

## Disaster in Ramat Gan

by

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On 22 January 1991 emergency response teams in Israel were operating on full alert. The Gulf War was almost one week old, and the civilian population of Israel already had been the object of Iraqi-launched Scud missiles. At 2015 hours sirens were sounded throughout the country, then moments later a missile hit an urban residential neighbourhood in Ramat Gan, Israel's fifth largest city. This paper deals with some of the civilian disaster response issues which were involved and with the lessons learnt.

Extensive damage included broken gas lines, downed electrical wires, and the very real threat of building collapse. Immediate assessment indicated that the effected area included some twenty buildings, at least four of which were later judged beyond repair and marked by civil engineers for destruction; it was later determined that a far larger number of buildings had suffered some amount of damage. It was into this situation that local neighbours, then rescue and extrication forces entered. The consequences were not always immediately obvious to responding forces who tried to set up operations as quickly as possible. To cite one example, a police mobile crime unit started filming the scene from what was thought to be a safe distance. After several minutes of work, the team noticed a wavering balcony overhead and quickly evacuated the post.