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This issue was made possible through the generosity of
Bank of Palestine and Mr. Jawdat El-Khoudary

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turbo-design

Gaza...

The name itself implies numerous meanings and interpretations these days. If you remove the dot from the Arabic “G” or “غ” – a dot that could symbolise the universe itself and all that it encompasses – it becomes ‘izza or pride in Arabic!

I remember the first time I visited Gaza in 1995. My most vivid memory is of the beautiful sandy beach that felt smooth beneath my feet. I cannot even imagine the nightmare that it has been turned into by the monstrous Israeli army.

At *This Week in Palestine*, we felt a pressing need to document and communicate testimonies and stories from Gaza. We wanted to go deeper than what the mass media was willing to offer. A more thorough look at Gaza: the past, the present, and the future.

We also wanted to offer fresh and well-documented accounts and thoughts on the on-going onslaught and closure of the Strip. A closed prison, like no other in the world, which continues to be the ever-bleeding heart of the Palestinian experience and another major milestone on the journey for survival. The cry for justice is becoming a huge debt that weighs heavily on the world’s conscience, and it will explode one day in the faces of all those who ignored it. The sparks are already evident throughout the region.

Every page of this issue is marked with a reminder of those who have left us to suffer their loss. Their souls are finally enjoying the freedom that many of them had never experienced during their lifetimes. They will all remain in our hearts and minds ... waiting ... for justice.

Ahmad Damen
Content Editor

Situation Overview

United Nations Office for the Coordination
of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)



Ahmed Nael Nizar Mahdi, 16, male-Amjad Jumaa Saeed Shaban, 30, male-Mohamed Saeed Ahmed Shaban, 24, male-Khader Hussein Ibrahim Al Bashliqi, 45, male-Ahmed Musa Khalf Habib, 16, male-Mohamed Ahed Mohamed Habib, 22, male-Ibrahim Dawoud Abdelfatah Al Belawy, 24, male-Abdelrahman Jamal Ismaeel Al Zarnley, 22, male-Ibrahim Ahmed Mahmoud Abdeen, 39, male-Jumaa Aatia Jumaa Shloof, 26, male-Khalid Abdelhadi Mahmoud Abu Mur, 21, male-Mustafa Abdelhadi Mahmoud Abu Mur, 21, male-Abdelhadi Jumaa Mohamed Al Soufi, 24, male-Ibrahim Mohamed Hamd, 35, male-Fauzia Khalil Hamd, 63, female-Mohamed Ibrahim Fayeq Al Masri, 14, male-Sahar Hassan Ali Al Masri, 39, female-Hafid Mohamed Ahmed Hamd, 38, male-Mahdi Mohamed Ahmed Hamd, 50, male-Dina Mahdi Mohamed Hamd, 16, female-Sahaa Hamd Ahmed Hamd, 25, female-Mohamed Khalid Mohamed Al Nimra, 22, male-Mohamed Iyad Salem Arif, 13, male-Hatim Mohamed Saeed Abusalem, 26, male-Mohamed Fajr Mustafa Jamal Malka, 2, male-Hanaa Mohamed Fouad Yousef Malka, 27, female-Marwan Hassan Mohamed Asleem, 27, male-Mazin Faraj Mohamed Al Jarba, 28, male-Naifa Mohamed Tahir Farj Allah, 80, female-Khalid Abdelnasir Saleem Abu Queik, 30, male-Abdelnasir Saleem Faris Abu Queik, 56, male-Rashed Aldin Abdelrahman Hussein Yaseen, 28, male-Seraj Iyad Ali Abdeladel, 7, male-Qassem Jabr Edwan Awda, 11, male-Mohamed Ayman Aashrou, 15, male-Riyad Mohamed Kware, 50, male-Baker Mohamed Jouda, 22, male-Ammar Mohamed Jouda, 26, male-Hussein Yousef Kware, 13, male-Mohamed Ali Farj Kware, 15, male-Fakher Aaref Mohamed Alajouri, 22, male-Bassem Salem Kware, 10, male-Rafic Alkefarena, 30, male-Mohamed Khalf Awad Al Nawasra, 2, male-Nithal Khalf Al Nawasra, 4, male-Salah Awad Al Nawasra, 23, male-Aaisha Shabib Mahmoud Nagem, 23, female-Amal Yousef Abdelghafour, 27, female-Raneem Joudat Abdelkarim Abdelghafour, 2, female-Aseel Ibrahim Fayeq Al Masri, 16, female-Hani Saleh Hamd, 57, male-Saleema Hassan Muslem Alarjaa, 60, female-Mariam Atia Mohamed Alarjaa, 11, female-Hamid Abdallah Mohamed Shahab, 37, male-Ibrahim Khalil Ismaeel Qounon, 24, male-Mohamed Khalil Ismaeel Qounon, 26, male-Sulaiman Salim Musa Alastal, 55, male-Hamdi Badie Kamel Souwaili, 33, male-Mohamed Alkader, 24, male-Ibrahim Badie Kamel Souwaili, 28, male-Raaed Mohamed Rayeq Abushait, 37, male-Asmaa Mahmoud Hamid Alhaji, 22, female-Tareq Mahmoud Loutfi Alhaji, 18, male-Saad Mahmoud Loutfi Alhaji, 17, male-Najjaa Mahmoud Loutfi Alhaji, 29, female-Omar Mahmoud Loutfi Alhaji, 20, male-Basma Abdelkader Mohamed Alhaji, 57, female-Ahmed Saleem Musa Alastal, 18, male-Musa Mohamed Tahir Alastal, 15, male-Raaed Aalian Musa Alzouara, 33, male-Mahmoud Loutfi Mahmoud Alhaji, 58, male-Bahaa Abuallayl, 35, male-Salem Qandee, 27, male-Aamer Alfahyoumi, 30, male-Ismaeel Hassan Eid Abujaame, 17, male-Abdalla



August 4, 2014

Although the Israeli military presence has been scaled back in Gaza, hostilities continued for the 27th successive day, resulting in mounting casualties, the continuing destruction of infrastructure, and a rise in internally displaced persons (IDPs). This is adding to the unfolding humanitarian disaster about which senior UN officials warned yesterday, particularly in the health sector. Gaza's medical services and facilities are nearing collapse, with hospitals and clinics overwhelmed. Critical supplies of medicines and disposables are almost depleted, and the destruction of power supplies has left hospitals dependent on unreliable back-up generators. The status of hospitals and medical facilities as protected objects under international law continues to be violated with more attacks reported since the last situation update (see Infrastructure section below).

Gaza's sole power plant remains shut down after being shelled on July 29. Repairs may take months to complete, exacerbating the electricity crisis. This affects private households, companies, and public services provision, including water, sanitation, and health facilities. Access to food is also increasingly affected: bakeries cannot meet the additional demand for bread, triggered by the lack of electricity in households, while the inaccessibility of agricultural lands has resulted in fewer fresh crops and a significant increase in prices for some vegetables. There are also reports of fishermen jeopardising their lives by going 50 metres out to sea to feed their families.

Children continue to bear the brunt of the crisis. The number of children killed stands at 373 with at least 2,744 injured. A minimum of 373,000 children require direct and specialised psychosocial support based on the number of families who have experienced death, injury, or loss of home since the beginning of the emergency. Children are showing symptoms of distress and cling to parents, who might also suffer from sleeping and eating disorders, nightmares, nervousness, and feelings of depression, guilt, anger, and helplessness. These conditions worsen with the realisation that there is no guaranteed safe space in Gaza, including UNRWA

schools, as underlined again by the attack this morning in Rafah. On six occasions since the start of the conflict, UNRWA schools sheltering the displaced have been subject to shelling.

I watched the missile falling on my home. My home burned. It burned all my toys, my clothes, and my room. I don't think I'll survive. A nine-year-old girl from Rafah to an UNRWA counsellor.

Hostilities and casualties

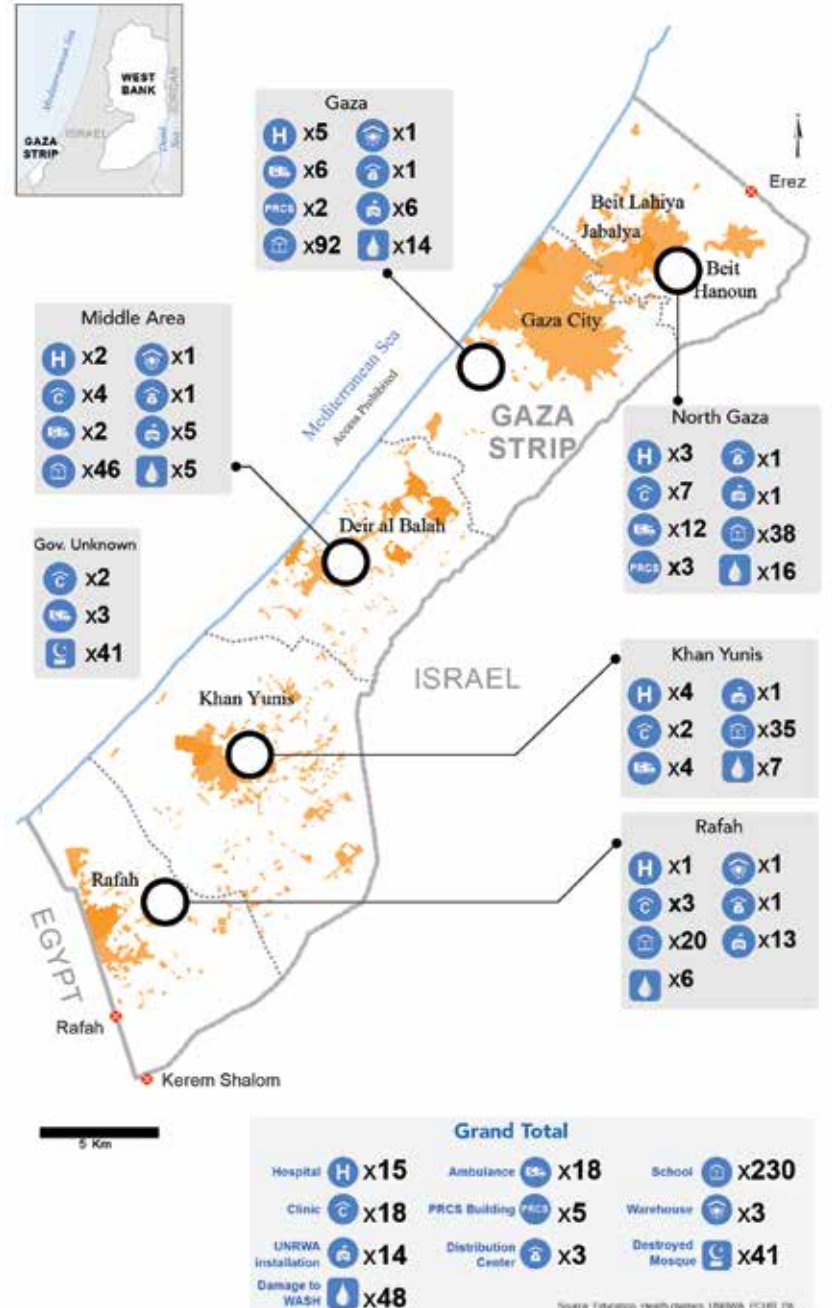
The Rafah area in southern Gaza continues to be the main focus of hostilities, with the Israeli military still present in the area. Rescue workers report recovering over 70 bodies from the area today, but parts of Rafah are still inaccessible because of on-going hostilities. A strike on an UNRWA school in Rafah today, which killed at least nine people, is the seventh incident in which an UNRWA shelter has been hit. The UN Secretary-General, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and the UNRWA Commissioner General have issued separate statements condemning this incident and calling for an independent investigation. Since the last situation update, at least 192 persons have reportedly been killed, though the status of many still needs to be verified. This brings the cumulative death toll among Palestinians to at least 1,717, according to preliminary data collected by the Protection Cluster from various sources, which includes 343 persons (20 percent), who could not be identified or their status established. Of the fatalities whose identity and status could be verified (1,374), nearly 85 percent (1,176 people) are believed to be civilians, including 377 children (27 percent) and 196 women (14 percent), and 14 percent (198) members of armed groups. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, 9,078 Palestinians, including 2,744 children, had been injured as of 20:00 on August 2.

The Secretary-General is profoundly dismayed over the appalling escalation of violence and loss of hundreds of Palestinian civilian lives since the breach of the humanitarian ceasefire on August 1. The resurgence in fighting has only exacerbated the man-made humanitarian and health crisis, wreaking havoc in Gaza. Restoring calm can be achieved through resumption of the ceasefire and negotiations by the parties in Cairo to address the underlying issues. Statement attributable to the spokesperson for the Secretary-General on the attack outside an UNRWA shelter, August 3.

The following are among the most serious incidents recorded during the reporting period.

- August 2, 14:30; the Israeli air force fired at least one missile, destroying the three-storey house, home to five families, of Yousef Dawoud Abu Madi, 68, in Nuseirat Refugee Camp. Six family members were killed, including the owner,

Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza emergency Damaged Structures (as of 12 of August 2014)



Residential Structures
It is estimated that 16,735 families, consisting of approximately 100,410 individuals, have no home to return to as they were totally destroyed or heavily damaged. These families are in need of emergency NFI kits and will require longer-term support until repairs/reconstruction can take place.
5,635 families (33,800 individuals), whose homes were damaged but are still inhabitable, and another 33,485 families (an estimated 200,900 individuals), whose homes sustained minor damage, need basic NFI assistance such as nylon and plastic sheets.



Photo by Shareef Sarhan.

his son, and four children. Another 10 people were injured, including three children and four women.

- August 2, 15:00; the Israeli air force bombed the house of Mohammed Ayyad Abu Taha, which is located in Al Shabura Refugee Camp in Rafah. The house was destroyed and four of its residents were killed, including two children and one woman. Another three members of the family were injured.
- August 3, 01:45; the Israeli air force bombed the house of Ahmed Sweelim Al Roumi, 53, which is located in the Al Hashsh neighborhood in Rafah. The house was destroyed and three of the owner's sons and a daughter – all children – were killed. His wife and two other sons were injured.
- August 3, 06:40; an Israeli aerial attack on the house of Al Ghoul family in Rafah resulted in the killing of eight family members, including two women, three children (1 month, three years, and 13 years old) and injury to seven others.

Since the launch of the Israeli military operation, hundreds of homes have reportedly been directly targeted by Israeli airstrikes, and it is estimated that at least 945 houses have been totally destroyed or severely damaged in this manner, causing civilian casualties, including multiple members of the same families. As of July 30, at least 76 families had lost three or more family members in the same incident, for a total of 407 fatalities. Such cases raise concerns about the targeting of civilians and civilian objects and the launching of indiscriminate attacks. Indiscriminate firing by Palestinian armed groups in Gaza into southern and central Israel continued, with most falling in open areas or intercepted by the Iron Dome system, resulting in no additional fatalities. Since July 8, three civilians in Israel have been killed, including one foreign national, and dozens directly injured by rockets or shrapnel. The number of Israeli military fatalities is now 64, as the soldier who Israeli authorities believed to have been captured on August 1 has officially been declared dead.

Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza Crisis

Shelters and Internally Displaced People (as of 14 of August 2014)



348,767 displaced people hosted in UNRWA schools and registered in government schools, informal shelters, or with host families

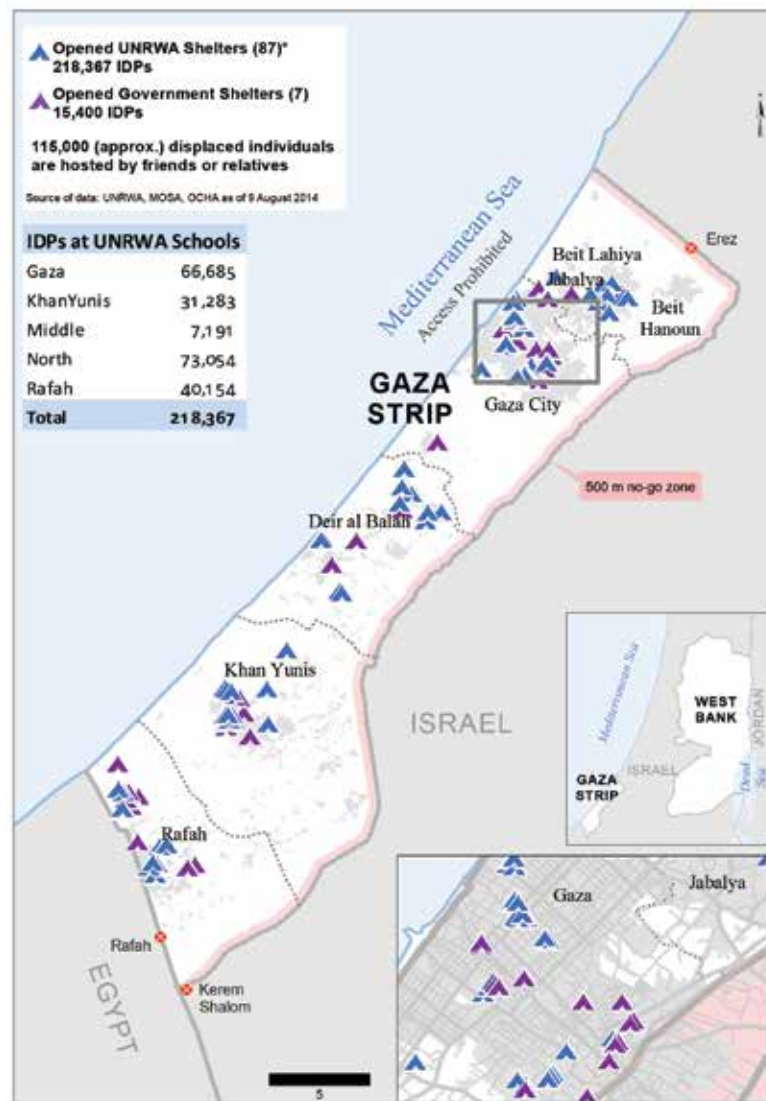




Photo by Eduardo Soteras Jalil.

Displacement

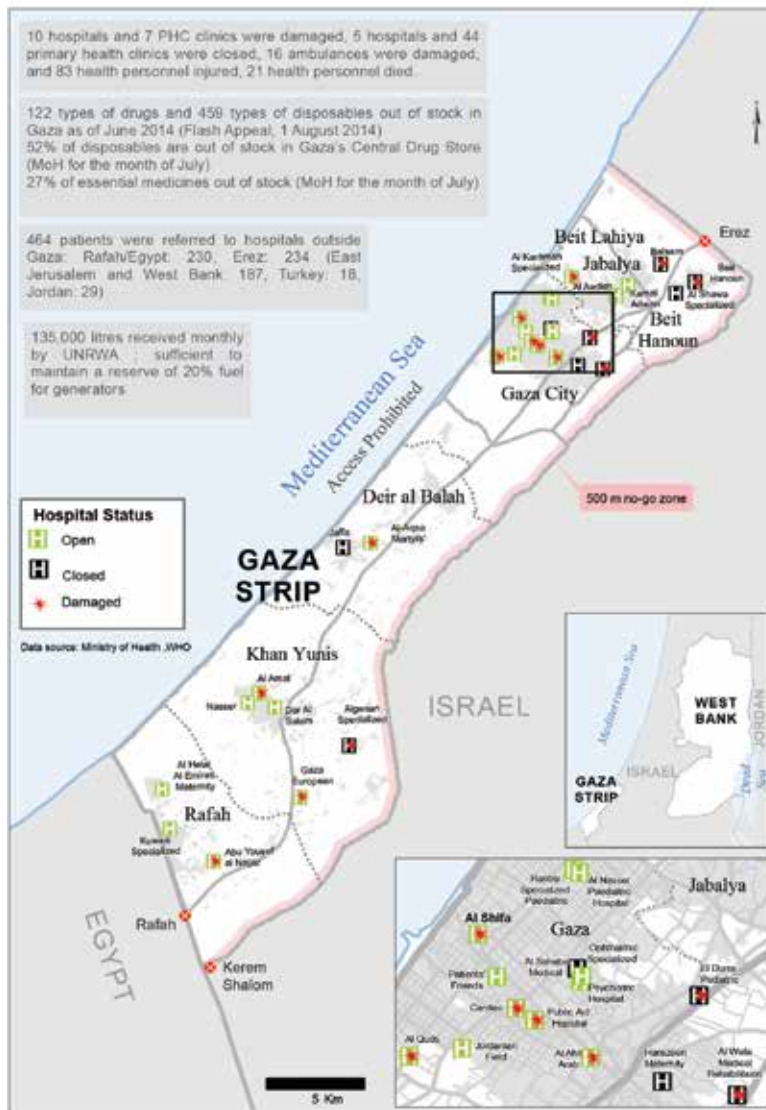
In the last 24 hours, approximately 10,000 more IDPs are taking shelter in UNRWA schools. As of this afternoon, UNRWA was providing shelter to 269,793 in 90 schools throughout the Gaza Strip. This represents an average of approximately 3,000 IDPs per shelter, which normally have the capacity to accommodate only 500 people. Another 15,741 IDPs are residing in 19 government schools and other institutions, and some 7,000 are reportedly seeking refuge in public buildings/informal shelters. The Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) estimates that the number of persons staying with host families throughout the Gaza Strip could be as many as 200,000. The total number of IDPs in Gaza is estimated at approximately 485,000, which represents one-quarter of the Gaza population.

Overcrowding at shelters is challenging the already stretched capacity to provide IDPs with basic necessities, maintain hygiene conditions, and prevent the outbreak of epidemics. While showers in shelters have improved personal hygiene and decreased the risk of spread of disease, an accelerated level of diarrhea has been reported among children. WHO and UNRWA are monitoring health in shelters in order to prevent and control any outbreak of communicable disease.

Hundreds of thousands of people are sheltering in terrible conditions, pushing UNRWA's coping capacity to the edge.

Robert Turner, UNRWA's Director of Operations in the Gaza Strip, August 2.

Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza Crisis Hospitals Status (as of 13 of August 2014)



Infrastructure and services

In the past 24 hours, an UNRWA school and two government schools have been affected by shelling. In the most serious incident, a missile fired by Israeli forces landed outside the gate of an UNRWA school in Rafah, killing at least nine people, including women and children, and injuring approximately 45. The school was a designated emergency shelter that had been hosting more than 3,000 people displaced by fighting in the area. This is the third occasion in 10 days that a UN school has been hit. Earlier this week, Israeli tank shells struck an UNRWA school in Jabalia, killing at least 15 people, including four children.

The Secretary-General strongly condemns the killing today of at least 10 Palestinian civilians in shelling outside of an UNRWA school in Rafah that provides shelter to thousands of civilians. The attack is yet another gross violation of international humanitarian law, which clearly requires protection by both parties of Palestinian civilians, UN staff, and UN premises, among other civilian facilities... United Nations shelters must be safe zones, not combat zones. The Israel Defence Forces have been repeatedly informed of the location of these sites. This attack, along with other breaches of international law, must be swiftly investigated and those responsible held accountable. It is a moral outrage and a criminal act. **Statement attributable to the spokesperson for the Secretary-General on the attack outside an UNRWA shelter, August 3.**

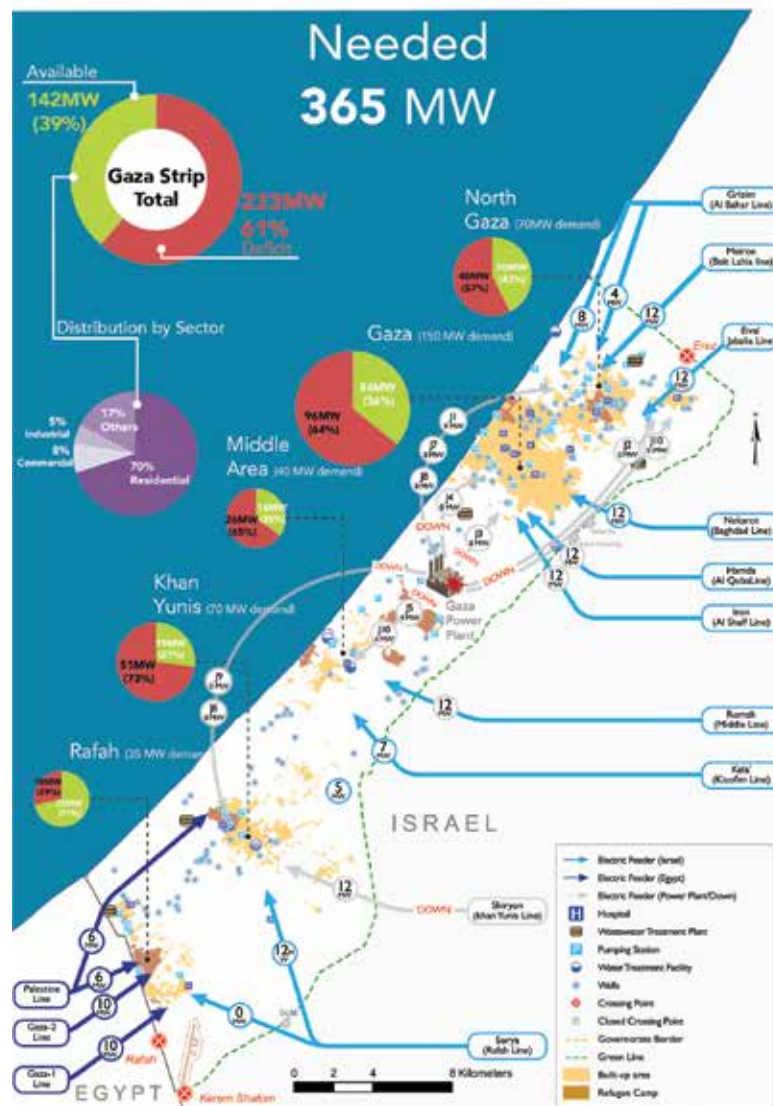


Photo by Shareef Sarhan.

