
Volunteering in Israel, March 2025



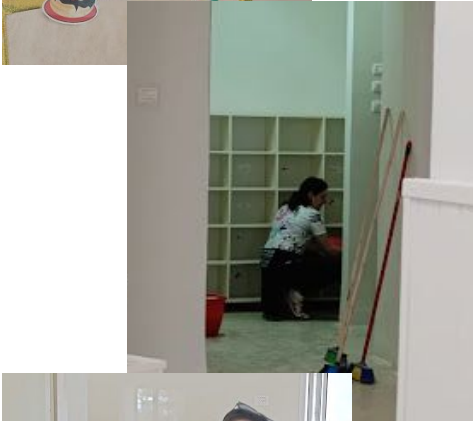
Sam Toso, Jewish Federation of Madison

Purpose Of The Volunteer Work

This spring, sponsored by and as a representative of the Jewish Federation of Madison, I was able to participate in a week-long service mission with [Livnot U'Lehibanot](#). Livnot "is a non-denominational, nonprofit organization that has been running immersive Israel-experience programs since 1980."

After October 7, 2023, approximately 200,000 Israelis were internally displaced. This displacement was primarily by government instruction due to community proximities to Gaza or Lebanon, and the risk due to proximity to Hamas and Hezbollah, respectively.

At the same time, 300,000 reservists were called up to serve in the IDF. More than 320,000 reservists arrived for duty. Israel was not prepared to have so many individuals in active duty around the country. Temporary IDF bases were made in the evacuated border communities as needed, where soldiers slept where they could - schools were widely used - before they were relocated.





Many of the border communities have been devastated by the war, including countless buildings beyond the point of repair and damages to key infrastructure. In early 2025, many displaced Israelis were told to return home - even though there has not been assistance from the government to clear out rubble, rebuild, and clean the communities to prepare for their return.

Livnot has been asked by various border communities to lend as many hands as possible to this effort. Through a dedicated coordination staff, a team of Israeli contractors (many of whom are in the reserves and left their pre-war jobs as they were moved to join this service instead), *olim* who are committed to showing up and volunteering, young Israelis fulfilling their national service duties, and weekly international volunteer groups, this work is being done. Livnot has “had the honor to complete 250 projects in 32 communities” since the war began, in an exemplary enactment of their motto: to build and be built.



First Stop: Hostages Square, Tel Aviv

Hamas-led militants abducted 251 people in the Oct. 7 (2023) attack and killed around 1,200, mostly civilians.

Here are details on the hostages released:

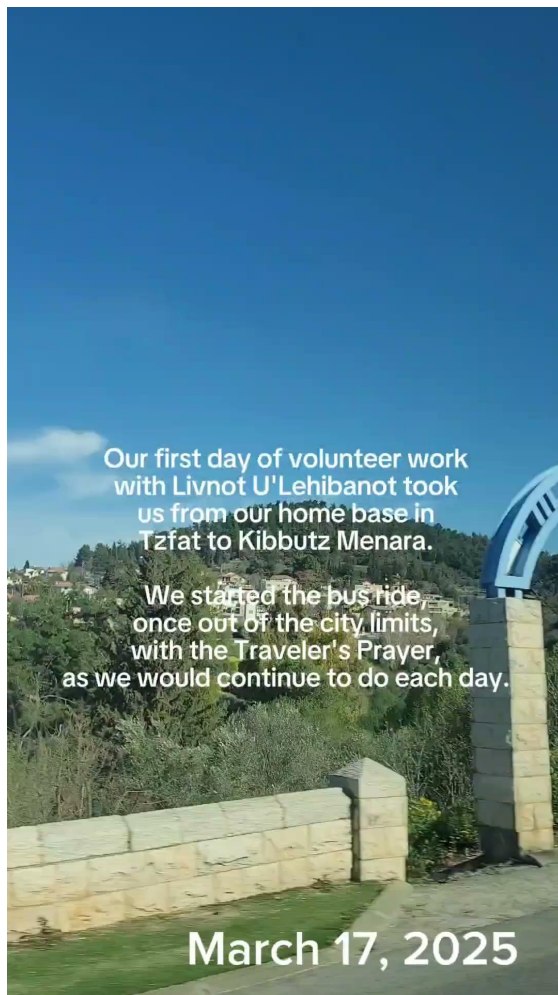
- Hostages taken before the Oct. 7 attack: 2 who entered Gaza in 2014 and 2015, and the bodies of 2 soldiers killed in the 2014 war
- Hostages released in exchanges or other deals: 147, of whom 8 were dead
- Bodies of hostages retrieved by Israeli troops: 41
- Hostages rescued alive: 8
- Hostages still in captivity: 59, of whom Israel believes 35 are dead.

