

SOULS OF THE FLOOD

Exceptional Models of Heroism and Steadfastness in al-Aqsa Flood

Dr. Osama Juma'a Alashqar



Al-Zaytouna Centre For Studies & Consultations

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Designed by:

Mr. Rabi' Ma'ruf Murad



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Introduction

Blessed is the Beginning, Auspicious is the End

I praise You, my Lord, I seek Your help and guidance, and I pray that *Allah*'s peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad, my master, the Imam of guidance, the leader of the processions of truth, and upon his companions and followers.

Prof. Dr. Mohsen Muhammad Saleh, General Manager of al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, has asked me to document some of the figures whose lives have touched the hearts of people, nourishing their souls with stories of heroism and values. He wished for this documentation to reflect the style I use in my public writings which have found resonance and popularity among both private and public audiences, especially on social media.

Seeking *Allah*'s assistance, despite being deeply immersed in two books that consume most of my time, I set myself a two-month period to complete this work. I made a vow to pause my work on the two books and focus entirely on this project. I knew that the greatest challenge would be gathering reliable information, as many sources had been lost due to the displacement of hundreds of thousands, the martyrdom of many of the scholars and intellectuals I knew and the disappearance of family libraries and oral references. However, *Allah* has eased my chest to accomplish the task, as I feared that these individuals might not find documentation worthy of them, even within the minimum available limits. By the grace of *Allah*, this work was completed on the third day of Eid al-Adha (18/6/2024) while the battles of Operation al-Aqsa Flood [afterwards referred to as “the Flood”] raged on. The stories of perseverance and sacrifice continue to unfold, and what we know, acknowledge and document is only a small fragment of the untold.

One of the most humbling and emotional moments in this journey was when some of the figures I worked to document—icons of resilience and redemption in this time of struggle—sent me their personal stories, biographies and glimpses of their private lives, either directly or through their friends and relatives, in accordance with their wishes before they passed away or as directed by their families.

In documenting the journey of these souls, I sought to represent the diversity of the Palestinian society in the Gaza Strip (GS), while avoiding distinctions between societal segments, as the Flood has united them in an unprecedented way. Among these souls, you will find professors and academics, doctors and engineers, artists and intellectuals, the sighted and the blind, the hearing and the deaf, men and women, teachers and students, the old and the young, warrior with weapons and fighters with words, imams and preachers, mother with their children, fathers with their sons and daughters, entire families and their individual members, as well as independents and faction members...



In this journey, I have carefully gathered the stories of those who inspired me—role models, icons of perseverance, pillars of patience and examples of contentment with fate. I was drawn to those whose final moments were etched with a heroic farewell—individuals who passed through life unrecognized, yet whose legacy blossomed after their departure, leaving behind the indelible marks of truth and the enduring traces of righteousness. I paid special attention to those whose bravery became evident in a critical moment of destiny, even as fate kept hidden the stories of other heroes whose heroism remains a secret—perhaps a secret that will never be revealed—or perhaps they had their own tales that never reached me.

In this book, I have gathered rare poems and traces written by these martyrs, as well as rare poems and articles composed about them. I have compiled vivid snapshots of their lives, aiming to document their journey, their stances and the essence of their stories. My goal is to record an exceptional and inspiring biography amidst the waves of this “Flood” which people clung to during their emotional engagement with the unfolding events of the battles, and which resonated deeply with them as it reverberated through social media, leaving a profound impact.

These anecdotes, famous in the moments of their emergence, were documented and recorded without any prior plan or decision from anyone. They represent only a small sample of the grand scenes that contained monumental moments, many of which were never recorded or preserved, and for which no witnesses remain to tell their stories.

The reader will notice that I have not included the stories of prominent, leading figures who were martyred and whose legacies are well-known within the movements and institutions to which they belonged. These figures often have someone to document their lives, preserve their archives and one day present them to the world—and, by *Allah*’s will, I may contribute to this effort as well.

Since most of the souls I have documented are not famous personalities whose biographies are widely known, I have ensured that each story includes concise information at the outset.

One of the most important sources I relied on in gathering material for this journey were the social media pages of these martyrs and their families. The value of these pages lies in their being direct, reliable sources that have not been targeted, distorted or fabricated. These pages contain dozens of documents confirming the authenticity of their attribution to their rightful owners. I also reached out to many of their acquaintances and relatives via phone, to gather some information about the last moments of their lives. Additionally, I relied on my own archive, which I have spent over 30 years collecting, to help complete the broader picture of each person I am writing about. This allowed me to better understand their lives, the people who surrounded them and the context in which their stories unfolded.



Some believed that their biographies would serve as an inspiring call, eagerly entrusting me with parts of their stories, hoping that they would become a source of lasting charity and a means to invoke prayers in their memory. I was profoundly touched by the generosity of those who, despite never having met me in person, entrusted me with photos of their children, personal documents and cherished memories, before bidding their final goodbyes.

My body trembles as I realize that the unknown biographies of many, whose impactful and defining stories are famous, now rest in my hands, entrusted to me after the departure of those who were closest to them. It is as if *Allah* has entrusted me with this sacred responsibility.

There are real epics that deserve to be documented—especially the heroic stories of doctors, nurses and healthcare staff who worked tirelessly in hospitals that were subjected to a comprehensive campaign of destruction. There are the epics of civil defense and municipal workers who labored to remove rubble and recover the martyrs and the wounded in the areas most exposed to catastrophic devastation for months on end, without a single moment's respite. There are the heroic efforts of emergency relief teams and rapid civil support units, the brave actions of media professionals and journalists who confronted the fire with cameras and pens, and the selfless volunteers who rushed to fill the severe gaps in managing the GS affairs—these are the actions that eased the lives of displaced people, who were left shattered in every aspect of their existence.

While most of the stories in this journey are those of martyrs, an exception must be made for the remarkable examples of strong and patient women who lost their children and families. Despite their grief, they quickly found the strength to rise again, letting this cruel ordeal deepen their faith in the inevitable reunion with their loved ones in the highest of heavens, and in the justice of their cause in this world—where innocent lives have borne the ultimate cost of the occupation's brutality, treachery and abhorrent racism.

As we capture glimpses of the lives of those who have passed, we uncover tales of profound significance. Yet, the stories of hundreds of living souls and heroes in GS remain equally compelling. Were these narratives not so abundant, repetitive and deeply entrenched, they might no longer seem extraordinary, particularly when set against the backdrop of Gazans' epic heroism, their legendary resilience and their coexistence with a chaotic and bloodstained reality, unbound by ethics, law, or humanitarian considerations..

Each story documented here provides a treasure trove of material for documentary or dramatic works, forming the bedrock of immortal tales, worthy of both study and storytelling. These narratives embody the ultimate act of faith—surrendering the soul to its Creator with contentment, satisfaction and acceptance.

Dr. Osama Alashqar

Istanbul, 18/6/2024



Yusra and Ahmad al-Maqadmeh... The Doctor and Her Son, the Doctor



Yusra ‘Abdul ‘Aziz al-Maqadmeh “Um Bakr” and her son Ahmad Sa‘id al-Maqadmeh “Abu ‘Umar”

Al-Maqadmeh family originated from the displaced town of Beit Daras, a town famous for its generosity, stubbornness and strength of character.

Dr. Ahmad al-Maqadmeh, a plastic surgeon in the burns department at El-Shifaa Medical Complex, has received the Humanitarian Innovation Fellowship from the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

Dr. Ahmad approached his work with passion, viewing the treatment of the sick and injured as a form of *jihad*. He had previously participated in the medical support of the Marches of Return that used to go out to the borders in large crowds along the occupied borders with GS and was dedicated to working in the hospital throughout the 2021 war. He was dedicated to his work and hardly rested, with a permanent smile, a comforting kindness and a beautiful soul that reassured those around him.

Dr. Ahmad bravely positioned himself at the epicenter of the medical crisis, transitioning from El-Shifaa Medical Complex to al-Quds Hospital and then to al-Ahli Hospital. With a heavy heart, he left behind his beloved wife and young child in the southern GS, desperately hoping to keep them safe from the chaos of war. As the days turned into weeks and then months, he endured the agonizing pain of separation, unable to see his family for over six long months.



He resolutely chose to remain in northern GS, steadfast in the face of relentless military pressure and the heartbreaking displacement of hundreds of thousands of residents. As bombs rained down, destroying his own home and the apartment he rented afterward, he endured unimaginable hardships, losing significant weight amid the siege and starvation that surrounded him. Amid this harrowing ordeal, he poured his soul into a poignant post on his Facebook account on 10/10/2023, capturing the essence of his suffering: “Praise *Allah* in good times and bad. In this crime against humanity, the occupation mercilessly bombed the residential building I live in after threatening a neighboring building with destruction.”

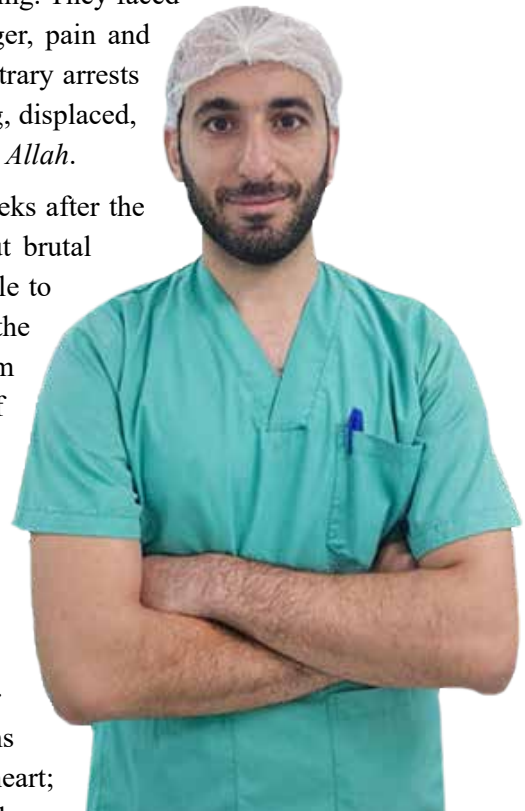
Dr. Ahmad poured his heart and soul into his medical work, dedicating countless hours to documenting his surgeries and sharing them with fellow doctors in a quest for knowledge and guidance. As he navigated the early stages of his career—an era filled with both promise and uncertainty—he understood the immense responsibility that came with his role, requiring unwavering care and precision.

But then, everything changed. When the Israeli army stormed El-Shifaa Medical Complex, chaos erupted around him. Israel launched a vicious assault on the Ansar area, where Dr. Ahmad and his beloved mother resided.

The mother and son endured relentless fire for what seemed like an eternity. When they narrowly escaped death, it came for them once more, yet they held firm, never wavering. They faced the end with unshakable resolve, their bodies weakened by hunger, pain and the haunting sights of death, destruction and the brutalities of arbitrary arrests and humiliating displacement. Through it all, they held on—fasting, displaced, exhausted, but steadfast—until the moment they were embraced by *Allah*.

Dr. Ahmad and his mother were missing for two agonizing weeks after the Israeli army stormed El-Shifaa Medical Complex and carried out brutal massacres there. The army then forced hundreds of innocent people to flee, including Dr. Ahmad and his mother, but didn’t stop there. As the displaced tried to escape the terror, the ruthless forces hunted them down, picking them off one by one with sniper fire. In a final act of cold-blooded execution, they were killed together, their bodies left discarded at Gaza City’s “Carrefour Mall.”

In a heart-wrenching plea, the bereaved wife, Dr. Israa Muhammad, laid bare the anguish of her husband’s absence, painting a vivid picture of the unbearable circumstances they faced. She revealed that her husband, a devoted doctor in the burns department at El-Shifaa Medical Complex, had been on duty for 38 agonizing days, separated from her and their only a few months old son, ‘Umar. The weight of that separation was heavy on her heart; the days apart had outnumbered the precious moments ‘Umar had been



held in his father's arms since birth. Dr. Israa's words echoed with desperation as she described the suffocating siege surrounding the hospital. Patients, including vulnerable premature babies, as well as displaced individuals and exhausted medical staff, were all trapped in a nightmarish reality. The inability to move freely between hospital buildings due to snipers firing indiscriminately at anything that dared to move intensified their suffering. She ended her plea with heartbreaking despair. She no longer held any hope that the world's conscience would awaken, that her Arab brethren would come to their aid, or that humanitarian organizations, including the Red Cross, would rush to open a safe passage for the besieged. Instead, she wrote her appeal not for action, but so that people might stand with them in prayer, acknowledging that only *Allah* could truly offer mercy amidst the horrors they were enduring.

In a series of anguished appeals, Dr. Israa, the wife of Dr. Ahmad al-Maqadmeh, expressed the deep pain of losing contact with both her husband and her mother-in-law, Dr. Yusra al-Maqadmeh. Their disappearance followed a terrifying encounter with the Israeli forces at El-Shifaa Medical Complex and their forced evacuation from the Ansar area in GS. With a heart heavy with fear and uncertainty, she recounted that the last place they had communicated was near "Carrefour Mall" on 22/3/2024. Desperation seeped into her words as she called out to anyone who might have information about their whereabouts, pleading for help in finding them. Dr. Ahmad's colleagues and Dr. Yusra's friends took up her cause, tirelessly republishing her heartfelt appeal in both Arabic and English, hoping to uncover any news, especially since Dr. Yusra is a dedicated UN employee, and her son, Dr. Ahmad, is a member of the medical staff, which is held in high regard according to international standards.

Dr. Yusra al-Maqadmeh was more than just a mathematics teacher; she was a beacon of hope and resilience in the schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). A successful educator, she moved from school to school, witnessing in horror as these places of learning transformed into makeshift shelters and, ultimately, into graveyards under the relentless onslaught of violence. Dr. Yusra, drawing on her experience and connections, managed the shelter operations in the schools, assuming multiple roles as a leader, manager, guide, educator and caretaker for thousands of displaced families. Most of these families were women and children in dire need of both psychological and material support. She spent the majority of her days fasting due to the severe siege on the northern GS.



Dr. Yusra steadfastly refused to abandon her work in service to the displaced, clinging to her post with unwavering resolve until she was, at last, forcibly removed from the shelter. When others urged her to leave, she resolutely rejected their pleas, declaring that she would stay, even if she stood alone in a sea of desolation.

To her, this work was more than just a duty; it was a profound act of *jihad*. She often repeated the powerful mantra, "It is a *jihad* of victory or martyrdom." With a heart full of purpose, she remained at her post, unwavering



in her intention of *Ribat*¹. During the holy month of Ramadan, while fasting, she was martyred. When her body was discovered, she was found clutching the Qur'an in her hands.

Dr. Yusra's heart overflowed with love for orphans, and she devoted herself to their care in the shelters, embracing them as if they were her own children. In her presence, they found comfort and joy, drawn to her warmth and unwavering tenderness in the face of adversity.

Her last posts on Facebook were suffused with deep pain, disappointment and a profound sense of failure, alongside a fierce pride in the resistance. She poured her soul into her words:

🕊️ “*Allah* (Alone) is Sufficient for us, There is no god but *Allah*! This is our reality, unfolding by the minute and by the second, with the Arab-Islamic fuel ceaselessly sustaining the Zionist-American destroyers.”

🕊️ “No humanity, no values... Al-Ahli Hospital massacre, more than 800 (mostly children and women).”

🕊️ “Normally, UN relief organizations move to places of war and conflict, but in GS they fled to Rafah on the Egyptian border?!?”

🕊️ “O *Allah*, strengthen the steadfast, be their supporter and guide, unite their ranks, and grant them victory.”

🕊️ “Truly, you were the most truthful in your promises and the most trustworthy in your responsibilities; yet, despite this and more, we continue to engage deeply.”

Dr. Yusra was shot by a treacherous sniper as she was moving to another area with her son Dr. Ahmad and others. The families did not find their bodies until after two weeks of searching near “Carrefour Mall” in Gaza City.

They Let Us Down... But We Persist!!

“O Messenger of *Allah*, do not intercede for them because they have only let us down, nothing more...”

This was the reply of a displaced women in GS when asked about her message to the Arab countries. She added, “We will remain steadfast and patient, *InshaAllah*. We will not give in, we will not be humiliated, and we will not compromise over even the tiniest grain of soil in Palestine. Even if they bomb our homes and destroy our land... It is our Lord who feeds us and gives us drink, not the Arab countries. They are the ones who let us down. Our hope was first in *Allah*, then in them, but now, that’s over.”



¹ *Ribat*: Guarding the Islamic frontier for the sake of *Allah*.



Hashim Ghazal... The Godfather of the Deaf

Hashim ‘Abdullah Hashim Ghazal

The spiritual father of the deaf in GS

Founder of the Future Society for Deaf Adults and chairman of its board of directors for ten years

Trainer for the deaf at Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children

Vocational teacher of carpentry



Hashim Ghazal is no ordinary man; he is the spiritual father of the deaf community in GS, a beacon of hope for those who struggle to find their place in society. He earned this description through his countless achievements in serving them, his personal struggles, and his journey to become an inspiring teacher, alongside his unwavering defense of their rights. As a trailblazer in developing sign language in Palestine, he has enriched its dictionary and has taught vocational skills to hundreds of deaf children. Through his commitment, he has not only trained dozens of families of deaf individuals but has also implemented numerous programs to empower future educators in the field.

For over 30 years, Hashim has been a steadfast leader for the deaf community, breathing life into their struggles and aspirations. He has tirelessly presented their cause to international organizations and the media, forging paths of will and hope.

Hashim Ghazal has been a powerful voice for the deaf community in the GS, representing their needs and aspirations on the global stage. With a keen eye for advanced technologies in deaf education, he firmly believed that anything can be achieved with determination and willpower.

His mission has been to forge meaningful connections between deaf individuals and the hearing world, urging society to “hear with their eyes” and to learn basic sign language in practical, everyday contexts, especially for those in their neighborhood, workplace or community.

Hashim Ghazal lived a life of hardship and sorrow. Born deaf and losing his father at just three years old, he was raised by his mother in an environment devoid of resources for the deaf. For much of his childhood,



he navigated a world without formal education or guidance, facing numerous barriers as he sought to adapt to society. To find purpose and stability, Hashim learned carpentry as a young boy, channeling his energy into a craft that would provide him with opportunities. His devoted mother eventually opened a small woodworking shop for him, where he honed his skills, creating home furniture, sofas and intricate wooden carvings.

His mother found him a life partner who could hear, and in her love and determination, she taught her sign language. At first, she acted as a bridge between them, a mediator navigating the silence. But soon, the bond between the couple grew so deep that the wife became her mother-in-law's trusted heir in communicating with both her husband and the vibrant deaf community they shared. Hashim faced a heart-wrenching challenge when his first daughter was born, a precious girl who, like him, was deaf. Desperate for her to learn sign language, he searched for a place that could help her. He nearly made the heart-wrenching decision to leave GS, but hope flickered when he discovered a fledgling association dedicated to deaf children. They embraced his daughter, igniting a new chapter of positive interaction with the world of the deaf.

Hashim Ghazal was blessed with nine children: six were deaf and three were hearing. He encouraged them to express themselves boldly in sign language. He taught them to cherish their language, to see it as a beautiful, unique skill—one that deserves pride. One of his greatest joys was seeing his eldest deaf daughter become engaged to a hearing man. She later blossomed into a teacher at schools for deaf.

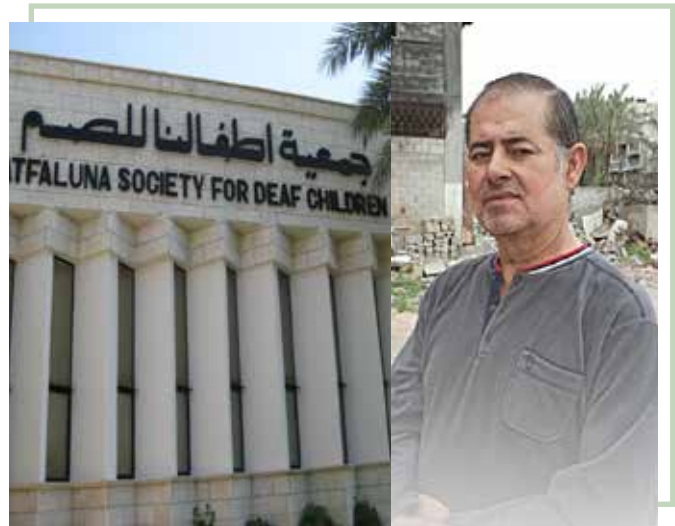
With the beginning of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Hashim Ghazal and his family lived under the shadow of death, surrounded by the relentless destruction that loomed over them, especially near the ravaged borders being torn apart by Israeli tanks. Though they couldn't hear the deafening sounds of chaos, the devastation etched itself into their minds and hearts, filling their eyes with a haunting reality. They couldn't hear the explosions, but they felt them deep within—a visceral tremor rippling through their bodies, echoing in their very cores as shells struck the walls and the ground.





Hashim's family lost their home before his martyrdom, and his wife, Um Haitham, faced the unimaginable, evacuating her children with painstaking effort every time the bombardment began. The most excruciating part was her helplessness; no matter how loud the warning sound was, it did not reach their ears. She was their sole lifeline, the voice and ears of the family, the only bridge between them and survival. Many times, despair threatened to consume her as she witnessed the convulsions of fear ripple through her family, born from the harrowing images of destruction and the constant anxiety of impending death. Yet, despite the devastation that surrounded them, she and Hashim remained steadfast, clinging to the ruins of their shattered home, determined to breathe life back into what had been lost.

The family suffered an unbearable loss when Atfaluna headquarters, located in al-Rimal area near the Gaza port, was destroyed. This was not just Hashim's workplace; it was the heart of his dreams and ambitions. Overwhelmed by grief, he wept deeply and entered a hunger strike that lasted a week, mourning the death of his aspirations. As famine swept through the area, they found only the charred remnants of animal feed and the scorched grasses that once thrived around them. His once full, round face had become gaunt, and his body had withered, yet his dream endured. Around his shattered home, he continued to plant seedlings, nurturing hope and sustenance for his family. Amidst the chaos, he found solace in the cherished memories of his three married daughters who had fled to the south in search of safety, leaving him in a painful silence filled with longing. As the shells rained down once more, it seemed that fate would not allow him to find peace, ultimately claiming his life and that of his beloved wife.



On the afternoon of Monday 13/5/2024, the hearts of the deaf community shattered as they mourned the loss of their 58-year-old father and guiding light, Hashim Ghazal, along with Um Haitham, his partner in life and communication. She was not just a voice; she was the vital bridge that connected their world to a society that often overlooked them, a bond that would be forever missed.

Israel wreaks havoc without discrimination, showing no respect for the sanctity of life or the unique struggles of its victims. Its planes and artillery relentlessly targeted the home of Hashim Ghazal, reducing it to rubble and claiming the lives of him, his wife, and their children in the Jaffa Street of the Al-Tuffah neighborhood in Gaza City. They were torn apart, their borrowed clothes offering no protection against the devastating explosion they could not even hear. Amidst the chaos, Wa'd, one of his daughters, suffered fractures in her hand and fingers,



losing her ability to communicate through the language of sign that had once been her lifeline. Her injured sister, Nidaa, sent out a desperate plea for help, a call to save what remained of their shattered family and to provide urgent care for their severe injuries.

With the passing of Hashim Ghazal, a profound void emerged in this close-knit Palestinian community, leaving a space that could never be filled. Yet, his memory has ignited an unquenchable fire of inspiration in the hearts of those he touched and their families.

They Devastated Him by Taking His Mother!!

Journalist Muhammad Qraiqa says he lost contact with his mother after the Israeli forces stormed El-Shifaa Medical Complex at dawn on 18/3/2024, separating women from men. “I called to check on her,” he recounts, “and she said: ‘How are you, my son? I don’t have water to take my medicine, no food, I slept on the floor. Where are you, my love?’ ” He reassured her, “*InshaAllah*, we will meet again.” That was their last conversation. Soon after, her companion in displacement called him from inside the hospital. She told him she had tried everything to convince his mother to flee with her to the south of the Strip, but she had refused to leave without him.

When the Israeli army ended its inferno at El-Shifaa Medical Complex and withdrew on 1/4/2024, Muhammad began the painful search for his mother. He posted desperate appeals on social media, hoping to find her. Eventually, he did. It was a bloated, fully decomposed body... “That’s my mother” he cried, a scream laced with anguish. He found her lying near the maternity ward, surrounded by a large pool of blood... “I recognized her by how she slept, by her nails, by her white hair... I was her only child. I was my mother’s only son.”

She died a martyr at 65 years old, executed in cold blood by the Israeli army while suffering from diabetes and heart disease.





Dr. Refaat Alareer... The Crossing of the English Language's Pioneer and Poet

Refaat Rafiq Sa'id Alareer

BA in English, Islamic University of Gaza

MA in English Literature, University College London (UCL)

PhD in English Literature, University Putra Malaysia

Faculty member, Department of English Language, Islamic University of Gaza

Founder and supervisor, Social Media Department, Palestinian Information Center

Poet, academic and translator



Alareer is celebrated as a trailblazer of the English language in GS, a luminous voice whose novels and poetry transcended borders. His poignant verses found their way to prestigious literary platforms in Britain and the United States, resonating deeply even after his martyrdom, as his poems were recited at numerous memorials and gatherings.

At the Islamic University of Gaza, he passionately taught poetry and English literature, illuminating the works of Shakespeare, Thomas Wyatt, John Donne and Wilfred Owen... for his students. He also edited the impactful two books, "Gaza Unsilenced" and "Gaza Writes Back." The latter compiled the powerful writings of Palestinian students, their voices resonating with pain and suffering, enabling them to share their stories with the Western world in its own language. These writings have struck a chord in Western circles and have been widely circulated.

Alareer's storytelling in English drew deeply from the rich well of oral narratives passed down through generations. Alareer feared these cherished tales would fade into obscurity, lost to a new generation increasingly captivated by the superficial allure of technology and its tendency to cut, paste and abbreviate meaning. He recognized the urgent need to preserve these stories, to shape a Palestinian narrative for the Palestine issue, and to present his vision to the world. He said:

"I am the man I am because of the stories told to me by my mother and grandmother."

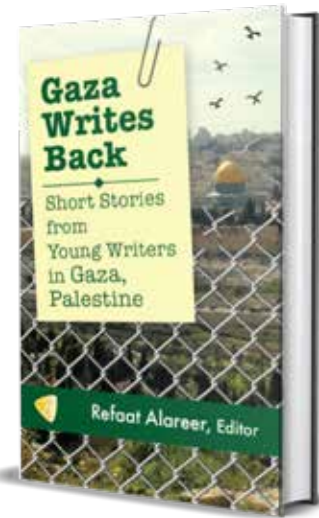




“As Palestinians under occupation, storytelling transcends the didactic value to an urgent need to owning our narrative, something that gives back power to the people rather than the elite. Stories that people can tell about a land are proofs of their right to that land.”²

“I am caught between wanting to take the family outside, despite the missiles, shrapnel and falling debris, and staying at home, like sitting ducks for the American-made, Israeli-piloted planes. We stayed at home. At least we would die together, I thought.”³

Alongside his colleagues, Alareer founded a dream humanitarian project aimed at the West called “We Are Not Numbers.” This initiative connected Gazan authors, youth and children with mentors abroad, guiding them to articulate their stories about the harsh realities they faced in English. Through this project, he sought to counter the pervasive Zionist propaganda and ensure that the true narratives of Palestine reached the world. He also played a pivotal role in the “Martyrs of Gaza” X account, in both English and Arabic, dedicating himself to translating the stories of Palestinian martyrs as part of a broader campaign to honor their memory. One of the projects he spoke about with great passion before he was killed was the translation of the series “The Palestinian Alienation,” a powerful testament to his unwavering dedication to highlighting the experiences and struggles of his people.



At 44 years old, Alareer had become a vital voice in foreign media, with his literature, knowledge and insight bringing GS to life through the language he had mastered. His teachings and advocacy inspired dozens of students and comrades. Tragically, he met his end just three months after Operation al-Aqsa Flood, specifically on 7/12/2023.

Refaat Alareer was unwavering in his commitment to translating his steadfast beliefs into action. He consistently rejected the policy of displacing the population and the emptying of the GS for the sake of reoccupation. Choosing to remain in his neighborhood of al-Shuja'iyyah, he brushed aside the threats of occupation, bravely navigating the perilous streets for hours each day. He bore witness to the devastation and the unfolding stories of genocide. In his relentless pursuit of truth, he waited for any opportunity to regain Internet service, eager to publish photos and stories that laid bare the brutality of the occupation. His reports, shared by Western student and trade union organizations, became a powerful catalyst for awareness and were the direct cause of the ruthless Israeli decision to silence him by any means necessary.

² Stories make us | Refaat Alareer | TEDxShujaiya, TEDx Talks channel, site of YouTube, 16/11/2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YsbEjldJjOw>

³ Refaat Alareer, My Child Asks, “Can Israel Destroy Our Building if the Power Is Out?,” *The New York Times* newspaper, 13/5/2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/13/opinion/israel-gaza-rockets-airstrikes.html>



He was traveling from place to place with his family, like a fugitive on the run. Before his martyrdom, he had taken refuge in an UNRWA school in Gaza's al-Tuffah neighborhood when an Israeli officer called him from an unknown phone to inform him that they knew where he was in the school, and that the army's ground forces would reach him, kill him and not detain him. He also received dozens of threats on social media platforms. Alareer had nowhere to go but his sister Asmaa's apartment in al-Daraj neighborhood before the shells deliberately hit him on the second floor of the three-story building. Alareer was killed along with his brother Salah and his nephew Muhammad. His sister Asmaa and her three sons 'Alaa, Yahya and Muhammad were also killed while his brother Salah's wife and two other children were injured in the massacre.

Alareer's confrontation with death did not begin on the day of his martyrdom; it had been a harrowing journey marked by loss and violence. In 2014, when the Israeli aircraft targeted his home, he tasted the bitter sting of death as his brother Hamadah was martyred in the attack. The family faced death once more in an even more devastating way when Israeli forces targeted his sister's house where he had sought refuge with several family members. In that fateful moment, he perished alongside with his brother, his sister and her children.

The relentless cruelty of the occupation continued to haunt him. Just four months after Alareer's death, it claimed his eldest daughter, Shaima', in a similarly cowardly attack in al-Rimal neighborhood in western Gaza City. In this attack, her husband Muhammad Siyam and their infant son were also killed.

Born on the very day of his martyrdom, Alareer's story transcended the limits of time, emerging as an immortal and defiant poem. His words and verses resonated deeply, particularly in the West, where they illuminated his cause and expressed both grief and glory for GS.

Al-Shuja'iyyah neighborhood was not just his home; it was a source of immense pride. He was born there on 23/9/1979, in a resilient community steeped in history, where a lineage of ancient fighters had once thrived during the first and subsequent Islamic eras. This steadfast neighborhood mirrored Alareer's own character, reflecting the strength of his personality and the unyielding determination that defined his life.

Alareer's weapon was his masterful command of the English language, which he wielded as a gateway to every human confrontation. In those encounters, the human spirit became a poignant fusion of hope and pain, reflecting the turmoil of the world around him. His martyrdom turned the story of his death into a profound testament to the Palestinian experience. In his last posted poem, he expressed a compelling desire for his legacy, writing:

"If I must die, let it bring hope, let it be a tale"⁴

⁴ Refaat in Gaza (@itranslate123), site of X, 1/11/2023, 3:01 p.m., <https://x.com/itranslate123/status/1719701312990830934>





For Alareer, language became both a weapon of resistance and a shield of defense, a tool he used to dismantle the imposed terminology forced upon his cause by the world. With mastery and confidence, he transformed language into a powerful voice, proclaiming that we are a living people with roots that trace back to ancient times.

In the opening lines of his poem, republished in early November, he wrote with profound wisdom:

“If I must die, you must live, to tell my story, to sell my things.”⁵

Mu‘azzaz ‘Abayat: From Bodybuilder to a Broken Man

Nine months in Israeli prisons were enough to completely transform Mu‘azzaz ‘Abayat, a 37-year-old from Bethlehem. Once a healthy, powerfully built bodybuilder, ‘Abayat emerged from the Negev prison shattered, consumed by fear, unable to move without assistance and in a pitiful state of health.



“My condition is very bad... Ben-Gvir trampled my body,” he said upon his release, sobbing. “We die every day... There are two thousand of us in prison, we die every day,” he added, referring to the swelling number of prisoners in the Negev prison since Operation al-Aqsa Flood. ‘Abayat added, “On December 4, I was the target of an attempted killing in Ofer Prison.” His body was placed in a black bag and taken to the hospital.

‘Abayat no longer remembers his family or his five children. Images of torture, humiliation and starvation cloud his memory. He repeatedly recalls the date of his “killing,” mentally trapped in a prison, despite his physical release.



⁵ Ibid.



Dr. ‘Adnan al-Bursh... The Sound of White Sheets

‘Adnan Ahmad ‘Attiyah al-Bursh - Jabalia al-Balad

Head of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at El-Shifaa Medical Complex, Gaza

Doctor of Medicine (MD), University of Iași, Romania

Jordanian Board and Palestinian Board in Orthopedic Surgery

Fellowship in Complex Fractures, King’s College London

MA in Political Science, Al-Azhar University in Gaza

Head of the Medical Unit, Palestinian Football Association



There are examples of extraordinary men whose kind is seldom seen, appearing only in their brief seasons—moments in time that arise for an instant, then quickly fade, leaving behind an enduring legacy.

He is a doctor in his fifties, having earned the highest medical credentials. Clad in a white coat, he dedicated himself to the frontlines of medicine, specializing in surgery. His most recent role was as the head of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at El-Shifaa Medical Complex, which witnessed significant achievements before it was destroyed by the villains of the era.

The image of Dr. ‘Adnan al-Bursh, asleep while sitting with his back against a hospital wall, his hands bound and his white medical shirt stained with blood, became widely recognized. Dr. al-Bursh shared this photo himself, explaining that it was taken on 15/4/2018, during the Marches of Return, after performing dozens of surgeries in one day for the many wounded. He revealed that this moment followed an exhausting 16 hours of continuous work.

