Women in confrontation with Israeli occupation

A Selection of Stories That Were Told By Women Under The Israeli Attack On Gaza Strip in November, 2012

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“Women Against The Occupation”
It is a unique title that is intended for a particular sector of women in this world. We usually use slogans such as “Women Against Poverty”, “Women Against Injustice”, or “Women Against Violence”. Nevertheless, “Women Against The Occupation” is a title that is endowed only for Palestinian women given that they are the only sector of women who still live under the occupation.

During the eight days of continuous aggression on Gaza Strip, the area was hit by the mightiest military weapons and equipments. Therefore, thousands of stories and tragedies told by women, men, elderly, and even children resulted from these days; tragedies that were also silently told by the sands on the grounds as well as the stones on the streets in a way the world was unable to hear. Although these stories occurred in different places, and were told by different people, they relate at one point; which is, they all reflect the occupation’s ugly face that we have all known. The occupation has one thousand and one faces, all of which are hideous.

This booklet comes as a modest attempt from Women’s Affair Center – Gaza to document some stories and experiences for women during the assault in 2012, and to portrait the resilience of this dear country against an occupation that is well-known for its inhumane face. This attempt is to consolidate the memories of the generations to come so as not to forget. It is also meant to be a reference for all truth seekers in every time and every place.

We present this work for all people who have a conscience; for them to know and recognize the truth about the war crimes the occupation forces had committed during the eight days of the assault. These stories will stand as witness in opposition to these crimes that were committed against humanity. Time will mark this effort that is intended to bear witness to the nonstop suffering of the Palestinian people which will never stop unless the occupation was brought to an end.

Amal Syam
Director Women’s Affairs Center – Gaza
Um Mohammed Never Gave Up, Despite Being Hunted By Shelling

"Shelling is following us from one house to another... In every attack, we have a new story to tell about how we were displaced..." With these words, Um Mohammed Salamah described her story during the assault. Eight years ago, the Israeli forces killed Um Mohammed’s mother-in-law. Later, during the first assault in 2008-2009, they destroyed the family’s building that consisted of several floors. In 2012, when the eight days assault began, the house was destroyed again.

Um Mohammed says, "They killed my mother-in-law while she was trying to defend her son, my husband, who was wanted for the Israelis. They were chasing him in every possible way, but, with God’s care, he was neither killed nor arrested."

She recalls how her mother-in-law tried to shut the door in the face of the Israeli soldiers to allow more time for her son "Rafee’a" to leave the house. But they fired at the door; consequently she was martyred.

Um Mohammed goes on saying, "It has been years since this had happened. Then, the 2008 assault took us by surprise in a calm day. It started with strong bombardment that shook the whole Gaza strip, causing hundreds of martyrs within few hours. It resulted in demolishing a number of houses and establishments; the family’s big house was one of those."

"We were at the house when the phone call came from the Israeli forces commanding us to leave the house in just five minutes. We rushed out of the house feeling afraid since the Israelis cannot be trusted; they might bomb the house any minute."

She says. She adds, "I was worried about my kids, husband, and in-laws. The house was full of kids. Besides, the entire neighborhood panicked; every one took their kids, and ran away from the area which was hit by F16 air strikes."

After the family has once lost the house that was a shelter for all of them: brothers, sisters-in-law, and cousins, the Israelis air strike, again, attacked their new house, demolishing it.

Um Mohammed says, "All what I was thinking of during the eight days attack was my kids. I was thinking of how I would protect them, and ease their fear, and how I could answer the questions they were asking particularly after what they were exposed to during the first assault. My concern was duplicated after I saw what had come upon Al Dalou and Hijjaji families and their kids..."

Therefore, she was thankful to God that all of them remained ok after her husband had gotten the phone call telling them that the Israelis were going to bomb their house shortly. She felt grateful despite the fact that they have lost their new house, and all their stuff including their children’s school books.

Um Mohammed ended her talk about the experience throughout the two assaults saying, "We will not get weak; we will not give up; on the contrary, we will go on with our lives. We will live a normal life with our families and dear ones, holding on to our right of return and all our rights no matter how the enemy tried to horrify us."
As long as the eye can see, you find shadowy lushly trees; lemon, orange, and olive trees as well as palms. The fragrance all over the place capture you whenever you pass a road or visit a house in Abassan Al Kabeera, a village which is located in the east of Khan Younis city. People in Abassan are used to working on their fertile farms for they believe if man works hard, it will give him a garden of delights.

Although he was eighty, Hajj "Ibraheem Abo Naser" still trusted his land. He kept working on it until he was martyred on its soil. His blood blended with the olives, while he and his sons were picking olives on November 21st, 2012.

Hajj Abo Ibraheem picked as much olives as he could with the help of his son, Mohammed, before they both took a break to pray Al Duher prayer. While he was praying, an Israeli airplane attacked him without a prior notice. And so, he died along with his granddaughter, Ameera, who was only fifteen years old. Ameera was asked by her grandmother to come to tell him that lunch was ready. His son, Mohammed, was slightly injured.

The grandmother who lost her partner says, "I finished preparing lunch, and I felt sorry for my husband who had been picking olives since the dawn at the farm. Therefore, I asked Ameera to go and ask her grandfather and Mohammed, her uncle, to come and join us for lunch. No body came though; no body ate lunch...".

Then, she stopped talking; tears could not let her finish her story as if with the death of her partner, her own story came to an end too... Her son, Mohammed, says, "My father raised his hands to start prayer. While I was going down a long ladder, I heard an explosion. I turned around only to find my father and my niece dead. Their bodies were mere body parts".

Ameera was severely injured; as soon as she arrived at Al Shefa’a Hospital, she was declared dead. The little girl did not know that her life would come to an end just by reaching her grandfather. Only ten days before, Ameera had faced death when she had had a surgery. She donated part of her bone marrow to her brother, Mahmoud, who was 9 years old, to give him a few extra years to live.

The grandmother went on talking about her sweetheart and soul mate, Ameera, “Ameera’s soul is still alive in her brother’s body although she was killed by the Israelis; she had no fault whatsoever...”

The pain of losing Hajj Ibraheem, and his granddaughter was not the first affliction for the family caused by the Israelis. During the Cast Lead Assault, their son, Abed Al Nasser, a thirty year old man, was martyred.

Branches of olive trees that were stained with blood as well as the scattered fragments everywhere stood witnesses to the crime. It was obvious that the Israelis wanted to murder any moving creature on the farm, claiming they were threatening them.

Ameera along with Hajj Ibraheem left to meet Abed Al Nasser. Still the agony they had left in the hearts of those who loved them was so severe that it would never go away from their memories even after two months.

And so Ameera left without fulfilling her dream; she wanted to finish high school, and to pursue her higher education. She always wanted to help her handicapped father and her brothers who suffer from Thalassemia. Ameera was the only child in the family who did not suffer from Thalassemia. Yet, she shared her brothers the affliction of the disease to the extent that she gave part of her bone marrow to her brother. She thought she might be able to give him the life that her other brother, Ibraheem, was deprived of. Ibraheem died in 2009.
Two weeks before the second assault on Gaza started which began on the 14th of November, 2012, Mona Al Helou, a thirty year old woman, finished constructing her new house. Yet, she did not have the chance to enjoy her new house. While Mona and her husband were getting ready to plant their garden, an Israeli air strike targeted one of the neighboring security compounds.

During the first war, Mona’s house that was located in the east of Gaza was demolished; her brother-in-law was martyred back then. After that, Mona rented a house in Al Sha’af area near Al Shejai’a neighborhood; she lived there for four years. Later, Mona moved to her new house near the Ministry of Interior Affairs building. Unluckily, this building was bombed on the second day of the War.

“I almost died three times; but it was not my time. This is not the first time our house gets targeted and destroyed, and in every time we live horrible days.” Mona says.

That night, Mona’s daughter, Lana, six years old, insisted on sleeping in her own room that overlooks the Ministry of Interior Affairs building in Tal Al Hawa. But, Mona refused.

Mona says, “I was very afraid for my children; I did not allow them to sleep in their room. I insisted that they all slept in my room.”

In the room, they gathered to watch TV; the children played around. Suddenly, an Israeli rocket was launched, shaking the entire area. She says, “I carried my little son, and grabbed Lana’s hand. I ran with them downstairs where all family members, not less than ten people, gathered...”.

Mona adds, “Over than six rockets were launched by the Israeli aircrafts at the Ministry building next to our house. The power went off, fragments of glass were scattered everywhere, and the entire place was dusty. Our room turned into grey; the children were screaming as they were bleeding, so were the adults.”

The shelling came to an end that night. But the scenes are still alive in Mona’s and her children’s memories. She never expected that nightmare to end or the firing of rockets to stop. That very day, she knew that she was destined to death, so she uttered Al Shahdateen, getting ready to die.

Mona has not got her normal life back yet. She works as a researcher in the social affairs in Gaza. Yet, now, she has to take a leave of absence so that she can rebuild her destroyed house, and spend some time with her kids who still tell their story to everybody they meet. Mona is still saying, “We survived two wars... But what are the coming days hiding for us??”

“Mona”: What Could The Future Hold for Us After Surviving Two Wars

Women’s Affairs Center - Gaza
Jehad and Duha Hellis were about to get married; they were counting down the days. Only a few days and they would live together in the house that they both prepared. However, the eight days attack the Israeli aircrafts launched on Gaza Strip on the 14th of November, 2012 ruined their plans. An F 16 aircraft destroyed their dream as it bombed Hellis’s house that consisted of several floors. The house was located in Shejaa’ya neighborhood in the east of Gaza city. Jehad’s apartment was on one of those destroyed floors. It was totally demolished.

