

NEWSZAKA

July 2011 / Tammuz 5771 / No. 20



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Dear Friends of ZAKA,

Welcome to another edition of NewsZAKA, bringing you up to date with some of the latest activities in the organization.

This newsletter, like ZAKA itself, deals with many different issues – international incidents, accident prevention campaigns, mass casualty accidents, civil defense drill and more. While ZAKA does not seek recognition for its work, it is nonetheless heartwarming to see the response and gratitude from the Japanese Ambassador, the Prime Minister of Israel and friends overseas.

Thank you in advance for your generosity which allows ZAKA to continue its operations. Secure donations can be made via our websites www.zaka.us (dollars); www.zaka.org.uk (sterling) or www.zaka-fr.org (euros).

Please forward this e-newsletter to family and friends.



*Yehuda Meshi-Zahav
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PRIME MINISTER BENJAMIN NETANYAHU THANKS ZAKA

“You carry the name of the State of Israel and the Jewish People with you around the world and I would like to thank you for it.

You are messengers who deserve all blessings.”

In early July, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with ZAKA in his office to express his gratitude to the UN-recognized international humanitarian volunteer organization for their holy work which they carry out, every day of the year, in Israel and overseas, as “ambassadors of the State of Israel”. Headed by ZAKA Chairman

and Founder Yehuda Meshi Zahav and Chairman of the International Board of Directors Michael Mirilashvili, the volunteers represented many different ZAKA units and regions in Israel, and included fifteen representatives from the ZAKA International Rescue Unit who came specially from the USA, UK, France, Mexico, Russia, Ukraine



and the newest addition to the ZAKA family – Belarus.

In his address to the yellow-vested volunteers and their commanders, Prime Minister Netanyahu commended the organization for its life-saving, rescue and recovery work in Israel and around the world, most recently in Japan, as well as the organization's accident prevention and safety campaigns. "I would like to commend you for the many things you have done, and are doing, in the country and around the world. You have become ambassadors for the State of Israel, ambassadors of goodwill and our good name. Thank the Almighty, you carry the name of the State of Israel and the Jewish People with you around the world and I would like to thank you for it. You are messengers who deserve all blessings. Continue, successfully, with your holy work."

Meshi-Zahav opened the meeting with a short presentation on the breadth and depth of ZAKA's activities, including daily car accidents, complex search and rescue missions and the comprehensive training drill during the recent nationwide Turning Point 5 civil defense exercise. In addition, Meshi-Zahav spoke about the organization's activities overseas, including ongoing training of eleven ZAKA International Rescue Units in North and South America, Europe, the Far East, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

Chairman of the International Board of Directors Michael Mirilashvili thanked the Prime Minister for his ongoing support: "I am proud of the Kiddush Hashem that the organization does, day in day out and I am thankful to have merited the honor of serving as Chairman of the International Board of Directors."

Mordechai Bamberger, a volunteer from the ZAKA International Rescue Unit in Manchester, came specially to Israel for the meeting, accompanied by his fellow volunteer Danny Liefman. "It is an honor for us to be here, to feel part of the wider ZAKA family. We are doing important work in the UK and are about to expand with training for a second unit based in London."



SAFE SUMMER HIKING

Every summer, ZAKA search and rescue volunteers are kept busy, caring for hikers who are in distress. They may have strayed from the path and got lost, dehydrated from insufficient water, fallen down a ravine and more. Even those hikers who are lost in inaccessible places can be reached, either with the help of the ZAKA Climbing and Rappelling Unit or the ZAKA Jeep and ATV unit.

Here are some useful tips on safe summer hiking.

Please read them carefully – they could save your life.

