

## Israeli UPF, WFWP and FFWP chapters' efforts for the sake of the Syrian People

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*Prayers for the health and safety of Syrian people ring out in an Israeli synagogue*

Recent polls in Israel show that the public is very concerned about the grave events occurring in Syria, our neighboring nation. While 87 percent opposes military intervention, around 65 percent would like to increase Israel's humanitarian aid to Syria. Such notions explain the long array of Israeli NGOs providing aid to Syrian refugees after removing any written trace of the origin of the aid. Given that Syria is an enemy of Israel, those numbers are especially interesting.

### Prayers

On Saturday, December 24, a prayer for the sake of Syrian children took place in Netanya, a city in Israel's Northern District, in the Synagogue of Rabbi Dr. Edgar Nof, a senior member of the Jerusalem Forum for Understanding and Cooperation among Religions, UPF, Israel. "May God shower his mercy upon you," prayed one. "May the world show mercy for your misery and may the

children of Syria have joy and light, others. No enemy existed in the hearts of the people, as they expressed in their prayers their sincere care for human beings who are suffering. "We worry for you and love you very much," concluded one of the prayers.

**Humanitarian aid** WFWP Israel and UPF Israel took part in a national humanitarian operation to collect various materials that act as a shield against the harshness of winter, of which displaced Syrians were in desperate need. This was to be transferred to Syria. Students in youth movements together with the Combat Genocide Association led the operation, named operation Human Warmth.

Mrs. Adi Sasaki, the president of WFWP Israel, and Mrs. Liel Willer-Hill the vice president of WFWP Israel in collaboration with the Human Warmth operation coordinated deliveries of blankets and clothing for the refugees in Syria. Mrs. Tamam Wakid-Dabbaha, a school principal from Gdeyda Maker, encouraged her village's families to offer warm coats and blankets. Gdeyda Maker formed from the merger of two Arab towns, a short distance from the coastal city Acre, is in Israel's Northern District. They collected donations within her school and in four other schools in her town. From there, on January 16, they were delivered to the collection center, before being brought to their destination, Syrian refugee camps.



*Aid going to Syria from Israel after all evidence that they are from Israel is removed*

## An Israeli Army field hospital

With funds from the Ministry of Defense, the Israeli Army is operating a field hospital in the Golan Heights, close to Syria. Syrian people arrive at the border to request medical treatment from the Israeli military medical staff. They staff provides medical treatment to everyone, regardless of his or her religion, group or organization. In an interview on Israeli television, in January 2014, the Israeli Defense Forces chief medical officer, Brigadier General Yitzak Kreis, said, "I want to give them what I know to be best as a doctor -- to save their lives, to give them hope."



*A collection point for materials bound for Syria*

## Medical treatments in Israeli hospitals

From the field hospital, they transfer the severely injured to hospitals in Israel. One of the main hospitals, which has treated Syrian victims since 2011, is Ziv Hospital in Sefat. The treatment of wounded Syrians in Israel costs more than \$33 million a year, funded by the government Ministries of Defense, Health and Finance. Yet, it is not enough. The Middle East Peace Forum of UPF Japan, chaired by Mr. Ikuzo Kobayashi and founded by Mr. Masatoshi Abe, has visited the hospital and provided donations.

## Raising funds

In December, through mass fund raising (crowdsourcing), 1.3 million Israeli Shekel [US \$346,500] was raised for the sake of humanitarian aid for the refugees in Syria in less than a week. The Israeli Flying Aid organization, a non-profit NGO, that took upon itself the mission to deliver aid to Syria, led the fund raising operation.

The following words, spoken in 2013 by Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, chief Rabbi of Israel (1993–2003) reveal the religious and moral motivation of the humanitarian aid described above: "When we hear about death from chemical weapons in our neighbor country, we cannot continue in our regular daily life. We should raise a loud voice of protest so that the UN, the government in America, the European Union and Moscow will do the necessary deeds to stop this massive massacre. The voice of the blood of those slaughtered cries out to us from the ground saying, Stop! This is the right moment for the Israeli Knesset to call all the other legislatures in the world, to set up a day of protest, hoping that this worldwide shouting will move the relevant governments to do actual deeds and stop the horrors that are occurring in Syria."