

# Players' Statements



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.



Basketball championship for girls with special needs.



## **Mona Redwan Khattab**

*Fifty years old, lives in Gaza City*

I was born healthy, but a medical mistake has turned me into a person with disability. When I was young, people understood neither the rights of persons with disabilities nor their potential skills and capabilities. I was born into a family of sports figures – my brother is a wrestler, and my sister a gymnast. I have loved sports since I was very young, and I wanted to be a participant. But I couldn't. What aggravated me most was the sports lessons at primary school because I couldn't be part of any activity. Ever since, I have been thinking of creating a sport team for persons with disabilities. And finally we established our own club, Al-Salam. Our basketball team has won a number of competitions. Fulfilling my dream has been the challenge of my life!



## **Samah Al-Sa'adneh**

*Sixteen years old, from Beit Lahia, the Gaza Strip*

Samah came in first in the 1,000-meter running championship, which is part of the Palestinian Youth Sport League's activities in Gaza. "I discovered my passion for running two years ago after watching my cousin who is also a runner," explains Samah, "and I realized that I liked this sport. I felt free when I was watching him. When I asked my mother if I could accompany him, she said yes, and then my journey started. I ran and ran with him in my city, and then the Palestinian Federation of Athletics discovered my passion and trained me to become a professional runner. My family supports me in keeping the balance between running and school. I believe I have managed to achieve this balance. I love running. It makes me feel strong, free, and happy."



## **Yousef Obaid**

*Twenty-five years old, from Beit Hanoun, the Gaza Strip*

Yousef is the winner of the 21-kilometer Palestine Marathon that was held in Bethlehem in 2015 and the champion of two running championships organized by the Palestine Sport League in Gaza. "Sports has always been my passion, and in order of priority, it comes right after my worship and my faith. I ran with my uncle when I was fourteen years old, and until now I continue to do that daily. I run between 15 and 20 kilometers per day. With little investment in sports in Gaza, the occasional running championships are very important because they give us the opportunity to practice and compete. My dream is to represent the State of Palestine in the 2020 Olympic games in Tokyo."



## **Mus'ab Fayyad**

*Sixteen-year-old student from Beit Hanoun, the Gaza Strip*

Mus'ab goes to Mahdia Al-Shawwa School in his hometown, and he's also a player with Beit Hanoun Beach Volleyball team. "I have been playing beach volleyball for three years now. My father played beach volleyball and I wanted to do the same. Unfortunately, beach volleyball is not widely known here, but our team in Beit Hanoun puts a lot of effort into spreading the game and encouraging people to watch and participate in it. I am very happy when I play and compete. Recently we won a championship organized by the Palestine Sport League in Gaza and that made me very proud. My only wish is to be able to play on beaches around the world and compete with other teams."



Beach volleyball in Gaza.



### **Mahmoud Ibrahim Al-Bassyouni**

*Seventeen years old, from Beit Hanoun, the Gaza Strip*

Mahmoud is also a player on the Beit Hanoun Beach Volleyball team along with his colleague Mus'ab. They were the winners of the beach volleyball championship, which was the first time that Beit Hanoun achieved this victory. "I have loved sports since I was a little child. Upon the advice of my football trainer, Wassif Nassir, I started to play beach volleyball because I am 1.93 meters tall. Mus'ab and I formed the team, and we always enjoy our training and playing together. I want to be an electrical engineer in the future, but I believe I will never stop playing sports, particularly beach volleyball, because it gives me a good feeling every time I touch the ball and volley it!"



### **Fatima Al Halouly**

*Thirty-seven years old, from Al-Shujaya, Gaza City*

Fatima has been an athlete since 2008, and she represented Palestine in 2011 in Qatar. "We were very active in athletic games, and we have been practicing various games in the well-equipped Palestine stadium. But since the playground was bombed in 2012, it suddenly all stopped. In 2013, I wanted to play sports again, and I joined the basketball team. Back in 1988, when I began school, my leg had to be amputated, but I insisted on going to school to get the education I deserve. My family has been a great support, and they haven't stopped me from pursuing my dreams of practicing sports. Here I am today, a healthy, active person and a winner of championships."

