

STRIKE! DEFEND! RESIST!

DID THEY BULLDOZE MY FATHER’S GRAVE?

*On the occupation’s
cowardly destruction
of Lebanon’s
southern villages*

By
HASSAN ILLAIK

Did they bulldoze my father’s grave? They bulldozed the entire cemetery, with all the graves in it. My father’s grave is in a corner, near the graves of my grandmother, my grandfather, my uncle, my father’s uncle, and his dear friend. It’s not far from the graves of his grandfather, his uncle, and his martyred cousins. Perhaps that corner survived the bulldozing. Perhaps. In the aerial image, they bulldozed the entire cemetery. But the acacia trees are still there. There, south of Yohmor al-Shaqif, near the water reservoir. Beneath the acacia trees, they bulldozed the graves.

“The quiet graves” — that’s what I would have written. For what are graves if not stillness? Graves beneath the acacia trees, near the reservoir. What threat do they present to an army bristling with nuclear weapons? They are the graves of my father, my grandmother, my grandfather, my uncle, my great-grandfather, my great-uncle, my brothers-in-law, my father’s friends, my aunt’s husband, my other aunt’s husband ... the graves of our people, our martyrs, and their ancestors. How does a D9 bulldozer enter a cemetery and raze it? Is there a reason? What could it be?



The IOF has destroyed cemeteries across Lebanon’s South with bulldozers and bombs alike. Photo by Hussein Bassal.

I will not speak about those who are buried in these graves. But the first thing that crossed my mind was the ghost of my grandmother. Did she frighten them? Her name was Latifa, and she was gentle, like her name. In the 1980s, electricity reached the village only on special occasions. My grandmother would wake at dawn, just before the morning dew. She would carry a lantern and step out onto the porch, toward the edge of the well, to perform ablution and pray. Sometimes, I would wake to the sound of her footsteps, and hear her murmuring before prayer.

Does the ghost of my grandmother frighten them, 23 years after her death? An old woman carrying a lantern, praying, rolling tobacco leaves, picking darnel from the wheat grains, braiding onions, loving her children and grandchildren, weeping for the martyr Husayn, while planting and planting and

Does the ghost of my grandmother frighten the Zionists? Perhaps they were afraid of an army of martyrs

planting ... Waking at dawn, carrying a lantern, performing ablution and praying, and spending the day telling us stories. Did they see her ghost before dawn and get frightened? Was she heading toward the reservoir to wash, after they had demolished the house and the well? Did my grandmother frighten an army with nuclear bombs so much that they were compelled to enter a cemetery in a military bulldozer and raze the graves? Or was it the ghost of my grandfather



Displaced Palestinian children play football between makeshift tents in Gaza City on June 30, 2026. Photo by Mohammed M. Skaik.

that frightened them? He used to mend what was broken, and plow and sow the land. Or does it frighten them that my father recognized, at an early age, the danger of the lights coming from Misgav Am at night? Perhaps they were afraid of an army of martyrs.

In the war of 2024, they destroyed my grandparents’ house, where I spent the summers of my childhood. They killed three paramedics there, including my cousin Hassan. The paramedics frightened them, so they destroyed the house — the house of my grandfather and grandmother, my father, my uncles, and my aunts. The house that always brought tears to my eyes whenever I left it as a

Lebanon today stands at a crossroads, facing down both Israeli military occupation and a government committed to normalization with the Zionist state at the expense of the South’s land and people. In the Syrian Golan Heights, the Israeli occupation has seized 350 kilometers of land, roughly the size of the city of Cairo. Instead of condemning the theft, the Syrian government — on the precipice of hosting its first US business forum — has surrendered the Golan, removing the region from its official map of the country. The genocide in Gaza has now passed the 1000 day mark. The IOF claims to have seized 60 percent of the Strip, aiming for 70 percent, while escalating daily bombardment and blocking the entry of critical humanitarian aid.

Despite this vast web of death and devastation, the Zionist state today faces the gravest threat to its existence in half a century.

The war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu and his fellow crooks in the cabinet had believed that Al-Aqsa Flood would unlock the gates to absolute domination in the region. Normalization deals would come in quick succession; the resources of the region would become theirs to loot and plunder; glittering towers would rise from the rubble of Gaza. Emboldened to escalate the genocide they committed with an ever-increasing flow of American dollars and weapons, Israeli politicians convinced the U.S. government to launch an assault on Iran, one that

NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

A Grave Threat to the Zionist State *Our renewed focus is required*

despite nearly half a century of Western sanctions that have suffocated its economy and imposed immense hardship on its people. While Lebanon’s leaders cobble together toothless words of censure for Israel’s repeated massacres in the South, and self-appointed Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa busies himself with lavishing praise on Donald Trump and celebrating the new warmth in U.S.-Syrian relations, Iran acts with the calculus of a revolutionary republic forged in resistance to Western imperialism.

That calculus has led Iran’s leaders to demand that the lands of the Resistance Axis form an integral part of their negotiations with the Americans. The first point of the Memorandum of Understanding, signed by the U.S. and Iran on June 26, calls for the “immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon.” Instead of embracing the protection afforded by this new security framework, the Lebanese government dispatched a delegation to the Pentagon in Washington to meet Israeli officials and sign a 14-point agreement that effectively legitimizes the Zionist occupation of scores of villages across the South: a Declaration of Shame.

This ‘Tripartite Agreement’ calls for the establishment of “pilot zones” where occupation forces withdraw from the land so that Lebanese Army soldiers can enter and clear Hezbollah military infrastructure. Point #13 calls on the signatories to “commit to tak-

martyrs that have fallen defending the country from invaders. They dismantle Lebanon’s means of self-defense all the while claiming that this capitulation to Israel will somehow restore Lebanon’s sovereignty.

Where does one begin to understand the folly of this Lebanese government that has pursued negotiations with the enemy of its land and people without any political or military leverage? Its calculations stem from the belief that the West will always be the victor, that the Zio-American order will never fall, and that nations can only rise when their fingers are interlaced with the forces of evil that seek to bury the Palestinian cause in the dust of history. We recall the words of Walid Daqqa: “Our elites are not helpless. No, they lack will. They lack imagination. Full stop.”

But as the Lebanese heads of state extoll this new era of “peace and prosperity,” the true forces of its sovereignty move iron and steel beneath the earth, continuing their work to expel the occupation. The sovereignty of the people is won through resistance, by those who point their arms at the invader.

The people of the South know this, which is why they condemn the actions of their government, burn tires in protest on the roads, and declare that the resistance lives, that it will always live so long as the talons of Zionist imperialism grip the soil of the Levant.

Our struggle continues despite the darkness that threatens to engulf us.



Lebanese protesters set fire to billboards put up by the Ministry of Interior after the government signed a “Declaration of Shame” — a 14-point agreement with the Zionist entity that legitimizes its occupation of the South. Photo by Ibrahim Amro.

they thought would deal a death blow to the resistance axis.

But the Islamic Republic of Iran did not and will not fall. Not from the Mossad spies that filtered into Tehran and armed monarchists with ambitions to overthrow the government; nor from the violent Zio-American air raids on Tehran that sent fiery mushroom clouds into the air and led to downpours of black rain; nor from the assassinations of senior Iranian figures, including Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Commander-in-chief Mohammad Pakpour, and Ali Larjani. Iran perseveres, not only as a state hostile to Zionist imperialism, but as a staunch supporter of resistance against Israel and a powerful counterweight to the wave of capitulation from governments across the region.

Iran’s resistance remains formidable

ing confidence-building measures that reflect positive intent” that “include ending all hostile or negative actions in international political and legal forums” — effectively barring Lebanon from pursuing legal action against the Zionist entity for its war crimes in an international court of law. The document’s accompanying “security annex” presses for coordination between the IOF and the Lebanese Army. The configuration recalls the disaster of the Oslo Accords, which transformed the Palestinian Authority into a police force serving the Zionists and escalated construction of settlements across the occupied West Bank.

Lebanon’s leaders do not hesitate to abandon the hundreds of thousands of southerners whose homes and land have just been destroyed by occupation forces, nor to desecrate the blood of the

Our people continue to endure the daily violence of a beast lashing out in its death throes. The shadow of Zionist occupation stretches across Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon. In Gaza, the daily massacres continue as hundreds of thousands face the burning summer heat beneath thin sheets of plastic. Southern Lebanon suffers Zionist occupation, its soil still waiting to receive the bodies of martyrs left where they fell. In Iran, families grieve sons and daughters crushed beneath the force of Israeli bombs.

But Iran’s undisputed victory can reshape the regional order in favor of the resistant forces working to end the scourge of Zionism. Across the imperial core, a renewed focus is required: expose the enemy’s crimes, exploit its hubris, and grind the imperial war machine to a halt.

The Summer Edition
“Together and united with the weapon of will that embraces the weapon of resistance.”
— Dr. George Habash

GAZA’S ORPHAN GENERATION

For thousands of children, the most basic facts of a life have come undone

By
MOHANAD MAHER
EL-HEMRAWI

Ahmed al-Harsh’s heart ached while he waited at Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis for the bus bringing 2-year-old Mahmoud back from Egypt. Mahmoud was one of dozens of premature babies evacuated without his family to Egypt during Israel’s siege of Al-Shifa Hospital in November 2023. Ahmed pushed through the crowd, trying to reach the bus to hug his little boy. The crowd pressed around him and the child started crying uncontrollably. Ahmed reached out to hold him. He could hardly believe the boy was finally here.

Standing not far off, Mohammed Lubbad clung to the hope he would finally get a chance to reclaim the child he believed had been taken from him.

Each of the two men, al-Hirsh and Lubbad, is certain that Mahmoud is his son.

Neither man can prove his claim. The war eliminated the most basic records of birth, and the collapsed healthcare system cannot provide a DNA test. The baby’s identity is a question without an answer.

In October 2023, an Israeli airstrike hit Ahmed al-Hirsh’s home. He survived with serious injuries. Eleven of his relatives did not. His wife, Fatima, was eight months pregnant, and doctors delivered the baby by emergency caesarean at Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City. Al-Hirsh was injured, so he wasn’t there for the birth. Fatima died two days later.

‘One day, a child can be surrounded by the embrace of his family. The next, in an instant, he is left with no one.’

The day before al-Hirsh’s house was struck, Mohammad Lubbad’s house was hit. He was dangerously injured, too, and was also away when his wife gave birth. Her baby came the same way, at eight months, by emergency caesarean.

On November 11, Israeli forces besieged Al-Shifa, the largest hospital in Gaza. A strike hit the cardiac wing, the power failed, and the incubators and ventilators in the neonatal unit stopped. Around thirty-nine premature babies were inside. The World Health Organization called the hospital a “death zone.” Some of the infants died. On November 20, 28 were evacuated to Egypt, where they would stay for two years. Most arrived without their families, who had no way of knowing whether their babies were alive.

