

WORDS FAIL US.

The horror in the Gaza Strip has been going on for so many years. We have reported on the blockade, the poverty, the wars. We have shared stories of life without water, without electricity, without hope. We have explained what international law requires and what conscience dictates.

Now, words fail us.

Eleven days of incessant airstrikes on or near civilian homes. With nowhere to run and no safe place. Dozens of people killed. Thousands injured, thousands more bereft of their homes and all their earthly possessions.

This is not a mistake, these are no “exceptional cases”. It is the policy.

B'Tselem's field researchers in the Gaza Strip spoke with people who lost their loved ones, their homes, literally everything. These are their words.

232 Palestinians were killed by Israel, including **54** minors and **38** women.

137 of the Palestinians killed had not been taking part in the hostilities, **90** (including 1 minor) had been taking part in the hostilities, and for an additional **5**. B'Tselem was unable to ascertain whether they had been taking part in the hostilities.

20 Palestinians, **7** of them minors, were killed by rockets fired by Palestinian organizations.

B'Tselem was unable to ascertain who killed another **8** Palestinians, **6** of them minors.

6 Israeli civilians and **3** foreign nationals were killed in Israel by rockets fired by Palestinian organizations.

1 member of the Israeli security forces was killed by an anti-tank missile fired by a Palestinian organization.

Testimonies

Gaza May 2021

11.5.21

A-Shati Refugee Camp, 4:30 A.M.

Military fires missile at building, killing two sixth-floor occupants¹

Amirah 'Abd al-Fatah 'Abd a-Rahman Subuh | 58

Her son

'Abd a-Rahman Yusef 'Ali Subuh | 18

¹ A Hamas military wing operative lived on the seventh floor. He was not home at the time. It is not known whether that was the reason for the strike.

A father of one, Amirah's son and 'Abd a-Rahman's brother²

I live with my family in the a-Rimal neighborhood of Gaza City. My mother Amirah, my brother 'Abd a-Rahman, my brother 'Ali and his wife Nasmah, and my two brothers Baraa and Anas all live in a-Shati Refugee Camp, on the sixth floor of a seven-story building near the a-Susi mosque.

On Monday, 10 May 2021, I went to my mother's with my wife and daughter for Iftar dinner. We stayed with them until 1:30 A.M. I had a feeling the situation was going to escalate, so I suggested they move in with us. It's really close, less than a kilometer away, but I thought it would better for them to stay at my place, mainly because my brother, 'Abd a-Rahman, has cerebral palsy. But my mother refused.

We went back home, but I wasn't calm. In the morning, I prayed the dawn prayers and went to my mother's house. I got to their street around 4:30 A.M. When I was about 50 meters away from the building, I heard a very loud explosion. There were clouds of smoke and dust, and I heard people shouting. The building my mother and brothers lived in had been bombed.

I tried to get into the building, but people there stopped me because they were afraid of another strike. They suggested I wait for the ambulance and the Civil Defense crew. They tried to reassure me and told me they'd seen my brother 'Ali at the mosque and had prayed with him. I felt on the verge of a nervous breakdown. I was sure my family was dead. I saw the sixth and seventh floors had been completely demolished. They looked like one floor. I lost all hope that anyone in my family would make it out alive.

Some neighbors went up to the apartment and came back down and told me my brothers Baraa and 'Ali and 'Ali's wife Nasmah were alive. As for my mother and my brother 'Abd a-Rahman, they said, "We didn't find them. We're looking for them, but it looks very bad." Then they told me my mother was injured and on the way to hospital, and that I should go there. When I arrived, I discovered she'd been killed. I hugged

her, kissed her body, and screamed and shouted, "I told you to come to our house! Why didn't you listen to me?!" Then they put my mother in the morgue.

I called the neighbors to check on my brother 'Abd a-Rahman. He'd been under the ruins for more than an hour and I was sure he was dead, because he's disabled and it's hard for him to get around. Sometime later, 'Abd a-Rahman was also taken to the ER. The doctors examined him and pronounced him dead. Then they put him in the freezer next to my mother.

I stayed there until 11:00 A.M., praying for their souls. Then we took their bodies to my sister Hala's house near a-Shifaa Hospital, so people could bid their farewells. Everyone was so sad.

I lost my mother and brother in a sudden explosion that happened right before my very eyes. I had a happy life with my family, with my mother and brothers. My mom was everything to me. I lost my father in 2003 and have been an orphan for many years. Now I've lost my mother, too. I'm still in shock. I can't stop thinking about her. I tried to salvage things that belonged to her and to 'Abd a-Rahman from the rubble, as keepsakes.

My mother always wished that when her day came, it would also be 'Abd a-Rahman's. She hoped they would die on the same day. God listened to her. 'Abd a-Rahman was always close to my mother. He never left her side and always tried to help her, despite his disability. They had a very strong bond. My sister Hala, who's our only sister, is in a bad way now. She and my mother were very close. Hala visited her every day and if she couldn't, she'd call her. I hope God will help her bear the pain and help us, too. I hope he has mercy upon them and that they'll go to heaven.

There was no reason to bomb the house and kill them. My mother was an elderly woman and my brother had special needs. The Israeli military bombed them without any warning. That's the "target bank" Israel talks about: my mother and my brother 'Abd a-Rahman.

2. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 9 June 2021.



'Abd a-Rahman Subuh and his Mother, Amirah Subuh



I heard a very loud explosion. There were clouds of smoke and dust, and I heard people shouting. The building my mother and brothers lived in had been bombed.



Amirah's son and 'Abd a-Rahman's brother³

On Tuesday, 11 May 2021, at 2:00 A.M., I came home and found my mother and my brother 'Abd a-Rahman awake. My mother was reading the Quran. I sat down with her, 'Abd a-Rahman and my sister-in-law Nasmah for the meal before the fast. Then I went back to the living room. At around 4:30 A.M., my brother 'Ali went to the mosque to pray and my mother told me to go to bed. We went to our bedrooms but a few minutes later, before I'd fallen asleep, the house suddenly collapsed on top of me. The wardrobe fell on me, too, and the wall behind me fell out to the road. There was a lot of dust and I had trouble breathing. There was no power and the house was pitch black.

I managed to pull myself out from under the debris and went to the room where my mother and 'Abd a-Rahman sleep. It was in ruins. I called out but couldn't see anyone. I started removing the debris to get them out. It was only then that I realized Israeli airplanes had bombed the house while we were in it. There was no warning before they fired.

The solar boilers on the roof were leaking into our apartment. I started running around the house looking for 'Abd a-Rahman and the rest of the family. I found my sister-in-law Nasmah and told her to go down to the ground floor. I also found my brother 'Ali, who was looking for my mother and 'Abd a-Rahman.

In the end, we found mother's body under the rubble. I started removing the debris that was covering her. Meanwhile, an ambulance and Civil Defense crews arrived, so I put her on a stretcher and told 'Ali to go with her. I stayed home to look for 'Abd a-Rahman with the Civil Defense crew and people from the neighborhood. Suddenly, I felt weak and short of breath. I was given first aid and taken to a-Shifaa Hospital.

'Abd a-Rahman was under the rubble for an hour and a half before we found him. The paramedics brought him to the hospital. Because of the amount of rubble, I didn't believe he'd survive and when we found him, he was lifeless. When I saw that my brother 'Abd a-Rahman was dead, I felt great sorrow. I also saw my mother lying lifeless and felt she was sending a message that she wanted to die along with 'Abd a-Rahman, because he was disabled and we have no father, so there would be no one to care for him without her. 'Abd a-Rahman was very attached to her.

In the meantime, we've rented an apartment for me, my brother Anas, and my brother 'Ali and his wife. Anas and I are unemployed and things are very tough financially. Our house cost a lot. We also had more than USD 17,000 in it, as well as my sister-in-law's and my mother's gold jewelry. It's all gone.

Ever since my mother and 'Abd a-Rahman were killed, we've been struck with grief, pain and despair. We pray for them all the time. They're gone, and so is the home in which we had a good life together. Life is hard without my mother, whom I loved so much, and without my brother 'Abd a-Rahman, who was the soul of the house. We've lost his smiles and the sounds he used to make around the house. I hope we can stay strong after their deaths.

3. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 13 June 2021.



‘Abd a-Rahman was under the rubble for an hour and a half before we found him. The paramedics brought him to the hospital. Because of the amount of rubble, I didn’t believe he’d survive and when we found him, he was lifeless.



11.5.21

Deir al-Balah, 10:00 P.M.

Military missiles kill two brothers working
in their family's chicken coop

Munzer 'Abd al-Karim Muhammad Barakah | 21

Manar 'Abd al-Karim Muhammad Barakah | 18

Testimony of 'Abd al-Karim Barakah | 65

A father of seven including Munzer and Manar⁴

In 1999, I rented a 14-dunam [1 dunam = 1,000 sq. meters] plot of land in the al-Musha'ala area in southeastern Deir al Balah. I built three chicken coops on the land. One of them has 3,000 chicks, the other has 3,500, and in the third I keep chickens for sale. On the rest of the plot, I planted palm trees, olive trees and grapevines.

On Tuesday evening, 11 May 2021, I was with my sons Munzer and Manar on our land. We went there despite the war because the chicks needed care. The atmosphere was tense that night. There were airstrikes all the time and drones hovering over us. We sat down under an olive tree, a few meters away from the coops. Munzer said he and Manar would go turn on the gas heaters in the coops to keep the chicks warm, and then come home.

Manar was terrified of the airstrikes and held his brother's hand. They headed to the coop and I stayed under the tree. Everything was dark because there was no power in the area at the time. When they were both 20 meters away from me, the bombings suddenly intensified and they shouted to me that they were leaving. I called out to them, "Leave everything and go home." Meanwhile, some bales of straw caught fire and I got up quickly to put it out. As I was putting it out, I heard a loud explosion.

About 45 minutes later, I was done putting out the fire and called out to my sons, but they didn't answer. I went in the direction they'd gone and then found them lying side by side about 30 meters away. I sat down next to them and put Munzer's head on my leg. I called, "Munzer, Munzer," but he didn't respond. So I left him and started talking to Manar. I called his name, but he didn't respond either.

I shouted as loud as I could for my neighbors to come, and some members of the Khsewan family, who live nearby, arrived. They picked my children up and took them to the house of a family member who lives 100 meters from the coop. Fifteen minutes later, a Palestinian Red Crescent ambulance arrived and took my sons to Shuhada al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah. When we got to the hospital, the doctors examined them and pronounced them dead. We buried them the next day at noon.

Munzer and Manar left school in the sixth grade and have worked in the coops with me ever since. They raised the chicks to adulthood and then sold them. They took care of the whole financial side of the business.

Recently, I started building an apartment above my house for Munzer, because he started talking about marriage. His mother really wanted him to get married. She's has diabetes and high blood pressure, and she was afraid that something would happen to her and she wouldn't be able to attend the wedding if he waited too long.

Since our boys were killed, things at home have been very tough. My wife is suffering immensely. I take her to the doctor almost every day. She has anxiety attacks and screams and cries a lot, especially when people come to console her.

4. Testimony given to Khaled al-'Azayzeh on 26 May 2021.



I sat down next to them and put Munzer’s head on my leg. I called, “Munzer, Munzer,” but he didn’t respond. So I left him and started talking to Manar. I called his name, but he didn’t respond either.



11.5.21

A-Shuja'iyeh neighborhood, Gaza City, 9:50 P.M.

Military fires two missiles at street, killing man

Muhammad 'Abed a-Ra'uf Muhammed Hiles | 34

Testimony of Ziad Hiles | 63

A father of nine, Muhammad's cousin⁵

I own a small shop in the neighborhood of a-Shuja'iyyeh. About 30 meters away, there's a shop that used to belong to the martyr Muhammad. On Tuesday, 11 May 2021, at around 9:00 P.M., after the Ramadan meal, I was in my shop. Muhammad came to open up his shop. He always came by before opening. I sat and drank tea with him and with three other young men from my family. About 45 minutes later, Muhammad went to his shop to open it.

Just after he got there, I heard a very loud explosion. The whole area was dark because the power was out. I looked towards Muhammad's shop and saw that the front door had been bombed. I saw him running towards me. His hand was wounded and he was holding it tightly. I called out to him to come quickly and hide in my shop, but he didn't respond. I guess he didn't hear me.

About a minute after the first missile, before Muhammad could get to my shop, another missile hit him. I was blown backwards from the force of the blast. My son Muhammad, 34, who was next to me, also flew back. I was holding a small flashlight and turned it on to see Muhammad. I crawled over to him and touched his body. I shouted, "Muhammad's been killed, Muhammad's been killed." His body was mutilated. His arms and feet were broken, and everything was full of blood. The neighbors came immediately with a civilian car and took away Muhammad's body. They also took 'Ali Jundiyyah, who was seriously injured.

About half an hour later, an ambulance arrived and took my son Muhammad and me to a-Shifaa Hospital. I was X-rayed, and they found I had bruises in my pelvic area. I was given a shot and painkillers. My son was injured in his left fingers and had glass shards in his chest. I was discharged that night and went with my wife to my son Tareq's house in the Tal al-Hawa neighborhood. We couldn't go

home because I was in a bad mental state and also because we were afraid of the airstrikes. We stayed with him until the war was over, and only then went back home.

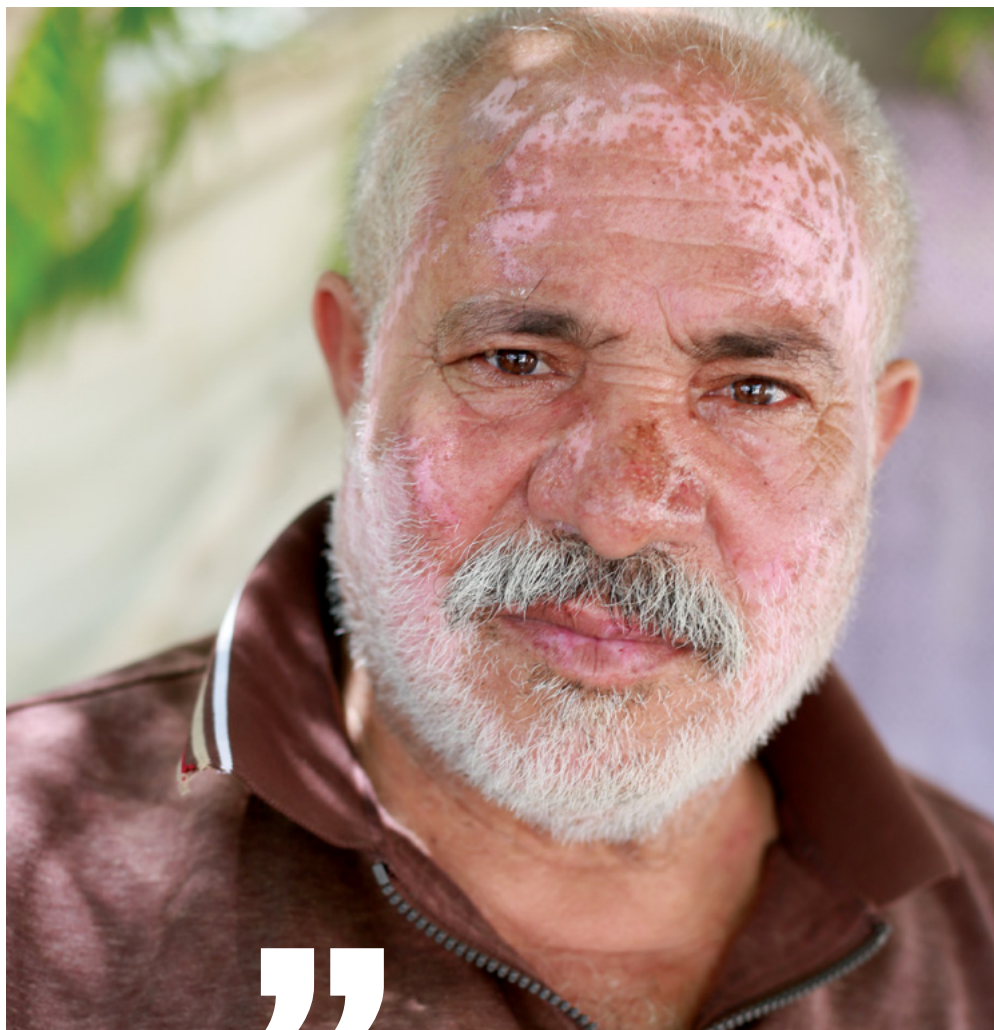
I'm very sad about Muhammad. I spend about an hour every day at his grave, crying over him. I miss him all the time. Every day, when I look at his shop and he's not there, it breaks my heart. I remember how he'd stop by on the way to his shop and how we'd talk and laugh.

