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How ZAKA Began

In 1989, yeshiva student Yehuda Meshi Zahav and his colleagues were startled into reality by a thunderous boom, followed by an eerie silence and scores of bloodcurdling screams. Meshi Zahav and his fellow students rushed to the scene to find the number 405 bus, which had exploded after being steered over the mountain by a terrorist. They began to care for the wounded and the dead: "It was chilling and horrifying chaos," recalls Meshi Zahav, who today serves as the ZAKA Chairman.

For six years after that attack, in which 17 people died and scores were injured, Meshi Zahav and a dedicated group of volunteers selflessly overcame the horror of terror attacks to recover human remains and ensure a proper Jewish burial. Chesed Shel Emet (true virtue) refers to the act of honouring the dead. In Judaism, this is considered the highest form of altruism, for the dead have no way of repaying the kindness.

ZAKA (the Hebrew acronym for Disaster Victim Identification) became an official volunteer organisation in 1995. ZAKA is the only organisation authorized by the Israel Police to handle the recovery and identification of body parts. The organisation has since developed the scope of its operations to include emergency response, search and rescue, accident prevention and assistance in international disasters.

 **Events** • 18-Nov-14 Attack in Har Nof Shul • 10-Nov-14 Candle Lighting at scene of Terror Attack • 10-Nov-14 ZAKA Commander "It's so much harder when the people you are treating are personal acquaintances"

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ZAKA, 1040 First Avenue, Suite 303, New York, NY 10022 Tel: 212.600.0019 Email: office@zaka.us Tax ID # 46-0567613