

GHF Press Briefing
September 4, 2025
Transcript:

Chapin Fay, GHF Spokesman:

Good afternoon, I'm Chapin Fay, spokesperson for the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.

Several weeks ago, Tony Aguilar, a disgruntled former contractor who was fired for misconduct, went on a media tour filled with reckless false claims about GHF. He revealed sensitive operational details that endangered the lives of his former colleagues and most importantly, the aid seekers they serve.

But the most dangerous lie he told was the story he invented out of whole cloth about a boy he called Amir, who he claimed was gunned down by the IDF in front of his eyes outside a GHF site.

He said the boy kissed his hand and thanked him, and that these were his final words. As recently as yesterday, Mr. Aguilar has continued to embellish his story with every telling, recently saying Amir was shot in the torso, in the leg, and that he watched him die. Here's a clip.

Start of Clip

Tony Aguilar: "... and Amir was amongst them, a shot to the torso, a shot to the leg, dead. So for anyone that says that Amir is still alive and that didn't happen, where's Amir? Where is he? Where is he? Amir is dead, and he died at the hands of the IDF."

End of Clip

Fay: In late July, when Mr. Aguilar took his lies public, he splashed photos taken of the boy across global media, knowingly misrepresenting his interaction to create a false viral story. That publicity placed the child squarely in the crosshairs of Hamas, who have benefited greatly from Mr. Aguilar lies and the media amplifying them. If the boy was proven alive, it would unravel their propaganda, expose Mr. Aguilar's lies and discredit a narrative that Hamas has used to stoke outrage and violence. An alive, healthy boy doesn't serve Hamas. It directly threatens them.

What is true is that Mr. Aguilar had a brief interaction with the boy on May 28 at our SDS3 site, though Mr. Aguilar falsely claimed it was SDS2, which didn't even open until early June. Mr. Aguilar's only words to the boy were: "Go home. Go home. Okay. Thank you."

Let's watch the video Tony Aguilar recorded that day, and listen to Mr. Aguilar in his own words.

Start of Video

Aguilar: “This little young man here, obviously pretty young. He has food. Go home. Go home. Okay, thank you.”

End of Video

Fay: After that interaction, which lasted mere seconds and in which no meaningful dialog occurred, the boy returned to his stepmother's home unharmed, where he lived until July 28th—the same day Mr. Aguilar unleashed the boy's photo across the globe.

GHF has been searching for this boy ever since, and today, I have some incredible news to share. The boy is alive and safe. Falsely identified as Amir by Mr. Aguilar, his real name is Abdul Rahim Muhammad Hamden. His family calls him Abood. He is almost nine years old.

After weeks of tireless, high-risk work by the GHF team, he and his mother have been moved to a safe and secure location. We will not be disclosing their whereabouts at this time for their safety and security, but we have every belief that they are on their way to a new life.

This outcome is thanks to our extraordinary relationship with the people of Gaza, our humanitarian team and American veterans who relied on the deep trust built through GHF's daily aid delivery to find Abood and bring him to safety. They followed every lead, engaged in dozens of conversations with the community, and ultimately confirmed Abood's whereabouts through his stepmother, extended family and finally, his biological Mother. He was brought to our SDS in disguise for his safety. We verified his identity through a variety of means, including biometrics and the very shirt he wore the day Mr. Aguilar claimed he saw him killed. What followed was a high stakes multinational diplomatic effort. We are grateful to the US Embassy in Jerusalem and to other countries in the region for their close coordination with GHF to make this rescue possible. I'd now like to share with you a brief clip of Abood's mother speaking with our team.

Start of Clip

Dialogue with Abood and his mother.

End of Clip

Fay: I'd now like to introduce a leader on our humanitarian aid team. For her safety, we will not share her name, face or any identifying details, other than to note that prior to joining our team, she worked as a USAID contractor. The threats our teams face come not only from Hamas, but from a hostile media climate determined to discredit anyone associated with GHF. Recently, after Sean, one of our humanitarian experts, spoke at this very briefing, he was stalked and harassed. Protesters targeted him. Reporters dug through his background not to verify facts, but to smear his reputation. That is the reality our team lives with. This experienced humanitarian woman is in the left picture. Please go ahead and share more about your interaction with Abood.

GHF Leader: Hi, Chapin, thank you. After weeks of searching, turning over every stone and following every lead, I am relieved and grateful that Abood is happy and safe with his mother. It's hard to capture Abood in just a few words. He is a child full of life, overflowing with joy, curiosity and laughter. Though he has faced more pain than any child should, Abood continues to shine. He has left a mark on all of us he's met here at GHF, and we won't soon forget him. He's a living, breathing reminder of why we do this work, not just to distribute aid, but to defend the dignity, safety and futures of children like Abood.