The house was provided with all they needed to start their new life together. The groom, Jehad who is twenty three years old, and his bride picked the day of his wedding. Unluckily, the assault made them postpone their wedding until further notice. Duha, who is still in shock, says, “They uprooted joy form my heart; my house was entirely destroyed, and all my new cloths were burned...”.

Duha remembers how she cried when they postpone her wedding because of the assault. Yet, she was disturbed more when her future house was destroyed; she still cannot believe what had happened. The Israeli aircrafts, tanks, and battleships launched more than three thousands different projectiles at various densely populated areas in Gaza throughout the eight days of the attack. Duha says, “Jehad was sleeping at the house when it was hit by a warning rocket fired from a military drone, locally known as Zananah. He along with all his family hurried outside of the house to the street. Seconds later, the house was hit by F 16 rockets, turning it into piles of rubble...”.

Duha’s biggest concern is that her dream will not come true; especially that her fiancé who had just graduated from faculty of architecture is still jobless. She believes the process of rebuilding the house would not be easy. All she wishes for now is that she and her fiancé would manage to rebuild their house and get married soon.
Once Reem, 23 years old, started telling what had happened, her eyes immediately revealed the great pain within her heart. “My tragedy began beside that laundry line tied between those two trees.” She says as she points to a newly constructed house nearby in “Mirage” neighborhood in Rafah, south of Gaza. She adds, “I am married, yet I was still living close to my family. When I heard the close shelling sound, I did not think that it was my family’s house. But I was mistaken.”

Reem Al Nasasrah continues, “Our life is not the same; everything has changed. The house was destroyed. For months I stayed with my family in a rented house until we finished rebuilding our house. My step mother was blinded as she was injured by a rocket fragment that deformed her face. My sister, Rana, who is 21 years, does not remember anything; she hardly remembers my martyr brothers. She does not believe that they are dead, but insists that they are….. returning…..”

Reem’s disaster is not finished. She continues, “My sister, Rabab, was seven months pregnant; however, when they took her to the hospital after our house had been bombard, they found out that the foetus had died in her womb.”

Amani, the step mother who is 37 years old, says, “On the fifth day of the attack on Gaza an Israeli aircraft bombed our house while we were asleep. It was past ten o’clock at night. I was the last person to go to bed after I had checked on everyone, locked the doors, and tucked my husband. I put my head on the pillow to wake up in the hospital. I did not grasp what had happened or why. I was in the hospital, but I did not see anything. I felt someone stitching a wound in my head.”

She adds, “Next day, my husband came to check on me, and said that I was fine. However, our house was entirely bombard, our two boys became martyrs, and my son, Sakher, along with the girls had been variously injured. I spent three nights in the European Hospital going in and out of conscious; I did not remember anything at that time as well. Then, I was transferred to Nasser Hospital in order to get my burns treated. Nonetheless, they sent me back to the European Hospital due to a bleeding in my eyes, retina rupture, along with many problems such as the burns in my face. Later, they transferred me to a hospital inside the Palestinian occupied territories. I am still suffering from my wounds till now, but I can see better now thanks to the Lord.”

Amani wished to be able to see again so that she could see her children, and take care of them as she used to do in the past. She did not recover her eye sight completely, but at least she got what she wished for. Here she is taking care of her only boy and her little girls after losing her elder boys.

As for Sakher, both his physical and psychological conditions are unstable after suffering from broken pelvis and leg, and having his spleen eradicated by the doctors because of a rocket fragment that penetrated his stomach, and therefore, disabled his spleen, and hit his liver.

Reem says, “Every time Sakher recalls what had happened, he cries, and he refuses to talk about the reason to any person. Not being able to move as well as my father carrying him to go to the bathroom hurt him the most.”

Reem raises the question of what any of her martyred brothers or family members has done to deserve this; all they did was work on their farms, planting them with vegetable. They used to work from the early morning till the evening seeking some profit from their farm. She adds at the end, “What have they done to be bombed while they are asleep in their house with an F16 missile? The house was not just completely flattened to the ground, but was replaced by a hole that was 10 meters in depth.”
Amina took as much cloths and supplies as she could, and rushed with her children and husband to Al Remal neighborhood in the middle of Gaza city, leaving behind her house and properties.

Omnia Al Khalidy, a forty eight woman, experienced how it feels to be scared to death during the previous assault on Gaza that was launched by the Israelis in 2008 - 2009. Therefore, she could not stay any longer at her house that is located near the Sudania Beach to the west of Jabalia Refugee Camp.

As soon as the Israelis launched the attack on Gaza by assassinating the Qassam brigades leader, Ahmed Al Ja’abary, on November 14th, 2012, Amina took her kids, and left with her husband to an area inside the town; she thought that place would be more secure.

Al Khalidy, a mother of nine kids, says, “We were surrounded by a lot of police stations and security compounds. Since the beginning of the attack, bombardment did not stop; there was heavy shelling everywhere. However, we did not evacuate, considering that we have a lot of kids. We stayed home for two days, though the situation was dire...”.

She goes on recalling her painful memories of those days, “On the third day of the war, the shelling got heavier; a place was targeted every hour; ambulances would rush to the bombed place. We would watch the destruction as well as the injuries on TV if power was on. At that moment, my husband decided that we should evacuate, and go to my family’s house in Al Remal neighborhood...”.

She adds, “We left that evening; I could not stop reciting verses from the holy Qura’an all the way long. I was praying for God to keep us safe, since the sky was terrifyingly portending death”.

Al Khalidy took with her some sugar, flour, and tea in addition to cloths for her and the kids. They all took shelter in the ground floor of her sister’s place; the accommodation was not good enough. Nevertheless, Amina says, “We had to gradually cope with the new situation despite the difficulty...”.

She painfully adds, “I was always thinking of my house that I left without prior preparation; I never planned to do so. It was very alarming and threatening in our neighborhood. Thus, I could not leave anybody there to guard it. I wanted to know what might happen to it while we were away. So, my husband and I decided to go see the house three days later. The windows were destroyed, and the curtains were torn. Honestly, I felt as if losing money was as painful as losing the soul. We deserted the house that cost us a lot to build; it was gone”.

Amina was not the only displaced woman who was worried about both her kids and property. Hundreds of women had to leave their houses in so many areas in the Gaza Strip that were exposed to constant bombardment in neighborhoods such as Ziaatoon, Shejaeya, Tal Al Hawa not to mention the areas located near the borders, and those by the beach that the Israeli military battleships kept targeting day and night without having to account to anyone.
Screaming, crying, voices from mosques were all combined with the noises of rockets falling. It was 9:38 P.M, Saturday November 17th, 2012, the third day of Pillar of Clouds Operation launched on Gaza Strip.

All those voices combined awakened Samaher, Naji, her husband, and their baby Mayar who was only 59 days. They could barely sleep during the noise of the war. It was just a one line dialogue between them. They agreed to get out of their house to a neighboring house, just a few meters away, since their house ceiling is made of tin, and the walls are about to fall down because of the shelling.

Samaher who was twenty nine years old seemed to see her death; as soon as she got out of her house, she gave her baby to her husband to hurry up before another bomb strike. She thought she would catch up after closing the door.

Naji carried his baby and was about to get into his first wife’s house, Maha Qudeeh. When Samaher, the second wife, was three meters behind him, a sudden rocket hit her, leaving her with serious injuries.

In his small house, Naji Qudeeh, a forty nine year old man, was sitting with his baby Mayar, rocking her to sleep in between his arms. Meanwhile, his tears were falling down on her cheeks unconsciously. The Samaher’s absence weakened his heart, and the scene of her death remained alive in his mind.

There in the corner lied the blanket he used to extinguish the fire that caught body after the rocket had hit her. Not far away from the door were some blood spots. On the tin bars of the ceiling were pieces of nylon that were burned by the rocket fragments. He confirmed that her departure was agonizing; however, the fact that Mayar was still there made it a little easier for him especially that she resembled her mom.

Samaher, did not die right after the bombing; she kept struggling with death for ten days. She was moved from hospitals in Gaza to hospitals in Egypt in order to get medical treatment. Eventually, she died on November 26th, few days after the announcement of ceasefire.

Her husband affirms that she was not the only victim of the shelling; his son, Nidal, was also affected. He was nearby watching news on TV during the shelling. Naji says, “After I had put my baby in the house, I looked behind me only to find that the smoke has covered the sky, Nidal was moaning, and Samaher was fighting death...”

The husband thought that one would make it, but God saved Nidal, while Samaher fought death until she was martyred.

Maha, the partner was deeply saddened for Samaher who was not a second wife to Maha; she was rather a daughter to her just like her eldest son who is only one year younger than her. Maha confirms that she was overwhelmingly shocked by Samaher’s death. She was also traumatized by the violent attack her son was exposed to.

Naji’s family suffering did not stop at targeting his wife, and injuring his son, Nidal who suffered a lot, and was moved with his step mom to Egypt to get medical treatment. They kept moving from one house to another because their house was a dangerous place to live in. They were afraid the house would be targeted again due to the fact that he drones, and airplanes never left the sky. The need to leave the house also increased because they wanted to move with the two injured people in the family from Gaza to Egypt to get them medical treatment.

The fact that Mayar was still alive was a comfort to her father and his wife, Maha, who took care of Mayar as a mother. Samaher’s family was sad, though. Their grandchild was orphaned; she was innocent with no guilt. Everybody was trying to give her the affection of her mother. No one, though, would understand her agony later when she could not utter the word “Mama” for her mother lies in the grave yard and would never come back.
Away from the scenes of damage and ruin caused by the eight days assault on Gaza, Hanan El Keelany managed to portray a different picture of the Palestinians’ life that was disturbed by the Israeli drones every time and everywhere.