In conditions like these, registering a birth was almost impossible. Who was the mother? Who was the father? Was the family even alive? Often no one could say. The records were lost, or simply never made at all.

The war has overturned the lives of an entire generation of children in Gaza. Since October 2023, more than 73,000 Palestinians have been killed, more than 21,000 of them children, according to the latest figures from the Gaza Health Ministry.

From the children who lived, it took something harder to name. It took the knowledge of who they are, the families they come from, the names that were theirs. For thousands of children, the most basic facts of a life, a name, a family, a place to belong, have come loose, with no one left to set them right.

The difficult life of a ‘lone survivor’

Tasahil al-Akhras is a psychologist who works with an organization providing psychological support to orphans, particularly “sole survivors,” children who lost every member of their family. “One day, a child can be surrounded by the embrace of his family,” al-Akhras said. “The next, in an instant, he is left with no one.”

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FREE DR. HUSSAM ABU SAFIYA

THE DOCTOR'S LIFE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, pediatrician and former director of Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza, became a symbol of the bravery and brutalization of Palestinian healthcare workers after being detained by Zionist forces in December 2024.

Arrested during the raid on Kamal Adwan Hospital, where he remained caring for patients despite repeated attacks, Dr. Abu Safiya has now been held for more than eighteen months without charges under the Zionist entity's Unlawful Combatants Law, a statute that permits indefinite detention without formal charge or trial. His detention is in flagrant contravention of international law and is a grave human rights violation, exposing the futility of international judicial and human rights bodies.

Dr. Abu Safiya was recently transferred to solitary confinement, reportedly following a legal challenge to his continued detention. His legal team and human rights organizations report that he has suffered torture, beatings, severe weight loss, inadequate nutrition, denial of essential medical treatment, and prolonged isolation, raising serious concerns about his deteriorating physical and mental health.

"This is the last time you will see me," he told his lawyer, according to Drop Site News. "They brought me here to kill me. I don't see myself surviving. This is the end."

His case has prompted widespread outrage and international calls for his immediate release. United Nations experts, medical associations, humanitarian organizations, and human rights groups argue that his continued detention without charge undermines medical neutrality and international humanitarian law.

Dr. Abu Safiya's unlawful and brutal detention serves as a sickening reminder of the reality that thousands of Palestinian detainees face: torture, sexual violence, starvation, and abuse. Mainstream media chooses to ignore this reality, a silence that eats away at their credibility and renders them complicit. Dr. Abu Safiya's life is at stake. We join his family in demanding his immediate release.



ABOVE: Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya ran Kamal Adwan Hospital from February 2024 until his abduction on December 27 of the same year. **BELOW:** Protesters demand the release of Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya during a January 2025 sit-in in Israeli-occupied Hebron.

To the Guardian of Our Borders

Photographer Fatima Joumaa on the martyrdom of reporter Ali Shoeib



Ali Shoeib ran coverage for the Al-Manar television network until his murder on March 28, 2026, when the IOF struck his media vehicle in Jezzine, southern Lebanon.

To our teacher, Hajj Ali Shoeib,

I write to you after you have been reunited with the warmth of the earth — a tepid warmth, for you remain far away from your village, al-Sharqiyya. But we know that your final return can only be upon the land you committed to memory, upon the borders where you stood guard.

We ought to confess: After your passing, the borders have been further displaced, the news has been made ominous, insufficient without your accompanying signature: "Ali Shuaib — News of the Border." We revisit your legacy, in search of your secret.

How were you so attuned to the murmur of the valleys and mountains?

Who kept you company after the death of your cameraman, Wisam, your closest companion, who was martyred in the 2024 war while sheltering in an area supposedly designated for journalists? I recall that from the site of the attack you declared: "I film myself because my cameraman, who accompanied me for months, has been martyred." You were a teacher with your words. "This is the martyred image," you often said.

So what is this image that has become, itself, a martyr?

You spoke to us about people grumbling after every broadcast, because you did not pass by their home, or make their rooftop your stage. Every homeowner wanted to offer you their window, to see their village through your lens. Not one person hesitated to give you access to their home. You told us some even left their keys hidden beneath the

doorsteps, that you knew where to find them even if they were not around.

You laughed as you told us the story of an elderly woman who left you a letter saying she would not forgive you for not finishing the plate of mulukhiyyah she had prepared for you. And the fuss from locals would always return: "Why didn't you mention the raid on our village?" "Why didn't you come by our neighborhood?" "Where were you the day we buried our men?" Smiling as usual, you noted that these comments were not reproach for a missed news story, but rather spirited banter directed at a relative late for his routine visit. You taught us that villages are not raw material for journalistic coverage, but homes where we find shelter.

You stood in front of the camera, but we saw you standing beside us. You did not merely show us the South, you taught us how to see. You spent your days transmitting images, but your voice remains the clearest of them all. Your voice is the first image.

I search for your name among my old notes, and find the transcript of an interview with you that I never conducted. I don't know what delusion had taken hold of me for me to have fabricated that exchange, for I had thought that whenever we had a question for you, we would find you between the Metulla settlement and the plain beneath Khiam.

Do you miss sitting beneath a tree near al-Abbad, where you would regularly station to monitor the movements of Israeli soldiers?

What crossed your mind as you stood in Khiam, declaring that the village

had not fallen, despite the spiteful enemy's encroachment? Did you imagine the occupation's gates collapsing at al-Qantara as they did in 2000, an event you captured with your own lens? What memories surfaced as you returned, time and time again, to bear witness to war and displacement in the same villages over the years?

Do you know that the enemy boasts of your murder? They published photographs showing your car, which they struck as you returned from an assignment with your colleague Fatima Ftouni and her brother, Mohammad.

They did not kill you at the border itself, but on your way back. Perhaps what terrified them most was neither the news you reported nor the images you documented, nor the comfort you provided us younger journalists. Indeed, the source of the enemy's anxiety must have been the very fact of your perception. What frightened them was that you were watching them. Before the South's liberation and afterwards, it was you who exposed them, sniped them daily with your lens.

We never felt reassured about the state of our villages and people until we saw you reporting on them. As for today, we are confident that you have found your place. We once yearned for you as our voice and witness. Perhaps today, we need you even more as a martyr.

To the guardian of our borders, rest in peace in the boundless heights.

Rest assured that we will not close our eyes, and we will not look away.

Sincerely,
Your loyal students

‘This is a war on the medical sector in every sense’

Hadeel Deeb, a medical researcher from Sour in southern Lebanon, discusses Israel's war on healing in the region

Hadeel Deeb is a medical researcher from the city of Sour in southern Lebanon. She founded the organization *Medicide* in 2025 to track the ongoing Israeli attacks on the country's medical sector and to develop a curriculum for Lebanese medical students and researchers to learn about "war medicine," a branch of healthcare focused on treating war-related injuries. Part of this curriculum involves archiving and understanding the long history of Zionist targeting of medical workers and centers in Lebanon and across the region.

According to Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health, Israeli forces killed 408 healthcare workers between October 2023 and the November 2024 ceasefire. Most of those killed were members of the Islamic Health Authority (IHA), the largest paramedic organization operating in southern Lebanon. While affiliated with Hezbollah, the IHA is a humanitarian organization whose personnel and vehicles are protected under international law. Nevertheless, during the 2024 war — and again following the renewed Israeli assault that began on March 2, 2026 — the Israeli Occupation Forces declared all IHA vehicles legitimate targets. Since the escalation in early March 2026, Israeli attacks have killed more than 150 healthcare workers, including paramedics affiliated with the IHA, the Amal Movement's Al-Risala Scouts, the Lebanese Red Cross, and the Lebanese Civil Defense.

The New York War Crimes collective sat down with Deeb in June in Beirut to discuss her research and her organization's work. This interview has been translated from Arabic and edited for length and clarity.

When did your interest in war medicine begin?

Hadeel Deeb: My research professor in college studied heavy metal toxicity in war zones, particularly among American soldiers injured during the Iraq War. Many of these soldiers developed infections that did not respond to antibiotics. Researchers began investigating why and found that injuries caused by shrapnel and bombs often leave behind tiny fragments of metal that cannot be fully removed. They hypothesized that these retained fragments may provide surfaces where bacteria can persist, making some infections more difficult to treat and, in some cases, allowing them to recur years after the initial injury.

One of the questions that led me to this work is the question of shrapnel. The thing that was supposed to kill you remains inside you after you survive. Sometimes shrapnel cannot be fully removed, and it remains visible in the body of the injured person. What fascinates me is that a fragment can finally emerge 30 or 40 years later. For decades you live with it. You accept it and make peace with it. Then it leaves your body, and suddenly you remember what happened. The wound is reopened, in a sense.

This raised a larger question for me: how does war stay in the body of the injured even after the fighting ends?

Do you have an example from 2006?

Beyond the direct targeting of hospitals, doctors also encountered injuries caused by weapons they did not fully understand. When wounded people arrived at medical facilities, physicians were not always sure how to treat them. They began encountering unusual injuries — wounds with unfamiliar appearances, colors, and odors.

The medical teams started wondering what had caused these wounds. Were they the result of chemical agents? White phosphorus? Some other type of weapon they had not previously encountered? Investigating those questions became part of the medical re-

sponse itself. Doctors had to learn not only how to treat the injured but also how to recognize and understand new forms of war-related trauma.

What does white phosphorus do to the body?

Many white phosphorus munitions are released through shelling. They burst in the sky and the chemicals fall from it like rain. So anyone below is at risk. The problem with it is that it continues burning as long as it is exposed to oxygen, so the wounds that come from it cannot be treated like traditional wounds. A normal patient — a burn patient for example — can be treated and stabilized in the ER. With white phosphorus, there are specific personal protective equipment for treatment such as uniforms that the nurse must wear because the phosphorus can be transferred from the patient to the nurse. They learned how to do this during the recent wars.

You have to ask: What is the Israelis' military strategy? From there you can begin to understand the injury. In Gaza, we've seen horrific instances of amputations. What was the goal? For no fighter to continue fighting, or, in the case of child amputees, for no one to grow up and be capable of fighting. This was also the goal of the paggers attack — for these 4,000 men to lose their limbs and their sight and be unable to fight.

The connection between the wounded and their body after this transformation [the injury] is something that needs further research and understanding.

‘How does war stay in the body of the injured even after the fighting ends?’

That's a very powerful question. What are you finding?

I've found that there isn't one relationship between the wounded person and the wound. Every person develops a different relationship to what happened to them and to the transformed body they must live with afterward.

I've sat with injured mothers who speak less about the injury itself than about how it affects their children, their family, and their neighbors. The wound extends outward, in a sense, becomes communal.

I've also sat with injured paramedics — heroes and leaders among us. They often try to serve as examples for others. They'll say: "I've been injured, but we must continue our work. And if I can't continue, then you must." Or: "I'm getting stronger so that I can return to the field." In these cases, the relationship between the individual and the wound is almost positive. The injury becomes part of a collective mission.

