

The Refugees of the Gaza Region



Refugees. This word brings to mind images of people with nothing. We've seen them on the television, after the Tsunami in Asia, and countless images from war torn places like Ethiopia and Somalia. Pictures from the past haunt us, of those who lost everything and were wandering forlorn or living in tent cities with no place to call home. These images follow a terrible tragedy and there is usually an effort made world wide to raise funds to bring hope and relief to those devastated by their circumstances.

A horrendous catastrophe was forced upon the people of Gush Katif. They lost their homes, their communities, their jobs, their businesses, their income, their synagogues and schools, absolutely EVERYTHING including the very land they had settled and cultivated for decades. And yet, no one is calling them refugees. But that is what they became. Their own government would like to sweep them under a rug and make them disappear; they do not want to acknowledge the fact that they did so little to prepare for these people who became refugees overnight.

The people from Gush Katif were evicted from their homes more than 3 years ago and they still need your help. They are not third-world victims of famine and war. They are still living in temporary housing, the building of permanent homes has been delayed, and many—so so many-- are still jobless, and hurting.

People in their 50's and 60's have lost their only source of income. The job market in Israel is not good - people over 50 rarely find jobs. And yet, the government has not offered these people decent early retirement packages. They were left with nothing, and with no prospects. And basic needs like rent, for homes that are not even suitable for the families, are steadily eating away at the compensation packages. Where is the money supposed to come from for all the basics? How terrifying it must be to have such heavy expenses and no income prospects in sight. How humiliating to not be able to write out a check because the bank accounts are bare.

But the problem runs even deeper. Only just recently are government agencies beginning to listen, beginning to see how bottomless the hole of need actually is for these refugees. Each family without a home is a world unto itself. Each has its own needs, its own traumas, its own special difficulties.

Last year CFOIC with your help allocated close to \$ 1 million for various needs of the Gush Katif evacuees. It made a substantial difference in the lives of these brave hurting people. In many cases it put

whole families back on their feet. But there is still a significant number of people who have no jobs, no homes, so many basic needs. This year we would like to raise more money for these people. Our job is not finished. We are still needed. Desperately.

With your help and God’s blessing we can provide practical help. If there is no serious intervention to aid these evacuees we will be faced with a major crisis.

The economic situation of close to 350 families is still quite difficult, due to the loss of jobs and businesses. The Gush Katif

Committee established a welfare mechanism which evaluates the families’ needs and provides the needed relief in different ways. They are asking for our help.

We can help them if you help us. We can reach across the miles and bring a smile and a hand of love during this devastating time. No matter how large or small a donation you can give, we can work together and bring help, during this time of need, to the refugees of Gush Katif. Please, give what you can and use the ability God has given you to get others to give as well.

Distribution of food for 150 families:16,500/month	\$198,000
Additional assistance for holidays for 350 families:\$275 per family	96,250
Monthly financial assistance for 80 families: \$10,000 per month	120,000
TOTAL FUNDS REQUIRED:	\$414,250

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