



# The Long Road Home

**BRIDGES FOR PEACE LEADERS** walked among the charred remains that were once homes. We surveyed the pitted scars left by bullets tearing through doors, piles of rubble and debris scattered by explosions. We gazed into blackened bedrooms, the smell of burnt flesh lingering in our nostrils.

Entire blocks of Kfar Aza had been completely destroyed when Hamas terrorists launched their barbaric attack on October 7. Now, weeks after that heinous morning, the rubble still bears the evidence of homeowners who had been murdered, kidnapped or fled for their lives.

Kfar Aza is only one community among many. Kibbutz Be'eri, Netivot, Ofakim, Sderot, Nahal Oz, Nir Oz, Re'im and many more are reeling from trauma and destruction. Communities and lives changed forever. Moreover, as the survivors come face-to-face with the scattered remains of what used to be refuges for their families, their hearts are heavy with the yearning for home.

In the wake of October 7, some 500,000 Israelis from the Gaza border communities as well as towns and villages on the Lebanon border were displaced as they fled their homes or were evacuated by the army. Israel experienced a refugee crisis of massive proportion. Hundreds of thousands of Israelis were settled in temporary housing or hotels in safer areas like Mitzpe Ramon, Beit Shemesh or Jerusalem.

Bridges for Peace visited these places of refuge. We comforted the survivors who had lost everything, brought aid to over 200 families in desperate need and delivered home appliances in partnership with the Isaiah Projects to the residents of Kibbutz Be'eri. Our hearts were heavy as we contemplated their future. October 7 left roads destroyed, communities burned and infrastructure and

utilities devastated and disrupted. Add to that the uncertainty of unemployment by the thousands and the haunting memory of genocide wherever they turn.

Despite the ongoing war against Hamas in Gaza and the nearly 180,000 Israelis who remain displaced, Israel is committed to the gigantic task of resettling the south, repairing what was destroyed and damaged as well as securing these communities to prevent another October 7 from ever happening again. But this task is enormous and time consuming. It also promises to be emotionally draining for the terrorized residents who desire to return home.

Speaking with a resident from Kfar Aza, Sarit (name change to protect privacy) told us that she is terrified to return home and sleep in her bed. "It's a place of death," she admitted. Asked what she might do, she said, "I might be able to live in my father's home, but it has to be completely restored because of damage." As we spoke, a tearful Sarit confessed that her immediate future is filled with intense counselling and inner healing as she tries to come to grips with the fact that many of her closest friends and neighbors had been brutally murdered.

For decades, Bridges for Peace has worked in many of the communities that Hamas attacked. We have built relationships with mayors, community leaders, social workers, teachers, children and parents. These are people who love their communities and have dedicated their lives to partnering with us to provide for the needy, help with infrastructure like bomb shelters or assist children from impoverished families succeed in school. Since forces of evil flooded down their streets, mowing down people out for a morning walk or watering their garden and bursting into bedrooms and safe rooms to slaughter and kidnap, these survivors need us more than ever.

The southern communities will be resettled. As I write this letter, the residents from six communities have started to return. But for the communities that were hardest hit, the reality is that it will be up to one to two years before they can start going back. Temporary accommodation featuring mobile homes and caravans are being set up. Hotels are still bursting at the seams with displaced Israeli families. Grief and pain linger like an ever present shadow.

Bridges for Peace remains committed to and intimately involved in demonstrating love and tangible support for the survivors. The requests of desperate needs continue to flow in. The testimonies are heart wrenching. As soldiers continue to fall in battle, increasingly more families are thrust into mourning. Through it all, we remain on the frontlines. Bridges for Peace mourns with the families who feel like parts of their souls have perished with the death of a son or husband. We attend funerals and listen to the intense sobbing that reverberates from those grieving around the open grave. We sit with distraught families who eagerly await—with hope and prayer—for the return of a kidnapped loved one. We embrace the survivors who stand in disbelief at our assistance and deeply moved by our love. Every day, we witness the love of God pouring into these peoples' lives thanks to the care and commitment of Christians around the world. We see the disbelief on their faces when they realize they are not alone, that there are people who love them, see them, hear them and stand with them.

Please help us bring the light of God into the lives of Israelis who are beginning to walk the long road home as they try to rebuild their shattered lives. Let's do our part in rebuilding the south, both in the hearts, families and homes of these Israelis. Let's make sure that they never feel alone. Please consider a donation to our Crisis Assistance Fund so that we can help the south return to life with the support of Christians who reflect the love of God. Will you stand with the Israelis of the south today?

With utmost urgency,  
 Rev. Peter Fast  
 International CEO



In partnership with the Isaiah Project, we delivered refrigerators to survivors from Kibbutz Be'eri.



## BRIDGES FOR PEACE Your Israel Connection...

### Crisis Assistance Fund

US \$50    US \$100    US \$200    US \$500    US \$1,000    US \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Other)

- GREATEST MINISTRY NEED** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- GREATEST ISRAEL NEED** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC PROJECTS FUND**  
US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- FOOD PROJECT** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ADOPTION PROGRAM** (one-year commitment)  
\_\_\_\_\_ US \$65/month
- FEED A CHILD** (one-year commitment)  
\_\_\_\_\_ US \$65/month  
\_\_\_\_\_ US \$ one-time gift
- PROJECT RESCUE** \_\_\_\_\_ US \$400 (or any size gift)
- EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY FUND**  
US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ADOPT AN ISRAELI TOWN** (one-year commitment)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Minimum US \$150/month
- PROJECT TIKVAH (HOPE)** \_\_\_\_\_ US \$45 (or any size gift)
- WIDOWS AND ORPHANS FUND** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- INTERNATIONAL HQ FUND** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- IMMIGRANT WELCOME GIFTS** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- NEW IMMIGRANT FUND** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- CHEER BASKET** \_\_\_\_\_ US \$25/basket
- SCHOOL STARTER KIT** \_\_\_\_\_ US \$7/kit
- HOME REPAIR** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- VICTIMS OF TERROR** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- DENTAL/MEDICAL AID** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- CRISIS ASSISTANCE** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ARAB FAMILY ASSISTANCE** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ZEALOUS8:2 SCHOLARSHIP** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- VOLUNTEER SUPPORT** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- VEHICLE FUND** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- SAVE AN ISRAELI LIFE** US \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A MONTHLY COMMITMENT TO \_\_\_\_\_ PROJECT  
 OF US \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Enclose amount in US dollars or your currency equivalent. Indicate your currency symbol.

### Payment Options

- Check:** Make checks payable to Bridges for Peace. US and Canadian gifts are tax-deductible.
- PayPal:** Go to [www.bridgesforpeace.com](http://www.bridgesforpeace.com), and click on "Donate>Bless Israel."
- VISA**    **MasterCard**    **Discover**    **AMEX**

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_  
 Card number \_\_\_\_\_  
 CW code (3 digit number on back of card) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Expires \_\_\_\_\_ Today's date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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 State/Region \_\_\_\_\_  
 Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone (   ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

- I will pray for Israel and the Jewish people.
- I also need your prayers and have attached my prayer request.
- I have placed Bridges for Peace in my will to bless future generations.
- Please send me information on your Bridges for Peace travel programs.
- Please send your publications to my friend(s), whose name(s) and address(es) are attached.
- By filling in this contact form I give permission to receive communication from Bridges for Peace International and my national office.