

Swords of Iron War

SNAPSHOT

October 19,
2023*

Evacuating Individuals Displaced by War – refugees in their own country
seeking recovery in times of emergency

* The brief offers a current overview based on the information accessible to us at this time.

The challenge: We are facing an unprecedented crisis in providing solutions for evacuees and those who have been displaced. These are people with no address. Providing solutions encompasses a wide range of response types such as housing, supplies, welfare, education, psychological support, healthcare, and more – in the short, medium, and long term.



General Background

- ▶ In the aftermath of the war, a dynamic national policy is emerging concerning the evacuation and resettlement of people, overseen by the military's Home Front Command.
- ▶ There are two distinct groups of people affected:
 - “Evacuees” – These are residents relocated from their homes by government decree, with the state expected to provide comprehensive support for their evacuation. The Home Front Command is responsible for managing these evacuees, who are accommodated in “absorption centers” such as hotels, hostels and youth villages. Currently, evacuations have been implemented within a 0-4 kilometer radius from the southern border (24 settlements) and a 20-kilometer radius from the northern border (28 settlements).
 - “Residents in Crisis” – These are residents living in conflict areas with no governmental evacuation decree. They have the option to move to absorption centers, with their residence permits renewed weekly under the “Mashav Ruach” (Spirit Relief) system. The Ministry of Defense allocates funds to local authorities (500₪ per adult, 250₪ per child) to coordinate accommodations for residents as a community. Presently, this system has been approved within a 4-7 kilometer radius from the southern border (29 settlements). Sderot, Ashkelon and Ofakim are also expected to join the “Mashav Ruach” system.

* This information is based on a meeting held by the Jewish Funders Network (JFN) and the Forum of Foundations in Israel on October 19, 2023, along with additional materials. Key speakers at the meeting included:

- **Ya'el Shamahi**, Director of Certification, Preparedness, and Civil Society in the National Emergency Authority.
- **Na'ama Gordinsheer**, Director of “IsraAid” in Israel.
- **Gadi Yarkoni**, Head of the Eshkol Regional Council.

- In addition, it should be noted that there are residents who choose to relocate on their own, often incurring personal expenses, and sometimes seeking for funding. There is a general lack of clarity regarding their status and rights, causing significant uncertainty among both evacuees and responders.
- Estimates suggest there are approximately 100,000 “evacuees within their own country,” with most of the 400,000 available accommodation rooms in Israel already occupied.
- The situation can be assessed over three timeframes: short-term (emergency), medium-term, and long-term. Broadly categorized:
 - The short-term outlook covers the coming weeks in a wartime emergency.
 - Stabilizing various aspects of the situation will likely require several months. Settlements within a 0-7 kilometer radius from the southern border may not return to their communities in the short or medium term. In the medium term, alternative housing facilities might be opened to provide stability for evacuees.
 - Long-term recovery will demand comprehensive, ongoing efforts.

The Gaza Perimeter Rehabilitation Authority is expected to address employment, income, and educational needs.

- In the short term, assistance is provided through a collaborative effort involving the Home Front Command, government ministries, governmental bodies, civil society organizations, philanthropy, volunteers, and grassroots organizations. This coordination involves somewhat ad-hoc efforts while attempting to establish a systematic response. It’s widely acknowledged that both emergency and medium-term assistance will be needed. However, building and implementing a systematic response is challenging when residents in absorption centers have limited stays, renewed weekly or tri-weekly.

Current Situation | Needs and Responses

➤ Absorption centers (accommodating entire families) offer partial support.

However, living in hotel rooms, in general, cannot provide a long-term solution as these facilities are not designed for permanent residence. Therefore, the major challenge for the state and civil society is to ensure a certain quality of life in these absorption facilities while offering some sense of stability to the residents.

The necessary responses include ensuring the availability of communal spaces, therapy rooms, and other amenities. However, the cost of using conference halls and meeting rooms in hotels is notably high.

➤ Support for additional services, such as laundry, is needed at this time.

The state does not currently fund laundry services. There is a need for responses, like funding for hotels already equipped with laundry facilities (a responsibility the state is expected to assume but has not yet taken on) or acquiring laundry machines for evacuees’ use.

➤ Services and products related to the economy, food security, and safety are generally available.

However, there are shortages in security for vehicles transporting eggs, meat, and poultry, particularly within the agriculture sector. Additionally, there’s a need for enhanced security measures in hospitals, logistics centers, and other facilities.

Disparities, Additional Needs, and Open Issues

Local authorities and evacuee communities:

Local authorities in the South are handling emergencies in their jurisdictions and, at times, managing evacuations independently, often without adequate budgetary support. The communities have faced a severe crisis when responding to the initial attack without any external assistance, and they continue to endure this prolonged crisis due to the traumatic experiences.

Given this context, support for local authorities and communities is needed on multiple levels:

- Empowering local leadership.
- Philanthropic backing for resources within local authorities and communities. Some have established dedicated funds, such as the [Sderot Fund](#), to ensure ongoing support.
- In view of the unprecedented situation created by the function and role of the local authority, ensuring the leadership and participation of the authorities and communities in the decision-making processes concerning them (“Nothing about us without us”).

Distinguishing between homogeneous communities (kibbutzim and moshavim) and individual evacuees (primarily from cities):

Field reports indicate tension between these groups due to differences in formal status. Homogeneous communities have community organizations and leadership, in addition to initial government responses. Civil society complements these efforts. In contrast, independent evacuees, primarily from cities, do not receive comprehensive government support, lack community organization, and have limited access to services provided by civil society.

Medium and Long Term:

Acknowledging the need to ensure responses in the medium and long term, the following points are significant:

- The necessity for establishing systemic responses, including for independent evacuees.
- In the medium and long term, relying on grassroots community organizations may not be feasible. Collaboration with professional organizations that have experience and suitable infrastructure is required.
- There is an ideological divide, at least among some evacuees, regarding whether they should return to live in the Gaza border communities at all.

Information, Initiatives, and Opportunities

- Fundraising campaigns for the kibbutzim and moshavim that are currently being orchestrated through the [JFN website](#).
- The Kibbutz Movement is actively engaged in addressing the immediate needs of kibbutz evacuees, particularly regarding bedroom furniture, (in absorption centers and independent, unfurnished apartments). They are also focused on tackling long-term rehabilitation needs.

For short-term needs, please contact Shir Goren via WhatsApp at 053-4440534.

To inquire about long-term needs, you may reach out to Gil Lin via WhatsApp at 052-3718791.

For general information concerning the Emergency Fund for donations to the Gaza border kibbutzim, click [here](#).