From the very first day of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, he took to his Facebook page with a heart full of pride, celebrating what he described as the birth of a new era. On 9/10/2023, he shared two powerful posts inspired by the Qur’an: “*and the flood seized them while they were wrongdoers,*”⁶ and “*Enter upon them through the gate, for when you have entered it, you will be predominant.*”⁷

⁶ *Surat al-‘Ankabut* (The Spider): 14.

Note: All translations of the Qur’anic verses in this book are from the site of The Quranic Arabic Corpus, <http://corpus.quran.com/>

⁷ *Surat al-Ma’idah* (The Table spread with Food): 23.





He knew this would be a different kind of epic, so on the fifth day of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, he lamented the abandonment of neighbors and relatives, “Gaza suffers not only under the whip of its oppressors but even more from the deafening silence of its kin. Like Yusuf [Joseph] among his brothers, Gaza’s only sin has been its beauty!”

His pain was worsening, so he cried out once more to the entire world, gesturing fervently, moved and filled with exclamation.:

“How many more martyrs do we need, Gaza, for the dust to cry out... Enough.

How much blood must flow to awaken this indifferent world?

How many broken bodies, scattered body parts of children, tears of mothers... and explosions of blood in the arteries must we endure!!!!!!?????”

On the ninth day after Operation al-Aqsa Flood, amidst the chaos, he began to find a semblance of peace within his soul. He started to embrace a profound understanding of divine wisdom, convincing himself of an unyielding truth that refused to succumb to fear or surrender: “We no longer panic or tremble. We are learning to greet our losses with the calmness of a victor, believing deep down that our losses are a form of victory.”

On the tenth day, he found himself immersed in a profound philosophy [by Mourid Barghouti], accepting the wisdom of fate and destiny: “Some homelands are like this—entering them is difficult, leaving them is difficult, staying in them is difficult, and we have no homeland but this one.”

His grief deepened with the martyrdom of two of his beloved relatives: Muhammad and Samih, his nephew, who were martyred on 7 October and 19 November, respectively.

He witnessed death in hospitals, where patients yearn to be discharged alive and unharmed. On the morning of the massacre at al-Ahli Hospital on 18 November, he wrote free verse that echoed the sentiments of Egyptian poet Ahmad Bakheet:

For the blood of a child,
In Gaza,
Say a prayer.
Every child
Is a qiblah..

On 21/10/2023, he made a note of every word spoken by those who passed by him in El-Shifaa Medical Complex. His soul intertwined with theirs, their sorrow and anguish flowing into him like a river of shared pain. Each word he recorded felt sacred, a historical testament to the collective suffering around him. He described these words as echoes that would linger in our ears, indelible marks on our memories that we would never forget:



- “His name is Yusuf, 7 years old, with curly hair, bright and beautiful.. I want Yusuf, Papa”
- “He was calling for me, ‘Kamal, Kamal!’ He was alive, I swear... I just want to kiss him”
- “Where are the children! They died without even eating. *Allah* bear witness to me”
- “Rise and nurse my precious baby.. Please, rise..”
- “I just want one strand of his hair, just one before you bury him”
- “You were sleeping”!
- “Oh ‘Ammar.. do you feel me? I won’t leave until you come out from under the rubble. I’ll wait a day, two days, a year, until you’re back.”
- “I swear by *Allah*, my daughter was a bride martyred. Her wedding was just last Friday. I swear by *Allah*, we didn’t even return the wedding dress to its owner”!
- “I swear by *Allah*, she was a bride, and she was two months pregnant”
- “The seven [were killed] with their mother.. the seven with their mother”
- “For just one second, one second, you let go of my hand—why! I wish I had died with you.. To whom have you left me”!
- “Oh world, bring me my daughter”
- “Oh everyone, my husband has been martyred; your father has been martyred”
- “Forty years I spent building this home... now it’s gone. For the sake of Palestine [I endure this agony]”
- “I was planning to throw her a birthday party”..
- “I wish I join my [dead] father, too.”
- “Don’t cry, man.. we are all martyrs; we are all potential martyrs”
- “For the sake of *al-Aqsa*, oh my mother, for the sake of *al-Aqsa* [we endure this agony]”
- “Don’t be afraid, Dad, I’m okay”..
- “My heart breaks for you, my sister. Where are the Arabs, where are the Muslims?”
- “Enough is enough, world”
- “Put your heart on my heart, mother... [I want to] feel you, mother”
- “I swear by *Allah*, our resolve stands unwavering [despite the grief we carry]”
- “This is Marah, she used to love to draw, and this is Bisan, the doctor”
- “I’m driving in to lay my father to rest”





- “Oh Uncle, take me to Mama... I want my Mama”
- “What did this little girl do to them? Twenty years [her father] waited for a child... she was here for only two months, and then she left [was killed]!”
- “ ‘Umar, say ‘In the name of *Allah*,’ My love, can you hear me? Repeat after me: I bear witness that there is no god but *Allah*.. Speak up, my love”
- “My siblings, my siblings... I’m fine, I just want my siblings”
- “Our house is gone, where are we supposed to stay?!”
- “There’s no place left to flee... where are we supposed to escape to? There’s nowhere left to live”
- “Never before were any of them just a number. Each one had a home, a story, a family, a dream, a memory and a heart”



On 24 October, a conviction took hold of him: “This land has no room for two identities.... It’s either us or us.... We are the ones who endure, and they are the ones who merely pass through.” That’s what he wrote, word for word.

In his final hours at El-Shifaa Medical Complex, on 8 November, he expressed his thoughts in colloquial vernacular, capturing the essence of his surroundings: “What remains in the valley is nothing but its stones...” Then, on 10 November, he reaffirmed his resilience with powerful words: “Unyielding, resolute, unwavering in our stance... We will not depart... except for the heavens above... or to our homes, with dignity and honor.” Just ten days later, on 20/11/2023, he penned another defiant message, announcing his transfer to Rumah Sakit Indonesia (aka The Indonesian Hospital): “We die standing, we will not kneel, and as I said, what remains in the valley is nothing but its stones... And we are its stones.”

Dr. ‘Adnan al-Bursh and his colleagues at El-Shifaa Medical Complex displayed unwavering resolve, akin to the steadfast companions of the Battle of Uhud⁸ who stood their ground to the very end. Even after relocating to the Indonesian Hospital, where Israeli bombing caused a wall to collapse, tragically killing 12 of his colleagues, al-Bursh’s resolve remained unshaken. In a poignant letter to a friend, Dr. ‘Adnan recalled the harrowing siege at El-Shifaa Medical Complex, noting that conditions at the Indonesian Hospital were even worse. While at El-Shifaa they could communicate their plight through some media platforms, but at the Indonesian Hospital, communication was severely restricted, reduced to few brief phone calls and occasional leaked footage.

⁸ Battle of Uhud is the second battle fought between the Muslim army under the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the leaders of the Quraysh.



On one harrowing occasion, as he supervised a critical operation in the hospital, his family's call came through. The sound of his children screaming, their voices tinged with terror from the relentless bombing, pierced his heart. In that moment of helplessness, all he could utter was a single phrase: "Praise be to *Allah*," though it was heavy with sorrow and pain!

His last phone call from El-Shifaa Medical Complex was to Aljazeera Channel, where he poured out his heart in a hoarse voice, testifying to the fulfillment of his duty. "By *Allah*, sister, we left the hospital with a heavy heart, but we have fulfilled the *Amanah*⁹. By *Allah*, we have fulfilled the *Amanah*, and our reward is from *Allah*!"

When he moved to the Indonesian Hospital, tanks surrounded it from all sides, and shells targeted all the operation rooms, killing 12 wounded and injuring two medical staff. From there, Dr. al-Bursh moved to his last front in al-Awda Hospital in Tal al-Zaatar, Jabalia, in northern GS, where everything had been destroyed.

In early December 2023, the doctor was in the midst of performing a critical surgery on a patient when the Israeli forces stormed al-Awda Hospital. Undeterred by their threats to abandon the operation and let the patient die, he stood firm, refusing to comply. In retaliation, they shot him in the foot, leaving him bleeding on the floor. Under the faint, flickering light of a powerless hospital, some of his colleagues desperately tried to tend to his wound. Exhausted and writhing in pain, the doctor's resolve was clear even in his suffering. Moments later, Israeli soldiers forcibly dragged him, along with dozens of doctors, medical staff and patients, into a military transport vehicle, leaving behind a scene of devastation—dozens of martyrs and wounded.

Dr. 'Adnan's wounds were still fresh—bleeding, raw and unintended—as Israeli forces violently transferred him to a detention camp in the Negev Desert. The signs of his torment were unmistakable to other prisoners upon his arrival; he was bound, a cloth covering his eyes, his body bearing the brutal evidence of torture. Like many others taken from GS, he was treated with deliberate cruelty. In a rare act of solidarity, fellow inmates managed to smuggle a mattress, a blanket and a bit of food into a filthy cell, offering him the smallest measure of humanity amidst the inhumanity. But after just two days, he was abruptly moved to another camp and ultimately ended up in the notorious Ofer detention center. There, he was subjected to the merciless grip of hard-hearted interrogators and indifferent Israeli doctors where his life ended as a martyr under torture. The unspeakable horrors he endured left him unrecognizable to those who saw him in his final moments—doctors and prisoners alike were shaken by the sight. The hellish torment, relentless humiliation and endless sleep deprivation had reduced him to a mere shadow of the man he once was—a haunting reminder of the cruelty inflicted upon him.

The Israeli authorities informed the lawyer, who was never granted access to Dr. al-Bursh, that he was in good health. This claim, impossible to verify, left his family clinging to a hollow reassurance, a cruel Israeli fabrication, as they waited in vain for the Red Cross to intervene and uncover the truth. Days stretched into agonizing uncertainty until devastating reality emerged: he had died a martyr, a victim of savage torture and

⁹ *Amanah*: The trusts.



relentless beatings at Sde Teiman base and other prisons. The Red Cross, complicit in its silence, failed to investigate or even ask the essential questions about his fate. Reports revealed the extent of his suffering under brutal treatment, while not a single Israeli doctor intervened or voiced concern as he endured unimaginable torture.

Al-Bursh was martyred in Ofer prison on 19/4/2024, but his martyrdom was not officially announced until 2/5/2024. In the wake of this devastating revelation, his family's foremost concern was recovering his body, longing to honor him a dignified burial in his homeland. Generations will honor the legacy of the courageous doctor, whose story and the white shroud that embraced him stand as eternal testaments to his unyielding spirit and devotion until the very end.

“His Hair is Curly, His Skin Fair and His Face Sweet”

“His hair is curly, his skin fair and his face sweet”... words of a mother describing her seven-year-old son, Yusuf, the youngest of her children, as she ran desperately through the hospital where his father, Dr. Muhammad Hamid Abu Musa, works, searching for him after an Israeli airstrike struck their home.

After desperately searching among the wounded and the dead, the father finally found Yusuf's lifeless body in the morgue. The boy had been left alone briefly while his mother went to find him something to eat. “I stood frozen and couldn't walk until they held me and took me inside... and I found him.... All I could say was: *Alhamdulillah*; Sufficient for us is *Allah*, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs.”

“Yusuf was beloved by everyone.. may Allah have mercy on him, my darling.”

“I have lost everything.. my relatives, my home, my life.. but the greatest loss is my beloved son, Yusuf.. I place him in Allah's care as a martyr, and we say only Sufficient for us is *Allah*, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs.”





Hiba Abu Nada... The Alphabet of Palestinian Shackles

Hiba Kamal Saleh Abu Nada

Hiba was born in Saudi Arabia on 24/1/1991 and was martyred in GS on 20/10/2023.

Her family hails from the village of Beit Jirja, once part of the Gaza district before the *Nakbah* of 1948, located about 15 km away. Hiba often gazed across the border toward her abandoned village, longing and waiting for the time to return.

BS in Biochemistry, Islamic University of Gaza

MA in Clinical Nutrition, Al-Azhar University in Gaza

Diploma in Educational Rehabilitation, Islamic University of Gaza, where she worked at the “Rusul” Educational Center in the department specializing in smart and creative children in the field of science.



She won:

- First place in short story at the national level in Palestine.
- Second place in the Sharjah Award for Arab Creativity (2017, 20th edition) for her novel “*Oxygen is not for the Dead*.”

Hiba participated in several joint poetry publications, including: “*The Alphabet of the Last Shackle*,” “*The Eaten Straw*” and “*The Poet of Gaza*.”

In her writings, a soul deeply yearning for justice, freedom, light, hope and homeland— a sad, wounded soul, charged with the anger and revolt, distressed by injustice and darkness.

In her debut narrative, “Oxygen is Not for the Dead,” she unravels the complexities of life in a realm marked by war and siege. The protagonist, “Adam,” embodies the weight of an ancient, forgotten guilt. Through her story, she casts her gaze toward an Arab revolution, one that aims to dismantle the chains of dictatorship and embrace the promise of freedom. She writes, “Here, you will find yourself searching with Adam for an elusive killer, living with his mother as she unravels the mysteries of love etched onto a military uniform. You will crawl





with Aziz toward the light at the end of his dreams' tunnel, and you will share your hunger with those who lay out the tables of their souls on the edges of cities. You will shout with the crowds, sing along as if you've discovered your voice for the first time. Beware, for you will fall in love and feel the stirrings of hope."

This poet and author documented the initial stages of the war in a brief literary work, composing her diaries during the 13 days of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, which commenced on October 7, 2023. Her first entries were written just hours after the operation began. She was awestruck by the grandeur and majesty of those beginnings, the powerful surge of emotions and events that would shape the narrative of her people: "Which mad writer has gathered all these shocking events into a single narrative? Yet our youth do not excel at crafting fictional tales; they excel at writing reality in blood and fire! Oh, magnificent episode, may you never end— we are all witnesses to this astonishment."

Her final writings came on October 20, as she bid farewell to her friend, the martyr Mariam Samir, expressing a longing to join her in martyrdom or remain a witness to the awaited liberation: "Here in Gaza, we are with *Allah*, we find ourselves poised between martyrdom and the dawn of liberation. Each of us awaits our destiny; we all wait, O *Allah*, Your promise is true."

Before her death, she penned her wish in colloquial Arabic on her Facebook account—a wish that soon became a reality, a hope that every Gazan who has tasted the bitterness of this brutal war yearns for: "That wish we all know too well in Gaza... Every day, I used to choose your clothes; why am I in a *jilbab*¹⁰ while you're dressed for burial? Oh, how the occasion has changed: I'm heading toward death, and you're going to paradise! What a loss; it would have been better if we had gone together."

As we reflect on her short writings that she penned throughout the days of the war, we see how she lived her life under fire and light, fear and hope, intimidation and desire, love and hate. We witness how deeply she was wounded by the betrayal of neighboring countries, Arabs and Muslims. Each word she utters here is heavy with profound, anguished emotions—wounds of hurt and fury that beg for a deep psychological and rhetorical examination. She said:

🕊️ "In al-Zahra area of Gaza, all 24 towers are now under threat, an entire city is falling, one tower at a time. Oh *Allah*, oh *Allah*!"

🕊️ "Mariam has finally found rest, free from exhaustion, I'm so sorry, Mariam, for every time we disagreed. I'm so very sorry..."



¹⁰ A long and loose piece of outer garment that covers the whole body, except for the hands, face and feet, worn by some Muslim women.



- ✧ “My list of friends is shrinking, transforming into small coffins scattered here and there. I can’t hold onto my friends as they scatter after the missiles. I can’t bring them back, can’t mourn them, can’t cry; I don’t know what to do!”
- ✧ “Every day, it shrinks more. These aren’t just names; they are us, with different faces and names.”
- ✧ “Oh Lord, what can we do in the face of this massive banquet of death?”
- ✧ “There’s no ‘icon’ here that can bring them back, not even through a lie...”
- ✧ “If we die, know that we are content and steadfast, and tell the world that we are people of rights.”
- ✧ “Our family photos have turned into images of a sack of limbs, a pile of ashes, five shrouds wrapped side by side, varying in size. Family photos in Gaza are different—they were together, they are together, and they left together.”
- ✧ “We are barely alive and just managing to survive; *Allah* knows that. Yet we have memorized the names of those who betrayed us and those who supported us—not just in memory but for eternity. We will carry them in our coffins when we die, carrying them until falsehood is defeated and truth prevails.”
- ✧ “Whenever a line bends on the map of Palestine between cities, bullets step in to set it right.”
- ✧ “Erasers are meant for children; cities erase their mistakes with gunfire—Gaza stands as a poignant example..”
- ✧ “The girl who, after years of torment, became engaged to the young man she loved, is gone. The home prepared for the bride and groom has turned into rubble. The baby, born after years of longing, was torn apart by a rocket. The mother, the heart of the home, has vanished along with the home. The classmates who once fought for the front seat are no more, as are the teacher, the doctor, the journalist... Only the photo, the scream, and the blood remain.. And coffins stretch from one end of Gaza to the other, perhaps no one will live to carry them!!”
- ✧ “How much we grieve, but by *Allah*, desertion is harder than a rocket. By *Allah*.”
- ✧ “The speed and tragedy of death in Gaza have reached the point where there are no longer martyrs who first go to the hospital and then to the grave. Instead, the martyr, the hospital and the grave have become one. Oh *Allah*, we are finished. By Allah, we are finished.”
- ✧ “O world, where do we go? By *Allah*, if they would just kill us all at once, it would be better. We won’t give up and we will not surrender. Kill us all at once and be done with it, instead of making us watch ourselves perish like this, Oh God, we can’t even weep even in the face of tragedy.”
- ✧ “When we go to *Allah*, we will not ask Him to take revenge on Israel; we will first ask Him to hold the Arabs and our brothers in the other part of the homeland accountable.”





- “We have stopped counting in Gaza, we have stopped counting martyrs, the wounded, or the days. Nothing has meaning anymore. We have stopped even knowing what to pray for!”
- “Sufficient for us is *Allah*, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs, against this world; Arabs and non-Arabs.”
- “For us, there is no difference between the murderous Israeli, the collaborating European, the silent Arab and the others who watch us. They are all murderers, every single one of them.”
- “The situation is as follows: We are all in an open field; stalks exhausted from siege, and death carries a massive scythe, swinging it at us from right to left. We are all dying, the field empties of us, and the stalks scatter!”
- “Children died who hadn’t even used their names yet!”
- “Under the shelling in Gaza, from the peak of our death, we hear the poets. Tamim has spoken on our behalf, saying everything that must be said. This statement, sealed with blood, is heavy and loud with its weight. If we survive, we will remember Tamim, and if we die, remember him on our behalf and curse the politicians, both Arabs and non-Arabs, and spit in their faces, for we won’t be able to.”
- “Peace be upon you, Gaza.”
- “We are up there, constructing a second city—doctors without patients or blood, professors without the chaos of crowded classrooms, new families free from pain and sorrow, journalists capturing paradise, and poets writing of eternal love—all from Gaza, every one of them.”
- “In paradise, a new Gaza is taking shape, one without siege.”
- “We’ve heard more expressions of solidarity from foreign names than from our own officials, and by *Allah*, we will never forget.”
- “These days, our bodies are made of air, while our memories are forged from iron.”
- “Shame in our era, O Sayyiduna al-Faruq [RA], is seeing on television reports about pro-Gaza rallies!”
- “*Alhamdulillah* you didn’t see it.”
- “The sound we hear is the sound of death passing us by to choose someone else. We are still alive, hearing the death of others we know, saying: *Alhamdulillah* the last sound they heard was not that of the missile.”
- “Whoever hears the sound of the missile survives.”
- “We are still alive until further notice.”
- “Those outside Gaza know the news and images of Gaza more than we do. We don’t know what is happening here; we are isolated from the world, and we do not know who among us is still alive. Do not leave, no matter what happens or what you hear about us.”



🕊️ “*Allah* is our refuge.”

🕊️ “We go through extended periods of communication blackout; we are all isolated in our places. Then we try bitterly to open any means of communication, only to be shocked by the names of martyrs. Streets and families are emptied of their children. Oh *Allah*.”

🕊️ “We bid farewell to everyone hastily, without tears or funerals, praying for fortitude under the bombardment, unsure of who will follow them. O *Allah*, grant us support!”

🕊️ “This night will be difficult; we will be cut off from all earthly means, but we will not be cut off from the means of heaven. In *Allah*’s gentle care, O Gaza, each and every one of you.”

🕊️ “We are surviving the moment here—the distance you put a ‘like’ on a post, the distance of you turning off the alarm, the distance of calling your son, only for him not to answer; death is much quicker!”

🕊️ “Today is Friday. It was not a week; it was a long day divided into dozens of martyrs and wounded. So much death, and we don’t know what to expect.”

🕊️ “In difficult battles, rationalists and emotionalists lose; only the faithful remain steadfast.”

🕊️ “The family trees fall completely, no individuals nor branches left. The tree collapses with all within it in a heartbreaking descent. Gaza transforms into a barren wasteland, an open graveyard stretching from the threshold of the Arab League to the United Nations podium. And we stare into our graves silently, heavily and in surrender to *Allah*.”

Hiba Abu Nada writes with a clarity that reflects her deep awareness and understanding of the truth she has arrived at about Gaza—the martyred witness—and her embrace of the profound philosophy of martyrdom, deeply anchored in the core of her faith:

🕊️ “Gaza has done its utmost in the face of this injustice, exceeding imagination, rising beyond the bounds of the possible and impossible, shattering every idol and every prohibition, and forging a resilience that will forever be studied in history and forever attributed to Gaza. When lies unravel, hypocritical politicians falter, and fragile humanity collapses upon itself, Gaza will remain an unfathomable, impossible symbol— an epic that no city, civilization, or army can ever achieve, except in the age of prophets and miracles. We have done what we had to do to reclaim our rights, to fight and to endure on behalf of the *Ummah*¹¹ and the oppressed across the world. We have nothing to regret, nothing to grieve. Before *Allah* and before ourselves, we are the rightful owners of this cause. Our share of the covenant was to endure and to strive. What comes after that is the command of *Allah* in whom we believe and to Him, we entrust our fate.

¹¹ *Ummah*: Muslim nation.





If we perish, it is a badge of honor, and if we remain, let us tell the tale and place our story before the eyes of the whole world. Yet between this and that, we have our rituals of weeping, patience, sorrow, remembrance, hope and despair.

And if we die, say on our behalf: Here were people who dreamed of travel, love, life and other things.

We lie beneath the planes, and *Allah* is above them and us.”

✧ “O *Allah*, we have no one but You, O *Allah*. These are Your days, we are Your servants, and this is Your blessed land. You are the support, from You comes the support, and in You lies the support—no Arabs, no one else [only You].”

✧ “This tragedy is too immense to be written about and broadcast in the media. O God, we have no aid or support except from You, O *Allah*.”

✧ “Allah, extend Your help, extend, we are the few—besieged, exhausted, steadfast and faithful to You—abandoned by all, left to face death alone. We have no means, no power—none but You, O *Allah*.”

✧ “At the beginning of the day, after we make sure we are still alive, we start counting each other: who among us has remained and who has turned into a funeral, not only people, but streets and neighborhoods as well.”

✧ “The entire city is being martyred, *Alhamdulillah!*”

✧ “In every past war, Israel followed a distinct pattern of targets—sometimes families, sometimes mosques, sometimes streets, sometimes border zones or central areas, sometimes towers. There was always a plan of fire, one that we, beneath the fire understood and learned to decipher—tracing from it the targets, air raids and the war’s expected duration.

This time, there is no set pattern; everything is under bombardment. All past wars are compressed into this one. Gaza, from north to south, is under fire—indiscriminate and horrifying. A state of collective slaughter and senseless assassination of everything. Yet it is only our patience and faith in *Allah* that allow us to gaze at the planes overhead. We calm ourselves before we cry, or we cry after the calm, and say: O *Allah*, we have no one but You, O *Allah!*.”

✧ “The city’s night is dark, save for the glow of rockets; silent, save for the roar of shelling; frightening, save for the solace of prayer; black, save for the light of the martyrs.”

✧ “Good night, Gaza.”

Hiba continued to write relentlessly every day, producing her intense psychological documents. She found that diving into her texts from those few days following the onset of the Flood could provide material for serious, specialized studies, as well as in-depth research on the values cherished by the people of GS and its cultural elite during this historic battle. She writes:



- ✂ “Dear all! We are approaching a phase in which we will be cut off from the world so that the city can be destroyed in the shortest time possible. We will not be able to communicate with anyone, either inside or outside the city. The night has not yet begun, and the bombardment is already like hell.”
- ✂ “Until then, hold us in your prayers and convey to the world even a single word of steadfastness and freedom on our behalf.”
- ✂ “We have entrusted Gaza, along with everything and everyone within it, to *Allah*, the Preserver and the Compeller.”
- ✂ “We don’t know who among us will remain to share the story; perhaps no one will remain in Gaza to tell it, but we believe in *Allah*. O mercy of *Allah* upon us and upon all. Death tears families and neighborhoods apart.”
- ✂ “There is no time for grand funerals or proper farewells, no time for much. A furious missile is coming, and we’ll settle for a fleeting kiss on the forehead, a swift goodbye and the wait for the next death.”
- ✂ “No time for farewell.”
- ✂ “From where do the [rocket] salvos launch? From our hearts, each one rising from the anguish of a Gazan.”
- ✂ “Our personal pages are homes of mourning, tents of tribute, obituaries. We drift from one page to another, as though wandering through an endless funeral procession, each part blending into the next. O *Allah*, how heavy these days are!”
- ✂ “America plans to send an aircraft carrier to support the entity [Israel]. Well, that’s good. *InshaAllah*, once we are free, we will transform it into a floating restaurant in the sea.”
- ✂ “O Gaza, may *Allah* be with you against the world’s treachery.”
- ✂ “The day breaks after yet another harrowing night, bringing news from all directions—of the missing, the martyrs, the wounded and the survivors. Though this scene has played out thousands of times, though wars have come and gone and nights like this have been countless, loss never becomes familiar. Every loss is a first. Every farewell is the only farewell for its loved ones, and every lost soul is a unique instance of heartbreak. This is something one cannot get used to, something the heart cannot be trained for nor the soul tamed. It is what shatters us, tearing us apart each time, as though it were the first! O Gaza, O its people, may *Allah* be with you.”

Hiba penned these words on the very first day of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, bracing herself for Israel’s response to the historic humiliation inflicted by the heroes of this operation.



“The night has fallen, and all of Gaza will be under fire. Yet *Allah*’s care and gentleness towers above their fire and missiles. We do not know what will happen! But this time is different; we know it, and we feel the weight of the moment. This is history changing, geography shifting, and we are the history and geography in this moment.

We have packed our emergency bags, charged our phones and entrusted ourselves, our families and our homes to *Allah*. Our prayers resonate in our hearts, and our praises flow from our lips. In the name of *Allah*, upon this city, all it holds, and all who dwell within it. Remember, do not leave, no matter what comes. This is a city beloved by *Allah*, a city that loves Him in return. Praise be to *Allah*, always and forever. May He have mercy on the martyrs, heal the wounded, comfort the bereaved and grant us victory by His will.”

“I suggest there isn’t much time. The fighters should take over the remaining settlements and leave the ones they already broke in for school students—Sderot for Grade 10, Shaar HaNegev for Grade 11, the captives for Grades 5 and 6 and so on...”

“Whenever the world’s path becomes crooked, Gaza sets it straight.”

“Where are those who doubted, who placed their bets? You do not hear from them a sound.”

“For the first time, we and the Jews find ourselves in the same position—confused, unable to fully comprehend what’s happening exactly.”

“The fighters, O Hanadi, have claimed your right back. One of them just wanted to walk the streets of his occupied town. Why is everyone so shocked? *“They see it as distant, and we see it near.”*¹²

Hiba also wrote poetry, and among the verses we have documented from her, there is a piece about Operation al-Aqsa Flood and her comment on her short poem, acknowledging that it does not measure up to her prose.

I shield you from all harm or death,
In the tightest of our siege and in the whale’s belly.
Our streets praise with every strike,
And pray for mosques and homes alike.
And when the shelling starts up north,
The south will rise in prayer.

Hiba was displaced with her family to Khan Yunis. On 20/10/2023, the aerial bombardment intensified, raining terror upon the homes of families in the area. Missiles unleashed by the occupation struck a residential belt in al-Manara neighborhood, taking Hiba’s life as her bones were shattered and her body torn apart.

¹² *Surat al-Ma‘arij* (The Ways of Ascent): 6.

Palestinian poet Muhammad Dababesh wrote heartfelt verses about her:

Friends are treasures and air,
And without them, wishes are dark.
They flock to life as verses,
And their reward at the end is martyrs.
Among them appeared “*Hibat al-Nada*,” as if
She were the tree of metaphor, its soul, and its water.
Imagination flows from her hands, speaking,
As if names grow from her.



“Amaneh, Come Take Me”

“The tank is right next to us... stay with me... when someone comes to me, hang up, okay? What time is it? It’s already dark, I’m scared, *Amaneh* [Please, I beg you], come take me...”

These were the tearful words of 6-year-old Hind Rajab, spoken during a phone call with a paramedic from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society shortly before her martyrdom. The recording captures the terror Hind endured; trapped and alone inside a car surrounded by Israeli tanks.

On 10/2/2024, the bodies of Hind Rajab and five of her family members were found, 12 days after contact was lost, following an Israeli assault on their vehicle in the Tel al-Hawa area, southwest of Gaza City. Israeli forces also targeted two Red Crescent paramedics who tried to rescue Hind, killing them both.





Hamza ‘Amer... The Elegant Fighter

Hamza Hisham Hosni ‘Amer

A resident of al-Amal neighborhood in Khan Yunis, GS

Hamza was born in 1991 to a family whose roots go back to the town of Beit Daras and who was displaced to GS.

BA in Police Studies, Palestinian Police Academy in Gaza



Hamza ‘Amer grew up an orphan, as it was in his first year of life that his father became a martyr in the famous Khan Younis operation on 30/10/1992. His sister Zainab, grew up alongside him under the care of their mother and family in their steadfast neighborhood, renowned in Khan Yunis, around the Palestine and al-Shafi‘i Mosques, where the comrades of his martyred father laid the foundation of their community and the supporting environment. His sense of orphanhood shrank before his swelling pride, for everyone in his neighborhood recognized him and carried the story of his father, greeting him with reverence and admiration.

His mother carried him in her heart, continuing her journey by completing her university studies and working at the very institution from which she graduated. She fulfilled the trust of her martyred husband, Hisham, until their two sons graduated in the fields each had come to love.

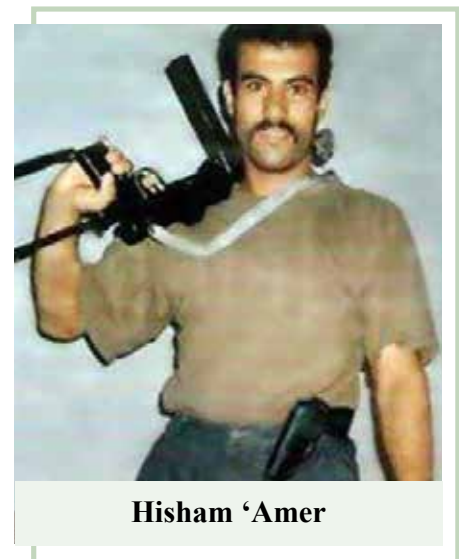
Hamza inherited his father’s towering, well-proportioned stature and sturdy build. His father’s legacy etched itself into his mind and conduct, shaping his steps as he walked the same path and upheld the same way.

In al-Amal vibrant neighborhood, destiny brought together the lives of his father and Yahya al-Sinwar, who was then his father’s direct superior. At the time, Sinwar was a passionate and driven young man in his mid-20s, entrusted by Sheikh Ahmad Yasin to establish a fledgling security apparatus, one that began with security operations and gradually evolved into military actions. In this neighborhood his father’s comrades gathered—Yasir Namruti, Muhammad al-Deif and Jamil Wadi, all pioneers of the Islamic military action groups in GS. At that time, a smaller group of younger individuals, trained by them, emerged—figures like Hasan Salameh, the leader of the Revenge Operations for the martyr Yahya ‘Ayyash, along with others pursued [by the Israeli army].



As a young boy, Hamza lived with the memory of his father, searching for stories and fragments of news in an effort to satisfy his longing to know the father he could no longer remember. All he had was an old photograph—an image of his father, standing defiantly with his weapon, a fierce glint in his eye as he taunted his enemies. This picture became Hamza’s treasure, a source of pride he shared with close friends. People would tell him how his father had planned to attack an occupation police station in western Khan Yunis with two of his comrades, armed with limited weapons and little ammunition. They swiftly took down the guards before retreating, only to be caught by a patrol. An expanding bullet (known colloquially as dumdum bullet) shattered his liver, and he bled profusely. Yet, he clung to his weapon, his resolve unwavering, until his comrades managed to rush him to the hospital. Knowing death was near, he entrusted his weapon to his brothers, urging them to care for it as if it were a piece of his very spirit. In those last moments, he slipped away during surgery, his soul soaring to the embrace of the green birds, carrying him to his heavenly abode, fulfilling the deepest yearning of his heart.

Therefore, Hamza always aspired to join the ranks of Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas). His father had been one of its earliest pioneers, when the local groups were small, pursued and armed with nothing but a few, very limited weapons. Hamza dedicated himself to embodying the values of the brigades—moral integrity, security, commitment, eligibility and competence. He trained his body fiercely, just as his father, a karate fighter, had done, strengthening it through bodybuilding exercises. His physique stood out, with a sculpted, tall frame and bulging muscles, exuding an elegant strength. In 2012, he proudly passed the exams for the Palestinian Police Academy, a significant step toward his dream. When he learned that his father’s comrade and mentor, Yahya al-Sinwar, had been released from prison in the Devotion of the Free deal, his heart swelled with hope. Listening, Yahya shared Hamza’s father’s story with him, as he had never heard it before. His heart grew closer to the man his father had been than ever, and he felt joy when others would say, “How much you resemble your father!”