I've met people who were wounded when they returned to their villages after the 66-day war. The Israelis fired directly on returnees. Some were martyred and others injured. Yet the survivors will tell you: "Yes, my leg is like this, but I made it to the village first. I made it to Maroun el-Ras." They see the injury as part of their participation in liberation. They'll ask: "Isn't this how we liberate our land? Aren't we going to pay a price? We can't all be resistance fighters. So what can we do?" They reject the idea that liberation belongs only to those who carry weapons. The people who returned to the border villages after the ceasefire also took part in liberation with their bodies. Even the

hospital participates in liberation, because it protects the people and allows them to continue living.

There's one pager attack survivor I've heard about who returned to the front. By doing so, he denied anyone the authority to tell him that he could not heal. In returning, he declared himself healed, regardless of the shape of his wound. He declared that he would continue.

It is worth noting that in these cases, the individuals were injured recently; when we spoke, they were not thinking about their wounds 40 years after the fact.

There's a woman named An'am who lost limbs during the 1982 Israeli invasion. Her family had been displaced to a school in Saïda when it was bombed. Her mother was killed. Her father was injured. Today she's around 50 years old. She wanted her story told, but she could not sit with me herself. She never married. She never allowed anyone but herself to care for her injured father. I can't know exactly what she feels, but I imagine that the relationship between her, the event, and her body remains unresolved. Forty years later, she is still living with that wound.

What has surprised you through this work?

Of course I can't tell you I've been surprised by the practices of the Israelis. But when you pay attention to the pattern of attacks that have occurred, you realize that this is a war on the medical sector in every sense of the word. That's one aspect. The other is the lack of war medicine in the medical curriculum here in Lebanon. Even though we live in a country of successive wars. Between 2006 and 2023, there was no war in Lebanon, but there was war in Syria and in Gaza. We should have understood that what was happening there would happen here too. We can't always wait for some Western model to reach us. We shouldn't wait for the documentation of war medicine in Ukraine and Russia to begin our own documentation. Their experience is not like ours. They [the Israelis] are experimenting new weaponry on us. In each war, they're asking: How can we hurt them more?

Is there something you documented from this most recent war that stays with you?

In Burj Qalaway, there was an Islamic Health Authority medical center where many paramedics were stationed. Some were inside the building; others slept in their cars or sat outside between shifts. The center was targeted, and 12 people were killed, including doctors. In one video recorded afterward, a paramedic who survived the attack walked through the site, recounting what had happened. He pointed out where they used to sleep and where they found the bodies of the martyrs, one of whom was his father.

Not long afterward, that same paramedic was martyred in another Israeli strike. What happened in Burj Qalaway was not an isolated incident. It is representative of what many paramedics have experienced throughout the war. Today, some describe deliberately spreading themselves out when they're in the field — one person beneath a tree, another under an electrical line — so that if they are targeted, they will not all be martyred at once. Someone, they say, has to be left alive to collect the bodies.

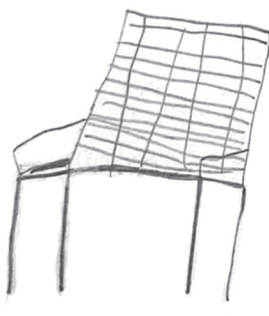
Even after the so-called ceasefire on April 16, the attacks continued. We thought our documentation work was finished. Then, on April 17, there was another strike. On April 18, another. Even now, when the war is supposedly over, reports continue to arrive. The archiving does not end.

‘A Letter to My Dear Leg’

Anwar, a child in Gaza, writes to the limb he lost as a result the occupation's deliberate targeting of children



رسالة إلى قدمي العزيزة
وانتي قدامي اليوم جابب أحليك كتنا حزين
حاسس بالضعف والخل لما فقتك عشان نقص في
أشي وانتي أطل من الناس ومش هعمل حاجة من نأفي
أنا اليوم بركت شخصه قوي وحاسس بالثقة كل ما أطلع قايدي
ونزلت أبيع وكونت محاب وهرت أوشي مسافات بعيدة
بجعل أشياء اللي ألهم رجلتين صابرينا بجلوها
بحبك كتير.



"Today, with you in front of me, I wanted to tell you: I was sad, and I felt weak and ashamed when I lost you, because something in me was missing, and I felt I was less than other people and would never do anything again. But today I have become a strong person, and I feel confident every time I look at you. I went out and sold things, I made friends, and I started walking long distances. I do things that people with two legs cannot do. I love you so much."

TOGETHER AND UNITED

A Letter from Dr. George Habash to Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah

August 17, 2006

To our Great Brother,
His Eminence Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah,
Secretary General of Hezbollah,
Salute to the valiant resistance. Salute to Palestine and Lebanon. Salute to Arabness.

Allow me to extend to you my congratulations and blessings on the historic victory achieved by the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon, the steadfastness of the heroic fighters of Hezbollah, and the sumud of the great Lebanese people, the people of pride, dignity, and defiance. I also extend, through you, my salutations to all the mujahideen and fighters among the cadres and leaders of Hezbollah who, with their blood, have inscribed a noble chapter in the history of the nation.

The brutal Zionist aggression against Lebanon has added yet another chapter to its record of heinous crimes, attempting to undermine the steadfastness of [Lebanon's] resistant people. The Zionist targeting of civilians and infrastructure in Lebanon and Palestine is but another example of the policy of massacres and genocide pursued by the Zionist enemy throughout its long and bloody history.

The steadfastness of Hezbollah and the Lebanese people has provided great support and a new revolutionary awakening to the entire Arab nation, revealing the naked truth about the Zionist occupation army — an aggressive army defeated from within, pursuing an illusory achievement over limited territory, thwarted by the steadfastness of a resistance which has achieved a strategic victory that the Lebanese and the Arab nation have a duty to uphold and preserve.

This war has stripped away all masks from the official Arab regimes and unveiled the schemes of this Zionist aggression, orchestrated by America and directed by the neoconservatives in the White House. But the wagers of the American administration have failed, and they have reaped nothing but shame and disgrace. The blood of the innocent and the martyrs, children and women, in Qana, Marwahin, Qaa, Dahiyeh, the Bekaa Valley, and every inch of the defiant land will remain a testament to their history stained with the blood of children.

The victory of the resistance in Lebanon is a victory for the resistance in Palestine and Iraq, and a victory for confronting and thwarting the American-Zionist project in the region. This victory pours into the current of strategic orientations which we have long struggled to consolidate. For rights are seized, not given freely, and just peace is forged only by the strong. This battle has exposed the falsehood of the deceptive peace rhetoric and has once again demonstrated with clarity the imperialist and Zionist ambitions to erase the alphabet of resistance from the Arab region's lexicon.

This battle, and the very experience of this struggle, has opened new horizons for the future, but this will not be the end of the matter. Rather, I say that in the coming phase, we will face confrontations more difficult than before, on both the internal and external fronts in Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, and throughout the entire Arab homeland. We will face another scenario and a new chapter in the American-Zionist scheme. In the face of all the conspiracies hatched by the American administration in what has been termed the "New Middle East" and is being constructed through sectarian wars and the fragmentation of the region, Arab national consciousness has become the primary bulwark against these new colonial projects led by the Bush gang in the White House.

Now we say: The defeat of the Zionist enemy's generals and soldiers in the battle gave a tremendous incentive and driving force for us to advance and develop the resistance experience and protect it through this open conflict. Today, the awareness of the masses has become the most important pillar of the confrontation.

With its victory, Hezbollah has opened a window of hope and light in a moment of complete darkness, reviving the spirit and raising the head of the Arab and Islamic nation high. This harsh and painful experience that Hezbollah underwent will remain a source of pride and honour for us and for generations to come.

Together and united on the frontlines.
Together and united in the resistance in Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq.
Together and united with the weapon of will that embraces the weapon of resistance.
Together and united on the path to the liberation of Palestine and Jerusalem.
Glory and eternity to our righteous martyrs.
Freedom for the prisoners and detainees.
And may you remain a symbol of pride and dignity.

Your brother, Dr. George Habash,
Founder of the Arab Nationalist Movement and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine



Al-Salihin cemetery in Nabatieh was directly hit by Israeli strikes during the latest aggression. Photo by Hussein Bassal.

What the enemy will never understand

No matter what the Zionists destroy, our connection to the land cannot be severed

Continued from page 1

On a personal emotional level, the house they blew up did not mean much to me. My first emotional connection to it formed after the last war, because its walls still bore the marks of the strike that destroyed my grandfather's house, where my cousin Hassan and his two companions were martyred. But my attachment to that house truly began yesterday, when I saw the aerial image. And if God keeps us among the living, we will return to the village as free people, and we will build a house where it stood. It will be more beautiful. And we will rebuild my grandparents' house, which remains seared in my memory, vivid with details ... I can still smell the scent of dried tobacco in the northern room. Every summer day, nostalgia steals me away, longing to sleep beneath the grapevine trellis above the water well, facing the low wall with its openings left for water to pass through, and others that serve no purpose other than to shatter the notion that a wall must be a wall. It was neither a wall nor a barrier. More like what we call a drabzin — a low railing running along the western edge of the house. It served two purposes: to tell us, "Here the house ends and the field begins," and to bear a flower bed along its length.

What they did awakened something in me. I haven't lost anything, nor am I among those who have sacrificed the most. There are those who have given their lives, those enduring the loss of children, spouses, and loved ones. Among us are those who will live with their wounds for the rest of their lives.

As for me, what the Zionists have done has marked a place for me to build a home on my land — the land of my father, my grandfather, and the ancestors who came before them.

What pains me is the bulldozing of the graves. Will it sever my connection to the land? Only fools believe that. In our tradition, noble people were often buried in secret, for fear that enemies would desecrate their graves. Our lady

If God keeps us
among the living,
we will return to
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people, and we
will build a house
where it stood

Fatimah al-Zahra', a figure most present in our faith, has an unknown grave. Zayd the martyr, Yahya the martyr, Hasan Ibn al-Sabbah, Sayyed Musa al-Sadr ... Does the destruction or absence of a grave extinguish a soul? The graves of our Imams in al-Baqi' have been demolished for a century. Yet the enemies will never understand that magical spell. They bulldozed the graves of our ancestors? The graves of our masters are unknown. They killed

our children? This infant is carried by Husayn. Our young men fought them? This is the battle of Ali al-Akbar. Our elders fought them? This is the battle of Habib ibn Muzahir. And Khiam? Did they burn our Khiam? Yes, they burned Khiam. And they burned the homes of my people in Kfarkela and elsewhere, house by house.