Everything reminds me of Muhammad. He has one son, who's four years old. Whenever I see him, I cry and hug and kiss him. I see Muhammad's mother pass by my shop every day, morning and evening, on her way to visit the grave. Every time I see her, it breaks my heart. Muhammad was a good, respectable man. He used to help the poor and anyone who was in need. I miss him very much. I walk around feeling that something's missing in the world. I hope he enters into the grace of God and goes to heaven



Muhammad Hiles

5. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 26 June 2021.



I spend about an hour every day at his grave, crying over him. I miss him all the time. Every day, when I look at his shop and he's not there, it breaks my heart. I remember how he'd stop by on the way to his shop and how we'd talk and laugh.



12.5.21

East of Jabalya Refugee Camp, 10:00 A.M.

Military fires missiles at farm,
killing four farmers harvesting peaches

Wael Muhammad Fares al-Ghula | 55

'Atef 'Abd a-Rahman Jum'ah al-Barawi | 48

Tal'at Jamil Mahmoud Warash Agha | 37

Nael Khaled Yunes al-Barawi | 22

A father of three who was working on the farm at the time of the incident⁶

I work on a farm east of Jabalya Refugee Camp. It has 45 dunams of farmland with olive, peach and apricot trees. I work every day but Friday from 7:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. My job is to guard the farm. I also water the trees, pick fruit, do weeding and handle the irrigation and electricity. I've been working there since 2007, and the place has become part of my life.

After the war began, I kept going to the farm every day as usual. I tended to the trees, watered them, sprayed pesticides and watched over the place. On Wednesday, 12 May 2021, I arrived in the morning and started to work as usual. I opened the water valves to water the crops. I heard the loud sound of drones all the time. I was afraid something would happen, so I went inside the administration building.

About half an hour later, 'Atef al-Barawi, a contractor who comes to harvest the crops, called me. He asked me to open the gate, which is about 350 meters from the building. I rode there on a donkey cart. 'Atef came in together with two farmers who work with him, Tal'at and Nael. They went in and started picking apricots by the gate.

At the same time, Wael al-Ghula, one of the farmers who works on the farm, called and asked me to pick him up from a gas station about 700 meters away from the farm. In the end, 'Atef went to get him and we all picked peaches together. After that, I went to water some other trees. On the way, I did some weeding and kept the weeds for the donkey.

Suddenly, I heard a loud explosion and felt a sharp pain in my left hand and stomach. I called out for someone to help me. I looked over towards the others and saw Wael, Nael, Tal'at and 'Atef lying on the ground. I tried to get up and go to them, but I only managed to walk a few meters before I fell. I grabbed the door of 'Atef's car to get up, but then another missile landed. I tried to get up but fell again, so I crawled on. Then a third missile landed next to me. I kept crawling until I got to the building. I looked down and saw I was bleeding.

I called my cousin on my mother's side, Luai Jneid. I told him what had happened, and he called an ambulance that took me to the Indonesian Hospital. I had surgery on my stomach and they removed some shrapnel. I was hospitalized for nine days and then discharged.

They bombed us even though we're civilians and farmers who work for our living, in broad daylight. I'm very sad about my friends who died. They were killed while working to support their families.

6. Testimony given to Muhammad Sabah on 27 May 2021.



Suddenly, I heard a loud explosion and felt a sharp pain in my left hand and stomach. I called out for someone to help me. I looked over towards the others and saw Wael, Nael, Tal'at and 'Atef lying on the ground.



12.5.21

'Abasan al-Jadidah, Khan Yunis, 10:00 A.M.

Soldiers shoot and kill 17-year-old working in field

Bashar Ahmad Ibrahim Samur | 17

Testimony of Sa'id Abu 'Aasi | 16

Bashar's friend⁷

On Wednesday, 12 May 2021, I left home in the morning with two friends, Luai Samur, 18, and Bashar Samur, 17. They're brothers who live next to me. We rode on a donkey cart to the a-Sanati area, where Luai's father leases a 17-dunam plot of land. The area is about 20 meters from the barbed wire fence that marks the border [with Israel], and has parsley, dill and wheat crops.

We got there early, around 8:00 A.M. We wanted to water the crops. Luai and I have been working there for a few years, and Bashar joined us when he didn't have school. When we got there, Luai went to turn on the water pump by the pool at the entrance to the plot. Bashar and I headed in the direction of the border to open the valves in the pipes. A few moments later, Luai joined us and we started harvesting the wheat.

After about two hours, Luai and I went to close some of the valves and open others. Bashar stayed put, about 20 meters from the barbed wire fence. Luai and I were about 50 meters west of him.

Suddenly, we heard three or four shots from the military watchtower by the fence, right in front of us. We looked in Bashar's direction but didn't see him. We went to where he'd been before the shooting and looked for him among the stalks. We found him lying face down. He couldn't move or talk. Luai and I picked him up and carried him to the Jakar Road, about 70 meters away, where we met Raed Samur, a farmer we know, who was working his land. We called out to him and he drove over in his car.

We put Bashar in the car and drove to hospital in 'Abasan. The paramedics gave him first aid, but the doctors said he was in critical condition. He was taken by ambulance to Naser Hospital. Luai went with him. I drove behind them with Raed Samur. When we got there, we learned Bashar had been killed. They put him in a freezer at the hospital. He was buried that day at noon prayers, at the Bani Suheila cemetery.

I was shocked by what happened. I didn't know what to do. Bashar has been my friend since childhood, and I lost him in an instant. I still start crying when anyone asks me about him or about the incident.

7. Testimony given to Khaled al-'Azayzeh on 3 June 2021.



Suddenly, we heard three or four shots from the military watchtower by the fence, right in front of us. We looked in Bashar's direction but didn't see him. We went to where he'd been before the shooting and looked for him among the stalks. We found him lying face down.



12.5.21

A-Sabra neighborhood, Gaza City, 11:00 A.M.

Military fires three missiles at street, killing six people

Taxi driver Mustafa Mazen Salem Kurdiyah | 31

Passengers Maysoun Zaki Hashem al-Hittu | 59

And her husband

Sa'id Hashem Sa'id al-Hittu | 66

Mansur Yusef Hassan a-Darimli | 66

Nader Muhammad Nabih al-Ghazali | 46

'Abd a-Salam Mahmoud Nabih al-Ghazali | 28

Testimony of Muhammad al-Hittu | 28

Whose parents were killed in the incident⁸

On Wednesday, 12 May 2021, there were heavy airstrikes in our neighborhood, Tal al-Hawa, in Gaza City. We feared for our lives and decided to leave home. We called our friend Mustafa Kurdiyah, who's a taxi driver, and he came to pick us up. He arrived at 10:30 A.M. and drove my parents, my sister Yara, 29, and me to my sister Rasha al-Wahidi's house in the neighborhood of a-Sabra. We planned to stay with her for a few days, just until the war was over.

We got to my sister's house and the taxi stopped out front. It was about 11:00 A.M. My sister Yara got out of the taxi and went into the house. I took out a bag that had our clothes in it, handed it to my mother and took another bag with clothes out of the taxi, and then we both made our way to the front door. I was walking a few steps ahead of my mother. My father was waiting for the driver, Mustafa, to hand him another bag he'd just taken out of the taxi, and then I heard a loud blast behind me. There was shrapnel everywhere.

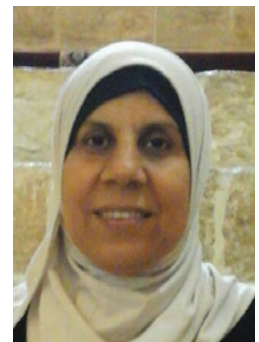
From the force of the blast, I was blown into the entrance to my sister's house. I was hit by shrapnel in the back, neck, left hand and left leg. I was bleeding and couldn't see where my parents were and what had happened to them. A few seconds later, I heard another missile land very close to us, but I didn't know where. I was focused on trying to see my parents. Then an ambulance arrived and the paramedics gave me first aid.

I saw the bodies of my father and of Mustafa lying by the taxi. I saw people cover them over. I knew my father was dead. My mother rode with me in the ambulance. I heard one of the paramedics say her pulse was very weak. When we got to a-Shifaa Hospital, the paramedics took me to the ER to give me first aid and took my mother somewhere else.

After two hours, some relatives came and told me my mother and father had passed away. I broke down and started screaming and crying. I was in shock. Why did they bomb us? We're just civilians. I lost the people most precious to me, my mother and father. We were just going to shelter at my sister's. We wanted to celebrate the holiday with her. My mother had made holiday food and we brought it with us, salted fish and holiday cookies.

I was only discharged from hospital two days later. I couldn't attend my parents' funeral, didn't say goodbye to them, and didn't hug them. When I got home and they weren't there, I started screaming and crying. I hugged my sister Yara and my brother Ibrahim. Yara broke down. She's in a terrible mental state. She saw them lying there, bleeding, and couldn't do anything.

Since my parents were killed, my life has lost all meaning. I miss them all the time. I miss their laughter, and drinking coffee with them, and their stories that never bored me, and gathering around the dinner table. It's all over now, a thing of the past. I hope I can keep going and live my life after losing them. Parting with them is so hard.



Sa'id and Maysoun al-Hittu

8. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 1 June 2021.



I saw the bodies of my father and of Mustafa lying by the taxi. I saw people cover them over. I knew my father was dead. My mother rode with me in the ambulance. I heard one of the paramedics say her pulse was very weak.



Testimony of Mu'awiyah al-Wahidi | 42

A father of two who owns a barbershop near the scene of the incident⁹

On Wednesday, 12 May 2021, I went to my barbershop on al-Mughrabi Street in the a-Sabra neighborhood. At around 11:00 A.M., I was sitting at a tailor shop that my brother owns along with my neighbor, Nader al-Ghazali, by my barbershop. While we were sitting there, Nader's cousin, 'Abd a-Salam al-Ghazali, arrived and Nader went out to meet him.

A minute after Nader stepped out, I heard a loud explosion outside the shop. I ran outside and saw that Nader had been hit in the chest and was bleeding. I saw his cousin had been killed. I looked around and saw a white Skoda that had been bombed, with martyrs inside. I went back to Nader and tried to carry him away from there. Across the street I saw our neighbor Mansur a-Darimli, whom we call Abu Rami, lying on the ground.

I dragged Nader about 50 meters away and then I dropped him. Blood came out of his mouth. A woman called out to me from a balcony to tell him to recite the Shahadatain prayer, and he started saying, "There's no God but Allah." Then I heard

another missile and it hit me. It was four or five minutes after the first missile. I also started reciting the Shahadatain. I didn't know what was happening to me and where I'd been hit.

They took me to a-Shifaa Hospital. The doctors amputated my right leg above the knee. I have shrapnel in my back and head. In my right leg, I have a large flesh wound. After seven days, I was transferred to al-'Awda Hospital for further treatment and I'm still there.

I was later told that my neighbor Nader, his cousin and my neighbor Mansur a-Darimli were all killed in the strike, along with the al-Hittu family, who were standing by a taxi, and their taxi driver. I pray for mercy for all the martyrs' souls.



'Abd a-Salam al -Ghazali



Nader al-Ghazali



Mustafa Kurdiyah

⁹. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 3 June 2021.



A minute after Nader stepped out, I heard a loud explosion outside the shop. I ran outside and saw that Nader had been hit in the chest and was bleeding. I saw his cousin had been killed.



12.5.21

Bani Suheila, 2:00 P.M.

Military fires missile at vehicle transporting gas balloons, killing two men

Majd 'Abd Rabo Mahmoud Abu Sa'adah | 57

Mahmoud Ahmad Muhammad Abu 'Amer | 37

Testimony of Ibrahim Abu Sa'adah | 31

Father of four and son of Majd¹⁰

On Wednesday, 12 May 2021, I was in my apartment on the third floor of our family's building, which is on the town's main street. We have a hardware store on the ground floor. At 1:50 P.M., I was standing by the window overlooking the street and saw my father standing and talking with his friend, Mahmoud Abu 'Amer, who had brought us a gas balloon. My father paid him and then stood chatting with him for a few minutes. There were drones hovering over us. They never leave us alone, day or night.

Suddenly, a missile was fired at Abu 'Amer's car from one of the drones. It hit the car, which immediately blew up because there were gas balloons inside. The area was covered in smoke and dust.

The moment I heard the blast, I lay down flat on the ground. At first, I thought it was a warning missile fired at our house. A few moments later, I got up and looked out the window, and saw my father lying on the road. His friend, Abu 'Amer, was inside the car and his body was on fire.

I ran outside. There were already a lot of people there. I picked my father up. He'd been hit by shrapnel in the head, chest and neck. He was dying. I carried him to the stairway and laid him down. He said his prayers and passed away. Meanwhile, other residents tried to put out the fire in the car.

Five minutes later, an ambulance arrived and took the martyrs to Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis. I stayed at home. That day, after the doctors pronounced my father's death, we buried him at the Bani Suheila cemetery.

10. Testimony given to Khaled al-'Azayzeh on 3 June 2021.



Abu 'Amer's car burning after the bombing.

A few moments later, I got up and looked out the window, and saw my father lying on the road. His friend, Abu 'Amer, was inside the car and his body was on fire.

12.5.21

Al-Fukhari neighborhood, southeastern Khan Yunis, 5:30 P.M.

Military fires missile at three children on way home from barbershop, killing two

'Amer Taysir Muhammad al-'Amur | 10

Hamadah 'Atiyah 'Abed al-'Amur | 13

A father of eight including Hamadah ¹¹

I'm a farmer and also own a small grocery store in the al-Fukhari neighborhood in southeastern Khan Yunis, opposite the Timraz cooking gas supply station. On Wednesday, 12 May 2021, at 3:30 P.M., I was standing at the doorway to my store. My son Hamadah had come over with two of his cousins, 'Amer al-'Amur, 10, and 'Alayan al-'Amur, 11. They were going to get a haircut and stopped by so I could give Hamadah money. The barbershop is two kilometers from the store, on Salah a-Din Street. I gave him money and they left.

Two hours later, at 5:30 P.M., they came back after the haircuts. They took some instant noodles and went home. I sat down in the doorway. I looked at the sky to the east and saw two Israeli helicopters hovering next to each other, and then one turned south and the other west. Less than a minute later, the helicopter heading west fired a missile that hit Hamadah and his cousins, who were walking along the right side of the street. They were about 50 meters from the store.

I saw dust and thick smoke where the kids had been. I couldn't see them. I went into shock and couldn't do anything. The smoke cleared after a few minutes, and then I saw the three of them lying on the road. I ran over to them, screaming. There was no one else around. I was so confused and panicked, I ran back and forth between the kids and the store.

A few minutes later, people started arriving. Among them was my relative Hatem, 50. He lifted 'Alayan, who was lying wounded on the ground by the Timraz station, about 20 meters from the other two boys. Hatem put 'Alayan in his car and drove straight to the European Hospital. He wanted to take 'Amer

and my son Hamadah with him, too, but I told him and the other people there that they were dead. Both boys were burnt in most parts of their bodies, including their faces.

