



UNRWA

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Child Shot in UNRWA School Dies

At 09:15hrs this morning, Ghadeer Jaber Mokheimer, a grade five pupil at UNRWA's Co-Ed Elementary D School in Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip died of her injuries from a gunshot wound received while sitting at her desk in an UNRWA school. She had been hit in the stomach by a shot from an Israeli military position on the outskirts of Khan Younis camp. Ghadeer would have been ten years old on December 9.

The nine year old is the second young child in recent weeks to die after being shot while sitting at her desk in an UNRWA school.

Peter Hansen, UNRWA's Commissioner-General, expressed deeply felt sorrow at the news of this tragic death and said his thoughts are with her family.

He added: "That two young children have been shot and killed, sitting at their desks in UNRWA schools in the last month is horrific by anyone's standards. Schools should be havens of peace."

"Outside the schools, the pace of child deaths in Gaza has been accelerating terribly in recent weeks. The most basic of the rights of the child – to life – is now being violated almost every day."

UNRWA has repeatedly called on the Israeli military to stop firing at its schools. There have now been four such incidents in under two years, a sign of the Israeli army's indiscriminate and dangerous military tactics in civilian areas. UNRWA is concerned that parents are growing increasingly fearful about sending their children to school in Gaza because of the level of violence they experience on their journeys and once they arrive.

-Ends-

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Note to editors:

On September 7 this year, 10-year old Raghda Adnan Al-Assar was struck in the head by an Israeli bullet while sitting at her desk in UNRWA's Elementary C Girl's School in Khan Younis camp. She never regained consciousness and died on 22 September.

On June 1 this year, two ten-year old boys in UNRWA's Al-Umariye Elementary Boys' School in Rafah were hit by a bullet and ricochets from a Israeli tank stationed on the sand dunes opposite the school.

In March 2003, 12-year old Hoda Darwish was sitting at her desk when she was hit in the head by a bullet fired from an Israeli observation post on the outskirts of Khan Younis. The bullet struck her head and left her blind.