1. Plan the trail ahead of time
2. Take with you one liter of water per person per hour.
3. Try to hike in shaded areas, or stop when possible for ten minutes to cool the body in the shade.
4. Wear a hat and cool clothing.
5. Let at least one person know where you are going and notify that person if you change your trail at any point.
6. Take a charged cell-phone and make sure to hike in an area with reception.
7. Make at least one call so that the call's location can be tracked in case of emergency.
8. Wear comfortable and appropriate walking shoes.
9. Hike in groups of three – in case of emergency one goes to seek help while two remain at the scene until help arrives.
10. Take a strong flashlight or matchbox in case you need to mark your location for emergency services.
11. Before going out learn about the various dangers that can turn up, including dangerous animals and plants as well as waterholes, sinkholes or wells.
12. Do not set off in the dark; at nightfall remain on a marked trail so that rescue workers can find you.
13. Learn basic first aid in case of a snake bite, a broken bone or bleeding.

ZAKA AMONG THE FIRST ON THE SCENE AT FATAL GAS EXPLOSION IN NETANYA

When a huge blast was heard – and felt – in Netanya late one night in mid-June, most of the local residents feared another terrorist attack. The reality was different, although the destruction and death was reminiscent of a suicide bomb attack. The explosion was caused by a gas leak, allegedly caused by a mixture of vandalism and negligence. The four -story building in Netanya’s main square was extensively damaged, with four people dead and about 90 others injured, most of them slightly hurt.

ZAKA volunteers were among the first to reach the scene. According to Israel Goldberg, ZAKA Sharon regional commander: “The first ZAKA volunteers who arrived on the scene immediately realized that this was a mass casualty incident, with dozens of injured crying out for help. There was a very strong smell of gas. While we were treating the injured, another team from

ZAKA Netanya removed the bodies. After all the injured were evacuated from the scene, the ZAKA volunteers remained in order to collect all the human remains which had been spread over tens of meters as a result of the huge force of the blast.”

Chaim Otmezgin, Commander of the ZAKA Special Units, added: “ZAKA volunteers, together with teams from the IDF Home Front Command, searched the building and found a man in his forties trapped and without signs of life. After the rescuers freed the body, ZAKA volunteers removed the body to a waiting ambulance. This was a very complex operation, reminiscent of a major terror attack, with rescuers working in a building that is in danger of collapse.”

ZAKA volunteers also removed Torah scrolls and holy books from a synagogue that had operated in the building and was completely destroyed.





500 “DEAD” IN ZAKA DRILL



For the first time, the ZAKA Search and Rescue Organization, with the cooperation of the Defense Ministry's National Emergency Management Authority, held a multi-unit training exercise in mid-June at the Sources of the Yarkon Park, within the framework of Turning Point 5 - the annual nationwide civil defense drill.

During the exercise, over 600 ZAKA volunteers from five ZAKA units and from all over the country acted out a comprehensive and complex exercise that simulated multiple missile hits

on civilians, followed by an explosion on a bus carrying evacuees and resulting in over 500 “deaths”, with scores more wounded, missing and feared drowned. The bus used in the drill was the same school bus in which 16 year old Daniel Viflic sustained fatal injuries following a Hamas rocket attack on 7 April.

The purpose of the drill was to enact a mass casualty incident in which various ZAKA units operate (including Canine Unit, Jeeps, Divers and Jet-Ski); to practice working together with ZAKA





teams from around the country and with the emergency forces; the professional management of a ZAKA command and control center alongside similar centers for the units in the field and to practice dealing with the dead in a mass casualty incident.

ZAKA Chairman Yehuda Meshi-Zahav summed up the drill: "This comprehensive drill is very important for ZAKA, as we test our ability to deal with mass casualty incidents in real time, working in full cooperation with the National Emergency Management Authority. ZAKA, with its unique professional capability to deal with all possible scenarios in today's reality, stands ready and able to assist at all times."

ZAKA Special Units Commander Chaim Otmezgin added that "this is the first time the over 600 ZAKA volunteers from five different units have come together in such a wide-ranging drill. In the second half of the drill, volunteers from ZAKA's diving and jet-ski units arrived on the scene, donned their special equipment and entered the river where they successfully located the missing "bodies" before night fall."

