

## **The Church of Saint Porphyrius in Gaza City remains after missile fails to explode.**

Caritas Australia has received news from Gaza of an attack on a hall attached to The Church of Saint Porphyrius in Gaza City. A potentially devastating incident was narrowly averted when a missile failed to detonate upon impact. The missile penetrated the roof and struck a room before reaching a hall full of civilians seeking refuge, leaving three people injured.

Witnesses reported a shell falling from the ceiling, inciting panic and screams. A Caritas Jerusalem employee present during the incident, expressed profound relief saying, "Thank the Lord it did not detonate, otherwise we would have been left with nothing but remnants."

In a statement on the incident, Caritas Jerusalem expressed thanks to the Lord for protecting those seeking refuge in the church compound while reiterating that nowhere is safe in Gaza. Caritas Australia prays alongside them for an immediate ceasefire to protect civilian lives.

The church compound comprised three buildings, one of which was destroyed in October 2023 with a funeral later held to commemorate the [16](#) lives lost. The church itself, which is the oldest active church in the city and one of the oldest in the world, sustained some damage to an outer wall in the October attack but remains standing after both attacks.

In the north, Caritas Jerusalem has 25 staff working across one medical team, an emergency clinic, a psychosocial support team, and a humanitarian aid distribution team. In the south following the invasion of Rafah in May, partner services in the region were moved to Deir El Balah, Khan Younis and Nosrat camp, with 50 staff currently working across 11 medical teams.

In the first six months of this year 9,137 people received medical assistance from Caritas Jerusalem in the region, with 5,153 of these in the north, 3,157 in the south around Rafah, and the remainder around Al Nuseirat in the centre of the Gaza. A further 879 people in the West Bank have also received medical assistance.

The [Khan Younis medical points](#) in the south were evacuated earlier in July following airstrikes in the region. A week prior, those sheltering in [The Holy Family School](#) in the north were also evacuated following airstrikes that damaged the compound and injured civilians.

Caritas Australia's Gaza Appeal also supports CRS, who work to help families meet their basic needs for survival, including food, living supplies, shelter, and water, sanitation and hygiene. Over 600,000 people were helped by CRS programs in the first 6 months of the conflict with efforts ongoing.

At this stage of the conflict [90](#) percent of the population is displaced, with 96 percent facing crisis levels of hunger. Many are facing severe, emergency levels of hunger, including 17,000 pregnant women, with 11,000 people now experiencing famine. The healthcare system has crumbled with 70 percent of bed capacity lost, and just 15 out of 36 hospitals partially functioning.

To support Caritas Australia's Gaza Appeal, visit [www.caritas.org.au/gaza](http://www.caritas.org.au/gaza) or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

**ENDS**

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