

# Baptist groups send aid to Gaza victims

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FALLS CHURCH, Va. (ABP) — A three-member medical team from Hungarian Baptist Aid is in Egypt, helping both Palestinians and Israelis affected by the current Gaza crisis.

Baptist World Aid, the relief-and-development arm of the Baptist World Alliance, gave an initial grant of \$10,000 for medical treatment of people who have fled the fighting, in its 13th day as of press time Jan. 8. Other planned relief projects include counseling and relief programs in the heavily bombed Israeli city of Sderot, [said](#) BWAid Director Paul Montacute.

Members of a Baptist  
World Aid Rescue24  
medical team visit  
wounded Palestinians in  
Egypt. (BWAid photo)

The BWAid Rescue24 team, operated by Hungarian Baptist Aid, [arrived](#) in Cairo Dec. 31. The team expects to relocate to the Egyptian city of El Arish, about 25 miles from the Gaza border.

After receiving permission from Egyptian authorities Jan. 1, the team visited Palestinians recovering in Cairo's Nasser Hospital.

"I played on the street when suddenly bombs began to fall," [said](#) 13-year-old Attala Abid, who has a severely injured leg. He was one of 79 injured Palestinians who managed to get through the Egyptian-Palestinian border at Rafah as of Jan. 1.

The doctors, who are also qualified as anesthesiologists, took part in a skull

operation. In addition to meeting medical needs of Palestinians, the group also is looking to give Israeli children opportunities to dwell in Hungary as guests of the organization.

Church World Service, a cooperative ministry of 35 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican [communions](#) affiliated with the World Council of Churches, launched an emergency response including humanitarian relief, protection for refugees displaced by attacks and an appeal for donations from the United States.

The group also mobilized its Speak Out advocacy program to urge members of Congress to seek an immediate cease-fire, address the humanitarian situation and renew talks aimed at achieving a "durable peace" between Israel and Palestine.

Roy Medley, general secretary of American Baptist Churches USA, a Church World Service member, called on both sides in the conflict to "break this cycle of ongoing violence" and urged the United States "to join with other nations in a new mediating role in the search for a just and lasting peace in the area."

"The issues that continually roil this region are complex and they shall never be resolved through armed force," Medley [said](#). "The welfare of each is linked to the welfare of the other.... Only sustained diplomatic efforts which acknowledge the human rights of the other can provide the possibility of peace."

BMS World Mission — British Baptists' global-missions arm — gave \$10,000 to local partner Bethlehem Bible College, which is caring for some students from Gaza who had to leave their homes due to difficulty even prior to the current humanitarian crisis.

Gordon McBain, BMS World Mission regional secretary for the Middle East and North Africa, [described](#) the situation in Gaza and the south of Israel as

"dreadful" and called on Christians to pray for an end to the violence.

"I believe that as Christians there is much that we can do to help alleviate the suffering that has become an everyday event," he said.

Last year BMS World Mission formalized partnerships with Baptist groups in both Israel and Palestine. "These are groups who are trying to bring about change through peaceful methods rather than through bombs and tanks," McBain said. "Christians there are using the power of prayer, dialogue and social care to change things for the better."

Bader Mansour, secretary of the Association of Baptist Churches in Israel, said Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel want to show grief and solidarity with fellow Palestinians suffering in Gaza, while also abiding by the law. Most Israelis strongly support the attack on Gaza.

"It is very hard being an Arab in Israel these days with the polarization and the very different attitude of Arabs and Jews toward the war," Mansour [said](#). "Please pray for the light of Christ to shine on the Palestinians and Israelis. Both need Christ badly."

[Donations](#) to the Gaza crisis relief effort may be made to the Baptist World Aid Emergency Response Fund.

*-Bob Allen is senior writer for Associated Baptist Press.*