Meanwhile, my cousin Taleb, 55, arrived and put Hamadah and 'Amer in his car. I was in shock and in a terrible state. I couldn't bring myself to go near them or drive with them to hospital. I sat down by my store and didn't know what to do. I was hysterical and the people around me tried to calm me down.

After half an hour, I went to the European Hospital and found that Hamadah and 'Amer were already in the morgue. My nephew 'Alayan was in surgery. He had abdominal surgery and after six days, was transferred to al-'Arish Hospital in Egypt. He's still there.

The next day, Thursday, 13 May 2021, was 'Eid al-Fitr. Instead of celebrating, we buried my son and my nephew. They're buried at the a-Sheik Muhammad cemetery in Khan Yunis.

Hamadah was in the seventh grade at an UNWRA school in the al-Fukhari neighborhood. Everyone loved him. Since he was martyred, we've stopped hearing the voices of his friends, who used to call him to come out and play. Hamadah loved playing soccer. He used to help me with farm work and sometimes also at the grocery store.

11. Testimony given to Khaled al-'Azayzeh on 1 June 2021.



I looked at the sky to the east and saw two Israeli helicopters hovering next to each other, and then one turned south and the other west. Less than a minute later, the helicopter heading west fired a missile that hit Hamadah and his cousins, who were walking along the right side of the street.



12.5.21

A-Shuja'iyeh neighborhood, Gaza City, 8:20 P.M.

Military fires missile, killing two men

Ahmad Ibrahim Ahmad Abu Sakran | 64

Muhammad Nahed Jaber Abu Sakran | 25

Testimony of Ibrahim Abu Sakran | 26

Ahmad's son and Muhammad's cousin¹²

On 12 May 2021, I was sitting at the entrance to our house on a-Nizar Street in the neighborhood of a-Shuja'iyyeh, talking with two friends – my cousin, Muhammad Nahed Abu Sakran, and my nephew, Muhammad Hashem Abu Sakran. The power was out and everything was dark. At around 8:30 P.M., my dad came out of the house and asked us to come inside so we wouldn't get hurt.

Just then, I heard a very loud explosion and the place filled with smoke and dust. I didn't move. I heard parts of the building fall near us. A minute later, I saw Muhammad Nahed and Muhammad Hashem. They were lying on top of each other, bleeding. I got up and saw that I'd also hit been by shrapnel in the leg and chest. I looked behind me and saw my dad lying on the floor inside, covered in shrapnel and blood. He was drawing his last breaths. I tried to pick him up, but I was too badly injured. I called out to my brothers, who were inside the house. They picked me up and gave the wounded people first aid. Some neighbors took them away in their cars.

After about 10 minutes, an ambulance arrived and I was put inside. I blacked out in the ambulance and woke up at a-Shifaa Hospital. I was X-rayed and they found shrapnel in my legs and chest. They also found a tear in my auditory nerve and a perforation in my right ear. I still can't hear properly. At the hospital I asked after my father, my cousin and my nephew. The doctors told me they were okay and were being treated in the ER. I was sure they'd all been killed because they were so badly injured. During the bombing, I'd seen them looking at me, but they hadn't been able to speak.

About half an hour later, the doctors told that me that my father and Muhammad Nahed had been killed. I started shouting and blacked out. When I woke up, I got up because I wanted to see my father. Even though I was injured, I had to see him.

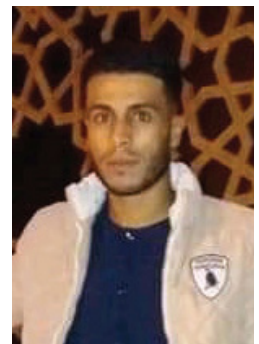
But the doctors wouldn't let me go because they weren't done treating me. I went home that night because I couldn't stand staying at the hospital. I wanted to be with my mother and sisters and the rest of the family.

The next day, they brought my father and Muhammad Nahel in so we could say goodbye to them. A lot of people came. I cried when I saw them. I couldn't hug them because of my condition. I said goodbye only by looking at them from afar. Those were very difficult moments. I felt like I'd lost part of my body. My father was so dear to me, and my cousin was a very close friend of mine. We were inseparable.

Since my father died, life has become extremely hard. My father and I worked as farmers. We went out to our land together every day. I still see him in my dreams, asking me to go to the land and water the crops. I go there with my brother but I can't stay long, because I see him everywhere. Muhammad was one of my closest friends. He was like a brother to me. Every day, we would sit together at the entrance to my house, and we used to go together to the market or to his place. I hope I can be patient after his death. I pray that he enters into the grace of God and goes to heaven.



Ahmad Abu Sakran



Muhammad Abu Sakran

12. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 24 June 2021.



I looked behind me and saw my dad lying on the floor inside, covered in shrapnel and blood. He was drawing his last breaths. I tried to pick him up, but I was too badly injured.



13.5.21

Al-Bureij Refugee Camp, central Gaza Strip, 3:00 P.M.

Military fires missile at house, killing 14-year-old and 19-year-old walking along street

Ahmad Rami Mahmoud al-Hawajri | 14

Muayad Taysir 'Abd a-Rahman al-Khatib | 20

Testimony of Muhammad al-Khatib | 29

Muayad's brother¹³

I live in Block No. 1 with my parents, my brother Muayad and my sister Baraah, 25. My brother Husam, 33, lives on the floor above us with his wife and their daughter Kindah, 9.

On Thursday, 13 May 2021, the first day of 'Eid al-Fitr, my sister Alaa, 28, came to visit us with her daughter Zahrah, who's two years old. It was very tense. There were airstrikes all the time, and we were scared because there were lots of drones and we could hear bombing close to al-Bureij Refugee Camp and farther away.

Shortly before 3:00 P.M., my brother Muayad went to the grocery store, which is about 40 meters away from our house. He asked Alaa if she needed anything. A few minutes later, I went into my room to rest a little and then, suddenly, the glass windows in the house shattered. The doors cracked and thick dust seeped in. We were all stunned and didn't understand what was going on. My brother Husam and his wife ran down to the ground floor from their apartment. Everyone was yelling and screaming.

We started checking how everyone was doing – who was there, who wasn't. My sister Alaa said Muayad had left a short while before. My father wanted to go look for him, but I told him I would go. I left the house and ran into one of the neighbors. I asked him if he and his kids were okay, and he said he didn't know how the kids were yet because everything was covered in dust and rubble. I kept walking down the street and saw fire coming out of the Abu 'Iyada home. It's under construction, and it's about 25 meters south of our house.

I understood that was the house that had been bombed. I saw flames, black smoke and dust rising from it. It was only then that I saw a person lying on the pavement on the northern side of the street, towards the market. He was about 15 meters away from the bombed house. I started walking towards him and when I was about four meters away, I realized it was my brother Muayad. He was lying on his stomach, face down. His right leg was near his head. He was bleeding from the mouth and from the right side of his body. Before I managed to get

to him, there was another strike, in almost exactly the same place. I ran home quickly, without thinking, and told the family Muayad had been killed.

Those were very difficult moments. The women cried and screamed. My father went into shock. He only said, "My heart is broken," and then sat down and started praying to God to have mercy on the martyr and ease our pain and suffering.

When things calmed down, the whole family went to my maternal grandfather's house. He lives close to us. Then my father and I went to Shuhada al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah. Ten minutes later, an ambulance brought my brother there. My father stayed sitting in the courtyard, and I went into the morgue to say goodbye to my brother and take one last look at him. We returned to my grandfather's house and ten minutes later, an ambulance brought Muayad's body there. We said goodbye to him in my grandfather's house and buried him.

Three days after the fighting stopped, we went back to live in our house, after clearing away the rubble and dust.

After we buried my brother, we heard that the boy Ahmad al-Hawajri had been killed in the same strike, and that he had also been on his way to the grocery store on the street. Another resident from the neighborhood was badly injured. He suffered burns in various parts of his body, including the face. They say he was walking along the street near the house that was bombed. I visited him in hospital, and he told me he had been on his way to see a friend. Another young guy from the neighborhood suffered a leg injury and was transferred to Egypt for treatment. Seven houses near the one that was bombed were badly damaged.

Muayad went to school until grade 12 and then went to work in construction with my father. The whole family relied on him. Anyone who needed anything would ask Muayad. He was also putting some of his salary away to build himself a room and a kitchen and bathroom, above the house, because he wanted to get married and start a family.

13. Testimony given to Khaled al-'Azayzeh on 13 June 2021.



I saw flames, black smoke and dust rising from it. It was only then that I saw a person lying on the pavement on the northern side of the street, towards the market. He was about 15 meters away from the bombed house. I started walking towards him and when I was about four meters away, I realized it was my brother Muayad.



13.5.21

Al-Qarayah al-Badwiyah al-Maslakh, Beit Lahiya, 6:30 P.M.

Military fires shells at house, killing six, including three sisters and 9-month-old baby

The three sisters

Sabrin Naser Muhammad Abu Fares-Abu Diyah | 28

Her son

Muhammad Salamah Muhammad Abu Diyah | 9 months

Nisrin Naser Muhammad Abu Fares | 26

Fawzeyeh Naser Muhammad Abu Fares | 17

Their neighbors

Ni'mah Saleh Salamah 'Ayash | 47

Hashem Muhammad 'Ayed 'Ali a-Zgheibi | 20

Father of 12, who lost three daughters and a grandson in the incident¹⁴

I have two wives. Most of the time, I live with my first wife, Madallah, and our children: Nisrin, 26, Israa, 18, Fawzeyeh, 17, Ghazal, 12, Ramzi, 30, Majdi, 22, 'Imran, 20, and Muhammad, 11. My wife Zinat, 34, and our three children, Hamzah, 6, Malak, 5, and Seif, 3, live in the other house, about 300 meters away.

When the war began, we started hearing shelling and bombing in the northern Gaza Strip. We live by the border and the strikes weren't close to us, so we carried on as usual.

On Thursday, 13 May 2021, at around 6:30 P.M., I was sitting at my neighbors' when suddenly, I heard two shells fall. I didn't know where they'd landed, but I saw smoke billowing out of my first house. I ran over there quickly with my friends, but before we even got there, a third shell landed right next to us. I went inside the house, but it was full of smoke and dust so I couldn't see who was hurt. I heard my neighbors say a shell had also landed on the home of our neighbors, the 'Ayash family. They said Ni'mah 'Ayash had been killed and that another shell had landed on the street and hit a resident named Hashem a-Zgheibi.

I continued searching the house. I found my daughters. Some of them were dismembered. My sons were wounded and there was blood everywhere. When I saw that, I blacked out for a few minutes. The neighbors woke me up, and then I found out that my daughters Sabrin, 28, Nisrin and Fawzeyeh, as well as Sabrin's nine-month-old son Muhammad Abu Diyah, had been killed. Sabrin doesn't live with us. She's married and lives with her husband, but she was visiting us that day.

An ambulance came and took everyone to the Indonesian Hospital. I followed them in my car,

which had also been damaged in the shelling. On the way, I saw people evacuating their homes because of the shelling and fleeing the area.

I barely made it to the hospital. I had to identify my daughters. I asked a doctor where they were, and he led me to a refrigerator to identify them. I searched among the dismembered body parts and clothes in the fridge. A forensic doctor who came there arranged the body parts so I could identify them. It was unbearable. I couldn't take it, especially when he laid their parts out next to each other so I could identify my daughters and the baby.

We buried them the next day, with some relatives and friends in attendance. It wasn't a regular funeral because everyone was anxious about the airstrikes. It was scary. The bombings didn't stop. My daughter Israa didn't come because she was in hospital. She's still in the ICU. She's injured in the chest, head, back and leg.

From the hospital, I went with the rest of my family to al-Khalifah School in Beit Lahiya. Our house was in ruins. We had nowhere to go back to, and we were also afraid to go back there. We can't bear to look at the walls, either. They still have traces of blood and bits of flesh on them. We had a rough time at the school. There was no food or drink, and there were no mattresses. The situation was bad and we couldn't buy food or drink. We didn't have any extra clothes, either. The war ended on Friday, and then I rented another house and my family moved there. I never thought something like this would happen to me, that I'd lose my daughters like that.

14. Testimony given to Muhammad Sabah on 25 May 2021.



I found my daughters. Some of them were dismembered. My sons were wounded and there was blood everywhere. When I saw that, I blacked out for a few minutes.



Ni'mah's brother ¹⁵

My wife and I lived on the ground floor, and my mother lived next door in a tin house. I had started building another floor above me. There's an internal staircase leading up to it, but the floor's not ready for living in yet.

When the war started, we stayed home and everything was normal, except for the sound of shelling and the airplanes, tanks and ships that were bombarding the northern Gaza Strip. Everyone in al-Qarayah carried on as usual and we didn't evacuate our homes, because we're close to the border and there are no Hamas outposts in the area.

On Thursday, 13 May 2021, at around 6:30 P.M., I was in my apartment with my mother Hamdiya, 75, my sister Ni'mah, 47, and my married sister Sarah, who was visiting my mother for the holiday. Our neighbors Jamileh a-Zgheibi and her daughter-in-law were at our place, too. They were all sitting in the garden and I was inside. It was the first day of 'Eid al-Fitr.

Suddenly, I heard a series of explosions and saw smoke, dust and flames. I heard screaming and windows shattering. I ran to the garden to see if my mother and sisters were okay, and saw debris on the staircase. I thought it might have been a warning missile, so I got everyone inside quickly. My sister Ni'mah went into my apartment and up the stairs to the first floor. My sister Sarah, the neighbor Jamileh and her daughter-in-law went into my apartment, and I helped my mother come in there, too.

Just then, I heard three more explosions in a row. I grabbed some personal documents and we ran out of the house, which collapsed. I went out to the street and saw it was full of rubble and lumps of concrete. I heard screaming and crying and saw

injured people lying on the ground. The street was in ruins. It was full of blood and dust and smoke. It was an unbearable sight. There were also ambulances and rescue teams. I ran away, supporting my mother. We walked about a hundred meters until we got to the ambulances. They couldn't reach the entrance to our house.

My mother, my wife and I were taken to the Indonesian Hospital. I didn't see my sister Ni'mah, and didn't know what had happened to her. I assumed she'd made it out. I saw my sister Sarah and our neighbor Jamileh and her daughter-in-law running away. I saw that Naser Abu Fares' house next door was completely destroyed. I saw people trying to extract bodies from the ruins.

At the hospital, I looked for my sister Ni'mah. I searched the wards and after an hour and a half, I found her in the refrigerator. She had been killed by shrapnel in the stairwell. I heard Hashem a-Zgheibi, who had been hit by shrapnel from a shell that landed by our front door, was also dead. Later, I heard Naser Abu Fares had lost three of his daughters and his grandson.

From the Indonesian Hospital, we went to al-Khalifah School at the Beit Lahiya project. We arrived at the school with nothing but the clothes on our backs. We stayed there in really harsh conditions. We sat on the floor and slept on the floor. Three or four days later, people donated some mattresses and blankets. We had nothing to eat or drink, and it was total chaos. There was nothing but sadness, pain and depression on people's faces. They were mourning their dead or wounded sons, and the homes destroyed in the shelling. It all happened when we were in our homes, on the first day of the holiday.

15. Testimony given to Muhammad Sabah on 28 May 2021.



I went out to the street and saw it was full of rubble and lumps of concrete. I heard screaming and crying and saw injured people lying on the ground. The street was in ruins. It was full of blood and dust and smoke. It was an unbearable sight.



13.5.21

A-Junainah neighborhood, Rafah, 8:00 P.M.

