

Head of IDF's Search and Rescue Mission Gives Briefing of "Operation Olive Branches" in Turkey

Kahramanmaraş, Turkey February 15, 2023 - As the Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) humanitarian delegation concluded its mission to rescue individuals from the destruction and treat the injured following the February 6 earthquake that devastated Turkey and Syria, Friends of the IDF (FIDF) yesterday held a special live emergency briefing on their heroic efforts.

The briefing, live from the earthquake site, was given by Col. Elad Edri, Commander of the IDF Search and Rescue Brigade and Commander of the Humanitarian Medical Aid Delegation in Turkey. Major (Res.) Dr. Daniel King, an intensive-care-unit specialist at the IDF's field hospital, also joined the live

briefing.

In the briefing, Edri and King discussed the IDF's tremendous efforts to save lives and rescue people trapped underneath the rubble of destroyed buildings, and the enormous undertaking of treating the countless wounded victims. King reinforced the impact that support from across seas has had on the soldiers, who at a moment's notice left their daily lives to provide aid.

"It's very hard to be so far away from our homes, sleeping on the floor, with no water," said King during the briefing. "To know that people out there around the world, Friends of the IDF, are supporting us, thinking about us and understand what we are doing, is deeply important."

For the mission, which Israel

dubbed "Operation Olive Branches," the IDF sent nearly 400 specialists in two teams: the search and rescue delegation and the medical delegation.

The first group consisted of 150 active-duty and reservist personnel, led by the IDF Home Front Command. Several hours after the 7.8-magnitude earthquake devastated the region, the IDF unit departed Israel for Turkey, part of an enormous, international rescue effort. The brigade has played a critical role in 31 major humanitarian missions worldwide after disasters struck, including the 2021 collapse of a high-rise building in Surfside, Florida. The soldiers in the delegation are among Israel's elite and experienced experts in rescue

operations.

As of February 13, after six full days on the ground, the IDF delegation concluded its activities and returned to Israel aboard the IAC aircraft.

It rescued 19 people from the earthquake zone; the youngest was two years old and the eldest a 65-year-old man.

The Search and Rescue Brigade is an FIDF-adopted unit. Adopted brigades receive multi-faceted support from FIDF. The program benefits a brigade's soldiers with funds dedicated to both their financial welfare and emotional well-being.

It also gives units direct connections to their donors in the United States, which greatly boosts morale, as soldiers feel support from across oceans.

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FIDF's donors thereby were personally connected to the soldiers on the ground in Turkey.

The 230-member medical delegation, including members of the IDF Medical Corps and Ministry of Defense, landed in Turkey on February 7 to provide aid to the tens of thousands injured.

The team consisted of highly trained officers and soldiers from the IDF Medical Corps, search and rescue personnel from the Home Front Command, and doctors, nurses and paramedics from the Ministry of Health.

On Friday, February 10, the medical delegation, led by the deputy IDF surgeon general and the head of the IDF's Medical Department, took on the enormous task of reopening a

local hospital in the city of Kahramanmaraş that was abandoned during the earthquake.

The group treated more than 180 patients, including 10 injured in Syria and brought over to Turkey, with state-of-the-art Israeli medical equipment and advanced technique.

Approximately 140 doctors, nurses, a pharmacist, an X-ray technician, paramedics and medical logistics personnel constituted the team. The medical delegation has departed Turkey back to Israel on Thursday, February 15, leaving supplies and equipment to the Turkish local medical authorities.

Since the teams arrived in Turkey, FIDF was in constant contact with the Israeli military about needs on the ground.

Olive Branches' medical delegation asked for FIDF's support to fund life-saving medical equipment for use at the hospital including portable X-ray machines, defibrillators, ventilators, EKG machines, ultrasound machines and CPR airway suction devices. The IDF also requested equipment for the field, such as inflatable tents to create a sterile environment for surgical procedures and coolers to transport blood.

Gifts to FIDF for this effort are going directly to fund medical supplies and equipment needed to treat the earthquake victims. FIDF is the sole organization authorized to collect charitable donations across the United States for IDF soldiers.

About Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF):

FIDF was established in 1981 by a group of Holocaust survivors as a 501© (3) not-for-profit organization with the mission of transforming the lives of the young men and women of the IDF who protect Israel and Jews worldwide through empowering educational, financial, well-being and cultural initiatives.

With 24 chapters throughout the United States, FIDF proudly supports soldiers before, during and after their service, as well as families of fallen soldiers and wounded veterans, reinforcing the vital bond between the communities in the United States and the soldiers of the IDF.

For more information, please visit: www.fidf.org.



Top: (left) Major (reserve) Dr. Daniel King - Field Hospital ICU Doctor. (Right) Lara Krinsky, FIDF Director of Content and Production. Bottom: Colonel Elad Edri - IDF Search and Rescue Brigade Commander.

Photos: Courtesy FIDF.



IDF's Search and Rescue team in action at the devastated major earthquake site in Turkey, searching for survivors in the hard to look at rubble.

Photo: Courtesy IDF.