Hanan, a forty-eight years old woman, a mother and grandmother of eight children, lives in El Jala’a Street in Gaza city. She, like other women in Gaza, opened her house as shelter to all her relatives who escaped from the most dangerous areas close to the borders.

Four families related to her husband took shelter at her house that is only 180 square meters; they stayed there during the whole eight days of the assault that was launched by the Israeli airplanes in 2012. Feelings of dread and loneliness were, surprisingly, replaced by feelings of love and intimacy.

El Keelany smiles upon recalling the events and says, “They were tough days; the shelling was continuous day and night. But we still had time to stay together. We were over fifty members, men, women, and kids. We all stayed and watched news, updating ourselves with the latest events. We would even laugh sometimes at what the kids did.”

El Keelany misses those days that were full of family ties, although she was exhausted all those days. They all felt so close especially at meal times. She says, “I did not have free time at all; the kitchen was the place I visited quite often along with my sisters-in-law. We all cooked at the same time; we would prepare large quantities to have enough food for everybody. We all ate more than we usually eat because we were staying home all the time.”

El Keelany points out that a lot of families abandoned their houses during the attack and took shelter at other relatives’ houses. This, she says, made us closer to each other, and therefore, we lived wonderful, happy moments. Hanan hopes that one day peace and security would dominate the Palestinian territories. She also hopes that the scenes of destruction and blood that severely affected the Gazans would not occur again.
Only five minutes separated Sohad Abo Fool, a twenty year old woman, her husband, and her three children from death. Frightened of the heavy shelling and the fact that their house in Bait Lahiat Project might be bombed, Sohad and her children hurried to Al Fakhora area in the north of Jabalia Refugee Camp. Sohad's family was informed that their house was going to be targeted in just five minutes by the Israeli army.

Sohad was carrying her one year old son while once dragging her other two children behind her, and once pushing them in front of her. She was yelling at them, “Run, sons, the Jews are going to bomb the place…”

She was looking left and right every second to make sure that her children did not get lost like her husband did. She could not find him; in fact, she did not know if he was dead or alive. They were panicking in these few minutes after the Israeli warning to bomb their house.

On November 18th, 2012, the fourth day of the attack, Sohad’s husband got a phone call from the Israeli army at 2:00 A.M., demanding them to evacuate the house in order to bomb it.

Sohad says, “My husband, my three kids (Anas, 5 years old, Khaled, 4 years old, and Mohamed, 2 years old), and I were sleeping in the same room. The phone kept ringing; we were disturbed. It turned out that it was the Israeli army calling, asking us to evacuate the house. My husband wondered whether that was a joke…”

“It could not be a joke.” Sohad answered. She was horrified and started yelling at those living in the building that consisted of four floors. Over 25 people lived in the building, most of them children. She ran out of the house, very scared that she forgot to put on her scarf.

Sohad recalls those terrifying moments and says, “We hurried to the street; we did not have time to take our stuff. Meanwhile, dust filled the atmosphere; pieces of glass scattered everywhere…” The Israeli aircraft fired the so called “warning rocket” on Abo Fool’s house while they were still trying to evacuate their house. As a result, the whole place was filled with stones, smoke, scattered glass, and dust. Abo Fool family survived death. However, their torment did not stop when the war finished. They are now living in a rented house that is not fit for humans…!

Sohad and her children had psychological therapy to help them forget the disaster. Sohad says, “We still have nightmares”. Her only consolation is that her husband and children are still alive.
Wearing her white scarf around her sad face, she stood on the wreckage of what was once the house that enclosed all her loved ones. It was clear that she was in agony; still she was trying to look self controlled.

Trying to remember that night Abo Zoor’s wife, Hana’a, a forty years old woman, whose house was totally destroyed, said that night was like a nightmare; it caused her life to become dull and kept her away from her family.

Hana’a says, “We were sleeping when we heard a loud explosion; the neighboring Azam’s house was directly targeted on November 19th, 2012. Few minutes later, our house was hit by warning rockets. We did not know what to do at that point; the children and women were screaming and crying…”

“My daughter, Hanady, thirteen years old, was injured; she got eight rocket fragments inside her stomach. She was rushed to a hospital in Egypt due to her critical condition. I could not see her before she left. My son had his kidney removed; he is still at the hospital until now. My three years old grandson, Mohammed, was martyred. My daughter-in-law was injured in her spine, and she is still at the hospital…”

The distressed Hana’a, a mother of ten children, cannot take care of her sound kids. She says she spends most of her day following up on her sick daughter, visiting her son and his wife at the hospital, and praying for them…”

Hana’a seeks solace in visiting her demolished house from time to time. She goes there to converse with her neighbors about what had happened to her and her sons. She is still in shock and cannot believe what came upon her and her family.

Despite what had happened to Abo Zoor’s family, as well as Hana’a’s misery and distress, the family’s children preferred to play in the middle of the street, leaving behind their pains, and trying to forget the war that claimed lives and paralyzed bodies.

The war that the Israeli Army launched on November 14th, 2012 lasted for eight days consecutively. Over 178 Palestinians were killed; thousands were injured, most of which were women and children.
Very much has changed; the sky was loaded with military aircrafts and was covered in thick smoke; the earth was dyed with red while Huda and Khaled screamed more and more.

It was just a few moments, then, Huda, a twenty-year-old woman, was being rushed to an ambulance on a holder. Meanwhile, Haneen lied under the rubble of her house.

The power of the rocket caused part of the house to fall apart. Haneen’s small mattress was covered with wreck. She was not allowed to enjoy a moment of sleep without the noises of explosions.

Her father, Khaled Tafesh, says, “Haneen was in the room that was bombed; my wife, Huda, and I were at the door. Her mother brought her some eggs. Suddenly, the shelling started and everything became different…”

Her mother could not believe that her first daughter, who has not yet turned one year old, had been killed by the rocket. She still dreams of how Haneen would grow up, go to kindergarten, and to school. She still pictures herself combing her hair. She still dreams of the day when Haneen would be able to utter the word Mama. Unfortunately, all dreams died with the eight-day assault called Pillar of the Clouds.

After Haneen was buried, the family could not stay any longer in the house. It was destroyed and it remained a dangerous place, for it could be targeted again.

Huda took some of her daughter’s toys and moved with her husband to their uncle’s house. They were accompanied by sadness and tears that had not dried yet in addition to fractures in her back that had not healed yet.

She says, “The physical pain is easier a thousand times than the agony of losing my only daughter…” She wonders in grief, “How would life go on after the airplanes kidnapped the delight of my heart and soul?? How can I go to the house and not hear her cries and laughter? I could no longer run to her, put her between my arms and rock her to sleep!”

As soon as Haneen turned four months old, she developed a strong attachment to her father. Whenever she would see his clothes or hear his voice, she would refuse but to go with him, neglecting her hunger or need to sleep. He, too, was very close to her, for Haneen closely resembled him.

Haneen’s father used to compete with her own mother; he would rush to hug her, play with her, and even feed her. The happiest moments for him were those when she would sleep like an angle on his lap, smiling.

As for her grandmother, Um Khaled, she still misses Haneen’s voice and sweet odor. She also prays that Allah would bestow His blessings on her son, Haneen’s father, and his wife, and grant them other children soon. She says, “Haneen was my first grandchild; she was the soul of this house, and the candle that lighted everybody’s life. Her innocent smile always touched our hearts…”

The young boy, Mohammed Hussam, who is two years old, never stops asking about little Haneen. He goes through the entire house, thinking he might find her. Yet, the attempts of explaining the meaning of death are pointless.
Um Mohammed Hijazi who is thirty eight years old, lives in a humble house in Jabalia Refugee Camp. She lies on a bed as half of her body is paralyzed; she continuously has headache.

She says, "It was the sixth day of the attack. We were all gathered, and watching news on TV. Suddenly, there was a huge explosion that shook the whole place. I did not know what had happened then. I woke up to find myself in one of Al Areesh hospitals. It turned out that I had been in a coma for the previous ten days...".

An Israeli military airplane had bombed a house close to Um Mohammed’s house. Consequently, her husband and two of her children were killed, while he others were injured with varied wounds. They were taken to the hospital to receive medical treatment. Um Mohammed's daughter, a nineteen year old girl, had a fractured back bone.

What had happened to Hijazi family was regarded as the second massacre to attract the attention of the world after that of Al Dalou family. The whole world saw the rescue teams trying to pull the members of both families from under the rubble. Some of them died; others lived but with chronic, incurable disabilities.

The mother, who had received a long term medical treatment in both Gazan and Egyptian hospitals before being able to come back to her remaining children, says, “Nobody warned us that the neighboring house was going to be targeted. Therefore, we did not evacuate; we thought it would be just like the other days of the assault. Out of a sudden, without a prior notice, the house collapsed...”

"After I came out of the coma, I was watching TV, and I saw Mohammed, Sohaib, and my husband under the rubble. I could not believe what had happened to my family...".

The family that once consisted of ten members now consists of seven due to a catastrophe that was not of their choice. However, it was their destiny. The house had turned into a pile of stones right before 7: 30 P.M. Unfortunately, Um Mohammed Hijazi and her daughter, Noor, were victims of this disaster.

Um Mohammed is still unable to take care of her remaining family members because she is bedridden. She says, “Ever since I came out of the coma, I have had a constant headache. Even now, that I came back home, only pain killers help me feel better...".