Military fires missile at house, killing four,
including 65-year-old woman and 6-month-old baby

Siham Yusef Mahmoud a-Rantisi | 65

Her son and daughter-in-law

Raed Ibrahim Khamis a-Rantisi | 29¹⁶

Shaimaa Diab Muhammad a-Rantisi | 21

Her grandson

Ibrahim Muhammad Ibrahim a-Rantisi | 6 months

¹⁶ Raed a-Rantisi was an operative with the Hamas military wing.
It is not known whether he was the reason the military fired a missile at the house.

Who lost four family members in the incident¹⁷

I now live in a rented apartment in al-Junainah neighborhood, after Israel bombed our house to smithereens. It was a three-story building with five apartments. The first and second floors had two apartments each, and my brothers lived in them with their families. I lived with my mother on the top floor.

On Thursday, 13 May 2021, at around 8:00 P.M., I was in my apartment with my brother Muhammad. Suddenly, I heard a missile whistling. I felt a tremor and was thrown in the air. Muhammad, who was standing next to me, flew and fell on some debris. More rubble fell on him. I stayed put for a few minutes until the debris, glass and stones stopped falling. When I got to my feet, I saw our building was still standing, but the missile had gone through the ceiling and landed on the ground floor. I went down the stairs, which were covered in debris but were still standing.

When I got to the ground floor, I saw my brother Yusef at the entrance to his apartment, covered in dust and smoke. I started shouting and calling for people to come save my family and get the wounded out from under the rubble. Some more people came. We looked behind the house to see if there was anyone wounded there. We searched with flashlights, because there was no electricity. I found Shaimaa, my brother Raed's wife. She was dead. We pulled her out from under the rubble.

We kept looking and found Aya, my brother Muhammad's wife. The shock wave had blown her into the house of our neighbors, the al-Hamaydah family. She was wounded and was holding her six-month-old baby, Ibrahim Muhammad a-Rantisi. He was dead.

We found my mother inside the apartment. She was dead, too. After looking for my brother Raed for two hours, we found him in the neighbors' house. He was dead, too. He'd been blown about seven meters away from his apartment.

We barely managed to save my brother Hamzah, who was under the rubble. We worked for more than two hours to remove the debris that had fallen on my sister-in-law Asmaa, 27, my brother Yusef's wife. She was trapped under bits of rubble, lumps of concrete and concrete posts. She was moderately injured. The rest of the family, the children and women, had made it out of the building and weren't hurt.

17. Testimony given to Muhammad Sabah on 3 June 2021.



Palestinians carry the body of the young child Ibrahim Al-Rantisi, Credit: Yousef Masoud/TheNEWS2/ZUMA Wire/Alamy Live News

We kept looking and found Aya, my brother Muhammad's wife. The shock wave had blown her into the house of our neighbors, the al-Hamaydah family. She was wounded and was holding her six-month-old baby, Ibrahim Muhammad a-Rantisi. He was dead.

13.5.21

Beit Lahiya, 11:00 P.M.

Military fires missiles at house, killing father
and three daughters ¹⁸

Muhammad Ibrahim Muhammad Aman | 51

And three of his daughters

Walaa Muhammad Ibrahim Aman (six months pregnant) | 24

Warda Muhammad Ibrahim Aman | 22

Hadil Muhammad Ibrahim Aman | 18

¹⁸. A Hamas military operative lives in the building. He was not home at the time. It is unknown whether that was the reason for the strike.

Mother of six, who lost her husband and three of her daughters in the incident¹⁹

Before our apartment was bombed, I lived on the first floor of the building with my husband, Muhammad Aman, and four of our children: Yusef, 15, Hadil 18, Warda, 22, and Ibrahim, 30. My husband worked as a driver. He would drive people to UNRWA to get food supplies and then back home.

When the war began, we started hearing airstrikes all the time. My children hardly slept at night. We followed the events constantly. My husband and I fell asleep late each night, exhausted, and woke up before dawn. We were constantly stressed by what was going on and by sound of the lengthy bombings, which was horrifying. We were constantly afraid. The situation was really dire. A lot of people were killed. Many were wounded, and homes and buildings were destroyed.

Before the strikes started, my daughter Samar got into a fight with her husband and came to live with us. My daughter Walaa came to us with her husband after the strikes started. They left their home in the a-Salatin neighborhood of Beit Lahiya because it was constantly being bombarded. Many residents there left their homes.

On 13 May 2021, at around 11:00 P.M., I woke up suddenly in complete darkness. There was debris, dust and smoke all around me. I couldn't see anything. I had terrible pain all over my body, and it felt like things were piercing it. I also felt burns on my body and face. The pain was so strong, I screamed. Suddenly, one of my daughters came, I don't know which one, and pulled me out. Just then, I heard another missile and lost sight of her. The place filled with smoke and dust.

Then the paramedics came. I asked them to look for my daughters. They told me they'd take care of me first and then look for them. I lost consciousness and woke up the next morning at the ICU in a-Shifaa Hospital in Gaza City. I asked my relatives about my children, and they said they were alright. A few days later, the doctors moved me to the orthopedic department, where I was told my husband Muhammad had been killed. I went into shock and cried.

A few minutes later, I was told that three of my daughters had also been killed – Hadil, Warda and Walaa. I went into shock. They were my hope, my whole life, especially Hadil, who was the most spoiled and was very attached to me. It was a shock for me. I never thought anything like that would happen to me. I don't know how to go on living.

After 14 days at a-Shifaa Hospital, I was transferred to the burn unit at al-'Awda Hospital because I had burns on my face and hands and shrapnel all over my body. I have burns on my head and a fractured left leg. They put a metal plate in. I'm still suffering. I'm in a great deal of pain, and I'm receiving treatment that's expected to take months.

19. Testimony given to Muhammad Sabah on 26 May 2021.



I woke up suddenly in complete darkness. There was debris, dust and smoke all around me. I couldn't see anything. I had terrible pain all over my body, and it felt like things were piercing it. I also felt burns on my body and face. The pain was so strong, I screamed.



Testimony of her son, Yusef Aman | 15

Who lost his father and three of his sisters in the incident²⁰

On Thursday, 13 May 2021, I woke up in the middle of the night and found myself in the passageway between our building and the building next door, which belongs to the al-'Alul family. There was rubble underneath me and on top of me and a blanket over my head. I was very scared and started shouting, "Help! Help! Get me out!" No one answered me. Suddenly I heard an explosion in our apartment, and I also heard people screaming and crying and calling for the neighbors and paramedics to help.

It terrified me, because I heard the screaming of people who were trapped under the rubble with no one to save them or help them get out. I was scared I'd stay under the rubble and no one would come help me, that I'd die under the rubble before the paramedics got to me.

But a few minutes later, civilian rescue teams came, and someone took the debris off me. I heard him say, "Martyr, martyr." He meant me, but then he discovered I was alive. I leaned on him and we started walking. I could barely walk, because I was injured

all over my body. I felt like my left leg was broken. I couldn't step on it. Then the civilian rescue man had to let me go, and I carried on by myself. I crawled on the ground. I saw a little girl, our neighbor from the Abu Jarad family. She was lying on the ground. She grabbed onto my right leg, and the two of us crawled together to get away from the rubble that filled the street. I had a hard time crawling on the piles of debris. They injured me.

At some point, paramedics showed up and took me to an ambulance. I was taken to the Kamal 'Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya, and from there transferred to the Indonesian Hospital in Jabalya Refugee Camp, where I had surgery on my leg. They took shrapnel out of various parts of my body and put a metal plate in my lower left leg.

Then, some relatives came to the hospital. They told me my father had been killed and so had three of my sisters. I went into shock. I never imagined I'd hear such a thing. This loss has caused me terrible pain.



20. Testimony given to Muhammad Sabah on 26 May 2021.



I heard the screaming of people who were trapped under the rubble with no one to save them or help them get out. I was scared I'd stay under the rubble and no one would come help me, that I'd die under the rubble before the paramedics got to me.



13.5.21

Beit Lahiya, 11:30 P.M.

Military fires missiles at house, killing eight, including four children ²¹

Husband and wife

'Abd a-Rahim Muhammad 'Abdallah al-Madhun | 63

Halimah 'Ali Muhammad al-Madhun | 66

The a-Tanani family | The parents:

Raafat Muhammad Isma'il a-Tanani | 39

Rawyah Fathi Hassan a-Tanani | 35

Their children

Isma'il Raafat Muhammad a-Tanani | 7

Adham Raafat Muhammad a-Tanani | 6

Amir Raafat Muhammad a-Tanani | 5

Muhammad Raafat Muhammad a-Tanani | 2

²¹. A Hamas military operative lives in a nearby building. He was not home at the time. It is not known whether that was the reason for the strike on the building.

Whose father and his first wife were killed in the incident²²

Until Israel bombed our house, I lived in an apartment in a building in which my father, 'Abd a-Rahim, 63, his first wife, Halimah, 66, my mother, 'Aliaa, 47, who was my father's second wife, and my sister Maryam, 25, also lived. I have a brother, Qusai, who's studying in Egypt, and another sister, Hanin, who's already married.

After the war started on 10 May 2021, we constantly heard Israeli airstrikes and learned about people killed and wounded. Our area was relatively quiet. I kept going to work as a physician at the Indonesian Hospital, which is 300 meters away from our house. We kept following the news and events.

On 13 May 2021, at around 11:30 P.M., I was sitting in my room. My mother and my sister Maryam were at my sister Hanin's. She's also a doctor, and she was due to give birth. About an hour later, I heard people shouting outside and unusual movement on the street. I went to the window overlooking the main street of Beit Lahiya from the south, and saw men, women and children running along the street. Some of them were carrying clothes, and it looked like they were running from home. I went and woke my father up right away. I was about to go outside to see if we needed to evacuate, too. As soon as I opened the door, there was a strong blast and the stairs crashed. I went back inside immediately. My father and his wife Halimah were standing behind me. We were trapped in the apartment.

I thought the bombing had ended, but a few minutes later, another missile landed on the house. The concrete and the walls fell on top of us. We recited the Shahadatain prayer. The door fell on me and shielded me from the debris and the concrete. My father and his wife were next to me, completely covered in rubble. At first, I could hear my father's voice, but after two minutes, he fell silent. His wife Halimah told me he had been killed.

I managed to call my cousin, and he called the Civil Defense and told them our house had been bombed. They arrived about half an hour later. I heard them ask if anyone was alive. I answered yes and that we were

having a hard time breathing because of the rubble, smoke and dust. It took an hour until they managed to pass an oxygen tube to me, which helped me breathe, and another three hours before they managed to get me out. They took me to the Indonesian Hospital, where I had tests and X-rays. It turned out I had four fractured ribs, a tear in the right lung, and hemorrhaging in the lung membrane. I also had contusions, bruises and scratches all over my body. The tests showed I had torn muscles, too. I was in the ICU for a week.

The bombing of our house ruined my life. I feel huge sorrow over my father. I came back here only less than a year ago, after leaving my father for seven years to study medicine in Egypt. When I was discharged from hospital, I went to my uncle Rizeq al-Madhun's house in Beit Lahiya. I'm still suffering from contusions and fractured ribs. It's been very difficult emotionally to deal with all of this. I was supposed to get married after 'Eid al-Fitr. I had already fixed up the apartment. I worked every day with my father to get it ready and prepare for the wedding. Now, I've now canceled the marriage ceremony.

We lost everything. The apartment I built cost 20,000 USD. The value of the rest of the apartments that were destroyed comes to about 150,000 USD. My father also had merchandise worth about thousands of dollars in the storage rooms, and it was destroyed. We've also lost our school report cards, academic degrees, distinction awards and personal photos from our lives. Also, three of our laptops were destroyed. They had all the pictures from my brothers' and my studies at university in Egypt. They ruined everything we had. Now we have nothing.

My whole family is scattered and exiled. We're looking for apartments to rent and live in. We're buying new clothes and furniture. It all costs a lot of money. We're starting life all over again. It's bitterly difficult. We lost our father and his wife, and the building we lived in, which we had built bit by bit. They destroyed it in one instant, at the push of a button.

22. Testimony given to Muhammad Sabah on 29 May 2021.



As soon as I opened the door, there was a strong blast and the stairs crashed. I went back inside immediately. My father and his wife Halimah were standing behind me. We were trapped in the apartment. I thought the bombing had ended, but a few minutes later, another missile landed on the house. The concrete and the walls fell on top of us.



Father of two who lost his brother, sister-in-law and four nephews in the incident²³

My brother and his family lived on the third floor of a three-story building.

On Thursday, I was visiting friends at Jabalya Refugee Camp. A friend of my brother Raafat's called me a little before midnight and asked me to call Raafat. There were bombings all over the Gaza Strip at the time, and he was worried something might have happened to him. I called my brother right away. Raafat answered, and I heard him shouting, "Help!" I got up and ran towards his house. I kept talking to him as I was running. I told him: "Don't worry, I'll be there in seconds." He said, "Help!" again. Halfway there, I heard a several very strong blasts. The call with Raafat got cut off. I tried calling him again, but he didn't answer.

I got to a-Ribat Mosque, which is 500 meters away from Raafat's home. There was dust everywhere. I took my shirt off and wrapped it around my face so I could go on. When I came close, I saw his building was nothing but rubble and stones.

I went towards it. People were running away from there, and I passed by them. I stood on the rubble and couldn't recognize my brother's building, because everything was in ruins. I heard voices below me. Then, some paramedics and Civil Defense people came. Everyone who was there tried to help, and we all tried to find survivors under the rubble. I started looking. We found the al-Malfuh family. There were six of them. We got them out, and they were okay. I heard another voice. I felt relieved because I thought it might be Raafat and his sons. It turned out to be the al-Madhun family. There were two martyrs there.

At 3:30 A.M., we stopped searching and walked about ten meters away from there. I spoke to the Civil Defense people and told them my brother, his wife and their sons were still under the rubble. I started looking for them in the fields near the house, but I couldn't find anyone.

I went to three hospitals in the area. I thought I might find my brother and his family there, but they weren't there either. I talked to my parents and told them everything

was okay, that Raafat was next to me and that he was okay. At around 5:00 A.M., I went to my sister Asmaa's (36). Her house is close to Raafat's. When she saw me, she hardly recognized me, I was exhausted and covered in dust and dirt. I didn't tell her Raafat had been killed, but just told her to pray for him and for his family.

In the morning, I went back to the wreckage of Raafat's house and looked for them everywhere, but to no avail. I went home to my parents. I still didn't tell them we couldn't find Raafat and his family. We had breakfast, and then I went to Raafat's house again and met some relatives there. I was physically and mentally exhausted. I sat down far from the house and called the Civil Defense. They came with special equipment for locating bodies and started working. I was there with friends and neighbors, and we looked for the bodies.

We were there all day, and we didn't find the bodies until the middle of the night. They took out the body of my nephew Amir. I picked him up and put him in the ambulance. Then we pulled out Muhammad, then Isma'il, and in the end, Adham. When we found them, Raafat had his arms around Isma'il and Amir, and his wife Rawyah had her arms around Muhammad and Adham. Then we took out Rawyah's body. It was dismembered. I got a tarp, and we got her out. She was three months pregnant. I carried her to the ambulance. Finally, we got Raafat out. His body was removed in two stages, because it was also in pieces. Everyone was taken to the Indonesian Hospital.

The next day, I went to the hospital with my father. The medical team there prepared the bodies of Raafat and his family. I wanted to help them. I took the pieces of Raafat's body and wrapped him up. I did the same with the little kids. My father gathered Rawyah's body parts and wrapped her. I held the pieces of the martyrs' bodies and recited, "Allah Akbar".

We put the wrapped bodies in an ambulance and drove home. I laid the bodies of Rawyah and the children in front of my mother and sisters, but I couldn't place Raafat's body in front of them. I left him in the ambulance. I took

23. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 18 June 2021.

my mother to say goodbye to him. She screamed and cried. Her state was indescribable. In those moments, I stayed strong so my family wouldn't fall apart, especially my father and mother.

