

THE BOMB RIPPED THROUGH THE APARTMENT IN ISRAEL NO ONE EXPECTED AMI TO LIVE

Can you imagine being told that a home you stayed in last month had been bombed and that the son of a close friend had been severely injured and may not live?

That was the call I received from Leah Ortiz in Ariel, Israel. Each year when I travel to the Holy Land, I stay with David and Leah Ortiz. Over the years I have watched their lively family of five children grow up.

David Ortiz and his four older children all served in the Israeli Defense Forces and, like other Messianic Jews, they took an oath on the Bible to defend the nation of Israel.

David and Leah Ortiz for decades have lived in the community of Ariel in the heart of Samaria, a place our newspapers refer to as the “West Bank,” as if it is not and has never been a part of Israel, yet it is an integral part. David worked for many years supporting his family with his orthodontic technology business while pastoring a small but growing Messianic Jewish congregation, and gaining the trust of the community. His outreach for the past several years has been full time, ministering the love of Christ to Arabs and Jews alike.



The bomb blew a hole in a table that was solid wood and over an inch thick. In the background there is blood on the floor. Even the refrigerator had holes from bolts and screws placed in the bomb.



Ami with his newborn nephew, just days before the blast that nearly cost him his life.

David has a small van whose windows have been darkened out. I have driven with him to deserted areas where there are no homes, where Palestinian Christian converts could secretly meet with us and we could hold a prayer meeting in the van. Sometimes there have been up to ten of us in this van that only has six seats.

My organization, the Religious Freedom Coalition, has supported David and Leah Ortiz and their ministry for many years, as they have won Palestinians and Jews to a personal relationship with Christ.

My wife Nancy and I have been in a prayer circle in Ariel with both Jews and Palestinians who had accepted the Lord. I recall grown Palestinian men crying because they could not believe they were holding hands and praying with Jews. David Ortiz and his wife Leah, who is Jewish and a devoted servant of Yeshua (Jesus), have a vibrant and irreplaceable ministry in the Holy Land.

This is the ministry, the family that was shattered by a bomb on March 20, 2008.

That day, fifteen-year-old Ami Ortiz was so severely injured in the bombing that no one expected him to survive. By a miracle of the Lord a nurse trained in treating war injuries was walking outside the apartment when the bomb went off. She ran in and worked to stop Ami's bleeding. There was hardly an inch of his body that did not have cuts from the shrapnel. Now, almost two years later, small bits of metal are still emerging from his scarred body.



Ami's scarred body weeks after the explosion when some bandages were removed. Ami was in the hospital for many months and underwent a dozen operations.

Everyone believed the bombing was done by Muslims angry that the Ortiz family had won so many Palestinians to the Lord. But, that was not what had happened. The reality was even harder for the Ortiz family to accept. One clue was that military grade explosives were used, the same kind used by the Israeli army. The attempted murder of the Ortiz family was not an act of radical Muslims, but rather the act of an extreme right-wing Jew who wanted to rid Israel of Christians and Messianic Jews. It was a shock to us all as many months went by with no arrest.

Messianic believers such as David and Leah Ortiz believe in the special covenant between Yahweh and the Jewish people. David served in the army to protect Israel as a Jewish state. They are different from most other Israelis only in that they believe that the Messiah so many Jews still await has already arrived in the person of Jesus Christ. For this, some radicals attempted to murder the entire family.

The bomb was in a basket of sweets that was delivered to their home during the Jewish holiday of Purim. Only young Ami was at home at the time. He reached for a piece of candy in the Purim basket, and every window in the home was blown out ... every window. There was damage everywhere. The force was so intense that even the refrigerator had holes in it. Major arteries in Ami's neck were miraculously narrowly missed, yet he was bleeding to death from his injuries. His body was burned and metal had penetrated him in hundreds of places.

Again, it was a miracle, an act of God, that Ami did not die that day.

But he was facing months of intense pain and a long struggle to survive. Ami was in the hospital for five months and underwent a dozen operations -- with four more to go.

His eyes had to be operated on again and again as more fragments were found. He lost parts of his foot. His skin was burned off the front of his body by the force of the explosion. Both his ear drums were ruptured by the blast.

I flew to Israel and visited the Ortiz family after the bombing and I visited Ami in the hospital. It was difficult for me to see his pain and suffering as I had literally watched him grow up as I visited his family in Ariel. He was part of a video the Religious Freedom Coalition produced several years ago, called "Holy Land Teenagers."

