



TOGETHER WITH ISRAEL

October 7, 2023: One Year Later
The Jewish Agency's Impact
During The Swords of Iron War



THE FIRST RESPONDER OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

When Hamas and other terror organizations in Gaza attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, the magnitude of the onslaught was unprecedented. Thousands of rockets were fired into civilian areas and thousands of terrorists infiltrated towns in southern Israel to murder and kidnap Israeli citizens. In just hours, **1,200** Israelis were killed, more than **10,000** were injured, and **251** people were taken hostage into Gaza – **101** remain captive, including four who were in captivity prior to October 7.

In response to the assault, the Swords of Iron War began, calling some **360,000** IDF reservists away from their jobs and families to serve their country. Since then, Israel has endured relentless bombardment, with over **26,000** rockets, missiles, and drones targeting the country from Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Iran. This onslaught has caused widespread devastation, displacing approximately **200,000** Israelis, including more than **75,000** who remain unable to return home.

In times of crisis, The Jewish Agency for Israel is the first responder of the Jewish people. Our emergency management teams—always in a state of readiness thanks to the undesignated Core support we receive from our philanthropic partners The Jewish Federations of North America and Keren Hayesod-UIA—jumped into action, as did our **1,000+ Israel-based employees**. We provided urgent financial relief to thousands of terror victims; distributed grants and loans to affected businesses; evacuated immigrants from our absorption centers in regions under fire; offered emotional and hands-on support to the elderly, at-risk youth and other vulnerable populations; and worked to ensure the security of Jewish communities worldwide, which began to experience increased antisemitism after the attacks.

Thanks to the assistance of our partners and our strong relationships with the Israeli government, local municipalities, the IDF, and numerous community organizations in Israel, The Jewish Agency had the infrastructure and agility to meet Israel's immediate critical needs in the wake of October 7 while also working toward helping the country's long-term recovery and fostering resilience. This report highlights our extensive and vital efforts in Israel and around the world in the year since the war began. All data is updated as of October 7, 2024.





**DIRECT
RELIEF**

The Jewish Agency promptly mobilized emergency response protocols after the October 7 attacks, offering crisis intervention and vital assistance to families of victims, survivors and affected businesses as well as Israel's most vulnerable residents: senior citizens, new immigrants, youth at risk and more.

SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF TERROR

With so many horrifically impacted on October 7 on an unparalleled scale, and many more in the ensuing war, our Fund for Victims of Terror quickly began working overtime, with staff extending hours and volunteers helping answer calls. The Fund supports those affected by terrorism and violence, offering emergency grants within 48 hours of an attack, followed by long-term rehabilitative care, in collaboration with government resources. Since October 7, 2023, the Fund for Victims of Terror has distributed **11,106** grants to **10,272** households.

In the entire 20-year history of the Fund, until the attacks, we had served around **9,000** beneficiaries; in just the first two weeks of the war, we saw **10** times the number of people affected than we typically serve in a year. Due to the extraordinary scope and cruelty of these attacks, we also established a special fund for Israelis with the greatest needs, including orphans, the families of hostages, welfare recipients and those who lost their homes.

In addition, The Jewish Agency provided emergency aid to border communities in southern and northern Israel; to date, **20 million ILS** has been distributed. The

funds were transferred to eight regional councils in the south and 15 regional councils in the north (each of which represents many towns, villages, and kibbutzim), enabling the communities to take care of their residents during this traumatic time.

The Fund also offered respite camps during school vacations for child victims of terror to help the kids process trauma and build resilience while enjoying games, activities, and excursions. It also offers long-term interventions for traumatized teens who are preparing to join the IDF, recognizing the significant challenges they face as they prepare to defend their country after experiencing horror and upheaval.



AYAL'S STORY

We woke up at 6:30 in the morning that Shabbat from rocket barrages that were so loud we didn't even hear the warning alarms going off. I checked my phone and saw a lot of notifications from the Alumim security squad, which I'm a part of, including one message saying very clearly, *"Terrorists in Alumim. On motorcycles. There has been shooting in the barn area."*

A friend and I headed for the barn with our weapons and we saw the shocking sight of two dead Nepalese workers and another five wounded. Later, we saw the terrorists went back to the workers' living quarters and literally massacred them -- there's no other way to put it. They murdered and slaughtered 19 Nepalese and Thai workers.