Very well. What is the outcome? Nothing but to fight. And after the war, we will restore the gravestones to where they were. And on my father's gravestone, I will write the true date of his birth. And if God keeps us among the living, I will tell my daughter about her grandfather, his father and mother, his grandfather, and his friends. I will tell her that she is who they are. I will carry her to that very cemetery and point out Misgav Am, and I will teach her that this land is called Palestine. And this is al-Azziya hill, behind it lies Kfarkela, where we will visit the grave of Hassan Atwi and Zainab. And this is Taybeh, the Taybeh of anemones. And that is Deir Siryan. And here stands Beaufort Castle. And there is Ali al-Tahir. I will tell her about the martyrs;, about her heroic cousin Haidar Khomeini;, about Jawdat and Rifaat and "Abu Azzouz,;" about all our martyrs. I will tell her about one of our martyrs from the Revolution of 1958, and our two icons, Hajja Fatima and Hajja Umm Hussein. I will tell her about the noble Ali Ismail Illeik, and the martyr son of the martyr son of "Abu Hassan of the Revolution." I will point out their gravestones to her, one by one. And at the door of the house, I will hang a lantern for my grandmother to carry at dawn.

When a Satellite Image Becomes a Form of Return

On witnessing the destruction of home from exile

By
ZAYNAB MAYLADAN

This article was produced by The Public Source, a Beirut-based magazine of long-form journalism and critical commentary from the Left.

The most recent photo we saw of my grandfather's house after the fragile ceasefire was not taken by a neighbor, a journalist, or someone returning to the village. It came from above.

Months into the Israeli war on Lebanon, families from border villages developed new ways of witnessing destruction from exile. In village group chats, people collect footage published by the Israeli military, drone videos, satellite images, and photographs taken from a distance from neighboring hills or towns. They pause videos to carefully inspect each frame. They zoom in, circle ruins, compare roads, and try to identify homes through rooftops, gates, and water tanks, through a nearby tree or the curve of a road.

Southerners living abroad, those with the means to do so, buy commercial satellite images of their villages so their relatives can check on their homes. Some images cost only a few dollars per square kilometer; clearer, more recent ones can cost much more. Displaced residents who cannot afford them often wait for someone else to buy and share an image of their village.

In April, a satellite image of Aitaroun — purchased by a local living abroad — circulated through the same WhatsApp

groups where displaced families exchange rumors, coordinates, drone footage, screenshots, and fragments of their villages and homes.

On April 15, the house was still standing. One week later, it was gone.

My family closely inspected the image, in search of the house my grandfather began building in 2009. He poured his life savings into that house. He spent decades working as a butcher in Beirut, rarely taking time off. Every morning, he opened the shop, and every evening, after locking up, he changed his clothes and drove straight to Aitaroun to check on the construction site. He would drive back to Beirut the same night.

Whenever visitors came, he would show off the house. He pointed out its size, the view, the plants, and all the work that had gone into it. It was not just a house. It was a personal victory — proof that after a lifetime of labor in the city, he had built something of his own in his own hometown.

It was also not the first home he had lost.

During the Lebanese civil war, my grandparents lived in a rented house in Bourj Hammoud. When fighting reached their neighborhood, they fled. Their Armenian neighbors helped them leave and protected their home from looting until they were able to return. Later on, they moved to a house in Burj al-Barajneh.

In 1982, after the Israeli invasion, that house was destroyed in an Israeli airstrike. They fled again, this time to Haret Hreik. Then came the War of the Camps. My grandfather sold that house and bought another in Burj al-Barajneh,

where they still live today. Aitaroun was supposed to be different. It was the home that came after all the other houses that did not survive.

Yet even before it was demolished by Israel in late April, the house had



already been violated. Israeli soldiers occupied it during the previous escalation in late 2024. They slept in it, stole from it, vandalized it, wrote on the walls in Hebrew, drew the Star of David, destroyed furniture, and used it as a military position. They also destroyed a photo of my late aunt, who died from cancer.

After the 2024 escalation ended, my grandfather gathered the mattresses the soldiers had slept on and burned them in the backyard. He refused to keep any-

thing they had touched inside the house.

My aunt discovered the destruction of her home in Ainata the same way. She watched it disappear in a video showing a series of detonations carried out by the Israeli Occupation Forces.



That video circulated among residents trying to identify whose homes had been blown up.

"When you watch your house being deliberately detonated, you feel helplessness and injustice," she told me. "You ask why. Why did this happen? In the end, it is our house."

My aunt, who spent much of her life between Canada and the United States, had already lost a house once before, in Kafa'at, in 2024. After Israel issued a forced displacement order, she and her

family left. The house was later demolished and everything inside destroyed. At the time, she tried not to dwell on her own loss. People were dying, others had lost even more, and catastrophes were everywhere. It was only later, when she rented an apartment in Dahieh again and had to start over from scratch — furniture, appliances, even the smallest domestic objects — that the weight of her loss finally settled.

There is a particular violence in watching your home be destroyed through someone else's lens. The image arrives after the event has already happened. You are late to your own loss. Too late to open a door, collect a photograph, check a drawer, save a plant, or even stand in the dust and process what took place. You receive the destruction as a file. A screenshot. A forwarded video. A satellite image. Proof without presence.

When my family realized my grandfather's house in Aitaroun had been destroyed, they deliberated over whether to tell him. Do you tell an old man that the home he built after losing so many others is gone? Do you let him keep imagining it standing? Do you wait for a clearer image, a confirmed photo, a neighbor's testimony?

They ended up telling him a few days later.

He did not react dramatically. He absorbed the news quietly, and said that if he could return, even though the house was gone, he would check on the plants. That was all that was left for him to ask about.

I keep thinking about it. After a lifetime of displacement, labor, saving

to rebuild, and war, he still wanted to know whether anything living had survived among the rubble of his home.

Now, like many families from Lebanon's border villages, we search for home in images taken from the sky. We wait for someone to buy a clearer picture. We zoom in. We compare shadows. We ask each other: Is that our roof? Is that the neighbor's house? Is that rubble? Is anything still there?

The war has turned image analysis into a form of return.

After a while, you start to wonder: Will we ever return to see it for ourselves?

With every new discussion of a "buffer zone," return feels less certain, and loss becomes more than just the destruction of walls. It is not only houses that are erased, but the people, memories, and culture attached to them. To be kept from your land is to be kept from the place that made you, from the place inhabited by your ancestors for centuries.

The last time I visited Aitaroun was just a week before the war escalated on March 2. Even then, the village was not really safe — the house is close to the border, and Israel was still targeting civilians. I could not go to it. I could only look from afar.

If I had known that would be my last time seeing home, even from a distance, I would have paid closer attention. I would have photographed every corner my lens could reach. I would have taken pictures of the road, the walls, the landscape, the plants, and the rooms I could not enter. I would have stayed a little longer.



DANCING ON GRAVES

FIFA, SPORTSWASHING, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF PALESTINIAN FOOTBALL



Building Stadiums on a Mass Grave

FIFA wants to build stadiums on the ashes of Palestinians. Through its partnership with the Board of Peace, a U.S.-led international body that uses the language of humanitarianism to legitimize the genocide in Gaza, FIFA has presented a vision of “recovery through football” in the Strip: 50 FIFA Arenas, a FIFA Academy, and a 20,000-seat national stadium designed to project an image of renewal. In so doing, FIFA is complicit in an endeavor that bypasses the international judicial system and circumvents any meaningful

pathway for justice and restitution in Gaza in order to line the pockets of Donald Trump and his cronies. But FIFA’s proposal turns Palestinian suffering into a backdrop for rehabilitating the organization’s tarnished image while skirting a central question: Who destroyed the Palestinian football that existed before? Since October 2023, the Zionist entity has killed hundreds of athletes and sports workers. Clubs that once represented neighborhoods and families have lost generations of players. The infrastructure that

sustained Palestinian football has been attacked, destroyed, or transformed into internal displacement camps. Consider Yarmouk Stadium in Gaza, one of the Strip’s oldest, most revered and important sporting venues. Once a place where Palestinian athletes gathered to compete, train, and rejoice in the sport. The occupation converted the stadium into another vehicle of genocide — a detention site and torture center — before it became a shelter for displaced persons. Across three years of genocide

in Gaza, FIFA has repeatedly ignored international calls to hold the occupation to account for its war crimes. FIFA’s celebration of renewal is built atop the remains of those it failed to protect. A stadium cannot replace a murdered player; a football academy cannot replace a lost generation; and FIFA’s ‘recovery’ plan is not a reprieve from Israel’s relentless assault on Palestinian life and infrastructure. FIFA’s self-aggrandizing reconstruction will not eradicate the stench of annihilation and murder.



A History of Corruption

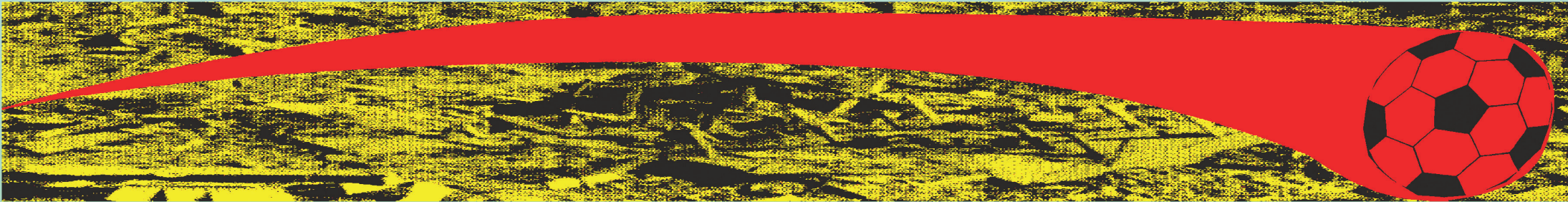
FIFA’s response to the genocide in Gaza is part of its decades-long pattern of speaking the language of unity while prioritizing money, extraction, and political convenience. Founded in 1904, FIFA’s reputation has long been marked by corruption scandals. The collapse of the Interna-

tional Sport and Leisure marketing empire in 2001 exposed the extensive bribery that underpinned FIFA’s commercial expansion. Allegations of corruption continued throughout Sepp Blatter’s presidency (1998–2015), culminating in 2015 when U.S. prosecutors indicted numerous FIFA offi-

cials on charges including bribery and fraud. The same pattern of prioritizing profits over people is evident across FIFA’s World Cup decisionmaking. In 2022, following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, FIFA suspended Russian national and club teams from all interna-

tional competitions. Russia has since been locked out of major football events such as the 2026 World Cup qualifiers. But nearly three years into the genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, the organization has not taken similar action against the U.S. and Israel. Instead of barring American and

Israeli players from tournaments and demanding large-scale protections for Palestinian athletes and sporting infrastructure, FIFA awarded the U.S. hosting privileges for the 2026 World Cup. FIFA’s partnership with the so-called “Board of Peace” is yet another effort to sportswash its image.



