

“The War Surfaces Old Traumas:” Causing a Rise in Calls from Sexual Assault Survivors

As fighting continues at high intensity and many people are spending extended periods in safe rooms with family members, Maslan reports a significant increase in calls to its helpline, “People carry trauma from the past- and the war amplifies it.”



Karin Zawi-Lowenstein, CEO of Maslan, in a meeting with the wife of the President, Mrs. Michal Herzog, at the President's House / President's House

The war against Iran is posing major challenges for various nonprofits. The tense reality has reached Maslan, a support center for sexual assault survivors, at an especially complex moment. During this period, the organization continues to address the post-traumatic effects stemming from the events of October 7th, to which additional rounds of fighting and military operations have since been added – first Operation “Rising Lion,” and now Operation “Roaring Lion.”

Amid this ongoing chain of security incidents and combat, countless women and men are grappling with past sexual trauma alongside post-traumatic conditions that are exacerbated in times of emergency. Navigating a wartime reality while carrying deep wounds from the past demands tremendous psychological resilience and strength.

Maslan reports a rise in additional phenomena as well: intimate partner violence and incidents of violence in protected spaces — places where a clear understanding of boundaries, consent, and mutual respect is sometimes lacking.

Maslan's helpline (1202) continues to operate throughout these difficult days. Following an initial drop in calls during the first two days of escalation, volume has risen significantly — in part due to the missile strike on Beer Sheva, which triggered acute

anxiety and distress among survivors. Callers are also reporting the strain of prolonged time at home or in protected spaces with all family members present. This situation, with little space, high tension and stress, and no clear end in sight, can intensify feelings of distress and loss of control.

Alongside the helpline, Maslan enabled two therapy and support groups to continue meeting via Zoom, after participants and therapists expressed a clear need to maintain their sessions during this period. Participants shared that despite their personal difficulties and the challenging reality, the Zoom sessions were deeply meaningful, helped them with emotional regulation, and provided a sense of relief and connection during a time of stress and uncertainty.



A Support group at the Beit Maslan combining self-defense practice and setting boundaries and self-confidence / Maslan

"Thanks to our donors, who are well acquainted with and believe in Maslan's work, we are able to provide an immediate response to every inquiry – without delay and without bureaucracy. The trust our donors place in us allows us to act quickly and support anyone who has experienced violence, sexual violence in particular. Maslan's staff and those who reach out to us alike express deep gratitude and great appreciation for this ongoing support and faith in our work. Unfortunately, Maslan's building does not include a protected space. As a result, during periods of security escalation, most of our activity takes place from home, under the difficult conditions of rocket fire and sirens, family demands, and the search for shelter. This reality does not allow for the continuous, uninterrupted work that we strive to provide," said Karin Zawi Lowenstein, CEO of Maslan.

She added, "Despite this, we continue to operate in every way possible: holding Zoom support groups focused on emotional regulation and containment, calming, and grounding. We proactively reach out to all of our volunteers, both to hear about their personal well-being and how they are managing and coping with the weight of the calls to the helpline. Our volunteers are the front line of response. They are a human presence that meets callers in their most difficult moments and provides them with immediate support,



and strengthening this team is a priority. Maslan is here for everyone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We invite anyone who is interested in taking part in meaningful, life-saving work related to human rights to join us at Maslan. In the second half of 2026, a new and unique volunteer training course will open, designed in a format that is considerate of and accommodating to working women.”