Um Mohammed wonders if this is what she will have to live with for the rest of her life. She says, “My husband along with two of my children were martyred. My daughter became disabled. Our house is now wreckage. I still have this awful headache that prevents me from taking care of Mostafa, Ashraf, Usama, Noor, Sondos and Sohaib...".
The noises of drones in the sky gave Mona Keskeen, a surgeon who is in her early forties, a feeling that such signs are like alerts for a military operation that was about to begin. So, she prepared herself very well for this upcoming war first by kissing her three children goodbye, and then by taking a car to get her to the neurology department in Al Shefa’a Hospital.

It was just minutes before her fear came true; the Israeli aircrafts carried out the first target and assassinated “Ahmed Al Ja’abary”, the leader in Ezz El Deen Al Qassam Brigades.

Her colleagues at the hospital tried to persuade her to go back to her house, and stay with her kids. However, she refused. For her, her duty as both a doctor and a human is to treat the wounded with her scalpel.

Keskeen just got out of the operation room, sweating. Yet, with a victorious smile on her face after she had succeeded along with the medical team in reviving one of the patients.

The surgeon summed up her experience by describing it as “a humanitarian and professional epic”. Yet, she kept wondering about the war details, “How would a doctor feel while dealing with critical injuries in the head and the whole body be they amputated or dismembered bodies?!?“.

Dr. Mona was the only neurologist among her colleagues in the surgical department. This led her to handle severe injuries in the head and the nervous system of the upper part of the body.

She says, “The significance as well as the danger of my profession increases at times of war launched by the Israelis against our people. I never hesitate to leave my house, and my two babies to get to work even when there is heavy shelling, and lots of explosions...”

Keskeen thinks that her duties are magnified now with the latest 2012 war compared to 2008-2009 war, considering that she now has twin girls who are barely one year old in addition to her first daughter.

Dr. Keskeen believes that seeing burned bodies of children and their dry blood that was due to them being under the rubble was the cruelest scene she had seen during this attack.

She says, “I felt as if those children were mine, and so I would sorrowfully cry in a great fear...”.

Dr. Sobhy Skaik, head of the surgery department at Shafa’a Hospital, says that Dr. Mona is highly professional with a dauntless personality. He recalls how she was risking herself in order to save the lives of some patients.

He says, “Due to shortage of supplies, the medical staffs had to take some patients, especially those with serious injuries in the head as well as the upper part of the body, to Al Quds Hospital in order to have Computerized Tomography and also to diagnose some cases before surgical intervention...“.

According to Dr. Skaik, doctors tried a lot to persuade her into not going out to the other hospital with patients to have them examined and have their CT taken, for they were worried about her. Nevertheless, she never stopped doing that. She said patients with serious injuries should not be left alone with unspecialized doctors since any movement or delay might possibly cost them lives. This was something she would never accept hence she had made her oath to do her job honestly.
Mahmoud Khater... Went Out but Never Came Back...

"Mahmoud, could you please get me a bottle of dish washing liquid from the grocery shop?"
"Sure sister, I'll be right back."

Mahmoud accompanied his son, Anas, to the grocer’s, near Abdullah Ben Rowaha’s Mosque in Ma’an located in the eastern of Khan Younis City. As soon as he got out of the grocer’s, the Israeli aircrafts launched an air strike, targeting a motorcycle passing by Mahmoud. The scattered rockets fragments caused Mahmoud to be seriously injured that he was martyred right away. His son, however, was critically injured. The man, Abed Allah Harb Abo Khater, who was riding the motorcycle, was also martyred.

Moa’ath, Mahmoud’s son, who is only four years old, says, “We were eating mandarin in the garden with Dad, my grandmother, and my aunt just a few minutes before my dad was killed. What wrong did he do to them?? My brother, Anas was also wounded badly; blood was covering their faces...”

The mother bid farewell to her eldest son, Mahmoud, recalling his good deeds towards her. She would cry in pain but then pray that Allah would reward him with Paradise. The fact that the Palestinian resistance managed to cause the Israelis a lot of losses during only eight days, and that the Israelis could not deter the Palestinian fighters made her cheer up. She says, “We, martyrs’ mothers, feel proud because the resistance could reach the Occupied Palestinian territories and fire rockets into Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.”

His sister is still blaming herself for what had happened. Had not she asked him to buy some stuff for her, he would have stayed with them, and he would not have been killed. She cries and cries, praying that he would be settled in Heavens. She also prays that his son, Anas, would recover soon so that they do not have to say goodbye to him too.

“Mahmoud was a caring, friendly, amiable, kind, and pure hearted man.” That is how his wife described him. Despite being busy with her two years old son, Anas, who was badly injured, her pain did not go away, neither did her tears. Her son is still suffering from his injuries, although, recovering slowly. However, she is still in morning for the loss of her soul mate forever.

The only thing she hopes for now is that Anas would recover soon and fast, and would join his brother, Moa’ath, who is now lonely, and that they would play together. She really does not want to have to say farewell again.
“Malak”: When Are We Going to Waleed??

Throughout the Pillar of Clouds Operation that was launched by the Israeli Army in Gaza on November 14th, 2012, the airplanes never left the Gaza Strip sky; they were flying day and night, announcing a violent wave that would cause a lot of blood shedding. There, on the ground, only children did not know what hidden aims these airplanes had. Their innocence totally motivated them. They would go out to play, and have fun, not far away from their houses, though. They would be playing a few meters away from their houses. That is what their parents told them, for they were very worried about them.

On November 15th Waleed Al Abadlah and his twin sister, Malak, both are three years old, woke up in the morning although they are not used to get up early. They were so much excited about playing and enjoying their time with the friends. It took them only a few moments to finish their breakfast and then, quickly, they went with their father to the front yard. Only few minutes later, their cousin, Haitham, along with some other neighbors arrived; they all started playing. The roaring sound of the aircrafts in the sky did not actually mean anything to their mother, since she was sure that her children were under the watchful eyes of their father, and that they would not go far away. Unfortunately, very much to her disappointment, the kids did not come back to have lunch, and take their nap. The fact was that the Israeli airplanes were provoked by the scene of the children playing, having no fear whatsoever. Therefore, they launched rockets as if to revenge themselves on those innocent children and assassinate their childhood years. One hit was followed by another, horrifying the children and terrifying everybody.

Only moments ensued; another rocket was fired. This time it was much closer to where the children played. The place was full of smoke, claiming lives and injuring others.

Abo Waseem, the kids’ father, rushed to the front of the house. He carried his son, Waleed, who was lying on the ground with his mouth bleeding. He says, “At the beginning, I took him to the house; my wife and I tried to wake him but he did not wake up; I rushed him to the hospital. Doctors told me that it was serious; the bleeding from his mouth resulted from hyper inflated chest, and the rupture of some veins and arties in his small body.”

At hospital, the doctors immediately operated on him in an attempt to save his life. They told Waseem’s father that the child recovered some how. However, he should remain in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

The first few hours after surgery passed by really slowly for Waseem’s mother. But she was patient enough, praying for him. Nonetheless, it was inevitable that Waleed died only three hours after the surgery. Malak, Waleed’s sister is still waiting for him to continue the games they were playing together; however, he never comes back. His cousin, Haytham, insists that Waleed ascended to Heaven, for he saw the rocket carrying his body up there. Poor Haytham does not realize that this very rocket brought waleed back to earth lifeless.

Waleed’s mother used to predict a bright future for him, since he was smart, wit, and always determined to learn new things. He enjoyed playing the teacher with his sister; they would also take turns. Since they were twins, they used to be always together and happy, they even used to go to bed together. Malak is now alone; she does not understand why her twin brother is not around. She never stops asking her mother about him; she insists on asking, “When are we going to Waleed?”.
Nahed, “My Life Has Changed. Had Not It Been God’s Will, I Would Have Been Injured or Martyred...”

Nahed Abo Daggah, was breast feeding her baby, who was born five days before, when she heard the news about the beginning of the Israeli attack on Gaza Strip on November 14th, 2012.

“Only few minutes separated between me and an absolute death.” She elaborates, “I was staying temporarily with my mother-in-law, Najwa Abo Daggah who is 50 years old, until I recover from the delivery. Surprisingly, I am still staying at her place until this moment after she got injured...”

Nahed adds, “My house is located in Al Faraheen, a border area to the east of Khan Younis. It is constantly exposed to Israeli incursions and shelling. Therefore, we often leave our house and take shelter at one of our relatives’ houses so that we could get away from insecure areas. However, it seems that all areas are targeted; no place is safe...”

We never imagined what had happened could actually occur. The twenty years old Nahed says, “On November 18th Sunday morning, my mother-in-law sent her granddaughter to me to ask me to hurry up so we could bake some bread. A few days ago she was at the hospital with her sick daughter; she came back on Saturday. I told her that I wanted to feed my baby, and clean up my house first before going to help her. It was 6:30 in the morning; my mother-in-law was in the small store that we used sometimes as an outside kitchen in addition to storing some food supplies in it. Abruptly, while she was there, there was a huge explosion. The entire house started shaking and smoky clouds came out of it.

She adds, “We all went down to the ground floor. My husband and father-in-law looked for my mother-in-law amidst the heavy smoke. When they found her, she was badly injured. They shouted, calling for help. The rest of the family and neighbors came, and took her to Gaza European Hospital in Khan Younis that is fifteen kilometers way from our village...”

Najwa was badly injured in her colon; she lost a lot of blood. On top of that, her left hip, left and right arms, and her right upper arm were broken. In addition, she had something wrong with her lungs, and she could not breathe well. She had several surgeries at the European Hospital. Then, she was referred to Al Maqassed Hospital in Jerusalem.

Nahed says, “My mother-in-law is still at the hospital, receiving medical care. The house looks awful because she is away. We miss her around. She used to take care of us, the plants, and the birds...”