In total, 141 schools (90 UNRWA and 51 government schools) have been affected by shelling due to their close proximity to targeted sites. No information is available on schools in the eastern part of the Gaza Strip and Beit Hanoun, due to the security situation. In the last 24 hours, another government-run kindergarten in West Gaza was affected by shelling, bringing to four the number of kindergartens which have reported significant damage so far, although this number is likely to increase substantially once a full assessment can be conducted. More hospitals reported damage by missiles, rockets, and shrapnel from attacks in their vicinity, and they are also facing shortages of services and staff, as well as fuel and water. According to preliminary information, Al Amal Hospital in Khan Yunis was hit by a missile on August 3, but no details of damage or possible injuries are available. The Cardiac Hospital in Gaza also suffered damage to its cardiac lab, administration building, windows, and an ambulance; one person was injured. The Patients' Friends Hospital also reported damage to one of its ambulances.

Al Aqsa Hospital, which has been working at 50 percent capacity following an attack on July 21 in which at least three people were killed, reported being hit on the roof on July 30 by a drone missile that caused major damage to the female medical department and injured a nurse. The Gaza European Hospital, located in an area where access has become dangerous, between Rafah and Khan Yunis, reported stoppage of its water supplies, forcing the 250-bed hospital to bring a water truck which can supply only 50 percent of its needs. On August 2, its main generator shut down, the daily supply of bread did not reach the hospital, and the laundry services were not working due to the manager being unable to report to work.

Gaza's sole power plant remains shut down after being shelled on 29 July. According to the Palestinian Energy Authority, repairs could take months to complete, exacerbating the Gazan electricity crisis. This will affect private households, companies and public services provision, including water, sanitation and health facilities.



TESTIMONIES

Omar (27)

Gaza

Profession: Journalist, blogger

Credit: Voices of Gaza

July 14, 2014

Housebound, with death all around

(Omar is stuck inside the house, with death all around him.)

"I miss Gaza. I miss the beach. [...] I miss my friends. I miss walking around. [...] We are a week into Protective Edge. Being under siege and occupation for so long makes you adapt very quickly to any situation, bad or good, which is totally unhealthy."

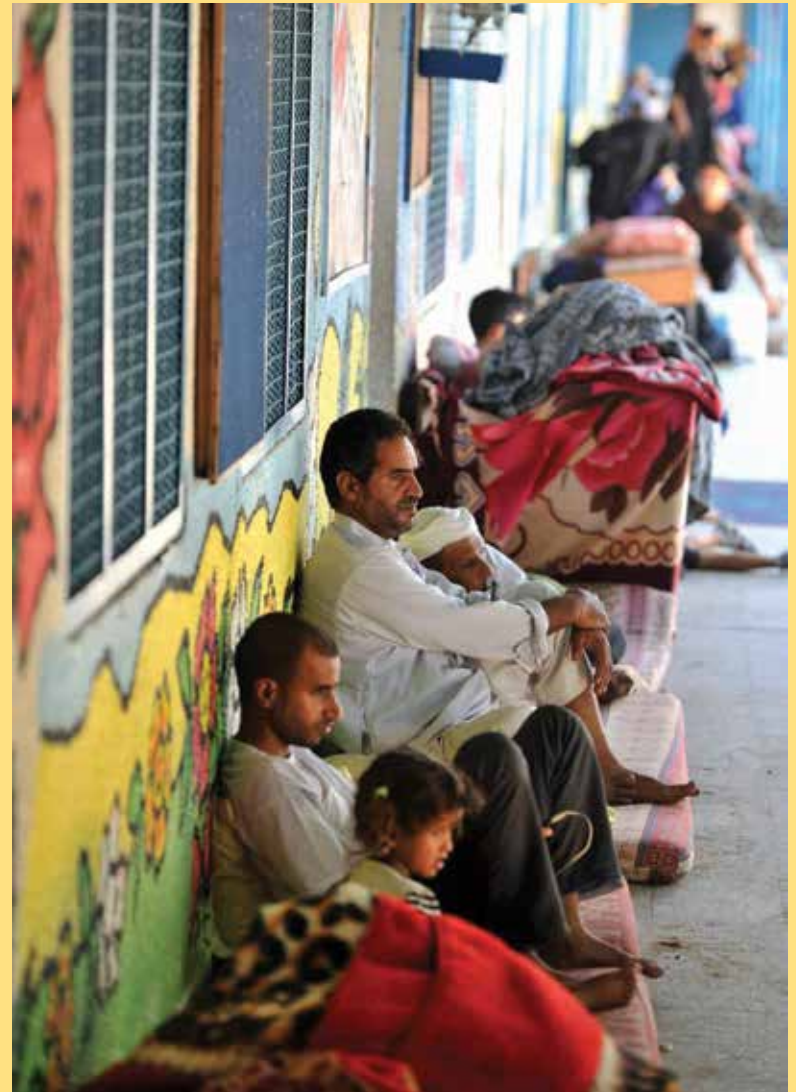
The last two nights were intense, with numerous nearby explosions. But how dare I complain about anything when whole families are being killed and Gazans have become refugees in their own country? Many families have left their homes in the north seeking refuge in UNRWA schools. Not that it's safer, since Israel bombed them during Cast Lead. Thousands of people left everything behind seeking the illusion of safety, but nowhere is safe.

A multi-storey house was bombed. EIGHTEEN were killed and more than fifty others injured; all from the Batish family. Imagine losing your mom, and your dad, and your siblings. Oh, and your other relatives. Oh wait, there is more, and your neighbours.

More than 172 Palestinians killed, 1,150+ injured, nearly 750 houses and mosques bombed, 2,500+ Israeli attacks on Gaza, a 365 m2 strip of densely populated land. Hospitals, ambulance centres, cemeteries, farmlands, the beach, boats, cars, motorbikes, residential areas, banks, schools, colleges, universities, everything. Depressing, huh? Well, that's what we are going through. According to UNRWA, about 70 percent of the fatalities are civilians, of which 30 percent are children.

We are a week into Protective Edge. Being under siege and occupation for so long makes you adapt very quickly to any situation, bad or good, which is totally unhealthy. There are two prominent types of explosions we experience: either you hear the sudden blast of the explosion, or you hear the missile fall and then the blast. This will sound crazy, but we all favour "Type 2." We prefer to anticipate death instead of being blown up without any warning. But if you hear a missile falling, it means you're lucky; it's near you but not targeting you.

Every time the phone rings, you assume it is a call from the Israeli army telling you to evacuate your house, if you are lucky. Except now Israel uses the new system of "warning missiles." They bomb the house with a warning missile and, after that, if you are still alive, you have one to three minutes to leave, or less. If you are lucky. Many houses have been bombed with no warning missiles, hence the huge numbers of fatalities and casualties.



Gaza shelter. Photo courtesy of UNRWA.

Housebound for a week now. I try everything with my family to convince them to let me go out. It's always a big fat resounding "NO." I miss Gaza. I miss the beach. I miss having the freedom to choose whether to go out or stay home. I miss my friends. I miss walking around.

It hurts when you see children die. People with names, lives, families, and they are being turned into numbers. Statistics. It's like you can smell death, overpowering the smell of gunpowder. Life was never normal here, ever, by any means, but I miss my normal life, whatever that was, before this Israeli war. Every day you live through the fear of losing a loved one. It's nerve-racking.

As usual, the house was shaking while I was writing this story. It's like I am watching an action movie, but instead of watching it this time, I am actually living it.

Three Wars and Counting

By Omar Ghraieb

We all take pride in different things in our lives, especially our nationality. But being a Palestinian gives a whole different dimension to this pride. It's a plight of over 66 years of struggling and yearning for freedom, waking up every day and reminding ourselves to keep fighting for our rights because, just like everyone else on this earth, we deserve it. We've kind of earned it too.

It doesn't matter whether or not you are a Palestinian who was born and raised in Palestine, or whether or not you live in Palestine, we all know that being Palestinian means that your homeland lives inside you, regardless of whether you actually live there. We all have the passion of Palestine filling our lungs, our hearts, our souls, and our existence. It's an on-going reminder, like an alarm you set every day for the rest of your life.



Photo by Shareef Sarhan.

Ramadan Jameel Abugazal, 4, male-Mohamed Ihsan Mohamed Farwani, 18, male-Hassan Eid Hassan Abu Jaame, 79, male-Mahmoud Talee Saadi Wouloud, 26, male-Hazem Ibrahim Mahmoud Baalousha, 30, male-Oudai Rafic Saeed Alsultan, 27, male-Yasmeen Mohamed Yousef Almataouq, 3, female-Ahmed Zaher Hamdan, 24, male-Sami Adnan Ahmed Shleidan, 28, male-Abdelrahman Bassam Abdelrahman Khateb, 5, male-Ghalia Deeb Jaberginam, 57, female-Wassam Abdelrazeq Hassan Al Ghenam, 31, male-Mahmoud Abdelrazeq Hassan Al Ghenam, 28, male-Kafah Shehada Deeb Ghenam, 20, female-Noor Marwan Abdallah Alnajdi, 11, female-Mohamed Mounie Mustafa Aashoor, 26, male-Anas Rezaq Saleem Abualqas, 32, male-Shahraman Ismaeel Hussein Abualqas, 42, male-Mazin Mustafa Ibrahim Aslaan, 52, male-Raaed Hani Jaber Abuhani, 31, male-Abdelhalim Abdelmaati Mohamed Abuaashra, 54, male-Mohamed Rabee Mohamed Abuhameedan, 65, male-Abdallah Mustafa Abumahrouq, 22, male-Safer Salman Ali Abunamous, 3, male-Hussam Deeb Osman Alrazanah, 40, male-Abdelrahim Saleh Abdelrahim Alkhateeb, 38, male-Yousef Mohamed Yousef Qandeel, 34, male-Mohamed Idris Abdelhameed Abusulaiman, 20, male-Ola Hassan Mohamed Washahi, 31, female-Sahaa Masbah Ahmed Abusaada, 16, female-Mohamed Kamel Alabid Alkahlout, 22, male-Rateb Soubhi Yousef Al Saifi, 22, male-Azmi Mahmoud Taha Abeer, 51, male-Nidal Mohamed Ibrahim Abualmalsh, 22, male-Sulaiman Saeed Younis Abeer, 56, male-Gassan Ahmed Mahmoud Almasri, 25, male-Mustafa Mohamed Taha Enaya, 58, male-Ibrahim Nabil Osman Hamada, 23, male-Hassan Ahmed Matar Abughoush, 28, male-Ahmed Mahmoud Rehab Albelaaawy, 24, male-Ali Nabil Asaad Basal, 28, male-Mohamed Bassem Mustafa Alhalabi, 27, male-Anas Yousef Ahmed Qandeel, 17, male-Hussein Mohamed Hassan Almamlouk, 47, male-Fadi Yacoub Kamal Soukar, 25, male-Nasser Rabah Mohamed Samama, 50, male-Rami Saleh Mousaade, 25, male-Mohamed Refaat Mohamed Alsuweiti, 25, male-Mohamed Idris Abusenina, 20, male-Mohamed Saber Mustafa Salem, 73, male-Refaat Yousef Shabaan Amer, 35, male-Ghazi Mohamed Mustafa Aareef, 62, male-Mohamed Ahmed Samiree, 25, male-Ahmed Yousef Ismaeel Daloul, 45, male-Khaoula Mahmoud Sarhan Alhawajri, 25, female-Mohamed Ghazi Mustafa Aareef, 35, male-Amir Iyad Salem Aareef, male-Raweeda Ahmed Hussein Abuharb, 28, female-Hussam Ibrahim Shahda Alnajjar, 14, male-Hijazi Hamid Alhelou, 70, female-Moueed Khalid Ali Alarji, 3, male-Ramziya Abdelaal, 73, female-Mahmoud Abdallah Shirateh, 53, male-Rami Sami Abu Shanab, 22, male-Ezaldeen Naeem Nasser Bilal, 27, male-Haitham Ashraf Ahmeedan Zaarab, 20, male-Layla Hassan Ahmed Alaaawedat, 39, female-Fadi Mohamed Rezaq Zaarab, 21, male-Emad Bassem Mohamed Zaarab, 21, male-Nahed Naaem Subhi Albatesh, 41, male-Bahaa Majed Subhi Albatesh, 28, male-Samah Alaa Subhi

GAZA
Lest We
Forget

I was born and raised in Cyprus. We returned to Palestine before I was a teenager, and we lived in Gaza. I attended a Christian school, even though I am Muslim, and that kind of eased the culture shock of moving from Europe to Gaza. The harmony, love, and equality between Muslims and Christians here made me feel as though I fit in, to a certain degree, and the two Christian schools that I attended at different stages of school life were my sanctuary. Little did I know that the same school I attended years ago would become the sanctuary for displaced Muslims during Israel's latest and third war on Gaza. This harmony had come to life. I was proud and touched.

On-going occupation means a routine you get used to but always resist. Gaza has witnessed invasions, airstrikes, and tragic times throughout the years, some of which I witnessed while I lived here, including the second Intifada. But the concept of war was not only foreign, it just never even occurred to us.

In December 2008, it was a day like any other day. My sister, who is married and lives abroad, was visiting us in Gaza with my newborn nephew. We were all sitting in the living room when there was a huge explosion. The windows nearly flew off. I ran to cover my nephew but was pushed out of the way by my sister, who was



Photo by Shareef Sarhan.



running with her baby for shelter in the corner. She held him tightly and couldn't stop crying. It took time and strength to ease her grip and keep her from smothering him with her protection. Thus began the war.

I was in complete denial. I listened to music. I never watched the news unless I was forced to. I slept a lot and ate a lot and laughed hysterically every two seconds. As the days went by, this denial started to subside and the foreign concept

of war started to become familiar. But after 23 days of hell, the war ended at the beginning of 2009, and I thought to myself that Gaza would never ever witness this again. Impossible. No way. Never. I survived the worst with my family and it would never happen again.

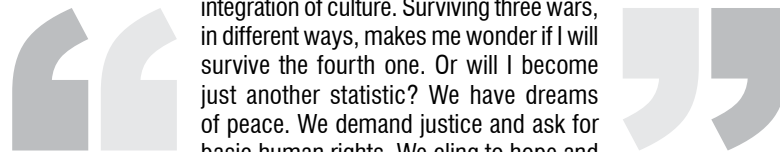
Only three years later, in November 2012, while I was in New York for media training with the United Nations, Israel launched its second war on Gaza. I wasn't physically there but I was constantly in contact with my family by phone or on Skype. They would lie and say that everything was okay, but I could hear the familiar noise in the background, and I read the news all day every day. I never slept and I lost focus till the war ended.

My colleagues and I went to protests in New York and Washington, DC, nearly every day. We shouted, we chanted, we cried, and we demanded an end to the war. The same thoughts came to my mind when I was going through "Operation Cast Lead": I want justice, I deserve freedom, I demand equality, I dream of peace.

I wanted to head back home to be with my family during this second and horrible war, but the Rafah border was closed and my family logically insisted that I stay in New York. But how can you think logically when your family is in danger and you are not there?

They assured me that the second war was less horrible than Cast Lead, but that didn't help. War is war, right? It is never fair or forgiving or less horrible or less damaging or merciful. It is blind and dangerous, and it claims too many lives and causes too many injuries and too much physical\mental damage.

As Palestinians, we are born into a struggle that we didn't choose. Fighting for our rights becomes a daily routine if not a lifestyle. Culture becomes a type of resistance, and resistance becomes an integration of culture. Surviving three wars, in different ways, makes me wonder if I will survive the fourth one. Or will I become just another statistic? We have dreams of peace. We demand justice and ask for basic human rights. We cling to hope and faith despite everything. We try to "stay human," like the late Vittorio Arrigoni used to say, even if all the odds are against us. Gaza is beautiful and will remain beautiful, no matter what.



The second war ended in a little more than a week. I came back home from New York after it was over and again the same naive thought came to my mind: Oh this will never happen again. Ever. Gaza – we – could never witness a third war. No way. No more war.

And then during Ramadan 2014, at the beginning of July, Israel proved me wrong yet again. A third and more vicious war was launched against Gaza. And even after five weeks, it is still not over. I am writing this during the second 72-hour ceasefire brokered by Egypt to allow talks to take place between Palestinians and Israelis. The ceasefire ends on Wednesday night, August 13. And the million-dollar question comes to everybody's mind: Will the war resume or is it over?



Nearly 2,000 people have died and 10,000 others have been injured, including hundreds of children. Pretty much everywhere has been bombed, including hundreds of houses and tens of mosques. Nowhere is safe. Never has been anyway. Nearly half a million Palestinians in Gaza are now displaced across Gaza, seeking refuge in schools, streets, churches, and every empty space they find.

It is beyond tragic and inhuman, distorting most definitions and beliefs that we have ever known or had faith in. Peace has started to mean war; targeting terrorism now means killing children; strategic targets means houses and mosques; and so on. How can we believe in peace again after living in danger and uncertainty during every second of our lives?

I didn't lose any family members or my house. And I am not married so I have no kids to lose, thankfully. But I have lost my humanity and big chunks of my soul. Oh, and most of my beliefs and my hope, my faith, and my dreams of peace. I guess we can never get all this back, can we? I don't think so.

Gaza was never normal, and life here was never normal, but I do want everything back. But how can you bring back the dead? And how can you bring back the health of those who have been injured and become disabled? How can you get the smell of roses back when all you smell now is blood, death, and intoxicating smoke? How can you get back all the children who have died? How can you get the beach to be untainted with the blood of children? How can you ever look at sunsets and dawns here without seeing smoke or bombings?

"What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." This maxim has always had a literal meaning for those who live in Palestine. Gaza will emerge stronger from the ashes, like a phoenix. We will emerge stronger. But what I know for sure is that we will never be the same after this war. Ever.

We will never give up on hope, peace, and/or our dreams of justice, freedom, and equality no matter what happens. Three wars and counting.

Omar Ghraieb is a Palestinian journalist/blogger and social media expert from Gaza. His blog can be found at <http://gazatimes.blogspot.com/>.



Photo by Shareef Sarhan.

TESTIMONIES

Solafa (31 years old)

Credit: Voices of Gaza
July 19, 2014

Pregnant, displaced, and at risk of attacks.

Solafa el Deabella (31), her husband Issa, and their three-and-a-half-year-old son, Adam, live in Gaza City. Over the past week, Solafa has shared her experiences during this military offensive.

I am in the seventh month of my pregnancy. I am so stressed. It is not good for me to live in these conditions. I'm also worried; I think I might be suffering from high blood pressure. I'm afraid I'm in the same situation as during my previous pregnancy, with high blood pressure caused by all the stress. And there is no way I can reach my doctor in these circumstances; it's not safe to move.

(On Wednesday, July 9, the family experienced an attack on an adjacent building, which left their apartment damaged. Solafa, Issa, and Adam had to flee their home.)

(On Tuesday, July 15, Solafa writes the following words.)

Due to the damage to our apartment, we had to leave Gaza City. Now we are staying in Bureij Refugee Camp with my husband's family. They targeted a house here a few hours ago. Thank God we are all safe. Still, it is safer for us to stay here than to go back. And at least there are other children with whom Adam can play. That way he forgets about the bombing, at least during the daytime. At night, it is terrible."

(In a phone conversation today – Saturday, July 19 – Solafa has a worrying update.)

We're fine so far but they've [Israeli jets] just dropped leaflets on Bureij, telling us to move to Deir al Balah. They're going to attack this area and we're supposed to move. They've dropped them just now, within the last 30 minutes. It is the first time that they've dropped the leaflets in Bureij Camp. I don't know what to do. Issa is at the UNRWA schools, checking what the displaced people staying there need, and trying to get supplies for them from other people and charities. We have two UNRWA schools in Bureij that have been receiving people.

Adam is very worried and he is afraid. He was shocked to see the leaflets falling from the sky. But now, my phone battery is very low. I'll have to go soon. Since yesterday, we have had only three hours of electricity. It will be off again soon. Our electricity might come back on at about 5:00 a.m. tomorrow.

(Not long after the end of the phone conversation, Solafa sends a message.)

Just after I got off the phone with you, Adam entered the room where



Women and children in a Gaza shelter. Photo courtesy of UNRWA.

we keep our belongings. He started collecting our stuff and putting it into our travel bag. I tried to stop him but he was crying and saying we should go to Deir al-Balah, to Uncle Mari's house. Mari is Issa's friend. You met him once at our home.

(After a long pause, another message follows.)

I called Issa and asked him to speak to Adam. Issa told Adam to join him in the nearby UNRWA school. But Adam continued crying and said: "I am afraid of the people who fled their homes and who are staying at the school now." Maybe it is because of the pictures he sometimes sees of dead people. I try not to let him see any pictures. Maybe he thinks they are dead or wounded people staying at the UNRWA schools.

(In a rush, Solafa adds...)

And there is something else I wanted to tell you. On Friday, just two days after we arrived in Bureij, Mr. Abu Khaled, a man from Bureij, was killed in an airstrike. He is an employee of the Bureij municipality and he was targeted while driving in an official municipality vehicle. This man was very dear to Adam. On Thursday, just one day before he was killed, he spent hours with Adam. He used to take Adam to the market and buy him things. When Adam learned about Abu Khaled's death, his first reaction was laughter, then he kept silent for several hours. This is not usual for Adam. At night, he did not sleep a moment. He kept talking about the Israelis, the bombing, and Abu Khaled. He has been wetting the bed every night since that day. I spend difficult moments with him at night. He gets up every few hours and keeps crying. This is too stressful for me.

(When asked about their decision whether to move or stay, Solafa responds...)

We have not yet decided to leave.

(Then Solafa has to disconnect, probably until tomorrow morning, unable to communicate what will happen overnight.)

What Comes Next in Gaza?

The Welfare Association and Its Key Partners Take Action

The Gaza Strip is in an unprecedented state of destruction and ruin. There is much death, suffering, and agony. The damage of the Israeli assault on Gaza that began on July 7, 2014, has reached every resident and home in the Gaza Strip; destroying tens of thousands of facilities and buildings either partially or



Photo by Eduardo Soteras Jali.