The Destruction of Palestinian Football

The destruction of Palestinian football did not begin in October 2023. For decades, Palestinian athletes have been forced to compete under conditions designed to restrict movement, fragment communities, and limit their ability to develop a functioning sporting system akin to any other nation. Players in Gaza and the occupied West Bank have struggled to travel across Palestine for games, often spending as much time navigating bureaucracy as preparing for inter-

national competitions. The sport has nonetheless survived, because football is not mere recreation, but a lifeblood of the people and a signifier of nationhood. A football club is a place where children can dream of a life beyond occupation and war. Among the Palestinian footballers martyred in the occupation’s genocide on Gaza are: Suleiman al-Obeid, also known as the “Palestinian Pelé,” one of the most recognizable figures in Palestinian

football history — a former Palestinian international footballer who scored goals for both club and country. According to the Palestine Football Association, he was assassinated in Gaza in 2025 while seeking humanitarian aid. Hani al-Masdar, also known as “Abu al-Abed,” a former Palestinian national team midfielder and coach of Palestine’s Olympic football team, killed in a January 2024 Israeli airstrike in central Gaza. Muhammad Khalifa, a promising

20-year-old Palestinian youth international player, killed alongside members of his family in an Israeli airstrike on the Nuseirat refugee camp. Rashid Dabour, a 27-year-old defensive player for Al-Ahli Beit Hanoun and the Palestinian national team, murdered in an October 2023 Israeli airstrike. 20-year-old Nazir al-Nashash, who played for Bureij Services Club, killed in another airstrike in October 2023 alongside family members.

Each was a player, teammate, coach, son, father, or future professional whose martyrdom marks the sport as a whole. Amid the carnage of genocide, we clearly see the deliberate erasure of a sporting generation. Palestinian football does not need FIFA to arrive after the destruction with a branding campaign. It needed FIFA when the players were alive, when the stadiums were still standing, and when there was still something left to protect.

FIFA’s Moral Depths

Under current president Gianni Infantino, FIFA presents itself as a global force for peace, reconciliation, and diplomacy. But Infantino’s close relationship with Donald Trump demonstrates FIFA’s obsession with authoritarian political figures. Trump’s involvement in the 2026 World Cup makes it even clearer that external political interests and the forces of global power continue to shape the organization. The organization’s response to the genocide in Palestine is the microcosm of this contradiction. The same contradictions have appeared throughout football’s broader political landscape. Israeli clubs connected to settlements in the occupied West Bank are allowed to participate on the interna-

tional stage, which normalizes illegal settlement activity. Fans of clubs such as Beitar Jerusalem F.C. have chanted “Death to Arabs,” attacked Palestinian workers, and in 2013 set fire to their own club offices in protest at the signing of two Muslim players. Meanwhile, Mark Bonnick, a former kit manager for Arsenal, was fired from the club after expressing his support of the Palestinian people and his opposition to Zionism. Then there are the controversies surrounding the 2026 FIFA World Cup. We all watched as Trump boasted on live television that he phoned in a favor to have U.S. striker Folarin Balogun’s red card postponed for the United States’

match against Belgium. The tournament had already been tarnished by biased refereeing, the shameful treatment of the Iran national team, and other political pressures. The bloody contradiction between FIFA’s language of brotherhood and the reality facing Palestinians was made painfully visible on the eve of Egypt’s World Cup match on July 7. Mohamed Fawaz al-Waheidi, a senior official with the Egyptian Relief Committee in Gaza, was killed in an Israeli strike on a civilian vehicle in Gaza City’s al-Sabra neighborhood, according to reports from Palestinian and Egyptian sources. Al-Waheidi was involved with an Egyptian humanitarian organization providing

assistance to Palestinians in Gaza; he was also the lead organizer scheduling public screenings of World Cup matches in front of a backdrop of destroyed buildings and civic annihilation. These screenings were a widely documented source of joy and enthusiasm for thousands of people in Gaza, and the Zionist entity targeted him for this reason. FIFA’s response? Silence. The Zionist obsession with exterminating all sources of hope and happiness for Palestinians gets swept under the rug as Gianni Infantino smiles, signs contracts, and gives a “Peace Prize” to Trump. Following Egypt’s match, Egyptian coach Hossam Hassan spoke openly. Asked about Gaza, Hassan

responded: “Does anyone know about those children who died? The ones whose legs were amputated, whose arms were amputated, and those who were blinded? Does anyone feel anything at all? In the country where children are dying, they wear Argentina jerseys. They wear Barcelona jerseys, they wear Manchester City jerseys, Real Madrid jerseys. You see, these people love you and love football. They’re being killed. And you just stay silent.” The message from FIFA is clear: Politics are acceptable only when they protect its relationship with imperial powers. Sport becomes a mechanism not for confronting injustice, but for advancing it.



Why Sporting Boycotts Work

For decades, international sporting isolation became a weapon against the apartheid regime of South Africa. South Africa was expelled from FIFA, excluded from the Olympic movement, and increasingly isolated in rugby and cricket. These measures contributed to a broader campaign that stripped the regime of legitimacy and increased international pres-

sure against it. The message of these boycott campaigns was clear: A government that denies the rights of millions cannot participate normally in the institutions that claim to represent humanity. We demand that football institutions live up to the values they claim to represent. That means refusing FIFA’s gestures of “reconstruction,” which are a sub-

stitute for justice. FIFA must end its allegiance to colonial power and focus on equitably governing global sport. FIFA should suspend the Zionist entity from its competitions. Leagues must ban clubs connected to illegal settlements. The organization needs to apply its own stated principles consistently across nations. Football is called the beauti-

ful game partly because of its power to unite across differences. But unity and reconciliation in a world marred by atrocity cannot be achieved through alliances with imperial powers and systemic racism. It cannot be achieved with a public relations move to plan a stadium where bodies still remain under rubble. A ceremony cannot substitute for justice.

The Last Line of Defense

Israel’s war on Lebanese paramedics in the South

Text and photographs by
HASAN FNEICH

Sour — May 31, 2026. The city of Sour is empty but for the few residents who remain and the paramedics working in the war-stricken areas surrounding it. They navigate the roads without fear or worry. Some of them are injured, others have lost relatives; they intimately know the meaning of loss, how death creates a heavy void in the hearts of a family. The paramedic understands the dedication and sacrifice required to save a life, and he brings that same devotion to every injured person entrusted to his care.

Here in Jabal Amel, where the Israeli enemy endeavors to strip paramedics of their humanity, ambulances roam like coffins waiting to be submerged in the blood of those inside. These first responders are not combatants, nor are they in any way trying to aid the fighters militarily. Sometimes, they can-

not even rush to the medical aid of a fighter because they are the area’s last lifeline. They must prioritize their own safety and the lives of civilians. International law requires warring military forces to respect the presence of civil defense teams, be they local or international. But in southern Lebanon, the Israeli military does not respect these rules, nor does it consider itself bound by the conventional laws of war.

It is worth noting here that most, if not all, of the attacks targeting civil defense teams in southern Lebanon during the last two wars were deliberate. Everything the heroes of the civil defense do to rescue those who remain steadfast in their villages across southern Lebanon is guided solely by humanitarian principles. The difference between them and the Israeli army is not ideological or social, but categorically moral. The Israeli military continually violates moral norms in ways unprecedented in the annals of war since the dawn of history.



‘No one can rid the soul of fear, but I can sometimes be indifferent. If I’m hit in an airstrike and the injury isn’t serious, I get up, brush myself off, and carry on as if nothing happened’

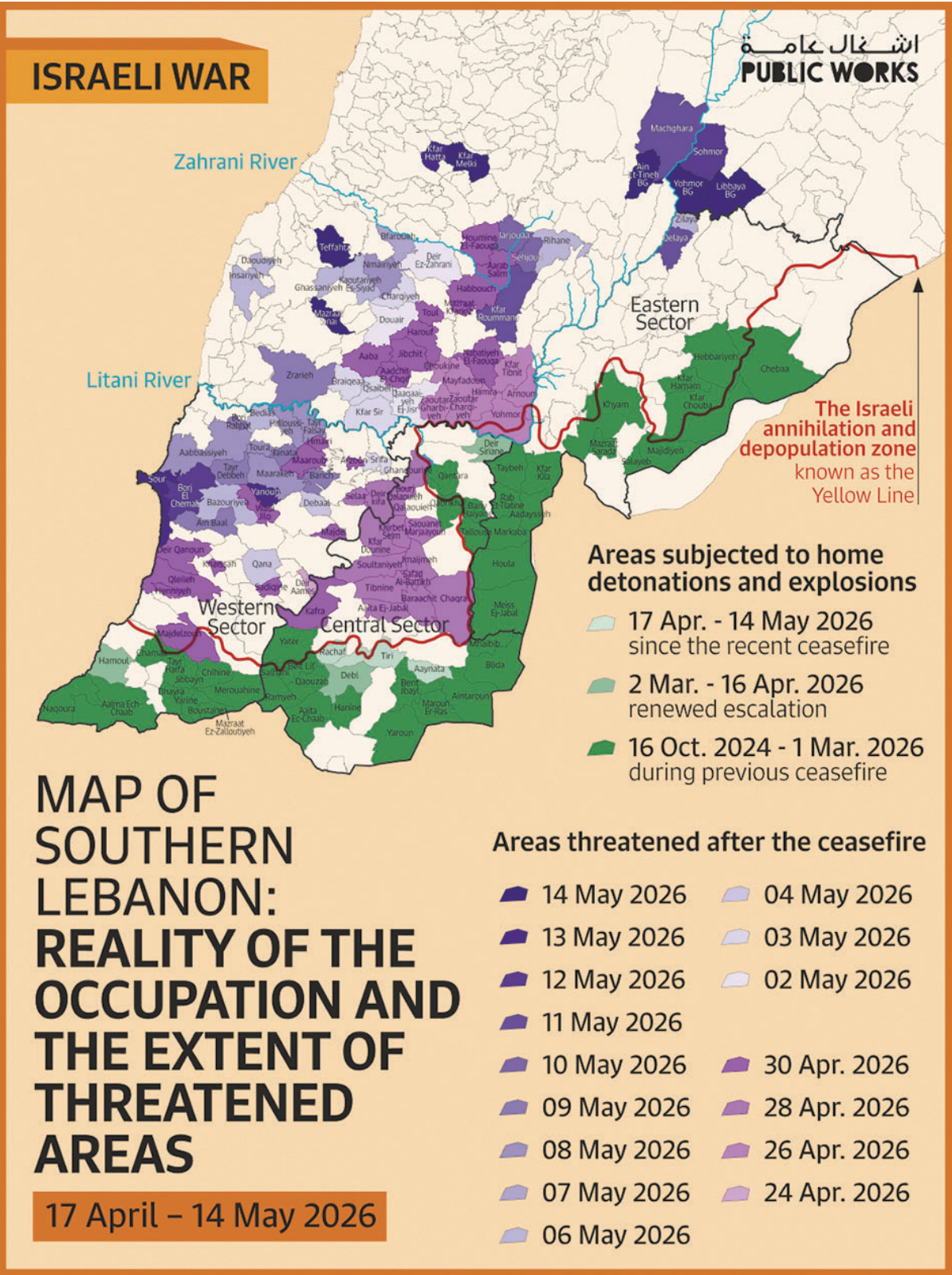
Abu Maroun, the nickname of one of the few who remained in the village of Yater throughout the war, says he has been unable to adjust to life away from his work with the health organization where he has volunteered since the 2023 war of support for Gaza. Since then, he and his team have been subjected to 15 targeted drone strikes, in which he has sustained multiple injuries. In the last strike, he was

wounded in his right thigh where he had already undergone multiple surgeries and had steel pins inserted to stabilize the bone. He mentions the names of many friends who were martyred in the long war, mentions them with a smile as his eyes disappear behind tears.