Nahed points at the spacious front yard of the house and says, “Look, there were citrus and lemon trees, and also roses; my mother-in-law took care of all of them. Now they are all covered with dust and poisonous chemicals because of the shelling. We had to uproot all of them because they could be dangerous for kids...”

Nahed, who is still living in her mother-in-law’s house, concludes her story by saying, “If it was not for God’s will, I would have been wounded or have became a martyr maybe!”
Rasha Qataty was sitting alone in the middle of her house in Al Zaytoon, east of Gaza, wearing her black gown and scarf. Rasha is thirty years old and six month pregnant. She has six other kids to whom she is, now, a mother and a father.
She says, “On the day before the last day of the attack, at 3:00 am, Abo Zoor family’s house was targeted. My husband, Ahed, went out to see what had happened. He tried to rescue the kids and women inside the bombed house. While doing so, a cement block hit his head and he immediately died…”

Using a few simple words, Rash describes how her life has changed forever, “I did not know that my husband was martyred; no one actually did. After the aircrafts had stopped firing rockets, we spent hours looking for him. Later, we found him under the rubble. Upon seeing that, I screamed and cried; he was my husband and my kids’ father. He was the only one left for us in life…”

Rasha was on the verge of tears while telling her story. She says, “Ahed was praying the night prayer at 2:30; he was praying that Israel would be defeated. At that moment, our neighbors’ house was bombed; my husband went out for their rescue, but never came back…”

Rash, who still mourns the death of her life partner, adds, “Nothing in the whole world would compensate for the absence of my husband, Ahed. All money in the universe would not compensate my children for their father’s affection. However, this is God’s will, so I thank God for everything…”

What hurts Rash the most is what her children had suffered and still suffering from. She says, “At that very night, my fourteen years old Ameera had her head injured. She was rushed to the hospital for medical treatment. There, she saw her father lying with other martyrs; she wept a lot, and up till now she is still psychologically unstable…”

Her youngest child, Abdullah who is two years and seven months old, does not stop crying. He keeps looking for his dad only to add more grief and sadness to his mom and siblings. Abdullah was very attached to his father who always played with him, took him to the market, and bought him toys...
Rasha wonders, “Why would my baby be born an orphan? What wrong did he do to spend his entire life without a father???”
U m Anas Rayan is a mother who seems to have a sixth sense. It made her unable to sleep during the eight days of the attack; this sixth sense was warning her that something catastrophic was about to happen.

Um Anas together with her husband spent over twenty years building their house. However, it was destroyed in a blink of an eye when an Israeli military airplane targeted a neighboring house that belonged to Abu Fool family, and therefore caused their own house to collapse, too. The house that took years to construct took only seconds to destroy.

On November 18th, 2012, Um Anas, a forty year old woman who was up all night, heard the warning rocket that was fired at their neighbor’s house. So, she hurriedly carried her children outside the house.

Um Anas started counting her sons who were dispersed because of fear. She was shocked, though, that her son, Anas, an eighteen year old boy, remained at the house. She was horrified and shouted, “I forgot my son in the house…”

Anas was saved only seconds before the explosion; the warning rocket gave the residents of the house five minutes to evacuate. Um Anas describes what happened, saying, “Seconds before the explosion, men dragged my son out of the house and then the house was bombed…” Five minutes later, their house was falling apart in front of their eyes, burying everything under the ground.

Um Anas says, “That day is unforgettable; even the kids will always remember it. What my husband and I did throughout our lives disappeared in the blink of an eye…”

Now Um Anas lives with her ten children in a rented house close to her destroyed house. She pays two hundred dollars monthly. She still feels worried every time an Israeli aircraft hovers over the sky. She cannot sleep until the aircraft is gone, and even then she cannot do so peacefully.

Two children were martyred and more than twelve others were injured as a result of bombing Abo Al Fool’s house Bait Lahia Project in the North of Gaza Strip.
Reham And The Eight Days Assault

As soon as the last ray of the sun warming the Gazans disappeared, the night fell accompanied by fear, dread, and horrifying voices. The voices of explosions, sounds of drones that did not stop flying in the skies of Gaza, and the concussion grenades launched in both residential and agricultural areas made people panic. These bombs were like the messenger of death that might arrive any minute.

Reham Al Baz is a twenty years old educated and working woman who loves life, and is always smiling despite what she has experienced throughout her life. She says, “I have two boys and one girl. I love them so much, and I miss them a lot when I go away for long hours. I work as a radiologist at the Red Crescent Hospital in Khan Younis City. As soon as I finish my work, I rush to my house to meet them; they are still young...”

The attack was launched on November 14th, 2012. It was alarming and startling; everybody was terrified at the idea of getting hurt. The ghost of death was following everybody; the smell of gunpowder was everywhere. Reham’s concern grew, and she became more worried about her children and husband especially that her husband works as a staff nurse at the European Hospital.

Reham says, “Although the assault was relentless, we went to work every day. I was trying to pull together all the power and determination I had to stay strong, and be a committed worker at the hospital as well as a good mother at my house. I was also trying to ease my husband’s pain because of what he was going through at work. He would see the wounded and dead bodies that were killed by the rockets. Some of these bodies arrived to the hospital as mere pieces of flesh.

It was just a few moments of peace and safety that Reham felt while her husband was home with her and her kids. The suffering, though, would start again when he had to leave for his night shifts; he would stay there for two nights in a row. She tried to alleviate her fear and create a life away from the attack with her kids by watching cartoons and children’s songs with them.

“The hardest times were those at night. Therefore, I was doing my best to lighten the atmosphere so that my kids were not afraid of the sounds of explosions and shelling. I did that by saying Allah Akbar and La Elah Ela Allah after every bombardment pretending that such voices were voices of celebrations. I did not want them to panic at this young age.”

The assault is over; Reham got over its aftermath, but she remained intimidated that there might be another assault. Her tricks to comfort the kids might not be useful then. She might lose one of them; that is what she would not be able to confront.
With the breaking dawn, and the twitting birds, the kids went out dreaming of a fresh day full of joy and happiness... Renan Arafat, a five year old child, was one of dozens of children who left their houses to study at Al Huda Kindergarten in Al Zaitoon neighborhood in the east of Gaza City.

As soon as she came back from the kindergarten, Renan would sing and practice what she had learned and memorized. She, along with her twelve years old sister Maria, would sing some songs from the well-known channel, Toyour Al Janna, which she loved a lot.

At exactly 5:30 in the afternoon on November 14th, 2012, the Israeli jets launched an air strike, assassinating the leader in Ezz El Deen Al Qassam Military Brigades, announcing, by this, the relentless and hostile assault on the innocent people of Gaza.

Renan, as usual was playing with her sister, Maria, and singing Toyour Al Janna songs. Her family was taking care of a farm surrounding their small house in Al-Ziatoon Neighborhood; at that moment, the little girl heard the loud shelling. She was scared to death to the point that she stuck to her brother as the oysters do to the sea rocks. Maria tried to calm down her sister; she asked her to supplicate to God, and recite some verses from the holy Qura’an. While they were doing so, a rocket surprised them, a meter away from their house and their uncle’s. And that was the last scene in their life.

It was just a few moments and the rocket wiped out the house, burying all who were inside under the rubble. God was very merciful; they all survived except for Renan.

Her mom, Um Jalal, a thirty year old woman, recalls some reminiscences which she cannot force herself to forget, saying, “Her face was as gentle as a flower; her voice was like a nightingale; she used to sing the famous song from Toyour Al Janna, Mama Jabat Baby.”

Renan was different from others; her mother says that, although she was young, she knew what a family means. She loved family gatherings; she used to save some money from her daily allowance in order to buy some nuts for everybody when they get together in the evening.

Renan’s death was no easy for her young sister, Maria, who could not describe her twin soul; she just cried.

Her brother, Jalal, an eight year old boy, could not walk due to the injury. He is still not able to understand why those who saved him and his sister, Maria, did not save Renan. He keeps wondering and blaming them, saying, “Why did not they get her out of the rubble alive?”
Sa'adya Al Aidy... Her Birds Became Motherless
When She Was Killed By a Rocket

One morning during the Pillar of Clouds Operation, more particularly, on November 18th, 2012, Sa'adya Mohammed Al Deeb, a sixty year old woman, went out as usual to check up on her few hens. They were put in a backyard, a few meters square, in Al Mansoura Street, Al Sheja’ah neighborhood. However, she never came back.

She took a handful of seeds, some leftovers, and a small bottle of water. She headed, then, to her birds hut in the corner. Serenely, she called on her hens to have their food. They quickly responded, until Sa'adya was pleased with them. She gave them more seeds to make sure that they were not hungry any more. While the old lady was with her hens, her sister, Nasra, and her brother came to check up on her, since the night before was very violent; shelling and demolishing were everywhere. There was a short conversation between them, but, then, an Israeli airplane surprised them with a rocket that made her drop dead.

Rezeq could not but shout loudly, calling for all those who were home to come to his sister’s rescue. He asked them to call the ambulance or to rush her to the hospital, yet they were shocked that she was dying. Her blood was mingled with the grass; the screaming of the birds became louder as if they figured out that their mother and care giver had just died.

She says, with tears running down her cheeks, “She left with her usual smile on her face. Right after the rocket had dropped her down; she was still able to breathe for a few moments. Her family members gathered around her. Then, Sa’adya smiled especially to me...”

Sa’adya’s life was not complex; it was rather simple, and full of unconditional generosity towards her brothers, nephews, relatives, and neighbors. Shaher, one of her nephews, says that he had a very intimate friendship with his aunt. Every time he would pass by her house with his taxi, Shaher would stop by her place to have a cup of coffee or tea, and talk to her about the agony of life for a couple of hours.