Albatesh, 20, female-Aziza Yousef Ahmed Albatesh, 59, female-Mohamed Essam Subhi Albatesh, 17, male-Ahmed Neman Albatesh, 27, male-Yehya Alaa Subhi Albatesh, 18, male-Jalal Majed Subhi Albatesh, 26, male-Mhamoud Majed Subhi Albatesh, 22, male-Marwa Majed Subhi Albatesh, 25, female-Majed Subhi Ismaeel Albatesh, 48, male-Khalid Majed Subhi Albatesh, 20, male-Ibrahim Majed Subhi Albatesh, 18, male-Manar Majed Subhi Albatesh, 13, female-Amal Bahaa Majed Albatesh, 4, female-Anas Alaa Subhi Albatesh, 10, male-Qoussai Essam Subhi Albatesh, 13, male-Qassem Talal Hamdan, 23, male-Hussein Abdelkader Hussein Muheisen, 24, male-Maher Thabuti Awdat Abumur, 25, male-Mohamed Salem Salmi Abualbarees, 79, male-Saddam Musa Shahda Abumomar, 23, male-Musa Shahda Marzouq Abumomar, 56, male-Adham Mohamed Abdelfatah Abdeladel, 25, male-Hameed Sulaiman Abualaraji, 60, male-Abdallah Mohamed Salma Abubarkah, 25, male-Tamer Salem Muslem Qadeeh, 36, male-Sara Omar Ahmed Sheikh Aleid, 4, female-Jihad Ahmed Abdallah Sheikh Aleid, 36, male-Omar Ahmed Abdalla Sheikh Aleid, 27, male-Mohamed Shaeab Osman Alagha, 22, male-Ziad Salem Alshawi, 25, male-Mohamed Younis Sulaiman Abuyousef, 30, male-Kamal Atef Yousef Abutaha, 19, male-Ismaeel Nabil Ahmed Abuhattb, 21, male-Hanadi Hamdi Moumar, 27, female-Mohamed Yasser Ali Hamdan, 24, male-Ziad Maher Mohamed Alnajjar, 17, male-Sulaiman Salama Mohamed Aboulouli, 27, male-Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim Alnajjar, 49, male-Ismaeel Salim Abdelkarim Alnajjar, 47, male-Ataah Hajj Aameera Omar Alaamour, 57, male-Bushra Khalil Zaarab, 53, female-Subhi Abdelhameed Hussein Musa, 78, male-Khalil Ibrahim Alashaafi, 41, male-Ismaeel Fatouh Ismaeel Fatouh, 24, male-Musa Saeed Ahmed Dahleez, 23, male-Yasser Eid Mahmoud Almahmoum, 18, male-Mohamed Abdallah Ahmed Alzahouq, 32, male-Mohamed Ismaeel Abuouada, 27, male-Mohamed Sabri Hamad Aldibari, 21, male-Abdallah Mohamed Abdallah Alerjani, 19, male-Ahmed Adel Ahmed Alnuwajjha, 23, male-Mohamed Tayseer Yousef Sharab, 23, male-Khudra Alabdelsalama Abudiqat, 79, female-Amrou Ramadan Hassan Abudiqat, 26, male-Ibrahim Ramadan Hassan Abudiqat, 10, male-Fareed Mahmoud Ali Abudiqat, 32, male-Ashraf Faris Jumaa Abushanab, 32, male-Hend Shadi Abdelrahman Abuharbeed, 11, female-Abdelrahman Ibrahim Khalil Alsarhi, 37, male-Aahed Etaf Aahed Bakir, 10, male-Zakariya Aahed Subhi Bakir, 10, male-Mohamed Ramez Ezzat Bakir, 11, male-Ismaeel Mohamed Subhi Bakir, 10, male-Hamza Raaed Mohamed Thari, 6, male-Akram Mohamed Mohamed Abuaamer, 32, male-Kamal Mohamed Mohamed Abuaamer, 39, male-Hussein Abdelnasser Hussein Alastal, 23, male-Kawthar Hussein Hussein Alastal, 58, female-Yasmeen Mahmoud Hussein Alastal, 5, female-Hussam Mahmoud Hussein Alastal, 12, male-Hussam Jamal Hassounat Shamlakh,

GAZA
Lest We
Forget

fully, including civilians' homes, public facilities, and schools, in addition to the systematic targeting and devastation of the infrastructure of Gaza's electricity, water, and telecommunications services.

For the 1.8 million residents of Gaza, the aggression comes to add a new chapter of suffering to their steadfastness under the 8+ years of siege in addition to the severe impact of the last two assaults on the Strip (2008 and 2012).

Don't ask me who I am or what I want of this life, for I no longer know.

"We escaped death by minutes, but we've lost everything. I am sure that my children and I will need ten years of therapy to survive this and another ten years to get over this trauma," says Fatima, a mother of three who miraculously survived the shelling of Al-Shuja'iyya.



Photo by Eduardo Soteras Jali.



The Welfare Association and the Bank of Palestine collaborate

Stemming from its humanitarian duty towards people in the Gaza Strip, the Welfare Association (WA) responded immediately to the increasing need for relief, intervening from day one in an attempt to alleviate the suffering and respond to basic needs through an on-the-ground team and an emergency appeal to help Gaza, which has proved both

beneficial and popular amongst organisations and individuals eager to support the Strip.

Through its campaign “Gaza under Fire. Help Gaza,” the WA has remained firm in walking hand in hand with its brothers and sisters in Gaza. The campaign has been a tool for outreach to key local organisations, public and private, and to international partners and the donor community, facilitating immediate collective and collaborative work. More than **\$3 million** of humanitarian supplies and services have been distributed as of mid August, despite the on-going Israeli shelling and aggression.

Immediately after the WA appeal went out, the Bank of Palestine responded and spearheaded the emergency relief efforts under the heading “Palestine Is in Our Hearts,” in cooperation with the WA. The work focused on serving the bereaved

“Today I will be able to sleep on a soft, warm mattress and not the hard and cold floor as the previous days,” said Sabreen from Al-Shuja’iyya, after her family’s home was completely destroyed.



in Gaza and providing victims of the attacks with the emergency medical supplies and humanitarian aid they needed during those very difficult times.

“Gaza under Fire” and “Palestine Is in Our Hearts”

The primary concern was to be able to reach every affected person in Gaza in view of the dangers and limitations of mobility, supplies, and cash flow. The WA’s emergency appeals were very effective in reaching more than **250,000 persons** and providing medical supplies and fuel for hospitals and ambulances; food and milk for children; blankets, mattresses, and clothing for displaced families; hygiene kits; rechargeable light kits; school bags and stationery; and basic rehabilitation of damaged houses and schools.

More specifically, 179,000 litres of fuel were provided for hospitals and ambulances; 17,000 families received food packages; 7,250 families received 35,000 mattresses and pillows; 10,500 families received hygiene kits; 50 injured children received gifts for the ‘eid; 4,000 hot meals were provided daily for injured people at Al Shifa Hospital; and eight water tanks were delivered to eight shelters during the first week of the assault.

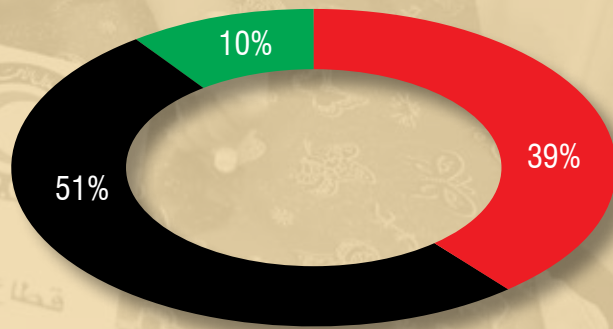
Relief is being distributed through the following WA local NGOs and partners:

Al Rahma Society for Relief and Development
Al Wafaa Charitable Society
Artificial Limbs and Paralysis Center
Beit Lahia Development Society
Canaan Development Institute
Central Blood Bank Society
Dar El-Salam Charitable Society
Islamic Society in Rafah
Maan Development Center
Mercy Association for Children
Palestinian Association for Development and Reconstruction
Palestinian Counseling Center
Palestinian Medical Relief Society
Patients Care Charitable Society
Patients Friends Benevolent Society
Public Aid Society
The National Society for Rehabilitation
Union of Agricultural Works Committees
Union of Health Work Committees
Yabous Charitable Society

More than 300 donors have supported the Gaza Appeal 2014 Campaign to date; this includes 29 institutional donors from the non-governmental and private sectors, as listed below in alphabetical order.

Abraaj Group | Ahli Bank Employees | Al Daleel Establishment
Al Iqbal Investment Co. and Employees | AlFakher Co
AINabulsi and AlAmad | AlQuds Bank
Alromouz for Marketing Services and Organizing Exhibitions
Bank of Palestine | Bio Lab Employees | Cayan International Ltd
Consolidated Contractors Company (CCC) and Employees
Dozan O Awtar Troup | Drake and Scull | Elia AlNims Co
Rasim AlNashashibi Gathering | Invest Bank & Employees
Kinder USA Association through WA – UK
Kuwaiti Red Crescent Society (KRCS)
Members and Employees of Fitness First
Open Society Foundation (OSF) | Palestine Investment Fund
Palestine Islamic Bank | Palestine Monetary Authority Employees
Philip Morris International (PMI) | Reliance Co | Salam Ya Sighar (SYS)
Yellow Pages.

Source of Funding



● Private Sector ● Individual ● Institution

Gazans, local officials, and humanitarian workers have already begun to inspect the damaged areas and the “unlivable” towns that have been shelled hard. Estimates at an earlier stage may look optimistic in view of the harsh reality that is emerging on a daily basis.



On-going strategic partnership

The Welfare Association and the Bank of Palestine will continue their relief emergency campaign with all its partners and seek to raise more funds to be able to attend to the calamity at hand. In view of the WA's five-year strategic plan that seeks to raise \$50 million in support of immediate relief and long-term developmental projects, donations are coming in and new agreements are being signed. Over \$2 million has already been committed in support of children and youth, psychosocial support, people with disabilities, and limb replacements for the huge numbers of orphaned children, in addition to addressing environment pollution resulting from the sewage floods.

GAZA deserves our HELP to rescue the children, the widowed, and the elderly. PALESTINE deserves to stand up, shine, and prevail.



The Welfare Association, established in 1983 by a group of Palestinian business leaders and intellectuals, is a leading independent non-governmental organisation that provides support for the sustainable development of the Palestinian people and their communities. The WA strives to empower communities and individuals to become productive, professional, and capable of achieving their goals and aspirations in order to contribute to economic and social change. This is achieved through implementing a set of unique programmes, as well as grant making, to foster an effective and sustainable Palestinian society. Programmes and grant making are focused on four main sectors of intervention: education, culture, community development, and emergency and humanitarian relief.

TESTIMONIES

Asma AbuMezied (26 years old)

Central area, Gaza Strip

Profession: Business Development Specialist with a local NGO

Credit: Voices of Gaza

While her family home shakes under the bombardments, Asma writes about what it means if your home, your past, and your memories are taken away in a single moment.

Memories capture the moments of our lives that are gone forever. They become our own life companions whether in sorrow or happiness, whether we are surrounded by our loved ones or feeling lonely. A person without memories is a lost soul unable to look into the future or live in the present. Memories and little things that we keep from the past give us strength when we need it and the drive to have a better life ahead.

Imagine all the memories of your life ruthlessly taken away from you in less than ten minutes! All it takes is ten minutes and in some cases five minutes. That's how much time the Israeli army gives us to leave our home, to leave our past – our memories – and run for our lives. Ten minutes to get what is important to us out of our houses to take with us. As if what is important can be materialised in a thing or two! What about the whole house? Is it possible to carry away the whole house in these minutes?

I fear the moment when our house will get “The Call” for evacuation. The Call is also called a “knock on the roof” warning when a drone fires a non-explosive missile at the roof of the building that is to be bombed by the Israeli air forces – nobody knows how long after.

How can I abandon all my memories and the life that I have spent in that house? Among the stones of my house resides the history of my sister, my brother, my mother, my father, and me. In my house, I have seen my tiny twin nephews, who were born premature, grow up and become the noisy and lively little kids they are today. This house has witnessed me growing up, graduating from university and becoming who I am today. It has witnessed our happy moments – graduations, birthday parties, my sister's engagement party, and the 2008 and 2012 wars that we survived. It has also been our companion during the sad times when my grandmothers, my uncle, and my aunts died.

How can I abandon my room and leave everything in order to save my life? How can I allow them to take away all my accomplishments? My room has all my memories; one wall has all my pictures and memories of my friends when I was in London pursuing a master's degree as well as pictures from my recent



trip to the United States where I met so many inspiring people. My closet has the gifts I received from Japanese children when I was a kid participating in an UNRWA programme to reward top students – the gifts I dreamt of showing to my children and grandchildren in the future. Every corner of the room is a part of me. How can I see parts of me scattered among the debris of my house?

It took us more than three years to build our house – finally. Too long, isn't it? But it was time-consuming because construction materials were rarely allowed to be brought to the Gaza Strip back then. My house is more than bricks laid on top of each other. It is a member of my family, it is our home, a living and pulsating thing to me that I don't want to lose or think of losing. So how can I see my home crumbling in front of my eyes in one minute and stand still watching? How can the whole world expect me to stand still, watching and talking about peace when that rocket steals my memories, my past, my house, my land, and, probably, the members of my family?

Excuse me, World! I stopped believing you and calling out to you to stop the killing of my people because all you do is send some money after it is too late; as if money could compensate the sorrow, the pain, the hurt, and the loss of beloved ones. Excuse me, World! I don't want to listen to you demanding that we stay calm and humbly accept the mass murder of our people – I haven't been listening to you since I saw that F16 rocket kill another sleeping household in the middle of the night.

(Written while our house was shaking violently from continuous bombardment all night.)

Reinforcing Social De-Development: Spatial Annihilation as Essential to Zionism

By Natasha Aruri



Photo by Eduardo Soterias Jalil.

23, male-Mohamed Kamel Mohamed Abdelrahman, 30, male-Mohamed Mahmoud Alkadeem, 22, male-Zainab Mohamed Saeed Alebadlat, 71, male-Mohamed Abdelrahman Ahmed Hassounat, 67, male-Ahmed Rehan, 23, male-Salem Saleh Salem Fiyad, 25, male-Abdallah Salem Mansour Alakhras, 27, male-Bashir Mohamed Hassan Abdelaal, 20, male-Mohamed Nabil Mohamed Ghanem, 25, male-Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed Alhout, 41, male-Ismaeel Yousef Taha Qassem, 59, male-Afnan Wessam Marzouq Shahibar, 8, female-Jihad Essam Marzouq Shahibar, 10, male-Waseem Essam Marzouq Shahibar, 9, male-Amal Khoudr Ibrahim Dabour, 40, female-Rami Abutaweela, male-Hamad Abdelkareem Hamad Abulehiya, 26, male-Mohamed Abdelfatah Rashid Fiyad, 25, male-Mahmoud Mohamed Ahmed Fiyad, 25, male-Ahmed Fauzi Hamad Radwan, 23, male-Mahmoud Fauzi Hamad Radwan, 24, male-Bilal Mohamed Mahmoud Radwan, 23, male-Manthaf Nabil Mohamed Radwan, 22, male-Hani Assad Abdelkarim Alshami, 35, male-Mohamed Hamdan Abdelkarim Alshami, 35, male-Bassem Mohamed Mahmoud Maadi, 22, male-Salmiya Sulaiman Jadouaa Ghiad, 70, female-Karam Mahmoud Nasir, male-Nassem Mahmoud Nasir, male-Omar Eid Awad Almahmoum, 18, male-Faris Jumaa Hamad Altarabeen, 1, male-Majdi Sulaiman Salama Jubarat, 22, male-Salah Saleh Ramadan Alshafi, 24, male-Mohamed Shadi Nateez, 26, male-Mohamed Salem Ibrahim Nateez, 4, male-Abdelal Ali Abdelnateez, 15, male-Hamza Hassan Ali Alebadlah, 29, male-Rahaf Khalil Hamada Al Jabour, 4, female-Yassin Alhamidi, male-Hussam Muslem Abdelkarim Abuessa, 26, male-Ahmed Ismaeel Mohamed Abumuslem, 10, male-Walaa Ismaeel Mohamed Abumuslem, 12, female-Mohamed Ismaeel Mohamed Abumuslem, 15, male-Ahmed Abdallah Ahmed Albahnasawi, 22, male-Saleh Sulaiman Mohamed Alzagheibi, 20, male-Alaa Mohamed Abdelmajeed Abushabab, 23, male-Mahmoud Ali Abdelaziz Darwish, 36, male-Rafat Ali Mohamed Bahloul, 36, male-Abdallah Jamal Jumaa Alsamiri, 17, male-Ahmed Hassan Saleh Algalban, 23, male-Hamada Abdallah Mohamed Albashiti, 21, male-Walaa Jihad Mohamed Alqiraa, 26, male-Maali Abdelrahman Sulaiman Abuzayed, 24, female-Mahmoud Abdelhameed Hussein Alzuwaidi, 25, male-Dalia Abdelhameed Hussein Alzuwaidi, 35, female-Nagam Mahmoud Abdelhameed Alzuwaidi, 2, female-Rawyat Mahmoud Abdelhameed Alzuwaidi, 3, female-Mohamed Attallah Awdat Saadat, 25, male-Fadl Mohamed Albinna, 29, male-Mohamed Rafic Ahmed Alrahal, 17, male-Mohamed Ziad Saleh Alrahal, 6, male-Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed Abuzaanounat, 30, male-Mohamed Ooud Matar, 38, male-Hamza Mohamed Hamad Abualhussein, 27, male-Emad Hamid Elwan, 7, male-Qassem Hamid Elwan, 4, male-Sara Mohamed Bustan, 13, female-Razq Ahmed Alhayek, 2, male-Mohamed Saado Mahmoud Abusaada, 26, male-Naeem Musa AbuJarad, 24, male-Abdmusa



Over a period of four decades, Copenhagen has been transformed from an insignificant urban space with unsatisfied inhabitants into the world's happiest city in 2013. The Danish planner Jan Gehl – who accompanied and contributed to this rebirth – emphasised the role of “self-reinforcement” of both positive and negative socio-spatial trends, and therein the accumulative impact on the lived space. As the tribulation of the Gaza Strip by Zionist colonialism has become a reiterative prophecy, it is essential to address the stagnant trivial questions: Reconstruction of what? How and to what end beyond the obvious physical? Is today different from yesterday? Will tomorrow diverge from the reincarnations of modern history? Haven't we – Palestinians – been building makeshift-shelters for years aplenty? Will we break off the engagement with the “*déjà vu!*” expression? When will we obstruct the harmony conjoining the Zionist strategy of spatial annihilation and our reactionary discourse, which together reinforce the precariousness of Palestinian existence? Although declaring and echoing statistics of human casualties and material losses, and employing those as indicators of a rise in scale and intensity of Israeli aggression against Palestinians are relatively apparent, comprehension of roots and real-time consequences is more complex.

More than 2,000 lives have been lost over the past few weeks, and according to UN estimates this tragedy is furthered by the displacement of over 500,000 persons. In other words, about 1 of every 3 persons in the Gaza Strip has been made a refugee, some for the second, and others for the third time in a lifetime. A Facebook post by Mohamad Joudeh from Gaza was shared by a couple of my contacts:

“I'll tell you what is harder than dying in Gaza by an Israeli missile deluxe. What is harder is that you get a phone call from the Israeli army telling you to evacuate your home because it will be bombed in ten minutes. Imagine. Ten minutes; and your whole short history on the surface of the earth will be erased. [...] things that you love, your favourite chair, your books, that last poetry collection you read, a letter from your expatriate sister [...] your prayer rug, your wife's gold, your savings. Imagine. All this passes in front of your eyes in ten minutes; all that pain passes while you are struck by surprise. Then you take your identification papers (passport, birth certificate, etc.) which you have ready in an old metallic candy box, and you leave your home to die a thousand times, or refuse to leave and die once.”

In his book *The Prince* (written ca. 1505), the Florentine political philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli wrote that “men forget more easily the death of their father than the



loss of their patrimony.” He argued that destruction of life, i.e., murdering individuals, could aid in upholding societal order as it instills fear yet does not amount to systematic – hence unforgettable and unforgivable – suffering. However, destruction of livelihood (e.g., source of income, accumulated wealth, securities, etc.) and hence infliction of long-term systematically regenerated suffering breeds desperation, and perpetuates desires of vengeance and the

mentality of crisis, amongst others. The genocide in the Gaza Strip today and in the entire geography of Palestine since 1947 is not comparable to Machiavellian cases of “arguable” state prosecution of individual subjects. However, deprivation of Palestinians from elements of dignified life and modernity through spatial – hence social, economic, and ideological – annihilation has been quintessential to the colonial discourse, as transcribed by Machiavelli centuries ago and expounded in countless volumes of works since; from acts of Zionist militia-terrorism to State of Israel mayhem, from Deir Yassin to Shuja’iyya.

Israel justified and continues to justify its destruction of homes, neighbourhoods, and communities for reasons of “security,” using bulldozers, segregation walls, tightened economic valves, and advanced weaponry. These highly expensive operations of intensive and extended, direct and indirect sustenance of Palestinian emergency are an existential requirement for the continuation of its colonial superiority; therein maintaining a Palestinian inferiority and impeding the re-emergence of a societal modernity capable of leading a successful revolution. While the erasure of over 400 villages and the confiscation of land throughout and after the *Nakba* is often displayed, the hijacking of the major Palestinian urban centres of modernity is underplayed. Subsidiarity is not only financial or legal, as often discussed, but ultimately and more importantly, intellectual and therein societal. Economic dependency – e.g., through destruction – is predominantly a tool for ideological co-optation which in this case is twofold: first, enabling self-imposed socio-economic shackling through perpetuation (self-reinforcement) of non-individuality, and second, political castration.

Regarding the first, through citing history academia has shown that modernity and civic freedom, as well as decolonisation, require flexible, locational, and relational solidarities whose emergence is highly linked to alternative economies and societal practices, and therein the ability to choose beyond limited norms. Akin to other earthly processes, these require incubation and nurturing, hence partnerships, trust, and inspiring examples of fruition. Why would an inventor undertake the risks of start-up investment under conditions of blockade and periodic obliteration? How will new solidarities – hence ideas and practices – emerge under repeated displacement and societal amputation? The periodic Israeli spatial annihilation of

Palestinian communities has little to do with security and a lot to do with impeding organic – and quintessential – social development in favour of hegemonic (and even fascist) socio-political systems.

Second, and in line with the former, over the past few decades the Palestinian liberation discourse has shifted from core principles of equality and dignified living conditions to being largely a reaction (a sort of inverse) to the Zionist rhetoric. It prioritises concepts of state monopoly over violence, thus reinforcing certain limited concepts of security as essential to self-determination rather than the opposite. In addition, it employs exclusive self-defining terminology such as “national genus” in the Palestinian Declaration of Independence of 1988; mirroring the Zionist mythology of the “Jewish People” in place of the genealogically evident ethnic



Photo by Eduardo Soteras Jalil.

and cultural diversity of Palestinians, e.g., wedding customs in the Galilee are closer to those in Lebanon than to those in Hebron, and although Palestinians are predominantly Muslim, burial traditions (tomb, biographical headstones, and visits on mornings of religious feasts) are closer to those of Christianity than to those in the birthplace of the prophet Mohammad, in Saudi Arabia. Further, and while holding slogans of planned state-building, destruction is utilised to enable colonial spatial re-organisation and social re-grouping, one prioritising military surveillance possibilities and control over societal needs as seen in the reconstruction designs of the Jenin Refugee Camp after the uricide inflicted by Israel in its 2002 Operation Defensive Shield.



Questioning the reactive “reconstruction” imaginations projected in the media and commencing discussions over potential organic, innovative, and visionary initiatives is paramount for Gaza, in particular, and for the entire geography of Palestine, in general. The Zionist strategies of artificially induced emergency, cultivation of crude makeshift spaces as a mode of sustaining colonial superiority, and systematic impeding of socio-economic development of

the colonised subjects through spatial alienation and annihilation are partially enabled by the current Palestinian political and institutional approaches, which are antithetic and ecologically non-viable. Unlike many experts with manuals, I do not claim knowledge of golden solutions for breaking either the state of “emergency”

or mutated mentalities of “underdevelopment.” However, former Palestinian and regional experiences warn that regardless of the institution – whether UNRWA, Palestinian Authority, or neoliberal-private actors – a developer-based mass-reconstruction in Gaza will engrave the tragedy rather than set those aggrieved on the long tracks of rehabilitation. How true will the prophecy of Mohamad Joudeh of “dying a thousand times” turn out? And how can we impede the self-reinforcing processes of social de-development in face of the rising political neo-religiosity?

Natasha Aruri is a Palestinian urbanist, architect, and planner who studied in Palestine, Germany, and Spain. She is currently based in Berlin as a doctoral researcher of socio-spatial (de-)colonisation. She can be reached at n.aruri@me.com.



TESTIMONIES

Yousef M. Aljamal (25)

Malaysia

Profession: student, writer

Credit: Voices of Gaza

I can't stop thinking about my family in Gaza.

July 28, 2014

I spent my entire life in Gaza and only left last year to continue my studies in Malaysia. Being outside Gaza is really terrible right now, especially for those who have family back home. My parents are in Gaza, along with my four brothers and six sisters, and their families. My youngest brother Omar is just eight years old.

I'm in Jordan now. I have family here, and a wedding is planned soon after Eid. It is supposed to be a celebration, with family coming from the West Bank, aunts and uncles whom I have not seen in 15 years because of the lack of freedom of movement between Gaza and the West Bank. I decided to leave Malaysia and come to Amman early to be a little closer to Gaza at least.

I wish I could be there. It is much better to be inside Gaza at a time like this. If something bad were to happen to my family, it would happen to me too. I cannot stop thinking about them, about what is happening. I can't sleep at night, and I spend my days and nights following Twitter, listening to local radio, and speaking to my friends and family when I can.

I am watching the situation unfold second by second, reading nonstop breaking news, hearing reports of airstrikes here and there, sometimes close to my family home, or sometimes in other neighbourhoods. The details are usually sketchy at first and I frantically try to figure out what happened. Often, when I try to call my family, I can't reach them. They spend 21 hours a day without electricity, so their phone batteries die and they have no Internet connection.

One of my sisters had to evacuate her apartment and move to husband's family's home. Another sister evacuated her house with her children because it was especially dangerous. The area was repeatedly targeted.

