



Press release

JERUSALEM (January 7, 2009)

Brief Cease Fire Brings Little Relief to Families in Gaza

Save the Children continued to provide vulnerable communities in northern and southern Gaza with lifesaving food supplies today, working before and during a brief cease fire that brought little relief to families in need.

The agency delivered food parcels containing two-week supplies for households of up to ten people in Khan Younis, Middle Camp and Rafah in the south. In the north, 100 families in the Bedouin camp of Um Al Nasser received 100 food parcels.

Donkey carts were used to deliver food parcels in Um Al Nasser because truck drivers were afraid to venture to the area in their vehicles.

While a three-hour cease fire allowed families the opportunity to leave their homes, Save the Children staff in Gaza reported that few had the confidence to do so.

“A three-hour window for delivering aid to an extremely frightened population is an insufficient approach to providing humanitarian assistance,” said Annie Foster, Save the Children’s team leader for the Gaza emergency. “More than 15,000 people have been displaced from their homes. One million people — more than half of them children — lack both water and electricity. And after 12 days of conflict, families are faced with dwindling or little food and water, and few remedies to finding it.”

Even before the latest outbreak of violence, 50,000 Gazan children were malnourished; more than two-thirds of all children suffered from vitamin A deficiency and almost half of children under age 2 were anemic. Lack of access to food, clean water and medical supplies exacerbates threats to children’s health and well-being.

Despite the danger to staff and the people they are trying to reach, Save the Children has reached about 7,000 people, including more than 3,500 children, with food assistance since Sunday, January 4.

Save the Children is calling for a peaceful solution to the current crisis that endangers the lives of nearly every child in Gaza, and the lives of Israeli children in areas subject to attacks. Save the Children is calling for a cessation of hostilities by all parties including air and ground assaults from Israel and rocket attacks from Gaza. The agency is also seeking free access for humanitarian assistance to allow aid agencies to

provide much-needed relief to vulnerable children and so that children and their families can access essential services.

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