Near the barn, we encountered a terrorist less than 10 meters from us and he opens fire. My friend got shot in the leg and I got hit by either shrapnel or indirect fire that entered my cheek and settled right underneath my ear. I returned fire at the terrorist and killed him. But



several seconds after that, before I managed to comb the area, I felt a very sharp pain in my back, a pain that knocked me to the ground. I realized I was injured and began to cough up blood. A bullet had shattered my shoulder blade, punctured my lung, and fractured six of my ribs. I couldn't get up and it was very hard to breathe, but I managed to report in that I was injured.

They couldn't evacuate me for a while because of the fighting going on. But once the fighting calmed down a bit, two guys who came to help defend the Kibbutz got me to a car, folded down the back seats and laid me down on the floor, and we took off at a frantic speed.

We got to Neviot, where ambulances were waiting and around 1:30pm, I arrived at Soroka Hospital in Be'er Sheva and was taken in for my first surgery. My wife and four kids stayed in our safe room for 26 hours until the army permitted them to leave at 8:30 Sunday morning.

The Fund for Victims of Terror helped us first with immediate grants to each family as a whole and to family members individually too. The Fund also was supporting our regional council and the Kibbutz itself in the aftermath.

We've overcome crises in the past. This is a bit different from previous wars because the disaster disproportionately affected civilians but we're a strong people and we'll emerge from this much stronger, too.



EMERGENCY AID FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Many small businesses in the communities near the Gaza border closed or were forced to completely cease their operations due to the ongoing war and security situation. Some had all their employees called up for reserve duty in the IDF, others had to evacuate their production facilities, and still others were destroyed entirely. Moreover, many of the owners of these businesses experienced the tragic events of October 7 firsthand, witnessing friends and relatives being murdered or kidnapped, and they and their families were displaced, without the means of supporting themselves. The Jewish Agency immediately took emergency measures to assist these small businesses and reinforce Israel's economy.

Grants

In the wake of October 7, in partnership with Shva, Klirmark Capital, and Israel Venture Network, The Jewish Agency launched Support Business IL. The special initiative provided immediate grants to small businesses in impacted communities; over the last year, Support Business IL had provided over **21.6 million ILS in grants to 3,209 businesses.**

We're incredibly grateful to The Jewish Agency and its partners who made the support from Support Business IL possible. They ensured the grant came quickly and really helped get us back on our feet.

– Shlomo and Shmuel, brothers and co-owners of Israeli Wood Art, an artistic wood workshop in Sderot, and Support Business IL grant recipients.

In February 2024, we launched Business IL Miluim



to specifically provide grants to IDF reservists whose small businesses have suffered due to their absence while they are on the front lines. Since its establishment, Business IL Miluim has distributed over **94.5 million ILS in business grants to 4,554 IDF reservists so far.**

Loans

The Jewish Agency's SparkIL program, established in cooperation with Ogen, continued to facilitate peer-to-peer crowdfunded loans and support to small businesses throughout Israel that were affected by the war, offering up to **100,000 ILS** in interest-free loans. Since October 7, SparkIL and other Jewish Agency loan funds have facilitated over **204 million ILS in loans to 777 small business owners.**

An additional loan fund provides low-interest loans of up to **150,000 ILS** to businesses in southern Israel. And in March 2024, together with philanthropic partners, we established a **20 million ILS** loan fund serving Ashkelon, which has already begun receiving applications.

All three of us owners and most of our employees were called for reserve duty, so there was no one to open the place. The loan from SparkIL helped us keep our heads above water.

– Tal Malihi, co-owner of Jacob Cafe and Wine Bar, and SparkIL loan recipient.

RECENT IMMIGRANTS

The Jewish Agency operates more than 18 absorption centers throughout Israel that offer transitional housing and an array of supportive services to thousands of new immigrants each year. After October 7, we evacuated immigrants from absorption centers that were in the line of fire. We organized temporary residences for them in hotels, youth hostels, and at our Youth Villages and other campuses, with a cumulative **139,462** nights in evacuation stays provided along with **418,386** hot meals.