But usually, when leaflets are dropped or people receive phone calls, they do not leave. Before the massacre in Shuja'iyya, the Israeli forces dropped leaflets, but many people ignored them because there is no safe place in Gaza. People don't know where to go so they do not leave. They have also learned from previous experience that people have been targeted while leaving their homes or in the places they sought shelter. UNRWA schools serving as shelters were attacked in 2009, and it happened again in Beit Hanoun this week.

The devastation I see is immense. Entire buildings have been erased, and whole families wiped out. Israel is doing this because it feels secure. No one will hold it accountable. As long as the world is silent, Israel will

continue to do the same thing to Gaza, targeting densely populated areas, in Shuja'iyya, Khuza'a, Khan Younis, Bureij – neighbourhoods and refugee camps crammed with hundreds of thousands of people.

Civilians of all ages have been killed. Journalists and ambulance workers, too. No one is safe. During the so-called humanitarian ceasefire on Sunday, July 20, Israeli forces were shooting at ambulances within ten minutes. Even if the temporary ceasefires hold, they only offer a short-term reprieve. They are not doing us any good. They are merely allowing a short time to evacuate the bodies. Dead bodies.

Israel kills more civilians when they suffer casualties on their side, especially if soldiers are killed. They carry out horrific attacks against Palestinian civilians. They are trying to push the people of Gaza to surrender, to stop supporting the resistance. But this backfires. The more they kill civilians, the more people support the resistance. We are defending ourselves. There is no one else to defend us. People whose houses have been destroyed usually support the resistance. They know that the UN and the ICRC cannot protect them.

My family are trying their best to keep going. They go to the market when they can. At night, they stay together in one room. War is war, and loss is loss. They are exhausted and they want the attacks to end, but they also want justice. We want a ceasefire that meets our demands for basic human rights, to be able to move freely, to have border crossings, to be able to cross in and out, to no longer be humiliated, to no longer see our people dying, to have access to raw materials, food, medicine. These are not "conditions," these are basic human rights. The world is upside down when the basic requirements for life must be included in a ceasefire agreement. These things should be taken for granted.

Everyone is worried that they will lose someone, or that their house will be destroyed. They have no place to go. But they are still resilient. People have the feeling that Israel is killing us anyway, no matter what, with the slow and soft aggression of the blockade. The full blockade of Gaza has been in force since 2007, but people around the world don't pay attention when there is no body count to keep track of.

I was in Gaza during the war in November 2012. People were calling me non-stop from the West Bank, from Jordan, and beyond. Now I understand how they felt – being outside, feeling helpless. But people around the world can help. The more people mobilise and become aware, the more the Israeli narrative can be challenged. How many massacres must take place before the international media takes notice, before politicians do something to end the siege and the occupation?

My youngest brother Omar is named after my older brother who was shot and killed by Israeli forces in 2004. He was born in 2006, just before Israel destroyed the only power plant in Gaza. He grew up in darkness. Gaza has suffered severe electricity shortages since then. Though only eight years old, Omar has experienced three major military operations. In 2008/2009, 2012, and now in 2014. He, like others his age, has survived countless attacks. He has heard thousands of explosions. His childhood has been stolen from him. What does Israel expect from him when he grows up? When I ask him, "How do you feel when Israel attacks Gaza?" his answer is "Normal."

An Interview with Pierre Krähenbühl

Commissioner-General for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

At a press conference held in Gaza on August 17, Pierre Krähenbühl, Commissioner-General for UNRWA, repeated his earlier call to investigate the shelling of UNRWA schools during the attack on Gaza last July. *“We were clear in blaming Israel for this act, and this page will not be turned till a full investigation is conducted and justice prevails. We insist on full accountability even if this matter will take time.”*

This Week in Palestine (TWIP) met earlier with Pierre Krähenbühl (PK) for his views on the war on Gaza.



Photo courtesy of UNRWA.

Abujarad, 30, male-Saham Musa Abujarad, 15, female-Rajaa Elian Abujarad, 31, female-Ahlam Naeem Abujarad, 13, female-Hania Abdelrahman Abujarad, 3, female-SamiH Naeem Abujarad, 1, male-Musa Abdelrahman Abujarad, 1, male-Mustafa Ouda Mohamed Abusalimah, 22, male-Emad Faisal Ouda Abusalimah, 18, male-Nizar FayeZ Himad Abusalimah, 38, male-Ghassan Salem Musa Abuazeb, 28, male-Mohamed Salem Khamis Shaat, 20, male-Ahmed Salem Khamis Shaat, 22, male-Mohamed Talal Sulaiman Alsanei, 20, male-Amjad Salem Khamis Shaat, 15, male-Iyad Ismaeel Sulaiman Alraqueb, 36, male-Yehyah Bessam Mohamed Alsurai, 20, male-Mohamed Bessam Moahmed Alsurai, 17, male-Mohamed Mustafa Darwish Salhiya, 56, male-Mohamed Reda Mustafa Salhia, 21, male-Mustafa Reda Mustafa Salhia, 22, male-Ibrahim Jamal Kamal Naser, 13, male-Wassim Reda Mustafa Salhia, 15, male-Ahmed Mahmoud Hussein Aziz, 34, male-Saeed Ali Abueissa, 31, male-Mohamed Awad Faris Naser, 25, male-Rasheed Khalid Faris Naser, 24, male-Raed Waleed Ali Laqan, 27, male-Bilal Ismaeel Mohamed Abudiqqa, 33, male-Mohamed Ismaeel Hussein Samour, 21, male-Ismaeel Ramadan Salmi Allawlihi, 21, male-Mohamed Rezq Mohamed Hussein Hamouda, 18, male-Mohamed Khalid Jameel Alzuwaidi, 20, male-Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed Alsaïdi, 19, male-Mohamed Abdulrahman Mahmoud Abuhamd, 25, male-Abdulrahman Mohamed Aouda Barak, 24, male-Tareq Samir Alhato, 22, male-Mahmoud Ali Alsherif, 25, male-Mohanad Yousef Mohamed Dahir, 22, male-Mohamed Fathi Ibrahim Alghalban, 26, male-Mohamed Ziad Ali Alzabout, 23, male-Hatim Ziad Ali Alzabout, 24, male-Moumen Teyseer Abudan, 24, male-Mahmoud Anwar Abushabab, 16, male-Abdelaziz Samir Abuzuaitar, male-Ahmed Tawfiq Mohamed Zannoun, 26, male-Saheeb Ali Jumaa Abuqoura, 22, male-Hameed Subhi Mohamed Abufawji, 22, male-Fahmy Abdelaziz Saad Abusaeed, 29, male-Khalid Riyad Mohamed Hamd, 24, male-Fuaad Jabar, male-Ahmed Maher Abutharya, 27, male-Abdallah Ghazi Almasri, 30, male-Ayman Nasri Alnaouq, 23, male-Mohamed Mahmoud Hussein Moumar, 30, male-Hamza Mahmoud Hussein Moumar, 23, male-Anas Mahmoud Hussein Moumar, 17, male-Narmeen Rafic Diab Eiyad, 19, female-Osama Rabhi Shahta Eiyad, 31, male-Ibrahim Aaref Ibrahim Alghalabei, 26, male-Mohamed Mohamed Ali Muhareb, 38, male-Alaa Jamal Eldin Mohamed Bardei, 34, male-Ahmed Eshaq Yousef Alramlawy, 32, male-Mohamed Ashraf Rafic Iyad, 5, male-Aahed Saad Musa Alstersik, 35, male-Ahmed Sami Diab Eiyad, 27, male-Adel Abdallah Salem Asaleem, 38, male-Mona Abdelrahman Mahmoud Eiyad, 41, female-Hala Subhi Saeedie Eiyad, 24, female-Khalil Osama Khalil Alhaiya, 6, male-Osama Khalil Ismaeel Alhaiya, 29, male-Deema Adel Abdallah Asleem, 2, female-Omar Jameel Subhi Hamouda, 10, male-Yousef Ahmed Younis Mustafa, 62, male-Amamah Osama Khalil Alhaiya, 8, female-Hala Saqer Hussein



TWIP: Unprecedented by an UNRWA Commissioner General, you recently gave speeches at the Security Council and the General Assembly. What prompted that?

PK: After the massive attacks on civilians, particularly the shelling of UNRWA's Jabalya School, I took that opportunity to condemn the attacks on civilians, and in my speeches, I asked for accountability and an investigation of the Jabalya incident.

TWIP: Mechanism?

PK: Not clear yet.

TWIP: How will you cope the day after?

PK: [sigh] It's mammoth. Currently, UNRWA gives aid to over 1,000,000 Gazans who have been suffering not only because of the war but also because of a seven-year-old siege. We also give assistance to 200,000 people in our schools and 300,000 in other locations in cooperation with several UN agencies. Remember that the new scholastic year is around the corner. I visited Gaza and saw despair. I also saw first-hand the damage in Beit Hanoun, Khuza'a, Shaja'iyya, Rafah, and other areas. This will require a huge and unhindered effort to rebuild. If the same constraints that existed after the last war remain, it will be very difficult to reconstruct.

TWIP: Any initial thoughts on psychological treatment?

PK: The best we can do at this point is give a sense of normalcy. We are facilitating the efforts of counsellors to work particularly with children. Simple things like playing with children can help in the rehabilitation process. An awful lot needs to be done though.

TWIP: When you were with ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross), you worked in many countries in crisis, such as Haiti, Peru, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan, etc. Can you compare?

PK: Each crisis has its own challenges. This one, however, is particularly challenging.

TWIP: What would be your biggest challenge?

PK: Bringing hope in the middle of it all.

TWIP: Are you hopeful?

PK: As I was inaugurating an UNRWA photo exhibition a few months ago, what caught my attention was that every single photograph had professional Palestinians providing service to a refugee. UNRWA is a key player in the development of human



capital. From what I see, given the opportunity, Palestinians can excel. The fact that there is so much potential gives me hope.

TWIP: A last word?

PK: Ninety-eight percent of our employees are Palestinians and, to a large extent, our employees in Gaza are refugees themselves. A word of gratitude and admiration is in order

particularly to our Gazan staff who have demonstrated incredible dedication to their people by risking their lives daily to go to work, which also means leaving their own families alone. Unfortunately, we have lost eleven staff members during this war. I would also like to say that we affirm our standing with the Palestinian people who deserve to feel hopeful and be free like all other peoples in the world. One thing is for sure, things cannot go back to where they were before this war.

“Pierre has huge natural authority borne of years of experience as the head of operations at the ICRC. He brings with him a detailed knowledge of international law and a protection reflex, which has proved invaluable in dealing with issues such as the conduct of hostilities and UNRWA’s neutrality. Moreover, Pierre also has a zen-like calm and clarity of vision which has greatly benefitted UNRWA and our beneficiaries amid the fog of war.”

A member of Pierre Krähenbühl’s management team



Gaza shelter. Photo courtesy of UNRWA.

TESTIMONIES

No Sanctuary in Gaza

Courtesy of UNRWA GFO

August 5, 2014

The UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Jabalia Elementary Girls School was supposed to be a sanctuary. When he and his family of 10, most of them children, fled their home in Beit Lahia, Ahmad Ramadan Ghaban thought they had reached a place where they would be protected from the violence and chaos engulfing the Gaza Strip. The UNRWA school may have been crowded, filled with internally displaced people in desperate circumstances, but at least it was safe.

At dawn on Wednesday, July 29, Ahmad was on his way back to the school from performing *fajer* (morning) prayers at a nearby mosque. He had barely entered the gates when the first artillery shell struck right in front of the school.

Terrified, Ahmad ran towards the classroom in which he and his family were staying. “I did not know what to do or where to go,” he says. “I kept thinking that we would all die. I kept thinking about my poor children. It is the worst feeling in the world, to be so completely helpless that you can’t save your own family.”

UNRWA had communicated the coordinates of the school – and the fact that it was sheltering over 3,000 displaced people, many of whom had been warned by Israel to evacuate their homes – 17 times to the Israeli authorities. A preliminary analysis of fragments, craters, and other damages, however, suggests that there were at least three impacts of Israeli artillery against the school.

“It was atrocious,” Ahmad says, remembering. “The carnage, the blood, the screams, dead bodies everywhere. It is indescribable.” His family members were among the lucky ones who survived the attack. UNRWA has been unable to confirm an official death toll, but there were multiple casualties, including children, as well as the UNRWA guard protecting the facility.

“Children, women, and the elderly were killed in the school. Why? For what reason?” Ahmad asks. “What crime did they commit to meet such a fate?” And, he wonders – “If even the schools are not safe, where can the people of Gaza go?”

Gaza's Youngest and Most Vulnerable Are at Greatest Risk

By June Kunugi and Monica Awad



The violence and destruction that have swept Gaza and its 1.8 million people over the last month have shocked and shamed the world. Children below the age of 18 make up half of Gazan society, and they have borne the brunt of the violence, which has left them with deep scars and wounds.

More than 430 children were killed in the first 28 days of the escalation; this is approximately one-third of all civilian deaths. Seventy percent of the children killed were age 12 or under. This conflict has taken a devastating toll on the youngest and most vulnerable, and only a ceasefire will bring an end to the suffering and allow the wounds to begin to heal.



UNICEF-SoP/Elbaba.

Alhaiya, 28, female-Heba Hamid Mohamed Alsheikh Khalil, 13, female-Tawfiq Birawy Salem Marshoud, 52, male-Marwa Salman Ahmed Alsarsawy, 13, female-Deena Rushdie Omar Hamada, 16, female-Eman Mohamed Ibrahim Hamada, 39, female-Maysa Abdelrahman Saeed Alsarsawy, 36, female-Mohamed Rami Fathi Eiyad, 2, male-Fadaa Rafic Diab Eiyad, 23, female-Gada Subhi Saadi Eiyad, 11, female-Shereen Fathi Osman Eiyad, 17, female-Ghada Ibrahim Sulaiman Edwan, 38, female-Husni Mahmoud Yousef Alabbasy, 55, male-Akram Mahmoud Abdelsalam Almatouq, 39, male-Wassam Majdi Mohamed Hamouda, 30, male-Salem Ali Abusaada, male-Mohamed Jihad Mohamed Alfara, 29, male-Abdallah Mansour Radwan Emarra, 22, male-Fadi Ziad Hassan Asaleem, 9, male-Shadi Ziad Hassan Asaleem, 15, male-Tala Akram Ahmed Alaatwey, 6, female-Khadijah Ali Musa Shahada, 62, female-Ola Ziad Hassan Asaleem, 11, female-Mohamed Raed Ihsan Aakila, 19, male-Esraa Yasser Atia Hamdi, 29, female-Layla Hassan Mahmoud Alshaaer, 30, female-Mohamed Ayman Mahmoud Alshaaer, 5, male-Salah Saleh Mohamed Alshaaer, 57, male-Heballah Akram Saleh Alshaaer, 7, female-Najah Saad Aldin Mahmoud Daraji, 49, female-Abdallah Yousef Abdeljabar Daraji, 3, male-Yousef Shaaban Ziyada, 44, male-Jameel Shaaban Ziyada, 53, male-Shaaban Jameel Ziyada, 12, male-Mohamed Mahmoud Saleem Almouqadema, 34, male-Raaed Mansour Nayef, male-Mohamed Rajaa Mohamed Handam, 15, male-Mohamed Bahdar Khalil Aldagham, 25, male-Basil Mohamed Ibrahim Albareem, 20, male-Ismaeel Abdelaziz Abdelhameed Alkurdi, 21, male-Ibrahim Khalil Abdammar, 13, male-Ibrahim Salem Jumaa Alosehban, 20, male-Akram Mohamed Ali Alosekafi, 63, male-Eman Khalil Abdammar, 9, female-Khalil Salem Ibrahim Masbah, 53, male-Rahah Akram Ismaeel Abujumaa, 4, female-Saji Hassan Akram Alhalaq, 4, female-Samia Hamid Mohamed Alsheikh Khalil, 3, female-Saad Mohamed Abdelrazeq Alhalaq, 62, female-Samar Osama Khalil Alhalaq, 29, female-Essam Khalil Abdammar, 4, male-Aaesha Ali Mahmoud Ziad, 54, male-Abdelrahman Akram Mohamed Alosekafi, 22, male-Abdelrahman Abdelrazaq Abdelrahman Alsheikh Khalil, 24, male-Abdrabba Ahmed Mohamed Ziad, 58, male-Essam Atia Saeed Alosekafi, 26, male-Ali Mohamed Hassan Alosekafi, 27, male-Fatima Abdelrahman Abdelkadar Abuamouna, 55, female-Kanan Hassan Akram Alhalaq, 6, female-Mohamed Hassan Mohamed Alosekafi, 53, female-Marah Shaker Ahmed Ajjamal, 11, female-Marwan Mouneer Saleh Qanfad, 23, male-Masaab Alkheir Salah Eldin Saeed Alosekafi-Mona Sulaiman Ahmed Alsheikh Khalil, 49, female-Hala Akram Hassan Alhalaq, 27, female-Hani Mohamed Ahmed Alhalaq, 29, male-Yousef Salem Hamtou Habib, 62, male-Abdelrahman Abdelrazaq Abdelrahman, 24, male-Ashraf Ahmed Musa Alselawi, 36, male-Turkeiya Alaabd Mohamed Albass, 77, female-Aya Bahjat Hassan Abusultan, 17, female-Maftiya



UNICEF-SoP/Elbaba.

For many children, this is the third military operation that they have experienced. There are 400,000 thousand children in Gaza who need psychosocial support to help them heal from the fear of bombardment and the trauma of injury or loss.

In the first 28 days of the escalation, at least 2,750 Palestinian children were injured. Many of these children will need long-term rehabilitation. Some of them will need treatment that is unavailable in Gaza, and they will have to apply for special permission to leave the coastal territory – unless the closure that hinders the travel of people and goods is brought to an end.

There is no safe place in Gaza. Preliminary assessments show that an estimated 65,000 people have lost their homes. At least 255,000 Gaza residents remain displaced, seeking shelter in schools and in the homes of relatives or friends. Overcrowding is creating a public health crisis, with increased cases of diarrhea, which can be life threatening for the very young. Scabies and lice are also spreading.

At the Carmel School for Boys in Gaza City, hundreds of people sought refuge. Taiseer Khamees Hassan and the 12 members of his family fled from Al Zaytoun neighbourhood and are living in a classroom of the school.



“The bombing goes on day and night,” he says. “We can’t sleep. We always have our children in our laps. What will we do with this life that was created for us? How can I complain that there are no blankets? We need medicine for sick children, medicine for fever, and medicine for diarrhea.”

“I want stability. I want to go back to our home, to our lives. I want to feed my children and watch them grow up,” he goes on.

The overcrowding is aggravated by a shortage of water caused by the inability of technicians to access the eastern parts of Gaza and the critical water infrastructure. Six water-authority personnel were killed while on duty in the first 28 days of fighting, and officials at one point said that they would no longer risk sending their workers out to repair water lines.

Gaza’s only power plant was bombed and put out of commission in July, worsening the existing power outages. During the 72-hour ceasefire from August 5 to 7, some repairs made it possible to provide Gaza with three hours of electricity a day. Power is essential to run pumps that push water into homes, desalination plants, and sewage networks.

Still, drinking water and water to wash are expensive or hard to find. Gaza’s aquifer is contaminated and its water undrinkable without desalination. Thousands of tonnes of waste have accumulated in Gaza’s streets; while some collection has taken place, the final dumping site remains inaccessible. Clean water is the first line of defence against the spread of disease, and without it, Gaza’s children are at risk.

It is UNICEF’s role, responsibility, and moral obligation to ensure that these children have a better future. Whether by providing basic essential humanitarian supplies to children and their families, continuously advocating for the protection of children, or helping children to regain a sense of normality in their abnormal lives, we can restore hope.

UNICEF is helping to ease the water crisis by providing communal water points – three have been installed and ten more await Israeli approval for entry into Gaza. It is also helping to coordinate the work of the water authorities, repair water tankers, and provide support for critical repairs to infrastructure across Gaza.

In partnership with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS), UNICEF distributed thousands of adult and baby hygiene kits and jerry cans to tens of thousands of Palestinians in shelters. The agency is also distributing thousands of blankets, sleeping mats, and items of clothing for children and women, many of whom fled with only the clothes on their backs.



“We were playing when suddenly I heard the sound of planes above in the sky,” recalls 12-year-old Mohammed from Gaza.



In cooperation with the World Food Programme, e-vouchers for water, hygiene products, and food were distributed to families whose homes have been destroyed, and the hope is to support up to 300,000 people.

Through its partnership with PRCS, the Palestinian Centre for Democracy and Conflict Resolution (PCDCR) Ma'an, Tamer, and Al Nayzak, UNICEF is also providing daily specialised psychosocial support and extracurricular activities for

thousands of children and adolescents who are seeking shelters in Gaza public schools that are managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The PCDCR deployed 160 counsellors to hospitals and shelters from the first days of the escalation to help children cope with the distress.

In working with UNICEF, our partners have demonstrated time and again that their knowledge and expertise can bring about real benefits for children. But this is not enough.

It is high time for those in positions of command or leadership, who have a legal duty in both Israel and Gaza, to exercise maximum restraint and prioritise the protection of children from violence and harm. They also have an obligation to enable humanitarian access and to permit aid workers to assist those in need. Aid workers need to complete search-and-rescue operations, repair critical water and electricity infrastructure, access remote areas, and carry out needs assessments.

For the sake of children, all sides to this conflict must put an end to the violence. Without a just and lasting peace, we cannot guarantee full respect for the rights of children. These children who have lost their childhood deserve our collective support. They have a right to a better childhood.

June Kunugi is the Special Representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the State of Palestine. Over the past 22 years, she has served in nine countries, advocating and promoting children's rights. Monica Awad is the Communication Specialist who has worked for the past 18 years with UNICEF based in Jerusalem.



UNICEF/SoP/Elbaba.

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Ghadeer (36 years old)

Gaza City

Profession: Media officer

Credit: Voices of Gaza

July 20, 2014

My son asks if we are going to die today.

Ghadeer is the mother of two small boys and works as a media officer for a human rights organisation in Gaza City. Hikmat (8) is now living through his third offensive on Gaza. Ahmad (6) was born shortly after Operation Cast Lead. In conversation with Voices of Gaza this morning, Ghadeer expressed deep anxiety about the on-going attacks, saying, "Things are getting worse and worse here. Last night was the worst ever. Wallah, I'm speechless." Below, she describes the impact of the situation on her children.

Inside our weary bodies and souls, something will stay broken.

I'm a mother of two little boys, Hikmat (8) and Ahmad (6). Like any normal mother in this world, all I want is to keep my boys safe and happy but, unfortunately, it seems that this wish is just impossible. Why? Simply and briefly, because I'm a Palestinian and I live in Gaza.

To be a Palestinian from Gaza means that you can be under attack from Israel at any time. It means that you are just a postponed target, and all you can do is wait to face your destiny. This is how we live in Gaza, both with and without war. I have experienced three wars in the last six years. During the first war on Gaza, in 2008/2009, my apartment was destroyed when the Israeli occupation forces targeted the Palestinian government complex. At the time, I was seven months pregnant, and I had been decorating my baby's room! In the second war, which took place in November 2012, I learned exactly what being homeless really means. Israel targeted the building where my family was living and in which I was staying. We evacuated the building and went to stay at my sister's house.

During war, the days are too long. Every single hour that passes feels like a whole year. Since the beginning of this war, I'm living the worst days and nights ever, as the peaceful moments are so few. As we are fasting, every day we have our morning and evening meals, listening to the bombing outside and asking God to keep us and the people of Gaza safe. Israeli airplanes are shelling houses. Many houses have

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been destroyed over the heads of children and women. These children and women are human beings. They have names, dreams, and beloved ones. The photographs of those victims are heart-breaking, and I can't stop my mind from drawing awful pictures of me and my family with our house being bombed over our heads just like them.

Our bodies shake and our hearts sink with every single airstrike. I try not to freak out so my two little boys won't either, but sometimes I'm just a big failure! During daylight hours, all of us gather together in the same place – a room or a corner – listening to the shelling, trying to figure out which are the targeted areas, and following the news second by second. I keep the boys inside the house all the time. I can't even let them go out into the backyard or to the rooftop. I'm doing my best to keep them away from this insanity, but how can I when it's everywhere?! I wish I could cover their ears so they wouldn't hear the sound of bombing. I feel like I'm dying as I see the fear in their eyes.

At night, things are much harder. I spend every night moving my boys from one room to another, looking for safety. I'm too frightened to sleep, not only because of the loud noises caused by the continuous bombing, but also because I think I need to be awake, monitoring the situation around in order to decide, according to the sounds of the shelling, whether to keep my boys in this room, or to move them to another one. We have had no electricity for three days now and I guess you can imagine how it feels without electricity in circumstances like those we are facing in Gaza during this war.

