

## Sheriff's Major returns from Israel

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Martin met with Israel Police Commissioner Roni Alsheikh during her stay in Israel. She said it was humbling to learn from law enforcement who deal with aggressive acts of violence, including terrorist attacks on a regular basis.

One of Cherokee County's deputies returned home from Israel after two weeks of public safety and counterterrorism training with the country's top policing executives.

Maj. Dana Martin, commander of Headquarters Operations with the sheriff's office, studied methods in counterterrorism, emergency management and other public safety and homeland security challenges and strategies in Israel from June 12 to 27.

Martin worked alongside 19 members of senior law enforcement from Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee as part of a training program with the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange.

As a Cherokee County native Martin has worked with the sheriff's office for 20 years. She said her training in Israel gave her many tools she looks forward to sharing with her own department.

During the training, participants worked 12-hour days traveling from one end of the country to the other, meeting different agencies and command centers.

"It was truly a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience the training they have so we could understand what they do on a daily basis and learn from it," she said.

One lesson taught during the training, Martin said, is that law enforcement are fighting crime today that has no borders. She said regardless of whether crimes are committed virtually on the Internet or on an international scale, police need to communicate with each other in order to solve crimes.

"The things (Israel) has been facing for many, many years, we're just now in this country starting to get a taste of unfortunately," she said. "So anything we can learn from how they've handled situations like that can only make us better."

Despite a packed schedule, Martin said she was able to see the sights by way of the Israel police. While visiting police headquarters in Jerusalem, she said they saw a behind-the-scenes view of the Holy City and learn how Israel police control crowds, threats to security and terrorist attacks.

"That is an epicenter for so many different religions—literally hundreds of thousands of people come there and have different holidays and religious ceremonies year round there," she said.

Police in the city have to be prepared for any type of threat. The day before the group visited Jerusalem, Martin said one Israel border patrol police officer was killed. She said the group mourned with the Israel police over the fallen officer.

"It wasn't as if someone from far away lost a police officer, we all lost a police officer," she said. "You know, the world didn't seem so big that day."

Martin said it was humbling to be around law enforcement who deal with aggressive acts of violence on a regular basis. She said it was overwhelming to experience and listen to how they have to adapt and keep learning in order to keep their residents and visitors safe.

“That’s what they stress most, they just try to learn from every single incident that occurs and do more and do better so it does not happen again,” she said.

Building trust within a diverse community and establishing communication was another aspect of the program Martin said she learned from Israel police.

“Fortunately, we live in a wonderful community here in Cherokee County where we do have very good communication and relationships with every member of this community,” she said. “But we can always do more. We can always know more people and encourage more people to know us so that we can serve them better.”

One of the biggest takeaways, Martin said, was being creative to prevent crime and willing to understand and listen to your community’s needs. She said law enforcement can no longer rely on giving the public what happened, but why it happened.

“I think you have to give them a little more these days than just the facts,” she said. “It’s more than giving people just ‘what.’ You have to give them ‘why,’ and you should give them ‘why,’ because that helps with understanding. The more we understand each other, the more we can communicate better to help make this community a better place.”

This was the Georgia International Law Enforcement’s 25th annual peer-to-peer training program in partnership with Israel. The program has educated more than 700 public safety officials, according to a news release.

Founded in 1992, GILEE works continuously to improve public safety by enhancing inter-agency cooperation and educational training among the world’s top law enforcement communities, with Israel a key partner in the exchange, the release said.

The program has offered more than 200 special briefings to more than 29,000 law enforcement officers, corporate security personnel and community leaders. It has carried out more than 430 programs and produced 1,500 graduates.