

ELCA International Disaster Response ESCALATING VIOLENCE IN GAZA

JANUARY 2009

Soon after Christmas, violence erupted between the military forces of Israel and Hamas militants, threatening the 1.5 million civilians in the Gaza Strip. The latest violence comes after a months-long blockade of Gaza imposed by Israel. **The humanitarian situation is dire.**

“Gaza is one of the most densely populated areas on the earth,” said Robert Smith, ELCA Global Mission Director for Europe and the Middle East. “Because of years of occupation and then blockade, most civilians live in extreme poverty.”

Through this latest violence, most attempts to deliver humanitarian relief, including food and medical supplies, have been blocked. Bombs have destroyed homes, schools, and businesses as well as major infrastructure throughout Gaza. Basic necessities remain in short supply.

Bishops from the ELCA are traveling in the region this month, meeting with Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian religious, community, and political leaders. The Rev. Dean W. Nelson, bishop, ELCA Southwest California Synod says the bishops want to “accompany our brothers and sisters in the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land** in their witness and service.” This trip was planned before the most recent outbreak of violence.

Augusta Victoria Hospital, located on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, is responding to the medical needs of cancer and dialysis patients from Gaza. **Your gifts will support the relief efforts of Augusta Victoria** and other ELCA International Disaster Response in the region as we **respond to immediate needs and help the most vulnerable to rebuild their lives.**

Thank you for your gifts and prayers.

Yes, I want to help!

Int'l Disaster Response: *MIDDLE EAST CRISIS* \$ _____ IDG0038

International Disaster Response: *Where Needed Most* \$ _____ IDG0016

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Give through your congregation or send your check directly to:
ELCA Disaster Response, PO Box 71764, Chicago, IL 60694-1764
To give by credit card, visit www.elca.org/giving or call 800.638.3522.
Visit www.elca.org/disaster and www.elca.org/middleeast to learn more.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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