The Israeli crimes committed against civilians in Gaza undermine my faith in international law and international bodies. It seems as though these bodies were created to defend Israel and cover up its crimes against the innocent people of Palestine. A massacre was committed last night in Al-Shuja'iyya neighbourhood, in the east of Gaza. The reality here is terribly bloody, and what is happening is so much more than any human can bear. Hundreds of artillery shells are falling on houses even at this very moment. The photographs of the victims are more than horrendous. People are running out of their houses, dead bodies are in the streets, and ambulances can't reach those who have been murdered. Every single picture reminds me of *Al-Nakba*.

I guess that we Palestinians should only believe in the law of power. We face death every moment of every day, and the whole world is silent. When they speak, they tell us about Israel's right to self-defence! Why? I need someone wise to tell me why. We are under occupation and Israel is the occupying force. These are not two equal sides.

This morning, Hikmat and Ahmad woke up to the sound of a huge explosion. I hugged their shaking bodies, asking them not to be afraid. Hikmat, who is 8, said, "I hate Israel. I hate all the Israeli people." I asked him, "Why, sweetheart?" He answered, "Don't you know why, Mum? Don't you see what they are trying to do? They want to kill us."

The Israelis claim that we teach our kids hate, but we don't. This is how Palestinian children start to feel hatred towards Israel. After 13 days of war, my



two boys are able to know the difference between F16s and Apache helicopters, and they play guessing games together, distinguishing between tank shelling and airstrikes. This is how our kids spend their summer!

Ahmad, my younger boy, asks me every morning, "Mum, we are not going to die today, are we?" Hikmat answers, saying, "Don't worry, Ahmad. Mum and Dad will protect us." This sentence makes me speechless. I don't know what to say or what to tell them. I would die for my kids but I'm afraid because I know that I am helpless. There is no way to protect my boys and, except God, no one knows what will happen in the next second. The war is still raging in the Gaza Strip. There will be an end, but inside our weary bodies and souls something will stay broken.

Debunking Israeli Arguments

By Diana Buttu

In the aftermath of Israel's month-long assault on Gaza, one is left astonished by the lack of international response to Israel's killing of more than 1,900 Palestinians, including 448 children, the destruction of thousands of homes, the bombing of mosques, schools, hospitals, and ambulances, and the displacement of thousands within the tiny Gaza Strip. There are a number of reasons for this silence – including the presence of powerful lobby groups, the disdain for Palestinian military resistance, and the decline of global leadership. But one of the reasons that Israel has successfully managed to carry out this massive assault is that Israel's assaults are accompanied by formidable propaganda campaigns that target international public opinion and politicians. These campaigns aim both to obscure facts and dehumanise Palestinians so as to allow Israel to maintain its military assault with

little criticism. Below are some of the myths that Israel continues to perpetuate.

Myth: Israel's military assault is self-defensive in nature. No other country in the world would tolerate "rockets."

Reality: No other country has to tolerate rockets because no other country has maintained a long military occupation coupled with siege. Israel's military assault was not and is not self-defensive. Israel launched air strikes against the Gaza Strip before and after the kidnap of three Israelis in mid-June. It must be noted that Israel initially, and without evidence, blamed Hamas for this kidnap incident, thereby attempting to justify its ransacking and invasion of more than 2,000 homes, its kidnap and arrest of more than 500 Palestinians, including members of Parliament, its killing of 11 Palestinians in the West Bank, and its military assault on the Gaza Strip, killing 2. All this happened before a single rocket was fired from Gaza.

Moreover, given that Israel maintains its military occupation over the Gaza Strip, it cannot claim self-defence. Israel has a choice: either maintain its military occupation and accept the consequences or end its military occupation, declare its borders, and claim it is acting in "self-defence."

Mohamed Hussein Ziyada, 72, female-Bayan Abdellatif Ismaeel Ziyada, 39, female-Ahmed Fayeze Jumaa Yaseen, 23, male-Manwa Abdalbaset Ahmed Alsaabei, 37, female-Mahmoud Musa Abdallah Abuounza, 25, male-Ahmed Abdelrahman Ahmed Abuteem, 26, male-Mohamed Hani Mohamed Alhalaq, 2, male-Ahmed Sulaiman Mahmoud Sahmoud, 34, male-Bilal Jaber Mohamed Alashab, 22, male-Razan Tawfiq Ahmed Abujaamei, 14, male-Raaed Ismaeel Mohamed Albardaweil, 26, male-Sulaiman Ahmed Sulaiman Abujaamei, 20, male-Fatima Riyab Abdelrahman Abujaamei, 25, female-Anjoud Tayseer Mohamed Abujaamei, 1, female-Sabah Tawfeeq Mohamed Abujaamei, 39, female-Jawdat Tawfeeq Ahmed Abujaamei, 13, male-Tawfeeq Tawfeeq Ahmed Abujaamei, 5, male-Hayfaa Tawfeeq Ahmed Abujaamei, 9, female-Yasmeen Ahmed Salameh Abujaamei, 25, female-Shahnaaz Waleed Mohamed Abujaamei, 28, female-Saheelah Bassam Ahmed Abujaamei, 2, female-Yasser Ahmed Mohamed Abujaamei, 27, male-Fatima Tayseer Ahmed Abujaamei, 8, female-Sumoud Nasser Mustafa Siyam, 26, female-Mohamed Mahrous Salam Siyam, 26, male-Bader Aldin Nabil Mahrous Siyam, 4, male-Ahmed Ayman Mahrous Siyam, 17, male-Mustafa Nabil Mahrous Siyam, 8, male-Ghaidaa Nabil Mahrous Siyam, 8, female-Shereen Mohamed Salam Siyam, 32, female-Shouhoor Dalal Nabil Mahrous Siyam, 8, female-Kamal Mahrous Salam Siyam, 27, male-Renad Tayseer Ahmed Abujaamei, 2, female-Abdallah Tarad Abdallah Abuhageer, 16, male-Yousef Ahmed Musa Sheikh Aleid, 23, male-Hussam Hussam Abuqeenas, 5, male-Unidentified from Abujaamei house, male-Seraj Yasser Ahmed Abujaamei, 4, male-Zakariya Masoud Mohamed Alashqar, 24, male-Aliaa Khadar Yousef Siyam, 33, female-Fayeze Saber Ahmed Siyam, 67, female-Rayan Bassam Ahmed Abujaamei, 9, male-Fatima Mahmoud Ahmed Abujaamei, 64, female-Bilal Abudaqqa, male-Abdelrahman Alqarra, male-Mahmoud Hussein Rushdi Alnikhala, 19, male-Raaed Aasem Saleem Dawoud, 36, male-Kamal Talal Hassan Almasri-Ahmed Mohamed Hassan Ezam, 19, male-Omar Shaaban Hassan Ziyada, 32, male-Manwa Abdalbaset Ahmed Albei, 30, male-Abdelrahman Diab Mustafa Alfaqiya, 26, male-Mustafa Khamis Mustafa Alwan, 22, male-Abdallah Mohamed Quwaraei, 17, male-Fatima Mahmoud Loutfi Alhaji, 14, female-Abdelrahman Farajallah Abdelrahman Altoum, 22, male-Sulaiman Ali Ahmed Abuvesevus, 30, male-Saleh Mohamed Saleh Badwey, 29, male-Wassam Mohamed Kamal Masoud, 25, male-Yousef Ghazi Atia Hamdia, 24, male-Moataz Jamal Atia Hamdia, 18, male-Aaed Jamal Atia Hamdia, 22, male-Saaeda Thabit Saeed Alnikhala, 54, female-Mujahed Waleed Hassan Alaqaad-Mohamed Hafid Ragheb Alzaini, 25, male-Ibrahim Shaaban Mustafa Bakroun, 39, male-Tamer Nayef Saad Joundeya, 32, male-Rahma Ahmed Shaaban Joundeya, 61, female-Mahran Kamel Ibrahim Joundeya, 32, male-Yasmeen Nayef Hatim Alyazji, 4,

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Myth: Israel targets only “combatants” and avoids civilian casualties.

Reality: Israel has adopted a loose definition of “combatant” to include any person who is affiliated in any way with Hamas. This runs contrary to international law, which requires

that military operations be confined to those who are actually fighting. For example, Israel deliberately targeted Gaza police chief Taysir al-Batsh, killing 18 members of his family. Police are civilians according to international law. Israel has also attacked hospitals, mosques, water treatment facilities, sewer lines, the Gaza Strip’s sole power plant, and other civilian infrastructure that has nothing to do with Hamas.

According to UN estimates, 80 percent of those killed are civilians, including 448 children and even medical personnel. Using Israel’s logic, this also means that any home of any past or present Israeli soldier or police officer is a legitimate target as is any civilian area where military is present (such as the Ministry of Defence in Tel Aviv).

The “knock on the roof” procedure – dropping a missile on a house in advance of its bombing – has resulted in deaths. According to Philip Luther of Amnesty International, “There is no way that firing a missile at a civilian home can constitute an effective “warning.” Amnesty International has documented cases of civilians killed or injured by such missiles in previous Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip,” he said.

In addition, while Israel claims that it distributes leaflets, these leaflets do not tell people where they are to go to be safe. As noted by Israeli human rights organisations, “Dispersal of leaflets does not grant the military permission to consider the area “sterile”, assume that no civilians were left in the area and then proceed to attack civilian sites. The military must not assume that all residents have indeed left their homes.” (<http://adalah.org/eng/Articles/2307/Joint-letter:-Grave-concern-regarding-Israeli-to>) Moreover, weaponry currently being used – such as fléchettes – is designed to increase casualties in densely populated areas.

Myth: Hamas uses Palestinians as human shields.

Reality: This is an effective mechanism to deprive Palestinians of their humanity by blaming Palestinian deaths on Palestinians. While the resistance movements fight from within the small area of the Gaza Strip, they do not use Palestinian civilians as cover. To date, international investigations have concluded that there is no evidence to substantiate these long-standing Israeli claims and yet the claims continue to be accepted by many, unchallenged. Ironically, the converse has been well established: Israel has



Photo by Shareef Sarhan.

How is it that Israel, a nuclear power with the strongest army in the Middle East, successfully manages to carry out three massacres in Gaza and still claims that it is acting in self-defence against a defenceless, civilian refugee population? How can Israel blame Palestinians for their own deaths?



Photo by Shareef Sarhan.

used Palestinian civilians as human shields when carrying out its military operations.

Myth: This is about Hamas/Gaza. Hamas seeks the destruction of Israel.

Reality: This is not about Hamas; this is about Palestine. Israel conveniently ignores the Likud party platform, the Yisreal Beitenu platform, and the Jewish Home platform (all members of the current Israeli governing coalition) that call for either no Palestinian state or the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. This attack on Gaza has little to do with Hamas but more to do with breaking up Palestinian unity and dividing Palestinians. Israel routinely kills and imprisons non-Hamas members. We recall, all too well, the bombing campaigns in the West Bank as well as the isolation of President Arafat. Israel seeks the destruction of Palestine – as evidenced by the *Nakba*, the *Naksa*, its on-going colonisation, its policy of demolishing homes, and its policy of expelling Palestinians (or revoking their residency). In Israel's eyes we are an inconvenient "demographic threat" – irrespective of who we vote for.

These talking points were not new to this latest attack. One can only hope that the Palestinian Authority and the Palestine Liberation Organization will learn the value of media, as the Israelis have, and will put into place an effective media strategy to counter these myths before the next attack takes place.

Diana Buttu is a Palestinian-Canadian lawyer, analyst, and communications consultant. She frequently appears on CNN, BBC, MSNBC, Al Jazeera, and other news outlets.

TESTIMONIES

Maysam Yousef

A blogger and a body-language trainer from Gaza

Original testimony for This Week in Palestine

It never ceases to amaze me how twisted the world's logic is. The Palestinian team is now in Cairo negotiating basic human rights, which are supposed to be granted to the people of Gaza without having to shed so much blood. The world is blaming a stateless, arm-less population that has been subjected to an inhumane blockade since 2006 for demanding their rights!

Since when does a people have to negotiate clean water and cooking gas? Since when does a people have to sacrifice so many lives so that the neighbouring countries would, or would not, very kindly open the borders and allow food in? Since when are entire families bombed inside their own homes and then blamed for being used as human shields? Where is a family supposed to be during war time? Since when does a country with 200 nuclear warheads and internationally banned weapons demand the disarming of the resistance who have hand-made rockets that do not pose any serious threat and that are used in a mere act of self-defence?

The world has to wake up from its self-imposed delusion and stand up for justice. There is nothing wrong with a people fighting their oppressor who's destroying their homes and killing their families and ultimately denying them the most basic human rights. The world has to learn to distinguish between the victim and the victimiser, the terrorist who kills hundreds of children and shamelessly targets UN schools and civilian homes and the freedom fighters who are sacrificing their lives to gain basic human rights.



Photo by Eduardo Soteras Jalil.

Crippled

By Riyam Kafri AbuLaban

July 22, 2014

9:00 a.m.

I have been awake for over two hours. I have been stuck on my bed for two hours. This is the case these days. Inability to get out of bed is simply the norm. Ahmed has gone to work, the children are sleeping soundlessly – what you get when they finally doze off at 1 a.m. – this used to be my favourite time of the day, when the children are sleeping and there is absolute quiet. My brain steadily quiets down, my breathing becomes rhythmically audible, and there it is, my centre waiting to swallow me into its warmth and silence. But not these days. These days silence only means the relentless jumping from one news website to the other, the fanatical scrolling down my Facebook newsfeed and my Twitter home page. Silence is



female-Mayar Nayef Alyazji, 2, female-Wajdi Mahmoud Ali Alyazji, 54, male-Nabia Eissa Sefinaz Alyazji, 51, female-Anas Alyazji, 5, male-Karam Ibrahim Atia Barham, 25, male-Nithal Ali Mohamed Abudeqqa, 26, male-Nithal Jumaa Mohamed Abuatia, 42, male-Mohamed Abdelkarim Atia Almasri, 30, male-Mohamed Ibrahim Saleem Abuhadaf, 23, male-Mohamed Khamis Matar Alghalban, 25, male-Aya Yasser Alqasas, female-Aisha Yasser Alqasas, female-Nesma Iyad Saad Alqasas, 11, female-Lamia Iyad Saad Alqasas, 12, female-Yasmeen Alqasas, female-Israa Yasser Khadar Alqasas, 11, female-Samia Mohamed Nasser Alqasas, 33, female-Arwa Alqasas, female-Iyad Mohamed Sulaiman Sabah, 18, male-Aarfa Sultan Maarouf, 70, male-Nayef Abuadwan, male-Thaker Ayman Siyam, male-Mohamed Mahmoud Abdelhameed Almaghreby, 23, male-Ibrahim Asaad Abdelkader Alqarra, 34, male-Fadi Aazmi Bareem, male-Osman Salem Bareem, male-Salem Abdelmajeed Bareem, male-Ibrahim Deeb Ahmed Alkilani, 53, male-Mahmoud Shaaban Mohamed Derbas, 37, male-Yasser Ibrahim Deeb Alkilani, 8, male-Elyas Ibrahim Deeb Alkilani, 4, male-Taghreed Shaaban Mohamed Alkilani, 45, female-Susan Ibrahim Deeb Alkilani, 11, female-Reem Ibrahim Deeb Alkilani, 12, female-Aida Shaaban Mohamed Derbas, 47, female-Yaseen Ibrahim Deeb Alkilani, 9, male-Einas Shaaban Mohamed Derbas, 30, female-Sawra Shaaban Mohamed Derbas, 41, female-Fadi Bashir Alebadlah, male-Jihad Mahmoud Abdelhamid Almaghreby, 22, male-Mohamed Saeed Mohamed Abdelghafour, 22, male-Abdelkader Khalid Yousef Alharazeen, 24, male-Mohamed Ahmed Abdelrahman Ammar, 41, male-Saheel Fareed Shahda Jelou, 48, male-Mohamed Abdelaziz Aouda Ashtiyw, 27, male-Abdelrahman Mohamed Abdelfatah Alaal, 23, male-Mariam Hassan Awad Ezam, 50, female-Fatima Hassan Awad Ezam, 72, female-Moueen Mohamed Mahrous Siyam, 5, male-Rezq Nayef Aatyawy Edwan, 35, male-Wael Jamal Harb, 32, male-Hassan Khadar Hassan Beker, 56, male-Mahmoud Sulaiman Mahmoud Abusubha, 19, male-Abdallah Ismaeel Omar Albaheysi, 27, male-Museib Saleh Aouda Salamah, 19, male-Mohamed Naser Khalid Haroon, 28, male-Naji Jamal Mohamed Alfajem, 25, male-Ibtihal Ibrahim Aayesh Alremahi, female-Eman Ibrahim Aayesh Alremahi, female-Yousef Ibrahim Aayesh Alremahi, male-Salwa Abdelaziz Ahmed Almenify, 50, female-Samira Send Mohamed Menify, 19, female-Ahmed Abuhaseera, male-Layla Abbas Ismaeel Alwaheedy, 60, female-Atia Nasser Dardouna, 26, male-Haitham Samir Khalil Alagha, 25, male-Waleed Sulaiman Abudahir, 21, male-Khadra Awad Abutaylakh, 50, female-Mohamed Abdrabah Ali Alqarra, 22, male-Zakariya Sulaiman Shahada Abudeqqa, male-Mohamed Faris Mohamed Alhemadiya, 17, male-Mohamed Atia Mohamed Alhemadiya, 24, male-Mohamed Mohamed Abdelsalam Albakri, 22, male-Fatima Ahmed Abdelkader Aaljarra, 14, female-Yasmeen Ahmed Aouda Abumur, 28, female-Sameh Zahri

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nothing but a symptom of the unequivocal feeling of helplessness. I am crippled. Gaza has left me crippled with...anger? Hate? Shame?

I am ashamed of humanity and its inability to wake up in the face of inhumane, indiscriminate shelling and bombing of civilians in what is perpetually the largest open-air prison. Gaza is approximately 45 km in length and 15 km in width – 15 km in width. That is not even a half-marathon in length!

I sit in silence in front of my computer screen starting one paragraph after another, deleting one paragraph after another. Nothing I write can come close to describing the images and sound bites coming out of Gaza. Nothing I can put into words will do Gaza justice. To date 23 families have been completely wiped out and the death toll seems to be racing towards 2,000 at the speed of light. Images of children cut in half, legs severed from their bodies, and brains pouring out of cracked-open skulls are now a constant. They form an arabesque background to our everyday life. Life these days seems mundane and unimportant, our daily worries and details seem to cower in shame in front of the ferocious atrocities that are taking place in Gaza. The silence I used to love so much while the children slept, the silence that used to bring me peace of mind is now infiltrated. It is drowned out by status-sharing,



Photo by Shareef Sarhan.



retweeting, photo-posting, and article-sharing on every possible social media outlet. My silence, my inability to write or speak coherently about what is happening to Gaza is another symptom of this new helplessness I have been feeling. I am crippled...with anger? Hate? Shame? Pain?

For the past month I have had a hole in my heart, a blunt pain, as though a ton of metal is sitting on my sternum preventing my ribcage from rising to breathe. The blunt pain is unbearable at night; it turns into burning unfallen tears that refuse to be shed, into urgent prayers that trip on themselves as they pour unconsciously out of my mouth. A blunt pain masterfully diagnosed by psychologists, humanists,

children. I cannot look at them without being whisked through their optical nerves to the image of the orphaned toddler who only stopped crying when doctors sat him beside his mother's dead body. He immediately quieted down waiting for his mom to wake up. My dear child, your wait, I am afraid, is an eternal one.

I cannot bathe my children and dress them without thinking of the endless number of children with no mothers to bathe and dress them ever again. Who will lull them to sleep at night? Who will hold them in her arms and assure them that everything is going to be ok? Who will bake birthday cakes and blow up balloons? Who will buy tiaras and birthday hats? I cannot look my children in the eyes knowing that in this small displaced and disconnected country, just a few hours away from my seemingly normal home, there are children orphaned forever. There are



Photo by Mohamed Zanoon.

and scientists as a broken heart. Have you ever had a broken heart? It feels like an unexploded missile has landed in your chest cavity, cracking the walls and valves of your atria but never completely shattering them into pieces.

I have a hole in my heart the size of Gaza and the depth of its sea. It is a hole so deep you can almost feel the heat of the Earth's core radiating with...anger? Hate? Frustration? Or is it shame? Yes it must be shame. I am ashamed of my own

“

“One should feel obliged to think about what it means to look at them [images of great cruelties and crimes], about the capacity to assimilate what they show.” *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag

”

children forever maimed. An entire generation physically handicapped and emotionally scarred. What do you suppose they think or feel?

As the profane images of the massacres in Gaza invaded our newsfeeds on social-media networks and television newscasts, many of us sat mesmerised in disbelief. As humans we are lured by the images of calamity. In her essay collection *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag argues that there

is something pornographic about images of calamity. Humans, according to Sontag, are lured by images of disaster and pain, but this time there was nothing lurking. The images blazing live from Shajaeya, Khuza, Khan Younis, Rafah, and the entire Gaza Strip are not images of the other. They are a projection of a parallel universe that very much exists. Gaza is not the other. Gaza is us. This is the reality that Palestinians have not faced in years, the unyielding brutality of Israeli occupation that many of us have so luxuriously been able to ignore since Oslo. The feeling of



helplessness does not stem from fear but from utter shock at relearning what occupation is. The genocidal facts that come out of Gaza tell the true narrative of the Palestinian struggle. We are all targets. We are all prisoners in an open-air prison. We are not in control; we are not free. Regardless of any feelings of pride and high morale, we are ultimately the occupied, the battered, the killed, and the orphaned.

I am not crippled because I am afraid; I am crippled because I, like many others, fell for the hologram of a peaceful life. I let my daily simplistic desires take over. I was busy potty training, feeding, and planning a bright future for my children. But now it is apparent to me, there is no bright future for any child if the status quo continues. There is no peace if we are nothing but moving targets for gun-happy settlers. The bright future I have been romantically dreaming of for Basil and Taima is not possible with 10,000 injured in Gaza over the course of a month. It is not possible with so many children recounting the horror of being stuck underneath the rubble of their own homes. Any bright future should include a just and fair solution for all of us. We cannot continue to live like this.

I am crippled because I am finally waking up, and I am trying to come to terms with the reality all of us have not yet faced. This is exactly how Sleeping Beauty must have felt after waking up – dazed, disoriented, and helpless.

I am crippled now, but soon I will get over it. And so will all of us. And soon helplessness will be replaced with action. You just wait.

Dr. Riyam Kafri AbuLaban is a chemist by training, a writer by passion. She is an assistant professor at Al Quds University, Abu Dis, Palestine, and a mother of two. She is currently working on a food memoir that documents food, motherhood, and Palestine. In her free time she makes homemade ice cream and cupcakes with the help of the tiny little hands of Basil and Taima. At the epicentre of her creativity is her husband and partner Ahmed.

Photo by Eduardo Soteras Jalil.



TESTIMONIES

Mona (29)

Central Gaza Strip

Profession: Organisational capacity-building trainer

Credit: Voices of Gaza

July 15, 2014

A normal night in Gaza

Mona Krees (29) is an organisational capacity-building trainer who lives with her family in the central Gaza Strip. On July 11, in the middle of the night, she received a distressing phone call from her sister, Daleen, in Khan Younis. In the targeting of the Al-Hajj family home, which resulted in the deaths of seven people, the house of Mona and Daleen's relatives had also been destroyed. The Al-Athamna family arrived on Daleen's doorstep in the middle of the night, barefoot, homeless, and utterly distraught. Mona describes receiving the upsetting call.

After three wars in less than seven years, you cannot remain as you once were. Since the current offensive on Gaza started, we wake up every morning asking ourselves, "Are we still alive?" If the answer is yes, we wonder who must be the new victims who have had their houses destroyed over their heads. This is how we pass our days in Gaza.

We are all at risk of death at any moment. What could justify the bombing of a house over the heads of its residents during the holy month of Ramadan? Where are the international conventions, charters, and laws? Are they all a lie? Just ink on paper?

Two days ago, I received a phone call in the middle of the night from my sister, Daleen, who lives in Khan Younis. Crying and shouting, she told me that a whole family of our relatives, the Al-Athamna family, had suddenly arrived at her door, barefoot. They knocked on her door shouting, "Help, help!" When my sister opened the door, they fell to the ground on the threshold of the house. "Our home was destroyed over our heads." They wept.

It happened during the massacre of the Al-Hajj family, whose house Israeli warplanes bombed as the family was sleeping. Seven people were killed in this attack. The Al-Athamna family home was also destroyed due to the force of the explosion, and body parts of the victims of the blast, their neighbours from the Al-Hajj family, were scattered all around.

The Al-Athamna house had been home to four families of my relatives: Mohammed (50) is a father of 6 sons and daughters; Ashraf (47) is a father of 5; Mahmoud (36) is a father of 4; and Akram (33), who was recently married. Now they have no home for their wives and children. Mahmoud's wife, who recently had a baby, had a heart attack due to the shock of the explosion, and she is in a critical condition in hospital. Doctors cannot say if she will recover.