Hisham ‘Amer

He felt a surge of anger and sadness as his brethrens and his father’s comrades treated him with kid gloves, shielding him from the dangerous missions he longed to undertake. They were motivated by concern for his mother who had only him and his sister in this world. It troubled him to be labeled as “his mother’s only son.” However, Hamza often reminded them that honoring his mother was in perfect alignment with his father’s wishes; he believed deeply that fulfilling their legacy would lead to a greater righteousness in the hereafter. He dreamed of a generous intercession for all their families, one he hoped to earn through a martyrdom that would be pleasing to *Allah*. Driven by this conviction, he took matters into his own hands, buying his weapons with his own money and dedicating his car and its fuel to supporting his comrades.



After that, Hamza became a rare presence in his family home. Even during holidays, seasons and family gatherings, he often chose to be absent, missed only slightly because whispers circulated that he was a solitary soul who shunned crowds. Yet, the truth was far different. He was deeply immersed in the cause he had always yearned to join. He made it clear that any future wife must understand his unwavering commitment to this jihadist project, that his role as a fighter would always take precedence over that of a husband, and that he saw himself as a martyr in the making. He chose a noble wife who accepted his condition, a woman from a family of freedom fighters, whose brother had been martyred just a month before her husband, Hamza. He built a small family, which he embraced alongside his patient and devoted mother. His seven-year-old daughter, Lana, bore a striking resemblance to her grandmother, while his son Hisham—named after his father—was five years old, at the age when he began to grasp that he came from a lineage of brave fighters. The youngest, Muhammad, was only two and a half when he lost his elegant father.

Since the battles of Operation al-Aqsa Flood erupted, Hamza threw himself into the fight with unwavering resolve. He donned his war suit—a long, elegant black coat that concealed the long Yasin launcher—and moved stealthily through the streets of his neighborhood which he and his comrades had vowed to defend at all costs, determined to strike down the enemy. Little did he know that the moment he appeared, lying in wait for a heavily armored Merkava 4 tank, then sprinting toward it to stand in the open, upright and unflinching, would be the one to capture the gaze of millions. He, who had once been wounded in his back by an airstrike, would turn himself into a launch platform for a Yasin rocket, striking the tank with pinpoint accuracy from an agonizingly close distance, causing it to explode. Millions have been searching for any thread that could lead them to identify this man with a thick black beard, wearing a black wool coat that made him stand out, like a mythical hero, reminiscent of Batman in his iconic cinematic persona. His pristine white sneakers, which his wife had bought for him a month before the Flood, were also part of his signature. It was through these details that they came to know him. However, given that his face was concealed in the Al-Qassam video that spread like wildfire, his black coat, which made him appear as a man of elegance who cared about the finer details of his attire, became the mark that pointed to him, signaling his mysterious and captivating identity. No one knew that this neat figure was Hamza Hisham ‘Amer until after he was martyred, joining his father in the afterlife. He didn’t even know that people were talking about him, or that he had become famous across the world, or that he would become even more sought after. Hamza was focused solely on avenging his father, darting through the streets and alleys of Khan Yunis. Like a wasp, he stung with every appearance, lying in wait like a lion among abandoned homes and rubble. He rose like a flood from the depths of the earth and its





tunnels, paths he knew by heart, as familiar to him as his father's name and the milestones of his life. He was skilled in setting traps, watching his prey until they stumbled into his snare, then raising his voice in resounding cries of *Allahu Akbar*.

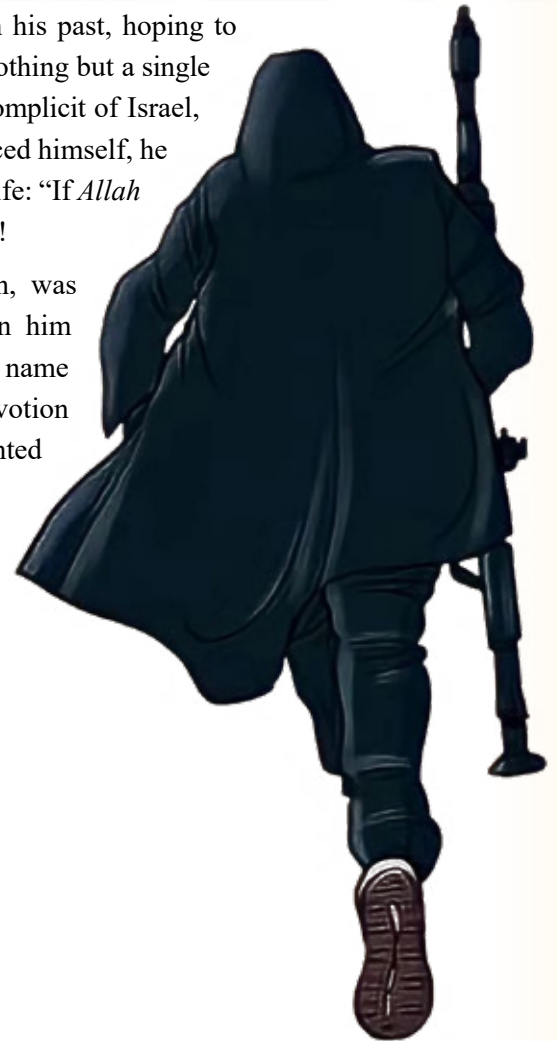
Drones were looking for him and for his comrades and spotted him about a month after his courageous appearance during one of his missions. In an instant, incendiary missiles rained down around him, surrounding him on all sides. As always, Israel, devoid of the honor of true combat, resorted to destruction and chaos. It was in this moment that Hamza found the martyrdom he had sought so fervently, achieving his dream in early March 2024. He became the martyr, son of a martyr. His forefinger remained raised, a powerful testament to his faith, and his body continued to bleed for nine agonizing days, as if still bearing witness to his battles and triumphs. Only when his comrades reached him, braving the belts of fire, did his journey beneath the open sky end. They carried him away, laid him to rest, bid him farewell, and saluted him with the honor befitting his grandeur.

After his identity was revealed, people began to searching through his past, hoping to learn who he was. Yet, they found no trace, no sign pointing to him—nothing but a single sentence he had left behind his Facebook account. But the platform, a complicit of Israel, wasted no time in erasing it. In that fleeting space where he had introduced himself, he had etched his deepest hope and the purpose to which he had bound his life: “If *Allah* grants me the chance to fight the Jews, He shall witness what I will do”!

He was sincere in his intentions and desires, and *Allah*, in turn, was true to him—granting him what he longed for and bestowing upon him a blessed and enduring remembrance. Through him, his father's name was revived after more than thirty years of absence, a tribute of devotion that carried him to the lofty heights of the heavens. And so, he planted a radiant rose in the memory of the *Ummah*.

Palestinian poet Sa'id Yaqub mourned him with these powerful words:

This is the path of those who rise to the heights,
 Rejecting humiliation and disgrace.
 They bring forth light from the heart of darkness,
 And awaken hopes within our souls.
 Glory is an action, not an empty word,
 An act that shakes mountains with its sound.
 O conqueror of hearts with your weapon,
 Fill the hearts of enemies with terror.





Soul of My Soul...

He cradles her, sometimes caressing her, sometimes gazing at her face. He opens her eyes and kisses her as if she were still alive. He tries to speak to her, but she remains silent. He shakes her gently, then hugs her tightly, looking at her and saying she is “the soul of my soul.”

This is Khalid Nabhan (Abu Diya’), the grandfather of little Reem, who was killed, along with her younger brother Tariq, when the brutal Israeli raid struck their home.

After they were shrouded, Abu Diya’ tried to wipe the dust of the bombing from their faces using saline. He combed their hair the way they loved. When Reem’s earring fell from her ear, he placed it in his pocket, the last thing left of Reem.

Abu Diya’ could not believe that Reem and Tareq were gone. “Until I laid them in the grave, I felt they were still alive. At night, I tell myself maybe they are still alive, I just don’t know.”

This raw and devastating moment echoed across the world. The video capturing it became one of the most powerful and widely shared.





Muhammad ‘Abdul Rahim Saleh... The Young Poet of the Resistance

Muhammad ‘Abdul Rahim Jabr Saleh

He was born on 7/8/2003 in Gaza and his family lives in Jabalia refugee camp (RC). He hails from a family whose roots go back to the village of Burayr, occupied in 1948

He graduated from high school in August 2021 with a GPA of 93.4 in Humanities

Presenter, calligrapher and student of directing



A poet who shared his first and final diwan just before his martyrdom in February 2023, His family, his RC and the displaced community of his village, along with the Student Council of the Islamic University of Gaza and a number of governmental and cultural institutions, celebrated him. This filled him with great confidence and a strong desire to be the voice of resistance in Gaza and Palestine, as well as the voice of the Palestinian people.

As he prepared for marriage, eagerly anticipating his wedding ceremony and cherishing the *kunyah*¹³ Abu Mus‘ab, he opened a small shop to support himself.

In his poignant Arabic diwan, titled “His Hand Fell,” he masterfully wove together the delicate threads of *ghazal* (amatory) and resistance poetry. Drawing inspiration from the structure of classical forms, he formed a tapestry of emotion that resonated deeply.

His delivery had a captivating presence, drawing listeners in with the richness and purity of his voice, the eloquence of his performance, and the beauty of his expression.

From a tender age, Muhammad was enchanted by the world of poetry. He eagerly memorized verses and proverbs, captivated by the majestic style of al-Mutanabbi and the artful beauty of prophetic praise.

In his poetry, I witnessed the echoes of the greats, as his long, intricate verses revealed a profound linguistic richness that spoke to the depth of his reading and the diversity of his influences. This young poet was poised to carve his path swiftly through the skies of poetry and soar high within them.

¹³ *Kunyah*: A teknonym in Arabic, typically an adult’s name derived from their eldest son.



People did not know that he was a Qassamite fighter who cherished his rifle as his truest love, yearning to become the voice of Palestinian resistance. Even before turning 20, he achieved the remarkable honor of being the youngest Palestinian poet to have his book published in the GS, only to become a martyr shortly after. His poetry resonated with a profound sense of pride, a soul brimming with dignity, and an unyielding spirit of defiance. Undoubtedly, his commitment to the armed resistance infused his warrior poetry with greater intensity and sharper precision. What is beautiful is that this military experience has ushered him into the realm wisdom—a wisdom possessed by great, mature poets or cultivated by young seasoned poets at the beginning of their journey. Consider, for instance, the defiant wisdom woven into his words:

A lion does not shy away from hardships,
For death is welcomed by the noble.

He viewed martyrdom for the sake of *Allah* as the pinnacle of human honor, believing that those whom *Allah* chose to dwell in the sacred land of Palestine, yet passed away without earning the grace of martyrdom, had betrayed their homeland:

In this land, death is but betrayal,
Unless you fall a martyred soul.

He also says:

Do not grant an oppressor what has befallen him,
For patience is praiseworthy—except with tyrants.

He also knew that the life of a *Mujahid*¹⁴ is short because his [actual] life is not in this world, but in his Hereafter:

Oh my companion,
Life is bitter, life is short
Merely a test,
Or like the rest of a traveler, seeking the shade of a tree,
Then back on the road.
Just a few days, just a few minutes,
So be careful, be cautious, for we shall not last long.



¹⁴ *Mujahid*: Freedom fighter (plural: *Mujahideen* or *Mujahidun*).



He had a goal he was striving for—to liberate and purify *al-Aqsa* Mosque, and to attain martyrdom in its sacred protection:

In war and turmoil, we find our home,
And we seek more, determined to fight.
And the greatest pride this world can give
Is that I die within *al-Aqsa*'s sight.

He pounded his foot against the earth, a fierce warrior fueled by a burning desire for vengeance and poured out his soul in these powerful verses, crafted with unwavering pride:

By *Allah*, blood will never rest; we are the children of lava.
We are the grandchildren of lions, and it is we who led the pyramids.
O Palestine, bear witness that the people's revenge is fulfilled.
And know that here I am the best keeper of the oath.
A master amid war, death is both my uncle and uncle.

The spirit of fiery vengeance pulses through his poetry, as he declares:

Rise and listen to the news they bring,
For the response has immediately shaken the world.
With it, we reply to the dogs and their hatred:
We heed the call of war.
O our sister at *al-Aqsa* Mosque, if they spill your blood,
They will drown in their own blood.
We'll climb over the corpses of dogs,
So stay tuned... revenge is alive within us.

This fierce yearning for vengeance sprang from the depths of his grief and frustration over the loss of his beloved companions—his brothers and role models—whom he mourned with a heavy heart. His younger brother, Adham, had endured a devastating head injury before Operation al-Aqsa Flood, and just as he began to heal after a grueling surgery, Adham was wounded once more in the very targeting operation that claimed Muhammad's life.

He felt an unbreakable bond with those brave soldiers who trained tirelessly in the dead of night, hidden away underground. He made them a promise:

Indeed, we have soldiers in the depth of the night,
Who will open a door in the seas of glory.
They will ignite a blaze on their [the enemy's] shores,
And cast torrents into their homes.



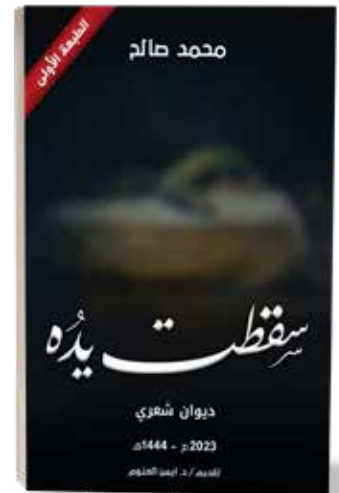


In the faces of the young martyrs, he saw his own reflection, feeling a deep yearning to embody their courage. He spoke passionately about martyr ‘Uday Tamimi, who was killed just a year before Operation al-Aqsa Flood, on the evening of 8/10/2022. He recounted the moment ‘Uday stepped out of a taxi with serene confidence at the Shu‘fat RC checkpoint near Jerusalem, seizing his weapon and aiming it at the heads of the Israeli soldiers:

With your gaze, they saw nothing but unwavering resolve,
 And you struck fear in enemies and invaders.
 You will conquer them, for you are born
 Of a people who cherish death over life.
 O Shu‘fat, within you, ‘Uday is a [source] of pride,
 For he earned martyrdom, not mere demise.
 He rose in a land of honor with pride,
 And rested among the Merciful’s grace.
 So there, when that gathering was one,
 Their gathering [enemies] was scattered.

After his martyrdom, people opened his diwan, and found him speaking of sacrifice—that there is no liberation without it, that one must give up worldly life to be granted afterlife, and only then will life be truly worthy of him.

We ride to death with pride,
 And to battles, we smile wide.
 We have grown weary of its wait,
 For within us, it’s grown old and frayed.
 We have kept it sleepless for an age,
 And stained it deep with blood’s embrace.
 O Palestine, bear witness true,
 That I would give my life for the sacred view.
 Know that in my land I stand,
 The best to keep the oath at hand.
 A master amidst the wars I tread,
 Death to me is uncle and uncle.





His amatory poetry (ghazal) is essentially about his homeland and his rifle, with the “Layla” he loves and redeems representing only one of them:

Why do I try to calm myself whenever
Layla crosses my mind, when no patience or peace can remain?
I love her more than myself, in fact, I revere her,
And her beautiful image never leaves my sight.
If she asked my soul, it would almost unravel,
And at once, my body would respond, without delay.

On the third day of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, on 10/10/2023, Israeli planes were covering the skies over GS, striking open targets unleashing destruction with ruthless disregard. One of these planes targeted the home of Muhammad’s family in Jabalia RC, injuring his father and brother and demolishing the house that had taken his father 20 years to pay off. Muhammed became a martyr while performing ablution for the Fajr prayer.

One of his friends mourned him, alongside the many other martyrs, writing:

Friends are treasures and the very air,
Without them, wishes are dark.
They flock to life, their verses unfold,
And their reward in the end is martyrs bold.
Among them, “Muhammad Saleh” in his grace,
His “hand” fell to us, and pride took its place.
I still remember how his poetry grew,
And how his brilliance reached the lights.

Poet Muhammad Dababesh, his friend, mourned him with poignant verses:

The heart grieves for you, my heart, my dear companion,
Tears burst from the eyes, pouring for you.
Muhammad, O companion of the path, hold on,
You’ve torn your soul from your world.
I wept for you, can there be a substitute for one like you?
By *Allah*, there is none among friends, not a single one.



He also wrote:

My longing for you has worn me down, it haunts me and drains my strength.

It has shattered my heart, and from its pulse, my sorrows slip away.

Those who gaze into my eyes can read the mourning for you in my pain.

I try to freeze them [the tears], but they neither cease nor settle.

They overwhelm me, and new ones rush forth, unbidden.

The last verse he wrote to his friend in a letter was penned on the day of Operation al-Aqsa Flood:

Take what's left of my blood and depart,

For death is but a wish in this world.

“Perhaps This is Something Unique to the People of Palestine”

“Let me share something remarkable with you. I’ve been practicing medicine for many years, and I have never seen patients as calm as these. I never once heard anyone scream or cry out in pain from their injuries. I stitched up their wounds with dozens of sutures, on their abdomens, arms and heads, yet not a single complaint, not a single cry. Even the children were calm. This deeply surprised me. These people displayed a level of calm and patience that was truly astonishing..... In times of war, people are usually overwhelmed by depression and psychological distress. But what struck me most was that I saw no signs of trauma, no visible depression among the wounded.... Perhaps this is something unique to the people of Palestine. Perhaps it is the result of the wars they have endured for so many years. Still, it was incredible to witness such resilience, composure and perseverance in patients with such severe injuries.”

These were the words of Turkish doctor Taner Kamacı, a pediatric surgeon from Diyarbakır, who volunteered in GS to help the wounded. He was the only physician granted permission, first by Egypt and then by Israel, to travel from Türkiye to GS.

What explanation could there be, other than the serenity and peace that Allah has instilled in their hearts?!!



➤ Site of Aljazeera.net, 25/4/2024.





Taysir Abu T'aimah... The Prostrating Martyr

BS in Engineering

Imam of the Palestine Mosque in Bani Suhaila, Khan Yunis Governorate

Commander of the elite in the Khan Yunis Battalion of Ezzedeem Al-Qassam Brigades



Barely five months after the Palestine Mosque in Bani Suhaila opened its doors, welcoming the community into its embrace for Qur'anic and academic activities, Operation al-Aqsa Flood began. Just a week into this operation, the mosque faced the first assault which shattered its windows and damaged spaces in it. Those in charge of the mosque called upon the faithful to pray in their dwellings as it was dangerous to gather in mosques. It wasn't long before the Israeli planes descended upon the mosque, destroying it during their large-scale invasion of Khan Yunis. They leveled all the homes and buildings surrounding it, forcing the residents to flee, and killed the young imam of the mosque, Sheikh Taysir Abu T'aimah.

The community of the Palestine Mosque had no idea that their young imam, with his dewy voice, slender figure, radiant face, youthful beard and an innocent smile, hid a brave heart that made him a leader of an elite group of trained Al-Qassam fighters. They did not know that this 32-year-old young man would become the talk of the town, admired by all, and his story would spread far and wide. They would soon learn that their imam, once leading them in times of peace, would also lead them in times of war.

Whoever is not ahead of us in the line [of battle],
Let him not be our imam in the rows [of prayer].

Taysir, affectionately known as Abu 'Ubaida, embraced the legacy of the prophet's companion Abu 'Ubaida 'Amer bin al-Jarrah (RA). Inspired by his asceticism, Taysir sought to embody his virtues, and follow his example in honesty, discipline and dedication to military service. His gatherings were filled with discussions on faith, sorrowful recitations, and *anasheed* (Islamic hymns) yearning for paradise, as though he were preparing himself for it and seeking the shortest path to reach it.





Taysir took great pride in his weapon, often cradling his launcher as he eagerly awaited the chance to fire the famous homemade Yasin shell, a tribute to the memory of the founding Sheikh Ahmad Yasin. Taysir and a few companions took on the daunting task of targeting tank columns that would circle their area, storming through in reckless fury. Due to the difficulty of communicating with his comrades or the urgency of opportunities that might not come again, he often ventured into combat and reconnaissance missions alone. At times, it felt as though he was fighting on that front by himself.

Taysir cherished every moment spent talking about the martyrs, celebrating their legacies with fervor and passion. His comrades captured a video of him, radiant with joy, as he recited the following verses:

I give my life for a soul of light,
It rose, and heaven's angels cried.
He soared under the Divine's shade,
Flying through paradise, free to glide.
There, among the beloved it stands,
Where martyrs sing in sweet refrain.
He gazes across the endless gardens—
Is it true we've left, and pain is slain?
Is it true the winds of bliss now blow,
And all that's harsh is left behind?
Is it true I'll meet eternity's virgins,
Their songs of joy to fill my mind?
And my branch entwines with hers,
And blossoms of love and bliss unfurl?
She appeared, her smile like pearls,
Saying, "*Come to a neck like the moonlit night.*"
She held my heart and wept, whispering,
"The wait for our meeting has been too long."
Our springs have run dry with longing,
For we thirst for love's endless stream.
We melt with yearning for an embrace,
To soothe the heart and ease all pain.
I fell ill with no true ailment,
My longing is my sickness, and you are the cure.
I was raised for you in seclusion for years,
Like a pearl embraced by pride.
My heart burned with longing for you,



Yet I concealed my yearning out of shyness.
 I watched your steps in the heat of battle,
 And my love grew deeper, my yearning wide.
 And when the enemy's bullets found your soul,
 They carried it to the sky.
 And that was what you longed for
 For your hope was the paradise of your Lord.
 They mourn for you, yet they do not know,
 What kind of solace has been prepared for you.
 It is time for the lips to be quenched,
 To kiss a mouth, pure in its grace.
 You offered your soul in sacrifice to your Lord,
 You were the reward, and I the price.
 They melted in embrace, lost in union,
 As the veil of sorrow and grief was drawn.

The mention of Sheikh Taysir spread when the Israeli military leadership wanted to gloat over al-Qassam fighters, showcase the brutality of the army in dealing with them, instill fear in the hearts of the Palestinians, and send a message that these fighters are easy prey for Israeli aircraft and drones. They made it clear that they are under constant surveillance, and that no mercy would be shown to any Palestinian who chooses this path. The Israeli military leadership showed the Israeli soldiers a video, captured by a drone, displaying how the plane locked onto him, its strike delivering a crippling blow to his back. He collapsed to the ground, his body writhing in agony. He crawled for cover, his hand trembling as he reached for his weapon—but his strength was fading fast. Leaning forward, he pressed his forehead to the ground. They believed this moment of suffering would symbolize submission and humiliation—and they reveled in it, rejoicing.



This leadership did not realize that it had granted the world a powerful glimpse into how these fighters bid farewell to their lives with dignity, contentment and faith in sacrifice. These scenes made people across the globe stand in reverence for this lone fighter in the field, surrounded by gunfire and amidst the destroyed buildings.

By your life, this is the death of the brave,
 And whoever seeks a noble unmatched end.



On 29/12/2023, just as the world prepared to close the chapter on the year, people revisited these scenes with wide, transfixed eyes. They saw a fighter in civilian clothes, moving with agility, swiftness and grace, his weapon in hand. In his left, he carried a bag with his ammunition and provisions—all while an armed drone locked onto him. Just as the path opened before him, a small, deadly missile struck his back, tearing it open. Blood spread swiftly across his shirt like a map. Crawling to a nearby wall, exhaustion weighed heavily on his injured body, yet he knew this was both the beginning and the end of his mission. Despite his fatigue, he fought to position himself for a direct confrontation with the enemy, but his strength began to wane. Summoning the last remnants of his energy, he felt his soul rise towards the green birds hovering near him [as if in paradise], thanking *Allah* for the closure he yearned for. With urgency and defiance, he repeatedly raised his right index finger in a powerful declaration of Tawhid, before finally collapsing into prostration in gratitude. And so, *Allah* preserved his memory at the moment of his passing, and his story spread like wildfire, igniting conversations far and wide. Writers and poets immortalized his legacy, dubbing him “the Prostrating Martyr.” For four long months, his body lay unreached, until he was finally laid to rest in the cemetery of his hometown, Bani Suhaila, where they honored his pure and noble spirit.

The Syrian poet Anas al-Dughaim was profoundly moved by this heart-wrenching scene, captivated by its depth as it resonated with millions. Moved by it, he composed powerful verses in its honor.

They did not kill the martyr in you, the worshiper,
They killed their own claims, while you bore witness.
Even in your final breath, a spark remains,
Enough to weave poems for your comrades.
A wound of yours still awakens, far and wide,
A people who had slept, and stirs a silent generation.
They killed you, but only after you taught them
A lesson, and taught life the meaning of praise.
You lowered your head, not in surrender,
But to meet *Allah*, free, in prostration.

The poet Muhammad Shahin crafted these lines to mourn him:

Prostrate to Your Lord and draw near,
For the gardens of my Lord await.
Here lies the one whose promise shone,
In golden rest, his oath well-known.
He attained martyrdom in prostration,
His heart still beating with joy.
Now bliss enfolds me,

And all the burden has left my heart.
 (Taysir) has achieved his goal,
 Son of the Brigades and the Elite.
 He angered the enemy and their cruel band,
 Who strike him with hatred, like fire in hand.
 Above, God raised his brow so high,
 And blessed him with the highest rank in the sky.

Poet and novelist Dr. Ayman al-‘Atoum wove a profoundly moving piece of prose in tribute to him:

“His charming smile, his deep gaze, his soaring soul and his clear eyes—as if a silver stream from the rivers of paradise flowed through them. Then came that final prostration, tracing a map of blood upon his pure body. His soul, now carried in the bellies of birds, ascended to the heavens... A scene found only in Gaza—a surreal tableau that felt both like a fiction or a cinematic masterpiece. Yet it was real, and it was the perfect ascent to eternity.

His enemies sought to kill him, but he was the one who took their lives instead. They wished for his death, but they unknowingly gifted him life. They desired his demise, but instead, they forged his immortality... His prostration on the very ground that bore him proclaimed: ‘We are the ones who endure while you are the ones who will vanish. We are the its people, its children, while you are mere intruders. We are native growth of its hills and clouds, while you are an alien, unnatural seed, destined to be cast away by the fields, the birds and the flowers of this land.. We cling fiercely to this sacred soil while you are the ones who will depart. At the first cry of war, you flee in fear, while we soar joyfully at the prospect of meeting with *Allah* in martyrdom. Thus, when you sever the bonds of life from our bodies and souls, and our scattered remains, we embrace a long-awaited appointment with the Divine—Oh, how long we have waited! How often have we cried out in yearning: *O, how we long... how we long... Tomorrow, we shall meet our beloved ones—Muhammad and his noble companions.*’

He is the hero, Taysir Abu T’aimah. The ruthless Zionist warplanes filmed him from their high towers, eager to send a message to the world: We have the power to kill those who stand against us, to hunt them down among homes, alleys and narrow streets. No one is beyond our reach—not the hidden, nor the distant... It sought to strike fear into the people of Gaza in particular, and the world at large. Yet, instead, it presented the most powerful scene, one that could inspire the youth to step forward, rekindle their love for martyrdom, and define their path in this long, unending struggle, which will persist until the last occupier is gone and the last Zionist leaves this sacred land. You, O Zionists, are not the first tyrants to do this to the followers of *Allah*. Pharaoh did it before you. When the magicians believed, he swore: ‘*I will surely cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, then I will surely crucify you all.*’¹⁵ They responded: ‘*Our Lord, pour upon us patience, and let*

¹⁵ *Surat al-A ‘raf* (The Heights): 124.



*us die Muslims.*¹⁶ And he did it—he killed them to eradicate the spirit of faith that had entered their hearts. Yet, his threats of death only strengthened their faith, leading people to rise up against the tyrant and pull the rug of power and dominion from beneath his feet.

Death is not the end; rather, in both stories, it seems to mark the beginning—the beginning of freeing minds and bodies from the shackles of fear, and from the chains of injustice. It is the beginning of the collapse of this kingdom of tyranny and oppression....”

Dr. Muhammad Salah ‘Abdo, professor of creed and philosophy at al-Azhar University, wrote:

“Muhammad [Taysir] the prostrator, his prostration was the key to his character. He prostrated with his soul, with his heart, and even surrendered his very self to *Allah*, and so his body followed in submission. His limbs prostrated, his cells prostrated; even his blood in his veins bowed. The entire universe responded with him, and he saw it all in a state of prostration. Wherever he turned his face, everything his eyes beheld was in the posture of prostration. Just as the mountains responded to Prophet Dawud (AS) and echoed with him, and as the pebbles praised *Allah* in the hand of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), all of creation bowed in support of the state that distinguished Muhammad [Taysir] the prostrator. The trees, stones, night, moon, birds, beasts and sea creatures all bowed in reverence.



Muhammad the prostrator seemed like a dervish of Jalaluddin Rumi, with *Allah* compressing the entire world before him at his forehead.

Endowed with supernatural strength, he faced the Israeli soldiers with his prostration, not with stones, as in the days of the Stone *Intifadah*. He exhausted them, defeated them and struck fear into their hearts. They fled from his path like frightened rats.

He shared no common path with them, nor any shared street.. His presence rendered theirs insignificant, and his mere appearance wiped out their spread, leaving them in constant fear and striking them with a dread of prostration.

The War Council convened and decided to confront the Prostrator from the air, as facing him on the ground or behind walls, as they usually do, was no longer an option.

One man, pursued by a plane! The Prostrator, in a state of spiritual prostration during the pursuit. The streets were empty of both people and animals. The air prostrated, the winds prostrated, and both light and night bowed in reverence.

¹⁶ *Surat al-A'raf* (The Heights): 126.

The cowardly wretch aimed the cannon at the hero's back and unleashed his deadly fire. The hero fell to the ground, rising to the sky. In that moment, he was among the highest of the celestial realm, his connection to the world of oblivion severed. His name was engraved for all time, at the very top of the list of the immortal.

He received the shot like a needle prick, despising death, while his Lord despised its cruelty. He descended, sitting up, facing the Qibla, and prostrated with strength, mastery, and tranquility in his final prostration. The scent of musk emanated from his wound, and his life became a prostration.”

“The Miracle Baby”... Couldn't Survive Without Her Mother's Embrace

Her head and body went limp on the hospital bed. Within seconds, blood pooled beneath her, staining everything red. Shrapnel from an Israeli missile had pierced every inch of her body. She was torn between the agony of labor and the searing pain of her wounds, gasping for what little breath remained. As her eyes closed, it was as if she had already left this world, yet something within her still clung to life, resisting death. Doctors rushed to save her unborn child, performing an emergency C-section without anesthesia. Meanwhile, others worked to stop the bleeding and prepare the mother's body for burial. The newborn, Sabrin al-Ruh, was placed in the doctor's hands the moment the surgery succeeded, her arrival met with tears and cries of “*Allah* is great.” The doctor sprinted with the baby from the operating room to the neonatal unit, while relatives carried the lifeless body of her mother, Sabrin al-Sakani (27), covered her with a shroud, and took her to the morgue. There, she was laid to rest beside her husband, Shukri al-Sheikh (29), and their three-year-old daughter, Malak.

But Sabrin al-Ruh, the so-called “miracle baby,” survived no more than a week without her mother's embrace. She passed away, despite having been shielded by her mother's body from the falling rubble, stones and shrapnel. In her mother's womb, she had been in “the safest place in the world.” Tragically, with her passing, the entire family was wiped from the civil registry.





Dr. Muhammad Abu Zur... The Insightful Teacher

Dr. Muhammad Mahmud Yusuf Abu Zur

PhD, University of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic Sciences, Sudan, 1997. His dissertation was titled, "The Treasures of Exegeses by the Esteemed Scholars: A Study and Verification from Surat al-A'raf to the End of al-Furqan."

MA, Faculty of Shari'ah, Department of Fundamentals of Religion at the University of Jordan, 1993. His thesis was titled, "The Methodology of Al-Qushayri in his Book (*Lata'if al-Isharat*)"

Professor at the Faculty of Fundamentals of Religion, Islamic University of Gaza.

Member of the Palestine Scholars Association



Sheikh Muhammad Abu Zur was a remarkable figure, a blind man gifted by *Allah* with a profound vision and an unwavering dedication to learning. A revered memorizer of the Qur'an, he immersed himself in its sacred verses, reciting them with deep reverence in his prayers. He continued his university studies, then traveled to Jordan to earn his master's degree from the University of Jordan. Later, he went to Sudan, where he obtained his doctorate. It was there that I had the privilege of meeting him and getting to know him closely.

He embodied vigor and passion in his work and *da'wah*¹⁷, standing strong in his faith. His devotion to prayer was unwavering, and he radiated goodness, beloved by all who had the privilege to sit with him, drawn to his piety, humility and radiant spirit. His heart was pure, his words measured. He supported and provided the needy freedom fighters, steering clear of gatherings filled with gossip and backbiting. In his presence, no one was spoken of with ill intent.

He was one of Gaza's most distinguished scholars in Qur'anic exegesis and sciences, a true vessel of knowledge. Described as one of the strongest instructors of Tafsir at the Islamic University of Gaza, he possessed vast knowledge and deep understanding, yet never received the recognition he deserved. He dedicated his life to teaching, guiding and nurturing others. He was an eloquent preacher to whom people listened attentively, moved

¹⁷ *Da'wah*: The practice or policy of conveying the message of Islam.



by his sincerity and the wisdom of his words. He spent long hours in seclusion at the mosque, as if his heart were bound to it. Whenever he began a lesson, he would open with a supplication that his students and close companions memorized from him: “O *Allah*, I ask You for a submissive heart, a tongue with remembrance, and a patient body in affliction.”

His popularity was unanimous, he had great influence among the people, he was trusted by them, and he commanded respect and reverence in their hearts.

He was a pioneering figure of the “Islamic awakening” in eastern Gaza, particularly in al-Zaytoun neighborhood, where he stands as a historical leader. His influence resonates deeply with the religiously committed youth and the wider community, especially among those who rose to action during *Al-Aqsa Intifadah* in 2000. The young freedom fighters who sought his guidance revered him, viewing him not just as a mentor, but as a father figure.