Shaher misses her pieces of advice to him. He says she was educated with a lot of experience in life. She was sewing and designing clothes to provide for herself and her sister who was living with her. She would also give money to the needy people whenever she had extra. She would never ask anybody to pay her back. Everybody in the neighborhood used to call her “Hajjah” since she went, a few years ago, to Mecca to do Al Hajj rituals. She hoped to do it again, but martyrdom found its way to her more quickly.

lame pretexts. Most of those who dye are women and children; the massacres its soldiers commit are evidence that the army targets the civilians randomly...” He wonders, “Is feeding the birds a crime that has to be punished by bombing.

Although two months had passed, Nasra, sat in a dark room with only one ray sneaking into the room through the window. She still felt the pain of losing her sister Sa’adya.

Her brother, Rezeq, still wonders why the Israelis targeted his sister’s residence. He could not find an answer until now. He says, “The area was not surrounded by agricultural lands which the Israelis claim always that the resistance forces use to fire rockets at the Palestinian territories taken in 1948.”

Filled with agony, he continues, “The occupation gives
“Sabha” The Alive Martyr

After her being bombed, her house in Al Hashash area in Rafah, South of Gaza was nothing but tons of rubble, which made it difficult to pull her body out. It was done, though, and then her body was moved to morgue in the hospital.

Her son, 40 years old, who was injured in the head, started receiving condolences from relatives and friends who were gathered around him in the hospital as he, too, was rushed to the hospital after being pulled from under the rubble. Meanwhile, his 60 years old mother’s heart started beating again.

Sabha Al Hashash, 65 years old, says, “On the fourth day of the attack an Israeli military aircraft fired 2 rockets at our house. I came to conscience 4 days later to find myself in a hospital in Egypt.”

Sabha adds, “I learned afterwards that they pulled me from under the rubble along with my son who lived with me. His wife and children were afraid of the shelling, and therefore had left for her family’s residence.”

Sabha believes that, by surviving an inevitable death, she was granted a new life. She says, “I was told that I was martyred when they pulled me out, and that they announced me dead on T.V.”

Sabha could not hide her fear nor her continuous assumptions, “What would have happened had they buried me alive? What would have happened if nobody noticed my slow, shallow breathing? What would have happened had they put me in my grave while I was still alive?”

Her fears grow stronger every time she hears an aircraft sound or any noise, for she recalls all that had happened in her mind. She says, “As I recall what had happened, I relive the same feelings of fear and panic. I remember how death was so close; it touched my body, and turned it into a lifeless corpse that no one would notice the few weak breaths it had.”

After being blessed with another chance to live, Sabha has to live with her backache that resulted from some fractures; her leg’s broken bones that were supported with platinum which prevented her from sitting or actually moving.

She complains of a mattered back because she lies on her back all the time to the point that pimples started spreading on her back. Her continuous follow ups with the doctors at the European Hospital, south of Gaza, did not help lessen her pain, neither did the long days she spend in hospitals in both Gaza and Egypt. As she is gradually losing hope in getting better, her fears of a new assault reappear to steal the life out of her.
Sana’a loves nursing, and she was the one who chose to be a nurse. However, she sometimes thinks that nursing is the one of the toughest and most dangerous professions due to the fact that nurses have to work under such cruel war circumstances. Throughout the war, Sana’a would stay self possessed and unruffled. Nevertheless, there was hidden fear inside her and she was pretending to be strong in front of her kids. “At the beginning of the war, I went every day to Al Shefa’a Hospital; it was so frightening and dangerous. I could not find a car easily since streets were almost empty. Shelling was everywhere, and so the streets were smoky darkened…”

Back in 2008- 2009 assault, Sana’a Thabet worked in Kamal Edwan Hospital. Going to work was not as much terrifying and frightening to her as it turned out to be during the eight day attack in 2012. She says, “During the first attack, my house was close to my work. It was therefore easier. This time, I moved to the middle area; I had to go to Gaza every day. I was exposed to danger more than once on my way to work. One time, I had to hide in a deserted house in order to escape from artillery shelling. Every day, before going to work, I would say good bye to my kids and husband, and would ask them to be careful. I felt that I might not come back, and see them again. There was a possibility, too, that they would get hurt or die…”

Thabet lives in a remote area where cars rarely pass by; the roads there are not paved. Therefore, she has to walk for fifteen minutes before she arrives to the street where she can find a car to get her to Gaza where she works. All this adds to her suffering, not to mention the fact that she leaves at home her four months old daughter. Besides, this very area is targeted a lot by the Israeli military boats.

She says, “After four days of the assault, we asked the Hospital to provide us with an ambulance to get to the Hospital and go back home. But, even this was not safe; lots of ambulances were directly targeted…” She adds, “About fifty members used to get into the same ambulance; they were from different areas. We would wait for the ambulance in the middle of the city. The driver was careful, driving only on the main streets. However, explosions were following us everywhere. Those days were horrible; we were trembling all the way long. When we got home or arrived at the hospital, we still could not believe that we were alive!”

“I was torn between my duty as a nurse and my family which consists of my husband, my four girls, and one boy. My heart was beating fast whenever I heard something on news related to events occurring in Nusierat in the middle area. I would hurry to call my husband and check up on the whole family. We used to call each other all the time in order to check whether we were fine.”

She sighs while saying, “Oh! They were tough days. Everyday I went to work, I would kiss my kids goodbye, and bid farewell to my husband. I thought I might not see them again…”
Sleepless Eyes At The Borders

Around the borders, people have a lifeless life; a life that does not know quietness; a life that holds a permanent fear of the future.

Ibtisam Owida, 46 years old, would not sleep, as her ears would listen carefully. She was afraid that they would be bombed by the occupation aircrafts which left no place in Gaza Strip without bombing it since they assassinated Ahmed Al Ja’abary, a leader in Al Qassam Brigades, on November 14th, 2012.

Ibtisam lives with her husband and 10 children at the borders between Palestine and Egypt to the south of Gaza Strip. That area was very dangerous; they were surrounding by danger from all directions be it on land or air.

Ibtisam says, “My young son used to tremble of fear after he had seen with his own eyes 2 of our neighbors being bombed with an Israeli rocket. Therefore, I decided to send him to his aunt’s house which is farther from the borders.”

She adds, “At first, we had to stay home given that there were enough children in each house. Besides, people’s economic statuses were not very good, so we did not want to an additional burden to anyone.”

She continues, “Nevertheless, in the last three days, we could not stay in the house due to the intense shelling that hit all the agricultural lands that surrounded us. We were scared to take the Toktok [a vehicle on 3 wheels], so we rushed to my sister’s residence on foot.”

As soon as Ibtisam stopped worrying about the roads, she started worrying about her house. She stayed in contact with her neighbor via text messages to check whether the house stayed intact amidst the nonstop shelling.

She says, “We used to think that our house was destroyed every time we heard a missile hit the ground. I would feel horrible until my neighbor would send me a text saying that my house was still standing. Then I would worry again.....”

Eight days of constant terror came to an end when the Palestinian resistance factions and the Israeli occupation forces announced a ceasefire under an Egyptian patronage on the night of November 23rd, 2012.

Ibtisam packed her stuff, and went back to her house with her husband, and children. She started checking what she had lost such as doors that became loose, or windows that were shattered. As her husband started fixing things, she and her daughters started cleaning the dirt as well as rocket fragments. Ibtisam Kept telling herself, “what really matters is that we still have a house to take us in...”
Al Nahal’s children wanted to evade the cold weather of winter, so they leaned on the metal bars by Gaza beach that separates their houses from the sea. Tasneem, too, resisted the feeling of fear and left her house in a hurry to buy some grocery for her mom and brothers. It was the third day of the war, November 18th, 2012. They could not go out during the previous days because of the heavy shelling.

The Israeli aircrafts that were hovering over Gaza Strip were monitoring the entire area and spotting every movement on the ground. When convenient, they carried out their random air strikes, resulting in causalities and martyrs.

“Tasneem Al Nahal, ten years old, was coloring pictures in her Human Rights subject notebook. But I asked her to go buy us some grocery at a minimarket in the middle of our neighborhood. I wish I had not asked her to go...” With these words Tasneem’s mother started her painful story.

Tasneem’s soul was doomed to leave her body. She died together with her relative, Ahmed Al Nahal, 26 years old. Their blood was mixed with the rocket fragments, and the pieces of candy and potato chips which Tasneem had bought with other stuff for her mother.

Um Ahmed Al Nahal, a thirty year old woman, says, “When I heard the shelling, I rushed to the street to check on my daughter. I saw her in some guy’s arms who told me that she was just injured; he was trying to comfort me by saying that. But I knew she was martyred; the burns were covering her young body”. She adds, “I was looking through the window, waiting for her to come back. Out of a sudden, a rocket fell close to her. The fragments and body parts were scattered. The clouds of smoke were rising. I did not know what had happened until I saw her; that guy was carrying her. Then, I knew that she was gone.”

Tasneem loved the roar of the sea where she spent most of her time during the summer. Between the iron bars that separated her house from the sea, she was speaking out her dreams that were inspired by the Human Rights subject according to what her mom said.

And so Tasneem was gone leaving her five siblings in a shock, and her mother’s heart grieving. Her teachers at Al Shate’a School were also overwhelmed by what had happened. As she was kissing Tasneem’s notebook that was empty except for one page entitled “Human Rights”, the mother says, “Her deeds and words made her sound more mature than her own age; her character was powerful, generous and friendly.”

Her fourteen year old sister, Islam, still cannot believe that Tasneem is gone forever; leaving the dreams she stealthily drew with a pencil and chalk on her room’s wall and door. Islam still keeps tracks sung by little Tasneem on her mother’s cell phone. She remembers how Tasneem used to sweeely sing Toyour Al Janna channel songs along with other verses from the holy Quraan.