As I listened to my sister cry, I thought to myself, "How would I feel if I saw the body parts of my neighbours falling onto my home while, at the same time, my home was destroyed and my family displaced, and my neighbours were asking me for help! Was this a drama or an action movie?! No, this was just another night in Gaza."

A Politics of Hesitation?

Gaza and the International Criminal Court

By Mutaz Qafisheh

With the recent Israeli war on Gaza, much confusion has broken out among Palestinians on the possibility of joining the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Palestinian Authority (PA) has been ambiguous in dealing with this issue.

The instrument that established the ICC was signed in Rome in July 1998, and came into force in July 2002, whereby the Court was opened at The Hague. The Rome Statute is open to all states, regardless of whether they are UN members or non-members. The ICC may prosecute suspects who commit war crimes, namely grave breaches of the Geneva conventions of 1949 and their protocols of 1977; crimes against humanity, i.e., massive human rights violations in non-war



Photo by Shareef Sarhan.

Helmi Alswafiry, 29, male-Mohamed Musa Ibrahim Abufiyad, 36, male-Saha Naeem Mohamed Akhrawat, 23, female-Mona Rami Adel Akhrawat, 1, female-Ahmed Rami Adel Akhrawat, 0, male-Ahmed Salah Mohamed Abusedo, 18, male-Mahmoud Saleem Mustafa Daraj, 22, male-Mohamed Khalil Aaref Ahel, 65, male-Mohamed Ahmed Abdelkareem Abujaamei, 22, male-Masab Nafid Mohamed Alajla, 21, male-Tareq Fayeq Jumaa Hajjaj, 21, male-Ahmed Ziad Jumaa Hajjaj, 19, male-Hakema Nafei Salmi Abuedwan, 66, female-Najah Nafei Salmi Abuedwan, 47, female-Mohamed Shahada Hajjaj, 31, male-Yousef Mohamed Shahada Hajjaj, 26, male-Fayza Saleh Abdelrahman Hajjaj, 66, female-Rawan Ziad Jumaa Hajjaj, 15, female-Ahmed Essam Atia Weshah, 26, male-Rafic Mohamed Abdelkader Abukeloub, 45, male-Hassan Shaaban Hassan Khamis, 30, male-Ahmed Saad Albadi, 24, male-Ibrahim Sabhi Yousef Alfiri, male-Khalif Atia Aouda Abusaneema, 16, male-Khalil Atia Aouda Abusaneema, 21, male-Mohamed Ahmed Saad Albadi, 1, male-Mohamed Talal Ibrahim Aljarf, 22, male-Ahmed Kamal Ahmed Abumaghseeb, male-Raed Abdelrahman Abdallah Abumaghseeb, 35, male-Mustafa Mohamed Mahmoud Fiad, 24, male-Noor Alislam Raed Ahmed Abuhowayshal, 6, male-Raed Salah, 22, male-Ahmed Naseem Ahmed Saleh, male-Mahmoud Ghanem, 22, male-Sameeh Sulaiman Mahmoud Abujalala, 63, male-Abbas Alsoury, male-Mohamed Aldaalsa, male-Hani Aoud Aouda Samour, 39, male-Ahmed Ibrahim Sabhi Shabeer, 22, male-Marwan Ibrahim Samour, 38, male-Radi Abuhowayshal, 40, male-Yousef Fauzi Ibrahim Abumustafa, 20, male-Oubaida Fadil Mohamed Abuhowayshal, 24, male-Motasem Saleem Salama Alhaji Salama, 24, male-Haroon Oud Wasfi Hararra, 25, male-Mohamed Ahmed Saad Abuhajar, 22, male-Abdallah Mohamed Hamid Alsaadi, 26, male-Hatim Zain Nayef Hatim Alyazji, 3, male-Hamada Rafic Hamdan Aliawa, 25, male-Hussam Mohamed Hussein Alkoulk, 19, male-Mohamed Khalid Mohamed Ahel, 19, male-Hassan Abuheen, 70, male-Osama Abuheen, 34, male-Ahmed Abdallah Mohamed Abusalah, male-Ismaeel Mahmoud Mohamed Abuzareefa, 58, male-Zainab Safwat Abdabuteer, 4, female-Shahda Ahmed Ibrahim Abujaamei, 37, male-Yehya Saber Ramadan Salout, 19, male-Ahmed Abdelhakim Abdallah Aasfour, 30, male-Tawfeeq Jabara Mohamed Allagha, 61, male-Salman Abdelkarim Sulaiman Abueid, 79, male-Mohamed Sabhi Saleem Abedain, 23, male-Adel Mohamed Huwayshal Huwayshal, 40, male-Mehdi Kamel Mohamed Abuedwan, 1, male-Yousef Ahmed Musa Alzamy, 24, male-Ahmed Assaad Rashad Albaie, 27, male-Shahd Moueen Ali Keshta, 9, female-Osama Bahjat Mohamed Rajeb, 22, male-Mohamed Dawoud Abdulatif Hamouda, 23, male-Manal Mohamed Alastal, 45, female-Mahmoud Oud Ali Ziyada, male-Wessam Bahjat Mohammed Rejeb, 21, male-Rabei Qassem Rabei Aburass, 9, male-Ezzat Ormeya Ezzat Alsayed, 18, male-Ahmed Adel Ali



zones, including the crime of apartheid; and the crime of genocide. The crime of “aggression” will be punishable in 2017.

Palestine became qualified to join the ICC after its recognition as a state by the UN General Assembly in November 2012. In particular, the admission of Palestine to the Court has become more likely after its accession to 19 treaties in April 2014, including the four Geneva conventions and seven core human rights treaties, as well as the apartheid and genocide conventions. Examples of the crimes that the ICC may punish include wilful killing, torture, attacking civilian objects such as hospitals, homes, schools, and electricity installations. A crime that is punished by the ICC and that is particularly relevant to the present context is the transfer of citizens from the occupier state to the occupied territory, in our case, Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem. As of today there are 122 ICC member states: 34 from Africa, 18 from Asia, 27 from Latin America, and 43 from Europe and other states. Israel is not an ICC member.

According to the Rome Statute, the ICC may have jurisdiction: (1) if crimes are committed in the territory of a state party; or (2) if perpetrators are citizens of that party. Thus, if Palestine joins the ICC, the Court can exercise jurisdiction if

the crimes occur in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, or Gaza. As a rule, the ICC competence relates to crimes committed after the state’s accession to the Statute; for example, if Palestine accesses the Statute in October 2014, the Court cannot decide on crimes committed in Gaza in the recent war. But the ICC may have retroactive jurisdiction, even for non-state parties to the Statute, over crimes that took place as of July 2002 if the state asks the Court to do so by a declaration under article 12.3 of the Statute. Cases may be brought before the Court in three ways: (1) by a state party; (2) by the prosecutor without a complaint from any state; and (3) by the Security Council.

In addition to ensuring protection for its civilians, Palestine may benefit from joining the ICC in three ways. First, after bringing a given case before it, the Court may issue arrest warrants through INTERPOL (the International Criminal Police Organization). INTERPOL, in turn, can request that national police offices arrest any alleged criminal landing in their territory. This would make Israeli war criminals wanted in 122 states, meaning that Israeli officials would no longer be able to travel to these states to avoid being dragged to The Hague. Secondly, in accordance with the Statute, cases may be delayed if the Security Council so decides. Thus, Palestine may use cases against



Israel as bargaining chips in exchange for certain political gains, such as releasing prisoners, removing settlements, or withdrawing from certain areas. Third, joining the ICC would strengthen Palestine's independence as a state at the global level.

The Court may prosecute anyone who commits crimes, whether perpetrated by Israelis (there is no need for Israel to become party to the Statute if the crimes are committed in Palestine) or Palestinian officials, militants, or individuals. Given its grave and on-going crimes, Israel would be the main target of the ICC. Yet Palestinians could be affected in two instances: if they wilfully attack Israeli civilians; and in cases of internal human rights violations by officials. This should motivate the Palestinians to adopt non-violent resistance methods or direct their attacks at military objects. In order to avoid being prosecuted by the ICC, Palestine could form tribunals to prosecute those who would be otherwise prosecuted by the ICC. Evidently, the main beneficiaries of joining the Court would be Palestinian and, equally, Israeli civilians.

After the Israeli offensive on Gaza in 2008–2009, the PA Minister of Justice at the time, Ali Khashan, lodged a letter at the ICC Register on January 22, 2009, declaring that Palestine is ready to accept the ICC's jurisdiction over crimes committed since July 2002. In April 2012, the former ICC prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, replied that Palestine does not qualify as a member of the Court because it is not a state.

This situation changed after the UN vote on Palestine statehood in November 2012.

In July 2014, Palestinian Minister of Justice Saleem Saqqa and Gaza Attorney General Ismail Jabr, by two separate letters, authorised the French lawyer Gilles Devers, among other things, "to act... before the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in order to obtain the opening of an investigation on crimes committed on the Palestinian territory of Gaza in 2014." On July 25, 2014, Mr. Devers filed a complaint. On August 7, 2014, two days after the visit of Foreign Minister of Palestine Riad Malki to the ICC, media reported that the PA requested that the ICC prosecutor, Ms. Fatou Bensouda, nullify that complaint. This, if correct, virtually means that the ICC cannot prosecute recent war crimes committed in Gaza. Yet, on August 9, 2014, Hasan Ouri, the legal adviser to the Palestinian President, denied the said withdrawal. If this is correct, one could still hope that the ICC would accept the complaint.

It is unclear, however, why Palestine has chosen to submit the complaint through the Gaza officials. It is also unclear why it has chosen to authorise a French lawyer and not to approach the Court directly as in 2009. It is also unclear whether Mr. Devers reactivated the 2009 declaration of Dr. Khashan or filed a new declaration. There is no confirmation of whether Palestine withdrew the complaint. In such circumstances, it is therefore unsure whether the prosecutor would accept the complaint. Nor is it clear whether the prosecutor would investigate the crimes committed in Gaza as of July 2014, as per the complaint, or as of July 2002,





according to article 12.3 of the Statute, or as of November 29, 2012, after Palestine became a recognised state. Simply stated, the treatment of the ICC affair can be described as confused and ambiguous.

“The PA has declared its willingness to join the ICC. But practically, it seems that it does not want membership. Facing popular demands to join the ICC during the Gaza war, the PA pursued contradictory policies in approaching the ICC: the exact Palestinian official position is unknown: joining or not; withdrawing or not; giving the ICC immediate or retroactive jurisdiction? This can be called “wilful hesitation.” But the PA must join the ICC, whatever the means might be, in order to prevent future atrocities.

”

What can Palestine do in such doubtful circumstances?

Option I. Full Membership

Palestine can request recognition as a full ICC member state at any time. In this event, the Court would be able to exercise its jurisdiction after sixty days of Palestine’s accession to the Statute. So if Palestine accesses the Statute on, say, October 1, 2014, the Court could prosecute alleged criminals as of December 2014. The value of such accession is that it could form a deterrent measure towards preventing future crimes that might be committed in Palestine by Israel or by the Palestinians themselves.

Option II. Specific Request

If we want the Court to have jurisdiction over the recent Gaza crimes, we could wait to see what the prosecutor would say regarding the current complaint. If she were to accept the Palestinian declaration, regardless of when the ICC jurisdiction commences, that would be sufficient to prosecute for the Gaza crimes. If she rejects it for whatever reason, Palestine could file a clear declaration based on article 12.3 and ask the Court to start investigation as of July 2002; but the Court may start investigating crimes as of November 2012, when Palestine became a state. Or Palestine could become an ICC member and, simultaneously, ask the Court to investigate as in Option I.

Dr. Mutaz Qafisheh holds a PhD in international law from The Graduate Institute (HEID) in Geneva. He is dean of the College of Law at Hebron University in Palestine, and a former UN human rights officer in Geneva and Beirut. He is the editor of Palestine Membership in the United Nations: Legal and Practical Implications (Cambridge, 2013). He can be reached at mmqafisheh@gmail.com.



Photo by Eduardo Soteras Jalil.

Gaza Still Standing: A Historical Perspective

By Jawdat El-Khoudary

332 BC: Alexander the Great besieged and attacked Persian-occupied Gaza for more than 100 days. Alexander entered Gaza with an injured leg and was so infuriated that he obliterated the whole city, including its seaport.

1917: The British Army, led by Edmund Allenby, fought three ferocious battles with Gaza en route to Jerusalem. The people of Gaza, their cactus groves, and the Ottoman army won the first two battles, keeping the British away from Palestine. The only way the British won the third battle was with the help of traitors, and that was how Allenby occupied Jerusalem. Three battles during the first World War.



Photo by Eduardo Soteras Jalil.

Hamida, 23, male-Raed Salem Rajeb Alradei, 19, male-Salma Salem Rajeb Alradei, 2, female-Iyad Ghaleb Alradei, 2, male-Wael Maher Ouwad, 19, male-Ahmed Mahmoud Sahweel, 23, male-Hussam Ahmed Eiyad, 24, male-Mohamed Fareed Alastal, male-Ali Hamid Alastal, male-Fathiya Nadi Marzouk Abumomer, 72, female-Yousef Kamal Qaddoura Hamouda, 29, male-Tareq Farouq Mahmoud Tafesh, 37, male-Mahmoud Ziad Masoud Habib, 28, male-Hazem Naeem Mohamed Aakel, 14, male-Mohamed Naser Atia Eiyad, 25, male-Hussam Ayman Muhareb Eiyad, 23, male-Nayef Maher Nayef Alzazah, 24, male-Nidal Hamdi Diab Alaajla, 31, male-Omar Zaher Saleh Abuhusseini, 19, male-Aadnan Ghazi Saad Habib, 23, male-Mohamed Abdelrauf Mohamed Aldidaa, 40, male-Ahmed Mohamed Darwish Bulbul, 20, male-Ahmed Nabil Ahmed Abumirad, 21, male-Nayef Fayed Nayef Alzazah, 19, male-Ayman Adham Yousef Alhadj Ahmed, 16, male-Ziad Ghaleb Rajeb Alradei, 23, male-Wael Bashir Yehya Essaf, 24, male-Bilal Ali Ahmed Abuaathira, 25, male-Abdelkarim Nasser Saleh AbuJarri, 25, male-Adham Ahmed Ibrahim Abueitah, 4, male-Jameela Saleem Eid Abueitah, 55, female-Ibrahim Abdallah Ibrahim Abueitah, 55, male-Hadi Abdelhameed Abdelatah Abdelnaby, 3, male-Abdelrahman Mahmoud Abdelatah Abdelnaby, 1, male-Ahmed Ibrahim Abdallah Abueitah, 31, male-Bilal Zayed Ahmed Aalwan, 20, male-Majed Mahmoud Mohamed Hameed, 28, male-Meelad Omran Alastal, 29, male-Mohamed Omran Khamis Alastal, 33, male-Malak Ameen Ahmed Alastal, 24, female-Ahmed Thaeir Omran Alastal, 33, male-Ameen Thaeir Omran Alastal, 3, male-Nada Thaeir Omran Alastal, 5, female-Ismaeel Mohamed Alastal, male-Ahmed Ismaeel Mohamed Alastal, male-Mahmoud Ismaeel Mohamed Alastal, male-Mohamed Saleh Alastal, male-Mohamed Hassan Alastal, male-Abdelhadi Abdelhameed Abdelnaby, 2, male-Mohamed Ibrahim Abueitah, 32, male-Mohamed Ahmed Salem Alnajjar, male-Shadi Yousef Alnajjar, male-Anwar Ahmed Abudeqqa, male-Sami Musa Abudeqqa, male-Mohamed Ibrahim Abudeqqa, male-Adli Khalil Abudeqqa, male-Akram Ibrahim Abudeqqa, male-Anas Akram Mohamed Alsekafy, 18, male-Saad Akram Mohamed Alsekafy, male-Ismaeel Hassan Aburajeela, 57, male-Baker Fathi Alnajjar, male-Nafith Sulaiman Qathih, 34, male-Khader Khalil Khader Allouh, 27, male-Hanan Jihad Matar, male-Tamam Hamd, female-Mohamed Johad Matar, male-Abdelaziz Noor Eldin Ibrahim Noor, 21, male-Ahmed Abdelkarim Ahmed Hassan, male-Mohamed Ismaeel Khadar, male-Rasmi Saleem Hussein Aburayda, 54, male-Hanafy Mahmoud Kamel AbuYousef, 39, male-Ahmed Mohamed Kamel Qadeh, 23, male-Rami Raed Taleb Qadeh, 19, male-Saddam Ibrahim Aouda Allah Abuasy, 23, male-Mohamed Mansour Hamdi Albashiti, 8, male-Mohamed Naeem Saleh Abutaema, 12, male-Salem Abdallah Musa Abutaema, 36, male-Mohamed Rady Mahmoud Aburayda, 22, male-Hassan Majdi

GAZA
Lest We
Forget

What we're witnessing today are three separate wars, each with its own martyrs, losses, victories, and countless memories. (All can be referenced for you by the youngest child in Gaza.)

Before, during, and after these two particular incidents, Gaza was a city desired by many conquerors who coveted control of the Levant or Egypt. Given its geographical position, it served as a gate to the Levant after the Egyptian desert, and vice versa. Ruled by the Egyptians, Philistines, Romans, Byzantines, and Crusaders, visited by Emperor Hadrian (who was so fond of Gaza that he introduced wrestling, boxing, and oratorical competitions in Gaza's stadium, known from Alexandria to Damascus), and Napoleon. Throughout its turbulent history, Gaza, and its people, survived. Evidence? We are still here today.

Three years from today, in the year 2017, we will be commemorating the centennial of the Balfour Declaration, the spark that ignited our modern-day misery. The year 2017 is the centennial of World War I, for which Gaza was a hot spot. From then on, a trail of countless wars and massacres followed Palestinians wherever they went.

The foundations of the city of Gaza – built on soft Mediterranean sand, on a beautiful

coastline adorned with citrus, olive, fig, and palm trees, and many grapevines – have probably been indifferent since the earliest signs of life in Gaza. How have the people changed, though? It's hard to tell with such little data available, but it's safe to say that the countless wars that Gaza has survived have implanted a special ability inside of us. How else – besides the fact that we basically have no other choice – have we endured the three most recent wars?

Endurance and resilience are not the only historical elements present in today's situation in Gaza. These factors were able to survive and stay with us. However, three other historical elements are present in today's situation, but only in our collective memory.

Anthedon, the ancient seaport of Gaza, was built in the 5th century BC, and its current location extends from the northern end of Al Shate' Refugee Camp to the nearby Bader site. Anthedon was the main link between the Arabian Peninsula and the Ancient World – namely Turkey, Greece, Italy, and the Carthaginian Empire. Around the Anthedon seaport, the city of Anthedon emerged, with its own coins, temples, and even army. The literal Arabic translation of the word Anthedon is City of Liliums, which still grow on the beach of Gaza to this day.



East of Gaza City, right where Shuja'iyya is located, the first international airport in Palestine was built, during the 1930s. Many airlines used the Gaza Airport, including British Airways and EgyptAir. Destroyed in 1948, rebuilt in 2000, and destroyed once more in 2001, Gaza's airport is no longer.

Thus, an airport and a seaport are not new to Gaza.

Aside from the fact that they are unquestionable rights for Palestinians, given basic human rights and previous agreements, Gaza was historically used to being a hub for trade and travellers alike. It is only natural, in the seemingly predictable cycle of our history, that we get both facilities back.



Last but not least, ever since the early days of antiquity (5th century BC), Gaza used to mint its very own coins. Back then, when Gaza was the capital of the Philistines, we had our own Philisto-Arab coins, which were made and used in Gaza. From then until Byzantine times, Gaza continued to mint its own exclusive coins. An economically successful and independent Gaza is not new to history.

Shuja'iyya is one of the most important neighbourhoods in Gaza. One of the oldest districts in Gaza City, it was inhabited by the majority of Gaza's families before and after 1948, and has served as a commercial centre for major businesses and industries. Shuja'iyya was obliterated by a military earthquake, just like Khuza'a – one of the most beautifully green areas in the Gaza Strip – and Beit Hanoun.

The fate of this war remains unclear. Is it over or is it put on hold? Are we awaiting more death and destruction? Are any of our demands going to be granted? We know none of that. But there's one thing we know for sure. People who have lost their houses, businesses, factories, and farms are already planning the rebuilding process (albeit the very scarce materials in Gaza). If there's one other thing that history has taught us: our enemies, of whatever background, will continue to kill and destroy, but Gaza and its people, constant through history, will always survive and continue to rebuild. It's no wonder that the phoenix is the symbol of Gaza City.

Jawdat El-Khoudary is a Palestinian businessman and the chairman of Saqqa & Khoudary Construction Company.

TESTIMONIES

Karama (24 years old)

Gaza City

Profession: English teacher

Credit: Voices of Gaza

July 17, 2014

Please don't kill my humanity.

Karama is an English teacher who lives in Gaza City. During the November 2012 offensive, Operation Pillar of Defence, one of the first drone strikes hit the street near Karama's house. It didn't appear to be targeting anything but seemed like a message that the operation had started. Now Karama is enduring yet another offensive and describes her experiences.

Communicating is no longer useful in these times. All we can do is say our prayers. We have cried, shouted, and screamed. But our voices are no more than an echo. Today, we live this tragedy anew with fear, terror, and trepidation, for the ninth day in a row. My name is Karama, I am a Palestinian, I am 24 years old, and I live in the Gaza Strip. I don't carry a gun, I don't fight, I don't shoot, and I don't kill. My former president once said, "Don't let the olive branch fall from my hand. And today I say, "Don't kill my humanity." I feel that there is no place for humanity in our everyday life.

I try to get some sleep before a massive explosion wakes me up. Every day, we feel like it's the last day of our lives. My house was one of the houses affected by bombing in the previous attacks and now we are just waiting for them to bomb our neighbourhood again. We always say, "This night it is our turn." I am guilty of nothing. All that I have done is be a Palestinian. I have started to hate the night, because I can't sleep at night. I am afraid that my heart will stop beating suddenly, as a result of this relentless aggression. If you think that killing me will satisfy you, please do it, but with mercy.

After the publication of Karama's writing, her family was forced to evacuate her home in the early hours of July 18, due to the shelling of a nearby building. Karama and her family are now staying with her aunt.



Photo by Eduardo Soteras Jalil.

OCCUPIED GAZA UNDER ATTACK IN NUMBERS

AS OF 18TH AUGUST 2014 (8:00 AM)

HUMANITARIAN IMPACT

2,016 FATALITIES

541	CHILDREN
250	WOMEN
95	ELDERLY
77	FAMILIES
23	HEALTH STAFF
19	EDUCATION STAFF
11	UNRWA STAFF
14	JOURNALISTS

▶ 1,875 Killed by August 5th at 8:00 AM
(The start of first lasting cease fire for 72 hours)

10,193 INJURIES

3,084	CHILDREN
1,970	WOMEN
368	ELDERLY
83	HEALTH STAFF

▶ 9,506 Injured by August 5th at 8:00 AM
(The start of first lasting cease fire for 72 hours)

HOME DESTRUCTION

9,600	TOTALLY DESTROYED
7,600	PARTIALLY DESTROYED
40,000	DAMAGED

450,000 Internally Displaced People
227,000 IN 81 UNRWA SCHOOLS
28,000 IN NON-UNRWA SCHOOLS

RELIGIOUS SITES



MOSQUES

69	TOTALLY DESTROYED	150	PARTIALLY DESTROYED
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CHURCHES

—	TOTALLY DESTROYED	2	PARTIALLY DESTROYED
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CEMETERIES

12	MUSLIM	1	CHRISTIAN
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HEALTH SECTOR



10	HOSPITALS DESTROYED
7	HEALTH CARE CLINICS
49	HEALTH FACILITIES CLOSED
16	AMBULANCES DAMAGED

EDUCATION SECTOR



141	GOVERNMENTAL SCHOOLS DAMAGED
136	UNRWA SCHOOLS DAMAGED
3	MASSACRES AT UNRWA SCHOOLS
475,000	SCHOOL STUDENTS WERE AFFECTED
6	UNIVERSITIES/INSTITUTES DAMAGED
4	KINDERGARTENS

KEY FACTS ON GAZA

- ▶ Area: 365 km² (same size of Philadelphia, USA)
- ▶ Population: 1.7 Million. About 70% are refugees and 43% are under the age of 14.
- ▶ Israel's restrictions on access and movement into and out of Gaza date back to 1991. The current Israeli imposed siege began in 2007.
- ▶ 3 Israeli Military Attacks since 2008. Latest attack started on 6th July 2014.

Twitter: @nadplo

Hashtags: #PalestineUnderAttack #GazaUnderAttack

STATE OF PALESTINE

PLO - NAD, 2014

Why Latin America?

