

Rony Jabour, a Safety Leader, Survives Tsunami Chaos While Vacationing in Hawaii With His Wife and Children

Rony Jabour, OSHA trainer, faces real tsunami in Hawaii — and turns fear into renewed mission for public safety and disaster preparedness.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- What began as a dream vacation in paradise turned into a moment of real-world chaos for Rony Jabour, one of the United States' most respected voices in occupational safety and disaster response. While vacationing in Hawaii with his wife Caroline and their two young sons, Jabour experienced firsthand what he has spent decades preparing others for: a tsunami emergency.

Just two days into their stay on the island of Oahu, the Jabour family was enjoying the serene coastline of Kō Olina when the atmosphere suddenly shifted. Sirens pierced the air. Lifeguards began clearing the beaches. Locals grew quiet. The ocean itself appeared to hesitate.

"We knew something was wrong when the water started pulling back unnaturally," said Jabour. "In training, that's a textbook red flag. In real life, it's terrifying."

A Race Against Uncertainty

The family immediately left the beach, facing a slow and stressful drive back toward their hotel in Waikīkī. What would normally take 45 minutes stretched to over two and a half hours as roads were closed and traffic was rerouted. Honolulu was no longer a tourist hub — it was a city in suspense.

"Shops were shut. Streets were empty. The police had blocked off entire areas. It was surreal. Even parking was no longer safe — the underground garage at our hotel had been closed due to flooding risk," Jabour recalls.



From Brazil to Boston to Dubai — Rony Jabour shares his global mission: to train, protect, and inspire those who build the world.

Arriving at their hotel, they found the lobby nearly deserted, staff issuing instructions in multiple languages, and guests rushing toward elevators. "It was the most silent panic I've ever seen," he said.

From Trainer to Witness

Jabour, who holds a master's degree in Risk Management from the University of Texas and advanced certification from Harvard University in Management and Leadership for EHS Professionals, is an Outreach OSHA Disaster Site Worker Trainer — one of the few in the U.S. with the responsibility to teach professionals how to act under pressure during large-scale emergencies.

But this time, he wasn't teaching. He was living it.

"Everything I've taught — about awareness, exit strategy, response timing — was racing through my head. But there's a difference when your own kids are looking at you and asking, 'Are we safe?'"

Gratitude and New Perspective

Fortunately, the tsunami warning was later downgraded. No major flooding reached their location, and the family was safe. Still, the psychological impact lingered.

"It reminded me that preparation isn't just about policies. It's about presence of mind when seconds count. And it's about making sure the people around you — strangers, tourists, workers — know what to do when the unexpected comes."

What Comes Next

Jabour plans to share this experience in his safety trainings across the U.S., using it as a humanizing example of how even the most prepared can be humbled by nature — and how much more vulnerable the untrained truly are.

"We lived through something powerful, and we were lucky. But not everyone will be, unless we continue to raise awareness and bring real training to real people."

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