

# Tragedy in Meron: Tens of People Killed, Over 100 Injured

HAMODIA STAFF

**YERUSHALAYIM** — Over 150 people in Meron were injured, with tens succumbing to their injuries during the Lag BaOmer celebrations.

As we go to print, a police spokesman confirmed that 38 people were killed. At least 69 injured were evacuated to various hospitals, 39 of them were transported to Nahariya, with 14 in serious condition. Ziv received 46 injured, with four in critical condition. A total of five were evacuated to Rambam Kerem in critical condition, and one was transported to Poria in moderate condition, with five in light condition.

The tragedy in Meron occurred in the area where the Toldos Aharon Rebbe, *shlita*, was conducting a *hadlakah*. Six helicopters were sent to assist with evacuation of the injured.

United Hatzalah volunteer EMT Yosef Chaim Ben Tzion, one of the first responders at the scene, and who participated in the CPR, relayed, “A number of the injured are in critical condition and a large number of people were moderately injured after a grandstand collapsed with dozens of people on it. Doctors, paramedics, and EMTs from United Hatzalah who were providing medical security for the event rushed to respond and initiated CPR on a number of individuals while treating the others for their injuries.”

Due to the nature of the incident, members of the Psychotrauma and Crisis Response Unit were dispatched as well, in order to deal with those who were suffering from shock and emotional stress reactions.

Following the incident, the commander of the Northern District Police ordered a complete stop of transportation and a ban on entering Mount Meron due to fear for public safety. The shuttles will cease operations to bring people to the mountain, while empty buses will be sent to help evacuate those in Meron.

The public on Mount Meron was asked to come to the shuttle stations and parking lots so that all visitors can be evacuated. All visitors who were on their way to Mount Meron and had not yet arrived at their destination were also ordered to turn back, as the entrances to the mountain have been closed. No visitors will be allowed to enter.

Reports originally said there was a balcony collapse, although MDA spokesman Zaki Heller later said that the casualties were a result of a stampede and not a collapse. This report was later confirmed by the police.

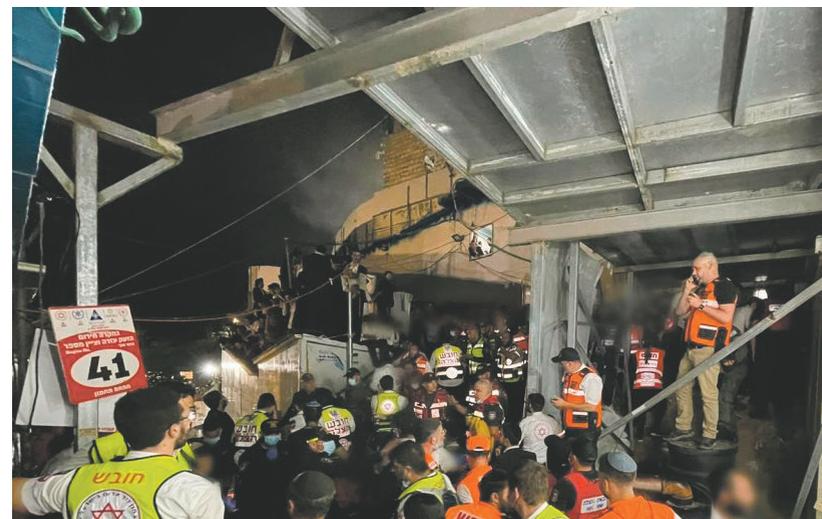
Ziv Medical Center received a report to expect the arrival of nif-



Emergency personnel tending to the injured in Meron.



Responding to the tragedy.



David Cohen/Flash90

tarim 150 wounded. What is known as the *Aran* procedure was announced

which entailed that hospital staff was called from home, and are prepared

for treating the wounded.

Avi Marcus, director of the Ichud Hatzalah's medical department, said: “This is a very serious incident, with dozens of casualties, some of whom were unfortunately pronounced dead due to the nature of the injuries they suffered. In addition, the Ichud Hatzalah's Mental First Aid Unit is providing assistance to a large number of victims suffering from shock.”

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said, “There is a heavy disaster on Mount Meron. We all pray for the recovery of the injured. I wish to strengthen the rescue forces operating in the area.”

A police spokesman for the Northern District Command said, “The main effort now of the Israel Police is to evacuate the mountain in an orderly and safe manner. The police commissioner is at the scene and is closely monitoring the evacuation efforts while receiving updates on what happened.”

“Major arteries have been blocked for vehicular traffic in order to allow rapid movement of emergency and rescue vehicles for the purpose of evacuating the wounded and treating casualties.”

Thousands of people with relatives who traveled to Meron were alarmed when they tried calling and they were unable to get through to them. Cell-phone service has been interrupted for the most part in Meron, and people who cannot reach their relatives are urged not to panic.

The Israel Police department is aware of the attempts of family members and relatives trying to reach their loved ones in the Meron area by cellphone, and have clarified that the entire mountain area is experiencing a cellular reception problem that does not allow for making and receiving calls. The police announced that the call Center 110, which is the information center of the Israel Police, is available, where details regarding the evacuation of the mountain, the hospitals to which the wounded arrived, and other vital information regarding unreachable phones can be found.

Following the tragedy in Meron, the Satmar Rebbe Harav Zalman Leib Teitelbaum, *shlita*, ordered the cancellation of his Lag BaOmer *tisch*, which was also a major fundraising event for the *mosdos*, and instead thousands will gather to recite *Tehillim* at the *beis medrash* in Williamsburg.

In Boro Park, it was also reported that the Rebbes of Bobov, Munkacs and Kopyczynitz, among others, canceled their planned *tischen*. Other *kehillos* refrained from playing music at their gatherings.