

Press release

Worker for CARE's food distribution project killed in Gaza *CARE condemns the killing of civilians*

Gaza, Occupied Palestinian Territories (Jan. 7, 2009) – CARE International is mourning the loss of a worker for CARE's food distribution project in Gaza, who was killed last night in an aerial bombing. Mohammed Ibrahim Samouni, a father of six, was killed and his son was critically injured.

"Gaza is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. Borders are closed and there is nowhere safe for civilians to flee. This is further evidence that any attack, even a targeted one, will result in civilian casualties," said Martha Myers, CARE's Country Director in West Bank and Gaza. "Mohammed was dedicated to providing aid to Palestinians, who are becoming more and more desperate as each day of attacks go by."

"Our sincere condolences go out to Mohammed's family. We hope that his son will recover from his injuries, but no child will ever fully recover from the loss of his father. This is further evidence of the terrible toll Palestinian families are paying for this war."

Samouni worked at one of the packing stations managed by CARE's partner, General Union of Palestinian Peasants, on CARE's Gaza Fresh Food Project, funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO). The project delivers fresh fruit and vegetables to 60,000 people, hospitals and orphanages a week. Since the attacks started Dec. 27, CARE has only been able to deliver food twice. The people who normally receive distributions from CARE have no other source of fresh food. Farmers who provide the produce cannot tend their fields for fear of attack, and the bombs have destroyed farmland. Sewage mains have been damaged, causing raw sewage to contaminate crops, posing a further health risk for Palestinians.

"People are running out of food," said Myers. "Food distributions cannot continue because of the bombings. And the very people who are trying to deliver aid – paramedics, and now a worker for CARE's distribution project – are being killed. The killing of civilians is unacceptable. CARE calls for an immediate, permanent ceasefire, from all parties. For the sake of the families of Israel and Palestine, this war cannot continue."

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, implementing programs in food security, health and water, support for civil society groups, and distributions of fresh food. Since the Israeli attacks 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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