In addition to offering housing and meals, as well as psychological counseling, we implemented heightened security measures, arranged structured Hebrew classes, distributed tablets so children could participate in remote learning and provided income assistance to over **1,400** olim who lost work as a result of the war. Most olim were able to return to their absorption centers in late November 2023, although residents from the Ibim Absorption Center, located in the western Negev, could not return until March 2024. Absorption center staff continue to support the olim as they cope with trauma.

In the beginning, it was tough. But The Jewish Agency gave us plenty of support, including clothes, shoes, shelter; all the necessary stuff. They are taking care of us and doing everything to help, giving us strength and courage.

– Addise, an Ethiopian immigrant who was evacuated to a hotel with her family from a Jewish Agency absorption center after October 7.



SENIOR CITIZENS

After the October 7 attacks, the staff at The Jewish Agency's Amigour subsidized homes throughout Israel's south and central regions immediately extended their hours to ensure the safety of thousands of Israeli senior citizen residents, including many Holocaust survivors. The ongoing threat of missiles and sirens meant these residents could not venture out for groceries, prompting Amigour to distribute food baskets and hot meals, particularly in high-risk areas like Ashkelon, Ashdod, Tel Aviv and northern Israel.

Amigour also swiftly inspected and equipped all its bomb shelters with necessary supplies and essentials and to ensure the emotional well-being of its elderly residents, offered group and individual psychological treatment.

What gives me strength is the constant support i received at the Amigour residence throughout the war. Amigour staff visited each resident to check in and distribute food donations. Amigour for me means security: emotional security, financial security, and psychological security.

– Irena, a senior resident of the Yuval Amigour home in Ofakim.





COMMUNAL REBUILDING

Many communities bordering Gaza and in the North have been hit hard by the attacks and ongoing war and face a tough and long recovery. But The Jewish Agency has been there, facilitating critical volunteer opportunities and bringing global Jewish communities together to help with Israel's rebuilding process.

COMMUNITIES2GETHER

After October 7, The Jewish Agency established Communities2Gether, a global partnership to support the numerous Israeli towns and kibbutzim impacted by the attacks and the ensuing war, in close coordination with the new Tkuma Government Authority and local municipalities, and with support from JFNA, Keren Hayesod, and Jewish communities worldwide.

Communities2Gether pairs each impacted Israeli community with a Jewish community abroad that is committed to offering sustained support for three to five years through funding, resources, and personal connections, helping rebuild infrastructure and restore hope. Through the initiative, **29** new partnerships with specific Israeli kibbutzim, moshavim and communities in the western Negev were formed, in addition to the **six** pre-existing partnerships in the region.

The connection The Jewish Agency facilitated between Kissufim and the Jewish community in Cleveland, Ohio, through Communities2Gether made us feel that someone was there for us. Thanks to this effort, we have support and know we are not alone. We are strong and growing, together.

– Shmuel, a resident of Kibbutz Kissufim whose grandmother was murdered on October 7.



CAMPERS2GETHER

Since October 7, Israeli teens have experienced overwhelming levels of anxiety and trauma, with many displaced from their homes and closely connected to family members or friends who were killed, injured, or kidnapped. To offer these teens an opportunity for respite and to connect with their global Jewish peers – who have faced unprecedented levels of antisemitism and anti-Zionism since the war began – The Jewish Agency, Mosaic United and the Foundation for Jewish Camp established Campers2Gether.

Through Campers2Gether, in the summer of 2024, over **1,000** Israeli teens ages 14-16 from the western Negev and northern Israel were brought to **49** Jewish overnight camps in the U.S. Canada, Europe, and Central America for a transformational two weeks.

ZIV'S STORY

On October 7, I was at home, when my father, the moshav's security coordinator, warned of terrorists infiltrating Tzohar. We hid for half a day with 13 family members in a protected room. Around noon, my grandmother received a call from a neighbor who told her that her son had been kidnapped to Gaza. That was when we started to understand the magnitude of the crisis. Later, we found out my 21-year-old uncle was murdered on his way home after fleeing the Nova Music Festival. Everyone was crying non-stop. Going to camp was a chance to get away, to share what my family and I went through on October 7 and our experience being displaced since then, to spread the story of my uncle and to show the American campers that despite the war, we are strong.