“No one can rid the soul of fear, but I can sometimes be indifferent,” Abu Maroun says. “If I’m hit in an airstrike

and the injury isn’t serious, I get up, brush myself off, and carry on as if nothing happened.”

“Once, when I was injured, I felt that the wound on my shoulder wasn’t serious enough to warrant a trip to the hospital, so I just bandaged it and waited until the next day. When some of the wounded were being transported, I went along and had the doctor examine me. Then I returned to work.”



WITHOUT DISTORTION OR FALSIFICATION

Remembering Anas al-Sharif

Two months before he was assassinated by Israel, Anas al-Sharif wrote as part of his final testament, “I have lived through pain in all its details, tasted suffering and loss many times, yet I never once hesitated to convey the truth as it is, without distortion or falsification.”

August 10 marks one year since the beloved Palestinian journalist was martyred outside Al-Shifa Hospital in northern Gaza. He was 28. His fellow Al Jazeera colleagues Mohammed Qreigeh, Ibrahim Zaher, Moamen Aliwa, Mohammed Noufal, and Mohammed al-Khalidi were also martyred in the targeted strike.

Al-Sharif was born in 1996 in the Jabalia camp in northern Gaza. He studied radio and television broadcasting at Al-Aqsa University before going on to work as a freelance journalist. Shortly after the genocide began, he started reporting for Al Jazeera, quickly

becoming one of the most recognizable faces to reach the world from Gaza. Despite receiving repeated death threats from the occupation, al-Sharif refused to abandon his post.

“The work [of journalists] in Gaza is continuous. We don’t sleep for days as a result of the continuous bombing and shelling,” al-Sharif told *Drop Site News* in September 2024. He committed his life to reporting on Israel’s genocidal war from the front lines in northern Gaza, conveying through his tireless coverage what the Western media, through its recitation of Zionist lies, tried to conceal.

In 2024, al-Sharif contributed to *The New York War Crimes*, chronicling the recovery of his colleague and friend, Al Jazeera cameraman Fadi al-Wahidi, after he was shot in the neck by a quadcopter drone while wearing his flak jacket marked “PRESS.” We felt

the incalculable weight of that piece of protective equipment months later as we watched al-Sharif slowly remove his jacket while announcing the temporary ceasefire from Gaza City in January 2025. The crowd that gathered around hoisted him over their shoulders, al-Sharif grinning as it fell to the ground.

While reporting live outside Al-Shifa Hospital in July 2025, al-Sharif broke down on camera. He had just watched a woman collapse from hunger. The Zionists were escalating their killing sprees at so-called “food distribution points,” where bags of flour became spotted with blood. A man off-screen urged him to continue reporting. “Keep going, Mr. Anas,” he said. “Keep going. You are our voice.”

Continuance has been al-Sharif’s watchword. It must also be ours. To recall, again, his final words: “Do not forget Gaza.”



July 31, 2024. Anas al-Sharif and his colleagues honor their slain colleague, Al Jazeera journalist Ismail al-Ghoul, who the occupation killed along with his cameraman Rami al-Rifi. Photo by Omar al-Qattaa.

Hanging in the Balance

Gaza’s reconstruction must begin with accountability, not more arithmetic

By
**MOHAMMAD
ABU SHAREKH**

We begin with the number zero. It is, first, the number of safe places left in Gaza according to *Médecins Sans Frontières*. It makes little difference what colors or labels the Israeli military marks on digital maps. The reality is simpler: Death awaits us everywhere. There is no immunity for hospitals overflowing with the wounded, in United Nations schools sheltering the displaced, in mosques, and beneath canvas tents.

Then to those thousands of statistical inputs rapidly approaching zero. Reports from the World Health Organization and UNICEF record the declining weight of Gaza’s children and the spread of acute malnutrition and dehydration brought about by starvation policies. In the corners of makeshift clinics, I have watched doctor after doctor stand helplessly as the numbers on the scale drop every week, as if counting down to the end of a life. I have watched a mother run her hand across her child’s protruding ribs as she gathers him into her arms.

Finally, to those families whose entire bloodline will now sit permanently at null. The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor has documented hundreds of cases in which three or even four generations of the same family were buried beneath the rubble of a single home. Entire extended families wiped from the civil registry. Grandfather and father, uncle and newborn, collectively killed in seconds. An archive, living and otherwise, reduced to ash. A collective loss marked not in the accumulated history of generations, but as distinct counts in a death toll.

Surviving in Gaza today means not only escaping the bombardment, but also fighting a fierce battle of preservation to protect our names, our thoughts, and our small human stories from being swallowed by cold statistics, stripped of all meaning.

I am among those 1.9 million people who have been displaced from their own homes to another’s, from that home to a tent, from that tent to a camp, and so on. Displacement is a cruel calculation that arrives without warning. It demands you compress your entire

life and dismantle your identity until all that remains can fit inside a single backpack.

Every displacement is a violent uprooting from a diligently built life, and mine is no exception. Before the war, I was a UI/UX designer studying human behavior, using technology to make people’s lives easier, designing digital interfaces and workspaces that felt comfortable and functional. My mind

statistic among a million displaced people running through the streets, searching for essentials to survive.

Another statistic dominates the news cycle: the number of aid trucks permitted to enter the Gaza Strip. Politicians coldly debate whether 50 or 100 trucks are allowed on any given day. This discourse skews the reality in the global consciousness, framing the crisis as a natural famine that could be remedied

genocide is to exhaust yourself trying to perform the most elementary acts of life. There is no international metric that can quantify such labor, nor a camera that can capture these mundanities. When essentials such as water and fuel disappear, every minute turns into a battle for survival in its own right.

The electrical grid has long since collapsed, and total darkness has

in search of some raised surface or unobstructed stretch of pavement where you may catch even the faintest signal. And then you wait for hours; you watch desperately as the loading bar creep across the screen, aware that even a single artillery shell could interrupt your signal or that the battery could fail suddenly, returning you again to that cycle of darkness, oblivion, and the world’s indifference.

I remember one day when I spent more than two hours walking through ruined streets in search of an internet signal strong enough to send a brief message to a relative. It contained only two words: “We’re safe.” My phone battery was running low, and the connection disappeared every few minutes. Anywhere else on earth, such a message would’ve taken seconds to send. But here, it brings about an anxiety that is immeasurable.

We live a life here that has been suspended, a life in constant anticipation of the promise of reconstruction. But true rebuilding is not, at least in any language worthy of human dignity, the allotment of thousands of tons of cement and steel. As necessary as that may be to restore shelter for my family and our neighbors, reconstruction actually begins with returning to us the capacity for production. It begins with the complete and unconditional end of the blockade that has crushed my society for twenty years. Rebuilding means opening the borders so we may breathe again. It means restoring our destroyed universities and cultural institutions so that they may flourish — without the need for permission. It means a life without the humiliating restrictions imposed at every crossing: a life where we may travel, study abroad, and trade freely with the world as others do.

But before any of that may become possible, the self-evident solution to Gaza’s crises requires an immediate and complete end to both the daily incursions that tear through our neighborhoods, and the ever-expanding systematic policy of constricting the geographical space where more than two million people are already crowded together. It is not possible for us to plan for tomorrow while the earth beneath our feet shrinks today.

A ceasefire that merely silences the roar of artillery and aircraft is not

peace, nor is it stability. Any agreement that sustains the blockade of land, air, and sea amounts only to an unspoken international consensus that we should die slowly and quietly, away from the cameras, so that our deaths may no longer disturb the world.

What is the unemployment rate this morning? Will it be 50 or 100 aid trucks permitted to enter the Gaza Strip today? Or will it be zero again? How many calories does an individual need to survive under siege without quite dying? For decades, the international community has constructed a framework whose function is to keep Palestinians in Gaza suspended in a state of permanent dy-

Displacement is a
cruel calculation
that arrives
without warning.
It demands you
compress your
entire life inside a
single backpack.

ing, a subsistence perpetually renewed through the fine-tuned calculations of minimum aid. All the while, the inherent structures of blockade and occupation remain untouched and largely outside the scope of accountability.

With every new round of bombardment, people around the world turn to their screens to watch our deaths become the toll, waiting for the figure to reach a certain threshold that warrants the announcement of a “temporary ceasefire” — only for everything to return to square one, awaiting the next round, back to null.

I write to you amid rubble and ash in the hope that I may wrest my voice away from the grip of statistical abstraction. Our loved ones cannot be left to a legacy of scaled models. We ask you only for ordinary things: to be looked at in the eyes, to live a life undeferred.



Two children play atop the ruins of a destroyed building in Gaza. Photo by Mahmoud Hamda.

was occupied by the movement of a cursor across a screen, by color and typography. But in a matter of minutes, all those years of hard work and sleepless nights were reduced to an escape plan into the unknown. I had to bid my life farewell and leave behind the keys to a home that would become nothing but ash.

You step out and join the tally, holding your identification papers in a small plastic bag, becoming another

by charity and donations. It portrays our entire society as nothing but hungry mouths waiting for bread, while obscuring the systematic humiliation that reduces us to this dependance. It does not describe how the ambitions and dreams of young people evaporate when they are suddenly forced to spend every waking hour searching for basic sustenance to support their families and loved ones.

To live beneath the daily weight of

enveloped the Strip. To send a brief message reassuring your family that you’re still alive — or to write just a few lines documenting the atrocities unfolding around you — requires undertaking a dangerous and complicated journey. Your digital existence depends entirely on old worn-out car batteries or small solar panels shattered by shrapnel. You walk through ruined streets, over piles of rubble, beneath the hum of surveillance drones



Displaced Palestinian children play in the street near their tents west of Gaza City. Photo by Majdi Fathi.

ternative care is the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development, whose capacity has been gutted.

The impacts on a child

Not every child breaks down. Some go quiet instead. They seem fine. They play, they even laugh, and the grief stays hidden underneath. A child rarely says, “I am sad.” The pain comes out in other ways: a nightmare, a wet bed, a drawing of the war, a long silence.

A deep wound does not have to de-

termine a child’s whole life. Al-Akhras is clear about this. One steady, loving adult. Some sense of safety. Room to speak. A life that slowly settles. Any of these can change their path, even after the worst. A child needs a circle of support. But that is exactly what the war keeps out of reach.