The Sheikh married a righteous woman, Um Zakariyya Kashko, who shared with him the burdens of *da‘wah*. She became his eyes, through which he saw the world. Together, they were blessed with children: Iman, Zakariyya, Alaa, ‘Abdullah and ‘Abdul Karim

The memory of Gaza City is forever etched with a poignant moment that speaks to the Sheikh’s remarkable strength. When the news of his son Zakariyya’s martyrdom—an al-Qassam fighter—reached him during a lecture, he received it with remarkable fortitude and composure. Without faltering, he continued his lecture, and only afterward did he return home to welcome well-wishers who came to offer their congratulations. Others recount that when he returned home, they assumed he was unaware of his son’s martyrdom. However, he never revealed that he knew. Instead, he received the news with pride, dignity, and satisfaction. He remained unshaken—unmoved by anger or panic. He stood patiently, seeking reward from Allah, knowing it was his own flesh and blood who had fallen, someone he had prepared for such a sacrifice.

His son Zakariyya was just 19 years old at the time of his martyrdom, a member of the frogmen unit and was nicknamed “the Qassamite Sea Whale” for his exceptional swimming skills, moving through the water like a whale. On 25/3/2004, Zakariyya, alongside his comrade and neighbor, the guerilla sniper Ishaq Fayez Nassar, infiltrated the Tel Katifa settlement on the shores of Deir al-Balah. This settlement was part of the Israeli Gush Katif settlement bloc in GS. They stormed the settlement via the sea, heavily armed with RPGs, hand grenades and machine guns. They ambushed the Israeli soldiers off guard with gunfire, grenades and shells, for half an hour before their ammunition ran out. They captured one settler, and their operation nearly succeeded, were it not for a patrol that intercepted them. It led to their martyrdom and the death of the captured settler.





Abu Zur was a deeply patriotic figure, fiercely devoted to his homeland and his faith. His unwavering commitment to justice was vividly illustrated on the day the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) signed the Oslo Accords in 1993. In a powerful act of defiance, he raised a black flag atop his house, a poignant symbol of protest against what he viewed as a surrender to Israel and the heartbreaking relinquishment of over 70% of Palestine's land.

As the events of the Al-Aqsa Flood intensified, Abu Zur remained in his home, despite the heavy bombardment, surrounding fires, and the tightening siege. He understood that the flames of war would chase them wherever they went within GS. Even if they tried to flee, the Israeli forces would leave no safe escape for the people. So, he and his family, along with their neighbors, resolved to stay steadfast and hold their ground. They were all certain that their time for martyrdom was approaching, and they prepared for it with prayer, patience, fasting and devotion, while the massacres unfolded around them. Had they been armed, they would have fought alongside their people. Then, on 7/12/2023, the Israeli planes descended upon al-Zaytoun neighborhood, unleashing missiles and fire on every sign of life within the besieged homes. The bombardment was catastrophic, reducing two large houses to rubble and claiming the lives of around 55 martyrs, including Abu Zur and his family. Tragically, no one could retrieve their bodies, leaving them buried beneath the debris, their final resting place unknown. In the aftermath, their deaths were not recorded in the official records of martyrs, even after nine months later. The grim reality was that documentation required physical bodies. As a result, they all passed in silence, and many of their names remain unknown in the records. Yet, it was widely known that Sheikh Muhammad Abu Zur, along with his family and neighbors, had perished there.

“The Palestinian Knows the Humiliation of Displacement and Considers It Worse Than Death”

After spending 43 days in GS under siege and bombardment, Palestinian plastic and reconstructive surgeon Ghassan Abu Sitta said, “The enemy has created a catastrophe in Gaza Strip, destroying everything and letting the disaster to feed on itself. People, especially children, will later die from the cold, due to the conditions imposed by the occupation.” He added, “But those who remain steadfast in the Strip will not leave it... The Palestinian knows the humiliation of displacement and considers it worse than death. This is a deep, structural experience that has profoundly shaped the collective consciousness of the Palestinian people.”





‘Abdullah ‘Alwan... The Chords of Resistance

‘Abdullah Shukri ‘Alwan

The Majestic Voice of Resistance

A professional voice-over artist, mastering all forms of voice-over

Al-Jazeera Midan channel commentator

Voice-over artist at the al-Jazeera Network

Voice-over artist at the Eekad platform

Radio host, professional voice-over artist and a trainer in the field

BA in Education, Islamic University of Gaza, 2005–2010



That deep, resonant voice remains etched in the hearts and minds of those who grew accustomed to hearing it in Al Jazeera Documentary productions, on the AJ Midan platform and in the countless Reels he regularly shared. For those who tune in to local Gazan radio stations, his voice remains a comforting presence. ‘Alwan cultivated his own unique school of voice-over performance, mastering multiple styles and techniques. Gifted with a distinctive vocal talent, he was considered one of the finest calm and warm voices—soothing to the ear and captivating to the listener. Many found themselves closing their eyes as they listened, as if watching the scene unfold before them, so vivid was his ability to bring moving images or live texts to life with his voice. This is exactly what he used to do. Alwan defined voice-over as “infusing life into words and turning them into a vivid experience through a distinctive reading and performance, skillfully weaving together narratives.” Although many outstanding Palestinian voices grace the world of voice-over, this field remained largely unknown in the GS. It wasn’t until ‘Abdullah Alwan began his journey as a trainee at al-Buraq Radio in 2009 that he discovered his remarkable talent. During his university studies at the Islamic University of Gaza, he participated in various activities and events, culminating in a triumphant moment when he won first place in the university announcer competition as part of the “Student Talents and Creativity” project in 2011. He realized that it was possible for him to work in this field and make it his source of livelihood. He knew he had to establish its principles, concepts and methods through relentless experimentation, measurement, breath



exercises and observing the impact—all while relying heavily on himself and also seeking feedback from those with insight and expertise. I would give him feedback on how to perform the poetic verses, advising him to make the uniqueness of the poem's internal rhythm a part of his delivery style. Reflecting on his journey, 'Abdullah shared, "Talent and voice were there, but I was unfamiliar with the nuances of performing various forms of voice-over and conveying various emotions like joy, enthusiasm and sadness. This challenge began to fade as I practiced, trained and continued to read."

He immersed himself in commentary with a unique blend of moderation and gentleness, as if he were living each event in real-time, channeling the emotions that surged through those moments. 'Abdullah had an extraordinary ability to shift his style and pace, tailoring his voice to enhance the essence of education, drama, narrative, poetry, advertising, book recording and automated responses. His remarkable skill lay in adjusting pauses and silences between words, allowing thoughtful moments to enrich the atmosphere of the text, drawing listeners deeper into the narrative.

Though he sought to experience life beyond Gaza, but never quite adapted to life abroad. He returned to Jabalia, where he truly belongs, and where his identity feels at home.

His voice resonated with the strength of his personality, warm humility and driven initiative. Every moment of his life was infused with purpose, as he devoted himself to various projects, pouring his heart and soul into each endeavor with an unwavering passion.

When he received the news of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, a mix of amazement and pride filled him. He exclaimed, "Those who have not experienced these moments have missed everything; the pride we feel in this struggle is priceless." He also wrote the Qur'anic verse, "*Enter upon them through the gate, for when you have entered it, you will be predominant*,"¹⁸ adding "Gaza has accomplished what many Muslim armies seem unable to do today." In a late-night recording, 'Abdullah's voice proud of the Operation that had been born, despite the early hardships visible in his eyes and pale face. Yet, his message was clear, "We are fine despite the massacres. We are fine, despite the direct targeting of civilians. We are fine, despite the homes targeted over the heads of their inhabitants, and the mosques targeted over the heads of their worshippers. We are fine because we've inflicted pain upon this occupier, withstood, stood firm, endured, and shattered its strength. But, by *Allah*, our Muslim *Ummah* is not fine." He concluded with his signature, unwavering voice, "We remain steadfast and resolute despite the aggression."

Three days after Operation al-Aqsa Flood, 'Abdullah poured his heart into a brief summary of their devastating situation: "Entire neighborhoods wiped out, dozens of families erased from the civil registry. A complete blackout—no electricity, no water, no fuel. Hospitals unable to cope with the hundreds of wounded."

¹⁸ *Surat al-Ma'idah* (The Table spread with Food): 23.



Five days after Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Jabalia was engulfed in relentless shelling. In the midst of this turmoil, ‘Abdullah penned a haunting prayer that encapsulated the pervasive stench of death: “O Lord! We beseech You for a rainy weather to cleanse the earth, for the air has become poisoned by smoke and phosphorus.”

On 12/10/2023, ‘Abdullah captured the devastation of the Islamic University of Gaza in poignant video and audio, his voice unwavering as he confidently declared that they would rebuild it soon. Yet, beneath the surface of his steadfast words, exhaustion and fatigue had begun to etch themselves onto the youthful contours of his thirty-something face, a testament to the weight he carried.

As In the final days of October and the early days of November, he wrote with vibrant energy:



“We have returned after complete isolation from the world. Despite the tragedies, we stand firm. We are a people who do not yield, we triumph or we perish.”

“Imagine losing a loved one or a relative at every moment. So many have fallen that the news of their martyrdom has become almost routine. There is no time for mourning, no space for sorrow—the caravan moves on, and the bleeding does not cease.”

“Words have died, breaths are held, and sobs are strangled in silence.”

“O Muslims! Take to the streets and the squares. Show us we’re yours, and you’re with us, always there.”

“The camera carried by the fighter may be more important than the weapon he wields to strike and destroy. Without documentation, all these acts of heroism would be lost to us. Without it, the enemy would have fed us lies and deception, never acknowledging their losses. And without documentation, you wouldn’t witness the euphoria and morale that soar to the skies in the hearts of the people.”

“You know what hurts us the most? It’s when we see the great achievements of the resistance and realize that we lack the support to protect ourselves or, at the very least, the resources—medicine and food—that would strengthen our resolve. If only we had that, the impact of the fighters’ efforts would be even greater. Ohhhh, how tragic is the state of our *Ummah*.”

“Soon, *InshaAllah*, we will celebrate the unprecedented victory of both the popular and military resistance.. Pride and honor for Gaza.. We will rejoice together on this earth, while our martyrs celebrate in the heavens.”





Then, November descended into a heavy shroud of psychological torment, due to the relentless shelling, siege and starvation imposed on Jabalia. ‘Abdullah expressed his feelings to us with complete sincerity, and his words carry a deep sorrow, mixed with anger and profound sense of betrayal and disappointment:

🕊️ “Praise be to *Allah*, we are still alive—ohhhh!”

🕊️ “O *Allah*, we accept Your decree with contentment. O Allah, we entrust to You our patience and steadfastness; grant the outcome Grant the outcome of our affairs to be one of guidance. We did not weaken, nor did we despair.”

🕊️ “In short: If you cannot help us, do not speak of us. Do not mourn for us and do not celebrate our achievements and victories!”

🕊️ “All those who were martyred had hopes and ambitions, dreams and aspirations they longed to fulfill. I know some of them—creative, exceptional individuals—and I saw a bright future in their eyes. But... the enemies of life put an end to all of that. extinguishing the light of those dreams. Our comfort lies in knowing they’ve gone to a place far better than this world and all it holds.”

Every time he stepped out, he radiated steadfastness and composure, sharing uplifting messages that urged patience and resilience. He urged anyone blessed with the gift of security to thank *Allah* and to preserve it. On 3/12/2023, he shared heartfelt advice:

“A piece of advice from under the shelling: I have endured the pains of life, and I can tell you there is no pain more excruciating than fear. You can adapt to poverty, exile, illness or loss, but you cannot acclimate to a reality devoid of security—especially when the fear threatening your life and the lives of your loved ones is ever-present.

My advice to everyone reading this: If you live in a safe place, you are experiencing a profound blessing. Never forget to thank *Allah* for this gift.”

He was deeply shaken by the inaction of the *Ummah* and the blatant inability to halt the horrific killings carried out by the Israeli forces. In his anguish, he painfully pleaded with his Lord to relieve their suffering, surrounded by dozens of children and women trapped in Jabalia. Their frightened voices grew louder with each passing minute as the walls trembled and the sounds of gunfire and missiles echoed through their trembling ears. On 14/12/2023, he wrote about their sorrow: “O Lord! Our plight is not hidden from You: hunger, killing and displacement.”

Feelings were seeping into him, feelings that were hard to define. He wanted to persevere, yet fear held him back. He wanted reassurance, but the fear still lingered. He wanted to maintain his sense of pride, yet fear clung to him. He was trying to convince a world that boasts of its safety and peace that their feeling of security is



devouring them, that they are fading away, and that they have given far more than they ever thought possible. On 30/11/2023, a day of unspeakable loss when parts of his home were reduced to rubble and two of his beloved nephews were martyred, he poured his heart writing:

“Can Gaza rest for a moment?

Can we have our share of life in this world?

Gaza cannot stand alone to defend the West Bank, *al-Aqsa*, and all the Arabs and Muslims—Gaza cannot do it alone.

My fellow Arabs!

Spare Gaza from your words!

You exaggerate in your descriptions and assessments. Gaza is but a tiny city, yet it has accomplished what superpowers cannot, but it cannot do it alone. Let us simply live.”

The day before he became a martyr, he wrote:

“By *Allah*, if it were not for our unwavering trust in Him, despair and anxiety would have taken hold of us from what we endure. We would have believed this annihilation would never cease. How could one not despair after losing everything over 70 consecutive days! Yet, we thank *Allah* for the blessing of certainty in Him and hope in His promise.”

In his final post, he shared a profound piece of wisdom: the longer the catastrophe lasts, the more each day becomes indistinguishable from the last, as it sinks deeper into a mire of misery. He wrote, “70 days have passed, and with each dawn, we greet the morning with the words, ‘this night was the hardest night of the war.’ All days and nights blur together in tragedy and suffering, but somehow, with each one worse than the one before. This is the essence of life during war.”

His comrades urged him to seek safety in Rafah or Khan Yunis in the south, but he stood firm in his conviction: “The enemy wants us to abandon our homes, but these are the only homes we have, and we will not budge from them.”

‘Abdullah ‘Alwan was martyred on the World Arabic Language Day, 18/12/2023. It was his language, meticulously refining its words, correcting its style and reviewing its spelling and sounds with specialists. From time to time, he would write to me with great politeness, seeking guidance on phrases that perplexed him. He also honored me by hosting me on his program on the Holy Qur’an Radio Station of the Islamic University of Gaza.



In this harrowing bombing that targeted a residential block housing the ‘Alwan and Barsh families, along with other displaced families, missiles from US F-16 fighter jets rained down mercilessly on three homes, including the four-story home of Sheikh Fathi ‘Alwan, where ‘Abdullah Alwan had taken refuge. In an instant, those homes were reduced to rubble, and the lives of nearly a hundred souls were snuffed out—most of them women and children or perhaps even more. Similarly, as many or more were injured.

In doing so, the occupier silenced the finest voices of Gaza, just as it silenced life itself.

Eid Clothes Turn into Shrouds on the First Day of Eid al-Fitr

On the first day of Eid al-Fitr, three-year-old Malak Muhammad Isma‘il Haniyyah wore her finest clothes and sat in her father’s lap inside the family’s car, which was out for Eid greetings. With them were her uncle Amir and his children, Khalid (7) and Razan (5), as well as her uncle Hazem and his children, Amal (10) and Mona (9). But the Israeli forces struck them with a missile that targeted their car, turning the joy they tried to salvage from the grip of war and death into a scene of mourning.

Little Malak had been gazing upward, hoping aid planes might drop flour or something to ease the hunger she and her family, along with the people of northern Gaza, were enduring. Instead, Israeli warplanes sent a missile that left her small body covered in severe wounds, burns and fractures. Less than a week later, her heartbeat stopped, she died a martyr, like the rest of her family who had been with her in the car.





Dr. Rizq al-Gharabli... The Resistance Journalist

Rizq Muhammad Ghazi Rushdi al-Gharabli

BA in Journalism and Media, Islamic University of Gaza

BA in Islamic Sciences, Al-Quds Open University, Gaza

MA in Islamic Jurisprudence and its Foundations, Al-Azhar University in Gaza

PhD in Islamic Jurisprudence and its Foundations, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

Sharia supervisor in several economic institutions and established a training center in the economic field

Online university instructor, Islamic University of Minnesota from 1/1/2022 until his assassination



Al-Gharabli family hails from the historic coastal city of Jaffa, rooted deeply in its cherished old neighborhoods. Their parents embarked on a grueling journey during the *Nakbah*, ultimately finding refuge in the heart of Khan Yunis in the southern GS, where a new generation blossomed, fiercely carrying the torch of return and liberation.

Rizq al-Gharabli had a dewy voice, and his Qur'anic recitation was profoundly beautiful. In his youth, he immersed himself in competitions showcasing the finest reciters, with al-Rahma Mosque in al-Amal neighborhood becoming his sacred stage as both imam and preacher. In the late 1990s, he had the privilege of learning Qur'anic recitation from one of Palestine's prominent scholars and pioneering leaders of revolutionary Islamic activism, Sheikh Ahmad Nimr Hamdan. Rizq was deeply influenced by his older brother, the preacher and imam Sheikh Bilal al-Gharabli, who passed away in 2021 after a brief illness. Following his brother's passing, he, along with others, took on the role of imam and preacher in his place.

Rizq al-Gharabli was deeply immersed in the spirit, nature and conditions of GS. He never forgot that his first child was born in the midst of war—on the tenth day of the Israeli assault on GS that erupted in late 2008 and continued into the early weeks of 2009. Even when he went abroad to pursue his PhD in Malaysia, GS never left his mind. He often expressed that while his body was in Malaysia, his soul remained tethered to his homeland. As he watched the Marches of Return protests, he would chant along with the crowds from his distant place of exile, yearning to join them in their intense revolutionary spirit. Despite the allure of a stable job abroad, Rizq never entertained offers to stay abroad.





He was known for his boundless energy and vibrant spirit. From a young age, stood out for his many initiatives and volunteer efforts. His peers in Malaysia fondly recall how he played a pivotal role in establishing an Arabic school, passionately contributing as a lecturer at Al-Aqsa Integrated School from 2018 to 2021. Even after returning to GS, he remained the chairman of the school board. The school also remained loyal to him and honored his legacy by launching, in March 2024, the annual “Rizq al-Gharabli Competition for Memorizing the Holy Qur’an – Taj al-Waqar [Crown of Reverence].”

Al-Gharabli also made his mark as the director of the GS office for one of the most prominent media centers aligned with the Palestinian resistance, The Palestinian Information Center (PIC), since 2015. A longtime passion and his first field of study, Journalism became a calling that intertwined with his love for literature and editing. He had previously achieved remarkable success in local short story competitions, but this time, he faced the challenges of the media landscape, becoming a target for the Israeli forces whenever tensions escalated.

On 6/2/2024, Rizq al-Gharabli became a martyr at the age of 40, a poignant twist of fate as he was born on the very same day in 1984 in Khan Yunis. This remarkable coincidence intertwined his life and death, marking a profound connection to his homeland.

Since the onset of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Rizq remained steadfast, documenting the unfolding tragedy from his small office—a space that fought to endure amidst the relentless hardships faced by all businesses in GS. He dedicated himself to covering the events, crafting reports and nurturing the spirit of his team, even as they grappled with total power outages and the overwhelming weight of dangers surrounding them. With the entire GS engulfed in chaos, he understood that fate was at hand; he resolved to stand firm, knowing that there was no escaping *Allah*’s decree except by embracing it. As the shelling intensified, Rizq chose to stay in his office, determined to maintain communication with his scattered team despite the dire conditions that rendered connectivity nearly impossible. He clung to the hope of any fleeting moment when the network might return, allowing him to share even a fraction of the heart-wrenching footage he had captured. Yet, the mere act of using mobile phones and the Internet put him at risk, drawing Israeli fire and turning his efforts into a dangerous gamble. In those harrowing moments, he felt more absent than present, his spirit unwavering even as the world around him crumbled.

His unwavering faith in *Allah*’s victory and support for His servants never faltered, a conviction he shared with everyone around him. Dr. Wisal, his wife, recounts how during the





height of the siege, while they were confined to their home in al-Amal neighborhood for two long months with around 25 family members, Rizq would gather them in a small room dedicated to the remembrance of *Allah* and worship. In those dark times, he delivered sermons filled with the profound meanings of *tawakkul* (trust in *Allah*), fortitude and patience, urging them to resist despair and hopelessness. Even though he did not witness the victory he so fervently preached about before his martyrdom, the spirit of his unwavering hope remained alive in the hearts of those trapped with him.

During their prolonged siege, they faced unimaginable challenges. Unable to hang laundry on the roof for fear of Israeli fire, they avoided lighting charcoal fires during the day lest the enemy see the smoke and bomb their home. They would divide the available loaf of bread into four portions, giving each family in the house a single bottle of water for the entire day and night. They wore socks all day to be able to wipe over them for ablution, as water for washing was rarely available—and drinking took priority. Their only source of water came from harvesting rain, which they used sparingly for drinking, washing, cleaning and purification. Since they had a solar panel, they would turn on the TV to catch glimpses of the outside world. They followed the operations of the resistance fighters, which lifted their spirits and renewed their trust in them.

Amid the siege, it became necessary to initiate a project to keep the many children in the household occupied—Rizq’s own children, those of his wife’s martyred brother, those of her widowed sister, and the children of her other sister. Rizq took it upon himself to train the older ones in Qur’anic recitation, focusing on *tajweed* and performance refinement.

They gathered to recite the Qur’an and Imam Nawawi’s *Riyadh al-Salihin*, and took care to rise each night before dawn. Some prayed on their beds due to the lack of space. All the while, warplanes swept over the area surrounding Nasser Hospital, unleashing destruction on al-Amal neighborhood and instilling terror through the relentless, round-the-clock barrage of massacres.

Rizq and his father-in-law made the heartfelt decision to fast each day, with the noble intention (*niyyah*) of easing the hardship around them. They wanted also to conserve what little food they had, sharing most of it with those in need, especially the children and the injured trapped in their home. A few days before his martyrdom, he poured his heart into a final update to his will, meticulously detailing his rights and obligations, ensuring no important thought was overlooked. The will was directed to his family—his mother, father, wife Wisal, and his four children. He concluded it with a prayer: “O *Allah*, we are Your slaves, the sons of Your male slaves, the sons of Your female slaves, our foreheads are in Your Hand [i.e., you have control over us], Your Judgment upon us is assured, Your Decree concerning us is just. We ask You, O *Allah*, for mercy and light in our graves, for Paradise and its bliss in the Hereafter. Grant us entry into the highest Paradise without previous punishment, O *Allah*. Amen!”



In early February 2024, Khan Yunis, especially al-Amal neighborhood, was engulfed in a harrowing ground invasion that unleashed relentless shelling. The home where Rizq al-Gharabli sought refuge was tragically struck, causing it to collapse and claiming his life in an instant.

After 42 agonizing days, his body was finally recovered from beneath the rubble and temporarily buried in the University College Cemetery in Mawasi Khan Yunis. Later, he was laid to rest at Yafa Community Cemetery, behind the shattered remnants of Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis.

In his writings, Dr. Rizq consistently echoed the powerful mantra: “Patience for an hour.” The last post he wrote was a post that I wrote on my Facebook page which he shared from my page. This post was titled: “The Door of Certainty is to Your Right.”

Rizq poured his heart into his confident posts on Facebook, each word a beacon of hope and strength:

- 🌸 “It will bloom again.”
- 🌸 “Can *Allah* be contended with!”
- 🌸 “They tried to bury us, not knowing we are seeds.”
- 🌸 “We are the salt of the earth.”
- 🌸 “We are the ones who rise from beneath the rubble to rebuild life.”
- 🌸 “We will rebuild it, and our beautiful Gaza will bloom again.”
- 🌸 “We will not weaken, and we will not be broken.”
- 🌸 “*Allah* is sufficient for us. He will grant us from His bounty. To Him alone we turn with longing.”
- 🌸 “Only iron cuts through iron. Period, new line.”
- 🌸 “By the One in whose hand is Muhammad’s soul. It’s soooo near now.”



Sheikh Rizq radiated a profound sense of victory and unwavering certainty as he prepared for martyrdom, firmly rejecting despair and hopelessness. Among his enduring words are:

- 🌸 “If every heartbeat were counted as a good deed—and with our Lord, each good deed is worth tenfold, and the Most Generous multiplies for whom He wills—then how will we emerge from this war, after hundreds of thousands of tons of explosives have been rained down upon us?”
- 🌸 “Do you think *Allah* would ever waste your efforts or forsake the pulse of your hearts? Far be it from Him!”
- 🌸 “Just an hour of patience!”
- 🌸 “We will bloom despite the defeatists, for we have made a pact with *Allah*. He has purchased our souls and wealth, promising us paradise. And sufficient is *Allah* as a trustee, and sufficient is *Allah* as a witness.”



- “Our certainty grows stronger in a victory that is near, and not ordinary. A triumph through which *Allah* honors the believers and humbles the wicked. It will not be a familiar kind of victory, but one where the hearts of the faithful will shine with joy. Rejoicing in the promise of *Allah*, which they will have touched with their hands and seen with their own eyes.”
- “Deluded is the one who thinks that the length of this war weakens us, or that its ferocity breaks us, or that the world’s abandonment will defeat us. By *Allah*, we feel His nearness in every moment. We glimpse His victory and honor gleaming from the mouths of rifles and rocket launchers. We stand steadfast; go on sleeping and rest assured.”
- “Some may think we’ve grown weary, that we have lost the strength to endure, to be patient and content in the midst of a war of extermination. But these poor souls fail to realize that with every passing hour, our patience, resilience, acceptance and surrender [to *Allah*] only deepen. More than that, our resolve grows ever stronger—to stay the path we’ve chosen, to liberate our land and reclaim our freedom.”
- “By Almighty Allah, we will prevail, with a victory so great, it will astonish even us and humiliate the enemy with utter disgrace. The heroes press on in the field, and you, my brothers, keep holding fast to patience, and await the generosity of the Most Generous.”
- “Poor souls! They think we weaken with time, or under the weight of hardship. They do not realize we are upheld by a promise from Allah; of victory and decisive breakthrough. We are simply waiting for our enemies’ deepest moment of disgrace, to proclaim the triumph of morality, principles, truth and justice.”
- “Tribulation is *Allah’s* way on earth; He created us to be tested: will we endure with patience or turn to disbelief? When *Allah* loves a servant, He tests them. And for the believer, every circumstance is good. The cultivation of faith, certainty, contentment and submission to *Allah’s* will, coupled with the determination to respond to His call for struggle, is the safeguard that protects us from trials, hardships, and calamities.”
- “No matter the pain or the sacrifices, we feel it is only right to entrust our affairs to *Allah*, accept His decrees and trust in His beautiful mercy. Indeed, we are certain that in it lies all good. O *Allah*, we are content with You; be pleased with us. Through Your mercy that encompasses all things, hasten to grant us a victory that honors us and humbles our enemies, O Beloved.”
- “How great you are, O our people!”
- “Greatness itself humbles before your patience, resilience and sacrifices. The One who has decreed these sacrifices is the same One who promised His victory is near. As for our humiliation, it is but a distant thing.”
- “I read the words of the trembling ones and feel sorrow for them. How can hearts that reflect on the verses of the Qur’an quiver before a cowardly enemy? *Allah’s* promise to grant us victory and the defeat of our enemy will surely come to pass by His grace, and it is close, very close. On that day, the believers will rejoice, while the trembling ones will remain sorrowful.”



- “We are faced with two choices: Either we can accept, endure, believe, resist and triumph, or we can weaken and falter, and suffer defeat, both in spirit and on the battlefield. By Almighty *Allah*, I swear: He will see from us what He loves, and indeed, we shall be victorious.”
- “We are rewarded for all this affliction. Our difficult days will pass, and the mercy and blessings of *Allah* will descend upon us.”
- “Tell the whole world: We bow to none but *Allah*.”
- “Glory be to the One who honored us and humbled them. O Allah, You have taken from the blood of our people, and we have surrendered our affairs to You and accepted Your will. So be pleased with us, deliver us and have mercy on us. Truly, You are the Most Gracious, Most Merciful!”

He is Still Trying to Retrieve His Daughter's Body From Beneath the Rubble, But in Vain...

“Hello, how are you, Dad? How's Mom and my siblings? Send my love to everyone, I'll miss you all. Please forgive me...” These few words were part of a brief phone call between Nur Abu Nofal and her father, Iyyad, shortly before the connection was abruptly cut. Hours later, Iyyad discovered that his daughter, her twin toddlers, her husband, and several relatives had been killed in an airstrike. Her three-year-old daughter, Sadeen, was wounded, suffering severe damage and impairment to her right leg, when their home in al-Shati' RC, west of Gaza City, was bombed on 15/10/2023.

Nur's father speaks with the pain of loss. His daughter, still trapped beneath the rubble of their destroyed home, was kind-hearted, constantly calling to check on him and her siblings.

Every now and then, Iyyad walks nearly five kilometers to her ruined house, trying in vain to retrieve her body from under the debris. He prefers to sit quietly nearby, away from sight, fearing that his tears might fall as memories of her flood back.



➤ Site of Felesteen online, 14/4/2024.





Ala'uddin Zuhd... A Martyr in Defense of His Home

Ala'uddin 'A'id Ahmad Zuhd

It was one of the largest military operations carried out by the Israeli army with direct involvement from the US forces, aimed at rescuing four captives whose location had been identified in the Nuseirat RC through frenzied intelligence tracking. As is typical of these merciless forces, they scorched wide areas with their fire belts to carry out the operation. This time, they required extensive direct human intervention, deploying a large number of personnel and unleashing unprecedented firepower, anticipating the high likelihood of failure in their risky mission. By the end of the operation, it became clear how they had cold-bloodedly killed around 300 Palestinians—men, women, children, the elderly, passersby, the displaced and the sheltering—leaving hundreds more wounded, all without the slightest remorse or a flicker of regret...



On 8/6/2024, the main unit tasked with freeing the captives infiltrated the area aboard a truck that appeared to be carrying refugees. In reality, it was transporting a trained elite force. The locals, well-versed in security observation, quickly saw through the deception, and shouted: “Special force, special force, special force”! Panic swept through the attacking unit and its supporters. Gunfire erupted instantly, and bullets rained from all directions. A terrifying battle ensued—a harrowing scene drenched in blood.

The resistance fighters were on the ground, few in number, scattered before a massive armored force. However, it is not in the nature of the youth of GS to flee or abandon their positions when they have something to defend with, something to fight with. In a flash captured by a camera fixed to a neighbor's window, a young man appeared, dressed in light clothing down to his knees, barefoot, as if he hadn't had time to find his shoes or boots. Holding his light rifle in his right hand, he entered the heart of the raging battle. With that modest weapon, he confronted a heavily armed special unit, catching them off guard as he opened fire from where they least expected. It seems he struck them hard, perhaps fatally, but Israeli fire reached him immediately, right outside the house from which he had emerged. Their frenzied bullets pierced his body, and he fell a martyr beside the special forces' truck which remained a witness to the bravery and determination of those defending their land.



Eyewitnesses confirmed that he chased the car carrying the captives, caused it to stall, and exposed its position—enabling a swift response. People praised his courageous self-initiated martyrdom; he did not wait for a command or organizational order, but answered the call of duty on his own, without hesitation.

The story emerged after the Israeli forces withdrew, revealing they had taken four of their captives and left behind an unknown number of dead soldiers. We then saw the body of the martyr Ala'uddin Zuhd, barefoot and lying in the road. Nearby was the body of his brother Baha'uddin, and not far from them, the body of their married sister, Ruba.

Ala'uddin, a graduate of the Faculty of Commerce, Department of Accounting at the University of Palestine. Though he had no affiliation with any group, he answered the call to arms—responding to the cry for defense, rushing to the aid of the desperate, and standing firm in protection. His sudden, awe-inspiring descent onto the battlefield altered its dynamics and shifted the course of the fight. Surely, there were others like him present, fighting fiercely. Some were locals, who refused to stand by as the enemy stormed their area. Each of them, armed with whatever weapon they had at hand, fought with neither fear nor hesitation in a direct, face-to-face confrontation:



When the people said, “Who is the brave youth to stand!

I thought they spoke of me.

So I was neither lazy nor slow to respond.

Their father, Dr. ‘A’id Ahmad Zuhd, mourned them with pride and fortitude. He wrote on his Facebook page praising them, threatening a campaign against their killers, and warning that they should be fought: “The lions, my children, dismounted from the saddle of their steeds, advancing without retreat: The martyr lion Eng. Baha’uddin ‘A’id Zuhd and the martyr lion Ala’uddin ‘A’id Zuhd. They bombed my house, and my daughter Ruba was martyred. Praise be to *Allah* who honored me with their martyrdom. We remain steadfast and resolved on the path of hardship. We did not bring the impure into our land, they invaded us. They took our water, our land and our air. So it is our duty to fight them with all that we have. If we die, we die as martyrs, and if we live, we live with dignity.”

These men are not mythical figures of imagination, but heroes of flesh-and-blood, yet they seem like dream. Their elder brother wrote a eulogy worthy of being recorded, for the depth of emotion it holds and the strength of endurance shown by the people of GS in such circumstances. Engineer Diya’ ‘A’id Zuhd writes:



“You slept, my brother, the sleep of the tombs; you left with no return—oh, if only you return.

My martyred brother, every day, I pray that *Allah* make us among the seventy martyrs who will be granted your intercession on the Day of Judgement.

O Lord, do not let a martyr who gave his life for the sake of truth go without a share of musk and amber in Your highest gardens.

I know that the martyr holds a special status with *Allah*, and that he is not truly dead, but alive, sustained. So O Lord, let me see him, even if only in a dream, far from reach.

Love is my brother, peace is my brother. The tear, the sorrow, the loss—all are my brother.

Do not blame my wailing, my brother, for without you, I am empty of soul and heart.

When will joy return to our days, and I see your smile again, so that the world may become a feast.

O Lord, I have raised my hands to You in supplication, asking that You have mercy on my brother and give him water from the River of Kawthar.

Did you know, my brother, that I need you the way a child needs his mother?

I ask my Lord to make you, my brother, among His honored servants, a reward from Him.

Honor your brother as much as you can, for you never know which distances may come between you.

How I long to write about you, my brother, but my tears come before my words, and pain holds me back.

There is no pain like the pain of losing a brother, no agony like the anguish of being deprived of him, as if a part of you is gone.

