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# **BNAI ZION MEDICAL CENTER'S FORTIFIED UNDERGROUND FACILITY**

BY CHERYL BIER



During the Second Lebanon war in 2006, a Hezbollah rocket just missed hitting the fuel storage facility of the Bnai Zion Medical Center, causing management to realize the hospital's need for fortified, underground facilities.

Bnai Zion Medical Center, a project of the Bnai Zion Foundation founded in 1922, is the only hospital in Haifa that has not yet been fortified against the ongoing threat of rocket attacks. But that is about to change, thanks in part to a \$3 million grant from the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust to construct a fortified emergency department and underground hospitalization department.

“The missile hit less than 100 meters from the hospital, breaking windows, but thankfully, no one was injured,” said CEO of Bnai Zion Medical Center, Amnon Rofe. “The new facility, which will cost a total of \$18 million, will be ready in three years.”

Bnai Zion Foundation has raised half of the funds required through

generous donors in the United States and abroad. This will enable the hospital to significantly increase the capacity of its current emergency room facilities, introduce advanced technology, and to remain fully operational in times of emergency.

When fully completed, the enlarged emergency department will cover approximately 16,580 square feet and will accommodate 88 beds. In addition, the underground hospitalization department, spanning more than 20,128 square feet, will accommodate 58 beds and offer a complete range of medical services.

Rofe noted, “It's not a matter of if, but when the next attack will come, making the fortified emergency room and underground hospitalization department our top priority. On behalf of the Bnai Zion Medical Center, I am very grateful for the Helmsley Charitable Trust's generous gift that allows us to achieve this important goal and protect our staff and patients at all times.”

