

Sarajevo Hospitals Critically Need Medical Supplies and Equipment

Hadassah Sends First Civilian Group Sponsored by Bosnian Government

Four American nurses returned from war-torn Sarajevo with a report on the horrific conditions of the cities two largest hospitals. Running water less than two hours each day, medical equipment without the parts to operate, severe shortages of even the most basic medical supplies are just a few of the debilitating conditions that the nurses observed on their week-long mission to Bosnia.

At the request of the Bosnian Government and under the banner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc., sponsored registered nurses Elsie Roth of St. Louis, Kathryn Bauschard of St. Louis, Deanna Pearlmuter of Boston and Charlotte Franklin of Santa Barbara to assess the medical needs of this population and to develop a plan to facilitate the delivery of medical supplies and equipment.

"Conditions in Sarajevo are much, much worse than what is depicted in news coverage and it remains a city under siege," said Elsie Roth, a member of the Hadassah Nurses Council who initiated this humanitarian mission. "The two hospitals that we visited, Kosevo and The State Hospital of Sarajevo have both been bombed and shelled, and anti-aircraft weaponry are currently pointed directly at the hospitals. Although the hospitals have a generator, electricity is very limited and there is running water for only two hours each day."

The nurses met with hospital administrators, doctors, nurses and other personnel while observing procedures in operating rooms, pediatric wards, and pharmacy supply centers. They also examined medical equipment and compiled lists of needed supplies.

"The hospitals' equipment

is highly under-serviced; there are no parts or technicians to repair or maintain these machines," said Roth. "Of course, all types of pharmaceuticals and basic supplies such as I.V. solution and soy formula for newborns are badly needed.

"The medical and nursing staff at these hospitals are performing miracles under these

Zagreb on Monday, Aug. 22. The following morning they were transported to Sarajevo on a U.N. cargo plane, and from the airport to town by armored car. La Benevolencija arranged for the nurses to stay as guests of the Catholic church at the seminary in Sarajevo.

While in Sarajevo and Zagreb, the nurses gathered in-



Four members of the Hadassah Nurses Council returned from war-torn Sarajevo where they assessed the medical needs of the population. Left to right: Deborah Kaplan, Hadassah National President; and registered nurses Elsie Roth, St. Louis; Charlotte Franklin, Santa Barbara; Kathryn Bauschard, St. Louis; and Deanna Pearlmuter, Boston.

conditions. While the doctors are highly educated, many of the nurses are recent graduates of technical programs. Although conditions have improved since the period of heavy shelling when they performed surgery by candle light, they live under the fear that the shelling could begin any moment. All hospital staff work for free and are themselves, under severe physical and mental strain."

The American nurses worked closely with La Benevolencija, the Jewish Community Center in Sarajevo. "La Benevolencijat the JCC, is a primary facilitator for humanitarian aid for everyone in Sarajevo, regardless of religious or ethnic background," said Roth. "They feed more than 150 people daily, care for the elderly, dispense pharmaceuticals, serve as the postal service and much more."

The nurses arrived in

formation and developed a plan for delivering medical supplies into the country. Roth explained, "Supplies must get into Sarajevo or these people will not survive. In addition to medical supplies, they need food and clothing, especially as winter is fast approaching."

Deborah Kaplan, Hadassah national president said, "Hadassah has a long-standing commitment to providing humanitarian aid throughout the world. We are proud to sponsor these four courageous women and through the Hadassah Nurses Councils will work to facilitate aid to Bosnia as identified through this mission."

Sponsored by Hadassah, the Hadassah Nurses Councils meet the special educational, social and professional concerns of Jewish and Zionist nurses in the U.S. and Israel.

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