The pain of parting renews and grows each day, as if, my brother, with every dawn you disappear again.

I wept until my tears ran dry, and I endured until my heart melted between my ribs.

Martyrdom is precious in the sight of *Allah*—But how can my heart bear your absence, my brother.

My brother is a martyr, far away, and I grieve deeply over his loss. O Lord, grant him Paradise as his resting place, and grant us patience and comfort.

The martyr holds a rank with *Allah*, that fills us with great patience for the loss of my beloved brother.

Nothing in this world equals my brother’s presence in our lives, But what soothes our hearts in your absence is knowing you were a martyr, seeking His pleasure.

O Lord, grant us martyrdom, that we may follow our brother and reunite in Your gardens, for we cannot bear his absence.

O martyr of truth, your parting has worn us down, and your distance has wearied our lives. O Lord, reward us with the highest gardens for the patience we hold over the loss of my brother.”





A Martyr of Starvation Policy in Northern Gaza

Adam Abu Qamar, 16 years old and the eldest son of his family, cast sorrowful glances at his pale family members, whose stomachs had been ravaged by hunger for several days. This suffering was the result of the starvation policy imposed by the Israeli occupation authorities in northern GS. Unable to bear the heartbreaking scene, Adam, who comes from the Jabalia RC in northern Gaza, packed his belongings in the early hours of 20/2/2024, and decided to go to al-Nabulsi junction in al-Sheikh Ijlin neighborhood to bring them flour. What he did not know was that this journey would cost him “his life and send his soul to its Creator.”

Adam waited alongside tens of thousands of citizens who were praying day and night for the arrival of aid. Then those trucks appeared, loaded with “flour and canned goods.” Adam hurried eagerly toward them, hoping to bring back some of the supplies. But before he could reach them, Israeli tanks and drones “mercilessly” opened fire on those present. Adam was martyred, leaving behind his mother, his younger brother and five sisters “without a provider.” His father had been working in the 1948 occupied Palestine before the aggression began on 7/10/2023, and to this day, they have been unable to contact him or learn anything about his whereabouts.

➤Felesteen online, 7/3/2024.





Sheikh Ahmad al-Al-Safadi... The Imam and Hafiz [of Qur'an]

Ahmad Fawzi al Al-Safadi “Abu al-Bara”

Imam of al-Hassayneh Mosque “Al-Mina Mosque”



Ahmad al-Safadi may not have been a renowned sheikh, but his star unexpectedly shone three times, without prior planning. The first time was in 2015, when the sheikh was praying alone in his seaside mosque. A young cat, accustomed to his kindness, approached and sat beside him, mirroring his movements in prayer. Someone captured a photo of the sheikh in prostration, with the cat mirroring him, and the story quickly spread within his close circle.

The second time was when he demonstrated his mastery of memorization, which took place during his participation in the second edition of *Safwat al-Huffaz* (Elite Memorizers) project. He was one of over 1,470 expert memorizers who recited the entire Qur'an in one sitting. His motivation was never for fame; rather, his intention was to encourage others, ensure the success of this initiative, revive the spirit of the Qur'an in people's hearts, and elevate its significance among them.

Sheikh al-Safadi recited the entire Qur'an in one sitting, from dawn until afternoon, without making a single mistake, as I was told by the esteemed Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Khalid Kullab, who witnessed this remarkable feat. When he finished the last verse of *Surat al-Nas*, his voice completely failed him, and his eyes filled with tears. His emotional moment moved the others who were present, as they, too, awaited the blessings of this completion.

The third moment was when *Allah* honored him with remembrance—following his martyrdom, the killing of his family and the destruction of his mosque. A young man passing by the ruins of Al-Andalus Tower—where Sheikh Al-Safadi once lived—was moved to leave a powerful mark on a crumbling wall. In bold, blood-red letters, he wrote, “Here beneath the rubble, lie the martyrs: Ahmad al-Safadi and his family—his mother, children and wife.”





This piece of writing set social media ablaze. It stirred up memories and brought back the image of the port's sheikh—the masterful reciter of the Qur'an, the man with the cat. People began to tell his story, and to draw words from the crumbling stones of the port.

Sheikh Ahmad al-Safadi was the imam of a beautiful mosque that gracefully overlooked the sea, nestled in the quaint port of GS. Once a vibrant hub where ships from the Maghreb, Andalusia, southern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean sailed, it now welcomed only small fishing boats, carrying echoes of a bygone era.

This mosque, one of the most exquisite and modern in GS, stood as a proud landmark, closely tied to the rhythm of the port, the bustle of the fish market and the joy of boat rides. Its wide courtyards opened onto the harbor and a lush green garden offered a space where children played.

Gazans fondly do not forget the sacred atmosphere of Ramadan, filled with spirituality, mingling with the roar of the sea and the gentle breeze in the air. They fondly recall the Eid prayers held in its open courtyards, near Gaza's corniche and the city's few modest tourist spots. Built in 2017 through the generous donations of kind-hearted individuals, this beautiful mosque also became known for its imam, a man with a tender, melodious voice. It soon transformed into a pulpit of awareness, learning and remembrance, drawing preachers, teachers, and lecturers from near and far. Its committee became one of the most active in public engagement and education, guided by the dedicated Sheikh al-Safadi.

After Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Israel lost all restraint and launched its most extensive campaign of genocide, sparing nothing in its path. In mid-November 2023, tanks stormed the port's pier and surrounding areas, advancing into nearby neighborhoods after Israeli aircraft, artillery, and naval vessels had pummeled the zone with relentless firepower. The Port Mosque was destroyed—its stones scattered—and everything around it lay in ruins. Gaza's most beautiful district was flattened. Its once-bright, paved streets were reduced to dusty, unpaved paths. Israeli warplanes relentlessly targeted the homes and residential towers overlooking the port, leveling them completely, with no regard for who might be inside. Their commanders had openly declared that all Palestinians as animals, beasts and insects—making their killing, in the minds and policies of these criminals, entirely permissible.

Sheikh Ahmad al-Safadi departed with his beloved family—his mother, wife and children—ascending to the heavens, bidding farewell to a nation that had forsaken them. Yet his name endures, eternal and unforgotten.





I Prefer Death in Gaza Over Leaving Through the Occupation's Gate

Martyr Ihab Ribhi al-Ghussain, born in Kuwait in 1979, came to GS from the United States, leaving behind a luxurious life and comfortable living to join the universities of GS. He graduated from the Civil Engineering Faculty at the Islamic University, grew up in its mosques and joined its Intifadah. His was captivating in his manners and character, in his silence and speech, and in all his qualities.

He advanced through organizational, movement and government work. He was active in the Islamic Bloc affiliated with Hamas, then spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior, later head of the Governmental Media Office, and finally Deputy Minister of Labor, the youngest deputy minister in the GS government.



Years ago, al-Ghussain was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. At the time, the Rafah Crossing was closed, and some intermediaries sought to arrange his travel through the Erez Crossing on humanitarian grounds. But he firmly refused, declaring, "I prefer to die in Gaza than to leave through the gate of the occupation." He was noble in both health and illness, in strength and in frailty.

On 7/7/2024, al-Ghussain was martyred among his people, serving as head of the Gaza City Emergency Committee. Weeks earlier, his wife, daughters and several relatives had also been martyred.



Mu'in 'Ayyash... The Righteous Reformer

Mu'in Mahmud Mustafa 'Ayyash

Sheikh Mu'in was born on 30/4/1963

Diploma in Security Sciences - Al-Awda College, Gaza

Imam, preacher and muezzin

Social reformer

Deputy *mukhtar*¹⁹ of the 'Ayyash family clan which consists of the 'Ayyash, Haniyyah, Abu Jyab and Basla families



Mu'in Ayyash's family is originally from the town of al-Jura in Asqalan, north of the GS. He was born in an RC in GS, grew up and lived in the Nuseirat RC in Deir al-Balah or Central Governorate. He had six sons and two daughters.

Mahmud, son of Sheikh Mu'in 'Ayyash, documented parts of his father's biography and sent them to me. I have rewritten the text to make it clearer.

Allah blessed him with a melodious voice, which he devoted to the Qur'an and the call to prayer. He cared deeply for the Qur'an, gathering young boys in a small mosque to teach them recitation and train them in memorization. He would go door to door, urging parents to entrust their children to his care. As the number of students grew, the modest mosque drew unwanted attention; the Palestinian Authority began tightening its grip on such nurturing spaces. Some elders were even incited against him, pressuring him to leave the mosque. He eventually moved his circle, until a new idea began to unfold before him.

Sheikh Mu'in 'Ayyash refused to bow to the harassment that sought to stifle his mission. With unwavering determination, he purchased a piece of land and laid the foundations for a new mosque, establishing the 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Mosque in al-Zawaida area in 1999. His mosque was among the first to be built in the area—standing firm before the spread of urban life around it. There, he established the earliest Qur'an memorization circles in the Zawaida region. With unwavering dedication, he urged the community to take part in building the

¹⁹ *Mukhtar*: An elected neighborhood—or village-level state representative who has historically been considered a highly significant individual within communities.



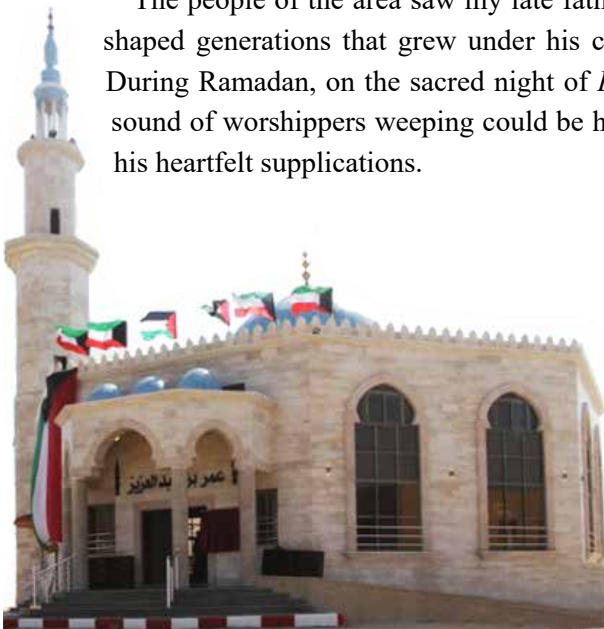
mosque and enrolling their children in the center. He became known for organizing excursions that encouraged families to help their children stay connected to the mosque and its circles. He also founded a nearby kindergarten that greatly supported parents—offering a safe, mindful space where they could entrust their children with confidence and ease.

He was a beloved social figure, renowned for his remarkable ability to bring people together and mend their differences. He welcomed all with a cheerful face and a captivating smile. People often spoke of his warmth, his gracious conduct, and his deep compassion and forgiveness. The needy and the dignified poor would come quietly to his door, and there, in privacy and with discretion, they would find what they were seeking.

Mustafa Mu‘in ‘Ayyash, director of the Gaza Now website, paints a vivid picture of his father’s life, sharing it in fuller detail as he says:

“In 1999, our area lacked mosques, there was only one, a small prayer room called Al-Sirat. At that time, my beloved martyred father Mu‘in Mahmud Mustafa ‘Ayyash (Abu Mahmud), decided to build a mosque, which he named ‘Umar bin ‘Abdul ‘Aziz, in the Sawarha area, west of al-Zawaida in central GS. He initiated the first Qur’an memorization circles, aiming to raise a generation of young Qur’an memorizers. He also organized excursions to encourage families to attend the mosque and send their children to the new place of worship in their neighborhood. My father served as the imam, preacher, muezzin and full-time supervisor of the mosque until 2015, when left the area and relocated to the Nuseirat in central GS.

The people of the area saw my late father—may Allah have mercy on his soul—as someone who had shaped generations that grew under his care. They considered him both a father and an elder brother. During Ramadan, on the sacred night of *Laylat al-Qadr* (Night of Power), when he led the prayers, the sound of worshippers weeping could be heard in the neighboring streets, so deeply were they moved by his heartfelt supplications.



He used to gather people and knock on their doors at dawn. He would prepare suhoor in our home for those observing *i‘tikaf*²⁰ and would send dishes of food, tea and fresh juice to the mosque.

My father regarded everyone in our neighborhood as his own—family and brothers alike. He cared for them with the same devotion he showed to his own children and household. In return, the people of our area would not allow anyone but him to intervene in their affairs or help resolve their problems. They brought him their concerns—both personal and communal—seeking his support and guidance.”

²⁰ *I‘tikaf*: The act of a person staying in the Mosque for a certain period of time in seclusion and devoting him/ herself to the worship of Allah.



When Operation al-Aqsa Flood broke out, thousands fled from the north to the camps of Central Gaza. ‘Ayyash opened his home to his displaced relatives, dividing the space with them and providing for all their needs. He didn’t hesitate to take from his own share to meet theirs. He owned a clothing shop that had sustained him. A month after closing it, he reopened it—selling clothes at wholesale prices. But when he saw the cold mercilessly striking those who had lost their homes, with nothing to keep them warm, he began distributing clothes for free, knowing they couldn’t afford to buy them. He moved among the displaced, steadying their hearts and comforting them through hardship. His words, calm and full of grace, brought peace to their spirits.

On 22/11/2023, just over six weeks after the onset of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, was a day of sorrow and tears. That night, the sound of shelling echoed endlessly, a constant terror. At exactly 2:30 a.m., two massive, back-to-back explosions rocked a five-story building on al-‘Ishrin Street in the Nuseirat RC, in the heart of the Gaza Strip. The building was sheltering around 95 displaced people, most of them elderly or children. The first explosion hurled several children through the air, slamming them into neighboring homes, their bodies bruised but still alive. Before anyone could grasp what had happened, a second missile struck, obliterating the building entirely. Some say there was even a third, a final blow to a place already teetering on the edge of destruction.

The darkness was absolute—no electricity, only thick layers of dust and smoke veiling all sight. People couldn’t comprehend what had happened. But as the smoke began to lift and the first light of dawn broke through, they were stunned by the scene before them. Braving fire, cold, smoke, toxic debris, and the nearby thunder of ongoing shelling, they streamed in to pull survivors from beneath the rubble. The tragedy was immense—beyond what anyone could bear. The rubble crushed and shattered the bodies of nearly forty family members. The blast hurled the martyrs’ remains several meters away, with body parts scattered into neighboring homes. Among those who perished in this unimaginable horror was Sheikh Muin ‘Ayyash, aged 60, alongside his beloved wife, Najah Kamil Mustafa ‘Ayyash. The brutal wave of death did not spare his two sons, Ahmad and Muhammad—both journalists at Gaza Now website—and their wives, Ibtisam al-Sha’rawi and Reem Natat. His daughter Fatima, his son-in-law Muadh, and his grandchildren Mu’in, Malak, Karim, Hiba, Layan, Khalil and Muhyiddin were also lost in that merciless shelling. The tragedy extended further as the bombardment claimed the lives of his sister Sahar, her husband Abu Khalil and their children—members of the Abu ‘Ali family—Khalid, Muhammad, Isra’,





Ala' and Fatima Suhail Abu 'Ali—along with Muhammad al-Najjar and his wife and their children... Tears flowed endlessly down the cheeks of the surviving family members, each one haunted by the memory of that fateful, blood-soaked night. They are haunted by the faint, desperate cries of those buried beneath the rubble, silent signals of life that continued, weakly, until their final breath. The tools that might have saved them failed to reach them in time, crippled by a lack of resources and the needed to power them, leaving their voices unheard and their lives slipping away in the darkness.

They Were All Martyred...

He Brought Bread for His Family but Found No One Left to Eat It

Na'im Abu al-Sha'r, 58, never imagined the tragedy that would await him after buying bread for his family. An Israeli airstrike had targeted his home in Deir al-Balah, central GS.

In the early morning cold, Abu al-Sha'r left alone to fetch bread from a nearby bakery, hoping to share breakfast with his wife and children. But when he returned, he found himself facing a scene he could not have imagined, his house reduced to rubble and debris, and those inside were either killed or wounded by the Israeli strike.



When Abu al-Sha'r returned to check on his family, he found his daughter's body beneath the rubble near their home. His voice trembled with grief as he cried out, "Amal, my daughter.. Amal, my daughter, pull her out!.. My daughter, where are my children? They were all in the house."

Upon reaching the hospital, he learned that everyone in the house had been killed; children, women and elderly. The death toll reached 15 from Abu al-Sha'r family and neighboring families living in adjacent buildings.



Dr. ‘Omar Ferwana... Pioneer of Charitable Medicine and His Daughter “Aya”

Dr. ‘Omar Saleh ‘Omar Ferwana

Pioneer of Charitable Medicine

Dr. ‘Omar was born in al-Sabra neighborhood in Gaza City on 7/2/1956. His family previously lived in al-Turkman neighborhood in al-Shuja‘iyyah neighborhood in Gaza.

Bachelor of Medicine (MBBS), Cairo University

PhD in Physiology, University of Leeds, UK

Dean of the Faculty of Human Medicine and Assistant Professor, Islamic University of Gaza

He is one of the most famous gynecologists in Gaza

His father is the poet Saleh ‘Omar Ferwana, author of the book “Palestinian Vocabulary”

Among his works (in Arabic):

The Life Scenario: A Scientific Journey Through Man and the Cosmos

Gaza and the Premonitions of Victory



He was arrested by the Israeli authorities in May 1989 during the first strike against Hamas in the First *Intifadah*, along with about a thousand other Hamas members. Dr. ‘Omar was arrested again after his release.

He was barred—first by the Israeli authorities, and later by the Palestinian Authority, from practicing medicine in Gaza’s hospitals or at his private clinic, where he treated sexual and reproductive health issues and offered IVF services, under military orders.

On 18/12/1992, the Israeli authorities deported him to Marj al-Zuhur in southern Lebanon, along with over 400 activists and cadres from Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).

He was one of the founders of the Faculty of Medicine at the Islamic University of Gaza and was sent to Britain to specialize in physiology as part of the effort to establish the faculty.

Dr. ‘Omar launched the Islamic Blood Bank project and played a key role in founding the Public Service Hospital and the Friends of the Patient Hospital in Gaza.



He was a compassionate and principled man, known for his moral integrity. In 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, he forgave a debt of 352,000 shekels (about \$100,000) owed to him by his neighbors, recognizing the hardship they were facing.

His father, Saleh ‘Omar Ferwana, was born in Haifa and earned a bachelor’s degree in Arabic language from Ain Shams University. He worked as an Arabic teacher with UNRWA published a collection of poetry.

In his memoirs, he recorded these verses, which were most likely composed by his father, the poet Saleh Ferwana. The lines seem to have directly anticipated the events of Operation al-Aqsa Flood:

And all who sit behind the darkness of sorrow
 Wait for the prisoner to return
 But he does not return
 Wait for the paralyzed to walk
 But he does not walk
 And all who search the rubble
 for the body of a little sister
 After the occupier has destroyed their home.
 And she whose only child has died
 And she whose beloved husband has died
 And the one, and the one, and the one...
 They wait for martyrdom
 We have no choice.

In May 2023, just three months before Operation al-Aqsa Flood, he published a small booklet titled “Gaza and the Premonitions of Victory,” in which he predicted Gaza’s coming actions. Despite its brevity, the booklet explores Gaza’s role at the heart of several pivotal battles in the region’s history—battles that ended in victory. For him, Gaza came to symbolize triumph.

Then, on 7/10/2023, Dr. Saleh wrote on his page, evoking the historic conquest of Salahuddin al-Ayyubi:

“Gaza is truly unbreakable; what is the reason behind the strength and steadfastness of the men of Gaza?”

Ten years ago, I wrote an article titled ‘Gaza is truly unbreakable.’ Back then, my emotions were stirred by Mais Shalash’s song ‘Gaza on the Day of Victory.’ Today, the driving force is different. Gaza stands on its own, supported only by the prayers of the righteous across the Muslim world. And yet, Operation al-Aqsa Flood has lifted the heads of the entire *Ummah* high.



I began to delve into geography and history, and it was then that I grasped the truth: indeed, ‘Gaza is truly unbreakable.’ The story traces back to the early Islamic conquests, when Gaza became the first city in *al-Sham*²¹ to be taken by the Muslim army after the Battle of al-Dumaytha. Caliph Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, followed by ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab, called upon the Arab tribes to migrate to the newly conquered lands in *al-Sham*, where they would spread Islam and teach its teachings to the local inhabitants. Thus, the Arabs entered Gaza and Palestine, joining the Nabataean Arabs and Arab Christians who had already settled there.

After the glorious victory at the Battle of Hattin over the Crusaders, Sultan Salahuddin al-Ayyubi granted lands in the eastern part of Gaza to the soldiers who fought alongside him in Palestine. This led to the establishment of the ‘Turkmen’ district for the Turkmen soldiers. Similarly, Salahuddin did the same in Hebron, where he granted land to Kurdish soldiers, which became known as *Jabal al-Akrad*—Kurdish Mountain.

About 50 years after Salahuddin’s era, the Crusaders returned to Jerusalem and Palestine. In response, King al-Saleh Najmuddin Ayyub, came from Egypt to confront them, decisively defeating them in the Battle of Gaza, famously dubbed Hattin II. The Crusaders were expelled from most of Palestine, including Jerusalem, and would not return until 700 years, after the Ottoman defeat in World War I.

Following in the footsteps of Salahuddin, King al-Saleh Najmuddin Ayyub granted land to Turkmen soldiers and others who had fought alongside him, settling them near earlier Turkmen communities in the same neighborhood. As a result, these victorious soldiers remained in Gaza rather than returning to their homelands. They integrated into the local society, intermarried, and gave rise to new generations in which the Arab blood of Gaza mingled with that of the warriors of Hattin. Thus, the blood that runs through the veins of Gaza’s people today is a blend that traces back to those who twice defeated the Crusaders. It is their descendants who now stand resolute in the face of Israeli aggression, Arab indifference and a protracted siege. They are the ones who continue to innovate and excel in the art of resistance —for indeed, the spirit of Salahuddin flows through their veins. Indeed, ‘Gaza is truly unbreakable.’”

On 7/10/2023, he once again shared verses by his late father, whom he described as the Poet of al-Aqsa, in a poem dedicated to the martyr Ayat al-Akhras:

O you barbarians,
The resolve of men cannot be besieged.
The determination of our people to endure
Cannot be subdued.
So kill, out of your rage, whomever you kill,
And slaughter, out of your fear, whomever you slaughter.
But we will not wear mourning.
You can even poison the air,
Confiscate the food,

²¹ *Bilad al-Sham* (or *al-Sham*) refers to the historical region that includes Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon.



Tear the milk bottle
So the little ones would suckle your hatred.
[But know this:]
You will not break our steadfastness,
Nor will you stop a girl
Who has not yet reached puberty,
Whose age is less
Than (Ayat's) years of heroism,
From flinging dust in your faces,
From killing the shame in your eyes,
From jamming sandals into your minds.
Minds corroded with rust.
So raise your madness higher,
Believe your lies and your cruelty.
But you,
You cannot bury the truth.
Can a shameless scarecrow
Ever kill the truth?
In every inch of my country,
Anger grows.
And we are waiting.
So stand firm, O barbarians,
Stand firm.
Your invasion of our land will not succeed.
You will not erase our existence.
For we are on your chests,
And in your graves.
You will leave our land,
From the Galilee to the Negev.
O gang of criminals.
The flesh of a small girl from our people
Is stronger than your tank,
Sharper than a falling star.
And we will prevail,
With our weakness and your cowardice,
We will prevail.
Do not worry, O Arab lords,
We will prevail without you.





His daughter, Dr. Aya Ferwana, was as patient and steadfast as her father, writing on October 7:

“It doesn’t matter what happens next... We are confident in *Allah*’s victory and His for for our mujahideen... But Gaza has paid the expiation for the humiliation and disgrace on behalf of the *Ummah* for decades and it has restored to us our usurped glory... O *Allah*, grant us empowerment, victory and a conquest from You, soon, without delay, O *Allah*...

The one who holds the truth has nothing to lose...

There is no turning back... The sea is before us... and the enemy is behind us... We advance with *Allah*’s blessing...

Today, we conquer them, and they do not conquer us...

The land is ours, and the homeland is ours

And by His power, *Allah* is with us.”

During the terrifying bombardment and just days before her martyrdom, Aya sent her family a voice message on October 10. In it, she conveyed a sense of calm and steadfastness. She affirmed that *Allah* had sent down tranquility upon them, and that they were filled with certainty and the sense of *Allah*’s presence. She spoke of the rain *Allah* had poured down to reassure them. She wished safety for the mujahideen so they could live to tell their stories—stories of fighting alongside the angels. She recited verses on patience and steadfastness, described the constant roar of aircraft, and said that the dust from the rubble and destruction was suffocating everything. Yet she declared that this dust was in the path of *Allah*.

Two days later, on October 12, just three days before her martyrdom, Dr. Aya wrote again on her page:

“This is the battle of Allah Almighty, and victory comes from Him alone, exalted is He... So if this person or that intervenes... It may settle in the hearts of some with weak faith that victory came because of the involvement of this group or that... But Allah is protective of His victory, He grants it when all means of success are cut off—except through Him... So that people may enter the religion of *Allah* in multitudes, after His victory and His conquest have come...

So, attach your hearts to *Allah* alone, and place your trust in no one else... The end.”

Aya ‘Omar Ferwana was a whole army in steadfastness. On October 11, she wrote in a bold, defiant, chant-like language, echoing the marching anthem:



“Victorious, we are victorious...
Even if we are all prisoners...
Even if my body is scattered...
Death is my birth...”

In one of her writings, Aya beautifully articulated the philosophy of steadfastness, which she had experienced firsthand and felt stirring within her, “When the battle between truth and falsehood intensifies and reaches its peak, when each side throws all it has in a final attempt to win, there comes a critical moment: falsehood reaches the height of its power, and truth the depths of its trial. Steadfastness in this intense hour is the turning point. It is the decisive test of the faith of the believers, and it begins right then. If one holds firm, everything begins to shift in their favor. From that moment, truth starts its ascent, falsehood begins its decline, and in the name of *Allah*, the awaited end is set.”

Aya’s sister-in-law, Sura Ferwana, wrote about her, highlighting some of her most remarkable qualities, “She was a symbol of patience, fortitude and *jihad* —an army in herself, the source of strength in our home, and one of our strongest pillars of resilience. We never saw her in despair, and her heart never knew weariness. Meeting her felt like encountering one of the early female Companions. She was a successful physician who earned her board certification in family medicine just months before her martyrdom. A remarkable mother, her nurturing was evident in her daughters, who excelled wherever they went, competing in memorizing the Qur’an and proudly wearing the hijab. Among ourselves, we used to call her ‘Bassamah Jarrar.’²² She had unshakable faith that the liberation of Palestine was near, and that our prayer in *al-Aqsa* was closer than ever. She often said, ‘Either victory or martyrdom,’ and she attained what she longed for. May *Allah* accept her.”

Dr. ‘Omar had envisioned a moment close to his martyrdom, but he could never have imagined that his death would come in such a brutal and horrific way, in a massacre that would wipe out his entire family. Fifteen people were killed, he the first among them, along with his wife, sons and daughters, in an Israeli airstrike on their home in Tal al-Hawa neighborhood, south of Gaza City, at midnight on 15/10/2023, about a week after the launch of Operation al-Aqsa Flood. It happened after he had returned from his shift at El-Shifaa Medical Complex, at a time when only one child from the extended family fated to survived.

The martyr registry of the Ferwana family massacre recorded the following names:

Martyr Dr. ‘Omar Saleh Ferwana

Martyr Sabah Nihad Khalil Ferwana (his wife)

²² She was given this title, optimistically, in the manner of Sheikh Bassam Jarrar, who had predicted Israel’s demise by 2022.



Martyr Dr. Aya ‘Omar Ferwana

Martyr Raghad Saleh Ferwana

Martyr ‘Abdul ‘Aziz ‘Omar Ferwana

Martyr Sondos Manar Saleh Ferwana

Martyr Mariam Abd al-Aziz Ferwana

Martyr Ayat ‘Abdul ‘Aziz Ferwana (infant)

Martyr Basmalah Saleh Ferwana

Martyr ‘Imad Saleh Ferwana

Martyr ‘Ula Ferwana

Martyr Isra’ ‘Omar Ferwana, “Um Ubaidah,” the wife of researcher and media professional Ahmad Samir Quneitah, and their children: Rahaf, ‘Ubaidah and Rima.





Hamas Leaders and Their Children Also Suffer and Fall as Martyrs



**Isma'il Haniyyah mourning his martyred sons:
“My son’s blood is no more precious than that of our people.”**

On 10/4/2024, three sons of Isma'il Haniyyah, head of Hamas' Political Bureau, were killed. This event exposed the collapse of the Israeli narrative, which many aligned with Israeli propaganda, had echoed. That narrative claimed Hamas pushes vulnerable women and children to the fire while its leaders and their children live comfortably in Doha hotels and elsewhere. It is important to remind all those who are willing to listen of the long list of martyrs from among Hamas leaders, their sons and their families.

Also worth noting, on 16/7/2024, the Israeli army claimed it had eliminated half of the leadership of Al-Qassam Brigades. It alleged killing or capturing nearly 14 thousand fighters since 7/10/2023, out of an estimated 30 thousand. Though we trust only the figures provided by Al-Qassam leadership, one thing is certain. Thousands of Hamas leaders, cadres and fighters from Al-Qassam Brigades remain at the frontlines. They continue to sacrifice their lives and confront the enemy with bravery and determination. Many Hamas and Al-Qassam leaders have been killed. Among them are:

- Head of Hamas Political Bureau: Isma'il Haniyyah
- Deputy Head of Hamas Political Bureau: Sheikh Saleh al-'Arouri
- Deputy Speaker of the elected Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC): Ahmad Bahar
- Political Bureau Member: Zakariyya Abu Mu'ammam



- Political Bureau Member: Jawad Abu Shammalah
- Northern Brigade Commander: Ahmad al-Ghandur, along with three of his children
- Central Brigade Commander: Ayman Nofal
- Director General of Central Operations at the Ministry of Interior in GS and a Hamas leader: Major General Fa'iq al-Mabhuh
- Political Bureau Member in GS: Jamila al-Shanti
- Head of the Hamas Shura Council in GS: Usama al-Mazini (Abu Hammam)
- One of the founders of Al-Qassam Brigades and one of the Marj al-Zuhur deportees in Lebanon: 'Azzam al-Aqra'
- Commander of the Rocket Systems in Al-Qassam Brigades: Ayman Siyam
- Commander of the Beit Lahia Battalion in Al-Qassam Brigades: Wa'el Rajab (Abu Suhaib)
- Leader in Al-Qassam Brigades: Ra'fat Sulaiman

Martyred sons and grandchildren of Hamas leaders:

- Head of Hamas Political Bureau: Isma'il Haniyyah (Approximately 60 members of his family, including a sister, 3 children and 7 grandchildren)
- PLC Deputy Speaker: Ahmad Bahar (A daughter and 8 grandchildren)
- Political Bureau Member: Fathi Hammad (A son, a daughter and her husband, a sister and a granddaughter)
- Political Bureau Member: Yasir Harb (2 children)
- Political Bureau Member: Nizar 'Awadallah (A son)
- Political Bureau Member: Mahmud al-Zahhar (A daughter and grandchild)
- Political Bureau Member: Basim Na'im (Mother)
- Deputy Commander of Al-Qassam Brigades: Marwan 'Isa (A son)
- Political Bureau Member: Kamal Abu 'Aoun (3 children and 8 grandchildren)
- Member of Al-Qassam Military Council: 'Imad 'Aql (A son)
- Member of Al-Qassam Military Council: Abu 'Amr 'Odah (A son)
- The Rafah Brigade Commander: Muhammad (Abu Anas) Shabana (2 children)
- Political Bureau Member: Abu Jihad al-Dajani (Wife and all family members)





The Poet Alaa al-Qatrawi and Her Martyred Children... The Grieving al-Khansa²³

Palestinian poet and writer

Born on 3/11/1990 in Nuseirat RC

PhD in Literature and Criticism, Islamic University of Gaza

MA in Arabic Language, Islamic University of Gaza

A teacher at UNRWA schools

Alaa received the Palestine Prize for Youth Creativity and the Golden Medal for Best Poetry Collection in 2011. She is the author of the poetry collections *When the Air Trembles*, and of *A Waterwheel Trying to Sing*, the latter was named Best Poetry Collection in the Youth Category, and earned her the Saud al-Babtain International Prize for Poetry. She also co-authored *From Zero Distance: Letters Under War* with Rana al-'Ali, a book written during the 2014 war.



Alaa al-Qatrawi was deeply moved by the overwhelming scenes of destruction and employed her poetic gifts to portray the waves of this brutal war, in which Israel unleashed its full machinery to punish civilians for being the support base of the resistance. As the battles of Operation al-Aqsa Flood grew more intense and Israel hurled all its firepower onto GS, Alaa captured these scenes in her words, “By *Allah*, these are heavy days, neither bearable nor movable. By *Allah*, if the swords struck our necks, it would be easier than what we are enduring.”

Those heavy emotions were the story of every Gazan beneath the rain of fire. But Alaa had her own story, one she wrote with her own hands. She had four children with her husband Musa Qandil: the eldest, Yamin, eight years old; the twins Kinan and Orchida, six years old; and the youngest, Karmel, three years old. After the couple separated, the children stayed with their father. Marriage is a kind of provision—and provision may run out. When it does, some of its distant beauties fade with it. After the separation, the children went with their father, while their mother watched them go, tearful and heartbroken. In her grieving heart, still tethered to them, she sketched dreams of reunion and plans for parenting from afar.

²³ Al-Khansa' in Islamic tradition was a female companion whose four sons were killed at the Battle of al-Qadisiyyah. She exemplified patience and steadfast devotion to *Allah* upon receiving the news of their martyrdom.