– Ziv, 15, from Moshav Tzohar, a participant in Campers2Gether.





YOUTH AT RISK

Our Youth Futures staff working with **14,000** direct beneficiaries (children and their parents) in Israel have been extremely busy supporting their constituents in the wake of October 7. Youth Futures mentors – who are paired with some of Israel’s most vulnerable children, providing them with community-based interventions to help them and their families overcome challenges and thrive – immediately reached out to those they work with to ensure they were okay. Many families know someone who was murdered, injured, or kidnapped during the attacks and/or a soldier who was killed in the ensuing war, and some were also displaced from their homes. As the war contracted the Israeli economy, Youth Futures families’ financial challenges worsened.

In the first days of the war, Youth Futures developed a comprehensive emergency approach, including weekly in-depth assessments for each program participant and their family members, to identify and address urgent needs. The program also distributed over **757 financial grants** to families in need, connected more than **1,970** beneficiaries to therapeutic services, and established **15** afterschool learning centers to lessen academic gaps.

Gali, my son Yoav’s Youth Futures mentor, really knows Yoav and immediately knew what to do so Yoav would get help for the horrors he witnessed on October 7th. I don’t know if I would’ve managed without her. Now I appreciate even more how vital Youth Futures is to us and our lives.

– Hadar from Afula, who together with Yoav, was visiting family in Moshav Yachini on October 7 when Hamas invaded; they witnessed her nephew being shot and dying.

VOLUNTEERISM

When the war began, The Jewish Agency mobilized a passionate force of volunteers from within Israel and beyond. Thousands of Masa Israel Journey Fellows in Israel took part in volunteer activities, from picking crops to babysitting and more, playing an essential role in assisting impacted Israelis.

In fact, so many Jewish young adults wanted to come to Israel's aid and were searching for volunteer opportunities in the wake of October 7, that Masa launched a new program, Masa Volunteers. For four or six weeks, participants engage in activities ranging from cooking for soldiers to teaching English to evacuated children and beyond. Since being established, Masa Volunteers already brought **613** participants from **30** countries to volunteer in Israel.



We've made a real difference as we respond to calls, ride in ambulances for our shifts, and drop patients off in hospitals. It's clear we are filling a need. People are so grateful and shocked that we are here and they feel really supported that we've come to Israel to help. This program has truly been so impactful.

– Elisha, 38, from Baltimore, Maryland, who underwent EMT training in Israel as a participant in Masa Israel Journey's Masa Volunteers-Magen David Adom program.

In addition to Masa's volunteers, participants in other Jewish Agency programs, including Partnership2Gether, Ulpan Etzion, Mechinot (pre-army leadership academies) and more, sprang into action to help. Some of our beneficiaries, including seniors at our Amigour homes and children in our absorption centers, also put together care packages for evacuees and soldiers, in a true circle of giving.





SAFETY & RESILIENCE

Rates of antisemitic violence have been increasing dramatically worldwide for many years, but the October 7 attacks and ensuing war opened a floodgate of anti-Israel and antisemitic hatred that is spreading fear among Jewish communities all over the globe. Many Jews are scared to openly identify as Jewish and just entering a Jewish institution—a Hillel, synagogue, or JCC—comes with risks. The Jewish Agency has long been committed to supporting Jewish unity and the safety of Jewish communities around the world and has continued to help ensure our connections and Jewish security over the past year since the Swords of Iron War began.

SHLICHIM

Our highly trained Shlichim (Israeli emissaries) around the globe, including our Campus Israel Fellows, acted immediately following the events of October 7, with enhanced support from the Adelson Shlichut Institute. Shlichim provided invaluable resources to their communities: Israel education, advocacy tools and a meaningful connection to the Jewish State.

Because of their existing networks and extensive relationships, Shlichim were able to mobilize quickly to share personal their stories; speak publicly about the war and counter misinformation and antisemitism; initiate and take part in rallies and events; raise awareness for the hostages; and much more. Over the past year, they've organized **75,000+** educational activities for nearly 1 million participants.

