

# Kidney from Jew killed in mob violence goes to Arab woman

By Hadas Gold and Michael Schwartz, CNN  
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**Jerusalem (CNN)**Randa Aweis, 58, waited nine years for the organ donation that would change her life.

An Arab Christian, born in the Old City of Jerusalem, she was relying on regular dialysis sessions as her kidneys failed.

Then the call came: A donor kidney was available. Aweis had surgery Monday at Jerusalem's famed Hadassah University Hospital Ein Kerem.

When she went under the anaesthetic, she did not know who the donor was.

Only afterwards did she find out that it was Yigal Yehoshua, a Jewish Israeli man who died in the wave of violence between Jews and Arabs in the Israeli town of Lod.

"I said, 'What? How can that be? How did I get the kidney?'" Aweis told CNN from her hospital bed. "They told me I got a present. It is a kidney that was a present from Yigal. I said, 'Good.' I was moved. In a war a Jew gave a kidney to an Arab."



Randa Aweis received a kidney this week after waiting for nine years for a donor.

Yehoshua, 56, was critically injured on May 11 after being attacked by a group of young Arab Israeli men in Lod.

He fought for his life for nearly a week before dying on Monday and being buried on Tuesday.

For many here, the explosion of violence between Israeli Arabs and Jews who had lived in mixed communities for years was one of the most shocking results of the conflict between Israel and Palestinian militants.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the attacks as "unacceptable," saying in a statement: "Nothing justifies the lynching of Jews by Arabs and nothing justifies the lynching of Arabs by Jews."

Yehoshua's brother Efi, spoke at his funeral, saying his brother "believed in coexistence."

"You said to me it would not happen. You believed if you put your head out everything will be fine: 'They know Yigal.' And the worst thing happened," he said.

He kept vigil at his brother's hospital bed for six days.

"I waited for you to wake up. Day after day. A finger, an arm, a leg, a word. You never did anything wrong. You paid with your life. You have given life to others. You will be blessed," Efi Yehoshua said.



Mourners attend the funeral of Yigal Yehoshua on Tuesday.

### **Calls for peaceful coexistence**

Aweis, who received Yehoshua's kidney, now wrestles with the same questions Efi faced at the funeral.

"The poor man, what did he do?" she asked from her hospital bed after surgery. "What did he do to them? Why did they kill him? What is his wife going to do with his kids?"

Aweis said she grew up in a mixed Arab-Jewish community in Jerusalem herself.

"There was no racism. Not from the Jews, not from the Arabs," she said. "I grew up with the Jews. Our kids grew up with Jews."

Her surgeon, Dr. Abed Khalaeileh -- a Palestinian born in Jerusalem -- said he and his colleagues simply treat everyone as human beings.

"We deal with everyone equally. There is no black and no white. Everyone is equal in the medical attention they receive," he said.



Dr. Abed Khalaeileh, the surgeon who operated on Aweis.

In his line of work, as head of Hadassah Ein Kerem's transplant unit, the sorrow of death brings new life

"The world of transplant is the world of humanity and it is important to remember this," he said. "People are born anew."

He is inspired, he said, by the spirit of Yehoshua's family.

"I turn to the family and feel part of their pain and say thank you for everything you have done. It cannot be taken for granted that a person will stand up and donate an organ during this time," he said.

Aweis hopes to be able to try and help ease some of the family's pain.

She said she has already spoken to Yehoshua's family, but that one of her first visits when she gets out of the hospital will be to Yehoshua's family to thank them and give them strength.

"I will tell Yigal's family thank you. They should not feel any more suffering. Yigal is going to heaven where it is better than here," she said.

And she has a message for the Jews and Arabs of the region: "We should live together. We should have peace. We should be happy."

*CNN's Richard Allen Greene in Jerusalem contributed to this report.*