I went to the cemetery. The family stayed home. I put Muhammad's body next to his mother, and Adham's next to his father, and Isma'il and Amir together. I went home shrouded in sadness. I was hoping I would cry, but I couldn't. We lost a whole family that did nothing. The

Israeli army bombed them, and they turned into dismembered bodies.

Raafat was the eldest brother, and he was always good to us. He was a humble man, and his family was a beautiful, easygoing family, and we loved them so much, I can't put it in words. His sons came over every day and always wanted to be with their grandparents. Raafat was a person who gave so much of himself. He helped my parents and never said no to them.



We were there all day, and we didn't find the bodies until the middle of the night. They took out the body of my nephew Amir. I picked him up and put him in the ambulance. Then we pulled out Muhammad, then Isma'il, and in the end, Adham. When we found them, Raafat had his arms around Isma'il and Amir, and his wife Rawyah had her arms around Muhammad and Adham.



14.5.21

Beit Lahiya, 12:30 A.M.

Military fires missile at house, killing mother and three children ²⁴

Lamyaa Muhammad Hassan al-'Attar | 26

Her three children

Islam Muhammad Mahmoud al-'Attar | 8

Amirah Muhammad Mahmoud al-'Attar | 6

Muhammad Zein Muhammad Mahmoud al-'Attar | 9 months

²⁴. According to the military, Hamas' tunnel network ran close to the house.

Whose family was killed in the incident²⁵

Before the war, I lived on the ground floor [of a building] in the al-'Atarah neighborhood, in the town of Beit Lahiya, with my wife and our three children: Islam, Amirah and Muhammad. My brother Diaa', his wife and their three children lived on the same floor. My brother Ihab, his wife and their five children lived on the first floor, and my brother Bahaa lived next to him. My mother Sabha lived on the second floor with my brother Tamim.

We have no connection to any organizations, and there are no government offices or military buildings and facilities in our neighborhood. Our area is very quiet, so we carried on with our lives at home as usual, even during the war. Of course, like all Gaza residents, we heard the Israeli airstrikes and the shelling from Israeli navy ships in northwestern Beit Lahiya. We also heard about the dead and wounded and about residential buildings and homes destroyed all over the Gaza Strip.

On Thursday night, after midnight, there was heavy bombing in the northern Gaza Strip – in Beit Hanoun and northern Beit Lahiya. Everyone was very tense and stressed because the noise was very loud, especially as it was the middle of the night and everything else was quiet. Half an hour after it all began, we heard an explosion nearby. The noise was horrifying. We thought it might be a good idea to get out of the apartment, but we hesitated because the bombings were right by the house. Suddenly, in one moment, there was an explosion inside and the house crashed down on us.

I found myself under debris, in complete darkness. I tried to get out from under it, but couldn't. I turned on the phone flashlight and tried to find my wife and children, but I couldn't see them or hear any of their voices.

I called my uncle, who works for the rescue team. I said: "Come quickly. We're under rubble because our house was bombed, help!" I told him I couldn't find my wife and children and that the rest of my family was trapped under the rubble.

The rescue teams arrived after more than half an hour. They started picking up the debris – stones, sand, furniture,

everything. After an hour and a half, they found my wife with her arms around our three children, but none of them were alive. They were covered in concrete and sand and had suffocated immediately. I saw them, but they looked like they were asleep. It was a terrible shock when I realized they weren't moving or breathing, that they were lifeless bodies.

We were all taken to Kamal 'Adwan Hospital, where we had tests and X-rays and were treated. The next day, with a broken heart and deep sorrow, we laid the martyrs to rest: my wife and my children, Islam, Amirah and Muhammad.

After the burial, I went with the rest of my family to the UNRWA school. We had nothing but the clothes we were wearing. We stayed there a few days without food or drink. We barely managed to get hold of a few items, and had something to eat and drink that area residents brought. A few days later, we moved to my friend's house in the a-Sabra neighborhood of Gaza City and stayed there until the end of the war. When it was over, we went back to our ruined home and sat on the wreckage. Then we rented apartments to live in until we rebuild our house. We still haven't processed what happened to us.

The Israelis destroyed my world. They ruined everything around me and left me alone. They simply erased my family from the population registry. There is no one left to comfort me. There's no one from my family by my side, the family I dreamt of for so long. I pictured my children's futures. I hoped to give them everything they needed and provide them with a good education. I dreamed of playing with them, having fun with them, traveling with them, always being by their side and living with them and for them. But that beautiful dream is over. Everything is over. Everyone has gone and will never return. They killed them and with that, killed me, too. They left me without any hope, without a future, to live a meaningless life. I tried so hard to give them a normal life, a life of dignity, contentment, stability. But I failed to protect them even inside my own house, the space that was supposed to be the safest for them and for me.

25. Testimony given to Muhammad Sabah on 6 June 2021.



Muhammad al-'Attar

They found my wife with her arms around our three children, but none of them were alive. They were covered in concrete and sand and had suffocated immediately. I saw them, but they looked like they were asleep. It was a terrible shock when I realized they weren't moving or breathing, that they were lifeless bodies.



Mother of five, Lamyaa's sister-in-law²⁶

The building we lived in had three floors, with two apartments on each. There were 29 of us living there, all from the same family. I lived with my family on the second floor and Lamyaa and her family lived on the first floor.

The day before the Israeli planes bombed our house was a high holiday. Despite the war and the airstrikes, we tried to make the kids happy. They dressed up for the occasion and were glad even though we adults were very worried. In the evening, my sister-in-law Manal called and said she was scared and wanted to stay with us until the airstrikes were over. In 2009, her house was bombed and her husband and his two brothers were killed. We told her to come over, that our home was her home. She came and stayed in my brother-in-law Muhammad's apartment on the first floor.

On Thursday, after midnight, we were all home. That day, there were heavy Israeli airstrikes. My husband Ihab went to the bedroom, and I stayed with my sons in the living room. At around midnight, I told my husband to come be with us in the living room. As soon as he left the bedroom, it was bombed. The windows shattered and all the doors in the house crashed. We all screamed and cried. We ran from the living room to the kitchen.

A few seconds later, Ihab said he thought it was over and everything was quiet. But then the house started shaking and I fell over. We looked at each other and didn't understand what was happening. The fridge fell on my husband and then the ceiling collapsed on us and on top of the fridge. There was a gas leak and we felt that we were suffocating. We screamed and called out for help, but no one heard us. My son-in-law turned on his phone's flashlight and turned off the gas valve. My sons and daughters were screaming because they thought their father was dead. I grabbed Ihab's hand and asked him if he was okay, and he said that he was. He asked me to get out of the house with the kids and leave him there, but I refused. My daughter Nur called an ambulance and the Civil Defense, but they didn't pick up. She called relatives and asked for help.

About 15 minutes later, I heard my brother-in-law Bahaa, 39. He called out and my daughters shouted back. He came right away and got them out. Then my brother-in-law Tamim, 30, came and helped Bahaa get us out from under the debris. They got all my kids out. I refused to leave and insisted on staying with my husband. He was trapped under the fridge. It was hard to move it, and we were also afraid the ceiling would fall on him. My brothers-in-law tried to get him out for about 45 minutes and miraculously, managed in the end. Thank God, my husband emerged safe and sound and we weren't hurt.

When we were outside, we shone our flashlights on the house and saw it was in ruins. We were sure Lamyaa and her small children were dead. Everyone was looking for them under the rubble and calling out to them. At around 1:00 A.M., my brother-in-law Bahaa said he'd seen Lamyaa and her kids under the rubble and couldn't save them. He said they'd been killed.

At around 2:00 A.M., Civil Defense vehicles and ambulances arrived and got Lamyaa and her young children out from under the rubble. They were taken to Kamal 'Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza.

We all moved to the UNRWA schools in the a-Rimal neighborhood. We were barefoot and had only the clothes on our backs, most of which were torn. We were in shock by what had happened to us and were very sad. We got to the school, which was unlivable. There were no water, food, mattresses or clothes, but it was safer than being at home.

We didn't get to say goodbye to Lamyaa and the kids. Their bodies were taken out of the freezers and immediately buried. Only my husband, my brothers-in-law and a few other relatives attended the funeral. It was the hardest thing I've ever been through. I can't describe it. I wanted to say goodbye to her and hug her and the kids. I couldn't believe I'd lost them. I still haven't processed what happened. Lamyaa was a very good woman. I loved her, and we were almost inseparable. Lamyaa's kids were always at my house, playing with my son Ahmad. He keeps

26. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 28 June 2021.

asking about them and can't believe they're dead. He keeps asking us to get them out from under the rubble, like we removed some of the furniture. He's in a bad emotional state. At night, when the power is cut off, he screams and says our house is about to be destroyed and asks us not to leave him.

Lamyaa has another daughter, Suzan, from a previous marriage. She comes over a lot now. She cries and you can see the sadness in her eyes. I comfort her and stay by her side, take her for walks with us and tell her that we'll never give up on her, that she's like a daughter to us.

I lived in that house for 21 years, and now I'm at my daughter's house. I worked hard to have my own home. I deprived myself of things to save money, but

everything was destroyed in an instant. I found some documents and jewelry, but you can't bring back all the memories. Now our lives are very hard and everything feels pointless. I spend most of my time sleeping with the kids, to get away from thoughts about what happened to us. Losing Lamyaa and her kids is unbearable. You can be compensated for a house, but they can't be brought back to life. They're gone forever.

Life goes on and must go on. I pray for Lamyaa and her sons to enter into the grace of God, and that her husband will have patience. He's in a terrible mental state. I haven't seen him crying. He's in shock over what happened and can't cry, but you can see the sorrow in his eyes. I hope he receives salvation from heaven.



I spend most of my time sleeping with the kids, to get away from thoughts about what happened to us. Losing Lamyaa and her kids is unbearable. You can be compensated for a house, but they can't be brought back to life. They're gone forever.



14.5.21

Al-Bureij Refugee Camp, 1:40 P.M.

Military fires missile at house,
killing passerby ²⁷

Mahmoud Muhammad Isma'il Khaled | 24

²⁷. The bombed house belonged to a senior member of the military wing of Hamas.

Testimony of Ahmad Khaled | 21

Mahmoud's brother²⁸

On Friday, 14 May 2021, around midday, I was at home. Our building has two apartments. One is mine and in the other, my parents live with my brother Mahmoud and his wife, who's five months pregnant, and their daughter Ahlam, who's a year and a half old.

At around 1:30 P.M., Mahmoud came back from the bakery at the entrance to a-Nuseirat Refugee Camp where he'd been working for the last year. He wanted to have lunch quickly, so he could buy groceries at the market before he had to get back to work. A few minutes after he went out, I heard fighter jets bomb the camp. The sound was terrifying and very loud. The neighbors said the strike was aimed at the home of Ayman Nofal, who's a Hamas operative, and at the home of the 'Issa family, whose sons also belong to Hamas.

I went outside immediately, because Ayman's house is very close to ours. I saw that the house was in ruins. There were many civilians there searching for wounded people under the rubble. I joined them and we got several wounded people out, including an unconscious baby, an elderly man who had been injured in the head, a woman who was injured in her hands and face, and a guy who was injured in the chest. They were carried to Palestinian Red Crescent ambulances, except for one guy who was evacuated in a civilian car.

I went back home. About two hours passed and my brother Mahmoud still hadn't come back. We started worrying about him and I called the bakery where he worked, but they told me he hadn't returned. At the same time, we heard on the news that there was an unidentified martyr from al-Bureij Refugee Camp at a-Shuhada al-Aqsa Hospital.

I went with my uncle Khalil, 62, and his two sons, Isma'il and Zeid, to the hospital and we asked to see the body. When they opened the refrigerator, I saw a body that was completely mutilated, especially around the head and face. I looked at his pants and checked the left hand, because one of Mahmoud's fingers was cut off at the tip. Then I recognized it was my brother. I blacked out and didn't know what was going on around me.

I woke up at home, surrounded by some of my friends. We later found out that the rescue teams had located Mahmoud while I was searching for wounded people under the rubble. They found him inside warehouses under a nearby house, about six meters away from the house that had been bombed. He'd probably been passing by the house as the missile hit it and was blown away by the force of the blast. The warehouse doors were completely destroyed.

We buried my brother the next day, in the cemetery of al-Bureij Refugee Camp. His hobby was hand wrestling and he was a large, strong man. He'd been into bodybuilding since he was 14 and worked out regularly. Mahmoud provided for my parents. My father used to work as a driver, but a few years ago he got sick and stopped working. Mahmoud worked every spare moment to support the family. He didn't belong to any faction or political organization.

28. Testimony given to Khaled al-'Azayzeh on 27 May 2021.



I saw a body that was completely mutilated, especially around the head and face. I looked at his pants and checked the left hand, because one of Mahmoud's fingers was cut off at the tip. Then I recognized it was my brother. I blacked out...



14.5.21

A-Sabra neighborhood, Gaza City, 8:30 P.M.

Military fires two missiles at building; 12-year-old killed and 18-year-old burned to death

Adam Muhammad 'Ali al-Far'awi | 18

'Abdallah Ashraf 'Abdallah Judah | 12²⁹

²⁹. His father was a senior member of the Islamic Jihad military wing.

Testimony of Muhammad al-Far'awi | 63

Father of eight including Adam³⁰

On Friday, 14 May 2021, at 8:30 P.M., I was at home with my family. We lived on the third floor. I was sitting in bed with my wife Sahar, and our daughter Dina, 15, was in her room. In the room next door, our son Adam was lying on his bed on the left side of the room. The rest of our kids – Dima, 17, Mahmoud, 12, and Lina, 10 – were in the living room.

Suddenly, there was a huge blast. I later realized there had been two missiles. One hit the apartment below us and started a fire that reached our apartment. Our room and Adam's caught fire. The other hit Adam's room directly, but didn't explode.

My wife and I tumbled out of bed onto the floor. I got up immediately and went towards the door, trying to put out the flames. I left the room and found Adam standing in his doorway. His whole body was going up in flames. He looked like a ball of fire. His sister Dima was standing in front of him, screaming for us to help him. I started putting out the flames and wrapped him in blankets to save him. I was terrified there would be another bombing while I was trying to save him. I managed to get him to the entrance to the house, covered him and told him to rest.

A few minutes later, ambulances came and took Adam to hospital. Sahar went with him and told him everything would be okay. He told her he was in a lot of pain. I went home to check on the other kids. There were fire trucks putting out the fire in the building from the outside. I tried to put out the flames inside the apartment. Our apartment, especially Adam's room, was in ruins. We can't live there anymore.

Then I went out of the apartment and fainted. My neighbors and the building's security guard came over to me, and an ambulance took me to a-Shifaa Hospital. My daughters Dina and Lina went to the

neighbors' house, and my sons Mahmoud and Dima went to the hospital to be with Sahar.

Adam had burns on 95% of his body. The doctors tried to treat him at the hospital's trauma unit until 11:00 P.M., but they couldn't help him. He was transferred to the ICU, and my wife and I weren't allowed to see him. We went to stay with my wife's aunt, who lives near the hospital.

At night, at 2:00 A.M., the hospital informed us that Adam had passed away. That was the hardest moment of my life. Parting with Adam was impossible. It never crossed my mind that my beloved son and friend, whose whole future lay ahead of him, would die. I had hoped he would work in my company and take over from me. The Israeli military destroyed that dream and crushed my hopes. His mother can't stop crying. She keeps looking at pictures of Adam, who was her eldest son. She had hoped to see him get married, build a house and start a family. She wanted to see his children. None of that will happen. The Israeli military robbed our family of its dream.

Adam was a Taekwondo athlete and was famous in the sports community. The club he trained at was preparing him for competitions in France. But the Israeli military also robbed us of his excellence and of his brilliance as a champion in that field. Adam's siblings are still in shock and in a terrible mental state. They all loved him. He played with them, helped them with their studies and was a true friend. Now he's gone forever.

