

Press release

Rafah eyewitness: CARE aid worker bombed with his family
Shelters full, humanitarian workers among hundreds in the street

Phone interviews from Gaza available – contact:

Melanie Brooks (Jerusalem) +41 795 903 047, brooks@careinternational.org

Juliette Seibold (in Jerusalem), +972.547797730, seibold@carewbg.org

A CARE aid worker in Gaza survived a heavy Israeli bombardment that hit his neighbourhood in Rafah an hour ago, in the fiercest attack in his area since the conflict began. CARE worker Jawad Harb fled his home, along with his wife, six children and 86-year-old paralyzed grandfather. They and hundreds of their neighbours stood in the open, unprotected street as the bombs fell around them.

Below are his direct quotes:

“The leaflets came yesterday, telling us our neighbourhood would be attacked. The whole population of the area is terrified. We have nowhere to go. My neighbour checked at the UNRWA shelter but it was full. Overflowing. There is nowhere to go. We waited to be bombed.

“The bombs came today. It was terrifying. We have nowhere to run. There was an air strike every five minutes. Thick black smoke 100m-150m away from us. People were scared, ran outside of their houses and gathered together in the street. 300-350 people in the street. The street was the safest place. If our house is bombed, we’ll get trapped and die like the people we saw on television.

“My children have seen the dead bodies of children on television. They cry, they are crying now, they are terrified. When will this end? There was screaming. It is dark and cold but most of us are still outside. My family is outside next to the house. We are terrified to go inside.

“It is quiet for 20 minutes now but we don’t know if it will start again. What if it is just a short break? We can’t take the risk. My children are shivering. It is getting so cold. Some neighbours went back inside, but they are staying on the first floor, next to the door so they can run outside. We don’t know what will come next. This is the closest it has come to our house. The neighbourhood next to ours was bombed. What do we do? We don’t know. We have nowhere to go. Nowhere to go.”

About CARE: CARE is one of the world’s largest humanitarian aid agencies, providing assistance in nearly 70 countries. CARE has been working in Israel, West Bank and Gaza since 1948 (with a short break from 1984-1994), initially implementing programs to help immigrants after the Holocaust. Today, CARE implements programs in food security, health and water, support for civil society groups, and distributions of fresh food. Since the conflict started Dec. 27, CARE has distributed fresh food, medical supplies, heaters, blankets and plastic sheeting to hospitals, families and feeding centres in Gaza.

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