Since she was at the heart of the battle, what the mother, far from her children, had feared came true. In that moment, she wrote an urgent, heartbroken plea, desperately seeking any news of her children:

“I have lost contact with my children since December 13, 2023. Yamin Musa Qandil, 8 years old; the twins Kinan Musa Qandil and Orchida Musa Qandil, 6 years old; and Karmel Musa Qandil, 3 years old. They had been living with their father after our separation, in al-Satr al-Sharqi area of Khan Yunis. On that day, the occupation army entered their home, arrested their father and confiscated their phones. The children were left with their paternal grandmother, and since then, I have heard nothing from them. I contacted the Red Cross, but they told me the occupation is refusing to coordinate with them. I also reached out to the Red Crescent, but they too are unable to assist since their area is a closed military zone under occupation. I appeal to every person who carries even a trace of humanity in their heart: help me uncover the fate of my children. For 44 long days, I have had no word, no information, no sign. I beg that this message reach anyone who can act, anyone who can help me find out where they are. I plead for it to reach Mr. Philippe Lazzarini and Mr. Thomas White at the United Nations, especially as I am one of its staff members. To every journalist, I ask you; please publish and translate my plea. The cruelest part of this war is when a mother is stripped of her very motherhood, when she cannot even know where her children are, let alone protect them.”



This campaign began to bear its bitter fruit, as heartbreaking news gradually reached the mother searching for her children. Alaa consoled herself with the legacy of her grandfather, the Messenger of *Allah*, peace be upon him, as her lineage traces back to al-Hasan, the son of ‘Ali.

“Since someone barely managed to reach the children’s home a few weeks ago and told us it had been bombed with everyone inside, I’ve been unable to speak or answer any calls. But I have a very close friend—separated from me by occupation’s barriers that have torn the Strip apart—who has persistently called me morning and night. I finally picked up, and her voice came through as I sat in complete silence: You love the Prophet, and the Prophet (SAWS) lost all his children! She said that, and then I tried—despite the weak internet connection—to resume my reading about the event. I read that our Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) was overjoyed at the birth of his son Ibrahim. Out of his immense happiness, he would carry him and take him around to his wives so they could hold him and feel his presence. But when Ibrahim reached a year and a half and had just begun to walk, *Allah* took his soul. The Prophet grieved deeply—and by *Allah*, I grieved for his grief as I read, and forgot my own. Then I wrote two lines of poetry, which were:

What eases my sorrow is knowing it echoes the Prophet’s own pain.

All grief we endure shall vanish—his sorrow will always remain.



Alaa documented the moment she learned of the confirmed martyrdom of her children:

“The occupation forces have withdrawn from the area near my children’s home. It has now been confirmed that my four children—the light of my eyes and the soul of my heart—have been martyred. The occupation bombed them unjustly and treacherously since mid-December. By *Allah*, the eyes shed tears, and the heart is grieved. Verily, I am heartbroken over your departure, oh my beloved Yamin ‘8 years old.’ By *Allah*, the eyes shed tears, and the heart is grieved. Verily, I am heartbroken over your departure, oh my beloved Kinan ‘6 years old.’ By *Allah*, the eyes shed tears, and the heart is grieved. Verily, I am heartbroken over your departure, oh my beloved Orchida ‘6 years old.’ By *Allah*, the eyes shed tears, and the heart is grieved. Verily, I am heartbroken over your departure, oh my beloved Karmel ‘Two and a half years old.’ Indeed, to *Allah* we belong and to Him we return. O *Allah*, reward me for my affliction and compensate me with something better. Praise be to *Allah*, who magnified my reward through you and comforted me with the thought that you have preceded me to the side of the one who holds my heart—Our grandfather the Messenger of *Allah* (SAWS). And know, my dear children, that I did not wail, I did not scream, I did not crumble, and I did not despair. But I wept—long and deeply—with pain, sorrow, longing, and heartache that have weakened my body and soul. My dear friend Fatima from Tunisia shared with me that she saw you [in her dreams] as birds adorned with the most beautiful, colorful feathers, and you were saying to me: ‘Be patient, O mother, for we have gone before you to Paradise with the martyrs.’ I wrote these words before me, so whenever my strength faltered, I would hear them in your voices, and I would steady myself. Now that you have shown the greatest devotion to your mother and have become martyrs—four colorful birds in Paradise—I feel ashamed not to honor you with my patience. May *Allah* be pleased with you, my beloved ones. May you grow under the merciful gaze of *Allah* the most merciful and in the sight of our noble Prophet (SAWS), and his family. May *Allah* ease your paths, for this world is nothing but sorrow, grief and hardship. I ask Almighty *Allah* to grant me patience until I meet you, and I pray that when my soul departs, He will say to me in His voice: ‘Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him],’ and count me among the patient and steadfast, those whom *Allah* is pleased with and who are pleased with Him. I had written a poem when I lost you, without any news of you. Every time the meaning settled in my heart, I added to it during that difficult time. Here is part of it:

It is enough for me—the patience granted by *Allah*, for He is *Allah*;
Had the loss been evil, His right hand would not have written its course.
It is enough for me—the patience granted by *Allah*, for He is my Lord;
Had such sorrow been harm, He would not have placed it on my path.

And when I wrote this verse (Glory be to *Allah*):

It is enough for me—the patience granted by *Allah*, for He is the Eternal Refuge;
Had it been evil, they would not have endured when despair took hold.





I looked at my phone and found a message: Your home was bombed, and you were inside. I stared at the message, then at the verse I had just finished writing about our home. And in that moment, I understood—my soul had been trained to receive the messages of its Creator. That is why, by *Allah*'s grace, I received the news of your martyrdom with calm from the very first moment. Farewell, O purest of martyrs—blessed in land, identity, noble lineage, and in every bond and nearness. We shall meet again in Paradise, in eternal reunion. O *Allah*, exact the severest retribution; *Allah* is sufficient for us, and He is the best disposer of affairs.”

The poet Alaa's suffering did not end with the martyrdom of her children. What followed was, in many ways, even more unbearable: her desperate attempt to recover their bodies and give them a proper burial. For four long months, she fought to reach the ruins of their home, hoping to retrieve whatever remains of them she could. Yet, the occupation denied her any chance to approach the site.

Here, she penned her most beautiful and heart-wrenching poems—ones that overflow with both solace and sorrow, filled with anguish as much as tenderness and compassion. She says:

And I know my tears, when lifted in complaint,
 You see them, and never show restraint.
 And when a mother cries to You for aid,
 You soothe her heart, though pierced by every blade.
 One gracious glance from Your all-loving eye,
 Can turn despair to beauty, pure and high.
 So do not deprive a lover of the kindness,
 That fed a trunk and lavished on the deer.
 And do not bar Your seeker from some light,
 To comfort him through darkness of the night.
 For I trust that Your grace is my protection,
 It will flood me though they crush my cords.
 And if I ache with pain from breaking down,
 You will mend me—Your mending is with grace.
 And if people conspire for harm,
 You'll push them back, as cratons hold the mountains high.
 And when the war grows tight upon our chest,
 You'll strengthen us, for You care best.
 And one for whom the Prophet is the heart,
 His every hope is sure to reach its part.
 And one who keeps the Prophet as his friend,
 His every grief is fated to its end.





She also wrote:

Do not blame the tears of my loss,
 The tears of my loss, do not blame.
 The ember weighs on my tongue,
 And every day is a day of fasting.
 The coffins rise, scattered far and wide,
 And the mourners cannot rise, their wails unbroken.
 Fill my bleeding with seeds,
 And drink from it, O borders.
 At my grave, there is no quarrel—
 Friends and foes embrace as one.
 Dig into me, O mountains,
 Rain upon me, O clouds.
 Continue your mourning,
 Try me, O vineyards
 Carry me across, O steeds,
 Age me well, O sorrows.
 Drown me, O seas,
 For my body no longer has the strength to float.
 I remained alone,
 As even the stars mourn the endless night.
 A torment, if only you knew,
 It has torn my flesh apart.
 Drink from my sorrow, my very cup,
 For that drunkenness endures.

She drew solace from the legacy of her ancestors and walked in the footsteps of al-Khansa' in her mournful poetry:

I see in the eyes of al-Husain my own,
 And in my eyes, I see the eyes of al-Husain.
 They left my heart's own son slaughtered,
 The rubble sealing both ends of the earth with him.





I bear upon my brokenness another breaking,
 And my back cries out—pierced by twin blades.
 You share my pain, O noble one,
 Our blood held together in cupped hands,
 They left us to groan, each one alone,
 And even the trees of Mesopotamia weep through us.
 So who but we can ease our pain,
 Now that we have become as one, through our shared lineage?
 And if only they knew, the Messenger is in us
 As a heart, soul, lash and eye—inseparable.

Alaa now lives by the memory of her martyr children, drawing strength from their remembrance. She constantly reclaims the signs that they were truly hers before they were taken from her. She says, “I gave birth three times, but never in the way most women experience childbirth. Each time, the doctor performed a cesarean section. He was skilled; and after each surgery, he left a delicate, cosmetic thread. All women are amazed when they find out, often saying, ‘It doesn’t show at all. It doesn’t look like you’ve given birth.’ Some have told me that I’d suffer from muscle contractions in the winter due to the cold, and that I might feel severe pain where the thread was, but that never happened. I also heard I might feel the sting of it in the summer because of the heat, but that never happened either. I often forgot about it, didn’t even notice it. But now, I feel it and see it constantly. I can examine it closely, and it’s starting to affect me. It hurts my heart, my liver, my soul, and even hurts when I breathe, between each inhale and exhale. No one had ever warned me about this before. This thin thread in my body reminds me every single minute: ‘You gave birth to a son, a daughter and twins, wonderful children, and then, you were left alone.’”

Alaa’s children became verses of poetry, and elegiac prose paintings that summon the universe to weep with her.

She writes of her firstborn, Yamin:

O Yamin, with eyes like a gazelle’s,
 And eyelashes like a steed’s hair,
 They make the rock stretch for me,
 Soft as the land, when they blink.
 They pierce the shepherds’ flute,
 When they laugh,





They race like the wind,
Outpacing the deer, never tiring.
O Yamin, the shade of clear water,
The soul of an angel,
And a mother who fears, deeply,
Never to see you again.
She keeps calling you name, but
You do not stir,
And in longing, she embraces
A grave called your soil.

My patience, O my son, stands higher than all ranks.

She wrote a poem for her daughter Orchida:

Let me see her,
If only once.
My heart withered in mid-March,
And no tree now springs up to shelter doves.
Give her my lips
So she may kiss them..
Even if only with a cold kiss..!
And grant her my lungs,
Maybe she suffocated without them.
Maybe she couldn't call my name,
For the rubble lay too heavy upon her.
And I could sense her spirit.
For in my veins flows a heritage of
Ancient sorrow/ time-worn venom/ a faltering sacrifice,
And a secret the Prophet's House binds
Upon my ascetic rosary.
And give her my long hair,
I love her fingers when they touch it.





The grieving mother wrote to Kinan, Orchida's twin:

"Kinan of my soul: Your wide eyes shrink when you laugh, and from the very first giggle your laughter enfolds the entire universe. You are not yet old enough to grasp that your laugh is a mobile hospital, a red apple tree, a fresh water Kawthar²⁴, a bird of lovebirds. And yet you are remarkable in every way, your laughter is enough to make us all laugh. I adore the way you lisp the letter R, and how you mix up the places of some letters. Orchida would laugh at you for it, you'd get annoyed, but you always knew how to tease her by saying, 'I'm older than you, poor thing!' She'd come to me upset, asking, 'Mama, is Kinan bigger than me?' And I'd reply, 'No, Mama, you are twins.' But Kinan would insist, 'I'm older. I'm taller than her!' Then Orchida would look at me and say, 'Why is he taller than me!' The same conversation every single time!

I admire your intelligence. You only studied one month of first grade before the genocide war broke out, yet your handwriting was beautiful. I loved how neat and organized you were. But I held back my praise, so Orchida wouldn't feel sad, thinking your handwriting was nicer than hers! But truly, your writing was beautiful, your notebooks were beautiful, and you, my love, were beautiful.

I can't bear to imagine it, that you stood there surrounded by dozens of occupation soldiers. Did you hold Orchida close? Did you cling to each other in those final moments? Did you tremble all alone? Were you struck down alone, or were you wrapped in each other's arms?

It breaks something deep in me that I'll never hear your lisp again. No one else can say it like you did. Even the letter R will mourn you—it will weep in protest. You were so kind to it, so gentle. It won't find that tenderness on anyone else's lips. There are no lips like yours, my love.

Perhaps now, you are at peace, laughing more than ever. But how is my longing heart supposed to understand that? How can my anguished soul accept it? And how can my empty arms make peace with this terrible absence?"

And she wrote a poem for her youngest, Karmel:

I can't believe you'll never again find rest
Upon my aching longing.
I cannot believe



²⁴ *Kawthar*: In Islam, it is a river in Paradise.



That the shadow of your head on my shoulder will stay cold,
 Now that your head will awaken no more.
 You offer me a star from your sky,
 And it burns with me in grief.
 I call out to your soul,
 But my dense clay holds me back, no release, no escape.
 Is sorrow of the soul, or of the flesh?
 I am besieged,
 For the weight of my body is a closing in.

I say:

Allah will reunite us in our eternal home.
 There, no tear will become a chain of wind around my neck,
 No memories will bind me with nails,
 Not drifting moment for your shadow
 Will fall like a sword into my lungs.
 There, where my Lord sanctifies the embrace!

Alaa al-Qatrawi was the wise, weeping Khansa', who taught herself how to bear the burdens of patience and the weight of mourning. She still admits she is strong, despite all the weakness that pours over her. Alaa continued to find solace in their memory, even after many long months had passed since their killing and martyrdom. This is the poem that some artists have recited or performed:

Wipe my tears with your palm, perhaps
 Your touch, O Prophet, will heal them.
 It is a lump in the heart that weighs down my back,
 Have you ever seen trees without branches?
 Have you seen the sun weep for its light,
 When my candles put on the garments of mourning?
 Have you seen how the gardens of my laughter
 Have turned to wheat, tormented by sorrow and my hunger?
 It's not the earth that's closing in,
 But my ribs, tightened by parting's weight.





Alaa al-Qatrawi, the bereaved mother and poet, narrowly escaped death in the June 8, 2024 massacre, which claimed the lives of nearly 210 people from the Nuseirat RC. She documents the atrocity she survived in her own words:

“They set fire to the sky above us and to the ground beneath. Smoke choked every particle of air around me. My brother’s voice pierced the thick dust as he shouted for me to hurry and leave. I went to grab my small bag containing my personal ID because I didn’t want my name to be lost, or for me to become an unidentified soul in this mass death. I love my name. I love the history of my small life, which feels so much like me. I love my poems, my whispered prayers, and my soul that loves *Allah* and the sky deeply. I grabbed the bag, then remembered the folder containing my university certificates from my laptop bag. Certificates that had taken me 10 continuous years of study, tireless effort, sleepless nights and struggles. My brother screamed at me to hurry, but I felt a force within me and shouted that I wouldn’t leave the house in my prayer clothes. I wanted to wear my beloved abaya. If I were to die, I would rather die at home than in the street. I put on my abaya, wrapped my shawl in the same color, carefully pinned it, and placed my certificates bag on my back, with a small bag on my shoulder. I descended the stairs, hearing rockets devour our lives with loud sounds. When I reached the door, I saw people running in all directions. Before I could despairingly ask, ‘Where will we go?’

I said, ‘I’m tired, O *Allah*

I’m tired, I swear

I’m tired...’ ”

Dr. Alaa al-Qatrawi has become a symbol of patience and resilience, and women in grief find solace in her poetry about her children and her heartbreaking story, which she has transformed into a vast human space that continues to provide consolation, perseverance, and the blessings of contentment. Alaa has remained faithful to this Flood, continuing to write, “Our martyrs now circle the Throne of the Most Merciful. Congratulations to the people of Gaza for this great circumambulation.”



“They Take Revenge on Us Through Our Children... It’s Okay”

Palestinian journalist Wael al-Dahdouh, long known for reporting the suffering of GS residents to the world, found himself struck by a series of personal tragedies that turned his own life into a stark reflection of the broader Palestinian ordeal.

On 25/10/2023, while broadcasting live, al-Dahdouh received news that the area in al-Nuseirat RC, where his family had sought refuge, had been targeted. This was the very area Israeli authorities had directed civilians to evacuate to in southern GS, claiming it was safe. The strike killed his wife, son, daughter and infant grandson. As he bid farewell to his loved ones, al-Dahdouh, holding back tears, said, “They take revenge on us through our children... It’s okay.” He added, “Our tears are human tears, not those of cowardice or collapse. Let the Israeli army be disgraced.”

On 15/12/2023, an Israeli drone targeted al-Dahdouh while he was reporting alongside his colleague, cameraman Samer Abu Daqa, on an airstrike that hit Haifa School in Khan Yunis. Abu Daqa was killed, and al-Dahdouh sustained serious injuries to his hand.

Just weeks later, on 7/1/2024, al-Dahdouh lost his eldest son, journalist Hamza, in another Israeli strike that targeted a group of journalists west of Khan Yunis. Bidding farewell to his son Hamza, al-Dahdouh said, “There is nothing more painful than loss. And when you experience it again and again, it becomes even more unbearable. But what can we say? Sufficient for us is Allah, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs.. This is our choice.. our destiny and we must accept it, no matter how hard it is. Our hope is that *Allah* is pleased with us and counts us among the patient..... To Hamza and all the martyrs, we say: we remain true to the promise.” Al-Dahdouh came to be seen as “Gaza embodied in a man.”





The Seven Moons of the Na'im Family!

Dr. Jamal Na'im never stopped telling the story of his seven moons: His eighty-year-old mother, his two cherished daughters, Samah and Shaima', and the grandchildren born through them: Batul, Taysir, Lara and Leah.

January 6, 2024, was a bitter and relentless day that descended upon him like a crushing mountain. He was engulfed by a piercing sense of cold orphanhood and disoriented loss.

As the father of daughters only, his love for them was boundless and enduring. After their martyrdom, he would withdraw from the world to grieve in solitude. Yet even in his sorrow, he remained resolute and patient, determined that his endurance would be his reward, and that he would show no sign of weakness or submission in the face of a tragedy that nearly broke his back.

His daughter, Dr. Shaima' Na'im, ranked first in her fourth-year class at the Faculty of Dentistry in 2017. She memorized the Qur'an from a young age and recites it with precision. She is fluent in English and German, and has a good command of Turkish, French and Hebrew. Shaima' was born on 21/2/1996 in Germany, where she lived until the third grade before moving with her father to Gaza.

She was creative and ambitious young woman, always striving to improve herself. Her discipline and commitment showed in her structured daily Qur'anic recitations, educational sessions with her young son, regular reading and engagement with art and painting. None of this ever came at the expense of her duties, neither her work as a dentist nor her role as a devoted wife. She deliberately avoided films and television series, believing her three-year-old son was more deserving of her time.

At the onset of the war, the father and sisters of Shaima' fled to the Nuseirat RC in the central region, while she remained in Gaza City with her husband and his family. As the fighting intensified, she was eventually forced to flee, without her husband, taking her son Taysir to seek refuge with her parents and sisters at a relative's home in the Nuseirat RC. There, approximately eighty members of the extended family endured seventy days of relentless



bombardment, siege and hunger. Amid these harsh conditions, they began to forge a new communal life—one that required strong values, disciplined routines, and ingenuity within the limits of a tightly confined space. This improvised household included the father of Shaima’, his mother, his three daughters and their children, along with his brother, sister and in-laws. Life inside this cramped shelter followed a tightly structured rhythm. The home became a spiritual center, anchored in prayer, night worship, Qur’an recitation and memorization, study and reading. Everyone took part in supporting one another and reinforcing family bonds—until nightfall brought the torment of trying to sleep through the thunder of shelling, the roar of artillery and the cries of terrified children.

On December 22, the family decided to leave the Nuseirat RC together after the central region had turned into a terrifying battlefield. Fleeing for their lives, they sought refuge in the relatively safer area in Deir al-Balah and remained together for two more weeks, until the final day arrived.

In her powerful posts chronicling her journey of patience, faith and unwavering trust in Allah’s promise of victory, Dr. Shaima’ wrote:

“This path of struggle deserves nothing less than such honorable endings. Martyrdom is a noble and exalted station, an honor with which *Allah* rewards the sincere. If a martyr could wish for anything, it would be to return to this world, to fight once more and to be martyred again for the sake of *Allah*. May Allah bless our resistance, guide their hearts and decisions, steady their aim and unite their ranks and word. And may He remind us of His words: ‘*So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior.*’”²⁵

On 24/10/2023, Dr. Shaima’ wrote a powerful reminder to maintain a clear and firm intention of steadfastness (*Ribat*) in the midst of this brutal and unyielding battle:

“*Ribat* is an act of worship, and worship is only valid when accompanied by pure intention. As the Prophet (SAWS) said, ‘the (reward of) deeds, depend upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended.’ Know that, even if there were no other virtue of *Ribat* except for the words of the Prophet (SAWS), ‘Observing *Ribat* for single day in the way of *Allah* is better than the world and all that it contains,’ that alone would be sufficient. O *Allah*, we bear witness before You that we have made the intention of *Ribat* in Your cause, in this blessed land. O *Allah*, You see us, You know our condition. Our hearts are heavy, our resolve is tested, yet our trust and certainty in You remain unshaken. We ask You, with full faith, to grant us the reward You bestowed upon the companions of Your Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) on the day of *al-Ahzab*²⁶ battle—reward for our *ribat*, patience and striving in Your way.”

Her final post, written on the day of her martyrdom, 6/1/2024, was a testament to her unshakable resolve and the depth of her faith in *Allah*’s divine promise. She wrote:

²⁵ *Surat Al ‘Imran* (The Family of Imran): 139.

²⁶ *Al-Ahzab*: The Combined Forces.



“O Allah, had You willed, You could have granted us victory over them, but You have decreed *jihad* and fighting for our people, to test some of us with others. We seek refuge in You from straying after guidance, and from deviating from the path. O Allah, aid us on the paths of patience and striving. Grant us steadfastness, and make us a source of strength for others. Let the mark of Your acceptance be that we never betray Your religion or Your message.”

Her husband, Mus‘ab al-Batsh, mourned her with sorrowful steady words:

“With pride, faith and submission to *Allah*’s will, I mourn the martyrdom of my wife, my beloved, my companion, the joy of my heart. She was devout and pure, gentle and kind, compassionate, steadfast in fasting and prayer, intelligent and diligent, of noble and honorable lineage, who devoted her worldly entirely to her Hereafter: the martyred dentist ‘Shaima’ Jamal Na‘im.’ I also mourn the martyrdom of my only son, the apple of my eye—brilliant, intelligent, cultured, light-spirited, and cheerful, loved by everyone who met him—the martyred child, Taysir Mus‘ab al-Batsh. I bear witness before Allah that I was granted the best of this world’s blessings in my wife Shaima’, and that I loved her as the Prophet loved Khadijah. I miss my son Taysir as the Prophet missed his son Ibrahim. I grieve their loss deeply—but such is this worldly life. *Allah* Almighty said to His angels, ‘Have you taken the apple of My servant’s eye?’ They said, ‘Yes.’ He said, ‘What did My servant say?’ They said, ‘He praised You and said: We belong to *Allah* and to Him we shall return.’ He said, ‘Build a house in Paradise for my servant and call it the House of Praise.’ *‘So that Allah may make evident those who believe and [may] take to Himself from among you martyrs,’*²⁷ *‘And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allah, ‘They are dead.’ Rather, they are alive, but you perceive [it] not.’*²⁸ O Allah, reward me in my affliction and grant me something better in return. O Allah, reunite me with them in the highest level of Paradise, with the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. What an excellent company they are. Praise be to Allah, and to Him we shall return.”

Her sister, Dr. Samah Jamal Na‘im, 29 years old, her father’s shadow and shared his character. She worked with him at the dental center and was known for her energy, compassion, generosity, and commitment to easing others’ hardships.

A few days before her martyrdom, she came to her father and told him she was no longer afraid of death, and if martyrdom were to come, she said, she would want her daughter, Lara Husain ‘Alewa,



²⁷ *Surat Al ‘Imran* (The Family of Imran): 140.

²⁸ *Surat al- Baqarah* (The Cow): 154.

to be with her, so that no one would snatch her away in this war with no end in sight. She asked her father two questions, “Does one feel pain when dying under bombardment?” He replied, “Our noble Prophet taught us that the martyr feels the taking of the soul as lightly as an ant’s bite.” Then she asked a strange question, “You know me well, Father, could someone like me enter Paradise!” Her father laughed and said, “And what have you done to be unworthy of Paradise, my daughter. Perhaps *Allah* will grant all the people of Gaza a place in Paradise for the patience they have shown in enduring such fear and terror.”

On that fateful Saturday night, Samah was fasting and prepared. She broke her fast with patience and joy, prayed the evening prayer in congregation with her family, and then went to sleep, her final one. After the house was bombed, she was found as if still asleep, her arm resting above her head, without a single scratch. Beside her lay her daughter Lara, who also died beneath the rubble. Together, they returned to their Lord, martyrs and witnesses.

The mother Rasmiyyah Na‘im, Um ‘Awni, who was approaching ninety, was the beloved light of the family and its haven. Despite being illiterate, she was a righteous and exceptionally refined woman, leaving a legacy of goodness and dignity with her descendants, who honored her as she had honored her own parents. Her final act was to set aside a portion of her wealth for her son to build baths for the displaced. Old age had taken its toll on her, and it was *Allah*’s will for her to depart this world as a martyr, praying against the oppressors at the moment of her targeting. She was pulled from the rubble, having suffered numerous fractures, yet she remained conscious for a day before *Allah* called her to Him the following day. Her children mourned her with deep sorrow, listening to her final tender prayer, which they had recorded before her passing.



The grieving father, Dr. Jamal, recalls the final moments of his family’s last night together, the night he lost the seven moons of his life. He says:

“On that sorrowful day, 6 January 2024, all the sisters, both young and old, gathered to hand-wash clothes in the garden of their uncle’s house. Everyone was utterly exhausted. We laughed a lot at our painful situation. The laughter of the six women echoed in a video I captured of them working for hours to accomplish what a washing machine would do in just one hour. Around them, their children played, including Tito ‘Taysir’ played between the wash water and the greenery of the place. At that moment, we didn’t know that the treacherous drone, with its disturbing hum above us, was bothered by the laughter of my queens, despite the pain, and angered by their joy, despite the harshness of the war. It took the coordinates of our haven to rob us of our happiness just hours later, forever. A warplane, like the Mongols of this age, destroyed our home, silencing all traces of joy and extinguishing the voices of our children forever.



At ten forty, I was jolted awake by the sound of stones crashing down on our heads. Just like the scenes we see on television, buried under the rubble, I prayed to *Allah* that you were all safe. In the pitch-black darkness of death, amid the choking dust of injustice that filled the air, I pulled myself from the debris, my face covered in blood, and began searching for you. I managed to rescue myself and my little daughter, Mariam, who had been sleeping close to me, from beneath the rubble. My mind was bursting from the horror of what I had seen—and what I feared I would find. Barefoot, with a bleeding head and fingers, and a broken shoulder, I searched for survivors among the wreckage. But the scene was more horrific than anything the human can imagine. Within minutes, neighbors had gathered. Then came the ambulances and civil defense crews,



pulling out whoever they could. I still didn't know who had survived and who hadn't. I rushed to the hospital to see who had arrived. They first led me to the martyrs' morgue to identify the bodies, and how unbearable that moment was: to unzip a body bag, praying it didn't belong to someone you love! But it was *Allah's* will. Two of my daughters and two granddaughters were among those who perished in the very first moments. I thanked *Allah* for His decree, then prayed with hope that the others might be among the survivors. But *Allah's* will was not what I had wished. Shaima' and her son were neither among the injured nor among the martyrs. Still, I clung to the hope, perhaps they were trapped beneath the rubble, and would be rescued. But at seven in the morning, they brought me the body of her son— an angelic boy, pure and radiant, with a brilliant smile and a mind beyond his years. What pained me most was that every effort to find Shaima' had failed. With nothing but our bare hands and limited means, we couldn't recover her blessed body. What remained of her lay beneath the rubble, as her soul rose to meet its Creator.

I have lost my seven moons. I lost my mother, my two daughters Samah and Shaima' and my grandchildren— Batul, Taysir, Lara and the piece of my heart, Leah! My joy at the birth of my daughters was immense, even though many around me pitied me for having only girls. But I was always certain that *Allah* had honored me with them, and that He would bless my livelihood, my wealth and all my efforts for their sake. I rarely cry, but since your ascension, I have wept bitterly, every single day. I hide my face from people so they won't see my weakness, leaving my reward to *Allah*, who never lets a right be lost. I lost my mother, whose boundless prayers were the brightest part of my day, as I knelt at her feet seeking her blessing. My most precious moments were seeing her smile as I kissed her hands and forehead, and reading in her eyes complete contentment. My mother was the epitome of beautiful family gatherings and the gateway to paradise. As for my daughters, each of them



holds a deep and cherished place in my heart. I raised them with utmost care, like delicate seedlings to which I gave all my attention. I was deeply committed to shaping their personalities, until each one became more than I had ever hoped for! It was as if the hand of *Allah* had formed them in a way that pleases Him. They devoted themselves to knowledge and faith, becoming a source of immense pride for me. I pour out my grief and sorrow to *Allah*, and I praise Him for choosing us for the greatest of trials. All praise is due to *Allah*, who steadied our hearts despite their sorrow and fading strength. None can overturn His decree, and none can resist His will. He has purchased from us our souls and our wealth, and we place our trust in *Allah*, hoping to attain Paradise.”

Amputated with a Hand Saw...

American Doctor Recounts His Experience in GS: “What I Witnessed Was Genocide”

In late January 2024, as the Israeli army systematically targeted hospitals and medical teams in an effort to deprive GS residents of medical care and force their surrender and displacement. American plastic and reconstructive surgeon Irfan Galaria left his home in Virginia to join a group of physicians and nurses volunteering in GS to provide critical medical care.

On 29/1/2024, the medical team entered southern GS. The doctor said that “Entering southern Gaza...felt like the first pages of a dystopian novel” and stressed that what he “witnessed... in Gaza was not war—it was annihilation.”

According to the doctor, who joined the European Gaza Hospital, “only one local plastic surgeon left and he covered the hospital 24/7.” Galaria “began work immediately, performing 10 to 12 surgeries a day, working 14 to 16 hours at a time.”

He said, “We had limited access to critical medical equipment: We performed amputations of arms and legs daily, using a Gigli saw, a Civil War-era tool, essentially a segment of barbed wire. Many amputations could’ve been avoided if we’d had access to standard medical equipment.”

➤ Site of Los Angeles Times newspaper, 16/2/2024.





Artist ‘Ali Nassman... Guardian of Memory

‘Ali ‘Abdullah Hasan Nassman

Guardian of Popular Memory

Born on 15/4/1985, in northern Gaza, ‘Ali Nassman grew up in al-Saftawi neighborhood.

BA in Financial Management and Business

Diploma in Organizational Management

To support his family, he works as a carpenter



A Palestinian actor and comedian from Gaza. He has appeared in numerous television series known for their committed and purposeful storytelling, inspired by the Palestinian resistance and the steadfastness of the Palestinian people. He portrayed Hasan in the series *Al-Feda'i* (The Commando) series, and his most recent work was the 2022 drama *Victory Sign –Gilboa*, based on the story of the prisoners who escaped from the high-security Gilboa Prison in the widely known “Freedom Tunnel” operation. His earlier roles include the series *Gate of Heaven* (2017) and *The Soul* (2014).

‘Ali Nassman was a revolutionary figure, who speaks in a fervent vernacular, driven by overflowing emotion. He preaches with steadfast conviction, a fierce cry, and a strong, impassioned physical presence. A firebrand and a voice of thunder, he is fiercely devoted to the resistance—its fighters, prisoners and martyrs. Each time he reenacts a scene related to martyrdom, he remembers his brother, Hasan, who was martyred in 2002.

‘Ali was a naturally satirical artist, spontaneous in his expression and known for a warm, emotionally resonant laugh. His dark complexion and thick black beard lent him a natural charm that brought smiles to people’s faces. He performed musical monologues that reflected the everyday realities, dreams and aspirations of the people. A deeply influential presence on social media, he enjoyed widespread popularity thanks to his committed content, impassioned delivery, emotional depth, and the vibrancy with which he tackled his subjects. The resistance leadership often provided him with opportunities to produce rich and distinctive material, which further reinforced his credibility with a devoted audience that eagerly awaited his broadcasts.



His appearances were marked by provocative, mobilizing content aimed at instilling a revolutionary spirit in Palestinian and Arab youth. Before the war, Israeli authorities had sent him multiple threats, recognizing him as a prominent symbol of soft power in Palestine.

He was a committed, purpose-driven artist, who consistently voiced his principled positions in numerous appearances. He often said, “I will not let my people down. My tools are not television production cities, nor advanced cameras, nor air-conditioned studios. The tools I use to create videos and monologues are simply my personal phone and its modest camera. And despite all that, I will continue to bring my people’s struggles to the world.”

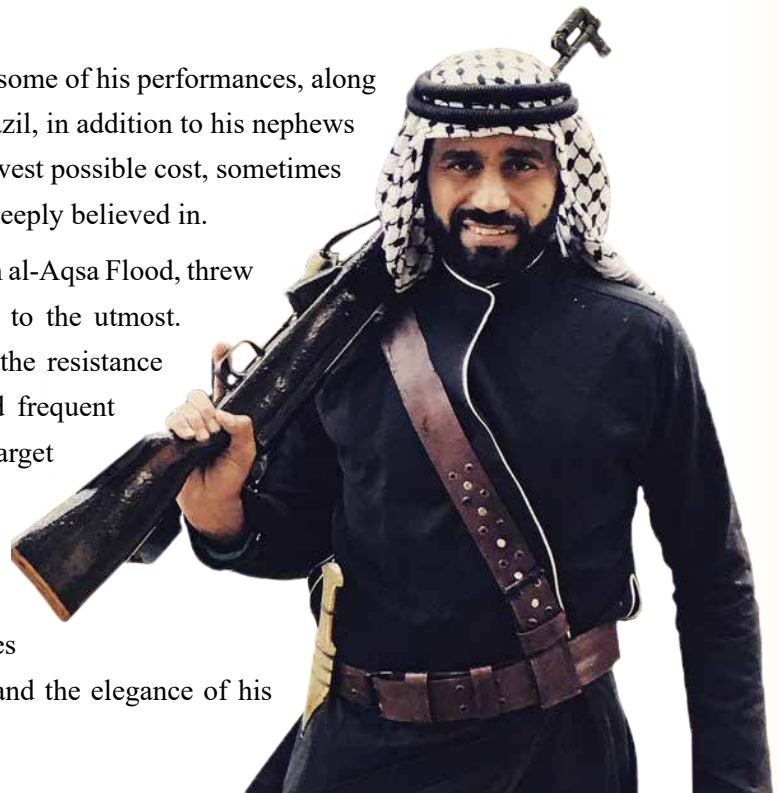
He firmly believed in the role of art within the context of resistance and saw the decline in support for the arts as a significant setback for the Palestine issue. He was deeply frustrated by approaches that marginalized artistic and cultural work, despite its vital importance in affirming the Palestine issue, promoting its narrative, and spreading a culture of resistance among communities.

