

**LATEST NEWS # 407, April 16, 2007**

**The following news concerns the West Bank.**

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[http://biblesociety.org/latestnews/index\\_latestnews.html](http://biblesociety.org/latestnews/index_latestnews.html)

## **Gaza bomb attack: “Please pray for the Bible Society team”**

**WEST BANK** — The Palestinian Bible Society’s bookshop was one of three targets of bomb attacks in Gaza City early yesterday morning (April 15). No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks, which follow several similar ones in recent months. The United Bible Societies (UBS)\* is calling for urgent prayer support for Bible Society staff in Gaza, who even before this attack were working under great pressure to serve its suffering communities (see Latest News #352).

The Bible Society shop has been the subject of threats in the past, but on this occasion no direct threats had been made. This meant that the attack came as a shock, explains Simon Azazian, the Palestinian Bible Society’s Information Officer, in a message sent just hours later.

“Two cars with masked gunmen parked in front of the office and kidnapped the security guard,” he continues. “An hour later they returned and placed a large bomb at the doors. There is a lot of damage, but we thank the Lord that there were no injuries.” The security guard was later released.

Staff morale remains good, despite the seriousness of this incident. “The team is strong and encouraged in the Lord,” says Mr Azazian. Nevertheless, prayer and material support are urgently needed and Palestinian Bible Society Executive Secretary Labib Madanat went immediately to Gaza to support the staff there and to begin the process of repairing and reopening the bookshop.

When he arrived in Gaza, Mr Madanat found that, although there is no structural damage to the building, the damage is extensive. The front of the shop has been blown in and most of the inside - furniture, fittings and stock - completely destroyed. But the staff had immediately set about clearing the place and obtaining quotes for the urgent repairs. In addition to repairing the shop, the Bible Society must now improve its security even further, adding to its costs.

While Mr Madanat was in Gaza, representatives of the Palestinian Ministry of Culture came to the shop. They expressed their support for the Bible Society and denounced the attack. They had a clear message for the Bible Society: “Please continue and increase your ministry here.”

Later, in the evening, there was a second attack outside the shop, with a device being thrown from a passing car. There was exchange of fire and the attackers were chased by the police, but were not caught.

“Please pray for the Bible Society team in Gaza, that they retain their resilience in spite of the dangers, and that they never lose sight of God’s presence,” asks Mr Madanat. “Pray that this incident may lead to even more opportunities for service in Gaza. Please also pray for protection for the staff as they clear up the damage and seek to reopen the shop without delay.”

UBS General Secretary the Rev Dr A Miller Milloy has already reassured Mr Madanat of the support of the UBS fellowship. Highlighting the promises of God's protection contained in Psalm 46, he writes, "Please assure your staff that we uphold them before the Lord in prayer, seeking his protection for each one of them. May their steadfast love for the people of Gaza and their commitment to serve them in Jesus' name be a witness to the truth and the power of the Gospel which they seek to proclaim."

\* The Palestinian Bible Society is part of the United Bible Societies – a fellowship of over 140 national Bible Societies who are committed to serving and working with all Christian Churches.

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