

## **Presbyterian Giving to Gaza—Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How Does the Presbyterian Church (USA) provide relief to Gaza?**

**Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)** is the official arm of PC(USA) working to save lives and communities involved in natural or man-made crises. In Gaza, PDA works with Action by Churches Together (ACT) which is a global alliance of 175 churches and related organizations working to support communities in emergencies worldwide. On Jan. 16, ACT issued a global appeal for US \$5.4 million for emergency assistance and rehabilitation to Gaza.

### **What assistance has ACT/PDA provided to date?**

ACT works with four member agencies established in Gaza to distribute aid. Fortified milk has been delivered to 18,000 persons, nutritional biscuits to 23,000 individuals and other food supplies to 2,240 persons. Blankets and hygiene kits have been given to over 1000 persons. Fuel has been delivered for the Gaza National Blood Bank. Hot meals and food baskets have been supplied to 5,000 people, and 9000 kilos of powdered milk have been distributed.

Also, one agency has delivered medicines, supplies and fresh water to its clinics. Another agency is supplying medical and food supplies and blankets to the Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City. (This hospital is one of the Presbyterian partners which has a special donations -ECO-account on the PC(USA) website.)

### **What needs remain and what assistance does ACT/PDA plan to provide?**

The Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees is planning to rent a new building and re-establish its destroyed clinic in the Shujaiya district. The clinic located in a densely populated area was destroyed after people living in the flat above received a telephone warning to evacuate; a missile strike followed 15 minutes later. One of only 3 clinics serving a population of 80,000 it offered services of gynecologists and internists. The bombing destroyed a 6 week supply of medicines and thousands of dollars of equipment (including laboratory and ultrasound machines.)

This period of months after the disaster is considered the crisis phase. Food supplements, medicines, medical supplies, cash for food and cash for work are part of the planned assistance.

In addition, the psychological cost of the severe bombing is now apparent. The effects of witnessing war and conflict, particularly the deaths of loved ones and friends, can cause lifelong trauma.

To address this problem, PDA with ACT is planning to provide psychosocial services to 4,000 children who are exhibiting symptoms of fear, clinging to adults, sleep disorders, and inability to concentrate-- all of which are direct symptoms of the traumatic bombing. The children will be given the opportunity to express their emotions such that the effects of the trauma and grief can be mitigated, and children will become able to continue healthy development. This effort will involve workshops and trainings to develop these skills in workers who will lead such sessions.

### **Can supplies reach Gaza given that there are problems with access?**

Getting humanitarian aid to Gaza is still challenging. While it is easier to get supplies in after the cease fire, there are still difficulties getting in and out. The Erez crossing may be temporarily closed by Israeli authorities when violence erupts. Transport from Jericho to the Karem Shalom crossing may also face delays. There is continued bombing at the Rafah (Egypt) crossing. Aid workers persevere to get trucks across but they get across.

### **How can churches give to PDA for this purpose?**

Checks can be sent to PC(USA) Church Remittance Processing, PO Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700. Write **“DR000081”** on the check or remittance form to designate your gift to Gaza relief.

Individual contributions can also be made online at the PCUSA website: [www.pcusa.org/pda/](http://www.pcusa.org/pda/).