Nassman was known by the nickname “*Shariha* [chip],” after the comedic character he portrayed in the 2017 television series *Jerusalem: Gate of Heaven*. He played a young Jerusalemite who became mentally impaired as a result of torture in the occupation’s prisons. A character who transforms into a mad philosopher with a role to play in the resistance project.

His wife, Khulud Fakhry Nassman, took part in some of his performances, along with their children ‘Abdullah, Hasan, Fakhri and Jazil, in addition to his nephews and nieces. He strove to produce his work at the lowest possible cost, sometimes nearly nothing, in order to deliver the message he deeply believed in.

He was elated by the announcement of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, threw his full weight behind it, amplifying its message to the utmost. As a civilian media professional, his support for the resistance was confined to the media realm, which required frequent and visible appearances. This made him an early target for Israel, which killed him on Friday, October thirteenth, 2023—one week after the launch of the Flood.

Browsing through his posts and tweets, one senses the quiet confidence and that defines this artist—and the elegance of his defiant spirit:





“Food and drink are scarce. Let us intend to fast in it in supplication and repentance to *Allah*, and may He grant us victory.”

“Your leaflets, O enemies, arrived in tatters. Glory be to the One who disgraced you. May *Allah* have mercy on those who rejoiced in what He granted them of His bounty.”

“We will leave the Strip as it is and will not rebuild it, so that the world may witness the high price of victory and liberation. Friday is the day of the truthful—those who answer *Allah*’s call to mobilize. Begin gathering now, prepare, train, arm yourself [and] share in the people of Gaza the feeling of greatness!”

He had pinned a poignant post on his X/ Twitter account: “My friends, trusting in *Allah* and His mercy, if we are parted, we will meet again: Either in Jerusalem or heaven.”

In his latest video, he cried out amidst the rain-drenched rubble: “No matter what you do, you will see no fear or panic in us. We have pledged, and we have sworn allegiance to death.”

Moments before he was targeted, he appeared denouncing the cowardly occupation and its false moral pretenses: “The occupation can’t handle the heroes who strike them in the face, but they [the Israelis] can strike civilians in Gaza. They can’t stand those who hit them square on the nose—this so-called nuclear state pretending to be a real one.”

In those final moments, ‘Ali Nassman was awaiting martyrdom, preparing for it, saluting the steadfastness of the Palestinian people, and delivering a live message into his phone camera, live for his people, delivering a message of unwavering pride and courage:

“They can’t handle the Palestinian fighters. This is what *Allah* and His Messenger promised us. As I speak to you now, a concrete block could fall on me at any moment, ending the story or the message. And that would be a great honor. In the end, it is an immense honor that our Lord chooses martyrs from among us. We’ve seen the children of Gaza toying with the Israeli soldiers like toys. May Allah bless you, people of Palestine. By Allah, whatever you do, we fear no one but Allah.”

Just hours later, news of his martyrdom spread after shells rained down on his home, and he ascended to his Lord. He left his home only as a martyr, advancing without retreating, just as he had wished and vowed. Under intense fire, his comrades managed with great difficulty to bury him in Beit Lahia cemetery, beside his martyred brother, Hasan Nassman.



Israel Assassinates Gaza's Scholars... President of the Islamic University Among the Martyrs

The International Academic Campaign Against Israeli Occupation and Apartheid confirmed that between 7/10/2023 and 29/1/2024, Israel assassinated 100 scholars and academics, as well as 500 university students, during its assault on the GS.

Among the prominent victims was Professor Sufyan 'Abdul Rahman Tayeh, a leading Palestinian physicist and president of the Islamic University of Gaza. He was killed along with nine members of his family in an Israeli airstrike on 2/12/2023, which targeted al-Faluja in Jabaliya, northern GS.

Tayeh, 52, was a renowned Palestinian scholar holding a professorship in theoretical physics and applied mathematics. Recognized for his academic excellence, he was ranked by Stanford University in 2021 among the top 2% of researchers worldwide.

He was previously awarded the "Abdul Hameed Shoman for Arab Researchers Award" in November 2012, and was appointed as the holder of the UNESCO Chair for Physics, Astronomy and Space Sciences in Palestine.





Heba Zagout... Palestine's Visual Artist

Heba Ghazi Ibrahim Zagout

Palestine's Visual Artist

Born in al-Bureij RC in central GS in 1984, to a family originally from the depopulated town of Ashdod

Diploma in Graphic Design, Gaza Training Centre, 2003

BA in Fine Arts, Alaqsa University, Gaza, 2008

Coordinator of the "With Hope We Live" project at the Save Youth Future Society

Art teacher at a private school and an acrylic painter



Heba inherited the label of refugee from her mother, father and grandparents. Along with it came the dream of return, passed down across generations. She wrote about the origins of this dream on her Instagram account: "I was born carrying the word refugee. I never saw my hometown Ashdod, but my aunt 'Alia would gather us and weave stories of my grandfather's land, of the orange groves, of harvest season and a home brimming with love and life. I saw the longing in her eyes as she shared stories of the homeland and her hopes for a return soon."

Because the artist is, by nature, a dreamer, Heba infused her paintings with the details of a dream. Palestine appeared vibrant and colorful, like the joy of her dream and the beauty of her imagination of a land she had never seen. Yet, despite the layers of happiness Heba applied, these vivid colors seemed charged with shadow and darkness.

Heba embedded the essence of her people's cause in her paintings. Jerusalem stood out clearly, its golden dome gleamed among the occupied cities, the homeland's lush green trees appeared vividly, and the tightly packed houses pressed closely together. Her canvases were full of life, evoking the imagined memory of place from the lips of grandmothers.

Many artists who dreamed of returning expressed their longing through playful, imaginative imagery; refugees living outside their homeland. Heba, however, was a refugee within her homeland, Palestine. Her family was uprooted from Ashdod and cast into GS, where exile took on a different taste. In her case, tragic realism, straining to fabricate joy, was more starkly felt. It was as if she were shaping hope from within the folds of a tangled reality she both illustrated and beautified.



Painting was no easy task for Heba, a mother raising four young children, a teacher and a homemaker. Under the prolonged, suffocating siege of GS, even acrylic paints were hard to come by. Each painting was both expensive and draining to produce. That's why she sold her artworks, each one like a child to her, to continue her journey through life.

At the same time, Heba was acutely aware of her distinctiveness and significance, and believed her art deserved to be seen and to flourish in Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Palestinian interior and across the world. A painful irony is that these very paintings were exhibited in New York and in numerous European galleries, where they received remarkable reviews and drew considerable attention from foreign critics. They presented her work as a testament to the overlooked art of Palestine, the resilient Palestinian woman, and the mother whom Heba portrayed in flowing traditional garments, her features marked by solemnity softened with a gentle, radiant smile. The mother fills the canvas, leaving no space empty, while the child appears behind her and around her, as if she were gazing toward a future that would reunite her with her two children in a single resting place.

Her creative talent was grounded in Palestine and the experience of life under occupation. The subject held particular significance for her, as she came from a volatile place in Palestine called Gaza, and she was a Palestinian woman from Gaza. She expressed this clearly, saying, "I consider my land, Palestine, the place that inspired me to paint, because it is where I grew up, Gaza, a land that has witnessed many struggles and much injustice against Palestinian women. Through my paintings, I try to defend the right of Palestinians to a better life, using bold and dazzling colors."

Operation al-Aqsa Flood or Iron Swords, as Israel calls it, was unlike any other war the people of GS had endured in the past twenty years. Amid the bombardment, Heba Zagout wrote on her Facebook page, as every Gazan under fire did, seeking to bring calm to her soul. In the days leading up to her martyrdom, she recorded feelings of fear, awe and hope. She turned to her Lord, asking for patience, steadfastness and strength, "O Allah, we entrust You with hearts broken by loss. O Allah, heal our shattered hearts and make us patient with Your will and decree. O Lord, be with us, strengthen us, increase our patience and reward us for it. O Allah, steady our hearts, for they are fragile, and have no support but You."





The devastating war had just begun when Heba Zagout bid farewell to this world. Its waves were harsh and terrifying, and hearts leapt to throats from the sheer horror. There had been no preparation for this heavy war, unlike any before it, nor any adaptation to its violent conditions. Heba Zagout (aka Um Faisal), 39 years old, was with her two sons, Adam (10), and Mahmud (6). Her other two children, Faisal and Bara', were with their father, engineer Maher Faisal al-'Awawdeh, in al-Bureij, a nearby area in the central region. On 13/10/2023, she had evacuated her home, which was in the line of fire. But when she returned with her two sons, the house was hit by intense artillery and airstrikes. All three were martyred beneath the rubble. Khalil Husain, the director of al-Safina Cultural website, wrote about the moment of her martyrdom, unaware that she had lost two of her sons, not just one, as was incorrectly reported by sources that circulated the news without verification.

Although the scene imagined by Husain is a fictional portrayal of the tragedy, the psychological atmosphere he constructs feels profoundly real. He writes, "The image could not capture the moment of the martyrdom of Palestinian artist Heba Zagout, as she embraced her child beneath the roar of warplanes and the thunder of falling missiles. It was too sudden, too swift and too piercing. Fear for her child gripped her racing heart, the planes were venomous, predatory insects and death descended without a parachute, with a force and brutality she had never known before. She was to meet her death, and that of her child, in the same moment, with a transparent, surrendered soul. Two deaths converged as two shards struck one another, forming a single, strange death. Before Heba Zagout left this world, she awoke just long enough to confirm the death of her little one, still curled upon her chest. Together, they painted in the sky the image of solitary death, with their bleeding bodies against a wall that had also collapsed upon them, putting an end to the myth of the lone, defenseless survivor. The unfinished painting scattered across the streets, pavements and public squares. Red was the last color to dye her soul and that of her child—before it dyed the canvas itself. Her studio remained behind, alone, absent of the woman's scent and the fragrance of her joyful Palestinian colors. Only the color of blood remained, coloring the life that followed."





“First Woman in Hamas’s Political Bureau” Joins the Martyrs’ Ranks

On 19/10/2023, Israeli aircraft assassinated Hamas Political Bureau member Jamila al-Shanti (68) in an airstrike on GS. Dr. al-Shanti was also a PLC member.

Born in Jabalia RC in 1957, al-Shanti earned a PhD in Educational Administration. She was elected in 2006 to the PLC as part of Hamas’s Change and Reform Bloc.

In 2013, she was appointed Minister of Women’s Affairs in the Gaza government. In 2021, she became the first woman elected to Hamas’s Political Bureau in GS. Al-Shanti (*Um ‘Abdullah*), oversaw the movement’s portfolio on “universities and Quranic institutions.”





Preacher Sheikh 'Isa Miqdad... Khatib of the Flood

'Isa Mahmud Miqdad "Abu 'Abdul 'Aziz"

MA in the Foundations of Islamic Jurisprudence, Faculty of Shari'ah, Islamic University of Gaza, earned November 2020. Thesis: "Difference in Specifying a Concept and its Effect on Jurisprudential Branches."

Imam, khatib and preacher



The Central Governorate of GS was a hive of activity, buzzing with a dedicated group of young believers who took upon themselves the mission of elevating their community. They promoted virtue, suppressed vice, revived religious traditions, encouraged obedience and inspired commitment to worship. Though mosques served as their primary base, their outreach extended far beyond. They moved in groups, fostering love among people and preaching with wisdom, gentleness and kind words. They frequented markets, evening gatherings, shops, salons, gyms, social halls, academic institutes, colleges, clubs and family councils. They took part in social occasions, visited the sick, seizing every opportunity for guidance and admonition. Their efforts were especially focused on youth, adolescents and children... Sheikh 'Isa Miqdad rarely missed this blessed round of visits. He could be found in the Nuseirat RC, al-Bureij, al-Maghazi, or al-Mughraqa, travelling southward to Khan Yunis and Rafah. Yet, he often longed to return to his first home in the Hamad Residential City where he first began his preaching efforts. There, he would sit to preach, guide and lecture, reminiscing about his early work with the "Hamad Da'wah Association."

Sheikh 'Isa, with his broad frame, round face, thick black beard and dignified robe, commanded both the respect and affection of the youth. He succeeded in gathering around him a group of young men known for their piety, graciousness, and gentle temperament. These young men were admired not only for their devotion to worship and their meticulous observance of both obligatory and Sunnah practices, but also for their social engagement and dedication to serving the community. Sheikh 'Isa was a leading figure among them and one of their respected sheikhs. He played a key role in planning charitable efforts and devising ways to deliver aid to besieged areas. He also served as an advisor to the volunteer team at the Raskhoon Foundation for Human Development in GS and was active in several other organizations.



At the onset of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, these preachers were the elite of Al-Qassam Brigades fighters. Most of them were martyred and Sheikh 'Isa mourned them one by one on his Facebook page, recounting their virtues and considering their sacrifices a sign that this cause is destined for victory, because such righteous individuals are its fuel, having joined it out of deep conviction and unwavering commitment. He wrote, "The weddings of the faithful martyrs in Gaza en route to paradise never cease; this is the season of divine selection."

During their lifetimes, these martyrs would come to him from all directions to listen to his teachings, especially when he narrated the stories of the martyred Companions. He particularly loved to recount the story of the martyr Dr. Nizar Rayyan, may *Allah* have mercy on him, and his path of resistance. His audience was deeply moved by this story, as Dr. Rayyan's memory was still fresh and vivid in their minds.

Sheikh 'Isa sustained multiple injuries during various phases of the Palestinian resistance against the occupation. In September 2018, he was wounded in the foot by shrapnel while living in the Hamad Residential City. On 24/10/2023, just weeks after Operation al-Aqsa Flood, he was moderately injured in attack that killed nearly thirty people, including his neighbors from the 'Awad family and displaced members of the Dahdouh family. The incident followed two consecutive days of airstrikes on adjacent homes. Among the martyrs were Nasser Awad, his daughters, sons, grandchildren and several sons-in-law. Though wounded himself, Sheikh 'Isa mourned them deeply, finding solace in their endurance and unwavering resolve.

Sheikh 'Isa's religious lessons had long centered on social guidance, the correction of religious practices, the promotion of virtues and the reinforcement of faith. However, with the onset of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, his focus shifted dramatically. His messages now aimed to strengthen people's resolve, elevate the values of resistance and martyrdom, inspire mobilization to the front lines, support refugees, assist the displaced, and attend to their needs. He would address the public, writing and proclaiming, "O people, be to the displaced as the *Ansar* were to the *Muhajireen*, and your reward is with *Allah*."

In the early days of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, he reminded his audience of the values driving this new phase, passionately declaring, "It is al-Aqsa Mosque, O men! For its sake, lives, souls and homes are sacrificed for its sake."

He was deeply anguished by the destruction and horror that rained down on the people, yet he called on them to remain steadfast, saying, "The people of the ditch were all burned, and yet *Allah* described as having attained 'the great triumph,' So, praise be to *Allah*."

He would assure them, "The days of war are created, and everything created is destined to perish. This war will pass, and blessed are those who endure, persevere, are martyred, wounded or afflicted for the sake of *Allah*."





As the situation grew more dire and the communication lines and internet access were severed, he wrote to his loved ones, “These enemies seek to sever our ties with the world, but they do not realize that we are connected to the Lord of the Worlds, and no force in the universe can break that connection.”

He would explain to his neighbors and brothers the jurisprudence of calamities arising from the harsh wartime conditions they faced. He taught them the proper ways of worship and permissible concessions in times of war, aiming to ensure their safety, ease their burdens, and relieve their hardships. He once wrote that Gaza had embraced all the legitimate religious dispensations during this war: *tayammum* (dry ablution), combining prayers, praying at home and omitting Friday and congregational prayers, among others—except in the path of *jihad* or resistance, where no concessions are allowed, as it is not permissible to relax in this matter. In that, they stand firm and resolute.

May *Allah* have mercy on him, whose resolve remained unshaken even amid the fiercest flames of war. Whenever the opportunity arose, he pursued it with unwavering determination. On one particularly harrowing night during heavy bombardment, Sheikh ‘Isa ventured out to perform the Fajr prayer in the darkness before the first light appeared, intending to lead a group of worshippers. It is not certain whether he managed to lead the Fajr prayer before his martyrdom. On the dawn of 16/4/2024, a drone struck him with a deadly missile right in front of the Salman Mosque in al-Hassaina area, west of the Nuseirat RC in central Gaza. He sustained grievous wounds and bled profusely until he attained martyrdom on his native soil. His surviving comrades wept for him bitterly and recalled his final words, especially the day he said to them during a lesson:



“*Allah* tests us with His decree and destiny. To lay bare one’s own wound is, in effect, to show discontent with *Allah*’s will. The duty of a believer is patience, the seeking of divine reward and steadfastness—especially when there is no escaping what has been ordained. Instead, we should occupy ourselves with prayer, performed punctually, for it is among the means of averting tribulation.”

In searching for traces of his legacy beyond his Facebook account, people found a single tweet on X/ Twitter in which he wrote, “The greatest return to *Allah* Almighty is to return to Him as a martyr.” Many saw this tweet as a sign of the acceptance of his martyrdom, *Allah* willing; a divine honor (*karamah*) that attests to his sincerity and the beauty of his devotion to *Allah*.

Israel Raids Hospital, Assassinates Paralyzed Patient and Two Others

In flagrant violation of humanitarian norms and laws, an Israeli special forces unit infiltrated Ibn Sina Hospital in Jenin, the West Bank, on 30/1/2024. The operatives were disguised in civilian clothes and medical uniforms. One even dressed as a veiled nurse.

They made their way to the third floor, where they used silenced pistols to assassinate three young men: brothers Muhammad and Basel Ayman al-Ghazawi, and Muhammad Walid Jalamneh. Basel al-Ghazawi, paralyzed and immobile, had been receiving treatment at the hospital since 25/10/2023, after being wounded in an Israeli airstrike that targeted the Jenin cemetery. Al-Qassam Brigades in Jenin mourned the three martyrs.



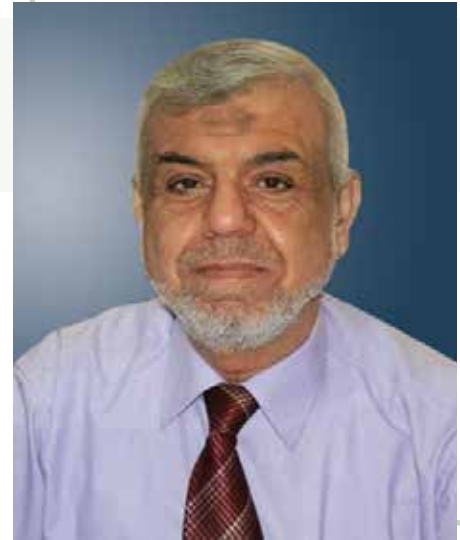


Mustafa al-Sawaf and his Sons, Muntasir and Marwan... The Family of Martyred Journalists

Mustafa Hatem al-Sawaf

Writer, researcher and political analyst

Mustafa Hatem al-Sawaf, a prominent journalist born in the 1950s, was long regarded as one of the leading figures in Gaza's media landscape. Many journalists considered him the dean of Palestinian journalists, given that he was among the earliest Palestinians to enter the field in the early 1980s. He worked for major international media outlets, most notably the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and went on to found the *Felesteen* newspaper in GS, serving as its first editor-in-chief. Al-Sawaf was widely known across the Palestinian media community—not only as a journalist, but also as a distinguished political analyst and a sharp, articulate commentator on Palestinian affairs. Despite his affiliation with the Islamic movement, which he helped shape through media work in GS, his analyses were often seen as balanced and credible, even in international media circles.



Mustafa al-Sawaf was a staunch supporter of the resistance, a stance that consistently shaped his writings across numerous platforms. Over the past two decades, his Islamic worldview was deeply embedded in his political discourse. His unwavering identity became even more pronounced after Operation al-Aqsa Flood, which he wholeheartedly embraced. He aligned himself fully with its objectives, remaining firm and calling on others to stand their ground. His followers will not forget the words he hurriedly posted on 11/10/2023, typed hastily out of fear that his phone battery would die before he could publish them. Though unpolished, they reflected the core of his convictions and his complete readiness to sacrifice his life, “The decision made by the free people of Palestine is to remain in Gaza; steadfast, resisting, advancing without retreat. We will die here and be buried here. We will not leave. We reassure our Egyptian brothers that the Palestinians in Gaza have made their choice, fully aware of what it means: there will be no displacement—not to Egypt, not to Jordan, not to anywhere else in the world. The land of Palestine is sacred and pure. Remaining in it is *Ribat*, and Palestinians understand what *Ribat* means. But every Arab and Muslim must act with maximum urgency and strength to stand with Gaza and the Palestinian people, now, now, now.”



Then, on 13/10/2023, he addressed the people of GS with a heartfelt message, reminding them of their true essence—that they are most deserving of victory and empowerment if they remain patient and steadfast. “There is no refuge from *Allah* except in Him,” he said, speaking as though delivering a sermon: “O our people, our kin, the light of our eyes! You are the ones who will prevail, *Allah* willing. Victory is but a matter of endurance, and dawn always follows the darkest hour. Your steadfastness, resilience and sacrifices will not be in vain. We are a people who learned from leaving our homes, and today, we must learn to remain rooted in them. Life and death are in *Allah*’s hands alone. He, the Almighty who has power over all things, gives life to whom He wills, and no soul meets its end except by His command. Stand firm, and do not be swayed by the occupation’s propaganda. Your steadfastness is the path to your victory, a victory nearer than we or anyone else might imagine. Hold your ground, stay vigilant, and be mindful of *Allah*. Victory is yours, and *Allah* is with you. These American, British and international forces are gathering only because they know this entity is crumbling and headed for collapse. By *Allah*, by *Allah*, by *Allah*, we shall be victorious. The reality on the ground affirms this, despite the occupation’s terror and its crimes against us all. Victory is but an hour of patience. Be patient—for patience is the key to relief, and relief is near, very near.”

Al-Sawaf did not live to witness the full unfolding of Operation al-Aqsa Flood saga and the prolonged months of steadfastness. The Israeli vengeance against him and against every Palestinian was brutal, senseless and horrifying. In a massacre that spared no one, Israeli forces wiped out his entire family, targeting children, adults, men and women alike. His son, the martyred photojournalist Muntasir, survived the attack long enough to bear witness to it, despite suffering a severe facial injury that damaged his eye. He recounted the heart-wrenching moment of his father’s martyrdom, along with 47 members of their extended family, following an Israeli airstrike on the family’s home in al-Tuffah neighborhood of eastern Gaza City: “On the night of Friday, November 18, 2023, Israeli warplanes bombed our home, collapsing it on top of everyone inside. The destruction was massive. The occupation showed no mercy, no distinction between old or young. My entire family was killed in cold blood. My father and mother were martyred, along with two of my siblings, several of their children, and a number of my cousins. I sustained moderate facial injuries; the blast damaged my right eye. I searched for medical help, but none was available. I’m currently treating myself based on guidance from doctors I’ve reached online and by phone. Though my injury isn’t life-threatening, I need care from eye specialists. A total of 47 family members were killed in the Israeli strike. We’ve recovered most of their bodies, but we’re still searching for the rest beneath the rubble using primitive tools, as civil defense teams lack the necessary equipment. Our hearts are broken, our souls wounded, yet we accept *Allah*’s will [with patience and faith].”

Al-Sawaf’s martyrdom in that massacre was a profound loss. Yet the violence only intensified. Two of his sons, Muntasir and Marwan, both journalists, survived the initial attack, but their lives were cut short just 13 days later, when the relentless bombing claimed them as well.



Marwan Mustafa al-Sawaf

Muntasir Mustafa al-Sawaf

Muntasir had an innocent face that mirrored his kind proactive spirit. He loved capturing beautiful moments, and as a photographer, he was drawn to joyful details. But the grievous injury to his eye on the day of the massacre only deepened the pain of losing his parents and family. With what remained of his eye and face, he threw himself into documenting the devastation, capturing wide shots to convey the scale of destruction, then narrowing the frame to expose the harrowing details of the assault. He sent his images to the Turkish Anadolu News Agency, with which he collaborated for a modest fee. His sole concern was to expose the aggression and preserve evidence of its crimes. He documented the destruction of the Islamic University of Gaza, the Tal al-Hawa Towers, the ruined mosques and the vandalized hospitals... His photographs were powerful, worthy of an exhibition that bears witness to the atrocities committed by the occupation in its all-out assault. Though he was in deep pain, he never gave in or gave up. He often remembered his father's words, and once wrote on his page, seeking solace: "Despite all our precautions and our efforts not to despair or grieve, there are days that weigh heavily on the heart and soul. There is no remedy but patience, until *Allah* permits relief and the days pass in peace. There is no might nor power except with *Allah*, the Almighty."

Marwan, like his brother Muntasir, was also a journalist, working with Alef Multimedia. He strove to mirror his father's resilience and patience, following in his footsteps both professionally and personally. Before his martyrdom, Marwan wrote words that captured his inner turmoil, his deep confusion about the source of their unwavering strength: "We are fine... very fine, despite reality, despite our constant losses, despite the exhaustion day and night, despite the overwhelming darkness and the maddening noise. We are fine in a strange mysterious way, in a way so contradictory, it defies explanation."



Like his brother Muntasir, Marwan was devastated by the loss of his loved ones. He felt his soul tearing apart, fading into nothingness: “When I write about my father and mother, I’m telling the story of the greatest man and the most tender mother. Their loss is immense, nothing could ever make up for it. I haven’t just lost my father and mother; I’ve lost an entire world. I’ve lost a homeland. And now, I feel as though my soul is without a homeland. May *Allah* have mercy on you, souls that once lived within mine.”

On the first day following the end of the brief truce during the battles of Operation al-Aqsa Mosque, brothers Marwan and Muntasir, the sons of the martyred Mustafa al-Sawaf, were killed. It was 1/12/2023, when the enemy warplanes struck a street near al-Shawwa Square, located in al-Daraj neighborhood. Both brothers were wounded, and several of their relatives were killed instantly. Muntasir lay bleeding for half an hour, with no ambulance able to reach him due to the danger in the area, until a brave young man managed to carry him, in critical condition, to al-Ahli Baptist Hospital. But the hospital was in a dire state, lacking basic equipment and medical supplies. Muntasir succumbed to his wounds and joined his family in martyrdom sooner than anyone expected. He was laid to rest in al-Batsh Cemetery alongside his fellow martyrs.

Three journalists from one family, honored by the press as martyrs. They lived with dignity, and they died with dignity.

Arrested Whole, Returned Half: Israel Maims Palestinian Prisoner

With half her body, Israel returned Palestinian detainee Wafa’ Jarrar (49), known as Um Hudhayfah and wife of Hamas leader ‘Abdul Jabbar Jarrar, to the city of Jenin in the northern WB, nearly ten days after her arrest during a large-scale military operation on 21/5/2024, in al-Marah neighborhood.

After her arrest, Israeli forces held her for an extended period in a military vehicle stationed in an area witnessing armed clashes between Israel and Palestinian resistance in Jenin. According to the Israeli army, the vehicle was targeted by an explosive device, resulting in critical injuries that led to the amputation of both of her legs. Jarrar later succumbed to her wounds on 5/8/2024.





Aya Dahrouj... The Syrian Martyr

Aya ‘Amer Nadim Dahrouj

The Syrian who was martyred in Gaza

‘Abdullah Bassam Shamiyyeh was a medical student at the Kordofan University in the city of el-Obeid, Sudan. He was a dedicated student, active in student life, and well connected with both his peers and the warm, welcoming Sudanese community. He was admired and held a strong reputation among them. When he moved to Khartoum for his clinical training, *Allah* brought into his life a Syrian woman who, along with her family, had fled from Ma‘arat al-Nu‘man in Idlib to Sudan following the outbreak of the Syrian uprising in mid-March 2011. At the time, Sudan had opened its doors to refugees and offered them facilitated paths to citizenship. Many Syrian families sought refuge there, acquired Sudanese nationality, and became citizens of their new home.



Aya ‘Amer Dahrouj was in the prime of her youth, known for her intelligence, dedication and piety, and for her commitment to Qur’anic study circles. She came from a devout family on both sides. Her maternal grandfather, Sheikh Ahmad Wasfi al-Jundi al-‘Abbasi al-Sayyadi, was the head of the Rifa‘i Sufi order and the successor of Sheikh Mahmud al-Shaqfa of Hama. Aya was deeply attached to her grandfather, who adored her and held her especially dear to his heart.

Dr. ‘Abdullah had long been searching for a wife who loved the Qur’an, as he himself was a skilled and devoted reciter. His search led him to this newly arrived family in Sudan, and it wasn’t long before he proposed to Aya and married her in January 2021, just months before completing his university degree in December that same year. A year later, he had to return to his family in GS. They had been waiting for him for years, ever since he left for Sudan in 2013 to study medicine. His entire family longed for the return of their son, the doctor who had been away for what felt like a lifetime. Their anticipation grew even stronger after his marriage, especially as many were unable to share in his joy due to the hardships of travel, the closure of the Rafah crossing and the suffocating restrictions imposed on every Gazan trying to move across borders.

Aya’s journey was far from easy, but her gracious family gave their blessing to her dutiful decision to relocate. After enduring a grueling ordeal, she finally reached Gaza in February 2022 and began a new chapter of her life.



Her first joy came two months later with the birth of her beautiful fair-haired daughter, Rayhana, who took after her father. Her husband soon established a medical center in al-Rimal neighborhood, where he and his family lived, naming it after their daughter. It specialized in general medicine as well as preventive and therapeutic cupping. Distinguished Qur'an memorizers and dedicated workers in the memorization community were offered a generous 50% discount for consultations and treatment. The center opened five months before Operation al-Aqsa Flood.

Aya Dahrouj was still becoming acquainted with the people of Gaza and their customs, trying to adapt to the difficult conditions, so similar to those she had previously endured in Sudan and Syria. Yet she quickly found her place within this vibrant community, which welcomed her warmly, embraced her as one of its own, and offered her a sense of belonging. Just as she began to feel at home, Operation al-Aqsa Flood began. At that time, she was in the final month of her pregnancy, awaiting the arrival of a baby girl. Aya had to draw upon every ounce of patience and strength she had seen in her grandfather al-Rifa'i, her parents Abu Bakr and Um Bakr, and her devout husband and his kind-hearted family. Amid relentless shelling, mounting fear, and the roar of planes, tanks and artillery, she came to feel, more deeply than ever—the powerful bond of love, solidarity, and mutual support that united her with her husband's family and those displaced who had sought refuge with them. And when someone from her own family managed to reach her through a broken phone call, all she asked was that they pray for their steadfastness and for strength to endure the ordeal.



It was the final day of Aya Dahrouj's life, the young woman from Idlib, Syria, who fled one bombardment only to be caught in another, even more brutal and bloody. The violence weighed heavier on her each time her little daughter and other refugee children in her in-laws' home screamed in terror at the sound of the relentless shelling. She bore it all, the fear, the noise, the anguish, and the absence of her husband, who had joined the ranks of those who stayed behind, volunteering with the "Somoud Initiative" since the beginning of the assault. She remained behind with his family and their child.

Her grieving husband, Dr. 'Abdullah Shamiyyeh, writes to us about that agonizing day—a day that ended in a devastating massacre that wiped out his entire family and claimed the lives of his wife, his daughter, and the unborn child who never saw the light of day. He writes:



“In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

‘And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision’²⁹

On Sunday, 29/10/2023, while I was volunteering as a doctor at El-Shifaa Medical Complex, a treacherous Zionist airstrike struck our family home, a four-story building, reducing it to rubble and burying its residents beneath the ruins. Most of those inside, including beloved members of our family and relatives who had sought refuge with them, were martyred. Among them were:

My beloved father, Abu Usama Bassam Hamza Shamiyyeh

My dear wife, Aya ‘Amer Nadim Dahrouj; Syrian by origin, Palestinian by heart

My daughter and the joy of my heart, Rayhana ‘Abdullah Shamiyyeh

and her unborn sister Habiba ‘Abdullah Shamiyyeh, in her ninth month of pregnancy

Also my cherished siblings and [their families]:

Anas Bassam Shamiyyeh, his wife and children

Hamzah Bassam Shamiyyeh

Arij Bassam Shamiyyeh

Fatimah Bassam Shamiyyeh and her children

My dear maternal aunt, Raja ‘Abdul Ra’uf Radwan “Um Bara” and her sons:

Bara’ Samih Abu Safiyyeh

Usamah Samih Abu Safiyyeh

Ahmad Samih Abu Safiyyeh

Husam Samih Abu Safiyyeh

‘Amr Samih Abu Safiyyeh

The children of my beloved maternal aunt Um ‘Ali:

Ahmad Fathi Radwan, his wife and children

Mahmud Fathi Radwan, his wife and children

‘Abdul Rahman Fathi Radwan, his wife and children

Wala’ Fathi Radwan and most of her sons and daughters

Afnan Fathi Radwan

Tasnim Fathi Radwan

²⁹ *Surat Al ‘Imran* (The Family of Imran): 169.