The hostages still in captivity include:

- 13 soldiers, of whom Israel has declared 9 to be dead
- 5 non-Israelis (3 Thais, 1 Nepalese, 1 Tanzanian), of whom 2 (1 Thai and 1 Nepalese) are believed to still be alive

[*Associated Press*](#)

Volunteer Work: Kibbutz Menara



Volunteer Work: Kibbutz Dafna

We spent the next three days with Livnot at Kibbutz Dafna. This kibbutz too is on the border with Lebanon, and was evacuated on Oct. 8, 2023.

March 18, 19, 20, 2025



Israel launches deadly wave of airstrikes across Gaza after ceasefire talks stall

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
13:00 MEET AT THE CARMEL TRAIN STATION	7:30 BREAKFAST AND PREPARE LUNCH	7:30 BREAKFAST AND PREPARE LUNCH	7:30 BREAKFAST AND PREPARE LUNCH	7:15 BREAKFAST PREPARE LUNCH
13:45 ARRIVAL AT THE LIVNOT CAMPUS IN TZFAT	8:30 LEAVE FOR VOLUNTEERING	8:30 LEAVE FOR VOLUNTEERING	8:30 LEAVE FOR VOLUNTEERING	7:45 PACK UP AND LEAVE FOR THE DAY
SETTLE IN AND ORIENTATION	15:00 OVERVIEW AND TOUR OF THE LEBANESE BORDER WITH CARMIT	15:00 TOUR OF THE GOLAN HEIGHTS WITH ABBIE	RETURN TO TZFAT HA'ARI POTTERY WITH DANIEL	OPTION #1 TOUR OF MEMORIAL SITES IN THE GAZA ENCLAVE INCLUDING A VISIT TO THE NOVA FESTIVAL MEMORIAL SITE
15:00 WALKING TOUR OF TZFAT WITH DR. YOSSI STAPINSKY	RETURN TO TZFAT FOR FREE TIME AND DINNER ON YOUR OWN	RETURN TO TZFAT FOR FREE TIME AND DINNER ON YOUR OWN	PREPARE DINNER TOGETHER FOR OUR FAREWELL BANQUET	
PREPARE DINNER TOGETHER		EVENING DISCUSSION WITH AHARON - LIVNOT PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE	GROUP DISCUSSION ABOUT THE WEEK	OPTION #2 MORNING VOLUNTEERING IN THE NORTH
19:00 MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR OF THE LIVNOT CAMPUS WITH AHARON				

1h ago

Rocket and missile fire

Enter the protected space and stay in it for 10 minutes in Tel Aviv - South and Jaffa

12:49 PM ✓

11:11 AM

11:14 AM ✓

11:14 AM

+ Add an...

Time of arrival to the protective room
One and a half minutes

Gatherings may be held witho

1:02 PM



Publi

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Fighting On Many Fronts

The Axis of Resistance, a loose and informal military network of militant groups, which bill themselves as resistance forces, and state-controlled armed forces in the Middle East that are supported by Iran...The interests of the axis members are regional in scope, aligning with Iran (one of the most influential powers in the Middle East) in opposition to Israel and Saudi Arabia as well as the United States for its interference in the region's balance of power. Each group in the network acts independently of one another and is motivated by its own self-interest, but the network coordinates in training, attaining weaponry, and supporting one another in achieving common goals.

[Britannica](#)

Hezbollah (in Lebanon): Founded 1982, designated terror organization since 1997

Hamas (in Gaza): Founded 1987, designated terror organization since 1997

Houthis (in Yemen): Founded 1992, redesignated terrorist organization in 2025

