

## Operation Moses: Personal Reflections of Mossad Agents

[The material below is transcribed from video testimonials of Mossad agents who carried out Operation Moses.]

25 Years ago, the Mossad was ordered to save the Ethiopian Jewish community and to bring them to Israel. Mossad agents were sent to Sudan to set up a camp from which they could secretly send Ethiopian Jews to Israel.

Emmanuel (Mossad agent): “Jonathan called me, ‘Listen up I need you for a special mission. This time there is no killing involved. It is something very human, something very special.’ He went on, ‘even as I speak I am excited.’ Then he told me, ‘I want to establish a vacation village in Sudan.’”

Jonathan (Mossad agent): “In order to work in Sudan you need a cover story. Because without one, after a week they’ll be asking: ‘What are you doing here? Are you a tourist? What is there to see here?’

The Ethiopian Jews being rescued in Operation Moses had to endure a secretive journey of thousands of kilometers from Ethiopia to Sudan evading army patrols, thieves and marauders, overcoming hunger, thirst and disease. There, on one of the beaches, the Mossad agents established a vacation village. Trucks carrying immigrants arrived every night, and from there the Marine Commando extricated them in rubber dinghies (small boats) to a ship waiting on the high seas, which then took them on to Israel.

Gadi (Mossad Agent): “We filled up the boats with everyone, from day-old infants to the extreme elderly. We went straight out to sea. It can be quite rough. The Ethiopian did not say a word or make a sound.”

One of those responsible for smuggling the immigrants across the Ethiopian-Sudan border to the coast was Mossad member David Ben Uziel.

David: “I would define that as the most dangerous part because they could have caught us. We were extremely close to the refugee camp. We had to do this part as quickly as possible.”

Emmanuel: “The vacation village quickly became a very sought-after resort for European deep-sea divers. During the day the guides and all the team workers functioned to make this a proper vacation resort village, while at night each week they would organize operations where the commandos would come with the dinghies. From there, they would take the people and make the connection to get them to Israel.”

(Quote from David’s audio journal): “Today, 12<sup>th</sup> November, we are actually carrying out the operation. 11 dinghies are on their way to the ship. Fully loaded, the dinghies reached the ship’s access. The sea was rough. Everyone was hand-carried to prevent drowning. There was much panic and confusion. The excitement and emotions of our team ran high.

David: “I was told that you must receive these people. They don’t know who you are, they have no idea where you are taking them. The people themselves finally understood that when they got onto the vehicle they are leaving forever. They are going to survive. “

Their understanding was that if they survived a while month of a crushingly difficult trudge, then the first priority is to get out of there and to reach the place they’ve always dreamed of—and that is Jerusalem. However, it was extremely difficult for the immigrants; a mini catastrophe for many of them. To this day there are many families that have great difficulty recounting the episode.

Operation Moses brought them the Mossad agents to tears, as they saw the immigrants entering the ship safely under the prevailing conditions.