

GLOBAL REPORT

FALL 2024

THE WAR AT HOME

How FOI International Ministries is serving Israeli soldiers and their families.



Anat drove quickly, ignoring the speed limit as she raced into northern Israel. It was September 25, 2024, and once again, her son's reserve unit had been ordered to report to the front lines. This time he wasn't headed into Gaza but instead to the northern front of the war in Israel. Since October 8, 2023, Hezbollah has fired rockets from Lebanon into northern Israel daily. But on this day, almost a year later, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) seemed to be planning a response that included more than just airstrikes.



Meno Kalisher delivers supplies to IDF soldiers.



Shopping for Ronit's new battalion recruits. FOI France Rep Henri came for a visit and helped.

Anat glanced in the rearview mirror at her son and two other members of his unit as they gripped their machine guns in the back seat, rechecking their gear. They sped through empty city after empty city, vacant of locals who had been evacuated to central Israel, many since the beginning of the war. It was eerie. And quiet. In this region, law enforcement had disabled all speed cameras and traffic lights because slow-moving vehicles are slow-moving targets for Hezbollah rockets.

Eventually, Anat and the soldiers reached the underground parking lot that served as the unit's gathering point. While everyone had hoped a ground invasion into Lebanon wouldn't happen, when the time came, these soldiers—and this family—were willing to fight for Israel and the Jewish people. They said goodbye, and Anat sped back to central Israel under the protection of the Iron Dome, Israel's air-defense system. The reality that God is the real Protector of Israel felt truer than ever.

These types of stories have become commonplace among The Friends of Israel's (FOI's) International Ministries staff and their families. Across Israel and around the world, our field representatives are working to bless Jewish people with the love of Messiah. In this time of crisis since October 7, 2023, one of our most vital ministries has been assisting soldiers and their families. As you read more about International Ministries' work with Israeli soldiers, would you prayerfully consider supporting us in these endeavors around the world?

REHOVOT, ISRAEL

On October 7, the IDF mobilized more troops at one time than they have in decades. Reservists, called up from around the globe, converged on the south to face thousands of terrorists who crossed into Israel to burn, rape, and murder as many Jewish people as they could.

Michal, the eldest son of one FOI worker, was one such reservist. His family was on vacation in Eilat that Shabbat. Because Michal is a sniper in the special forces, the IDF airlifted him away from his family and back to his base. He arrived there to find it being attacked and almost overrun by terrorists. After battling to secure the base, Michal and his team were sent into Gaza. It's believed that Michal and his unit have now spent more time in Gaza since the start of the war than any other IDF soldiers.

Because so many reservists were called into action simultaneously on October 7, the IDF was not completely prepared for the increased needs for supplies. FOI's representatives in Rehovot and their *kehila* (community of believers in Jesus) immediately provided food, drinks, and other immediate needs to units serving at the Gaza border. But many other unmet needs—outdated gear, lack of sun protection, and missing personal care products—indicated that the IDF was struggling to keep up. Again, our team and their *kehila* quickly took action, delivering sunglasses, tents, desert boots, tactical jackets, beef jerky, and other necessities. In fact, the quartermaster of one unit on the border was so impressed with our team's help that he contacted one FOI worker directly with all his unit's needs.



Clothes and shoes donated for evacuated families in the north of Israel.

By caring for soldiers, our team has found some rare and powerful opportunities to build long-term relationships with Jewish people. As one FOI worker says, “Our central goal has always been to support the testimony of every believing soldier in our *kehila*, while also building relationships with their families. It's not just equipment; it's relationships!” Seeing God open doors to share the love of Yeshua by blessing Jewish people is the heartbeat of FOI's International Ministries.

JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

It is easy to forget how small Israel is. Because of its size, no one lives more than a two-hour drive from the war front in either the north or the south. Every Israeli is involved in many aspects of the war. For example, our team in Jerusalem supplies food for soldiers and their families. The Jerusalem Assembly, our partner church in the city, has worked tirelessly to distribute hot meals to families of reservists since the beginning of the war. They also provide weekly meals to families displaced from their homes in the north because of the war who now live in hotels in central Israel. Additionally, they provide essential services like grocery shopping for moms with young children. Since every rocket attack siren allows people only 90 seconds to enter bomb shelters, shopping safely is particularly hard on reservists' wives caring for several young kids.

When temperatures dropped in the north, many units didn't have cold weather gear. The Jerusalem Assembly, along with International Ministries, purchased appropriate uniforms for entire units, totaling over \$20,000.



Believing soldiers continue their studies in Gaza.



Meno saying goodbye to Ronit.

Receiving the gift of winter gear, one soldier said,

Why are we willing to suffer through all this? I'll tell you. When I see the look in my commander's eyes and my fellow Israelis' eyes, I am willing to do whatever it takes to fight for our people. I drop everything—my family, my children. My unit was grateful for the help of the winter uniforms. And the carrot cake. We will not stop fighting.

Every Israeli has been marked by the trauma of this war. Knowing that every surrounding nation would like to see Israel destroyed and its people dead is bad enough. But the war's close proximity and the constant anxiety for life and the welfare of loved ones has impacted everyone. Along with spiritual counseling and around-the-clock prayer, the Jerusalem Assembly also offers mental health services that soldiers and their families desperately need to cope with the ongoing trauma caused by the war.

PARTNER MINISTRIES

FOI's International Ministries have also partnered with other organizations for many years to serve Israeli soldiers. Because of confidentiality concerns, we cannot share much of the sensitive information about these efforts. However, FOI's International Ministries seek out opportunities to help believing soldiers strengthen their faith while serving in the IDF.

Tragically, 40% of IDF soldiers lose the faith with which they entered military service. We are grateful to partner with many organizations working to change that statistic for believers. Additional organizations with which we partner offer services like decompression days for soldiers who have stepped away from the front lines for relief. We also partner with organizations that provide follow-up spiritual care and mentoring for believing soldiers when they return home from their active military service.

FOI'S INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

All around the world, our field representatives are mobilizing Christians who love God's Word to compassionately bless God's Chosen People. This is an incredibly important time for Christians worldwide to proclaim loudly and clearly that we love the Jewish people because God loves them. No matter what opposition they face or the trouble they endure, we seek to bless Israel with the love of Messiah Jesus.

Will you join us during this urgent time? Ministry to soldiers is only one of many vital ways in which our International Ministries are answering God's call. We are grateful for your prayers and financial support, as together, Christians seek to bless God's people wherever they might be.

In Christ Alone,

DAN PRICE, MDiv
Director of International Ministries



If God has spoken to you about providing much-needed support for the FOI International Ministries, please send your gift to The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc, PO Box 908, Bellmawr, NJ 08099, or visit foi.org/global-report to donate online.