

Rony Jabour and Family Face Tsunami Panic in Hawaii: 'It Felt Like the End of the World'

Boston safety expert Rony Jabour recounts the moment his family faced a tsunami emergency while vacationing in Hawaii with their children.

HONOLULU, HI, UNITED STATES, July 31, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A tropical vacation turned into a moment of panic, responsibility, and reflection for Rony Jabour — an Outreach OSHA Disaster Site Worker trainer in the U.S. — who faced a tsunami alert in Hawaii with his wife and children.

What was meant to be a relaxing family getaway became an intense, emotional ordeal for Boston resident Rony Jabour, his wife Caroline, and their two sons, Isaac and Davi, during their vacation in Hawaii.

On the afternoon of July 29, while enjoying the water at Kō Olina beach on the island of Oʻahu, the family suddenly found themselves in the middle of a real tsunami emergency — triggered by an 8.8-magnitude earthquake near Russia.

"At first we thought it was just a routine warning," Caroline said. "But when we saw the lifeguards moving, the alarms getting louder, and the ocean visibly pulling back, we knew it was serious."

2.5 hours of fear, chaos, and no answers

Their drive back to their hotel in Waikīkī — normally under an hour — turned into two and a half hours of tension and confusion. Police had blocked key roads, stores were shut down, and streets were eerily empty. "People were running and screaming. The city looked like a scene from a disaster movie," Rony recalled.

When they finally reached the hotel, another problem: they were told they couldn't park because



Rony Jabour celebrates his Excellence in Education Award at the Education 2.0 Conference in Dubai, joined by his wife, symbolizing the unwavering support behind his global impact in workplace safety and education.

the garage was underground and at risk. “The lobby was completely empty. Lights dimmed. No music. No people. Just silence and dread,” he said.

Then came the moment that would haunt any parent. His son asked, “Daddy, are we going to die?”

“I teach people how to prepare for moments like this,” Rony said. “But when it’s your own family, your own children asking that question... nothing prepares you emotionally.”

A safety trainer caught in the very disaster he trains for
Rony Jabour is not a regular tourist. He is an Outreach OSHA Disaster Site Worker trainer in the United States — a nationally recognized safety instructor who trains others to deal with large-scale emergencies, disaster zones, and post-catastrophe response under OSHA protocols.

In that moment of chaos, he said, his mind was pulled in two directions: “How do I protect my family — and how do I help others?”

Once the family was safely in their hotel room, he began doing what he was trained to do: analyzing the environment, checking structural conditions, observing escape routes, and mentally preparing for what actions to take if the situation escalated.

“It was a flood of emotion and responsibility. You want to stay calm, you want to lead, but you’re also just a dad holding his children. It’s humbling and terrifying.”

After the wave — gratitude, reflection, and next steps
The tsunami waves did reach parts of Hawaii, including Maui and the Big Island, but spared most



of Waikīkī. Officials later confirmed the area was within a safe zone. Still, the emotional impact was profound.

“The sea hasn’t felt the same since,” Caroline said. “It’s not just the water — it’s what it represents. The power of nature. The fragility of life.”

The Jabour family chose to continue their trip, now with a renewed sense of awareness and a deeper respect for the unpredictable forces around us.

“We lived through what I’ve spent years teaching others to prepare for,” Rony said.

“And I can say with certainty: no matter how much you train, it’s different when it’s your family on the line. But the training helps. It gave me clarity in the middle of chaos.”

Rony now plans to use this experience to expand public training initiatives and raise awareness about real-life disaster readiness.

Rony Jabour is a Brazilian-born safety expert based in Boston, known for his leadership in occupational safety and emergency training across the U.S.

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