By Xavier Abu Eid

The images of thousands of people waving Palestinian flags and calling for an end to the Israeli aggression against Gaza were of great importance for our people in Palestine; let alone the decision taken by several Latin American governments to take concrete action, including recalling their diplomats from Tel Aviv. Saeb Erekat would say that Latin America is the “moral reserve of the international community,” just as many would repeat that “Latin Americans are closer to us than the Arabs,” but very few would understand why. Here are some tips that might be helpful as well as some challenges for Palestine in the Latin American region.



Mahmoud Radwan, 19, male-Mohamed Sami Aseid Amran, 26, male-Eitaf Kamel Mohamed Abudeqqa, 54, female-Shaaban Musa Mohamed Abuhaya, 64, male-Ahmed Sifyan Abuhajeer, 23, male-Zakariya Alaa Sabhi Albatesh, 21, male-Abdelkareem Himad Abdelkareem Abuhajeer, 33, male-Atia Mohamed Hassan Aldaawsa, 34, male-Atia Mohamed Mohamed Abdelrazeq, 34, male-Rawan Ayman Saood Sweidan, 9, female-Naeem Jumaa Mohamed Abumazeed, 31, male-Janna Rami Yasser Almuqateaa, 2, female-Yasmeen Hassan Mohamed Almuqateaa, 27, female-Saeed Ahmed Tawfeeq Altaweel, 22, male-Alaa Himad Ali Khattab, 26, male-Abdelkader Jameel Abdelkader Alkhalidi, 23, male-Khalil Nasser Atia Wishah, 21, male-Ahmed Ibrahim Saad Alkiran, 26, male-Ola Khalil Ali Abuebada, 24, female-Duaa Raed Abuouda, 17, female-Aamer Abdelrauf Abuaazeb, 26, male-Oud Abdelmajeed Hassan Abuaamouda, 39, male-Bilal Ahmed Tawfeeq Alshinbary, 21, male-Fatima Alshinbary, female-Falastine Hussein Hassan Alshinbary, 40, female-Mariam Shaiboub Ahmed Alshinbary, 12, female-Abedroubba Alshinbary, male-Saha Abedroubba Mohamed Musleh, 1, female-Ahmed Akram Abdelaziz Alkurafna, 10, male-Ali Shaboub Alshinbary, male-Abedroubba Jamal Alshinbary, male-Abdallah Shaiboub Ahmed Alshinbary, 7, male-Ahsraf Ibrahim Alnajjar, male-Ahmed Talal Alnajjar, male-Mahmoud Jihad Abedain, male-Mohamed Abdo Alnajjar, male-Sana Hassan Ali Alastal, female-Nabil Mahmoud Mohamed Alastal, 12, male-Ashraf Mahmoud Mohamed Alastal, male-Mohamed Rateb Shehada Abujazer, 25, male-Hisham Mohamed Farhan Abujazer, 23, male-Mohamed Farhan Mohamed Abujazer, 48, male-Mahmoud Salmi Saleem Aburoayshd, 49, male-Shadi Sulaiman Saleem Quarei, 31, male-Sulaiman Alshuwaf Mahmoud Sulaiman Alastal, 17, male-Layla Ibrahim Zaarab, 40, female-Maram Rajeh Fiyad, 26, female-Shaimaa Hussein Abdelkader Qannan, 23, female-Eid Mohamed Eid Abuqotaifan, 23, male-Abdelhadi Abuhassanain, 9, male-Mohamed Samir Abdelal Alnajjar, 25, male-Hadi Salah Aldin Ahmed Abuhassanain, 12, male-Najaa Ibrahim Hamdan Alnajjar, 42, female-Sherif Mohamed Saleem Abuhassan, 25, male-Mohamed Ibrahim Abdelhadi Alkhateeb, 27, male-Rasha Abedroubba Mohamed Oufana, 28, female-Ali Mohamed Ali Aasfour, 58, male-Ahmed Waleed Naserallah Samour, male-Rasmiya Salama, 24, female-Hassan Abdallah Mustafa Alouthamna, 59, male-Hassan Zaki Hassan Altihrawy, 23, male-Anas Hatim Sulaiman Qadeeh, 7, male-Thaer Aahed Aouda Shemali, 17, male-Ammar Ismaeel Ali Qazaat, 18, male-Ibrahim Jihad Jaffar Abulobn, 28, male-Ahmed Mehdi Abedroubba Abuzoor, 25, male-Tamer Bassam Mohamed Abukameel, 19, male-Waleed Saeed Alharazeen, 5, male-Rami Faisal Matar Alshishi, 31, male-Mohamed Abdelhameed, male-Yazeed Saadie Mustafa Albatesh, 23, male-Tareq Ismaeel Ahmed Zahed, 22, male-Ghassan Yousef Salem Abudebagh, 26, male-Khodra



Latin America and Palestine have known each other for over 100 years

By the end of the Ottoman Empire in Palestine, and its catastrophic economic situation, groups of Palestinians began to immigrate to Latin America, establishing prominent communities in countries such as Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Honduras. Later, Palestinian immigrants would reach the shores of Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, and even Argentina and Uruguay. After more than 100 years of immigration, Palestinians are an integral part of Latin American societies and have taken their place as prominent politicians, artists, businessmen, clergy, and sportspeople, among other professions. The Palestino Football Club in Chile is one of the most prominent examples of Palestinian integration in Latin American societies.

Relations between the PLO and Latin American left-wing movements

During the late sixties and early seventies, Latin Americans in exile, victims of their dictatorships, met Palestinians in Europe and Cuba, where the revolutionary regime had already offered scholarships to Palestinian students. Groups such as Fatah and the PFLP would establish strong relations with various revolutionary groups in

Latin America. President Yasser Arafat himself would dedicate enormous efforts to reaching out to the leaders of such movements. Palestinian combatants supported the Sandinistas in Nicaragua against the pro-American dictatorship, and many Latin American freedom fighters would be trained by the PLO in Lebanon. Some of them or their movements, 35 years later, would be in power in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile. Chilean president Michelle Bachelet would say that during the exile in Germany, she learnt symbolically from a Palestinian how to say “refugee” in German. While Israel was cooperating with the military juntas, including training in torture techniques, the PLO was technically, and even financially, supporting the Latin American resistance groups.

PLO links in Palestinian communities

Several envoys were sent during the seventies and eighties to work and coordinate the work of Palestinian communities in Latin America. This integration, consolidated with the inclusion of representatives from Chile, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, and Honduras in the Palestine National Council (PNC), included a great level of interaction between the Palestinian leadership and its communities. Special



envoys to work with the communities, the opening of the first diplomatic missions to the region in Cuba, Mexico, and Brazil, as well as the visits conducted by PLO symbols such as Yasser Arafat (Cuba, Nicaragua, and Colombia), Faruk Kaddoumi, Khaled Hassan, Fr. Ibrahim Ayyad, Intissar Al Wassir, Bishop Hilarion Capucci, and Mahmoud Darwish, would boost the relations between the communities in Latin America and Palestine.

Civil society activism

Social media has provided Palestine with an excellent opportunity to network with its diaspora and with solidarity movements. Many civil society initiatives, from health care to Palestinian children to the BDS movements, have penetrated into various Latin American circles, attracting new supporters for the Palestinian cause. Their work can be seen mainly in Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, where initiatives to secure an arms embargo and even to cut diplomatic relations with Israel have taken to the streets of Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, and Santiago with thousands of supporters.

Not all Jews support Israeli actions

Despite the fact that thousands of Jews were persecuted by Latin American dictatorships due to their left-wing ideology, for decades it was not easy to find organised Jews in Latin America advocating publicly for Palestinian rights. Though a significant percentage of the Latin American Jewish communities



support the Israeli attacks against Palestine, and have done everything possible in order to prevent sanctions against Israeli settlements, an increasing number of Latin American Jews have publicly rejected Israeli actions against Palestinians. Going from Argentina TV presenter Pedro Brieger, to Uruguay TV Jerusalem

correspondent Quique Kierszenbaum or the former Chilean minister Clarisa Hardy, hundreds of Jews in the region have condemned the bombardments against Gaza. Though most of them are not anti-Zionist, they advocate for the right of the Palestinians to have their own state based on international legitimacy. Their voices, often very influential, have been important in showing that the crimes that Israel commits in the name of the "Jewish nation" do not represent them.

Latin American political context

After two decades of bloody dictatorships, most of them supported by Washington, the vast majority of Latin American and Caribbean countries do not want to be seen as allied with the United States of America. Though many care about keeping good relations, no Latin American country, with the exception of Colombia, has supported Washington in sensitive issues such as the blockade against Cuba or the isolation of the Bolivarian government in Venezuela. This new political order in Latin America with regards to its foreign policy comes from



Photo by Eduardo Soteras Jalil.



the election of left- to centre-left parties around the year 2000 and the desire of those countries to distance themselves from US positions and to diversify their alliances and opportunities in a post-unipolar world. Through their various regional organisations, including MERCOSUR, UNASUR and ALBA, Latin American countries have defined an independent foreign policy allied to the principles of justice, UN resolutions, and respect for human rights. Differences between states are being

overseen either by regional courts or by the International Court of Justice, noting the respect for international law and its mechanisms that exist in the region. Latin American countries have made clear their intention to play a bigger role in the Middle East, including Brazil's criticism of the "useless Quartet for Middle East Peace," calling instead for UN reform in order to implement its resolutions.

Despite all the enthusiasm, there are still many challenges in the region. For instance, it would be necessary to ask, Is Palestine prepared for a change of government in Argentina, Peru, or Venezuela? Has there been any strategy to get closer to right-wing opposition parties? There are many challenging questions that require urgent answers. Despite the fact that Latin America could not be turned into a pro-Israeli Apartheid bloc, in certain countries there is the possibility of having governments that would not be as proactive as they are now.

Palestine should endorse and do everything possible to involve Latin America in the political process and to encourage it to present innovative ideas and solutions for the political process. South-south technical cooperation should be significantly increased, just as Palestinian communities should once again be involved in political decision making by electing new representatives to the PNC. The State of Palestine should consider appointing a special envoy for Latin America given the significant role played by Latin America in the defence of Palestinian national rights. Given Latin America's importance for Palestine, an extra effort is required.

Xavier Abu Eid is a political scientist born in Santiago de Chile to a family from Beit Jala, Bethlehem District. Currently he serves as a communications adviser to the PLO – Negotiations Affairs Department in Ramallah, Palestine.

Photo by Eduardo Soterias Jalil.



TESTIMONIES

Nadeen (12 years old)

Gaza

Credit: Voices of Gaza

July 14, 2014

Between fear and gratefulness

My Mom is the one who fears the sound of bombs the most. Zeina, my sister, or I come second and, in the last place, comes Dad. Dad is really strong. He doesn't fear anything. He doesn't fear things like Mom does, and he always makes sure that everything is okay. I got this from him.

My life, a story from Gaza

I will always remember the day it started, this war, as some people call it. For me, it is not a war; it is just the bombing of Gaza. I thank God every day because I'm not afraid of these bombings but, to be honest, on the second night of the "war," I stayed awake the whole night thinking about images of people and children who had died, or lost their homes. I kept thinking sad things about them, and wondering, "What if this war lasts for a long time? What if my house is bombed like the others? What will I do? Will I cry or will I become mad?"

I can't imagine myself without a home or a family! A home where I keep all my memories, a family to hug me warmly, and calm me down when I'm scared. I cannot imagine myself without my new room – I was flying with happiness when it was finished – without the clothes that Mom chose for me, without my favourite pair of shoes that Dad brought me from abroad, and without my favourite teddy bear that my brother bought me 10 years ago. People might think that these are just silly small things, but for me they are everything. I love every part of my home and my life.

On the third night, I woke up to the sound of a huge bomb. I got out of bed, afraid that the glass of the window would fall on me but my parents, who came quickly, calmed me down and told me to stay strong because God is always with us. My Mom is the one who fears the sound of bombs the most. Zeina, my sister, or I come second and, in the last place, comes Dad. Dad is really strong. He doesn't fear anything. He doesn't fear things like Mom does, and he always makes sure that everything is okay. I got this from him. I really thank God for everything. I thank him for my home, family, and life, and most of all that I'm from Palestine, the Holy Land, the land of prophets. I'm really proud, and I really LOVE MY LIFE.

Palestinian Private Sector: Gaza Calls

Courtesy of Dalia Association

Families, as they prepare their daily meals, are buying supplies as a donation for the people of Gaza. One package of rice for me, and one for you.ⁱ Other individuals are volunteering their time to arrange and package supplies. Supermarkets are not only facilitating these donations of supplies but some are also participating in the boycott of Israeli products.ⁱⁱ They say “Let’s stop funding the destruction of our brothers and sisters in Gaza.”

Banks have donated \$250,000 to relief efforts.ⁱⁱⁱ

Everyone seems to be doing something within his or her means to support Gaza.



Ibrahim Salman Abubalimi, 55, female-Noor Mohamed Salama Abudebagh, 13, male-Ahmed Ramzi Mohamed Moueen Abdugadoos, 13, male-Maysara Anwar Sulaiman Derazeen, 6, male-Mohamed Anwar Sulaiman Derazeen, 13, male-Mohamed Abdelhameed Mohamed Shaat, 29, male-Rajaa Hemad Mohamed Aldoughma, 36, female-Sami Abdallah Ahmed Jouda, 18, male-Hamada Sulaiman Abuyounis, 25, male-Osama Salem Abdelrahman Shaheen, 27, male-Mohamed Kamel Ahmed Alnaqqa, 40, male-Kamal Kamel Ahmed Alnaqqa, 35, male-Ibrahim Omar Alhalaq, 40, male-Hussam Abdelatif Abdelatif Rady, 43, male-Mohamed Ibrahim Subhi Alaareir, 30, male-Issam Ismaeel Abushaqra, 42, male-Abdelrahman Ibrahim Abushaqra, 17, male-Mohamed Ahmed Akram Abushaqra, 17, male-Yaseen Mustafa Mohamed Alastal, 37, male-Walaa Mohamed Ali Alqayed, 15, male-Majed Samir Hussein Alnajjar, 19, male-Ghalia Mohamed Ahmed Alnajjar, 56, female-Ahmed Khalid Mohamed Alnajjar, 14, male-Hussam Hussein Samir Alnajjar, 7, male-Eman Salah Mahmoud Alnajjar, 23, female-Samir Hussein Samir Alnajjar, 2, male-Moataz Hussein Samir Alnajjar, 6, male-Oulfat Hussein Samir Alnajjar, 4, female-Reham Fayez Hussein Albareem, 19, female-Ameer Hamouda Khalid Abushahla, 3, male-Islam Hamouda Khalid Abushahla, 4, female-Baraa Salah Mahmoud Alraqeb, 11, female-Samia Harb Yousef Alnajjar, 50, female-Kafah Samir Hussein Alnajjar, 23, female-Ameera Hamouda Khalid Abushahla, 1, female-Khalil Mohamed Ahmed Alnajjar, 59, male-Rawan Khalid Mohamed Alnajjar, 17, female-Ikhlal Samir Hussein Abushahla, 30, female-Mohamed Samir Abdelaal Alnajjar, 25, male-Abdallah Aiesh Salman Armilat, 39, male-Abdelrahman Aouda Altalbany, male-Mamdouh Ibrahim Mohamed Alshawaf, 25, male-Eiyad Naser Abdo Sharab, 24, male-Mohamed Khalil Mohamed Albareem, male-Ahmed Sulaiman Ismaeel Abuyounis, 31, male-Mohamed Ahmed Matar Alabadala, 32, male-Yousra Salem Hassan Albareem, 65, male-Ibrahim Salman Qablan Qablan, 34, male-Abdelhameed Mohamed Abdelhameed Almaghreby, 31, male-Abdelmajeed Abdallah Abdelmajeed Aleidy, 36, male-Hamid Mohamed Ali Alsheikh Saleem, 30, male-Mohamed Rafic Saeed Alaareir, 30, male-Yousef Kamal Yousef Alwasifi, 22, male-Amro Abdelhakim Ibrahim Alsheik Khalil, 25, male-Shadi Kamal Ramadan Yaseen, 22, male-Mohamed Essam Deeb Abudalfa, 25, male-Mohamed Yaseen Saadie Siyam, 29, male-Essam Mohamed Saleh Shermali, 29, male-Mohamed Abdelnasser Ali Abuzainah, 20, male-Masaab Salah Salman Abuataata, 20, male-Ibrahim Aiesh Abed Abughanimah, 27, male-Waleed Saeed Naser Alaajla, 7, male-Abdelrahman Ziad Hassan Abuheini, 26, male-Rami Mohamed Sabhi Yaseen, 24, male-Naji Ziad Abdelrahim Abuamouna, 25, male-Emad Adnan Mohamed Abukameel, 20, male-Osama Essam Fawzy Ezam, 23, male-Mohamed Eissa Khalid Hajji, 24, male-Abdallah Ibrahim Abdallah Abulayla, 51, male-Sami Fathi Ahmed Alaareir,



This time, however, it seems that the group most capable of supporting Gaza is the private sector. Not only has the human suffering and the number of lives lost exceeded that of the previous military campaigns, but also the damage to infrastructure and private business. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics estimated that economic losses in Gaza from the 2008–2009 aggression totalled \$804 million.^{iv} The Alternative Aid Center estimates that, as of August 3, the latest aggression has caused economic losses standing at \$1,590 million.^v

Al Awda Co. in Deir Al Balah, which has been an important pastry factory for over 40 years, has been completely destroyed. The owner, Mohammad Al Telbani, had announced just days earlier that they would supply their trademarked Choco Sandwich biscuits to refugees in UN schools.^{vi}

Assessing some of the damage during the temporary ceasefire on August 3, reporters noted that 175 of Gaza’s most successful industrial plants had been severely damaged. Prior to this latest Israeli military operation, the unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip was 47 percent and was only expected to rise with hundreds of production companies now unable to operate.^{vii}



Photo by Eduardo Soteras Jalil.



The damage incurred during the attack has plunged the Gaza Strip into an even deeper dismal economic hole. Here is the role of the Palestinian private sector: To not only rebuild Gaza but also to enable a level of sustained economic activity and investment. How is this done?

A 2012 PalThink report attributed the economic conditions in the Gaza Strip to the Israeli blockade, effectively implemented since 2005, and frequent military incursions. For example, in 2007, 400 truckloads (\$8 million) of furniture made in the Gaza Strip were stranded, unable to be exported to Israeli and international markets. PalThink reports that the furniture industry that year was operating at less than 5 percent of its capacity due to these restrictions.^{viii}

The question becomes: How can the Palestinian private sector use its leverage to increase the opening of these borders and invest in the human resources of Gaza? How does the private sector ensure that the materials and expertise needed to rebuild the private sector of Gaza successfully enter the Strip? Supplies for urgent humanitarian assistance are necessary and crucial, but we must find ways to support the construction sector in rebuilding the thousands of homes destroyed during the attack. How does the Palestinian private sector ensure that concrete reaches those who are trying to rebuild homes?^x

Responsibility falls first upon those companies with branches or factories in Gaza to support their counterparts. But responsibility falls more broadly on a unified effort on the part of the Palestinian private sector to use its influence and leverage to remove the border restrictions and invest in Gaza's human resources. In this way, we enable and support Palestinians in Gaza to build a resilient, vibrant economy that is integrated with the West Bank's private sector and that draws upon the strength of its people.

Dalia Association is the first Palestinian community foundation established as a way to realise the right of Palestinians to control resources and sustain development for generations to come. Dalia's Gaza Fund Campaign is a way for private-sector companies to invest in grassroots civil society in Gaza. For more information, visit www.dalia.ps.

ⁱ Daoud Kuttab, "West Bank Palestinians Raise Money for Gaza," *Al-Monitor*, August 1, 2014.

ⁱⁱ Shawn Carrie, "As Relief Supplies Make Their Way to Gaza, Boycott of Israeli Products Spreads in West Bank," *Palestine News Network*, August 7, 2014.

ⁱⁱⁱ Information provided by an UNRWA representative at a meeting of the Palestinian private sector, August 7, 2014. Reports from the meeting can be found at: <http://www.al-ayyam.com/article.aspx?did=244877&date;http://www.wafa.pna.net/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=181329;http://www.pal24.net/ViewNews.aspx?ID=37908>.

^{iv} http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Gaza_lost_e.pdf.

^v "Statistics on the Israeli Offensive against Gaza," Alternative Information Center, August 3, 2014.

^{vi} Rami Almeghari, "Israel 'wipes out' Gaza Ice Cream Factory that Stored Vital Medicines," *Electronic Intifada*, August 2, 2014; Jodi Rudoren and Fares Akram, "Conflict Leaves Industry in Ashes and Gaza Reeling from Economic Toll," *The New York Times*, August 6, 2014.

^{vii} Nigel Wilson, "Gaza Strip Rebuilding to Cost Billions of Dollars," *International Business Times*, August 12, 2014.

^{viii} Reham Al Wehaidy, *Private Sector: Impact of the Gaza Blockade and Strategies to Cope with its Consequences*, PalThink for Strategic Studies, October 22, 2012.

^{ix} Nicholas Casey, Jay Solomon, and Joshua Mitnick, "Cease-fire Brokers Grapple with How to Rebuild Gaza," *Wall Street Journal*, July 24, 2014.

TESTIMONIES

Iyad, from Nuseirat Refugee Camp, describes airstrikes and "roof-knocking"

Nuseirat Refugee Camp, central Gaza Strip

Profession: Bank employee

Credit: Voices of Gaza

July 12, 2014

Iyad describes one of the terrifying nights (July 11) that he and his family lived through, facing airstrikes and 'roof knocking'.

It was 10:57 p.m., and I was on Facebook answering messages from friends. "I'm fine, don't worry!" I was writing to my Spanish friend, Miriam, when my mother's voice interrupted me with her usual three words, "It's about time." I put my phone aside and carried out my nightly routine of searching for the candle. After walking through the apartment three times, I heard my mother's distant voice again. "It's right above the dinner table." Of course it's there, it has always been there. But, somehow, you forget, since every morning you believe you won't need to use the candle again that night.

A few minutes later, my father, my mother, my young brother, my three sisters, and I gathered in the same room around that one candle. I wanted to light more but my father reminded me that we would need the other two to see us through the night. That night, the explosions were so loud it sounded like they were on our roof top. My mother hugged my little sisters and started singing to them. They were really frightened and it was very dark once the first candle had melted. Eventually, they went to sleep. My little sister, Shahd, held my mother's hand as she fell asleep.

My father and I were still awake, as usual. We haven't slept for the past few days, at least not at night. The room was very quiet and we didn't speak. We just waited for the unknown, hoping that nothing would break our silence as we waited for the sun to rise.

I was about to light another candle when I heard the whistling sound of a rocket falling, but there was no explosion. Two minutes later, I heard someone on the street, calling my name. "This can't be good," I thought to myself.

My next-door neighbour was on my doorstep. He told me that a warning rocket had fallen on his roof and that we needed to evacuate the house. I woke up my family and told them to move quickly down the stairs and go to my uncle's house. My father, my neighbour, and I began to call the other families in the neighbourhood and tell them to evacuate. I spent the night outside, afraid every minute that my childhood home would be demolished, hoping that the worst would not come.

That night, they didn't demolish our neighbour's house, but they did demolish five other houses in the neighbourhood, leaving five more stories to be told. In the morning, we went back into our house. We took the decision not to move to another neighbourhood, but stayed that night in the same room, waiting once more by the light of a single candle.

The basic tenet of Palestinian consciousness is that Palestinians must reject all value systems that seek to make them foreigners in the country of their birth and reduce their basic human dignity. Life is not a matter of things or comfort; rather it concerns the basic human rights of family, country, justice, and human dignity.

As long as the Israeli occupation continues, there will be Palestinian human dignity that is conscious of and rebels against that oppression. Without our human dignity, we would have to “bear our burdens” or “suffer through in silence.” We would have no pride – no reason to be outraged at crimes committed against us.



Photo by Shareef Sarhan.