Our home, our safe haven, is completely ruined. It's unlivable. Everything is burned. Right now, we're scattered and moving from house to house, from friend to friend. I pray to God for salvation and patience during this difficult time.

30. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 15 June 2021.



Adam al-Far'awi



My wife and I tumbled out of bed onto the floor. I got up immediately and went towards the door, trying to put out the flames. I left the room and found Adam standing in his doorway. His whole body was going up in flames. He looked like a ball of fire. His sister Dima was standing in front of him, screaming for us to help him.



15.5.21

Al-Amal neighborhood, Beit Lahiya, before dawn ³¹

Military fires missile at house, killing woman

Fayzeh Ahmad Muhammad Salamah | 45

³¹. According to the military, Hamas' tunnel network ran by the house.

Fayzeh's husband³²

Our house was a two-story building. I lived on the ground floor with my wife Fayzeh, God rest her soul, our son 'Udai, 23, and his wife 'Uhud, 27. Our son Musa, 26, and his wife Suraya, 22, lived on the first floor with their two children, Ibrahim, 5, and Lin, 2.

Our area was relatively quiet during the war, and we carried on almost as usual, despite the sound of the airplanes and bombings that terrified us. We followed the news reports on the bombing and shelling of homes and on the dead and wounded throughout the Gaza Strip. Sometimes, we also heard shelling from ships.

On Friday, after midnight, there was massive shelling all over the northern Gaza Strip. I was with my wife and our son Musa in our apartment on the ground floor. 'Adi and 'Uhud were with Uhud's family. Suraya, Musa's wife, was also with her children at her parents' house in a-Shati Refugee Camp.

We heard very loud explosions nearby. We were in the living room, and the bombardment didn't stop. Suddenly, I saw the window fly. I felt dizzy and fell down. I woke up several minutes later with lumps of concrete on me. I saw a concrete pillar still holding the roof up. Musa was next to me. My wife was, too, but she was buried under debris.

I said to Musa, "Where's your phone? Turn on the flashlight." Then I told him to call for help. He called his uncle Ahmad and a friend of his. Meanwhile, I heard people shouting and screaming outside, and neighbors talking and calling Civil Defense forces and ambulances.

At some point, neighbors came to rescue us. They lifted the rubble off me and pulled me out. I crawled out. Musa was taken out after me. An ambulance took us to the Indonesian Hospital. It was 1:30 A.M. At around 4:00 A.M., they extracted my wife Fayzeh's body.

I stayed at the hospital for a few hours. I was diagnosed with a fracture in the fifth vertebrae and bruises. Musa sustained bruises and partial hearing loss. We're still recovering. At first, I went to my in-laws', because our house was completely ruined. After the war ended, I rented this apartment.

32. Testimony given to Muhammad Sabah on 29 May 2021.



Palestinian civil defense teams participated in rescue work to recover a body from the rubble of a building belonging to a Palestinian family
Credit: Pacific Press Media Production Corp./Alamy Live News

Suddenly, I saw the window fly. I felt dizzy and fell down. I woke up several minutes later with lumps of concrete on me. I saw a concrete pillar still holding the roof up. Musa was next to me. My wife was, too, but she was buried under debris.



15.5.21

A-Shuja'iyeh neighborhood, Gaza City, 1:30 P.M.

Military fires missile, killing two minors and a man

Muhammad Ahmad 'Atiyyah Bhar | 17

Seif a-Din Hani Muhammad Abu al-'Ata | 18 ³³

Yihya Basseem Ahmad al-'Ajleh | 24

33. Seif a-Din Abu al-'Ata was an operative with the Islamic Jihad military wing, but it is unknown whether he was the reason the military bombed the house.

Testimony of Mahmoud al-'Ar'ir | 24

Yihya's cousin ³⁴

On Saturday, 15 May 2021, at around 1:30 P.M., I was home. I went to my paternal aunt's house, which is on a side street off the main street where Yihya lived. On the way, I met my paternal cousin Muhammad, 21, and stopped to chat with him. A few minutes later, I heard a very loud explosion. I ran to the site of the bombing on the main street and saw the missile had landed at the entrance to Yihya's house. A small TV repair business next door had also been hit.

On the road next to me was the body of the martyr Seif Hani Abu al-'Ata. Not far from him lay Muhammad Bhar, who was still breathing. I rushed to Yihya's house and saw some young guys carrying the brothers Majd and Muhammad al-'Ajleh, Yihya and Seif Fadel Abu al-'Ata. We gave them first aid on Yihya's uncle's bus. Two other wounded people were treated inside an Electric Company vehicle. Then we took all the martyrs and wounded people to a-Shifaa Hospital.

I was shocked by the sight of the martyrs and the wounded people. They were all very badly injured. Yihya's injury was particularly severe, he had shrapnel in his neck and back. Majd was also very badly injured in the head and stomach and is being treated at a hospital in Hebron. His brother Muhammad was injured in the legs and is still being treated at a-Shifaa Hospital. Muhammad a-Zaqut has medium-level injuries in the shoulder and leg.

I wanted to visit Yihya in hospital, but he was unconscious and they wouldn't let me see him. The

hospital wanted to transfer him to al-Makassed Hospital in Jerusalem, but the Israelis didn't approve it. I saw Seif Abu al-'Ata and Muhammad a-Zaqut, who were doing well. I went to Yihya's mother's house, who's my paternal aunt, to support her and see how she was doing. Yihya was my friend and we had a very strong bond. I hoped Yihya would recover and come home to his family, but it wasn't meant to be.

After 18 days in the ICU, on 3 June 2021 at 3:00 A.M., we were informed that he had passed away. I couldn't believe it. I went immediately to my aunt's house. All my relatives, neighbors and friends were there. My aunt, her husband and her sons were screaming and crying. I was heartbroken over my beloved friend Yihya. At 11:00 A.M., an ambulance brought his body home so we could say goodbye to him there. When I saw him, I fell to the floor and cried. I couldn't touch him because I was in such shock. We took him to the mosque and there, I hugged and kissed him. All around, the mourners were wailing and everyone was crying over Yihya.

Yihya was always smiling. When I looked at him after he died, it seemed like he was smiling. We'd been friends since we were little kids. We met every day and hung out together, at my place or at his. We would go out at night, and in the morning walk to the beach for sport. Now that he's dead, I feel lonely. I've lost a very precious person. Life after his passing is a life without laughter or smiles. I still can't believe I'll never see him again.



Seif a-Din abu al-'Atah



Muhammad Bhar



Yihya al-'Ajleeh

34. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 2 June 2021.



I went to my paternal aunt's house, which is on a side street off the main street where Yihya lived. On the way, I met my paternal cousin Muhammad, 21, and stopped to chat with him. A few minutes later, I heard a very loud explosion. I ran to the site of the bombing on the main street and saw the missile had landed at the entrance to Yihya's house.



A mother of six including Muhammad³⁵

During the war, there were intensive airstrikes near our house in the neighborhood of a-Zeitoun in Gaza City. We were terrified, so my husband and I escaped with our three children who still live with us – Hanadi, 25, Majdi, 23, and Muhammad, 17 – to my son 'Atiyah's house. He lives with his wife and three-year-old daughter in a rented apartment in the neighborhood of a-Shuja'iyeh.

On Saturday, 15 May 2021, I was making lunch at my son 'Atiyah's house. Muhammad was standing next to me and he said, "I love you, Mom." He kissed me, headed downstairs and went out to buy some things at a shop nearby. It was 1:30 P.M. The moment he left, I heard a loud explosion. I screamed and called out, "Muhammad!" I looked out the window and saw dust and smoke on the street. I hurried downstairs and found Muhammad lying in the doorway, bleeding.

I screamed for help, and Majdi came and picked him up. Muhammad was crying and saying, "I want Mom and Dad." Majdi told him to recite the Shahadatain. Muhammad was taken to hospital in a private car, along with other martyrs and wounded people. It was a massacre at my son's doorstep. The stairs were full of blood. I will never forget the sight.

Majdi went with Muhammad to a-Shifaa Hospital, and I stayed home. My husband drove after them and every time I called him or my sons, they told me Muhammad was fine. But I sensed that he wasn't okay, that I'd lost him.

Two hours after he was injured, I went to the hospital, too. I sat by the entrance to the operating room, reading the Quran and praying for him. The doctors told me to pray because his condition was unstable. I still had hope. At 11:00 P.M., I suddenly heard Majdi shouting. I ran over to him and heard everyone saying Muhammad was dead. I saw Majdi lying over Muhammad's body, crying and screaming, "Why did you let Muhammad go?!"

I told the doctors to check on Muhammad, that maybe he was still alive. I felt I was losing my mind. I over up

to Muhammad and screamed. I couldn't believe what had happened. Only then, I saw my husband lying on the floor unconscious. The doctors were treating him. I fainted, too, and when I woke up I was told they'd already transferred Muhammad to the morgue. I went there and sat in front of the fridge for two hours, by Muhammad's side. Then I hugged his body. I couldn't say goodbye to him. I stayed there all night.

At 6:00 A.M., I went back to Atiyah's house. They brought Muhammad's body there so we could say goodbye to him. They laid him before me and I scattered flowers over him, hugged him and kissed his head and face. Then they took him away. I couldn't say goodbye and ran after him along the road, holding onto him. Those were extremely difficult moments. My heart broke. I wish I had died instead of him. Since he died, life has turned black. He was my youngest son and the dearest to my heart.

He was a happy, smiley person. He loved soccer and used to play with the kids in the neighborhood. He also loved riding his bike and riding horses. My husband even bought him a horse. After Muhammad was killed, the horse died.

Since Muhammad was killed, I've been unable to go on living. I cry day and night. I try to escape the memories, but it's impossible. I don't eat. I've given away all my clothes and only wear black. Muhammad was everything to me, and I have no life without him. My relationship with him was special. I can't describe it. I've kept some of his clothes and touch them every day to feel his smell.

I left the house in a-Zeitoun and moved in with my son 'Atiyah to be close to Muhammad's grave, so I can visit him every day. I give out sweets and chocolates to kids by the grave. I tell Muhammad that I'm waiting for him and ask him how he could abandon me. I keep imagining him opening the door and hugging me.

35. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 29 June 2021.



The moment he left, I heard a loud explosion. I screamed and called out, “Muhammad!” I looked out the window and saw dust and smoke on the street. I hurried downstairs and found Muhammad lying in the doorway, bleeding.



16.5.21

Al-Wehdah Street, a-Rimal neighborhood, Gaza City, 1:00 A.M.

In two adjacent buildings, 22 members of the al-Kolak (al-Qolaq) family were killed³⁶

In one building, eight members of the family were killed

Husband and wife 'Izzat Mu'in Muhammad al-Qolaq | 44

Du'aa 'Omar 'Abdallah al-Qolaq | 35

Two of their children Zeid 'Izzat Mu'in al-Qolaq | 8

Adam 'Izzat Mu'in al-Qolaq | 3

Muhammad Mu'in Muhammad al-Qolaq ('Izzat's brother) | 41

Three of his children Hala Muhammad Mu'in al-Qolaq | 12

Yara Muhammad Mu'in al-Qolaq | 9

Rula Muhammad Mu'in al-Qolaq | 6

In the adjacent building, 14 members of the family were killed

Husband and wife Amin Muhammad Hamad al-Qolaq | 90

Sa'diyah Yusef Taher al-Qolaq | 84

Their son Fawaz Amin Muhammad al-Kolak | 62

His children Riham Fawaz Amin al-Kolak | 32

Sameh Fawaz Amin al-Kolak | 28

His wife Ayat Ibrahim Khalil al-Kolak | 19

Their son Qusai Sameh Fawaz al-Kolak | 4 months

'Abd al-Hamid Fawaz Amin al-Kolak | 22

Their daughter Bahaa Amin Muhammad al-Qolaq | 48

Their daughter-in-law Amal Jamil Salamah al-Qolaq | 42

Her children Taher Shukri Amin al-Qolaq | 23

Ahmad Shukri Amin al-Qolaq | 15

Hanaa Shukri Amin al-Qolaq | 14

Their daughter-in-law Khitam Salim al-Kolak | 47

In the third building, which belongs to the Abu al-'Oaf family, 22 people were killed

'Abir Nimer 'Ali Ishkuntana | 29

Four of her children Dana Riyad Hassan Ishkuntana | 9

Yihya Riyad Hassan Ishkuntana | 5

Lana Riyad Hassan Ishkuntana | 4

Zein Riyad Hassan Ishkuntana | 2

Rajaa Subhi Abu al-'Oaf al-Ifrangi | 41

Her four children **Dima Rami Riyad al-Ifrangi | 15**

Yazan Rami Riyad al-Ifrangi | 13

Mira Rami Riyad al-Ifrangi | 11

Amir Rami Riyad al-Ifrangi | 9

Husband and wife **Tawfiq Isma'il Hussein Abu al-'Oaf | 79**

Majdiyeh Khalil Hussein Abu al-'Oaf | 82

Their son **Ayman Tawfiq Isma'il Abu al-'Oaf | 49**

His wife **Rim Ahmad Khalil Abu al-'Oaf | 40**

Their children **Tawfiq Ayman Tawfiq Abu al-'Oaf | 17**

Tala Ayman Tawfiq Abu al-'Oaf | 13

Diana Ziad Muhei a-Din Abu al-'Oaf al-Yazji | 45 Died of her wounds on 3 June 2021

Her daughters **Rawan 'Alaa Subhi Abu al-'Oaf | 19**

Shaimaa 'Ali Subhi Abu al-'Oaf | 21

Their father's aunt **Subheyeh Isma'il Abu al-'Oaf | 73**

Hazem 'Adel Na'im al-Qumo' | 48 a tenant in the building

Muhammad Ahmad Mesbah Iki | 39 owner of a shop in the building

In the fourth building, the al-Ahlam building, about 500 meters away,

Two occupants were killed **Mu'in Ahmad Hassan al-'Alul | 66**

Luai Muhammad Ahmad 'Odeh | 54

Military fires missiles at four buildings late at night,
killing 46 people³⁷

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36. Some members of the family spell their name with a K (al-Kolak), while others spell it with a Q (al-Qolaq).

37. According to the military, Hamas' tunnel network ran by the house.

A father of four who lost 22 members of his family³⁸

I now live with my wife and our children at my parents' house, which is behind the house I had on al-Wehdah Street, in the a-Rimal neighborhood. I lived in it with my wife and our four children: Lana, Ahmad, Mahmoud and Zina. The building had three floors. On the ground floor, our family had shops and businesses and we all worked there. We lived on the third floor. My brother Muhammad and his wife Dalal lived on the second floor with their children: Hala, Yara, Rula and 'Abdallah. My brother 'Izzat and his wife Du'aa lived on the first floor with their three children: 'Aziz, Zeid and Adam.

My uncle Amin, his wife Sa'diyah and their children lived in the building next to us. My uncle was a pensioner. He used to work at the Ministry of Public Works. His son Shukri owns the Ajwaa Paint Company, his son Muhammad is a clerk with the Ministry of Public Works, his son Fawaz owned a supermarket under the building, and his daughter Bahaa worked at a kindergarten.

After the war started, I following the events and moved between my apartment and my parents' house. We sat together and followed the news. There was the constant sound of airstrikes throughout the Gaza Strip, and we could hear the sirens of ambulances taking wounded people to a-Shifaa Hospital. We led an almost normal life, but were constantly anxious and stressed because of the airplanes and the powerful blasts caused by the shelling and missiles. The general atmosphere was one of sadness and depression. We left the house only if we had to, for instance to buy food at my cousin's supermarket.

On Sunday, 16 May 2021, at around 1:00 A.M., my wife and I were getting ready for bed and our children were already asleep. We heard a very loud explosion. The building literally shook. My wife and I grabbed the kids and sat down in the middle of the apartment. Then we heard another very loud explosion and the apartment walls cracked. We were terrified and were scared the walls would fall on us. Then we heard another blast, even louder, and felt our whole building plummet to the

ground, simply collapse. We didn't know what was going on and how something like that could happen. I saw the walls break and the water tanks fall to the ground.