The rise in antisemitism and anti-Israel views was even more blatant on college campuses in North America. These places of higher education became a battleground as Jewish and pro-Israel students were confronted by new levels of hate and experienced a lack of administrative support. Last year there were **90+** Israel Fellows. This year, there are **106**.

On October 7, our Israel Fellow dropped everything to speak with all of the students he could to process what was going on. And every day since, he has helped us.

– Ori, a Jewish student at a California university.

Additionally, as part of our new “Shlichim in Uniform” initiative, we trained and brought 87 active or reserve duty IDF soldiers to 50 Jewish communities in 38 countries to share their personal experiences at hundreds of events during the week of Israel’s Memorial Day (Yom HaZikaron) and Independence Day (Yom HaAtzma’ut).



SECURITY GRANTS & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Since its founding in 2012, The Jewish Agency's Security Fund has helped Jewish communal life thrive in areas where Jewish gathering places are targets of violent attacks. The Fund has assisted with security improvements such as armored doors and windows, access control systems, window bars and CCTV systems. In total, in the past 12 years, we have allocated nearly 90 million ILS (\$25 million) to over 800 Jewish institutions in 70 countries. Due to the current threats, The Jewish Agency is aiding Jewish communities worldwide, outside the U.S., by providing urgent financial security grants. Since October 7, the Security Fund has approved 594 emergency grants totaling more than **\$1.6 million** to communities and institutions in **49** countries.

South African Jewry saw a steep upsurge in antisemitism after October 7 and the community is grateful for the assistance extended by The Jewish Agency Security Fund, which has gone a long way toward reassuring our members and helping them feel safe.

– a director at the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

Additionally, The Jewish Agency's JReady platform – initially established in 2020 to help Jewish communities cope with the pandemic, and adapted to serve in any emergency – has been offering tools, connections, and resilience-building support to communities worldwide.

Since October 7, weekly webinars have kept community leaders updated on the situation in Israel and provided resources such as how to address collective trauma, how to advocate for Israel, how to use social media in the current online environment and more. To date JReady has facilitated numerous webinars for over **500** community leaders from **40** countries and provided tailored training and consultations for crisis teams and volunteers from across the globe.

Additionally, JReady has also completed its 10th cohort of a semester-long Emergency Management Course with Tel Aviv University for **38** leaders from 15 countries across Europe, and hosted resilience sessions for some **20** delegations to Israel.



WHAT'S NEXT

As the war continues, we are committed to fostering hope and resiliency within Israeli society and assisting in Israel's rehabilitation process. Since October 7, The Jewish Agency's work on the ground in Israel has expanded significantly so we can better aid in re-establishing a bright future for the Jewish State and ensuring the security of its people.

In addition to continuing the critical work of this past year, we are proud to launch two new vital projects which will help secure and reinvigorate Israel's most vulnerable communities as we work to move Israeli society forward:

The Bayit Project, in which we will renovate and or construct new shelters in 10 Absorption Centers, nine Amigour facilities for the elderly, and two Youth Villages to ensure the safety of 15,000 vulnerable Israelis, including new immigrants, the elderly, and children at-risk. These major security upgrades will include creating "safe rooms" in each family's apartment or a larger reinforced room on each floor.

Ibim, in which we will construct a new thriving town in the Sha'ar HaNegev municipality consisting of 94 new or renovated housing units and public gardens. Ibim will help revitalize the Negev, which experienced unprecedented devastation in the October 7 attacks, establishing a vibrant campus for an estimated 3,000 young immigrant and Israeli residents.



THANK YOU

Israel's citizens have endured unimaginable trauma since the October 7, 2023 and the start of the Swords of Iron War. And while The Jewish Agency's efforts to strengthen Israel and the Jewish people have always been crucial, our work and presence on the ground around the world have become even more vital over the past year.

We are deeply grateful to you and to all of our generous philanthropic partners worldwide who enable us to help Israel recover and rebuild, to pivot and respond efficiently when a crisis occurs, to ensure Aliyah continues, to foster connections between Jewish communities, to offer Israeli society our unwavering aid and maintain global Jewish safety.

