

Mushtaha & Hassouna Factory

By Yasmeen El-Khoudary

The Arab Contracting & Concrete Industry Company (ACCI) is owned by Mushtaha & Hassouna Co. LTD. Established in 1993 by Safwat Mushtaha and Rafiq Hassouna, the ACCI, a leading local contracting company, hosted the only concrete factory in the Gaza Strip. Back then, Mushtaha and Hassouna decided to relocate the factory from the industrial zone in Beit Hanoun to the Eastern Road district in Gaza, thinking it would be safer.

In 2005, the company built a new factory that soon became the biggest producer of interlock tiles in Gaza, with a production capacity of 2,000 m²/day compared to the 300–600 m²/day produced by other factories. The concrete factory, with two production lines, produced 266 m³/hour.

During the first war on Gaza in 2008, both factories were destroyed by the Israelis,



Before



After



Alnaji, 18, male-Fareed Abdelkader Abdelmalik Habib, 28, male-Abdallah Nabil Abdelkader Albatesh, 21, male-Sherif Jalal Hassan Alqarsheli, 27, male-Mohamed Aarafat Saleh Khalil Alghemari, 33, male-Abdelrazeq Shaaban Abed Omar, 27, male-Salem Khalil Salem Shemali, 22, male-Mohamed Husni Saeed Alsaqqa, 20, male-Ismaeel Abdelkader Abdelaziz Alkajk, 54, male-Mohamed Saeed Shaaban Baba, 40, male-Aazmi Khalid Yousef Badwan, 16, male-Arjad Nahed Ali Alserfy, 22, male-Adham Majed Yousef Dahir, 18, male-Aamer Yehya Ali Abualeitaa, 21, male-Khalid Yousef Mohamed Bedwan, 47, male-Mohamed Mahmoud Rajeb Hijaj, 32, male-Mohamed Mahmoud Saeed Abualeitaa, 28, male-Hamza Hassan Mahmoud Heles, 25, male-Ahmed Musa Ahmed Ahel, 75, male-Salman Mohamed Ahmed Semaina, 30, male-Mohamed Hussein Hassan Almasri, male-Mahmoud Hussam Mohamed Mansour, 22, male-Massaab Mustafa Rajeb Ali, 24, male-Moumen Mustafa Mahmoud Eikasha, 20, male-Eiyas Ahmed Mohamed Abuouada, 28, male-Nidal Khalid Mohamed Khalil, 20, male-Nader Majdi Abdelrahman Qassem, 30, male-Ahmed Shawqi Mohamed Abusaada, 37, male-Fadi Mahmoud Saad Almasri, 22, male-Eman Sulaiman Ibrahim Alghandour, female-Jihad Naji Ahmed Abuamer, 22, male-Eiyad Yousef Ibrahim Alsady, 34, male-Sulaiman Zaky Abdelmawla Aldardeesy, 27, male-Rabah Rashed Muslim Feyad, 40, male-Salem Mustafa Zaky Alhadyahdy, 18, male-Wassim Naser Abdo Sharab, 22, male-Jihad Mahmoud Hamid Alhelou, 59, male-Siham Eitaa Saleem Alhelou, 57, female-Mohamed Jihad Mahmoud Alhelou, 29, male-Ahmed Jihad Mahmoud Alhelou, 27, male-Tahrir Jihad Mahmoud Alhelou, 20, female-Najya Jihad Mahmoud Alhelou, 15, female-Hedaya Talal Mahmoud Alhelou, 25, female-Myram Ahmed Jihad Alhelou, 2, female-Karam Ahmed Jihad Alhelou, 1, male-Abdelkareem Ahmed Jihad Alhelou, 1, male-Salman Hamid Salman Alaamour, 32, male-Rafaat Nabil Ramadan Ouwaida, 27, male-Ashraf Qassem Mansour Wafi, 25, male-Bahaa Rabeey Tawfeeq Ouwaida, 36, male-Ahmed Barham Elyan Abudeqqa, 34, male-Teyseer Mohamed Aiesh Alnajjar, 39, male-Mohamed Ibrahim Hamdan Abutaeima, 25, male-Ra'id Khalil Hamdan Abu Tahima, 34, Male-Mamduh Malahi Suleiman Abu Naja, 24, Male-Ayman Akram Ismael al-Ghaban, 23, Male-Hamza Fawzi Suleiman Qadeeh, 24, Male-Ibrahim Abd al-Rahman Abdullah Ismahana, 18, Male-Mohamed Abdulla Hussein al-Juajri, 28, Male-Tamar Talal Abd al-Karim Nasser, 25, Male-Tahar Ismael Abd al-Rahman Nasser, 19, Male-Du'a Sami Ibrahim Sahada, 11, Male-Naheem Abd al-Aziz Ahmed Abu Zaher, 39, Male-Hazem Faiz Salah Abu Shamala, 32, Male-Nader Mohamed Fawzi Halawa, 33, Male-Baha Ahmed Abu Saeed, 27, Male-Ahmed Sahad al-Din Abu Saweerh, 27, Male-Mohamed Jamal Abd al-Rahman Haroun, 29, Male-Khaled Abd al-Satar Mohamed Abu Sahnoum, 20, Male-Yussef Abd Shahada al-Masry, Male, 24-Ibrahim Khaleel Ibrahim



just like many other establishments that were unaffiliated to any political party or militant group. Hatem Hassouna, the company's project manager, explains that the company rebuilt the two factories within six months after the war. In 2012, during the second war, the factories sustained minor damages, and the owners decided to increase the production capacity by adding new lines for both factories during the same year. With that, the factory employed a total of 230 full-time employees and workers, who had no other source of income.

From 2012 until this summer, the concrete factory produced concrete exclusively for UN and Qatari projects, under the constant heavy surveillance of several parties. Not a single bag of concrete was sold to any other buyer. With a special coordination to import the raw materials from Israel, they could only import enough material to meet the demands of their specific projects.

Then came July 25, 2014. The two factories were, once again, obliterated by the Israelis. Hatem describes the scene: the army used the factory as a base for their operations in the area. Once they were done, they used everything in their weaponry to destroy it: F16 bombs to destroy the factories' buildings and warehouses and everything inside, tank shelling to make sure nothing was left untouched, gun

machines to shoot open the bags and allow everything to spill out, and bulldozers to turn every single thing into microscopic pebbles.

Why? They know our products aren't used in building tunnels – they oversee everything we sell! Tiles? When was the last time you saw pictures of a tunnel that was tiled? Our factory is one of about 78 construction-material factories that were destroyed during this war. If you bring all the money in the world, how are we going to rebuild Gaza without the material to do it? How are we going to repair what is left of Gaza's economy, with a total of 236 factories left in total destruction?

Regardless, Hatem did not leave me on a pessimistic note. He courageously noted that in 2008, when the two factories were first destroyed, they rebuilt them in six months and increased their production capacity. "The destruction did not make us surrender or give up on working in Gaza," he adds. "On the contrary, it made us much stronger and more determined. We will rebuild our factories again, and will triple and quadruple our production capacity. They destroy, and we rebuild."

Yasmeen El-Khoudary works towards the preservation of the cultural heritage and history of Gaza. Visit her blog at yelkhoudary.blogspot.com.