Safety and Security

The safety, security and wellbeing of Participants is, and always has been, our primary concern. UJIA Israel Experience recognises that questions of security are of critical importance to potential Participants and their families and we would like to reassure you that UJIA Israel Experience is continuously monitoring developments in the region.

All JAFI Programmes are planned according to the security directives of the Cheder Matsav (Situation Room) and the Moked Teva which is run by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) and who are connected to the Israeli Defence Forces, Home Front Command, and the Israeli Police Force. In addition, the Tour Provider in Israel (Israel Experience Educational Tourism Services Ltd) are also linked directly to the Security Department of JAFI. We hope the information provided below will help to clarify our precautions and plans for JAFI Programmes.

The Organisers provide a meaningful, educational and fun Israel experience that will serve our mutual goals of strengthening Jewish identity among our Participants, while maintaining the highest level of security and safety.

UJIA Israel Experience's Approach to Safety

For more than 30 years, JAFI and UJIA have contributed to Israel Experience Programmes for the UK Jewish community. Although an enriching and exciting Israel experience is certainly our mission, the safety and wellbeing of our Participants has always been, and continues to be, our highest priority. Matters of security always take precedence over all other concerns and our safety record is proven Programmes are adapted, as the situation requires, in a manner to assure the safety of all Participants. This includes the routes, accommodations and security measures taken. Before a decision is taken to launch Israel Tour, a detailed risk analysis is completed within UJIA Israel Experience, taking legal advice in the UK, securing travel and medical insurance policies, and liaising with our partners and security officials in Israel. In response to the ongoing military conflict, a number of steps were made for Summer 2024, 2025 and 2026 to ensure additional security was in place, and increased provision available to care for the participants on Israel Tour. These measure will be reviewed in advance of summer 2027 based on updated guidance from relevant security bodies.

During Israel Tour

The situation in the Middle East is constantly changing and we cannot predict what the circumstances will be whilst the programme is in Israel. Regardless, every decision regarding itineraries, including transportation routes and locations or sites for day and/or evening activities, is made in conjunction with the Jewish Agency Security Department, the Israeli Police Command, the Ministry of Education and the SPNI. The central coordinating office is called Cheder Matsav/Moked Teva. The Tour Provider in Israel is in constant contact with the office of the Cheder Matsav/Moked Teva who receive regular police, army and other intelligence reports.

In conjunction with the security apparatus in Israel, JAFI also routinely examines and re-examines each activity, site and transportation route to ensure the safety of our Participants. As always, the Participants are not permitted to take public transportation or leave the group at any time without prior agreement. At the time of writing it is difficult to predict what may or may not be required in the summer, and the following steps are of course subject to change depending on the advice received from organisations we work with.

This year we anticipate:

- All Israel Tour groups will have an Israeli Madrich/a trained and responsible for managing emergency/siren situations. It is their responsibility when arriving at any location to know where safe areas/shelters are, and ensure participants get to those places in an emergency.
- All Israel Tour Groups will have knowledge of the location of shelters at each accommodation, and on scheduled routes the buses take. This will begiven in advance of arrival. Please note, travel itineraries can change for a variety of reasons.
- All Tour Providers will have an emergency protocol in place for locating all participants immediately in the event of an emergency situation.
- There will be increased provision of mental health support on call, should a group or individual be affected by a siren or serious incident. There is provision for this through the Tour Providers, Medical Insurance, UJIA Israel Experience support infrastructure, and often also through your Youth Movement.
- Additional training will be given to UK Madrichim on safety & security best practice.

At the time of writing it is difficult to predict which of the above measures may or may not be required during Israel Tour, and the above steps are subject to change depending on the advice received from organisations we work with.

Going to Israel when there are heightened concerns about security does not diminish the "Israel Experience". Being in Israel with the people of Israel at such a time enhances the experience educationally. From Programmes run by JAFI in the last few years, we know that Participants return home with a more profound understanding of the fabric of Israeli society, its place in the Jewish world, and the meaning of being Jewish, along with all the other enrichment that is part of coming on an Israel Programme.

First Aiders and Armed Escorts

The regulations of the Cheder Matzav/Moked Teva require us to have a first aider with each group throughout the Programme and an armed security person at various points throughout the country. In some years as an additional level of security we may anticipate the need for an armed guard at all times. Each JAFI Programme complies with instructions dealing with the number of security personnel per bus.

Accommodation Security

The Tour Provider in Israel follows the guidelines set out by the Cheder Matsav/Moked Teva in relation to security personnel at all group accommodation sites including hotels, hostels and kibbutz guest houses and do not deviate from their instructions. All sites that are visited will have security personnel where feasible.

Free Time

Participants' free time will be restricted to those areas approved by the office of the Cheder Matsav/Moked Teva. Participants should be aware that the decision to allow free time is made on a day-to-day basis. If Participants are given free time it will always be within specific geographical boundaries. They will be split into sub-groups of no less than three Participants and will have to report to their Israel Tour Madrichim/ot (Leaders) at regular intervals. Participants will have an emergency card that will include all relevant and emergency phone numbers.