The electricity went out after the second explosion. Then, after the third one, I turned the flashlight on my phone on and went to the front door. But when I got to the stairs, I couldn't find them. All I could see were piles of concrete. I went back to the living room, and then I saw that the kitchen door was ajar. When I peeked through the crack, I saw my cousins and neighbors, and they all shouted to me to get out of there. I didn't understand how I was supposed to get down from the third floor, but then I saw I was only one meter above the ground. My apartment had fallen from the third floor to the ground.

I took my wife and kids outside. They were all barefoot and in shock. Afterwards, I couldn't see anything any more because there was complete darkness. I took my wife and kids to my parents' and then went back to our building. I saw how the bombing had destroyed it, my uncle Amin's three-story building and the Abu al-'Oaf building, which is about 60 meters away from ours. Then I found out that many residents of the three buildings were no longer alive.

Along with everyone else there, I started helping the Civil Defense team search for casualties, remove debris and get the dead and wounded out from under the ruins. Checking who was out, who'd been left behind, who was alive and who was dead. I walked around and checked on my brothers and relatives to see who was still under the rubble.

It was a massacre. A disaster brought down on us for no reason and without justification. In a single moment, in the blink of an eye, we lost 22 of our loved ones. They were all innocent. We received no warning before the strike. They fired suddenly, without prior warning. We're ordinary citizens and aren't affiliated with any organizations, so it took us completely by surprise.

38. Testimony given to Muhammad Sabah on 30 May 2021.

Our lives revolve around home and work. We're still in shock by what happened to us. We're in a nightmare. How can we believe that we lost

22 family members in one fell swoop, that our homes are gone? They have destroyed the rest of our lives.



”

It was a massacre. A disaster brought down on us for no reason and without justification. In a single moment, in the blink of an eye, we lost 22 of our loved ones.

”

A father of five who lost his wife and four of his children in the incident³⁹

Before the war, I lived on the third floor of the Abu al-'Oaf building on al-Wehdah Street, along with my wife, Abir Ishkuntana, and our five children: Dana, Lina, Yihya, Zein and Suzi. We rented this apartment three years ago. The building had four stories and there were shops on the ground floor. I used to work as a waiter at restaurants and cafeterias. Since the pandemic broke out in March 2020, I've been unemployed and have only worked odd jobs.

After the war started, we were terrified and constantly followed the news and the events. I stayed home with my wife and kids so they wouldn't be scared by the sound of the bombings, even though we lived in a prestigious area that had no military targets. Our area is peaceful, and we only occasionally heard the sirens of ambulances evacuating the wounded to a-Shifaa Hospital, which is close to us.

On Saturday evening, 15 May 2021, our children went to their rooms to sleep. My wife 'Abir and I were still awake. After midnight, at around 12:30, my wife also went to bed after a long day of fear from the airstrikes and drones.

I stayed in the living room and watched the news. Suddenly, about half an hour after my wife had gone to bed, I felt our building shake. I saw a strong red flash and then there was another intense tremor. I ran to the children's room. My wife was already there, getting them out of the room. Suddenly, the building collapsed. It all fell down, the walls, the pillars, the concrete. The ceiling fell on my wife and kids, and I dropped as if I'd fallen into a deep pit. There was concrete around me and I couldn't breathe or see anything. The power went out during my fall. I couldn't see my wife and kids and didn't know what had happened to them.

A few minutes later, I heard Dana and Zein shouting, "Daddy, Daddy." I called out to them. I don't know if

they heard me. After a few moments, I couldn't hear their voices anymore. I was stuck under the rubble, screaming and crying and calling for people to come and help us.

A few hours later, I heard a voice calling, "Is anyone alive?" I said I was. They asked for my name and I answered them, and then they told me they'd remove the rubble soon and get me out. I was exhausted, wounded and couldn't breathe. I didn't know what had happened to my wife and kids. I didn't stop thinking about them.

They removed the debris and took me to a-Shifaa Hospital, where I was examined and X-rayed. It turned out I had a fracture in my back and thorax, wounds and bruises on my body, deep gashes in my eyebrow and right hand, and that one finger had been severed. I heard that bodies from the Abu al-'Oaf and al-Ifrangi families who lived in my building had been extracted.

A few hours later, I was informed that the bodies of my wife and four of my children – Dana, 9, Yihya, 4, Lana, 3, and Zein, 2 – had been extracted. Only my daughter Suzi, 7, survived. They got her out after she'd been trapped for 10 hours under the rubble and concrete. She was hospitalized for five days with fractures and bruises. I was discharged after six days.

I've lost all hope in life. They killed my wife and four of my children. Israel buried them alive under the rubble. My children loved life and loved their family and friends. I woke up to a tragedy and a massacre. Everything is black. My daughter Suzi and I are in shock. Every day, she asks me about her mother and says she needs her and wants to see her, and I have nothing to say to her. She asks me to take her to her mother. She keeps asking me about our tragedy and talking about it. Our lives have become meaningless. I have no life now that they're gone.

39. Testimony given to Muhamad Sabah on 31 May 2021.



A few minutes later, I heard Dana and Zein shouting, “Daddy, Daddy.” I called out to them. I don’t know if they heard me. After a few moments, I couldn’t hear their voices anymore.



A father of four who lost his wife and children in the incident⁴⁰

I lived with my mother, my wife Rajaa Abu al-'Oaf and our four children in the a-Safa building in the a-Rimal neighborhood, on a-Thurah Street, which is parallel to al-Wehdah Street. Our building was 60 meters away from the Abu al-'Oaf building. After the war broke out on 10 May 2021, I stayed with my wife and our kids, Dima, Yazan, Mira and Amir, in the apartment. We followed the news all the time. We heard airstrikes all over Gaza City. My wife and kids were scared of the bombings, and we kept the kids busy so they wouldn't hear the explosions and the sound of the drones hovering over us all the time.

On Saturday, 15 May 2021, at around 4:30 P.M., my wife went with our four children to visit her family on al-Wehdah Street and bake holiday cookies. They planned to sleep there and come back the next day, just for a change of scenery in the middle of the war and the bombings.

At around 11:00 P.M., I went to bed. My mother also went to her room. Suddenly, I woke up in a panic to a series of loud explosions very close to us. The power went out. I checked the time. It was 1:00 A.M. A cousin on my father's side called to ask if we were okay. He lives near me and thought the explosions were in my building. I told him I'd woke up in fright from the sound of the explosions. I looked out the window to see where the strike had been. Just then, my cousin 'Imad 'Ali Hassan called and told me that it was the Abu al-'Oaf building. When I heard that, I was shocked. I was very scared.

I immediately ran over to the Abu al-'Oaf building, where my wife and four kids were. I got there in less than a minute. I saw a shocking, unbearable sight. The building and the street were totally destroyed. I stood there in total shock. I also saw Amin and Mu'in al-Kolak's buildings in ruins. People were screaming and crying, running from place to place, some looking for siblings and relatives.

Ambulances and Civil Defense crews arrived. Everyone was searching for people, trying to save them. I wanted to save my wife and kids. I saw one girl taken out and I was sure it was my daughter Dima. I later found out it was Shaimaa Abu al-'Oaf, who had also been killed. More people were extracted, some dead and others wounded. I also saw them remove bits of bodies. I saw them extract Dr. Ayman Abu al-'Oaf and his wife Rim. They also extracted his mother Majdiyeh and Diana, 'Alaa Abu al-'Oaf's wife, who was wounded.

Then they brought out my wife Rajaa's body. They also got out my two sons, who had been sleeping side by side. Their faces were blue, which means they died of suffocation. At first I was sure they were still alive, but the Civil Defense crew told me that no one in my family had made it and they were all dead. I was in shock. My whole family was killed. I have no one left in this world.

They continued getting people out. They removed 'Omar Abu al-'Oaf, who was wounded, and Hazem, who rented an apartment in the building. The body of Muhammad, who owned a mobile phone shop he was renting from Bahaa Abu al-'Oaf, was also recovered. They were all taken to a-Shifaa Hospital.

On Sunday, we buried my wife and kids at the cemetery. I went back to my apartment in shock. I couldn't believe what had happened. I couldn't believe I was going home without my wife and kids. The apartment is sad, empty, abandoned, and has no signs of life. They were bombed by Israeli airplanes while they were asleep at their grandfather's house. Everything is ruined for me forever. They killed my wife. She had a master's degree and worked with international projects in the Gaza Strip. My children were outstanding students and knew English and French. Especially my daughter Dima, who drew, danced and took part in festivals. My wife and I raised our children for 16 years. Their lives were wiped out in an instant.

40. Testimony given to Muhammad Sabah on 31 May 2021.



Then they brought out my wife Rajaa's body. They also got out my two sons, who had been sleeping side by side. Their faces were blue, which means they died of suffocation.



A mother of five who lost her husband in the incident⁴¹

We lived in the Abu al-'Oaf building. It was a four-story building and we lived on the fourth floor. We rented the 180-meter apartment about five months ago. My husband and I lived there with our sons Muhammad, 18, and Khaled, 12, as well as our son 'Adel, 26, his wife and their baby, who's eight months old.

On Saturday night, my son 'Adel and his wife went to visit her parents. After midnight, at 12:30, I told my husband and sons to go to bed already, that they should rest and forget about the airstrikes. My sons and I went to our rooms, and my husband stayed in the living room. I picked up my phone and suddenly heard several very loud explosions. The house started swaying from side to side.

As I ran to the boys' room, I saw the walls begin to crack. The whole house was full of dust and gravel. I opened the door to the boys' room, which is next to mine, and shouted for my husband to come help us. He didn't respond. I went into their room. Muhammad ran into my arms and Khaled was lying on his bed. A few seconds later, another missile landed on the building. Muhammad and I fell to the floor, and debris fell on us. I heard Khaled shout, "Help, Mom, my hand is broken!" I told him to shout loudly so I could hear he was okay, because I couldn't see him. I kept hugging Muhammad the whole time.

The wall and the roof fell on me, and the wardrobe fell on Muhammad. I asked Muhammad if he had his phone and he said yes. He called his uncle Hassan al-Qumo' and his sister Ghadir. He told them, "Our house has been bombed and we're buried under the rubble. We can't hear Dad's voice."

I started to choke because of the debris from the roof covering me. I had no air. Muhammad tried to help me out, but he couldn't. We stayed under the rubble for almost three hours. Muhammad held his phone up with a stick to help the rescue team locate us.

At some point, I blacked out. I woke up at -Shifaa Hospital and asked where my sons and husband were. It turned that Muhammad was in the bed next to me. I held his hand. After an hour, Khaled came to visit me and I was thrilled when I saw him standing there. I had bruises all over my body and blood clots. I'm still suffering from the bruising. Muhammad had bruises on both legs. Khaled's condition is more complicated, because he has a fracture in his right arm and nerve damage in his hand, in addition to the bruises. He's still being treated and may need surgery.

In the morning, I asked the nurses about my husband. They told me he was okay, that he only had a broken leg and was in surgery. Then I asked again, and my son-in-law told me he was in the ICU because he'd inhaled dust and a lot of smoke, and the doctors wanted to keep him under observation. I told them I wanted to see him, but they told me that his condition didn't allow it and it wasn't possible to talk on the phone with patients in the ICU.

I was discharged from hospital and when I asked again to see my husband, they told me that it would be better to go home first and come later to see him. I went to my parents' house, changed clothes and told my family that I wanted to go back to the hospital. I noticed their expressions were strange. I asked them if anything had happened, because I felt something was wrong. I said, "Tell me what happened."

My sister Sanaa hugged me and said, "Be strong. May God give you patience and compensate you." I collapsed immediately, because I understood Hazem had been killed. I immediately went to his parents' house, where I saw him. He looked like he was asleep, as if he would wake up any time soon. I hugged him and screamed, "Wake up, Hazem!" My children broke down. Those were the most harrowing moments we've ever been through.

41. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 6 June 2021.

In the first days, Khaled, Muhammad and I stayed with my parents in the a-Daraj neighborhood of Gaza City. My son Adel rented an apartment to live in with his wife. Two weeks ago, I also rented an apartment in the a-Rimal neighborhood. Khaled doesn't want to move there. His condition isn't good – physically or mentally. He's scared and stayed at my parents' house, where he feels safer around his uncles. He doesn't want to turn the light off at night, and he's also scared to go to the bathroom alone and asks his cousins to accompany him. He's afraid there's going to be another bombing. He's also refusing therapy. He went to one meeting and decided he didn't want to go again. I'm very worried about him and about his future. How will he continue his life? He was very attached to his father and is finding the loss very difficult.

Muhamad is a high school student at the al-Azhari school and is studying for his matriculation exams. He's in a bad state mentally, too. We left home with nothing, not even his books and the exam forms. I hope he gets through this period and passes the exams without failing.

My financial situation is tough. I lost my gold jewelry, all the furniture and about 1,000 shekels (~USD 306) that were in the apartment. My family and friends are helping me furnish the new house and pay the rent.

I miss Hazem all the time. He meant everything to me. There's no life in the house without him. It's just an empty space and walls. Now I'm alone and all the responsibility lies with me. Sometimes, I think it would've been better if I'd died with him. Hazem was a man with a big heart, and he was full of compassion for me and for our girls. Our daughter Rada was very close to him. She got married and left home, but he visited her all the time. Rada cries all the time and says how much she misses him.

I pray for God to have mercy on us and help me bear this loss. The Israeli military attacked our home for no reason. They didn't even warn us before the bombing. Suddenly, our house blew up while we were inside. I keep thinking, why did they even bomb our house and rob me of my husband and the children of their father?



I miss Hazem all the time. He meant everything to me. There's no life in the house without him. It's just an empty space and walls.



16.5.21

Wadi Gaza, a-Nuseirat Refugee Camp, 3:30 A.M.

Military fires mortar shell at house, killing man

Khaled Hassan Salem al-Masalha | 49

Testimony of his widow, Amal al-Masalhah | 40

A mother of six⁴²

Until the war broke out, I lived with my husband and my children: Ayman, 23, his wife Hind, 22, who's seven months pregnant, 'Abdallah, 22, Lina, 20, Salem, 15, Ibrahim, 14, and Yusef, 11.

On Sunday, 16 May 2021, at around 3:30 A.M., my husband Khaled was sitting in bed smoking a cigarette. I was next to him. Ayman and Hind were in their room, and the rest of the kids were with my mother-in-law, who lives next door. When we heard the muezzin call for dawn prayers, I said to my husband, "Get up and wash for dawn prayers." He said, "I'll just finish the cigarette and go."

Suddenly, I heard something fall on the house and the room filled with dust. Stones fell and scattered all over the room. I looked around and couldn't see anything. Everything was full of dust. After five minutes, the dust settled and I saw my husband's face. He was badly wounded in the head. I went out of the room and screamed. My son Ayman came out of his room at the same time and when he saw his father, I heard him say, "Oh my God!"

I looked down at the prayer robe I was wearing and saw it had blood and bits of my husband's flesh on it. I was shocked and started screaming hysterically. Ayman helped me downstairs and took me to his grandmother's house. We left my husband as he was.

About half an hour later, an ambulance arrived. It came late because there was massive artillery shelling and shells had landed in our area. When the ambulance arrived, there was another shelling, and the driver reversed and stopped by one of the houses to avoid getting hit. The Israeli military also fired flare bombs over the area.

Ayman went up to our house with two paramedics, and they brought my husband down on a stretcher and put him in an ambulance. Later, I saw that parts of his head had remained on the bed. The ambulance drove to a-Shuhada al-Aqsa Hospital, and Ayman and another relative of ours named Hassan went with him.

