



Emergency Briefing Summary: Rising Lion Operation

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Andrés Spokoiny, President & CEO, Jewish Funders Network

Context and Overview

- Andrés described the current Israel-Iran conflict as another layer in a multi-crisis reality, following COVID, internal political unrest, and the October 7th attacks. He quoted poet Chaim Guri to illustrate how “the historical has become routine.”
- He emphasized that the situation is evolving quickly. What was true 24 hours ago may not hold tomorrow. Funders were advised to be measured, adaptable, and avoid rushing decisions.

Philanthropy's Role

- Andrés encouraged funders to focus on "safe bets" such as federations and established Jewish communal organizations that have infrastructure and local knowledge.
- He highlighted the importance of stepping in where systemic responses fall short, especially in cases that governments cannot effectively address. For example, supporting individuals with mobility issues who cannot access shelters.
- Coordination and communication, both among funders and with grantees, were framed as essential. JFN is already coordinating with the IDF Homefront Command and the Prime Minister's Office.

Diaspora Considerations

- The war has ripple effects in Jewish communities abroad:
 - Summer camps that rely on Israeli counsellors are affected.
 - About 20,000 travellers have cancelled trips to Israel, opening up local engagement opportunities.
 - Social media disinformation campaigns are ramping up.
 - Institutional security needs in Jewish communities are rising again.

Call to Action



- Funders were urged to think beyond the immediate moment and prepare for the long-term reconstruction phase. Often, the most impactful giving comes after media attention fades.
- Preparedness and pre-established coordination were underscored as the key to effective crisis response.

Sigal Yaniv Feller, Executive Director, JFN Israel

Personal and National Context

- Sigal shared the personal strain on her team — no schools, children at home, spouses on reserve duty, lack of access to safe rooms.
- She noted that the conflict is occurring after 20 months of continuous emergencies. The population is exhausted, both emotionally and physically.
- However, she also highlighted the upside — mechanisms for coordination and response, built since October 7th, are now active and helping guide decision-making.

Key Observations

1. This is a historic event unfolding on top of chronic emergency.
2. Unlike October 7th, the government is present and functioning, especially at the municipal level.
3. Municipalities are now the key actors in the field. Civil society fills in the gaps.
4. We are only on day 11 — needs and responses are still evolving.

Situation Overview (as of June 23)

- 569 missiles launched — 62 impacted Israel directly.
- 30 civilians killed, over 3,000 injured.
- 16 cities hit, 11,000 people displaced. These individuals are spread across 80 hotels and referred to as “roofless,” since their homes are uninhabitable.
- 36,000 tax claims have been filed. Systems are overwhelmed.
- 2.5 million Israelis lack access to adequate shelter.



- Estimated economic cost: 8 billion shekels. Budgetary strain is expected in 2026, with possible cuts and tax increases.



Focus Areas for Philanthropy

1. Displaced Individuals (“Roofless”)

- Immediate needs: food, toiletries, clothes — many of these were initially unmet due to delays in government funds.
- Bureaucratic support for navigating compensation claims.
- Mental health services — already mobilized through organizations like Natal.
- Informal education — urgent need for recreational programs and youth engagement. Teenagers especially are at risk due to isolation and stress.
- Planning for long-term housing — balancing quick rebuilding with “building back better” models.

2. Health System

- Hospitals like Soroka exposed vulnerabilities — lack of fortified labs and underground facilities.
- The Ministry of Health is considering partial home care models.
- Municipalities need generators for residents dependent on electric medical devices.
- Some requests for hospital equipment may be opportunistic — funders are encouraged to vet them closely.

3. Mental Health

- Demand is rising — hotlines show a surge in calls.
- A layered trauma is evident — overlapping crises since October 7th are weighing on public morale.
- Special attention is needed for early responders, soldiers, reservists, and affected communities.

4. Arab Communities in Israel

- Severely underprepared — many lack shelters and awareness about emergency procedures.
- Cultural barriers and infrastructure deficits increase their vulnerability.
- Efforts are underway to increase access, training, and communications in Arabic.



- Philanthropic collaborations are emerging to address these gaps (e.g., Qudra, Social Venture Fund).

5. Nonprofit Sector Activity

- NGOs are providing shelter cleaning, elderly care, home security in damaged neighbourhoods, and establishing mass shelters.
- Many are doing more with fewer resources.
- Mass shelters lack formal oversight - NGOs are stepping in to provide structure and support.
- Support for nonprofit staff and general operations is critical.

Future and Ongoing Needs

- Housing for displaced residents will become a growing concern.
- Volunteer management, small business support, and continued mental health services will require philanthropic attention.
- The status of the 50 hostages in Gaza remains urgent - 22 are believed to still be alive. This issue must not be forgotten.

Recommendations

- Avoid haste - allow time to understand needs as they evolve.
- Offer flexible funding and general operating support.
- Prioritize mental health and care for nonprofit workers.
- Coordinate with others and share information to reduce duplication.

***Rebecca Caspi, Director General, Israel Office & Senior VP Israel & Overseas,
Jewish Federations of North America***

Strategic Pivot

- JFNA had launched the "Rebuild Israel" initiative for long-term recovery, assuming acute needs had passed. The Iran conflict changed that.
- Damage levels are "unprecedented." One missile in Bat Yam affected 70 buildings -25 are total losses.



Grant-Making Categories

1. Lifeline Services - evacuees, elderly, food, and pastoral care.
 2. Medical and Trauma Relief.
 3. Economic Recovery.
 4. Community Resilience and Rebuilding.
- Initially, most funds went to lifeline services. As capacity grew, other categories caught up. The new crisis demands renewed emphasis on urgent needs.

Recent Allocations

- \$10 million was just allocated to 19 organizations.
- Funding includes:
 - Volunteering coordination.
 - Support for public shelters.
 - Help for essential workers and small businesses (in partnership with JDC).
 - Cash grants to terror victims through the Jewish Agency.
 - Food and care for the elderly and displaced.

Decision-Making Process

- Consultation with a broad group: federations, the government, JDC, the Jewish Agency, and other major players.
- A representative committee, led by Steve Hoffman (Mandel Foundation) and Jeff Schoenfeld (former UJA NY President), guides decisions.
- Over 840 organizations have received grants since October 7th - strong familiarity with the nonprofit landscape ensures informed decisions.

Balancing Large and Small Organizations

- Caspi emphasized their ability to support both established players and grassroots Amutot. Direct lines of communication are in place.
- Coordination is essential — grantees are encouraged to collaborate to avoid overlap and ensure broad coverage.