

CARE press release

CARE resumes distributions in Gaza Strip ***Supplies destroyed in the bombed UN warehouse and hospitals***

Gaza, Occupied Palestinian Territories (Jan. 16., 2009) – CARE International is recommencing distributions today, after being forced to cancel scheduled deliveries of blankets and food yesterday due to the heavy bombing in Gaza City. The attacks severely damaged the UN compound and three hospitals – including two hospitals where CARE had recently delivered urgently needed medical supplies. The attacks also damaged or destroyed 15,000 blankets CARE was to deliver yesterday to needy families in UN shelters.

“Thousands of people will not be receiving blankets today because of yesterday’s attacks. The temperature dropped to 5 degrees (Celsius) last night, and people have no heat, no electricity,” said Martha Myers, CARE International’s Country Director for West Bank and Gaza.

CARE strongly condemns the bombing of the UN compound, hospitals and Palestinian Red Crescent Society buildings, and again calls for an immediate ceasefire and full humanitarian access to people in need.

“CARE has reached 160,000 people with food, blankets and medical supplies during this conflict, but it’s not nearly enough. How can we help all the people in need, when we can’t get enough supplies in, and the supplies that we have and distribute are destroyed in bomb attacks?” said Myers. “As the situation gets worse, Gazans need more assistance, not less.”

CARE staff distributed fresh vegetables in the southern part of the Gaza Strip to more than 1,300 families yesterday morning, but was forced to cancel afternoon distributions because of severe bombing in the heavily populated area of Gaza City where CARE’s supplies are stored.

CARE staff will distribute powdered milk for 600 young children at the North Gaza UNRWA Jabalia Refugee Camp schools today. Food and nutritional supplements are especially critical, as the Ministry of Health warns of rising numbers of malnourished children in Gaza.

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 refugees 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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