Fay: Thank you for your service to this mission.

This story ends in relief, but it nearly ended in tragedy because of one man's lies and a media ecosystem that was far too eager to amplify them. Imagine the kind of person who would endanger a child's life for 15 minutes of fame. That's what Tony Aguilar did, and the outlets, influencers and individuals that gave him a platform, even after GHF and several journalists interested in the truth provided clear, contradicting facts, share in that responsibility.

I'd like to spend a few minutes sharing more about how we found Abood and secured his safety. As soon as Mr. Aguilar's claims aired, GHF launched a search. GHF's leadership from the very top was clear that we needed to do whatever we could to try and locate the boy and bring him to safety. So how do we do that?

Because so many people rely on our sites every day, our team has built deep relationships within the community based on trust and mutual respect. That trust allowed us to quietly begin showing Abood's photo to regular recipients and ask if anyone knew him or his family.

One conversation led to another, and eventually we reached Abood's extended family. Our team, some of whom have backgrounds in hostage rescue, led a careful step by step process to safely find Abood. We interviewed relatives, building a fuller picture of the family structure and Abood's whereabouts. We traced the steps from the day of the alleged incident to the day he ran away from his stepmother's home on July 28th to be with his biological mother. After further discussions, Abood's biological mother agreed to bring him to us in disguise.

All the while, our team monitored Mr. Aguilar's media appearances, which, over time, were becoming more radical. We assessed Hamas's likely response. The risk was escalating quickly, and so we took action. Abood and his mother were evacuated to a secure location.

We have known Abood was alive for weeks now. We could have exposed it sooner to protect our own reputation and discredit Mr. Aguilar, but safety came first. That decision guided our investigation, planning and international coordination, and we succeeded. He is alive. He is safe.

Today we celebrate this outcome, but we don't forget the cost. This child is alive because of quiet, determined work by people who choose service over spotlight and truth over theatrics. But make no mistake, this boy's life was put in danger by one man's reckless lies and a media ecosystem that failed its most basic test.

From day one, there were verifiable facts that were ignored– the wrong location Aguilar cited, the circumstances of his termination, the counter testimony from his colleagues, and his erratic behavior. None of it stopped the headlines.

Tony Aguilar's 15 minutes are up. He should be held accountable. So should the platforms that handed him a megaphone, the media outlets that ran his false claims without a shred of verification, and the public officials who echoed them without asking a single question. Every single one of them owes Abood, and the public, a retraction. And one final question for those who believed and repeated this lie– if you were so easily convinced by this story, one so completely false, what else have you believed about GHF that simply isn't true? We'll leave you with that.

As for us, today, we're celebrating Abood's safety and preparing for tomorrow's aid delivery.

We do have time to take a few questions. If you want to put them into the Q and A function via Zoom, we'll start going through them, and we'll have time for a few.

Q: Where is he going?

Fay: Sorta answered that already. Abood and his mother are in a safe, secure and undisclosed location for their safety. We're not going to be commenting further on their exact whereabouts or the location where they'll begin their new life.

Q: Did the IDF shoot him?

Fay: No. Those allegations by Mr. Aguilar were entirely fabricated. Abood himself confirms that he was never harmed by GHF or Israeli forces.

Q: Who is Tony Aguilar?

Fay: Well, Tony Aguilar is a disgruntled former employee who was briefly employed by UG Solutions before being terminated for cause after being reassigned multiple times because he couldn't hack the job. He was terminated for poor performance, volatile conflicts with staff and erratic behavior. He then begged for his job back, describing how important and good the mission is. He then officially applied for his job back. Then, he began threatening his former colleagues and supervisors in text messages saying he could be their best friend or worst enemy. He then made good on those threats, and now we're here. Almost everything he said has been proven false. You can go to our website and you can see affidavits from at least a half a dozen of his former colleagues refuting almost everything he says. His former colleagues, by the way, who are still out there every single day, risking their lives along with local Palestinian workers and our humanitarian team to feed the people of Gaza. This is the last time we will be addressing Tony Aguilar, the proven liar.

Q: Can we have copies of the videos?

Fay: Absolutely, I believe we're going to post this on X right after this, if it's not already there, we will also be sending out this and all the relevant information via our email distribution list. If you're not on it, you can sign up on our website@ghf.org. And that's it for today. As always, for any follow ups, please email media@ghf.org. Thanks, everybody.

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