My dear mother Um Usama Shamiyyeh, my beloved brother Ahmad Bassam Shamiyyeh, were injured in the airstrike, along with many of our cousins. I pray that *Allah* Almighty accepts the martyrs into the highest ranks of Paradise, heals the wounded and grants us patience and contentment. Truly, to *Allah* we belong and to Him we return. Please remember them in your prayers, for mercy and the highest Paradise, and for us, for patience and steadfastness.”

When the husband returned to the site of the massacre, he found the four-story building flattened, reduced to level ground by the sheer force of the explosion. Months later, he insisted on staying there. He pitched a tent on the spot and remained, holding fast to the memory of his wife, daughter and loved ones. He stayed loyal to the resistance, steadfast in his belief in its cause.

Aya’s story was among the many sorrowful accounts that spread across social media, a grief tinged with pride: that Syrian blood had mingled with Palestinian blood in this Flood, and that *Allah* had chosen this young woman to meet Him as a martyr in a blessed place, one usually inaccessible behind layers of barriers that shield it from its Arab and Muslim surroundings. Her blood became a bridge, renewing the spiritual and geographic bond between Syria and Palestine.

“I have no Father, no Uncle, no Brothers Left” She Lost 23 Family Members

A woman from GS appeared in a video published by Aljazeera, recounting that she had lost 23 members of her family: “I have no bother left, uncle. The house collapsed on them. They were asleep when the strike hit early in the morning. There were 23 people; my elderly father, 75 years old, my three brothers, their wives, their children, including infants and babies. All of them were educated, some were teachers working in UNRWA schools. Sufficient for me is *Allah*, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs... Sufficient for me is *Allah*, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs. I have only one sister left. No uncles, no father, no brothers. We no longer have a family to stand with us. Sufficient for me is Allah, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs... Sufficient for me is *Allah*, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs.”





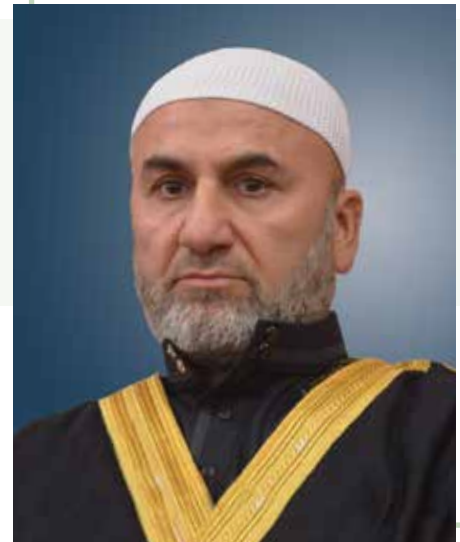
Diya'i al-Susi... The Martyr Exegete

Diya'i Nu'man 'Abdul Jawad al-Susi

Born in Gaza on 1/2/1961

BS in Mathematics

MA in Qur'anic Exegesis



Before Israel deported Sheikh Diya'i al-Susi to Marj al-Zuhur in Lebanon in 1992, he had a long record of resistance. He was sentenced to 20 months in prison on security charges, held in administrative detention for four months, and placed in preventive detention twice. In the 1980s, he was a prominent figure in the Islamic student movement. He served on the student council of the Islamic University of Gaza during its formative years, holding the position of Secretary of the Social Committee in the 1980 session. Many of the student movement's early leaders would go on to form the core of the Islamic resistance movement following the outbreak of the Palestinian *Intifadah* in the late 1980s.

He was in his early thirties when he experienced deportation, an episode that became an inspiring milestone in the history of the Palestinian people's struggle. During the Marj al-Zuhur deportation, he helped organize religious observances in the camp and served as one of the designated muezzins, alongside Sheikh Abu Ayman Taha, Sheikh Maher al-Kharraz, Sheikh Ramadan al-Saifi and Sheikh Muhammad Maher Badr.

Although he held a university degree in mathematics, he combined it with a deep dedication to Islamic studies. A memorizer and teacher of the Qur'an, he deepened his expertise by earning a master's degree in Qur'anic exegesis and sciences from the Faculty of Da'wah and Fundamentals of Religion at the Islamic University of Gaza in 2006, in his late forties. His thesis, titled "Corruption and the Corrupt: A Thematic Qur'anic Study" reflected his scholarly focus. He went on to serve as director of the Qur'an and Islamic Da'wah Center at the Islamic University and was an active member of the Association of Palestine Scholars.

Sheikh Diya'i devoted his entire life to the Qur'an, in recitation and instruction. He engaged in teaching the Qur'an, its canonical readings, and in training memorizers. He felt most alive and whole when immersed in the clear verses of the Divine Book, reciting them and contemplating their meanings. His mosque, al-Kanz Mosque, where he served as the regular imam for Fajr prayers, became a vibrant center of spiritual teaching, reform and



education. Worshippers stood shoulder to shoulder behind him, listening intently to his reverent, melodious recitation and to his brief but impactful lessons delivered after prayer. They recited to their sheikh, refining their recitation under his careful guidance. Sheikh Diya'i also played a leading role at the Qur'an Center of the Islamic University, and together these two platforms served as dynamic institutions that, over the course of decades, graduated thousands of young men drawn to the Book of *Allah*. It was no surprise that many of these graduates were among the elite memorizers who chose the path of resistance and became among the honored martyrs. They had drawn not only from the Qur'an but also from the character of their teacher Sheikh Diya'i, the devout, ascetic worshiper; constant in fasting and prayer; a disciple of the martyred Sheikh Ahmad Yasin, may *Allah* have mercy on him.



Sheikh Diya'i's deepest wish was to return to pray at *al-Aqsa* Mosque once it was liberated, and to relive the moment he first prayed there in 1978, when he was just 18 years old. He says, "Only those who have set foot in *al-Aqsa* Mosque can truly grasp the depth of what I'm saying, only those whose souls have felt peace as their ears were filled with the sound of the Qur'an rising from every minaret and corner of *al-Aqsa*. Praying in *al-Aqsa* is incomparable. My heart breaks with pain when I cannot visit the mosque and see it with my own eyes, except through a television screen."

At the onset of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Gaza's mosques became a primary target of Israeli airstrikes. More than 90% of the mosques were reduced to rubble, viewed as the nurturing grounds for this unique generation of resistance fighters. Despite this, the sheikh made his way to the mosque at dawn to call the adhan and lead the prayer. The mosque was bombed, and he sustained moderate injuries. After a partial recovery, he insisted on returning, to call the Adhan once more, lead the prayers, deliver the Friday sermon, and bring the community together to coordinate relief efforts and manage their essential needs.

Sheikh Diya'i al-Susi was a pillar of patience and steadfastness. When he received news of his son's martyrdom, Hafiz Bara' al-Susi, a memorizer of the Qur'an, he went to the house where his son had fallen, determined to retrieve his body and give him a proper burial. Upon arrival, he heard the groans of the wounded. Without hesitation, he rushed to their aid, tended to their injuries, and helped them to safety. Only then did he resume his search for his son, whom he had long entrusted to *Allah* for a day such as this.

Sheikh Diya'i's resolute decision to remain stationed in his residential block had a profound impact on the steadfastness of those who remained. The fighters, his own students, tasked with defending the area, drew courage from his presence and found solace in the sight of his dignified, smiling, round face.





The Sheikh knew that death was inevitable, and that *Allah* had brought the moment of martyrdom near. He prepared for it with serenity, devotion, tireless effort and unwavering service. He remained steadfast, never leaving his mosque or home, until the appointed moment came, on 13/4/2024, during the last ten nights of Ramadan, when the roof of his house collapsed under aerial and artillery bombardment. The walls caved in on him as he was tending to people's needs, offering aid, and easing their suffering. He died beneath the rubble, a martyr, content and devoted. His neighbors carried him to the destroyed al-Kanz Mosque, wrapped him in a clean white shroud, and prayed over him as they stood atop fallen stones and shattered ruins. His final farewell to this world was through the mosque he loved, where he had long stood as a preacher.

She Lives in Cairo... Learned on TV That She Lost 26 Family Members All at Once

Zainab Sulaiman has been living with her parents and sister in Cairo for three years. On 22/10/2023, she woke up to the image of her maternal uncle's home in GS reduced to rubble.

Zainab followed on television the extraction of the bodies of 26 of family members from under the debris, including 17 children. For hours, she and her sister searched through videos and photos posted daily on Telegram showing bodies pulled from the rubble in GS.

Zainab says, "We wanted to know if anyone had survived the bombing." She and her sister eventually found a video showing their cousin standing next to several lined-up bodies labeled "Hamad al-'Aruqi Family." That's when they realized he was alive, and they were relieved he had survived to bury the others.





The Three Rooftop Martyrs

Muhammad, Mu'min and Mu'tasim: Heirs of Mu'tah's Commanders

Followers of the heroics of Operation al-Aqsa Flood will recall the short video released by the Israeli media on 18/5/2024, capturing the final moments of two of Al-Qassam Brigades fighters on the roof of a house across al-Salihin Mosque in Block 2 of Jabalia RC in northern GS. This came after months of relentless bombardment and a second ground assault on the camp. Intended by Israel as a display of military dominance through the elimination of the fighters, the footage instead became a legendary moment, elevated under the open sky. Viewers witnessed a gripping scene reminiscent of epic cinema. The first fighter, Muhammad al-Baik, masked and fully clad in military gear, rose above his wounded left leg, balancing on one foot to resume the gunfight he had begun. He opened fire once again with his rifle, partially shielded by the rooftop wall. Several bullets struck him, knocking him off balance. He collapsed, writhing in pain and bleeding. Immediately, his comrade Mu'min Shehadeh, dressed in a white shirt, stepped in without hesitation or fear. He took up the weapon that had fallen with his injured comrade and assumed the same position, continuing the firefight. He too was hit in the same manner and fell beside his friend, creating a rare and powerful image. The two fighters bled until they died as martyrs, steadfast, never retreating.



The shocking revelation came when the live footage broadcast in the video concealed the presence of a third person who had been with them. This went unnoticed until the Civil Defense team and local residents reached the rooftop of the house on 31/5/2024. There, they found all three still in their military uniforms, with their index fingers raised in declaration of Tawhid. It was in that moment that the full story of this elite al-Qassam fighting unit began to unfold.

Born and raised in the heart of Jabalia RC, these three men became eventually its defenders. They served in the Northern Brigade of Al-Qassam Brigades which led the resistance against the invading Israeli forces at the onset of Operation al-Aqsa Flood. All three also came from families displaced during the 1948 *Nakbah*, torn from their ancestral village of Burayr, situated just across the northern border of GS.



Muhammad 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Baik



Mu'min Majdi Shehadeh



Mu'tasim Diab Shehadeh

Muhammad 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Baik is the first fighter featured in this video. Known by the nom de guerre “Abu 'Aziz,” he was a member of the elite Al-Qassam Brigade, serving in the artillery unit. He joined al-Qassam at the age of 17, recognized early for his competence, physical fitness and the deep trust he inspired, especially as he came from a prominent family known for its fighters and martyrs. The youngest of his brothers, he was known for his dignity, generosity, and warm personality, with a wide social circle. Beloved by family and neighbors alike, he played a leading role in community events and was always quick to help others. When entrusted with major social responsibilities, such as organizing weddings, no one ever worried—his presence alone assured everything would run smoothly.

The second fighter in this video is Mu'min Majdi Shehadeh, a member of al-Shurah Mosque community, which was bombed and leveled by Israeli warplanes. He was a fighter surrounded by martyrdom on all sides: his brother Mustafa, the “military positions officer of the Eastern Battalion,” was martyred before him; his brother Mahmud was martyred after him; as was his cousin Usama 'Isa Shehadeh and earlier 'Abdullah Zakariyyah Shehadeh.

Mu'min was a member of the elite ranks of the Al-Qassam Brigades' Signal Corps, part of the Northern Brigade. He played a pivotal role in the events of the first day of Operation al-Aqsa Flood and was among the heroes of the incursion. Cameras captured an image of him returning with spoils from the Israeli military “Site 16” east of Beit Hanoun, making him a high-priority target sought by the Israelis through every means possible. He continued to inflict losses on them for several months in ongoing clashes before *Allah* honored him with the martyrdom he had long and earnestly pursued. His brother, Muadh Shehadeh, wrote about his life and character:



“Mu’min, the most devout in faith of my siblings. I don’t know who will now knock loudly on my door to wake me for Fajr prayer. The pillars of al-Shurah Mosque and your jihadist patrols will miss you. Everyone will miss your gentle manners, your calm and your dedication. I have never mourned any of my brothers before you. My beloved Mu’min, how did you meet your Lord? He saw you with your face turned toward death and I believe He smiled upon you. You astonished the world with your actions, and reignited the spirit of resistance in their hearts. How did you do that, you noble, well-mannered soul? I know you well, Mu’min—you sought only *Allah’s* pleasure, and in doing so, you inspired the *Ummah* and exposed those who failed to support the cause.”

The third fighter, who did not appear in the video, is Mu’tasim Diab Shehadeh, a member of the Al-Qassam Brigades’s elite forces in the Northern Brigade. He served in the artillery unit and was a professional officer with both academic and practical training. He officially worked in the naval police and graduated from the Sudanese Police Academy with a bachelor’s degree in police sciences. He also came from a family of freedom fighters. His brother, Muhammad Diab Shehadeh, was killed in the early battles of Operation al-Aqsa Flood.

‘Isa Shehadeh (aka Abu ‘Imad), a prominent Hamas leader and head of its administrative body in northern Gaza, played a significant role in raising, preparing and equipping them for this day.

Cameras captured the moment the bodies of the three martyrs were recovered. The public responded with deep emotion to these heroes, recalling a poem by the renowned Gaza-born poet Mu’in Bseiso, a native of the historic al-Shuja’iyyah neighborhood in Gaza City and a former teacher in the Jabalia RC schools before his passing. His poem, which deeply resonated with the noble actions of these three fighters, reminded all that a comrade’s place is never left empty:

If I fall, take my place, my comrade in the struggle,
And carry my weapon, do not be shaken by the blood that flows with it.
Look to my lips, sealed against the fury of the wind.
Look at my eyes, closed upon the light of dawn.
I have not died! I still call to you from behind the wounds.

Timeless words were written about them, and they came to be widely known as the heirs of Mu’tah’s commanders. Poets composed verses in their honor, and among the most circulated poems about the three martyrs of the rooftop was the one by poet Wael Abu Samha, titled “The Might of *Allah’s* Men.” It reads:

O radiant day, bearing an image,
Raised in glory above the heights of time.
The fool believed it crowned his pride,
[But] folly clings to the invader, unrelenting.
The coward sought pride in his path,



Yet pride refused to cloak him in its honor.
Can the noble fathom the secret of such valor,
That breathes through souls and outpaces sorrow.
They sold their souls, in love for *Allah*,
And strove to honor the pact with sacrifice.
The vain and ignorant believed the message
Would break strong men and bring them low.
But the message pulsed and traveled on,
A spirit rising in mankind, ascending high.
How many wandered in the shadows, sick at heart,
Chasing a mirage of victory, fading in retreat.
Of us he spoke, a grace perfumed with musk,
A will of iron, firm and ever marching on.
The deep wound did not stop his steed,
He trampled pain, advancing still to meet his fate.
A symbol of martyrdom, charging with his weapon,
Pouring forth his courage in relentless battle.
As for his brother, he came to him, fallen,
Yet pressed on, charging forth, never turning back.
The two feared not their countless ranks,
But took turns drinking martyrdom's cup, pure and clear.
O image that captured the tale's unfolding,
A promise dawns, who would defy the sacrificer?
Minds were left bewildered, seeking in vain,
The secret behind what grace this vision bore.
Blessed are the two martyrs, who borrowed a flame,
A living spark from history, warm and burning.
And shaking their enemies with the storm of their sacrifice,
For in devotion to the cause, they found kinship.
If the aggressors could grasp but a glimpse of our traits,
They would vow to flee, and never look back.
They would distance themselves, find shelter far away,
Where the brothers' presence is forever absent.





He Mourns 14 Family Members: “All Sacrificed for the Homeland and al-Aqsa”

Muhammad Ahmad, a young man from the GS, mourned 14 members of his family who were killed on 11/10/2023, in a heavy Israeli bombardment that struck the neighborhood where his family lived.

In a heartfelt post on his personal Facebook page, Muhammad wrote: “I entrust to *Allah* my mother, the light of my eyes; my brother Ra’fat, the crown of my head; my wife, the oxygen of my life; Linda, the beat of my heart; Sidra, the light of my eyes; Heidi, the apple of my eye; Qusay, my son, my love, my life; my heart, O father, by *Allah*, you are my heart, O father, may *Allah* have mercy on you; ‘Ubaida, the love of my heart, O nephew, you [left] with your beloved Qusay; Ra’fat’s wife, the best wife; Yamen, Ra’fat’s son; Diya’, my dear sister, the crown of my head and the beat of my heart, O sister, your son is a trust I carry; and Ghaida’ and Haifa’, the light of my eyes and my heart, the sparkle in my sight—all for the homeland and al-Aqsa.”





Muhannad Jibril... Man of the Call and Meeting

Muhannad Rizq Muhammad Jibril

Born on 23/8/1995, in al-Bureij, Muhannad came from a displaced family originally from the village of Beit Tima, whose people were expelled during the 1948 *Nakbah*. The village was part of the Gaza district, located in the southern coastal plain.

He graduated from the University of Palestine in Gaza, where he studied in the Faculty of Media and Information Technology, majoring in Media and Communication.



Muhannad's father, Rizq Muhammad Jibril, known as "Abu Tariq," was one of the respected *mukhtars* of al-Bureij RC. He raised his children to obey and revere *Allah*, to love Him deeply, and to understand that the true life and a meaningful future lie in the choices one makes in pursuit of the eternal life of the hereafter.

The family lived modestly, unfamiliar with luxury, and made do with what little they had. The siblings wore each other's clothes, often taking turns with the same shirts. There was no need for a wardrobe, clothes barely had time to dry on the line before someone put them on again.

Muhannad married at a young age and was blessed with two daughters. He was known as "Abu Basil." He settled in a border area near his home RC of al-Bureij, in the Juhr al-Dik area in central GS.

Muhannad was a preacher with a beautiful voice and often attended the sermons of the late Sheikh and preacher 'Isa Miqdad in the Nuseirat RC, whose calls for *jihad* and martyrdom left a deep impression on him.

Muhannad joined the military media unit of Al-Qassam Brigades and underwent advanced training within the elite units, where he became one of the core members. He later rose to become a field commander in al-Bureij Battalion of the Central Region Brigade.

On October 7, the day of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, he posted two lines of verse on his Facebook page:

Stand tall like the minarets in pride,
Unleash your bullets forth, a storm intensified.
Tear through the ranks of the invaders, and let them taste
The bitterness of death at the hands of Jibril [Gabriel].





These verses are by the late Palestinian poet and engineer Ghazi al-Jamal. Muhannad altered the final word of the second line, replacing ‘Izra’il (Azrael) with Jibril (Gabriel) to reflect his own name. He seemed to recite the lines often, subtly declaring, through hidden symbols, that he would be the proud figure who would make the enemy taste death. He cleverly played on his family name, “Jibril,” invoking the name of the archangel Jibril, the lord of the angels.

Israel targeted and destroyed his father’s house in al-Bureij RC. They also struck the home of his brother, the poet Tareq, and flattened his own house in Juhr al-Dik, demolishing it completely. Yet none of this broke Muhannad’s resolve. His determination remained razor-sharp, he took out their tanks with his rockets and ambushed their soldiers with precision. He knew every path and tunnel of Juhr al-Dik like the back of his hand.

Muhannad was at the peak of his commitment to jihadi mobilization when *Allah* granted him immortality, his powerful voice and striking image becoming emblematic after his martyrdom. His voice spread widely in a video released by Al-Qassam Brigades, in which he addressed Major General Fayez al-Dwairi, a strategic expert and military analyst on al-Jazeera TV. In it, he cried out with pride and vitality after striking a 10-member Israeli special forces unit in the Juhr al-Dik area, with an anti-fortification shell, confirming a direct hit: “Allah is great, in their midst, O sons of a... Analyze, O Duwairi.”



Military analyst Fayez al-Dwairi responded to Muhannad’s unusual and unexpected request with great pride. People were captivated by the man, laughing joyfully at his words, charmed by the fighter’s confidence, manliness, wit and spontaneous warmth. Despite their eagerness to uncover his identity, it remained unknown until he was martyred on 23/1/2024. Grief swept across social media as people began to speak of him and offering prayers for his soul. He had touched their hearts with his thunderous cry and that inverted red triangle zeroing in on the Israeli soldiers, a sign that they had been taken out.

His story began to unfold gradually, as the remains of his family’s and siblings’ homes were pulled from the rubble. Out of that devastation emerged Muhannad, refined in taste, deeply humble, writing tender, heartfelt messages brimming with love and emotion. In his words, he expressed gratitude, recalled their virtues, and offered parting wishes with grace. His final letter to his family revealed a man who had offered his soul to *Allah* and had lived a joyful life among them on his way to meet Him. He urged them never to lay down their arms, to fight until their last breath, just as he had. The letter itself was remarkable. He wrote:



“To my brothers: ‘Abu Rizq, Abu ‘Abdul Rahman, Abu Muadh, Abu al-Sa‘id, Abu al-Mais, Abu Bakr, Abu Malik,’ to my family, my constant support after *Allah*!

I lived among you the most beautiful moments of my life, unforgettable times. By *Allah*’s grace, you were the truest of brothers, in both joy and sorrow.

Words may fail me. I may not find the right expressions to capture the depth of your hearts. But I was the happiest person alive just being with you, laughing, playing, going out together. Those were truly the moments I never wanted end...

If this message reaches you, then know that I have gone to meet my Lord. I entrust my mother to your care with all my heart. You are the best I could have chosen for this, for I know how devoted you are to her and how faithfully you honor her.

My final will to you: Do not lay down your arms. Fight to the very last breath!

I love you all. Please, don’t forget me in your prayers!

Your loving brother Muhannad”

With his powerful voice and defiant cry, Muhannad stirred the emotions of millions. The news of his martyrdom deeply moved them, a fitting end for someone like him. The Mauritanian poet Muhammad al-Hafiz al-Talib Ahmad captured these sentiments in a poignant and eloquent poem dedicated to him:

Muhannad, do not drift far—for you are immortal,
By your deeds, as time recounts and bears witness.
He who answered the call to battle, bold and unafraid,
Is ever alive, though we might think him gone.
You roared and struck the enemy down in vengeance—
A roar that shattered ranks and scattered foes.
Your cry, “Advance, O Duwairi!” a living poem,
Echoed by the past, and embraced by tomorrow.
So rest in peace, content, your past is rich,
Your life is honored, and your name is praise
You left to generations a legacy,
By which the universe sings, and time itself chants.
In Gaza, every sword is sharp and true,
And you were its keenest, most honed blade.
All the swords of India were drawn before you,
But you are the one that shall never be sheathed.

If there is solace in your death, it lies
In your steadfast comrades, noble and unshaken.
They did not yield to fear, nor waver in resolve;
Never once did sloth or numbness touch their path.
The descendants of ‘Adhl and Qarrah bowed before them,
One is crucified, the other shackled in chains.
Before Netanyahu and his gang,
Soldiers fall prostrate from the force of bombs.
Should they one day unite to wage their war,
And their warmongers snarl and thunder aloud,
A squad from Al-Qassam will rise against them,
Encircled by unwavering honor and divine support.
To *Allah* belongs Ezzedeen, and to *Allah*, his comrades,
Their raids resound as melodies of victory.
And to *Allah* belongs that blessed October and its Saturday,
Whose surging Flood brought forth what is now praised.

A Palestinian Khansa’ Commends 16 Martyrs From Her Family to Allah

This Palestinian girl from the “Warsh Agha” family stood amid the bodies of 16 relatives killed in an Israeli airstrike, mourning them with unwavering resolve, patience and faith. Her family members were martyred on 29/10/2023, when their home in Beit Lahia, in the northern GS, was bombed. Grieving deeply, she nonetheless remained composed, declaring with steadfastness and trust in Allah: “We remain resilient despite our pain, despite the martyrdom of my family whom *Allah* has chosen. May *Allah* have mercy on you, my family, and may He grant us steadfast and grant us the strength to persevere after you and dwell in the highest levels of Paradise... *InshaAllah*, we [will reunite] in Heaven, by His grace. Praise be to *Allah*, a pure and sincere praise. We too will be martyrs after you, ready to sacrifice our lives and possessions. Indeed, to Allah we belong, and to Him we return.”





Anas al-Khuli... The Child Whom the Prophet Offered Water and Honey

Anas Malik al-Khuli

The child whom the Prophet (SAWS) graciously gave water and honey to drink

There is a young boy from Gaza, only five years old, who captured people's attention with a remarkable vision that amazed them all. I spent considerable time searching for his name and family after a video circulated in which his mother spoke with him about the vision he had seen. In it, he described the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) offering him water and honey. He depicted the Prophet's appearance, saying his face resembled the Prophet's, his hair was long like his, and he had two large eyes just like his own. The boy spoke with wonder about the beauty of his encounter with the Prophet, saying that he was like a companion or brother to him. He also mentioned seeing his martyred father with him. His mother talked to him with heartfelt urgency, tears and deep emotion. During my search for the truth behind this child, all I could find was that his name is Anas. I wrote an article titled "About the Young Gazan Boy Whom the Prophet Gave Water and Honey," which went viral alongside the video I included. This prompted me to search for him further, believing that this child carries a special blessing; a message to the people of Gaza, offering reassurance and peace to their hearts. After much searching and effort, I learned that his name is Anas Malik al-Khuli and that his mother is Sariyah Dahdouh. His father was martyred, and since then, his mother has cared for him as they moved continuously from one tent to another. She found solace in him and began sharing glimpses of their life on her Instagram account, showing how this young boy spends his days with her in their tent, nestled among tightly packed rows of others.

In my article, I wrote that this young man did not share everything he had seen with his anxious mother, and that if we were to question him further, we would discover deeper, more profound details—details that bring comfort to the soul, mend the heart, and affirm the awe inspired by this blessed message. Later, I found that his mother had posted a comment on her page affirming that her son refuses to speak everything that transpired between him and the Prophet (SAWS), because he had instructed him not to share it with anyone. At that moment, I realized that my interpretation of his words was indeed closest to the truth of his state.





Anas's mother recounted that the first time her son spoke to her after waking up, he told her he had seen the Prophet (SAWS). She was overcome with emotion and asked him to describe what he saw. He suddenly realized he had been instructed not to speak of it, and simply said in colloquial Arabic, "*Khalas, khalas*" (That's enough, that's enough), not wanting to talk about it. She tried again, but he remained silent. When she insisted, he eventually shared part of what he had seen, but refused to recount their full conversation.

Among the rare and wondrous occurrences is for a child to see the Messenger of *Allah* (SAWS) in a dream. When this happens, it is often a sign that the child holds a special station and will rise to a noble standing. Care for such a child, nurture their growth, for they are among the blessed, the honored and the virtuous, *InshaAllah*.

What drew my attention was the serenity of little Anas al-Khuli: the stillness of his limbs, the calm within him, and his quiet confidence. He seemed cloaked in the innocence of childlike peace as his gentle contented words flowed, untouched by fear, as if what he had seen still surrounded and sheltered him in a close and tender presence, despite the visible signs of trauma etched onto his small frame, scars of the horror he endured in the inferno of Israeli brutality and prolonged displacement.



Anas narrated to us that the Messenger of *Allah* (SAWS) gave him a drink with his own blessed hands: water sweetened with honey. The child was struck by its sweetness and deeply moved, to the point that he called it "the Prophet's honey." This suggests that what lies ahead for him will be sweeter and more blessed than the bitterness he had previously endured. Drinking from the hand of the Messenger of *Allah* (SAWS) conferred a unique spiritual blessing, especially as the Prophet gave him enough to satisfy his need while also instilling in him a lesson in contentment and asceticism. That the Prophet extended his hands fully and gathered them to offer the drink is a sign of imminent and abundant provision, both for the child and for those to whom this vision pertains: the people of his homeland in GS. The vision of both water and honey together is more powerful than that of either alone. Water symbolizes life, and honey represents sustenance and abundance. When combined and offered with the Prophet's blessed hand, who gave generously rather than allowing the child to sip slowly, it signifies the beginning of a new, continuous and blessed life. It evokes the life of Noah's companions after the



flood, their blessings, and their triumph over their enemies: “*It was said: ‘O Noah, disembark in security from Us and blessings upon you and upon nations [descending] from those with you. But other nations [of them] We will grant enjoyment; then there will touch them from Us a painful punishment.’*”³⁰ In giving them this drink of life and provision, the Prophet also gave a sign: that they are the people of truth, that following them is the nobler and richer path; and that forsaking them leads only to loss, disgrace and decline.

As Anas recounted his vision to his mother, he focused intently and passionately on the appearance of the Messenger of *Allah* (SAWS), a sign that his vision was sincere and untainted, and that there was a secret behind his being granted such a vision. The child felt as though he were the Prophet’s companion, friend and brother. Only at the end of his account did he mention, almost in passing, that he had seen his martyred father alive with the Prophet, just a minor detail in the broader meaning of the vision. A deep sense of peace washed over his grieving mother. She rejoiced at the noble status of her husband and even more so at the extraordinary and awe-inspiring presence granted to her son. Undoubtedly, the mother herself was meant to be part of this vision, a sign, *InshaAllah*, that she too is among those honored.

I asked several people who had seen Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) in their dreams, and each described him in a way that reflected what was familiar and beloved to them. It was as if he appeared in a form they recognized and cherished, one of the commonly known descriptions of the Prophet (SAWS), whose meanings people have grasped only in part. This is because the classical descriptions in books are difficult to visualize without a deep and experienced understanding of the Arabic language. Many struggle to offer an accurate portrayal, either because they lack expressive skill or the precise vocabulary. Yet this child was able to do so. He likened the Prophet’s face to his own, his hair to his own, and his eyes to his own. It was as if the Prophet’s expression had changed, angered by the suffering of a segment of his *Ummah*, caused by the aggression of vile enemies and the betrayal of close neighbors.



We understood this from the way the child described the Prophet’s widened eyes and piercing gaze in his vision.

Sariyah Dahdouh lovingly cared for her son Anas and taught him how to honor his late father through acts of charity. He grew to love giving in his father’s name, finding joy in the thought that it might bring his father peace. He often told his mother how happy he was to have her, how she brought him comfort despite his sadness, and how kind and generous she was. He also longed to see his father in a dream.

His mother recounts that he dreamed of his father’s death before they learned of his martyrdom, In the vision, his father appeared wrapped in the flag of Palestine, soaked in blood. He reached out to hold his father’s

³⁰ *Surat Hud* (Hud): 48.

bleeding hand, but it slipped from his grasp. When he told his mother about the vision, she dismissed it, though a tightness settled in her chest. At dawn, she awoke to the news of her husband's martyrdom. Stricken with grief, she kept her sorrow hidden and, fearing for her son, withheld the devastating news for an entire month, until he had another vision.

Before Anas learned of his father's martyrdom, he saw him in a dream, standing in a land filled with trees, surrounded by white birds and swimming ducks, with a beautiful horse by his side. Anas approached and greeted him, then asked if he could go with him. But his father gently refused, telling him to return to his mother, take care of her and "look after her." Anas was heartbroken that his father left him behind. He sensed that he had died, and began to weep with deep pain, telling his mother, "Why won't you just tell me that my father is dead?"

The mother never forgot the heartbreaking sight of his tears. She held him close, wept with him, and said, "You are the son of the martyr Malik. Your father is at peace in paradise, and we must stay strong and patient so that he may rejoice." With sadness in his voice, he asked if his father could see him now. When she assured him he could, his face lit up, and he began to laugh through his sobs. Together, they raised their hands to the sky, prayed for him and recited al-Fatiha. It became their daily ritual.

Anas recounts that he now sees his father often and speaks to him when he's near the moon, always finding comfort in his presence. His anger has deepened toward the Israelis who killed his father, his aunts and his friends. Unaware of the honor he had been granted, the boy had unknowingly delivered the Prophet's message to the people of GS: that relief was drawing near, and that *Allah's* blessing would descend upon them; healing their wounds and making up for their losses. His vision filled people with profound hope.

Baby Malak Found Hanging From a Tree After an Airstrike Killed Her Family

She was found hanging from a tree, likely having landed on its branches after an Israeli airstrike killed her family. Just a few days old, with her umbilical cord still attached, she was rushed to the Emirates Red Crescent Hospital in Rafah, at the southernmost tip of GS. She had no known name or relatives, and it was unclear whether any of her family members had survived. Initially, she was classified as "unidentified." Then came nurse Amal Abu Khatleh, who, after receiving approval from the Ministry of Health in Gaza, took the baby into her care. Amal named her Malak [Arabic for "angel"], as she told US-based NBC News in a report published on 12/4/2024.





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SOULS OF THE FLOOD

Exceptional Models of Heroism and Steadfastness in al-Aqsa Flood

Dr. Osama Juma'a Alashqar

SOULS OF THE FLOOD

This book documents remarkable stories and powerful moments from the people of the Gaza Strip (GS) and its heroes. It captures their legendary resilience and epic heroism in the face of a brutal Israeli occupation, one unbound by ethics, law or humanitarian considerations.

This book is a journey through the lives of several souls of the Operation al-Aqsa Flood, with the author aiming to represent the diversity of the Palestinian society in GS; professors and academics, doctors and engineers, artists, poets and intellectuals, the sighted and the blind, the hearing and the deaf, men and women, teachers and students, the old and the young, warrior with weapons and fighters with words and brushes, imams and preachers, mothers with their children, fathers with their sons and daughters, entire families and their individual members, as well as independents and faction members...

These anecdotes were documented and recorded without any prior plan or decision from anyone. They represent only a small sample of many grand scenes that contained monumental moments, many of which were never recorded or preserved, and for which no witnesses remain to tell their stories.

Al-Zaytouna Centre, through this book crafted by Dr. Osama alashqar and supplemented with impactful short scenes and snapshots, aims to present a concise portrayal of the Palestinian human suffering in GS, alongside their spiritual resilience, determination and persistence amid the Israeli war following Operation al-Aqsa Flood. The narrative is designed to engage both the mind and the heart.

Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

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