My daughter-in-law Hind and I also went in an ambulance to hospital, where she was examined because she's pregnant. She was in good condition. I was hysterical and the doctors gave me oxygen, a sedative and an anesthetic. I stayed in hospital until 6:30 A.M. Then some relatives came and took Hind and me to my brother-in-law Tareq's house in a-Nuseirat Refugee Camp.

We buried my husband before noon at the a-Zawaydah cemetery in central Gaza. He was a farmer who worked odd jobs, and most of the time was unemployed. He had asthma, for which he needed medication and an inhaler. Sometimes, our sons would help support the family. They would go out to the streets, collect plastic waste and sell it for five or ten shekels.

42. Testimony given to Khaled al-'Azayzeh on 30 May 2021.



I looked around and couldn't see anything. Everything was full of dust. After five minutes, the dust settled and I saw my husband's face. He was badly wounded in the head.



17.5.21

Al-Wehdah Street, a-Rimal neighborhood, Gaza City, 17:30 P.M.

Military fires missile at home with family sitting down for lunch,
killing girl and man

Ziad Kamel 'Abdallah Abu Dayer | 54

His niece: Rafif Murshed Kamel Abu Dayer | 10

Testimony of Muhammad Abu Dayer | 16

Ziad's son⁴³

I lived with my parents on the first floor of the second a-Da'ur building on al-Wehdah Street in the a-Rimal neighborhood. After the war began, we heard the airstrikes and drones. We were terrified. We also heard the ambulances taking the dead and wounded to a-Shifaa Hospital. We left home only to buy groceries. Our area is pretty quiet.

On Sunday, 16 May 2021, there were loud explosions very close by. They went on for a long time, and we thought they were aimed at our building. My father asked me to recite the Shahadatain prayer. I hugged him tightly because I was terrified. Then we found out they'd bombed the building of the Abu al-'Oaf family.

When the bombing stopped, we left home and fled. We saw dust, smoke, rubble, pillars and torn power lines. The road and pavement were torn up, with gaping holes. I couldn't believe my eyes. I couldn't stand the sight of the destruction and the dismembered bodies being taken out of the debris. I saw the body of Dr. Ayman Abu al-'Oaf, who's the father of my friend 'Omar. The whole way, I thought it could've been me.

We got to my uncle Murshed's house, which is 200 meters away. We were scared and very anxious because the bombing was so intense, and because of everything that had happened and what we'd seen on the way. The next day, at around 11:00 A.M., my father went to pray at a nearby mosque. My cousin Mahmoud, 17, and I went with him. Then we bought a few things and went home.

The following day, around midday, I visited my friend 'Omar Abu al-'Oaf at a-Shifaa Hospital. At 3:15 P.M., I went back to my uncle's house. We arranged mattresses on the balcony to sit and eat. My father sat on a chair, reading the Quran on his phone. My uncle's daughter Rafif, was sitting next to him drawing. I sat with the rest of the family – my mother, my uncle, his wife and their eight sons – on the mattresses.

Suddenly, we heard something whistle through the air. Then there was smoke and dust, and bits of debris and stones rained down on us. I got up to look for everyone. I put a hand on the door and discovered it had no handle. The water tanks had been damaged, and the water leaking from them helped clear the smoke and dust. It also put out the fire that had started burning in the mattresses and sofas.

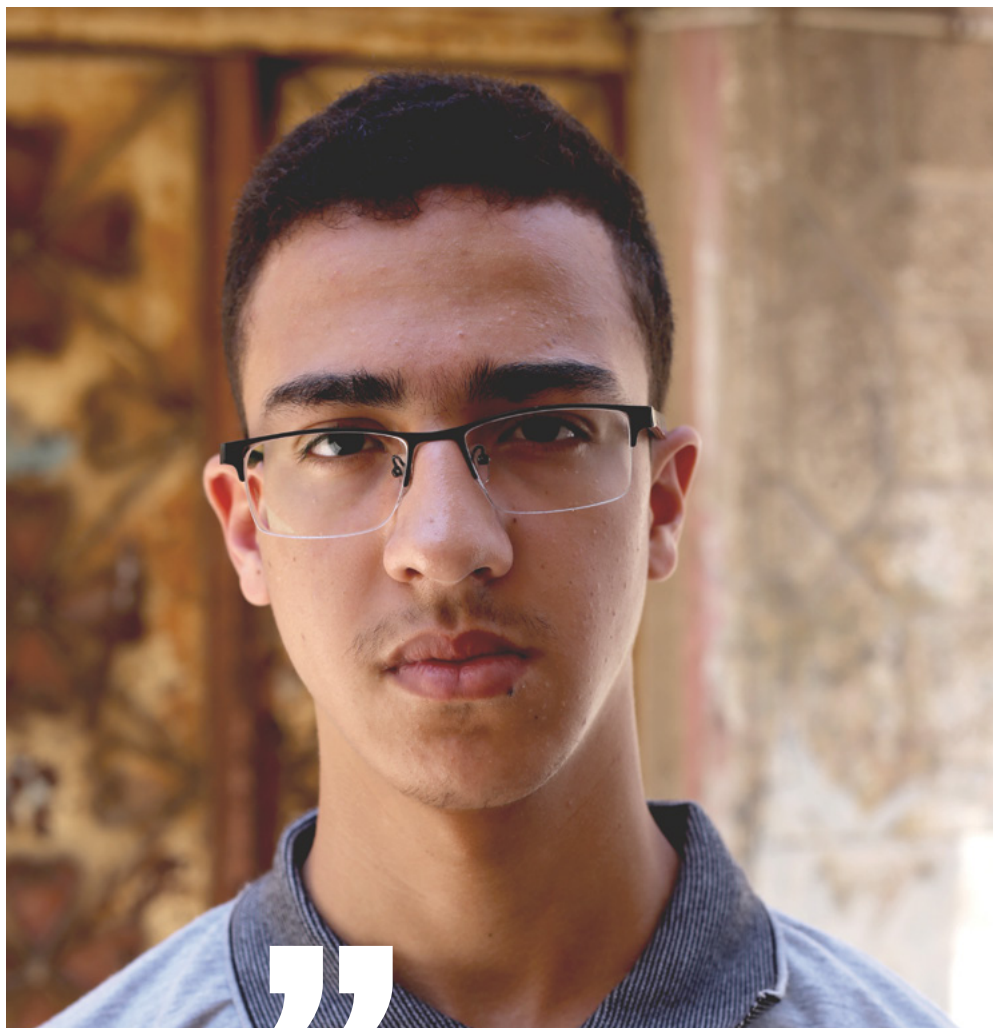
Only then did I start seeing what was happening around me. I saw everyone wounded and bleeding. I looked for my father and found him on the sofa, wounded in the head. Part of his head had fallen to the floor. When I saw that, I screamed in horror. I was in shock. It was the first time I'd seen anything like it. I've never seen anyone injured or killed. I went out to al-Wehdah Street. My cousins Ziad, 18, and Muhammad, 21, came out after me. They were looking for an ambulance.

A few minutes later, ambulances arrived. They took away my cousin Rafif, who'd been hit in the head and neck and killed. Then they put my father in the ambulance. He was dead. I went with them to the hospital. I was examined and they found I was injured in my shoulder and left toe. The rest of my family were examined, too.

That evening, at 8:00 P.M., we buried my father. Then we went to my uncle Khaled's house in the a-Sabra neighborhood, because it's no longer possible to live at my uncle Murshed's house.

It was a hard, sad day. My father is dead and I'm alone. I lost the person who was dearest to me. He was afraid something would happen to me in the airstrikes and that I'd be killed, but in the end, it happened to him. I still can't believe it happened and don't want to believe it. I feel like I'm living in a nightmare. I'm still young and already an orphan. I lost my father, who was my whole world and gave me hope in this world. He meant everything to me.

43. Testimony given to Muhammad Sabah on 9 June 2021.



Only then did I start seeing what was happening around me. I saw everyone wounded and bleeding. I looked for my father and found him on the sofa, wounded in the head. Part of his head had fallen to the floor.



19.5.21

east of Jabalya Refugee Camp, 8:00 P.M.

Military fires missile, killing 10-year-old
on her way home

Dima 'Asaliyah | 10

A father of eight⁴⁴

On Wednesday, 19 May 2021, at around 8:00 P.M., my daughter Dima, 10, went to her sister Irina's, 26, to get a baking pot. My wife was making pita bread and needed the pot. Irina's house is 50 meters away from ours. I was standing on the roof and saw Dima coming back with the pot.

Just then, there was a loud explosion behind our house. I thought the missile had hit farmland about 20 meters away. There was a huge ball of dust and fire, and the force of the blast knocked me down. I didn't think for a moment that the plane had struck my little girl.

I immediately called the Civil Defense services and told them there'd been a bombing by my house and there might be people wounded or dead. I looked out at the main street to give them instructions where to go to, and then I saw a body lying on the ground. I still didn't understand who it was. I told the ambulance driver that there was a body down below and asked him to wait a moment so I could climb down from the roof and check who it was. I went down and walked towards the body. Then I found it was my daughter Dima. I saw her lying dead, motionless. Meanwhile, my brothers and neighbors arrived, but I got to her first.

I was in shock. I stood there and didn't know what to do. I picked her up, but still didn't know what to do. My brother Sa'id took her, put her in my brother Fathi's car and drove her to hospital. After he drove

off, I went inside to evacuate my family, because I was afraid there would be another bombing. Meanwhile, the ambulance arrived, but there were no more dead or wounded so he drove away.

My brother Sa'id called me from the Indonesian Hospital in northern Gaza and told me that Dima had arrived at the hospital lifeless and that she was dead. I started crying and screaming and reciting verses from the Quran. Why did they hit Dima? She was just a young girl holding a pot. It's a horrifying crime against an innocent girl. Dima was my life and the flower of the house. She was the youngest. My home has become dark. Every child who comes into the house reminds me of Dima. Everyone loved her, family, neighbors, friends.

Today, the school principal and her teachers came to comfort us. They gave us her report cards. Everyone cried, the teachers and her friends. My wife held the report cards and hugged them and cried. I wish Dima were still with us, and could go to school to bring the report cards herself.

44. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 3 June 2021.



Dima 'Asaliyah

”

I went down and walked towards the body. Then I found it was my daughter Dima. I saw her lying dead, motionless.

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Testimony of Dima's uncle, Sa'id 'Asaliyah | 41

A father of eight⁴⁵

On Wednesday, 19 May 2021, at around 8:00 P.M., I was at home. I live next to my brother Sa'ed. Suddenly, I heard a loud explosion nearby. I thought it was in the field next to us, but my wife told me the bombing had been closer. I opened the door and saw dust and sand. I went out quickly and found my nephews outside. They said it had hit the wall of my brother Sa'ed's house. I saw Sa'ed talking to an ambulance driver, and he told me he thought someone had been hit in the bombing. We didn't know who it was.

Sa'ed walked ahead of me and before we even got there, we saw the explosion had hit the wall of his house. As we approached the body, Sa'ed saw it was Dima, although it was hard to recognize her because of the shrapnel. He picked her up but stood there in total shock. He didn't move or speak and didn't know what to do. I took her and started running left and right, because I didn't know what to do either. Sa'ed was standing still and didn't move or talk.

My brother Fathi's car was parked by the house. I put Dima in it, and we drove to the Indonesian Hospital in northern Gaza. When got there, I took Dima to the ER and laid her down on a bed. The doctors examined her and after a few minutes, pronounced her dead. They immediately put her in a refrigerator. I felt immense sorrow and pain. Dima was only a little girl and was killed barbarically. What was she guilty of? What crime did she commit? I cried bitterly for Dima. I can't stop thinking about her.

My brother Sa'ed came to the hospital and was in a terrible state. The next day, we laid her to rest. I carried her. Those were the hardest moments of my life. My brother Sa'ed couldn't cope with parting from his daughter. He was in total shock and didn't know what to do.

About an hour before Dima was killed, she'd been in my house because her sister Irina is married to my son. I saw her singing and dancing with my daughters and nieces. It was the last time I saw Dima. It didn't cross my mind that an hour later, she would become a martyr. What did she even do to the Israeli military? What was she guilty of? Why kill her in such a barbaric way?!

She was always a happy child. What I remember most is her mischief. But since she was killed, we've had no joy. There are no games, and the children don't gather to play together. Everything is quiet and silent. I hope her mother and father will learn to be patient, that they grow stronger, and that she will be a bird in heaven.

45. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 3 June 2021.



**The next day, we laid her to rest. I carried her.
Those were the hardest moments of my life.**



A mother of eight⁴⁶

On the evening of 19 May 2021, the power came on. I wanted to use the opportunity to bake bread and made the dough. I wanted another electric baking pot, so I could finish before the power was cut off again, so I sent Dima to get a pot from her sister, who lives next door. Dima went over there with candy in her hand.

After 10 minutes, I heard a very loud explosion by the house. The windows shattered, including in the kitchen. I was terrified. I said I was leaving and taking Dima to the UNWRA school. My husband said I should go to his brother's house before there was another attack. I went to get dressed, and then I heard someone say something about Dima. I rushed outside and saw a car driving away. My husband Sa'ed was standing there, and then he told me Dima had been killed. I collapsed. I was in shock. I started reciting: "We are the servants of Allah, and our fate is to return to him." Everyone around me was praying and I wept.

I was up all night. I prayed for her. I couldn't believe what had happened to her. How could she not be by my side anymore? When I saw her body, I couldn't believe it was her. Her injuries were so severe, and her face was distorted. It burned my heart. I kissed her. I wanted to take her body and show everyone the Israeli military's crime, what they'd done to her, how they distorted her appearance, and how they'd taken her from me.

Three hours before Dima was killed, she told me she was scared of the bombings and wanted to leave the house and go to one of the shelters that had opened at the schools. She came to me with her bags, ready to leave. Dima was terrified because the bombings were very close to us. She watched everything that was happening on her phone, the wounded civilians and the martyred children. I was scared, too, and wanted to say yes, but my husband said the schools weren't safe. We were there in the 2014 war, and it wasn't a safe environment. They were marked as targets. It was also very uncomfortable there because the schools were not built to shelter refugees.

Dima was my youngest daughter. She was the only one still at home, and all her sisters are married. They can't believe she was killed. My husband saw her right after she was killed. He keeps looking at photos of her and misses her so much. She was the princess of our neighborhood. Since she was killed, the neighborhood has been quiet. Every day, the neighbors' girls come and cry over her. I cry with them and tell them that Dima is in a better place than ours, that she's in heaven. My granddaughter Rihab, 6, keeps asking about her and can't understand why she doesn't come back.

Everything in the house reminds me of Dima. Her clothes, the games, her school bag, her books. On graduation day at her school, her teachers and friends came over to pay their respects and gave us her report card. I wish Dima could go to school herself to get the report card, like all her friends.

I keep thinking, how did she stand the pain? What exactly happened to her when the missile hit her? Did it hurt? Did she call for her father or for me? What was she doing at that moment? I can't get those questions out of my head. It's a nightmare I can't shake.

Dima was a happy child and loved to play. She had a big smile and captivated us all. Whenever I'd come home, she'd run to me and call me, and I'd hug her. I always gave her sweets. She'd sleep next to me, and I'd stroke her at night to make sure she was okay. I've lost her forever, and I've lost her smile.

I look out the window and see children playing, and then it hurts and I start crying. I say to myself, "Where's Dima? She always played here with her girlfriends. Dima has gone, she's left me." I keep asking myself, will I forget her one day?

Dima was a target in the Israeli military's target bank. That's their target bank, a little girl just starting her life.

⁴⁶. Testimony given to Olfat al-Kurd on 6 June 2021.



I keep thinking, how did she stand the pain? What exactly happened to her when the missile hit her? Did it hurt? Did she call for her father or for me? What was she doing at that moment? I can't get those questions out of my head. It's a nightmare I can't shake.