Her death changed her younger brother, Raed, a four year old boy. He became more silent than before. He used to be a trouble maker with his sister, Tasneem, especially when she would walk him to the kindergarten back and forth. He now knows that she is not coming back to play with him.
The Assault Continues..... In Arwa’s Mind

“Whether I close or open my eyes, the Israeli aircrafts haunt me.” Says the young child, Arwa Al Hashash, who was injured in the eight days attack that began on the 14th November, 2012.

Her mother, Ameera who is 54 years old, and lives with her family in North of Rafah City says, “In the first days of the attack, they bombed a neighboring area. So, a huge rocket fragment fell on the tin bars that top our house, while other parts fell on my sleeping daughters.”

She adds, “Arwa’s leg was broken, and both her legs were burnt.”

She recalls what happened by saying, “We all panicked. My children’s voices woke me up; they were screaming: Arwa is hurt.... Arwa is Hurt. Accordingly, we rushed towards her. Her face was so pale because of the pain as well as the fear. She kept crying until the ambulance arrived to which her brother carried her.”

Ameera had to hide her fear from her daughter, so she started cleaning her house, and rearranging everything until Arwa came back. Her legs were wrapped with some cotton, bandage, and a cast. The girl’s misery began then.

Ameera says, “She kept crying all night out of pain. All the painkillers she was prescribed at the hospital did not work to ease her pain. She broke my heart as I felt helpless to lessen her suffering or her sisters’ panic.”

Arwa spent the night crying out of pain, and when she managed to sleep she had nightmares. Her mother says, “Arwa started seeing scary events in her dreams; she told us some of these dreams where she saw shelling, murder, and blood. It was as if she was living her own war...”

Arwa, who stopped going to school, is waiting to have a surgery in her leg so that she could walk normal as doctors have promised her.

Meanwhile, her brothers and sisters are still trying to deal with the trauma and fear because of what they have seen during the last war, what has happened to their sister, and everything they have lost be it spiritual or material.
He was sitting there terrified, and eaten by his own fears. He was wondering about what he would do had our house been bombarded.” Says Huda Qeshta who is 46 years old. She used to pitifully watch her paralyzed husband during the eight days assault the Israeli occupation forces launched at the end of 2012.

“I was concerned about myself, my children, and my relatives; however, I was hurt the most for my husband’s situation and fear. I was always wondering how I would protect him in case we got hit by rockets from the Israeli aircrafts.”

Huda adds, “We were more than 30 people in a three floors building, yet we all gathered in one room due to the intense shelling that hit our neighborhood in the border area, east of Rafah.”

In the last 2 days of the attack, Huda, and her family, along with her in-laws’ families had to leave their houses as a result of the intensive, life-threatening shelling. They resorted to some relatives who lived in a house farther away from the borders than their own house. Fortunately, they found an empty apartment to stay in until the end of the assault.

“Our suffering from the attack has not ended yet; my 2 years old son used to have a seizure every time he heard the bombing sounds. Despite the end of the shelling, he is still afraid, and still has seizures. He cries upon hearing any loud sound around him.”

On top of that, Huda says that her husband was not doing any better than her son; he is still troubled and sad. In addition, he still has upsetting nightmares where he sees their house destroyed especially that they still live around the borders where they get shot at unexpected times. Furthermore, their house would be the first access point the occupation tanks would use in any future incursion. However, they would not leave it intact.
The First Days Of The Assault

“I was not only hurt in the head, but also I got it stitched; my daughter, Ranin was injured in the head and back. Hadeel’s, my other daughter, stomach was penetrated by some rocket fragments; her feet and her sister’s, Ghadeer, were wounded. My son, Ibrahim, got part of his face deformed, while my husband nearly lost his eye.”

This was not by far the biggest concern for Faiza Al Hashash, 44 years old, hence her family ended up in the street after an Israeli military aircraft had bombed their house with an F16 missile, turning it into rubble. Faiza, who lives in an area in Rafah that holds the same name of her family’s, says, “Our house was entirely bombed to the extent that nothing remained of it. There is just a big hole now; a hole that swallowed everything, even our official paper which we could not pull out of the rubble. We only came out of the house accompanied with our endless pain and worries.”

She adds, “I fear of a new assault. God was merciful enough on us that we all survived; none of us died or became disabled. However, now, after losing our house, we have nothing except our lives...”

Faiza’s husband had to rent a temporary house for them to live in, yet she complains about life aspects, “We lost everything from our cloths, our stuff, our photos, and my kids’ books.... Everything.... We lost everything. And now, we have start from scratch...”

Due to this major change, Faiza is concerned about her children, and their academic achievement.

The Israeli occupation forces had launched a vicious attack on the people of Gaza Strip on November 14th, 2012 that lasted for eight consecutive days, and ended when the Palestinian resistance factions reached a mutual ceasefire with Israeli forces with the Egyptian patronage.
Um Ashraf... A Paramedic Despite The Disaster She Has Been Through

Azzam’s family that lives in Zaitoon neighborhood got its share of pain just like other families. This neighborhood saw heavy bombardment by the Israeli air strikes; houses and streets continued to be targeted throughout the eight days of the assault. The entire place smelled like death and gunpowder.

Seham Azzam (Um Ashraf), a sixty year old woman, was tearing through the rubbles of her demolished house in hope of finding some of her stuff or her four kids’ stuff.

Um Ashraf says, “My house consists of two floors with four apartments. It was totally destroyed on November 20th, 2012. We did not take anything; we did not get our IDs, my kid’s birth certificates, their clothes, nor their computers.”

The distressful mother says, “When the Israelis bombed the house by a warning rocket, we went out running for our lives. While we were going downstairs, my youngest son, eight years old Haytham, fell down; I picked him up in a second; I do not know how I stopped and did that. I hurried to a place to protect myself. The shelling was heavy and consistent.” She points out that her other sons were after her running in the streets in search for any shelter.

She continues, feeling the pain, “Upon reaching the street, I found out that my youngest son had injured his head; this resulted from falling down. Having a little previous experience, I performed the first aids on his wound. I used a clean white piece of cloth as a bandage; I pushed it strongly to stop the bleeding in his head…”

Having this paramedical experience, Um Ashraf helped a number of her family members who gathered in one room downstairs at one of the neighbors’ house. They all got there to heal the injuries they had had while they were trying to get out of the bombed house.

She adds, “I helped almost eleven people who had minor injuries. Dust and smoke caused by the falling rockets were choking some of them. I started to throw some water at my husband’s eldest nieces who had fainted. I gently hit their cheeks to get them back to consciousness. Thank God, I managed to do what was necessary before the ambulance came, and rushed them to hospital."

She goes on, “My sister-in-law, Umnia, helped me do that. She called some neighbors, and asked them to get cloth, cotton, and iodine so that we could give first aids…”

Despite her big loss, she is proud that she could, together with her kids, make it. She also feels proud that she could help others by healing their wounds. She hopes to rebuild her house, and live in it again with her kids. She would also love to have a peaceful life instead of the disturbing life they now have…
Um Maher...A Weak Elderly Strengthened
By The War...

Being a worn out sixty five year old woman, Um Maher is always concerned about her sons and grandchildren. Her young sons survived the two wars on Gaza which was followed up by international community like a soap opera. The first episode was in 2008/2009, while the second was in November 2012. It was the fourth day of the War. As Um Maher was getting ready for the night prayer, she heard a warning rocket falling on one of the neighboring houses in Bait Lahia in the North of Gaza Strip.

Describing the first moments of their experience with the attack, Hajja Um Maher says, “It was as if it were in our house.” Two of her sons hurried out of the house to know where the rocket had fallen. She tried to stand in their way. Luckily, the mother could not stop them. They came back bearing news for everybody to evacuate the house immediately; otherwise they would be buried under the rubble...

Um Maher was worried about Ala’a and Maher, and tried to stop them from leaving the house. However, she realized later that they were the ones who saved everybody in the family...!

Hajja Um Maher moved from one floor to another in the building, making sure that no one remained there. She refused to go out until all her sons and grandsons had gone out first. She says, “It would be ok if I died, but I do not want them to die; raising them was not easy at all...” With their mother’s persistence, they had no choice but to leave the house with her. They scattered in all directions. Um Maher arrived at her neighbor’s house very exhausted as if she had been walking from the North of the Strip to the South. Neither Um Maher nor her sons expected to go back to their house safe and sound. Since, after the bombardment, the house was on fire, and the walls were almost collapsing, especially after a high voltage electric line exploded.

Like lots of Palestinians whose houses were destroyed by the Israeli army, Um Maher and her family are living in what was left of their house. It is now destroyed but at least the remaining cement layers protect them from hot weather in summer and cold, rainy weather in winter. It is the aftermath of the War; Um Maher’s family is waiting for a chance to reconstruct of their house.

Um Maher says, “We never imagined before that we would be displaced and homeless especially in such cold weather. The drapes we tried to hang were blown away by the wind; the doors were about to fall down due to the violent winds...” Um Maher is living on the third floor of the destroyed building; it is the only floor which walls remained intact. The ground floor was totally destroyed and unfit for living. However, Um Maher uses it sometimes to make fire to get some warmth.
Um Osama And Her Lost Life-Time Work...

On the spur of the moment, Um Osama Al Khooly along with her forty family members ended up in the street at 4:00 midnight on the fourth day of the assault that was launched by the Israeli aircrafts on the highly populated Strip on the 14th of November, 2012.

