

How Did This Benghazi Hero Assist American Christians to Evacuate Israel?

In the midst of dangerous and chaos, a group of 84 American Christians from the Diocese of West Fargo, North Dakota, found themselves in a harrowing situation in the heart of Bethlehem as war erupted in Israel.

Their journey, which had started as a peaceful pilgrimage, took a sudden and unexpected turn, thrusting them into a foreign land in the throes of conflict with the terrorist group Hamas.

The group, led by the Rev. Gerald Braun, embarked on their spiritual journey to Israel, seeking solace and connection to their faith's roots. However, their trip unraveled when Hamas launched surprise attacks, plunging the region into a state of war. It began as an ordinary day as they attempted to visit the site of Jesus' baptism on the Jordan River, only to be turned away as the area was declared off-limits.

Undeterred, they tried to make their way to Jericho, but they soon discovered that it was closed as well. It was only then that they realized the gravity of the situation, as news of the outbreak of violence reached their ears.

The group's leaders, Braun and the Rev. Phil Ackerman, quickly sought help from various quarters, reaching out to the State Department, the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem and their state's senators, John Hoeven and Kevin Cramer. The situation escalated rapidly, and the group found themselves stranded in Bethlehem, uncertain about their prospects of returning home.

One concerned family member, John McDonald, whose sister was among the stranded, reached out to Mark "Oz" Geist, a U.S.

Marine Corps veteran known for his heroic actions during the Benghazi attack in 2012. Geist, with his extensive network in the region, became a beacon of hope for the beleaguered group.

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up to date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

Geist worked diligently, utilizing his contacts to provide the group with reliable information. He understood that their flights from Tel Aviv were no longer a feasible option due to widespread cancellations. Instead, he suggested a daring plan: heading to the border with Jordan.

This idea was unconventional but rapidly gained traction among the group. Braun saw it as a lifeline, especially after the uncertainty regarding flights from Tel Aviv. With this new plan in place, they set their sights on reaching Jordan.

By Wednesday morning, the group had boarded buses and began their journey, the only significant obstacle being a minor delay at the border. They also praised their tour guide, who played a pivotal role in arranging accommodations and flights for the Americans returning home.

"They were unsure of what to do," Geist told Fox News Digital. "Their flights were out of Tel Aviv ... but the airline companies at the time had told them they couldn't rebook them."

The path to safety was fraught with challenges, but their determination and the assistance of dedicated individuals like Geist made it possible. The group finally boarded their flights back to the U.S. on Thursday. Frustrations lingered about the evacuation process, highlighting the need for more efficient and coordinated efforts in assisting American citizens overseas during times of crisis.

The State Department emphasized its commitment to the safety

and security of U.S. citizens abroad, offering assistance through multiple channels, including security alerts and communication. They also explored alternative evacuation methods, such as transiting through a third country when direct flights were unavailable.

Behind the scenes, Cramer and Hoeven, along with the State Department, worked tirelessly to provide support and solutions for the stranded group. The unexpected escalation of events had placed immense pressure on government agencies responsible for the safety of Americans abroad. {eo}

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

Shawn A. Akers is the online editor at Charisma Media.