



JDC RESPONDS: ISRAEL EMERGENCY

May 2021

The moment rockets started raining down on Israel, JDC launched into action and began providing relief and assistance to the most vulnerable populations in Israel. We were able to do that because of Federations like yours whose core support ensures our seminal work, day in and day out. As you have seen in your community, in times of crisis and conflict, it is the most vulnerable (homebound older adults, families already at-risk, people with disabilities) that experience even greater levels of stress and trauma. Today, JDC remains focused on responding to the most urgent and emerging needs of vulnerable Israelis.

The generous support that your Federation has made possible in past emergencies is felt today, at this very moment. The critical services and infrastructure that were put into place during past emergencies is proving crucial today, as municipalities and other government partners re-activate these services in order to immediately address the emerging needs of the day.

At this time, JDC's emergency response includes:

- **Aiding poor families and those in distress:** We are providing counseling and therapy services for the traumatized, including setting up a hotline for those most impacted by the ongoing rocket fire and related trauma.
- **Providing in-school trauma services for schoolchildren and educators:** We are working with local psychological services and the Ministry of Education to counsel educators in the cities and villages most affected by the crisis. We are also equipping volunteers with activity kits for bomb shelters and providing psychological support for young Israelis, Arab and Jew alike.
- **Delivering crisis support for at-risk elderly:** We are providing training in crisis-response and preparedness to over 150 elder-care facilities, creating tailored services for Russian-speaking older adults and developing virtual health and wellness services and long-term care solutions for the neediest elderly in Arab and mixed Arab-Jewish cities.
- **Deploying emergency services for people with disabilities:** In addition to coordinating with Israel's Home Front command to make safety information easily accessible to people with disabilities, JDC is helping to procure life-saving technology for the deaf and hard of hearing so they can follow the alerts as rockets continue to fall.
- **Fostering social cohesion and cooperation in Israel:** We are working with the Israeli Government and local partners to design a "day-after" plan addressing civic and social engagement. We are also launching a program to promote diversity, sensitivity training and conflict resolution in the workplace.



As was demonstrated in past emergencies, one of JDC's greatest strengths is our ability to create the foundations upon which individuals and communities can rebuild and emerge more resilient and prepared for the next emergency.

At this time, JDC has brought together a high-level "day after" that is developing longer term strategies that relate to deeply troubling internal and societal issues that have surfaced since the onset of the crisis.

A sample of some are below.

- **Virtual Assistance for Older Adults:** Drawing on the experience of the Virtual Center for Independent Living created during the COVID-19 pandemic, which used the internet to connect people with disabilities with community, professional assistance and access to services, JDC is creating a similar model for older adults who are unable to leave their homes due to the crisis.
- **Long-Term Assistance for Children in Lod:** The unprecedented and intense violence that erupted between Arab and Jewish residents in the city of Lod has thrown hundreds of families into crisis. In recent days, Lod's children witnessed gunfire and riots – a scenario no one could have previously imagined. JDC seeks to begin a full-year intervention program to provide emotional support and counseling to staff, students, and parents in up to ten Lod schools.
- **Community Caseworkers for the Elderly:** After months of being stuck at home due to COVID-19, Israel's elderly are now beset by nonstop rocket fire. Many cannot get to shelters in the short amount of time that follows a warning siren. Municipal social workers often have large caseloads (some 300 clients) and cannot possibly reach all the elderly in their care. JDC plans to reintroduce its Community Caseworker program, which was vital to alleviating stress, loneliness and fear in past crisis. JDC will recruit and train caseworkers to help share the caseload of municipal social workers, calling vulnerable elderly, assessing needs and providing critical emotional support.
- **Psychological Support and Trauma Relief for Israelis with Disabilities:** A large number of people with disabilities are struggling with ongoing emotional difficulties that affect their daily functioning. These individuals will need medical and rehabilitation services, but Israel is not equipped for this uptick in demand. JDC is helping to develop technology that alerts relevant caregivers and authorities of deteriorating emotional state via digital tools that detect loneliness, distress and agitation, mild depression, and more.

Thanks to the support of Jewish Federations of North America, individuals and foundations, JDC is answering the call of the Jewish people in times of crisis and will continue to do so as Israel recovers from this terrible crisis.