Back at Nasser Medical Complex, Mahmoud knows none of this. He is two years old. He does not know that two men call him their son, or that neither can prove it, or that a war erased

the record that could. He now lives with Ahmed al-Hirsh, but Mohammed Lubad still believes Mahmoud is his son. Mahmoud is, in a way, the opposite of Yara. She lost everyone. He has been claimed by two. But both will grow up with the same question hanging over them: Who am I, and where do I belong?

So will tens of thousands of other children, each carrying a version of the same loss into a terrifying future that has already started unfolding.

Growing up where it is never safe

Continued from the page 1

Gaza’s Ministry of Social Development counts 64,616 children who have lost one or both parents. Of those, 55,157 were orphaned in the most recent war.

In April 2024, UNICEF estimated that every child in Gaza needed mental health support.

One of the children al-Akhras works with, a 16-year-old girl named Yara (this is a pseudonym used to protect her privacy), lost her parents, her brothers and sisters, her grandparents, her aunts and uncles on both sides, all the roots and branches of her family. There is no one still alive for her.

Al-Akhras says Yara now lives in a small tent with another large family. The father of the family does not work because the war destroyed his livelihood, and he struggles with drug use as a result. There is never enough food. The tent floods in winter and overheats in summer. Yara has nowhere else to go.

Before the war, al-Akhras says, Yara was a sociable child and one of the strongest students in her class. That girl is hard to find now. Al-Akhras says she shows signs of post-traumatic stress. She has withdrawn into herself. She will not talk about what she lived through. She cannot walk past the ruins of her old home, and nightmares haunt her sleep.

She tries to keep up with online school, but the work of tent life leaves little room for it. There is cleaning and

cooking and caring for children who are not her own. She has no one to play with and nowhere that feels safe.

Yara wishes she had been killed with her family.

An environment where children can never heal

Al-Akhras knows the limits of her work. She can offer a child a space to talk, a way to put words to fear and grief and anger. She can ease the symptoms that follow trauma, like anxiety, nightmares, and panic. And she can guide the people caring for the child. But these children are living through continuous trauma that does not end: the bombing, the displacement, loss after loss, and no ground that holds still beneath them.

In a place that is never safe, al-Akhras says, real recovery cannot begin. She cannot give a child a stable home. She cannot stop the fear or lift the threat. She cannot promise a routine or a school or a place that stays safe. “Sometimes,” she says, “I feel like I’m only easing the pain, inside a reality that won’t let it heal.”

Since the so-called ceasefire was announced in October 2025, the killings have not stopped. Gaza’s Health Ministry recorded more than 1,000 Palestinians killed in the months after the truce took effect, in airstrikes, shelling, and gunfire across all five of Gaza’s governorates, some far from the so-called Yellow Line that Israel has established to demarcate the new boundaries of Palestinian life and some in its shadow.

By May, the Israeli prime minister declared Israel controlled 60% of the Gaza Strip and ordered expansion to 70%.

Aid moves the way the gunfire does, in fits and starts. Between October and late June, only about a third of the trucks promised under the agreement made it in, and Israel kept out basic nutritious food like meat, dairy, and vegetables, while snacks and soft drinks passed through. What remains of the health system barely stands. More than half of Gaza’s hospitals function partially, and, according to the U.N., not one runs at full capacity.

There is nowhere to fall back to, no sheltering interior, no corner of Gaza the enemy will consent to leave alone.

Before the war, a child who lost his parents would rarely be left alone. Someone from the family would take him in. He stayed close to the people and places he knew, and he was raised, al-Akhras says, with the same love any family gives its own.

But the children who lose everybody often find themselves in the care of strangers. Gaza’s community remains tightly knit, but a stranger’s home is not always safe. Al-Akhras says some of them are treated harshly by the very people meant to care for them.

Orphanages do exist, but they’re small and few. By January, 2025, for example, SOS Children’s Villages was caring for just 33 children in Gaza, ranging from infants to 17-year-olds, in a displacement camp in Khan Younis after its Rafah site was destroyed. Formal al-

U.S. AND ZIONIST FORCES BECOME ONE

U.S. lawmakers are pushing to expand the Pentagon’s relationship with the Zionist entity

As the tide of Western public opinion turns against Israel and politicians weakly gesture to so-called fractures in the U.S.-Israel alliance, the two entities grow structurally evermore intertwined. The latest collapse of the fiction that Israel and the United States are separate military and political bodies comes in the form of the new military funding package being pushed through Congress: Section 219 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), also known as the United States-Israel Defense Technology Cooperation Initiative. The United States and Israel have long functioned as military partners, but Section 219 of the NDAA would shift the occupation’s status from a recipient of U.S. aid to an even more deeply entrenched military partner.

The legislation seeks to create a unique role at the Pentagon responsible for its advancement; commit the U.S. to perform bilateral military research and development with the Zionist entity; and lock Israeli biotechnological weapons, AI research, and drone technologies into the U.S. supply chain.

Over the past 80 years, the U.S. has spent over \$300 billion (adjusted for inflation) on establishing and supporting the Zionist occupation of Palestine. Since 1974, Israel has been the United States’ top aid recipient. For nearly three decades, the U.S. Congress has established annual memoranda of understanding to provide the Zionist entity with military funding. The U.S. has committed to providing the entity with \$3.8 billion in military funding per year for the 2019 fiscal year through fiscal year 2028, though the actual amount is much larger, owing to a variety of multisectoral public subsidies and funding for direct commercial sales of military equipment. The funding had to be authorized by Congress every year.

After Al-Aqsa Flood, the U.S. poured additional billions into the occupation to support the genocide in Gaza. Between October 7, 2023, and September 2025, the United States sent the Zionist entity more than \$20 billion. Aid totals do not include arms sales, which amount to billions more: Israel was the third highest recipient of U.S. arms sales for the period from 1950 to 2024, and at least 78% of its arms imports since 2000 have come from the United States.

But for the overlapping U.S. and Israeli ruling classes who run these governments, this is not enough. Politicians across the spectrum are working to implement legislation that would allow for guaranteed, increased, and closer support without even the need for congressional approval. Section 219 replaces the required annual passage of memoranda of understanding with a permanent fusion of the U.S. and Israeli militaries.

Backed by AIPAC and the Zionist think tank Foundation for Defense of Democracies, the United States-Israel Framework for Upgraded Technologies, Unified Research, and Enhanced Security (FUTURES) Act was introduced to

Congress by Republicans and Democrats in February 2026. While The FUTURES Act didn’t survive, much of its language appears in Section 219.

The fusion between the imperial patron and its colonial beachhead lies in the creation of a unique role: an executive agent at the Pentagon whose job would be to find ways to integrate Israeli technology into the U.S. military, fund research on new technologies for both militaries, and ensure the countries buy technology and weapons together. The executive agent would have authority above that of other Department of Defense leaders, giving the agent the ability to override decisions made by some Defense offices. No such role exists for any other country at the Pentagon.

The U.S. has long been a primary sponsor of Israel, enabling the Zionist entity’s ongoing genocide of Palestinians. But what is new and most insidious about Section 219 is the enmeshment of the U.S. and Israeli weapons industries — including biotechnologies and artificial intelligence used for military purposes — and the integration of Israeli technologies and companies into U.S. supply chains. The legislation would establish a deep state of infrastructure supported by “American jobs” and led by the executive agent. Section 219 would embed the two militaries to a degree that would be nearly impossible to unravel.

At a time when U.S. polling shows

The fight for a free Palestine does not end in the polls of public opinion or the halls of Congress

low approval ratings for Israel, Section 219 would protect U.S. military and financial support for Israel from public opinion for decades to come.

The United States and Israel are foundationally fellow racist, genocidal settler colonies. This legislation provides de jure powers to fix into place the de facto military and sociopolitical conjuncture.

Section 219 puts an onus on us in the U.S. to reinvigorate and redefine our tactics. The fight for a free Palestine does not end in the polls of public opinion or the halls of Congress. The deepening imperial alliance has shown some weaknesses in recent months, owing in large part to the resistance of the Iranian state and its regional axis allies.

For Western imperialism to be brought to its knees, for Palestinians to return to the homes and lands taken from them, all will need to do their part to fracture the existing systems of accumulation and dispossession.

By WRITERS AGAINST THE WAR ON GAZA

The early Zionists took the adage that winners write history and ran it in reverse: They wrote the history first, so as to win. What they rewrote was the history of a land; what they won was dominion over that land and its historic inhabitants. In this world-scale historical revisionism they have had many collaborators; but since the Nakba, and most definitely since the 1960s, their chief collaborator has been American mainstream media.

In 1965, the Palestinian scholar Fayeza Sayegh described how the Zionist movement influenced the American press. His source was the American Zionist Council — the movement’s umbrella body in New York, funded from Jerusalem — whose own files the U.S. Senate had subpoenaed two years before. The Council’s methods, as Sayegh distilled them: “Cultivating editors, stimulating counteraction of press material hostile to Israel, drafting suggested editorials, and supplying editors with feature material which saves editors the time and trouble of doing their own research.” Pressed by Washington to register as a foreign agent, the Council handed its work to successors — AIPAC, then CAMERA, then HonestReporting.

The undeniable of the ongoing livestreamed genocide has stressed this arrangement. After decades of participation in the Zionist project of real-time historical revisionism, the American liberal media, freed from certain affective fidelities to White House narratives while Trump is the tenant, is turning its obfuscatory expertise to the smaller but no less sordid business of revising its own record of support for the genocide.

First there is the on-paper revision of the pieces themselves. In October 2023 the *Toronto Star* printed, as fact, the claim that Hamas had beheaded forty babies. When the claim fell apart, the *Star* deleted it and appended a note calling it unconfirmed — not false, just unconfirmed. A version of the same claim sat in a second column for another ten months. Postmedia’s papers ran the same claims and took over a year to append a single editors’ note. *The Washington Post* printed a claim from Israel’s defense minister that Hamas’s battle plans assigned commanders to rape soldiers; the next day it removed the quote with a brief correction saying it had not been authorized for publication — nothing about whether it was true. *The New York Times* reported that Israel held forensic evidence of systematic rape; days later it corrected the story to say Israel held no such evidence. And when Israel assassinated Anas al-Sharif, Reuters announced, “Israel Kills Al Jazeera Journalist It Says Was Hamas Leader,” then replaced the headline without a note. In no case did these outlets apologize for what the falsehoods did while they lived. In no case did anyone revise the hiring and editing practices that produced them.

Then there is the more general, sometimes abstracted revision of stance. A Polk Award is given posthumously to

Broken Record

Why is media accountability so hard to extract?

