



United Hatzalah of Israel

*Highlights of the week in Israel*

15 January 2009

*Dear Friends and Supporters,*



This war is taking many unexpected twists and turns. There are waves of tense waiting periods punctuated by **bouts of feverish lifesaving activity**. Our medics and the Israeli people in general are quite resilient but the extended period of **wary preparedness is taking its toll**.

Wishing peace in Israel and throughout the world.

Sincerely,

**Eli Beer**

Chief coordinator

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## When the Home Front is on the Front Line

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**Nerves and senses are taut** assessing the risks of every sound that may be the “**Color Red**” warning or the sound of a missile impact. Inconsiderately played radios or truck backfires can **provoke extreme reactions** from anyone in earshot. United Hatzalah medics are trained to **recognize these stress symptoms** in others and in themselves. The pressure mounts on Hamas in certain areas and pressure erupts in Israel in other areas.





A special **“Change a Missile to a Smile”** program is being developed to provide **support, counseling and recreational activities** for United Hatzalah medics and their families. The Kibbutz Chafetz Chaim Guest House is partnering with United Hatzalah to provide a venue for many of these restorative activities with **significant reductions and matching discounts**.

Aside from the **continuing strikes** in Beersheba, Ashkelon and Ashdod, a **salvo of missiles hit northern Israel**, and an **air raid siren** was erroneously **activated in the Jerusalem** region as well. Not only did United Hatzalah’s Moskowitz Command Center field over 150 calls in the first few minutes of the event, but almost all of its more than 300 medics in Jerusalem and Beit Shemesh reportedly **received numerous frantic phone calls and emails** from family, friends, co-workers, school principals etc. With its Moskowitz Command Center, MIRS and Beeper communications devices the medics had near **instantaneous access to reliable information**. The geometric expansion of the amount of people calmed by the reassuring message from the medics is incalculable.

One of our medics mentioned that he felt a **keen sense of solidarity and empathy for what the residents of the south**; and the north for that matter, go through on a regular basis. The warm words, actions and support from our friends overseas is extremely encouraging. As always, **solidarity, unity and compassion** have always been the cornerstones of strength that have enabled the Jewish people to **weather the storms of war and persecution**.

We hope the recent overtures for peace come to fruition in a true and lasting peace.

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## A brief recap of ongoing news, sidelined by war reporting

- My father and **United Hatzalah medic Aryeh Deutsch** are making guarded improvements in their medical conditions.
- The grim tally for 2008 in the **“Other War”**, the war on Israeli roads **460 people were killed**. December closed out the year as the month with the most fatalities, 54. That number of course includes the fatalities from the tourist bus crash near Eilat.
- We welcome **60 medics from Beitar Illit** who have joined United Hatzalah thereby strengthening our overall **coordinated response capability in the Gush Etzion region**. Medical and communication equipment distributed is pictured on the right.

- In commemoration of the six month anniversary of the **Jaffa Street Tractor Terror Attack** we assembled a **brief audio-visual presentation** to provide a sense of what it was like on the scene





and how 3 people from Chicago responded to the tragedy.

- As I write this letter, United Hatzalah medics from Ashdod and the surrounding areas are responding to **huge fire at an Ashdod chemical plant**. The fire is not thought to have been started by a missile. 4 people were wounded and have been evacuated. One of the first photos from the scene is shown here.

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**Thank you to all who have given us the opportunity to continue our work.  
We hope you will continue to support us in the future.**

**United Hatzalah** is the largest emergency rescue volunteer organization in Israel which, working hand in hand with MDA has the endorsement of the leading Rabbis in Israel.

**United Hatzalah** has branches in almost every city in Israel from the Golan Heights in the north to Eilat in the south.