The drill was attended by VIPs, including invited guests from emergency services around the world that came to Israel to observe the week-long Turning Point 5 civil defense drill.



PROJECT ZAKA

When 7th – graders Penina Singer and Yael Addi were looking for a subject to choose for the Eretz Yisrael fair at the Bais Yaakov Middle School in Baltimore, Maryland, they selected an issue that many adults – let alone schoolchildren – would find difficult: the sacred work of ZAKA.

After contacting ZAKA for more detailed information, they set about preparing a project that presented ZAKA in a manner that their peers could understand and relate to. And they did it so well that they were awarded the school's Grand Prize. As Penina's mother, Helene, wrote in an email: "They took a very serious topic that can be a bit daunting and scary and made it accessible to even small children."

Kol Hakovod! ZAKA salutes you for your maturity and sensitivity in tackling the issue of Kavod Hamet which is so central to Jewish values and, of course, the work of the ZAKA volunteers.



ZAKA

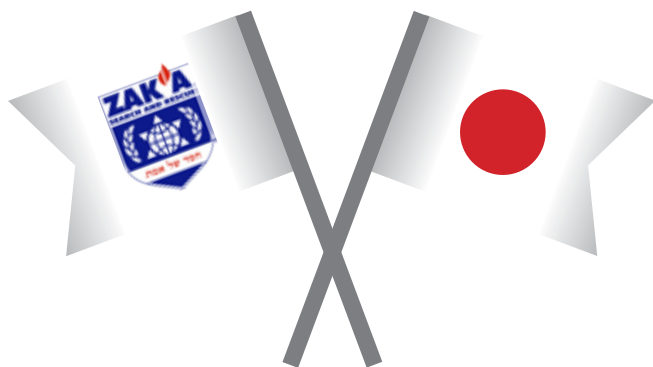
A SUPERBRAND OF HESED

For the third consecutive year, consumers and senior managers in advertising, marketing and academia have selected the ZAKA Rescue and Recovery volunteer humanitarian organization as one of Israel's 670 Superbrands.

The selection, made for the international Superbrands organization, was taken from an initial list of 2,300 brands. ZAKA was selected as one of Israel's Superbrands within the category of Services and the Public Sector, alongside other household names and Superbrands such as the Mossad, the IAF, Yad Vashem and MDA.

Meshi-Zahav: "We are honored that, for the third consecutive year, the Israeli public has selected the ZAKA organization as a Superbrand. While we do not seek any reward for our sacred work in saving lives and honoring the dead, we nonetheless appreciate the Israeli public's recognition of ZAKA's contribution to society both in Israel and overseas."

THANK YOU – IN JAPANESE



In a small ceremony held at the Ramada Hotel in Jerusalem in mid-June, the Japanese Ambassador to Israel Haruhisa Takeuchi presented a certificate of appreciation and the Shield of Japan to the members of the ZAKA rescue and recovery delegation that recently assisted in the earthquake and tsunami aftermath.

Among those taking part in the ceremony alongside the Japanese Ambassador were the Japanese Consul in Israel Mitoshiko Shinomya, members of the ZAKA delegation to Japan headed by ZAKA Chairman and Founder Yehuda Meshi-Zahav, Chairman of



the ZAKA International Board of Directors, Michael Mirilashvili, Chair of the Israel-Japan Parliamentary Friendship League MK Shai Hermesh, Chairman, Constitution, Law and Justice Committee MK David Rotem, embassy staff and representatives from Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the ceremony, which began with a minute of silence in memory of those killed in the earthquake and tsunami disaster, the Ambassador expressed his gratitude to the ZAKA volunteer delegation for their special assistance during a two-week humanitarian mission to Japan in early April then the volunteers worked shoulder to shoulder with the Japanese army and international relief workers in recovering bodies from the rubble and sharing information on mass casualty incident behavior.