Mariam Dagga, a photographer for the Associated Press, killed in a double strike on Nasser Hospital six months earlier. The award has been funded in part by the Ochs-Sulzberger family, whose trust controls *The New York Times*; but no one in the room seems to find this contradictory, given *The Times*’s insistence, since the first weeks of the genocide, on publishing every Israeli account of a bombed hospital’s alleged ties to Hamas. The Committee to Protect Journalists, at a gala chaired by the publisher of *The Wall Street Journal* and hosted by CNN’s chief anchor, “honors” the martyred journalists of Gaza, among them

ences an opportunity to say it back: *I was wrong*. Liberals seem to find this more difficult. Ta-Nehisi Coates, who publicly and famously converted to the Palestinian cause in 2023, has too few fellow travelers on the road to Damascus.

Why is accountability so hard to extract? In every class, we are accountable to people we share tables with: dinner tables, conference tables, gala tables. Once you reach the gala, you become accountable to the worst people on earth. *The New York Times* answers to the Ochs-Sulzberger family trust. *The Washington Post* answers to Jeff Bezos, and Postmedia to a New Jersey hedge fund.



“Our loyalty is to the truth and to a public that deserves to know it.”

al-Sharif, undoubtedly the most famous journalist the committee has ever failed to protect. The heads of the American institutions that helped spread Israel’s lies about these very journalists — calling al-Sharif an enemy combatant, therefore a legitimate target for an airstrike — sit at the \$25,000 tables, clapping.

On May 11, 2026, Nicholas Kristof, a banner columnist in the Opinion pages of *The New York Times*, published a column on the rape and torture of Palestinians in Israeli custody headlined, “The Silence That Meets the Rape of Palestinians.” He did not say in whose pages that silence had been loudest. Had *The Times* been a serious newspaper, this would have been front-page news years ago. The column came only after two years of our Boycott, Divest, Unsubscribe campaign had raised the cost of the silence.

Why don’t we simply categorize the belated appearance of a report on Palestinian prisoner rape — a report that angered and maybe damaged the enemy — as a win for our side, and move on? Because from *The Times* and others, there is no accountability; and without accountability, there can be no real change.

Unfortunately for those who dream of a popular front with liberals against Zionism and fascism, the American right has better performed this accounting. Tucker Carlson, Candace Owens, Joe Rogan, and others have risked permanently alienating Zionists by admitting they believed and helped spread Israel’s lies. Whether or not it is opportunistic, this gesture extends to their massive audi-

And Zionists sit at the same tables: Joseph Kahn, the executive editor of *The Times*, is the son of Leo Kahn, who sat for nearly two decades on the board of CAMERA; at the press-freedom gala, five Murdoch companies bought a quarter-million dollars’ worth of tables. All of them answer to advertisers, where advertising still pays, and all of them answer to the state, which grants and withholds access: In October 2025 the Pentagon made reporters sign onto restrictive new press policies to keep their credentials (more than thirty outlets turned in their badges instead).

Ghassan Kanafani, writing in 1972 on

The streets are now our offices. For Palestinian journalists, this is the condition. For Americans, it is a call to action.

publishing and political education, put it plainly: “Biased pedagogies that reflect the interest of the ruling class will not be changed through persuasion.” Persuasion — the appeal, the correction, the op-ed rebuttal — cannot dislodge what

holds a class arrangement in place. The demand has to fall on the arrangement itself: on the tables and on what can be withdrawn from them — labor, copy, subscription, prestige.

When the courtyard of Al-Ahli Hospital exploded into flames on October 17, 2023, the papers, *The Times* among them, at first reported the facts on the ground. Then, under evident pressure, they retreated. Three days later, in the Opinion pages, Michelle Goldberg wrote, “It Is Impossible to Know What to Believe in This Hideous War.” The function of the column was to make the reader feel better about doing nothing. Since then, the WHO has counted attacks on all thirty-six of Gaza’s hospitals: bombed, besieged, set ablaze, many of them more than once.

The Times keeps a museum of its own history, opened in 2021 at its headquarters but closed to the public. The fuller mea culpas were already in print: Max Frankel’s essay on the paper’s Holocaust coverage, “a staggering, staining failure”; the 2004 editors’ note on Iraq; a 2018 apology for shameful AIDS coverage.

We are not waiting for the Gaza exhibit in the halls of shame. We seek accountability now.

Western journalists, Americans in particular, tend to think and act in terms of rights and freedoms. The Palestinian journalists of Gaza speak continuously in terms of responsibility and faith: “By God, I fulfilled my duty as a journalist,” said Hossam Shabat in his last will and testament, released after his martyrdom in Beit Lahia in March 2025. Anas al-Sharif, killed in the strike on the press tent at Al-Shifa Hospital in August 2025, framed his record as testimony offered before God. In his will he wrote that he never once hesitated to “convey the truth as it is, without distortion or falsification.” Wael al-Dahdouh, the Al Jazeera Gaza bureau chief whose wife, two of his children, and baby grandson were killed by Israeli fire in October 2023, and whose journalist son Hamza was killed by an Israeli strike in January 2024, has said the reporters he manages are duty-bound to carry on. “Otherwise there will be no one left to tell the story.”

Gaza’s journalists do speak of one right, which is the right not to be shot in the head while wearing a press vest and holding a microphone. The right not to be martyred while bearing witness to their people’s extermination.

Filming amid the rubble for World Press Freedom Day in May 2025, the Gazawi journalist Mohammed Abu Namous described to UN News the difficulties of working without electricity or internet. “The streets are now our offices,” he said.

The streets are now our offices. For Palestinian journalists, this is the condition. For Americans, it is a call to action. We urge our readers in the media to heed it while they still have a choice. Choose the streets, the tables, and the courtyards of the people. Refuse the highest office and the view that comes with it. Or one day, when the tide of reckoning breaches the walls, you will be unprepared for what comes next.

The Most Beautiful of Mothers Was the One Who Waited (1976, to the mother of a martyr)

By HASSAN AL-ABDULLAH

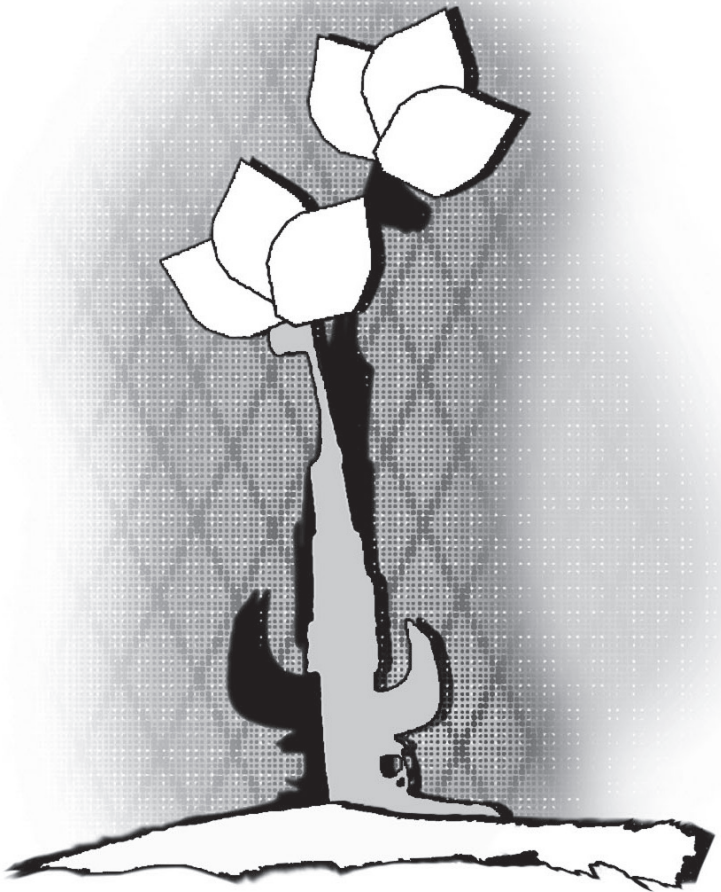
The most beautiful of mothers was the one who waited for her son
The most beautiful of mothers was she who waited,
and he returned
He returned a martyr
She wept two tears and a rose
and did not withdraw into mourning clothes
Assaad returned a martyr... a breeze of distant longing awakened his soul,
So he embraced his death and walked, parting the dawn’s haze
Alone
Dragging a heavy brokenness
We see him...
We see the silence and the yellow trees around him
the streaming bullets
And the sound of imminent collapse,
Tranquil blood rippling across the celestial dirt
The war has not ended
But he has returned
His rifle wilted
His hands at peace...
This is the moment of sleep for the soul-weary lover
Here he is now, swooping like a bird
The wind whistling in his heart
The war has not ended
yet his beloved’s face plunges into the hollows of terror.
There is ample space to forget
The windows flung open to the gray wind
To memories – smoke
And Assaad, now free within his longing
Assaad was...
a lover
Assaad returned a martyr
and with him returned the dawn, the river, the mountain rose, and the
moonlight shone once more on the house’s balcony
And the comrades departed then returned.
Open the doors of your grief, and enter his moonlit radiance
And pluck from his hands the birds and the wheat and the sweet thornbush.

Hassan Al-Abdallah (1943–2022) was a prominent poet and writer from the southern Lebanese town of Khiam.

أجمل الأمهات التي انتظرت (إلى أم شهيد، 1976)

حسن العبدالله

أجملُ الأمهات التي انتظرت ابنها
أجملُ الأمهات التي انتظرتُه،
وعادُ
عاد مستشهداً
فَبَكَتْ دمعَتين ووردة
ولم تنزو في ثياب الحداد
عاد أسعد مستشهداً... أَبْقِظْ روحه نسمةً من حنينٍ بعيدٍ،
فشد على موتهِ ومشى ماخراً غَيبشِ الفجرِ
منفرداً
ويجرُ انكساراً ثَقِيلاً
نراه...
نرى الصمتَ والشجر الأصفر من حوله
والرصافات جاريةً
ودويّ انهدام قريب
دماً هادئاً يترقّى فوق التراب السماوي
لم تنته الحرب
لكنّه عاد
ذابلاً بنديقيتهِ
ويدأه محابِدتان...
هذه لحظةُ النوم للعاشقِ المُجْهِدِ الروح
ها إنه الآن يهوي كطيرٍ
وفي قلبه تصفّرُ الريح
لم تنته الحرب
لكن وجه الحبيبة يهوي إلى وهدة الربع.
المكان فسحٌ لتنسى
النوافذ مُشْرِعةً للنسيم الرماديّ
للذكريات الدخان
وأسعدُ حرٌّ بأشواقه الآن
أسعدُ كان...
عاشقاً
عاد أسعدُ مستشهداً
عاد بالفجر والنهر والوردة الجبلية عادثٌ إلى شرفة البيت أقمارها
والرفاق مضوا ثم عادوا.
افتحوا باب أحزانكم وادخلوا في بشاشته القمرية
واقطفوا عن يديه العصافير والقمح والعوسج السكريّ.



DESTROY THE IMPERIAL WAR MACHINE