Um Osama, sixty years old mother of six children says, “At exactly 3:00 am, my eldest son, Ayman, got a phone call form the Israeli Army, the Shin Bet in particular. They asked him to evacuate the seven apartments in our building within only five minutes. When my son tried to object, the Israeli officer replied, “Do not talk too much!” Then, he hanged up…”

Standing in front of the rubble, with a challenging smile on her face, Um Osama goes on, “We have a case, charging the Israeli Army with bombing our house, and displacing its residents. We documented all what had happened. We even went to human rights centers. My husband insists on proceeding with the case till the end…”

She recalls the last moments of that terrifying night; she says, “At the beginning, Ayman did not believe what the Israeli officer told him. Seconds after he hanged up, he realized how dangerous the phone call was. Then, he loudly called upon his brothers who were sleeping at their own apartments with their kids to wake them up. He was running like crazy everywhere in the building, shouting, “Get out of the house quickly; they will bomb it”. We did not know how we all left the house fast enough; we took nothing except for our kids. Within five minutes, we were standing outside despite the freezing whether…”

She continues, with the pain appearing clearly on her wrinkled face, “We were almost 40 men and women. We stood there, waiting for what was going to happen. It was totally dark in Salah El Deen Street where we were hiding. Five minutes later, an Israeli drone fired two rockets at our house…”

She adds, “I saw the rockets right in front of my eyes being fired at our house, rocking it. The biggest destruction was yet to come. After other five minutes, five F16 rockets were launched at the house again, turning it into a pile of stones and sands. Our home, our only shelter that took years to build was gone…”

After this scene, Al Khooly says, “We remained on the street for three hours with some families who went out because of the strong explosion. At 6:00 am, the Israeli aircrafts bombed the house again, by firing another F16 rocket…”

Um Osama together with her children and grandchildren moved to a house the government rented for them. Charging the Israeli Army at the court is now Um Osama and her husband’s only solace. She says, “Following the cease fire, my husband went to a lawyer and asked him to sue Israel for the crimes. We hired two attorneys one that is based inside Israel while the other is based in the occupied territories of 1948. We are still waiting for the verdict…”
Um Waseem... And The Quest to Find Safety...!

“W"e went through really hard times; they were full of fear and horror. My entire body was trembling as if being electrocuted. It got even worse because I have a problem with the nervous system. That was how the doctors diagnosed it; they said it was a result of psychological stress that increased due to the assault…”

That is how Um Waseem summed up how things were during the eight days war on Gaza on November 14th, 2012.

Um Waseem, a forty year old woman, lives in Abassan Al Jadeeda which is located in east of Khan Younis, south of Gaza strip. Though the eastern villages are considered dangerous areas during such attacks, that was not the reason why Um Waseem was worried. Her anxiety sprang from the fact that her house is right next to a police station for the Gazan government.

Um Waseem was on edge throughout the war days; she was concerned that the police station next to their house might be bombed, especially that the Israelis are known for targeting, and destroying governmental establishments as well as police stations whenever an assault is launched.

Um Waseem says, “Whenever I heard close explosions, I would say Al Shahadateen.” She adds, “My husband insisted on leaving the house. So, I had to leave, too. I took shelter in my father’s house in the neighboring Bany Shohaila village. My husband and children took shelter in my brother in laws’ place.”

She adds, “Before Al Maghreb prayer, I would leave my house, heading to my father’s where my brother and sister live. The shelling would get heavier at night. Later, that night, my second brother, his wife, and their children joined us; they escaped from the dangerous border area they live in. We were all frightened, praying and reading Qura’an. We listened to the news on the radio and then forced ourselves to bed.”

Although Um Waseem was worried and concerned, she felt comfortable being around her siblings. It was an opportunity for her to get together with her family and bring back the good old days.

She says, “We were almost ten people sleeping in one room. The minute we closed our eyes, the shelling and explosions started. The roaring sound of drones would not stop. The guessing begins at that point: where did the rocket fall? What was bombed? And so on…”

In the early morning, Um Waseem would go back to her residence to check up on her children and her house.

She says, “I was walking in a deserted road; there were barely cars and passbyers. Once, a neighboring farm was targeted while I was on my way home. I was terrified; I started reciting short verses from the Qura’an until I got home.”

Despite the misery of the war, and the fear of losing dear ones, the war days were sometimes entertaining. Um Waseem says, “One day, my sister’s cell phone rang; it was an unknown number; it looked like an international number. She was afraid and did not answer due to her fear of the Israeli army breaches through Jawwal network. They used to call people demanding them to evacuate their houses so that they could bomb them. The cell phone kept ringing, so she turned it off, and got the battery out of it, lest anyone would ask her to evacuate the house immediately…”

She goes on, “We were worried for hours; my sister was online checking her inbox. Much to her surprise, she found out that her friend who lives in Britain was the one trying to call her. She wanted to see if things were ok. At this point, we started laughing…”

The war came to an end on November 23rd, but memories of fear still jump into Um Waseem’s mind whenever there is a new attack or every time an aircraft hovers above Gaza sky.
Wedad, Um Ammer, who is a forty-two-year-old woman, could not stay at her house at the time when others needed her to stitch and heal their wounds. She would move every day from Al Shyja’ya, in the east of Gaza, where she lives to Al Shefa’s Hospital in the west of Gaza. There, she would see the injured people saying Al Shahadateen, fathers, mothers, and brothers looking for the remaining pieces of their beloved. She would also see children who were crying out of pain, fear, or sometimes even sleepiness. She knew that those children were sleepy because the Israeli shelling usually got heavier at night, the time they were supposed to be safely fast asleep.

Whenever the reception at the hospital got packed, which was very common, during the last assault on Gaza Strip in November 2012, Um Amer would leave her work at surgery department in order to help her colleagues at the reception.

One day, Um Amer was taken aback to see her youngest son, Mohammed, who is eleven years old, being carried on a carrier. He was injured by some volatile rocket fragments from the bombarded police station in Al Shyja’ya area. Her heart bounced, as she said. She stitched and bandaged his injured leg. Then, she called an ambulance to get him home. After that, she resumed her work following up patients.

Um Amer, used to head everyday to Al Shefa’a Hospital, under the fire, and the fear. She would leave behind a family consisting of five members. Inspite of being at work, her heart would remain home with the kids, especially Mohammed, her wounded son. She used to take care of him after returning back from work. She says, “I was constantly exposed to danger during my work. Every time I left the house, there was a feeling that I would not go back. Therefore, I would bid them farewell, and urge them to take care of themselves. I would listen to the news on the local radio stations; whenever I heard about bombardment near my house, I would call my kids to check up on them.

Wedad says, “Every time I had nothing to do in the surgery department, I used to go to the reception to help them out treating the wounded that never stopped coming to the hospital. They would come with amputated body limbs, scattered body parts, and covered in blood and dust…”

Every time Um Amer remembered her family, her heart ached. However, she would pray for God to keep them safe. Then, she would go on with her work, stitching and bandaging the wounded. She would be crying, yet, trying hard to hide it.

“I saw a lot of scenes that made me cry!” Says Wedad, who shed a lot of tears seeing martyrs dying, and children screaming in soreness, never stopped doing her humanitarian, national, and professional duty.
Mohammed Al Shawa did not know how to tell her daughter that her soul mate and daughter, who was about to be wed to her groom a few months ago, had actually died...!!!

Abo Mohammed says, "My mother-in-law approached my wife; at the beginning she said, when asked about Yosra, that she was alright. She tried to be strong enough, but then she burst into tears, announcing that Yosra was martyred.

Um Mohammed along with her only daughter, Yosra, and her three sons gathered in the living room to watch on TV what the war had done to the disarmed people of Gaza. Um Mohammed did not know how such a calm family gathering turned into an endless nightmare. While they were peacefully sitting in their living room, a rocket was fired into their house in Al Sheja’ia neighborhood to the east of Gaza city. Consequently, Yosra was martyred, while her mother was wounded in her back.

Yosra’s mother, who did not know that her heart will be broken over losing her own daughter, says, “A few moments before her death, Yosra was crying over the tortured children killed by the Israelis. She prayed that Allah would keep them safe.”

Abo Mohammed was at work with his son when he learned the news about bombing his own house, and about what had happened to his wife and daughter. Immediately, he rushed to Al Shefa’a hospital only to find his daughter a lifeless body. He took her between his arms, and wept, breaking the heart of the Turkish Foreign Minister and his delegate who were checking up on the patients at that moment.

Yosra’s bleeding body, the rocket fragments that exploded like a volcano in the house, the siren of ambulances, and her daughter’s voice calling “mama...mama” are all scenes that Um Mohammed’s memory could not skip. Um Mohammed walks around what was left of her house, looking for Yosra to help her prepare food. She also enters her room to ask her to help her brothers with their lessons.

Um Mohammed remembers Yosra, and the dreams she had whenever she looks at her daughter’s books which she had prepared in order to study and improve her GPA in General High School. Yosra wanted to study Economy and Political science, and to get a job that would grant her a prestigious social position. Recalling all this, her mother says, “All those dreams were smashed by the Israelis.”

Yosra had a dream that lead her to believe that she was going to be a martyr. Therefore, she refused to go through with the engagement to one of her relatives, with the excuse that she wanted to pursue her education. Her mother insisted that Yosra got engaged; she kept expressing her desire to see her wearing the white dress. However, she could not do anything against Yosra’s desire. Her mother says, "I respected her desires; her father also encouraged her to pursue her education. I was so happy..."

Yosra’s mother reproached her sometimes, saying,"I would love to see you wearing the white dress." Yosra answered her once, “Do not worry mom, I had a dream... A good one and you will be pleased when it comes true, Good willing...".

At this point, Yosra’s mother shed tears; she could not go on with her story. She just wondered, "What wrong did she do to get killed? She was safe in her own house, trying to embark upon a journey to find her future?".