



UNRWA

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNRWA CONDEMNS RAFAH SCHOOL SHOOTING

Gaza –

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) condemns in the strongest possible terms the violation of the sanctity of one of its schools in Rafah on Tuesday 1 June by Israeli tank fire.

At around 16:00hrs a tank stationed on sand dunes several hundred metres from UNRWA's Al-Umariye Elementary Boys' School opened fire on the Tel Es-Sultan district of Rafah. The school stands on the main road into Tel Es-Sultan. Several shots hit the school building and one hit the window frame of a second-floor classroom.

The bullet, or shrapnel from the window, entered the classroom where it struck two ten year old boys. One was lightly injured in the head. The second, Mahmoud Nathmey Hamad was struck in the neck. After being rushed to hospital he received emergency surgery. His condition is still serious, but is now improving.

UNRWA will protest this incident in the strongest possible terms to the Israeli authorities.

Peter Hansen, UNRWA's Commissioner-General, said: "This is the second time in a little over a year that a child in a UN classroom has been struck by Israeli fire. Such indifference to the sanctity of schools and the UN flags flying above them violates all humanitarian norms and is absolutely deplorable. Israel's military must take steps to investigate this incident and, if necessary, bring to justice those responsible."

In March 2003 a then 12-year old pupil, Hoda Darwish, was hit in the head by a bullet fired from an Israeli observation post on the outskirts of Khan Younis. She was irreparably blinded by her injury.

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