

## Notes on the Friends of Palestine Trauma Centre (UK) online meeting

Sunday 2 June 2024

There was up to 29 people on the call. Three of the PTC(UK) team joined from Gaza (Ahmed, Dr Omar and Dr Said); one joined from Turkey (Niveen) where she has managed to evacuate to, and one joined from Egypt (Rasha), where she has managed to evacuate to. Dr Mohamed convened the call from Hatfield, alongside David.

**Ahmed:** The war has changed us a lot. We are very exhausted/overtired. Most of our free time is spent looking for wood and water to survive. We are very busy with the new life we are living – everything is taking time and effort. There is shelling and people are dying every minute. We are not coping but we have to deal with it; it is not our choice. There is danger and risk where I live in the middle zone/buffer zone near Netzarim. There is shelling and we are under target most of the time, day and night. My house has been partially demolished. If you are going to die, it is better to die in your house.

**Dr Omar:** I also live in the middle zone. It is a very painful experience. I have lost 15 members of my family: 11 children and 4 of my brothers. Part of my house has been destroyed. We are okay and hope peace will soon be in our area. Families, children are living in the street. It is very bad living conditions. There is no water, no electricity; people are living in a very bad situation. People are really suffering. There is bombardment day and night. There is real fear. This is a tragedy. But we still have hope.

**Dr Mohamed:** This is worse than genocide. The Israelis destroy everything. They are killing people, destroying buildings, killing trees, making survival in Gaza impossible. They are destroying water. This is multiple Nakbas. People are exhausted. They move and they move and they move. Israel is targeting civilians, pushing them out of Gaza.

**Dr Omar:** (Moved his camera to show us a camp that he can see from his house.) There are maybe 10,000 people living in this area. There are many areas like this in Gaza. They come here for safety but there is no safe place in Gaza. There is suffering for everyone. Life is very complicated here. How can we protect family? How can we look for water, food? There is a lack of food and clean water. We feel the sound of aircraft in the sky. Any moment there will be a bombardment. It is terrifying especially for children. Children can't sleep – they wake throughout the night. This is the time to say enough.

**Rasha:** My family is still in Gaza. They were in Rafah but they have moved.

**David:** Different people are doing different work in all parts of Gaza. PTC used to work in one place (Nuseirat) but now there are small groups spread out. If you are in North Gaza or Gaza City you are stuck there because of the buffer zone (Netzarim). No one can move between the two areas.

**Dr Said:** I am currently in Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis. I have moved between 7 areas since the start of the war. I have lost three brothers and their family in the war. It is a hard experience. I haven't heard the voice of my mother in three months and can't make connection with my brother. Everyday I ask myself, how can I complete my life with this big situation? It is a really, really hard time, experience and feelings. It is hard to look at your children and hear the bombing around you and you can't make anything safe for them. Water, wood for fire/cooking is

really really bad. My brother called me before he was killed and told me his heart would always be with me.

**Dr Mohamed:** What is happening is worse than war.

**Rasha:** *(When asked how much people in Gaza know about what is happening overseas)* I lived in a tent for 5 months. Internet was on and off. Sometimes we would hear what is happening in the world, but in Gaza we care about how can we get water, food. War still continues till now; lots of people are dead. My home was burnt with everything in it. We have nothing now; lots of relatives and colleagues are dead. We know you stand with us and thanks to all, but the reality is the war continues and we don't know till when. We don't know how we can continue after the war without our homes, without our loved ones, with nothing.

**David:** We will always be there for you. We aren't going away ever. We are doing everything to take this nightmare away.

**Dr Omar:** Thank you; that helps us to be strong. Seeing people out marching on the streets, it's very good. But we feel it's not enough because the reality hasn't changed. We are living under fire. We think of today and the next day. There is nothing good. There is no life in Gaza. No schools, no universities, no houses. We need a ceasefire yes but Gaza is not good for living. They've destroyed everything. Many people think of leaving. This is a genocidal war. We need a solution, not only a ceasefire. It is not enough.

*Dr Omar and Dr Said were asked if it helps to have this meeting.*

**Dr Omar:** Yes. It would help to have subsequent meetings. It is good.

*Dr Omar and Dr Said were asked about the situation in warehouses. They answered in Arabic and Dr Mohamed translated.*

**Dr Mohamed:** Dr Omar and Dr Said said that for the last two months, the situation has been getting better. Some things are getting through the border, but prices have increased by 40-70%. Khan Yunis was nearly destroyed. People are now leaving Rafah and moving to Khan Yunis, but they are returning to destruction. They are staying in rubble, so that they have some cover. There is zero infrastructure. It is hard to work, to find things to survive. Cash machines and banks, like hospitals, mosques and schools, have been destroyed. Most of the banks don't work, but people are able to get money through cash machines. Those who are lucky to get salaries have to use exchange offices/agents who take a 20-25% cut.

*More Q&As then followed, but I was unable to note everything down as I spoke with Niveen using the chat forum. She implored UK participants on the call to get the truth out there and asked us to get angry at our government, who Niveen stated is the main reason for supporting the occupation. During the Q&A, participants asked where we should send money and I heard UNRWA mentioned. Another participant asked about ground fighting and Dr Mohamed translated feedback from Niveen and Rasha, reporting that **militants are not hiding behind civilians; they are either in tunnels or out there fighting. It is a big lie that Israel is targeting militants.** A new member from St Albans asked what more we could do, and Dr Mohamed stated how proud they feel of people like her, going out on demonstrations and taking actions.*

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