



February 2024

Dear Friend of Israel,

As I write this letter to you, I continue to wonder how I, or any other Israeli, can most effectively relate the feelings and emotions the People of Israel have experienced over the last 100+ days. How can I best describe our deepest fears and sleepless nights, as well as the constant challenge of investing entirely into the current national struggle while also needing vital moments of personal time and introspection?

Over the last 3 months, I have shared with you my personal thoughts about all that has transpired in the Land of Israel since October 7th. Concurrently, I have made sure to respond professionally by focusing on our organization's core mission and how we can best be proactive with the help of our dear Christian friends who want to be involved not just through words but also with action.

As 100 days have passed since the devastating attacks on October 7th, I would like to share with you some thoughts and perspectives from a reservist in the IDF. The average reservist in is his 30s and 40s and has left his family, job, and daily routine to protect our nation against ongoing existential threats. Only now have some of them gradually returned home. I ask that you take to heart the most recent reflections of one of these reservists:

*"I didn't realize. I didn't realize that my longest leave to home since October would feel like my shortest - that trying to integrate into a busy week at home would make the time fly and make my departure that much harder on everyone. I didn't realize how much being inside a warm apartment on a cold and rainy day would focus my mind so sharply on those who, still on the front, are not. That it would remind me of my days in the mud and reawaken my awareness of the differences between my service and those of others...I didn't realize that it could be possible to feel like the world is regressing. That I would witness total war, a modern-day Dreyfus Affair on the world stage, and the degradation of political leadership, all while trying to raise hopeful and optimistic children. I didn't realize any of these things. I have learned a lot over the last three months.*

*But I have also learned that a community can rise to the occasion and provide support for a family that is still new to it and going through hardship....I have learned that we can literally rise from the ashes. That those towns stained in blood, buildings riddled with bullets, fields covered with mutilated bodies - can bloom and flower. That a massive wave of love and humanity can transform tragedy into a new beginning. I have learned that toddlers can live through torture. That parents can live through the loss of their children. That we can forgive each other and come together in the face of tragedy. And I have learned that even if we are not yet free to live in peace in our land after two thousand years, that our hope is not yet lost."*

With heartfelt gratitude,

Shalom,

Shmuel Junger  
Director  
Christian Friends of Israeli Communities

P.S. For those who want to do more, we are bringing a small solidarity team in March. Register today for an unforgettable trip, standing with the people of Israel and helping those in need. For information visit [www.cfoic.com/solidarity](http://www.cfoic.com/solidarity)