Most Americans think Israel has (free) socialized medicine, but that is not fully true. Everyone must pay to belong to an insurance plan and choose one of four “sick baskets”. Not all medical services are covered by any of the four “sick baskets” that are available. All of Ami’s care was not paid for by his family’s “sick basket,” which among other things does not pay for plastic surgery to cover up his scars. At the same time they were facing these expenses, the family home also had to be repaired and furniture replaced, even the refrigerator and stove.

There were holes in every wall. A huge hole was blown in the table where the basket of fruit containing the bomb sat. Every window was blown out. Every piece of furniture had holes from the shrapnel that came off the bomb. Even the floors had holes. There was a powder from the explosion on everything in the apartment.

In all of this there was reluctance on the part of the police to catch the bomber.

Yes ... you read that right. Once the police discovered that it wasn’t Palestinian Muslims, but rather an extremist Jew who had bombed the Ortiz apartment, they became reluctant and had to be pushed by the Ortiz family to investigate. The family even had to hire an attorney.

The city of Ariel actually has quite a number of believers, especially among the large community of Russian immigrants. Christians in America and Europe have developed good relationships with the officials in Ariel. The mayor of Ariel has been to Virginia where I live, and has many friends in America.



Ron Nachman, the mayor of Ariel, presents William Murray with a menorah as a thank you for helping the Israeli city.

I have helped raise funds for the civic center in Ariel ... in fact one of the buildings in the civic center complex is named after an American preacher who is a supporter of Israel, Rev. John Hagee!

Every Christian in America and Europe who is associated with the city of Ariel and the Ortiz family was shocked.

The fact that the bomber was an Israeli citizen has also made it virtually impossible to raise funds to help the Ortiz family. There is not a pro-Israel Christian in America who wants to hear that a Jewish Israeli planted the bomb, including me. I love Israel and the Jewish people, and didn’t want to believe such a thing had happened. But I have to believe it, because the police were convinced that it was in fact a Jewish extremist.

As a friend of Israel, I have been to the Israeli Embassy in Washington, DC many times over the years. A few months ago, I arranged to deliver petitions to the Ambassador, asking for help in finding anyone responsible for the bombing that so devastated the lives of Ami Ortiz and his family.

We mailed tens of thousands of the petitions asking for justice for Ami and addressed to the Israeli ambassador. The results, from American Christians who love Israel, were not good. Many wrote back saying they just could not believe such a thing could happen. Only a few people sent funds to assist with the legal and other work that needed to be done to help Ami and the Ortiz family. Virtually no funds were raised to help the Ortiz family and their ministry.

That is why I am writing this letter to you as the chairman of the Religious Freedom Coalition here in Washington, DC.

I am asking you to help the Ortiz family financially in this time of great need.

Your gift to assist the Ortiz family is tax deductible as long as your check is made out to the Religious Freedom Coalition. The funds received will go to assist the Ortiz family and their ministry. The Religious Freedom Coalition paid in advance for the postage for this letter so even more funds could be sent to the Ortiz family.

I have a personal stake in this ... I have watched this family faithfully serving in their ministry for many years, through many difficulties, although none so hard as this bombing of their home and their youngest son. They have gladly sacrificed for the sake of our Savior, and have led many to faith and salvation. I want to make things right for the Ortiz family. I want the guilty man who placed this bomb to be punished for his attack upon a family whose ministry is sharing the love of Christ.

Please be generous.

Ami shed blood for the cause of our Lord. He will never be whole; he no longer even has all of his toes, and his hearing has not fully recovered.

Please stand with Ami and the Ortiz family with a [gift](#) that will let them know you care. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, pray for the Christians of the Holy Land, and please pray for Ami's full recovery and the full restoration of the Ortiz family ministry in Samaria.

Thank you for helping and God bless you.

William J. Murray, Chairman
Religious Freedom Coalition
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PS: Just before mailing this letter, I learned that the Shin Bet (Israeli security agency) had arrested an American-born Jewish settler who not only had bombed the Ortiz apartment, but the home of a professor, a police station, and the Beit Jimal Monastery southeast of Tel Aviv. He may have even killed two Israeli police officers because he believed they were against settlements in Samaria. There is word that he may have committed violent crimes before moving from the United States to Israel. Regardless of his motives, the Ortiz family and their ministry need our help urgently. [Help today](#)