

Miss. Baptist Disaster Relief called to support first responders

MEMPHIS (The Baptist Paper and local reports) – Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief (MBDR) teams began providing meals for first responders in Memphis on Jan. 27 as the city braces for possible protests related to the alleged police beating of a man who died a few days following his arrest on Jan. 7.

Since the incident, five Memphis police officers who were at the scene have been fired and charged with second degree murder. The details involving 29-year-old Tyre Nichols' encounter with the police officers continue to be investigated.

Nichols, who died Jan. 10, was taken into custody following a traffic stop for reckless driving that led to confrontations with the police officers. Authorities are expected to release video footage of the arrest of Nichols on evening of Jan. 27.

Memphis Police Chief Cerelyn Davis told CNN that bodycam footage shows the police officers “defied humanity” in their handling of Nichols. “You’re going to see a disregard for human life,” she noted. The video will reportedly be released in four separate clips.

Nichols' mother RowVaughn Wells and other community leaders, including Davis, are asking for possible protests in the city to remain peaceful once the videos are released.

In addition to meal preparation, MBDR has chaplains on standby while Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief will provide a shower and laundry units for an estimated 250 police officers who are being brought in as an extra security precaution. Tennessee Governor Bill Lee (R) has also authorized the mobilization of

1,200 National Guardsmen.

A number of other MBDR teams are currently working in the Eutaw, Ala., area after severe weather on Jan. 13 spawned tornadoes across the central part of that state. Those teams include incident management, feeding, assessors, chaplains, and chainsaw.

For general information about MBDR credentialing and volunteering, [click here](#).

MBDR is supported by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program and donations from individuals.

Tax-deductible donations to assist MBDR are being accepted. At the present time, in-kind contributions such as clothing and furniture are not being accepted. "The need right now is for critical supplies to be purchased in bulk, such as food and cleaning materials. Monetary gifts will help accomplish that," Yates said.

Monetary gifts may be made by check, or electronically by [clicking here](#). Checks should be made payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, with "Disaster Relief" designated on the memo line, and mailed to MBCB Business Office, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.