The Ambassador added that he was aware of the sacred work of the ZAKA Rescue and Recovery Organization at terror attacks and mass casualty incidents in Israel and overseas. "We in the Japanese Embassy have great esteem for the humanitarian endeavors of the ZAKA organization, regardless of religion, race or creed. Our doors will always be open to you and your special work."

After receiving the presentation on behalf of the ZAKA organization, Chairman of the ZAKA International Board of Directors Michael Mirilashvili noted that ZAKA was "pleased to have been able to offer assistance to the people of Japan and help in whatever way we could. ZAKA will remain at your side."

Chairman of the Israel-Japan Parliamentary Friendship League MK Shai Hermesh added that a special friendship has long existed between the peoples of Israel and Japan: "Your pain is our pain; your joy is our joy and the help and assistance we were able to give was the least we can do in return for this friendship."



CHILDREN - AND SAFETY - FIRST ZAKA AT MOUNT MERON ON LAG

Once again, the ZAKA Search and Rescue volunteer organization was ready to cope with the tens of thousands who participated in the annual Lag Ba'Omer celebrations on Mount Meron, the resting place of kabbalist Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. And once again, children – and safety – came first, as the volunteers worked 24/7 to minimize accidents, to help lost children reunite with their parents and to offer first aid when required. In total, 160 ZAKA volunteers dealt with 478 incidents over the five days

Safety on the mountain

Working in cooperation with the local council, the Israel Police and the Hesdei Shabtai organization, ZAKA launched a multi-faceted safety campaign. 15,000 identification wristbands were distributed for children. The name tags bore their names and the contact details of family members and proved invaluable

in reconnecting children with their parents.

“There were many emotional scenes of parents reuniting with their children”, explained ZAKA Chairman Yehuda Meshi-Zahav. “It is so easy to lose yourself among the throngs of people celebrating at Mount Meron. In one incident, it took ZAKA volunteers two hours to find the parents of a two-year-old who had been found, on his own, at the entrance to the site.”

ZAKA volunteers manned a special hotline for missing children and adults throughout the Lag Ba'Omer celebrations and hosted a two-room center for lost children, providing the children with games and equipment to help pass the time and reduce the anxiety until they are reunited with their families. The center was open continuously from the Friday morning before Lag Ba'Omer through to midnight on the Sunday.



In addition, ZAKA volunteers staffed and equipped a dedicated area for administering emergency first aid. Four ZAKA all terrain vehicles and three ZAKA ambulances were also brought to the area to help in the search for missing family members.

Safety on the roads

As in previous years, ZAKA teamed up with the Hertz car rental company in a road safety

campaign aimed primarily at the Ultra-Orthodox community, under the banner: 'Go in peace; return in peace. On Lag Ba'Omer, we also drive differently.' ZAKA distributed 25,000 accident prevention flyers, in the form of a Lag Ba'Omer song sheet, with instructions on how to prevent accidents around the bonfire and the importance of road safety. This year, unlike last year, there were no serious road accidents related to the Lag Ba'Omer holiday.



RUNNING FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Once again this May, British Friends of ZAKA joined forces with 38 UK charities to participate in one of the most important Jewish sporting events of the year, the Maccabi Community fun run.

Almost a thousand runners took part in the event, providing an opportunity for organisers and fundraisers to sit back and watch others do the hard work of raising money for good causes.

British Friends of ZAKA were represented by runners from Immanuel College, Menorah High School for Girls, Hasmonean High School for Boys as well as a Jewish policeman from the Jewish Police Association and other members of the public. ZAKA runners even took second and third place in the ten kilometre run.

British Friends of ZAKA representative Mark Fabian commented on the enthusiasm shown by younger members of the community: "British Friends of ZAKA has launched a new program, taking the humanitarian story of ZAKA into schools across London. More and more children – and their parents – are becoming aware of the life-saving and holy work that ZAKA volunteers do in Israel and around the world. We could see the results of that increased level of interest at the Fun Run."