49, male-Fathi Sami Fathi Alaareir, 20, male-Mohamed Ahmed Kamel Abualeita, 29, male-Ismaeel Aesh Abd Abughanimah, 24, male-Ali Mansour Hamdi Albashiti, 1, male-Mohamed Riyad Shaaban Shabet, 23, male-Abdelkareem Ali Abdelkareem Abushanab, 40, male-Aziza Atia Mohamed Abushanab, 77, female-Ameer Adel Khamis Siyam, 12, male-Essam Faisal Khamis Siyam, 26, male-Mohamed Yousef Mansour Alqady, 19, male-Mohamed Sulaiman Nemr Oukal, 34, male-Jihad Hassan Mahmoud Hamd, 20, male-Abdelaziz Salah Ahmed Abuhassanain, 15, male-Salaheldin Ahmed Abuhassanain, 47, male-Mahmoud Ahmed Khalid Hassouna, 23, male-Mazen Adnan Salman Abedain, 25, male-Saleh Ashtaywey Ibrahim Abedain, 42, male-Nadal Ahmed Eissa Abualaaal, 26, male-Saleem Salam Saleem Abualtoun, 42, male-Huyam Abdelkareem Ahmed Abumur, 38, female-Mohamed Ibrahim Ahmed Alzuwaidi, 30, male-Alaa Maher Jumaa Tanteesh, 19, male-Abdeljawad Ali Abdeljawad Alhoum, 32, male-Ehab Saadie Mohamed Nasser, 22, male-Mohamed Abdallah Hussein Aljawajry, male-Wassam Sufyan Omar Kilani, 27, male-Aaed Mahmoud Ahmed Albare, 29, male-Munther Talal Abdalkareem Nasser, 34, male-Alaa Abdelrahman Mohamed Nasser, 25, male-Sherif Rafic Mohamed Alhamdeen, 26, male-Alaa Khalid Najib Alyazji, 21, male-Neima Mohamed Hassan Abuemsha, 64, female-Fawzy Ahmed Ahmed Abuemsha, 67, male-Wassim Salah Abdelrazeq Almasri, 22, male-Saaed Mounir Shahda Abukhater, 19, male-Ammar Mustafa Rasheed Hamdouna, 22, male-Tareq Mohamed Mohsen Alajrami, 25, male-Mohamed Salama Hamad Abukhawsa, 76, male-Hamza Hazem Khaiil Matthi, 23, male-Ismaeel Younis Abdallah Khala, 21, male-Abdelrahman Yousef Ahmed Saadat, 24, male-Khalid Abdallah Mahoud Edwan, 30, male-Osama Mohamed Naser Alkafarna, 50, male-Khalid Aata Mohamed Abushahada, 23, male-Hani Adel Mohamed Abuhashish, 23, male-Mohamed Ahmed Abudwaba, 19, male-Mohamed Ali Khalil Saidam, 17, male-Ahmed Mohamed Abdeljaleel Ramadan, 30, male-Ibrahim Mohamed Awad Barak, 19, male-Bilal Bassam Salam Almasri, 21, male-Anwar Abdelkader Hassan Younis, 2, male-Aarafat Salem Ahmed Abuawily, 27, male-Mohamed Fayez Shaaban Alsharif, 23, male-Hussam Mohamed Sulaiman Abumunifa, 18, male-Ghassan Tahir Sulaiman Abukamil, 25, male-Ismaeel Abdeljawad Ismaeel Abusaada, 26, male-Mahmoud Riyad Abdelkader Miqdad, 22, male-Mazen Yousef Sulaiman Abujariban, 31, male-Raed Abdelrahman Abdallah Abumakhseeb, 34, male-Mahmoud Raed Mahoud Alaash, 22, male-Shaker Ahmed Shaker Aljamal, 46, male-Hussam Abdelghani Ahmed Yassen, 17, male-Fadiil Fayeq Ali Aletawna, 31, male-Hazem Yousef Abdelrahman Almubaid, 34, male-Abdelkareem Fathi Ahmed Alaareir, 34, male-Fadi Abdelkader Abdelmalik Habib, 31, male-Hassan Fathi Ahmed Alaareir, 39, male-Aaed Kamel Mohamed Jandiya, 31, male-Islam Ibrahim Hamdi

GAZA
Lest We
Forget

Delivering Food to Gaza: The Triumph of Dignity

By Ali Qleib

“I am still alive,” my Gazan friend reassured me over the phone. He laughed nervously. “The municipal workers have cleared some of the rubble and I took a walk. I saw an Internet café open and decided to call you.”

I have not been to Gaza in over fifteen years. The family citrus farm in Beit Lahia was razed to the ground a long time ago, and through the years the phone calls with family and friends have become fewer and far between. In fact, I had not heard from Riyad for over five years!

“My immediate family has survived the shelling. Our house is among the few that remain standing in Al-Shujaiyyeh.” He answered my inquiry given the great number

of displaced, martyred, and injured Gazans. “Not a single family has been spared the loss of one of its members,” he added after a brief pause. “I lost an aunt and two uncles. But my immediate family has survived so far. Yet at any moment I could die. Right now as I talk to you, or as I walk back home, I may be hit by a missile. Death hangs everywhere.” He chuckled in an effort to make light of the grave situation. “There is no place that is safe.”

“I do not have the nerve to call my colleague in Khan Yunis,” he confided. “He and his wife are in their mid-fifties, and they have lost their three children. I am afraid he would break down and I couldn’t face it. I called you instead.”

“Are there fresh vegetables, fruit, meat, tomatoes?” I changed the subject.

“We have been eating things we hardly ever eat: canned fava beans, chick peas, sausages, and dried smoked meat. But thanks be to God we have these tins!”

All visuals in the media have depicted an apocalyptic scene of death and destruction. Nothing was left standing by the vindictive Israeli army as they turned their rampage of vile hate from the West Bank to Gaza. No effort was spared as the occupying army indifferently bombed its way into the densely populated Palestinian territory in a diffident show of power.



“There is a temporary ceasefire, and I took a walk,” he explained light-heartedly. “The entire neighbourhood has been blown down. Only a few houses, including ours, have not yet been demolished.”

Humans, dogs, cattle, donkeys and horses, pigeons and chickens lay dead, scorched by incinerator missiles or shot in cold blood by Israeli snipers. Even the electricity-generating engines in Gaza have been blown up. It is as

though a cataclysmic natural disaster has rocked Gaza to the ground.

“We have no choice. We even drink the salty water from the fire hydrants,” he chuckled. “We are lucky to be alive.”

The feelings of horror, pity, and compassion remain rationally compartmentalised as long as the horrors of the war remain a media event. In fact, I had been too afraid to call Gaza and talk with cousin Layla. I called neither our farmer who had stayed on in the orchard next to Erez nor any of my acquaintances. I had kept my distance. Riyadh’s phone call from the only open shop in the rubble of the war unnerved me.

“There is no safe place,” he continued. “Air raids are easier to bear than the horizontal shelling by tanks. The fighter planes drop the bombs and go. In an instant one dies or lives. The tanks keep shelling incessantly, prolonging the anticipation of the missile that would hit the house and kill you.” He laughed to cover the deep fear. “But we have become accustomed to death hanging close to us.” His voice became serious. “My brother, like all the employees of international United Nations-affiliated organisations, had the choice to be relocated to a safe zone. Instead he chose to move in with us. Should we die, we die together.”

I held back my tears. I felt awkward. This is one of the deeply human situations that one rarely encounters. I had been totally taken off guard. I could not ignore his immediate plight.

“Can I be of any help?” I wanted to be of practical assistance. “What do you need?”

“I do not need money,” he snapped derisively. “You know I am rich.”

Riyad wanted to reach out to a friend who was far away from the frontlines of the war, someone not afflicted by the war. He needed to confide his inner tremors and share his deep fears; he called me to share his humanity in a moment when his life and integrity were compromised by the war. Instead I saw him as hungry, thirsty, and reduced to poverty. Yet how can I not ask the obvious? I know people from UNRWA, WFP, and other international and local NGOs who would be willing to deliver food. “Do you think I called you to ask you to send a money transfer?!” he retorted indignantly. His sense of human dignity was hurt by my display of charity. I had inadvertently offended his dignity.

It is easy to strip destitute Palestinians of their humanity, to overlook their human dignity, and to reduce the displaced Palestinians and refugees to objects of pity. This has never been clearer than the media portrayal of the massive destruction

in which we are shown poverty, violence, and suffering without the overall context of the Israeli occupation.

Dignity is the keyword that underlies the process of delivering food to Gazans. The Israeli rabid rampage has displaced almost 500,000 Palestinians. Homeless and destitute these families have been reduced to living in stressful conditions where basics such as water and bare sustenance are impossible to obtain if not delivered by international aid organisations.

Emphasis on preserving Palestinian human dignity has been the main preoccupation of the major food suppliers at this critical time. Dr. Pablo Recalde, head of the World Food Programme (WFP), explained the need to avoid confusing charity with humanitarian aid.



Photo by Shareef Sarhan.

“Despite starvation, suffering, and deprivation, Palestinian dignity must be preserved.” He added, “Human dignity is the idea that every human has inherent worth. Human rights arise from dignity. Yet there are positive obligations that dignity imposes on humans, the moral requirement not only to avoid harming but to actively assist one another in achieving and maintaining a state of ‘well-being’.”

Dr. Recalde underlines the precarious position of the international humanitarian organisations, which should not be confused with patronising benevolence: “Human dignity cautions against public charity to avoid offending the dignity of the recipient.” In this sense humanitarian work is not a charitable activity that anyone can do; rather it is a full-time profession. Preserving human dignity is of



crucial importance but, given the thousands who must be fed, one must be professionally aware of the ins and outs of the culture, the legal/political system, and the dietary requirements necessary to maintain health. It is a multifaceted enterprise whose coordination requires a highly complex bureaucratic savoir-faire that needs much more than the simple, spontaneous good will of amateurs.

To preserve the dignity of the beneficiaries of food deliveries, Oxfam has played a major role in establishing the WFP vouchers' modality, which began right after the 2008/2009 war. It has become a favourite of people since each family can "shop" at any time during the week for a specified set of commodities that are mainly produced in Gaza or the West Bank. As such the coupon-bearers



Photo by Shareef Sarhan.

become shoppers. Charity is not doled out to refugees who scamper and scuttle around the loaded trucks. Rather the coupon-bearers are regular consumers who can exercise freedom of choice.

"It's very important that all food-security-sector partner organisations are aware of this activity. FSS partners are indeed called upon to let people know about the voucher programme so that all who are eligible can benefit from it," writes the Food Security and Livelihoods Coordinator Elena Qleibo at Oxfam. All details pertaining to the distribution are expertly monitored. "Those who are not in host families and who can benefit from the vouchers will be referred to the traditional food distribution. Effective coordination of all these actors is allowing the Gaza population to feel, at least with respect to food, more supported than ever."

In a situation of so much need, vouchers are limited in their effectiveness and cannot scale up and reach as many people as needed in Gaza today, as in the case of the modality called General Food Distribution. This is the traditional parcel with flour, rice, and usually chickpeas and canned food. This distribution is managed by another partner of WFP, Global Communities (previously CHF), and by UNRWA.

As part of its continued emergency response to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, UNRWA, WFP, and the Ministry of Social Affairs have partnered to distribute one-time exceptional food parcels to families who are not receiving regular food assistance from UNRWA or WFP through Global Communities and OXFAM. These parcels are designed to help ensure that people who are not usually part of the aid programmes and who have suffered displacement and stress have sufficient food. Every eligible family receives the same size parcel of 10 kg of rice and 30 kg of wheat flour, which is distributed on designated days based on family size. With respect to nutritional value, each parcel equals about 44 percent of the caloric requirements for an average family for one month. In this system no eligible family will miss out, not even those who are currently in shelters. The coordination among the various organisations and actual distribution to 200,000 displaced Gazans requires a professional bureaucracy.

Vouchers will allow families with children and the elderly to have daily access to dairy products and eggs. Because of the emergency voucher, users have been allowed to "buy" every day. In the absence of refrigerators and electricity the shopkeepers have a generator to keep the dairy products in optimal condition.

The dissemination of information is of crucial importance. Families in the Gaza Strip are being notified about the distribution through media channels (UNRWA/WFP) and posters (MoSA).

The professional logistics required to coordinate the teams of lawyers, doctors, dieticians, diplomats, graphic designers, anthropologists, and psychologists to feed the hundreds of thousands of displaced Gazans has provided an exemplary model of humanitarian aid. International empathy, as witnessed in the worldwide support of the Gazans, time, and faith will help the brutalised children, women, and men of Gaza to start over again. Until hot food, blankets, and mattresses are distributed and homes are rebuilt, Gazans remain in a fragile, vulnerable position. Their humanity has sustained a severe blow. It is a moment of great pathos; a tragic scene.

Now that the smoke of the war and the dust of the falling rubble have settled down, my earlier offer to intercede for my friends and relatives and send fresh food items through my personal connections seems at best naïve. I am ashamed of the clumsy note on which the call of Riyadh ended. I had rejected his appeal for human dignity.

I tried to call back. There was no connection.

Dr. Ali Qleibo is an anthropologist, author, and artist. A specialist in the social history of Jerusalem and Palestinian peasant culture, he is the author of Before the Mountains Disappear, Jerusalem in the Heart, and Surviving the Wall, an ethnographic chronicle of contemporary Palestinians and their roots in ancient Semitic civilisations. Dr. Qleibo lectures at Al-Quds University. He can be reached at aqleibo@yahoo.com.

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,



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

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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.

The Phantom of Gaza

By Ahmed Masoud

This article was first published in February 2009. The reason we decided to republish it is to show that the agony of the people of Gaza began well before July 2014. In fact, Gaza has been under Israeli military occupation since 1967, and the people of Gaza have endured other vicious attacks in 2008-09 and 2012. We pray that this current war on Gaza would be the last one.

Phone always busy. Al Jazeera online playing images of the destruction around. Bombing in Jabalia Camp, Al-Kholafa Mosque, Al-Qerim Square, the police station, and on and on. Seven people were killed, many were injured; the UN condemns, the Red Cross accuses, the Arab League worries - about their own people revolting against them. My small TV has never been used as much as these days; I could almost write down the names of all the people interviewed on the BBC, mainly Israelis venting their propaganda. " Hamas is cynically using civilians as a human



Photo by Eduardo Soteras Jalil.

al-Dirawi, 27, Male-Ala Nahid Ibrahim Matar, 24, Male-Asam Abd al-Karim Halyan Abu Sahada, 45, Male-Jalila Farah Abdullah Hiad, 70, Female-Iman Anwar Salim Breeham, 39, Male-Mohamed Maher Ibrahim Abu Jarrad, 20, Male-Akram Ahmed Tawfiq al-Shanbari, 23, Female-Yusuf Jameel Sabhi Hamouda, 15, Male-Fadi Sami Salam Baraka, 4, Male-Hasam Ibrahim Hussein Abu Shab, 42, Male-Saheela Abd al-Qader Mohamed al-Jahal, 70, Male-Aza Abd al-Karim Abd al-Haman al-Faleet, 44, Female-Ramzi Hussein Ahmed al-Far, 23, Male-Salem Mohamed Badawi al-Far, 24, Male-Hasan Hussein Hassan al-Huwari, 38, Male-Mohamed Mousa Musalam al-Hashash, 20, Male-Mohamed Ahmed Saheed al-Hashash, 19, Male-Azat Salama Mahmoud Dahir, 23, Male-Maria Amar Salama Dahir, 12, Female-Tarkia Khalil Hamid Dahir, 66, Female-Tasnim Mohamed Salama Dahir, 4, Female-Yasmin Ahmed Hamad Dahir, 24, Female-Mariam Marzouk Abd al-Karim Abu Zeid, 31, Female-Falestine Mohamed Saheed Abu Zeid, 26, Female-Ahmed Abdullah Hassan Abu Zeid, 24, Male-Abdullah Nadal Abdullah Abu Zeid, 5, Male-Abd al-Samad Mahmoud Ahmed Ramadan, 16, Male-Ayman Adnan Mousa Shukar, 25, Male-Isa Kamil Mousa, 59, Male-Saheeb Atif Suleiman AbuJuzur, 6, Male-Mohamed Ahmed Harbi Siyam, 7, Male-Sabreen Khadar Saeed Abu Zeid, 31, Female-Bisan Iyad Abdullah AbuZeid, 12, Female-Shama Wa'il Darawish al-Salibi, 15, Female-Mashud Ahmed Sahid al-Hashash, 19, Male-Hana Ali Habur al-Hashash, 47, Female-Omar Salama Mahmoud Dahir, 38, Male-Ala Baha al-Din Kamil Gharib, 17, Male-Baha al-Din Kamil Mohamed Gharib, 58, Male-Mohamed Omar Salama Dahir, 10, Male-Sabreen Mustafa Mohamed Dahlan, 27, Female-Mousa Ahmed Musalim Abu Sahada, 40, Male-Suleiman Mohamed Khalil Qadih, 73, Male-Mohamed Tawfiq Mohamed Qadih, 64, Male-Akram Suleiman Mohamed Qadih, 42, Male-Yahia Mohamed Abdullah al-Aqad, 48, Male-Mohamed Jama Ahmed Shahat, 30, Male-Mohamed Fadal Ata al-Agha, 25, Male-Ahmed Nadir Ata al-Agha, 20, Male-Marwa Nadir al-Agha, 54, Female-Dalia Nadir Ata al-Agha, 17, Female-Shadi Nasser Shahada al-Madhoun, 24, Male-Saheeb Mustafa Mahmoud Oukasha, 22, Male-Abdullah Abdullah Abd Abu Faul, 24, Male-Tamir Muheen Ibrahim Naseer, Male-Mohamed Shahada Abdullah Lawz, Male-Fatima Mahmoud Mohamed Abu Sultan, Female-Samih Jabril Rizq Janeed, Male-Mohamed Mousa Marzouk Alwan, Male-Hind Amad Mohamed Qadoura, Female-Yussef Mohamed Abd Abu Khalifa, Male-Samih Walid Abd al-Latef Abu Sharar, 35, Male-Mohamed Abd al-Karim Diab Abu Jarrad, 65, Male-Mohamed Amad Mohamed Baroud, 12, Male-Jamal Saleh Jamal Alian, 8, Male-Hassan Jamal Sha'ban Kart, 27, Male-Uthman Majid Yussef Dahir, 11, Female-Sabhy Awd Ahmed al-Hilou, 62, Male-Narmeen Majid Yussef Dahir, 11, Female-Ali Abd al-Aziz Abdullah Siyam, 22, Male-Faiza Ahmed Abd al-Fatah al-Nadi, 54, Female-Ibrahim Yasser Ibrahim Hamad, 18, Male-Hanan Ramadan Mustafa Dahir, 50, Female-Majid Yussef Mohamed Dahir, 53, Female-Dana Mohamed Majid Dahir, 1, Female-Mahmoud Abd al-Jalil Tawfiq Abu Kweik, 30, Male-Rahaf

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shield," a comment made by all the interviewees. And I wonder how long it took during their intensive training courses to drill that line into their brains.

I go out into the street and find that life still carries on in the little corners and bars of London. Some coming back from work, some talking about the credit crunch, and some just looking miserable. Back to the flat as fast as I can, eager to finish my day and switch on my screen again. "The death toll in Gaza has risen to 930, and more than 4,000 have been injured." Back again to the phone. Still no connection. Cigarette lit and a hand that shakes so uncontrollably it's about to fall off my body. Then it connects. My mum's voice is very shaky. The fear surrounds her voice like a cloth that's trying to silence her. "How are you?" now means "Are you still alive?" But she wants to remain defiant. She still wants to play the mother's role to make me feel safe. Sometimes I want to tell her that I am not a child anymore. But I never do. I think she makes me feel safe even though she is under attack and I am thousands of miles away from her.

Dad picks up the phone and gives a political analysis. I listen. I offer no opinion. I just want him to speak, to express everything that he has been thinking in his own world, all the debates that he is having as he sits on the roof watching Israeli aircraft

spitting more flames. My little brother takes the handset and tells me about all the places that have been bombed. All the places we used to go to have been bombed. All the corners that I chased him into are now gone. The market, the club, the school we played football in, the trees we climbed together, our favourite fishing place on the beach, our hidden corner where no one ever found us ... all is gone. I listen to him as he talks passionately, telling me news of more destruction. I want to shout at him to stop, but I wish him well instead, and I hang up. Another cigarette while my brother's descriptions still play in my head. I compare them to what I used to know. But everyone in my family is still alive, and this is the most important thing.

When is this going to end? Will it ever? Six years ago, I packed my bag and set off to Rafah Crossing. I kissed the family goodbye and waited for three days at the border to be allowed to leave. Hopes of a better future were running in front of me: the gentleness of life, the excitement of a young man going off to see the world were pushing me to go to complete my studies in one of London's best universities. I looked back at my family and waved goodbye, but they were expressionless, motionless. They knew that they wouldn't be able to see me for a long time. They knew that I could not go back whenever I wanted because there was a guard at the border who sealed the gate after I left.



My dear family, do you still remember me when I was with you at dinnertime? Do you still remember the jokes I used to make? The troubles I brought you, the worries, the smiles, my foolishness, my love, my fear? Is my room still tidy? Or has anyone taken it?

Six years without being able to visit. Rafah Crossing is always closed. Security reasons. New agreement. European monitors are upset about something. Hamas takes over

Gaza. More reasons are born every day to render this small crossing permanently closed. Yet the waiting continues to be my daily ritual, always looking for news of the border, always wondering whether Israel would allow me to go in to see my family.

During the first Intifada, the border used to be open two days a week. During the Oslo years, between 1994 and 2004, it started to open daily but only for four hours. Maybe the doors and machines have become too rusty and therefore are inadequate for use by ordinary people. Maybe they're only for soldiers now - to stand, rifles pointing, fingers on the trigger ready to aim at anyone who attempts to cross. Maybe the long electric fence that stretches along the tiny Strip would be safer for Gazans than those rusty metals; maybe this Warsaw Ghetto is safer than being chased by soldiers in the Sinai Desert.

When I took the train from London to Scotland for the first time, I took my passport with me in case I met a police officer who would ask for my ID. The train started. My face was almost glued to the window. I never imagined that freedom could be so beautiful. I could never have imagined being able to travel on a train for five hours without being stopped, without having to show my ID, without being questioned about the reason for my journey, without being thrown into a waiting room for hours at the Crossing. I did not want my train journey to end. I wanted the driver to continue until we reached the end of the universe.

If only I had done this before. If only I had been able to go to the West Bank whenever I wanted. If only I had been able to go to Cairo or Amman or any other place without being stopped, without having to wait for three days for the border to open, without fearing that I would never see my family again. If only anyone in Gaza could go out for a small holiday, to take their kids to the beach in Alexandria or to see the Pyramids. If only commercial planes were allowed to go in and out of Gaza, would there be any room for the primitive homemade rockets to fly through Gaza's sky?

"Breaking news: An Israeli air strike kills a man and his three children in a car while they were going out to buy some bread for the family." "Jawwal Marhaban" is the automated response that I receive when I try to phone again - a response that indicates that there is no phone service available. I still can't connect. More cigarettes and a feeling of hollowness slowly growing inside me. The fear is beginning to drum into my veins, louder and louder. I look up at the white ceiling of my empty white room. My mum is there, my brothers are there, they are all there. I feel better until I connect. "Your cousin Manal's three children and her husband." And the phone just falls from my hand. Mahmoud Al-Kahlout and his young children are gone. I will never see them again. Not even kiss them goodbye.

Mum's voice is still coming from the phone's speaker, shouting at me to pick it up again. I try but somehow I can't reach it. I stand up and leave, slamming the front door behind me, and I walk and walk through the freezing streets of London. The frost on the cars makes me shiver even more. My breathing becomes heavier when I think of my cousin's children, all lying there, burned bodies stacked on the floor like some cheap crops that have failed.

The next day I'm on the way to a demonstration, Palestinian scarf wrapped around my neck; on the bus a woman asks me about what the Palestinians want! She had been reading an article in the newspaper that had the word Gaza in the headline. I reached over to her paper and flicked the page she was reading: "We want this word not to be in the newspaper anymore because life is just normal." She looks at me and smiles. "I am sorry for your loss." Tears start to run down my face. I look away to hide them. People around me are staring. Manal's children are gone. Manal is lonely. Is she crying like me right now?

My dear family, you have not received any letter since I have moved here; it is not my fault. I have written and sent many, but they never reached you. The post office returns everything I send: Undeliverable. If you read this, please look after yourselves and don't leave me alone, not before I see you. I want to see what you look like now. Have the years changed you? Or do you still look as young as I remember you? Please don't die; I want to make up for the six years without you! I know that no one is safe there, but just wait for me a little longer!

Ahmed Masoud is a Palestinian researcher and writer who has finished his PhD in comparative literature at Goldsmiths College - University of London, U.K. Ahmed grew up in the Gaza Strip and moved to the U.K. in 2002 where he has undertaken several research assignments and positions. He is the author of the novel, Gaza Days. He is married to Heather Masoud and is the father of two children. He can be reached at masoud.ahmed@gmail.com.



The Last Word

Justice

As long as social and political justice are absent, there will always be a struggle to achieve them. Whether it is Ferguson, Gaza, or Myanmar, it is essentially the same story with a variant measure of intensity. The struggle for justice is not only a natural human reflex, it is also a right guaranteed by international law.

Targeting civilians and public infrastructure in Gaza is nothing less than a crime against humanity. Targeting children playing on the beach and on swings on the first day of a feast is beyond that; it's evil.

As we have been witnessing in Syria and Iraq, unjust conditions can lead to fanaticism; an evil monster that should be wiped out. However, it remains a symptom. The real culprits are those who caused it to flourish by denying justice to others.

Current conditions will not change until just prevails.

Sani P. Meo
Publisher



Photo by Eduardo Soteras Jalil.

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