which will visit evacuation sites (hotels) to help the less digitally savvy.
- **Creating an online Center for Independent Living**, a support hub providing critical guidance and information for people with disabilities.
- **Facilitating the establishment of schools and kindergartens** for displaced young war evacuees, including special education solutions.



JDC reached out to over 80,000 vulnerable elderly, including many living under daily rocket fire. We are also providing recreational and social activities to displaced and traumatized elderly who fled their homes.

Over the next six months, JDC will impact 250,000 elderly each month through emergency programming. This includes recruiting community caseworkers to check in on the homebound, organizing social and respite activities, and training caregivers to navigate emergency challenges.



## Economic Relief and Resilience

Loss of breadwinners, the closure of businesses, and the mass recruitment of hundreds of thousands of army reservists are impacting Israel's economy. Economic losses are especially strong in the South, where many struggled financially even before the war. JDC is providing emergency material and financial support to:

- **Young adults and families in financial distress**, providing food vouchers and cash assistance to both meet pressing needs (food, saferoom supplies, and more) and to help offset potential downward spirals among already vulnerable Israelis.
- **Small businesses** in the South teetering on collapse. JDC is organizing seed grants, supporting the launch of online businesses, and more. JDC is also training Israelis to fill vacant essential jobs.
- **Managing a diverse workforce during war**. With increased tensions between Jews and Israeli-Arabs, JDC will provide training for companies and public sector organizations on managing multicultural teams, with a special focus on hospitals and health organizations.



Bat-Chen, a young mother from Netivot, was struggling financially before the war. When her building was bombed, she took her children and fled. Now taking refuge in Jerusalem, where the weather is much colder, Bat-Chen needed sweaters and long pants for her children. JDC knew Bat-Chen from Netivot, where we were helping her build a path out of poverty. When we heard about her latest struggle, we gave her vouchers so she could buy her children clothes.

Like Bat-Chen, JDC is providing 3,000 young adults and families living in poverty with vouchers to purchase urgent and basic necessities during this time of personal and national crisis.

## Supporting Volunteerism and Civil Society

The war – with its chaos and destruction - created major gaps in care. JDC is leveraging its experience working with Israel's civil society to launch an immediate response that includes:

- **Training and deploying volunteers** around the country to do important work such as running activities for children who had to leave their homes, bringing food and medicine to older adults and people with disabilities, delivering meals to frontline responders, and more.
- **Coordinating situation rooms** to ensure a quick response to pressing needs. JDC plays a lead role in multiple government situation rooms, helping coordinate between different government offices and national organizations, to ensure swift and effective solutions to problems, such as reissuing government documents that were lost or destroyed in the chaos and destruction of war.
- **Developing technology and data solutions** to make government and civil society responses more efficient and exact.
- **Providing training, guidance, and assistance to grass root efforts and NGOs** to provide support for those affected by the war and to maximize the impact of those spearheading civil society's response.
- **Supplying emergency medical equipment.** JDC is supplying life-saving medical equipment and supplies (such as emergency stretchers, burn kits, hypothermia blankets) to support local emergency responses in the North and South.



JDC transformed a school kitchen into a volunteer center in which 1,000 hot meals are prepared daily.

## Rehabilitation of Israel's South

JDC is not only providing critical services in the immediate term, as outlined above.

JDC will also play a major role in the long-term strategic rehabilitation of the devastated region. This is possible due to JDC's decades of experience in building long-term partnerships with some of Israel's most vulnerable cities, their mayors, municipal leaders, and government ministries, all of whom play a leading role in this major effort.

To do this, we must start supporting the cities today. The cities in the South face difficult months ahead, especially those that have not been evacuated – and must function under fire. The actions taken in the next few months will be critical in laying the foundation for rebuilding in the future.

- **Strengthening cities under fire: today and tomorrow.** JDC is targeting key cities in the South - places which suffered tremendously, have high percentages of vulnerable and poor citizens, and desperately need assistance to best help their residents. We have already begun working in Ashkelon, Ofakim, and Rahat. JDC will partner with the cities in rebuilding and strengthening social services. Our work will focus on a city's vulnerable populations, whether that be at-risk schoolchildren, members of day centers for the elderly, families living in poverty, or people with disabilities. JDC's community organizers will assist in addressing immediate needs and accompanying local leaders as they build targeted rehabilitation plans to strengthen the cities and their social service systems for the long term.
- **Bolstering communities.** Community organizers will run activities and recruit volunteers to strengthen the sense of connection among evacuees and those suffering from the war so that they can rebuild together. This effort will focus especially on the residents from Sderot and the Bedouin community.
- **Meet developing needs** that are growing and changing rapidly. JDC is providing access to flexible funding to triage needs and provide immediate assistance, with limited bureaucratic hurdles.

## Why JDC?

Since 1948, we have worked in partnership with the Israeli government to develop innovative social services for the country's most vulnerable citizens, and to help Israel withstand and overcome national emergencies of all kinds. JDC continues to work in partnership with the current government, with municipal, lay, and religious leaders from every social sector, and with countless non-profit organizations and leading businesses across the country. Our decades of experience, well-established programs, and partnerships and professional relationships that span all of Israel are unique assets. These enable us to implement quick, effective, widespread responses in times of emergency that can meet the needs of all Israel's citizens.



The war in Israel is reverberating across the world. **As a global organization**, JDC is keeping abreast of the situation outside of Israel, offering trauma support and strengthening resilience amongst vulnerable Jewish communities where JDC is active.



# You Can Make a Difference Now

## Israel Emergency - Projected Budget as of Nov 2, 2023



### Trauma and Mental Health Support

Support and training for front-line professionals - educators, caregivers, medical professionals, youth workers, and more \$2,800,000

For those directly impacted, including in-person and online therapy and resources \$5,420,000

**Subtotal \$8,220,000**

### Ensuring Provision of Pre-War Services

Children, youth, and families - education and support \$2,940,000

People with disabilities \$3,400,000

Elderly \$5,700,000

Accessing rights, benefits, and public services \$900,000

**Subtotal \$12,940,000**

### Economic Relief and Resilience

Direct support to families and young adults including food vouchers, debt relief and emergency resources \$3,500,000

Grants, e-commerce training, and alternative workforce solutions for small businesses, farms, and other employers \$5,400,000

Managing a diverse workforce \$500,000

**Subtotal \$9,400,000**

### Supporting Volunteerism and Civil Society

Training and placing volunteers \$800,000

Aligning partners' emergency responses, such as interministerial coordination, regional initiatives, and cross-sector collaboration \$3,900,000

Leveraging technology, data, and entrepreneurship to meet emergency needs \$1,300,000

Capacity-building and coordination of NGOs and grassroots efforts \$3,200,000

First aid supplies and equipment for civil emergency responders \$1,300,000

**Subtotal \$10,500,000**

### Rehabilitation of Israel's South

Key cities: for the immediate term \$4,000,000

Key cities: in the mid- and long-term \$7,000,000

Bolstering municipalities and communities \$1,500,000

Immediately available flexible funding for emerging needs \$5,000,000

**Subtotal \$17,500,000**

**TOTAL \$58,560,000**

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