

August 3rd, 2014

To Our Dear Friends Overseas,

I am writing to you all personally to convey to you the difficult times that we are enduring here in the State of Israel and most especially our residents in the South of the country.

Our Israel Defense Forces are operating in the Gaza Strip. Our hearts and thoughts are with the thousands of soldiers who are valiantly fighting to rid of us the terror and return security to our homes.

I wish to convey my sorrow for the bereaved families who have lost their loved ones in battle. I wish a speedy recovery to all of our injured and am hopeful that peace and quiet will be restored soon all over the State of Israel.

These are times of great trial "these days that we live in are not simple for any of us". The news from the front lines is difficult and sometimes impossible to digest. The fortitude of all of our citizens is vital so that we can keep what is important to our humanity, to contain the sadness, the frustration and anger and yet to continue on with our lives.

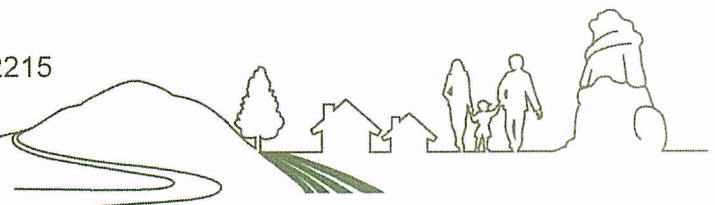
The escalation of the current situation demands that we look out for each other, to find ways to help each other, to be sensitive, and to be able to hear the distress of others. I give thanks everyday for everyone that opens that hearts and homes, residents and businesses that host and assist our residents from the South that are being hosted in our area in the Upper Galilee.

Recognizing, and giving out an emotional and mutual thanks for all the activities and energy that are given at this time gives us all the strength to continue. Together, we all seek the well being of all of our soldiers, men and women, the security services and send all of our best to our injured for their recovery.

Many of our children from the kibbutzim of the Upper Galilee Council have participated in these difficult times by baking cakes and cookies and writing letters and greetings to our soldiers and residents of the South. Everyone got together quickly and helped each other. The cakes were baked, the letters written and signed with love and this past Tuesday were sent with workers from the Council to our soldiers in the front lines. Later in the week we plan to send more packages.

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The Upper Galilee Where nature meets people



Since the most recent round of fighting, thousands of rockets have been launched at Israeli cities, and armed terrorists have attempted to carry out mass attacks on Southern border communities by tunneling into kibbutzim. Hundreds of mortar attacks have been aimed at kindergartens and schools.

Our citizens must flee to shelters at all hours day and nights while the sons and husbands of our mothers and daughter spend sleepless nights waiting for their safe return from Gaza. Because of the news from the South and the stress and anxiety that has affected all of us we have decided at the Council to provide social workers who will be available at all times in our kibbutzim who will hold discussions about the security situation and provide support for all of the people who are suffering from the fear and stress of knowing their loved ones are in battle against the Hamas.

In addition, war like any war, those who are suffering are not just in the battle zones. Here in the North and in the Upper Galilee, we are also suffering the effects of the war. Our small and medium size businesses are hurting economically as there is of course in these trying times no tourism and the purchasing power of many has declined. At this time we are assessing the situation so that we can assist and give support to maintain and continue the economy and the development of the North and Upper Galilee.

Today more than ever your support and letters of encouragement strengthen us. It was important to me to reach out to you, personally, in order to attempt to convey to you my pain, alongside my commitment to the lives of my people. Your support and friendship is, as always, a beacon of light in difficult times.

With all of my warm and good wishes and may peace soon be upon us,

Giora Salz

Chairman,

Upper Galilee Council

