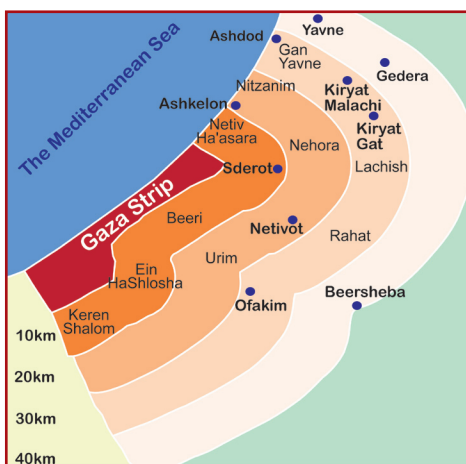


15 SECONDS



Photos by Isranet



WHAT CAN **YOU** DO IN 15 SECONDS?

I can read a paragraph, eat two-and-a-half bites of apple, drink a small glass of water, or walk down two flights of stairs. Fifteen seconds is also the amount of time residents of Sderot have to run to a bomb shelter after the *Tevah Adom* alarm (Color or Red Alert) sounds, telling them a missile has been fired at them. Over the past eight years, thousands of missiles have been launched at this small town in the western Negev, situated right next to the Gaza Strip. Sderot's population of 24,000 people live under the shadow of terror, running for bomb shelters frequently.

I have visited the mayor's office on more than one occasion, and a prominent feature of the meeting room is a remembrance corner. Pictures of those who have died are on display, along with the remains of a Kassam rocket that was fired on the town. An entire generation of children has grown up in terror, knowing where every bomb shelter is, having frequent nightmares, many of them sleeping in the bomb shelter in their home because they are afraid to sleep in their own beds.

Netivot, Ofaqim, Ashkelon, Gadera, Beersheva, and Ashdod are other cities within reach of Hamas missiles. According to Israeli Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld, "Based on our assessments, we're talking about—including the city of Beersheva and including the city of Ashdod, which have over 250,000 people in each city—we're talking about almost one million Israelis under the threat of Hamas rockets in Israel today." That is about one-sixth of the population. (In America, that would be around 50.6 million!)

MAKING DELIVERIES UNDER FIRE

During Israel's "Operation Cast Lead" in Gaza, I accompanied a team from Bridges for Peace to Sderot, Netivot, and Ofaqim. Missiles were flying, and naturally we felt apprehensive, but we traveled from Jerusalem in spite of the threats. We came with a truck full of gifts to cheer up 1,000 innocent Israeli children who had been sitting in shelters for nine days as the war between Israel and Hamas raged such a short distance away. We brought food for many families. We came to the aid of deaf residents who cannot hear the sirens by providing vibrating beepers that alert them to incoming rockets. We met with mayors, not in their normal offices, but in war-room bunkers. These war rooms bustled with emergency personnel dealing with all manner of problems. We heard the sounds of battle, and knew that we were in a dangerous situation.

We were protected by the hand of the Lord during our visit. We had planned to be in Sderot until 12:30 pm but left at 11:30 am because the mayor of Netivot had to change the time of our meeting. The drive between communities took only 12 minutes. As we were pulling into a parking place in Netivot, we heard the dreaded



Photos by Joshua Spurlock



BFP delivered 1,000 gifts for children living in bomb shelters.

Photos by Joshua Spurlock

words “*tzeva adom Sderot*” (Red Alert for Sderot) on the radio. Within a couple of minutes, we knew that four missiles had landed in Sderot, just after we departed. Minutes later, we were traveling with city officials to a city shelter to take gifts to the children there. I automatically buckled my seat belt, only to hear the official say, “Don’t buckle up! It will take longer to get out of the car in the event of a missile.” Thankfully, I heeded his words.

Moments later, we heard a siren—a missile was incoming. We started to pull the car to the side of the road so we could jump out. You don’t want to be in a car in a missile attack as the car can become thousands of pieces of shrapnel in an instant. But the city official said, “Don’t stop, drive fast, hurry, hurry, hurry!” We drove another couple of blocks and then saw a bomb shelter. Jumping out of the car, almost before it stopped, we joined many others, running from every direction for the safety of the bomb shelter. We didn’t run far, but my heart was pounding. We realized then how terrifying it is to live under this constant threat. For us, it was a one-time experience; for the residents of this area, it is a constant reality. As soon as the all-clear was sounded, we went to the truck and distributed gifts to 50 children in the bomb shelter. How blessed we were to be able to bring a ray of blessing into their bleak surroundings.

As this appeal goes to print, the fighting continues, and we do not know how long it will last. The needs are great. Your gift to our Victims of War fund enables us to be there meeting needs and comforting the people in the moment of crisis. Will you join with us to meet these needs?

I am so glad I went with the team. Over and over, I was able to tell mayors, social workers, moms and dads, that Christians all over the world are praying for them, some of them even fasting. I told them that not only were we praying, but we were acting, by giving of our finances to provide for their needs in this time of crisis. I told them that we are not fair-weather friends, but we would stand with them in the hard times. This is what Bridges for Peace is all about—supporting Israel and blessing the Jewish people with sincere unconditional love. Thank you for being part of our team.

Let’s continue to remind God of His promise of protection: “*When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the LORD your God, and you will be saved from your enemies*” (Numbers 10:9). Together, our love in action—through our prayers and our gifts—can make a difference.

Blessings from Jerusalem,

Rebecca J. Brimmer

Rebecca J. Brimmer
International President and CEO

MORE FUNDS NEEDED

We responded immediately out of general funds, because there wasn’t time to communicate with you. We have spent over US \$30,000 so far, and much more is required. In each area, we were told of more urgent needs:

- **BLANKETS** for cold bomb shelters
- **SHELTERS** in youth centers
- more **BEEPERS** for the deaf
- **FOOD** to help hosting communities feed families who have retreated to more peaceful shelter and for those who can no longer work



P.S. As we were going to print, rockets began to land in northern Israel. Pray for God’s protection along the borders.

This is what Bridges for Peace is all about—supporting Israel and blessing the Jewish people with sincere unconditional love.