
Death of UNRWA teacher in Gaza

15 November 2012

Gaza

Shortly after one o'clock today an UNRWA teacher was killed by an Israeli airstrike in northern Gaza. Marwan Abu El Qumsan was in his early 50s and an Arabic teacher at UNRWA's Preparatory Boys School in Jabalia. Reports indicate that he was in a car near the scene of the airstrike. Marwan's brother, who was with him in the car, was severely injured. UNRWA expresses condolences to Marwan's family on their tragic loss.

With over a million beneficiaries in Gaza, UNRWA remains deeply concerned about the escalation of violence, which puts civilians on both sides of the conflict at risk. We support the calls of the Secretary-General for an immediate de-escalation of tensions and his demand that both sides should do everything to avoid further escalation and must respect their obligations under international humanitarian law to ensure the protection of civilians at all times.

Background information

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance.

Financial support to UNRWA has not kept pace with an increased demand for services caused by growing numbers of registered refugees, expanding need, and deepening poverty. As a result, the Agency's General Fund, supporting UNRWA's core activities and 97 per cent reliant on voluntary contributions, has begun each year with a large projected deficit. Currently the budget deficit stands at USD 37 million.

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